

Everyone has at some time experienced a heavy cold or congestion and knows how debilitating that is. Symptoms can be difficulty in breathing and sweating. With an engine it is not dissimilar.

If the airflow, that is either passing into the engine or over the cooling fins is obstructed in any way, things start going wrong. When the air intake system becomes restricted, the air to fuel ratio is changed and the engine runs rich. The result is that power output becomes erratic, fuel consumption increases and large amounts of emissions are pumped out into the atmosphere.

Air filters become contaminated quickly and need regular cleaning or replacing, especially in the dry climate and dusty conditions we now experience throughout spring and summer.

Where air acts as a coolant the build-up of debris (grass cuttings) and dirt will restrict its flow, thus causing hot spots to occur. Keeping cooling fins clear on engines; radiators and hydrostatic transmissions need to be a daily routine, especially in dry hot weather. Failure to do this may result in a fire.

WATER

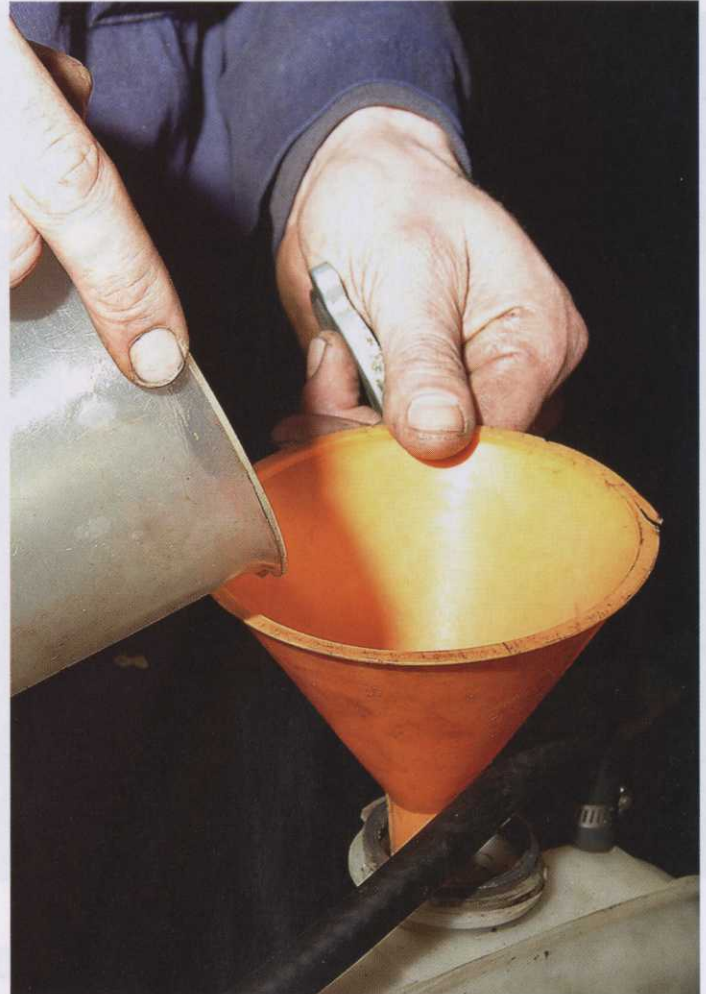
This can become polluted over a period of time and the fluctuations in temperature result in deposits forming. If a water cooling system is used, it should be flushed out at regular intervals. In hot weather the water will evaporate much faster, so check the levels at least daily.

FUEL

Would we drink a contaminated glass of beer? An engine will not respond well if its fuel supply is dirty. The chances are it may not start, if it does then it will run erratically. Where there is dirt, of an abrasive nature present, internal components will be damaged. Fuel should be stored in the correct containers in a cool location.



▲ Replace spark plugs as advised in the engine manufactures manual



▲ In hot weather the water wants checking at least daily

Some readers may not be aware that fuel should only be transported in two -gallon quantities and in the approved cans. There will be serious trouble if larger quantities of fuel are moved around a course and an accident occurs.

Modern fuels have a sale by date and therefore deteriorate if stored in a machine which is not used for a long period of time. Where this is likely to happen there are two choices.

Drain the fuel tank, and then run the engine to remove any left over fuel in the system, or alternatively use a fuel additive. These additives are readily available from outdoor power specialists and will keep the fuel fresh for up to two years.

SPARK PLUGS

As already mentioned, virtually all engines now use electronic ignition, but the one thing that has not basically changed is the spark plug. It is said to have been invented by a Frenchman, Edmond Berger in 1839.

A fellow countryman, Albert Champion, a name now synonymous with spark plugs, went to America to compete in a series of races. He discovered a shortage of parts and started making his own. To cover his racing costs he began manufacturing spark plugs and sold them to friends.

On a second visit to America in 1908, backed by the Buick Motor Company, Albert formed his own company - AC Spark Plugs. Albert Champion died in 1927 and General Motors purchased his company, but his name lives on.

In a lot of instances the spark plugs are components that tend to get overlooked until the day an engine fails to start.



THE TRI-PLEX THAT RAISED THE BAR NOW PUTS IT OUT OF REACH



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PIVOT 18°

Introducing the new John Deere 2500A Tri-Plex Riding Greens Mower. When it was first introduced in 1999, our 2500 Tri-Plex defied all comparisons. With offset cutting units, a distinctive control arm and low ground pressure, the 2500 became an immediate hit with greenkeepers, technicians and operators alike.

But there is always room for improvement. With our new 2500A, we put in a new radiator system to increase cooling performance. An enhanced lift/lower assembly increases feel and response. Plus we updated the back lap valve and enhanced the wiring system.

To find out more about the tri-plex that continues to set the industry standard, contact your local John Deere grounds care dealer or call 01949 860491. Nothing Runs Like A Deere.

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▲ If conditions are dry, hot and dusty the air filter system should frequently be checked and cleaned or replaced

Electrodes wear and the gap increases and the spark shorts out or is weak, placing greater strain and unnecessary wear on the engine. Replace plugs as recommended to ensure the engine's performance is retained.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Budgets are always being squeezed, so it makes sense to be continually on the look out for ways of trimming costs.

One possibility is to consider LPG or natural gas. Not only is there a saving in running costs, but environmentally they are of considerable benefit to both the planet and the operators.

At present the government has not taxed this fuel at the same rate as petrol and diesel. The price of 'off road' gas is between 19p and 25p depending on the supplier.

If a club is already using this form of fuel for other activities, such as buggies or heating, some companies take the total amount of gas supplied into account when calculating the final cost per unit of gas. Because of the high usage the unit rate will further reduce machinery running costs.

The storage installation may also be free-of-charge. Some companies will supply a one-ton bulk tank. All that is required of the recipient is a level base built to their specification, plus the cost of connecting the unit's electrical supplies by a qualified electrical engineer.

As far as the machinery is concerned, there are a number of companies who carry out engine conversions and they cost in the region of £750. While this figure does add extra to the purchase price of a machine, the savings over a two year period are considerable.

However it is dressed up, fossil fuels such as petrol and diesel, are gradually coming to an end. In the meantime they are doing considerable damage to the atmosphere for future generations.

Research has shown that LPG is cleaner than other alternatives with the exception of electric power. If looking to save costs or wanting to help protect our environment, then LPG is worth investigating further.

BLADE SYSTEMS

Regardless of whether it is a cylinder, rotary, reciprocating or flail system the one common factor to all is the sharpness of the blades. A blunt blade or badly adjusted cylinder is not only dangerous; it also places considerable stress on the machine's components. More fuel is used; the

job takes longer and the turf can be severely damaged.

Rotary blades tend to be left longer before sharpening, usually because of the vegetation they are cutting and the signs of bluntness are not as obvious as those of a cylinder mower being used on fine turf.

Bearing in mind that a blade tip is travelling in the region of 130-mph, it must be correctly balanced to avoid vibration build up. It could become lethal. From the safety aspect, replace any damaged blades immediately. These criteria also apply to flail mowers.

As far as cylinder mowers are concerned, correctly ground and set reels and bedknives, are imperative to the quality of cut, there are no margins for error. Back lapping is not the answer; it is only short term and therefore should be considered only as a stop gap measure.

The benefits of having modern in-house grinding machinery make it a worthwhile long-term investment. A cylinder problem can be dealt with quickly and efficiently, without the delay of having to wait in a queue. With one of these units in the workshop all the cylinder mowers can be maintained at the highest of levels all-year-round.

CLEANLINESS

Any machinery that is involved with grass, water and soil will get dirty and to what degree this is allowed to develop, is down to each operator and the golf course machinery maintenance programme.

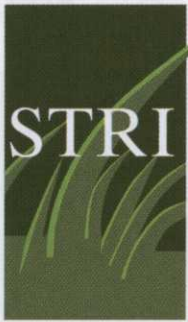
A cleaning-down routine, with a pressure washer, is beneficial for both the equipment and all those people involved in using or repairing it. Accumulations of dust and debris will cause heat build up problems, hide broken welds and missing nuts and bolts.

A clean well-kept machine is much more pleasant to operate and is very likely to fetch a higher trade-in price.

Keeping a course to the high standards now expected by players and members, requires machinery that is reliable and continually operating at optimum performance.

Having a well-planned maintenance programme ensures as little as possible can go wrong. It will never be foolproof and breakdowns will occur, but at least by being on the lookout for unusual signs and taking early preventive action most of these can be either avoided or kept to a minimum.

Like humans, giving machinery some TLC will pay dividends.



Don't Worry

Lee Penrose looks at those rare and protected species which can make your golf course such a special place to be

On hearing their course is to be visited by one of the STRI ecologists, Bob Taylor or myself, there are always one or two members within each golf club who raise the concern; "What if he finds something rare on the course?"

This inevitably leads to visions of a throng of crusty, sandal clad ecologists arriving at the club in a Citroen 2CV (or worse still – bicycles!) in order to erect fences around colonies of beetles, mushrooms or other equally unrecognisable wildlife.



Understandably, these members are often fearful that the power of management will be taken away from the club and put into the hands of environmentalists whom care little for the future of the golf course and are merely interested in the preservation of the species in question.

In practice this could not be further from the truth. The STRI do often encounter rare, endangered and protected wildlife on golf courses and it is immediately recognisable that their presence is because of, not despite of, the golf course and its past management.

Indeed, according to their policy on golf courses, English Nature; "recognises that the wildlife present on the site is a result of the past and existing management of the land as a golf course; the presumption will be continuance of existing management practices which do not reduce that special interest".

WHAT ARE RARE AND PROTECTED SPECIES?

Interesting wildlife can be found on every single golf course in the UK. Whether it be a pair of blue tits nesting in the greenkeepers' sheds, a family of foxes utilising the wide open spaces for playing and hunting or a flock of goldfinch pillaging the seed from stands of thistle and dock.

However some species are less common than others or have experienced significant population declines and are vulnerable enough to

be included within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

A mention within one of the various sections within this Act affords a particular species, and their immediate habitat, protection from intentional or deliberate damage. Furthermore, Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), lists 391 species of principal importance for which Species Action Plans have been produced by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (available from www.ukbap.org.uk) this list is constantly under review with species being added and removed as necessary.

For the sake of other articles in this month's magazine a full list of these species is not included here, however some species that do support statutory protection and are commonly found on golf courses include; great crested newt, badger, all 16 species of bat, water vole, red squirrel, brown hare, adder, grass snake, skylark, kestrel, song thrush, grey partridge, linnet, bluebell and juniper.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS LAND OWNERS/MANAGERS?

If any of the above species (or one of the numerous others on the aforementioned CRoW Act) do reside on, or regularly use, your golf course then you do have a responsibility to protect that species and its habitat from damage or destruction. You do not have a responsibility to notify any organisations of the presence of such species; however it will be beneficial to do so as government funding is often available for the further enhancement of the environment.

If management work is to be carried out that may affect a protected species then the correct channels must be followed in order to ensure the golf club fulfil their legal requirements as concerns the particular species.

Pond management, tree felling, building work and course architectural changes are all procedures which may affect the habitats, or access to, of species such as newts, bats or badgers. It is therefore always advisable to conduct thorough surveys of the areas in question before undertaking any work. Relatively cheap (or even free) surveys can often be sourced from local wildlife groups or even expert members within the club.

If it transpires that planned management work will affect individuals or habitats of protected species then a special licence must be acquired from English Nature (or the relevant statutory body in your part of the UK) and a licensed handler must be 'on-call' throughout the procedure. Do not be tempted to bypass any of the above advice in order to save time and cost as the penalties for non compliance are severe and well administered.

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO PROTECTING RARE SPECIES?

Aside from the obvious benefits of the membership being able to boast



to other clubs and visiting golfers that their course supports a rare orchid, mammal or newt and the satisfaction you will gain from monitoring its success, there are also financial benefits to harbouring protected wildlife.

Obviously the golf club cannot directly 'profit' from their presence, but management work funded via external bodies will inevitably benefit both the ecology and aesthetics of the course and therefore all parties benefit! Financial assistance with protected species management is available under the following schemes:

Biodiversity Grants Scheme: The scheme aims to restore priority species and habitats, to encourage all sections of the community to get involved in conserving biodiversity, and to deliver national conservation through local action. Application packs can be obtained from English Nature's enquiry service team on 01733 455101

The Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES), funding is available to golf clubs located on Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) through English Nature. Management agreements will be arranged that will best suit the species in question and the golf club. Application packs can be obtained from English Nature's enquiry service team on 01733 455101.

The Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish National Heritage and the Northern Ireland Environment Service run similar schemes to English Nature in their respective countries.

The Environment Agency may fund local survey and habitat management projects for specific protected species. Contact the Environment Agency Headquarters at Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS12 4UD,

Main grants programme. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for grants to fund projects which benefit the heritage of Great Britain, including urban green spaces and habitats. Contact Heritage Lottery Fund 7 Holbein Place, London, SW1W 8NR, 020 7591 6045

World Wildlife Fund. Projects involving wetland species and habitats of special concern are eligible for funding. Contact WWF, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, GU7 1XR,

The Chestnut Fund, an independent charity, makes grants available to encourage and enable community groups to carry out conservation activities. The grant is administered by British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). The maximum grant is £300. Contact the BTCV Community Unit on 01302 572236

There are several established organisations throughout the UK that deal with specific collections or species. Groups such as the British Dragonfly Society, the Bat Conservation Trust, RSPB, The Mammal Society etc.. may not only aid with financial assistance but are also an invaluable source of information and technical advice. The majority of these organisations can be found on the internet or via contacting English Nature.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Involvement with professional ecological consultants such as the STRI and statutory conservation organisations such as English Nature would represent a sound way forward.

Specialist advice is available on all aspects of wildlife management and legislation including general methodologies such as managing grasslands



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in order to maintain small mammal populations at a level that will support the protected kestrel.

Ponds within courses that support colonies of great crested newt or natterjack toad or rough grasslands that are filled with breeding skylark or lapwing will necessitate more specific advice and a tailored management programme will be required to maintain and enhance the habitat, equally there is legislation specific to each species outlining management methodology and timing that must be adhered to.

It is always advisable to find out more about the species in question. A good port of call is the UK Biodiversity Action Plans (www.ukbap.org.uk) which outlines the current legislation and objectives for each species.

In addition, English Nature produce several excellent information booklets regarding best practice management and the legalities relating to the majority of British wildlife species that are available from English Nature's enquiry service team on 01733 455101.

The STRI ecology department deal with these issues on a daily basis and will be happy to assist you with any concerns you may have.



WHO ARE THE STATUTORY BODIES AND WILL THEY GET INVOLVED?

For the sake of simplicity the Statutory Organisations for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be considered together as they all work in a similar fashion and are 'partner' organisations.

They are the Government funded bodies whose purpose is to promote the conservation of Britain's wildlife and natural features, and in essence are the groups whom are responsible for ensuring the survival of rare flora and fauna assemblages and have legal powers to enforce protection.

However, do not be alarmed by the use of words such as 'enforce' and 'legal powers', as the groups are very responsive to the requirements of a golf club and, usually working closely with the STRI, will work out species protection programmes with golf clubs that support interesting wildlife whilst ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the course.

The Chief Scientist of English Nature, Dr Keith Duff, is himself a keen golfer and understands all too well the problems caused by inappropriate course management.

In general the statutory bodies will not become involved with a golf club unless they have reason to believe a protected species is being damaged or destroyed, or if they are called for assistance from, or on behalf of, the golf club.

IN SUMMARY

Do not be perturbed by what may at first appear to be more hassle than benefit when discovering a rare or protected wildlife species on your golf course – the bearded tree huggers will hopefully leave you alone to manage at your discretion!

Certainly seek out advice from professional ecologists or local wildlife groups and do bear in mind the legalities that go with such species. Most of all enjoy the prestige and challenges associated with ensuring survival of our natural history and be sure to boast to other clubs about how valuable your course is to British wildlife.

Lee Penrose is an ecologist with the STRI

NEW PRODUCTS

NEW RELEASES FROM BILLY GOAT

Pinnacle Power Equipment has announced a programme of product improvements for 2004.

Billy Goat continues to be the number one outdoor vacuum sold in the UK and new models and higher specification machines are arriving in time for the coming season.

The KD512 is replacing the smallest KD model Billy Goat, the KD410. A 5hp horsepower Briggs & Stratton engine replaces the 4hp unit and the fan now has four blades for greater efficiency and quieter operation.

The KD511C Briggs & Stratton and KD511H Honda are replaced by the Honda powered KD512HC for the same retail price as the old KD511C.

Other Billy Goat updates involve the Professional SV50H vacuum. For the new season this popular machine is replaced by the new specification SV50HR and a price reduction to £1,295. (excl Vat).

For further information telephone: 01932 788799.



PRO RANGE CATALOGUE



A complete makeover of the 2004 Pro Range catalogue includes an easy to use, mixture guide with more technical data available than ever before. New top rated cultivars and up-dated mixtures are available from the DLF Trifolium in-house breeding programme.

An addition, this year, is the introduction of Micro Clover into the Ecosward mixtures which offers a real choice in specifying and sowing a self sustaining sward – an added bonus with

increasing pressure to reduce chemical and fertiliser usage.

In 2004 customers will be able to reap the benefits of the recent merger between the DLF Trifolium Group and Cebeco. Site visits, reports and product back-up to all sectors of the market are offered through the nationwide field support team.

For further information telephone: 01386 791102.

SOIL RENOVATORS/STONE BURIERS

Rustons Engineering has added Rotadairon soil renovators/stone buriers and combination seeders to its portfolio of ground care and amenity machinery.

The range covers a wide choice of models for different requirements and tractor power ratings from 15hp to 210hp, all allowing renovation and seeding to be completed by one machine in a single pass.

The most significant feature of the machines is a cutting rotor with special blades that turn in the opposite direction to a conventional rotary cultivator. Working against the direction of travel, the blades cut upwards away from the base layer, minimising compaction and panning.

Stones, trash and soil are then thrown upwards to the rear on to a special separation screen. Vegetation, stones and trash hit the screen and fall to the bottom of the worked area, while fine soil passes through the screen and falls on top, burying the larger particles. This creates a structured series of strata, with stones at the bottom, followed by woody material, then clods, with a fine tilth on top, which is firmed by a rear roller. This structure gives improved drainage, better aeration and easier root penetration into the substructure.

If a seeder unit is fitted, the whole operation can be carried out in one pass, speeding up the process of creating a suitable seedbed and avoiding the moisture loss associated with multiple passes with conventional machinery.

Rotadairon machines have been developed over nearly 50 years and incorporates many patented features, including a hydraulic clutch that stops the rotor when the machine encounters large obstacles such as tree stumps or boulders before shock loads are transmitted through the driveline back to the tractor PTO.

RECO will be marketing the Rotadairon equipment through its nationwide UK ground care/amenity dealer network alongside the existing products, which include Kioti compact tractors, hedge-cutters, mowing and turf care products, rotary cultivators and fertiliser spreaders.

For further information telephone: 01480 455151.



BOTTLED LIQUID BACTERIA

For those currently buying bacteria in bottled liquid form and probably spending around £20.00 per week, the availability of bacteria in freeze dried form must be good news.

Now available from Hydroscape and suitable for any type of biological wastewater treatment system, these freeze dried bacteria come in water-soluble PVA sachets and have a shelf life of up to 2 years, compared to a few days for the bottled liquid version (if not stored in a refrigerator).

More importantly, prices for the freeze-dried form are around half those of liquids.

For further information telephone: 01425 476261.

VERTICAL MOWING FROM ALLEN

Allen Power has launched a Vertical Mowing System for its National 8400 and 84 (Vanguard) triple mowers.

Fitted in under an hour by replacing the three mowing units with the vertical cutting heads, the system features 30 blades per head at 1" intervals.

The hardened spring steel blades are designed for long-lasting performance and frequent use.

This new unique thin blade design produces excellent slicing action while virtually eliminating turf damage. This allows the professional user to vertically mow more frequently – without disrupting play.

The National system can reduce de-thatching time by up to 50 per cent over conventional, dedicated machines.

With the exceptional climbing capability of the National, this new introduction means steep banks and slopes can now be vertically mown quickly and safely.

The design also incorporates a 'Dial-A-Height' precision depth control.

This feature allows the blades to be adjusted easily from a shallow depth for simple thatch removal or as deep as 3/8" for growth stimulation and increased shoot density for stronger, healthier turf.

For further information telephone: 01235 515400.



NEW VITAX FUNGICIDE

Vitax has launched Insignia, their first new fungicide for many years, which they confidently claim gives the most effective and long lasting control of Fusarium Patch Disease on the market.

Insignia, which has been developed by BASF, has undergone trials over several seasons on 25 different turf grass cultivars throughout the UK and Europe. The fungicide, first registered in cereals, is active throughout all stages of the disease from initial spore germination and leaf infection through to the prevention of further sporulation.

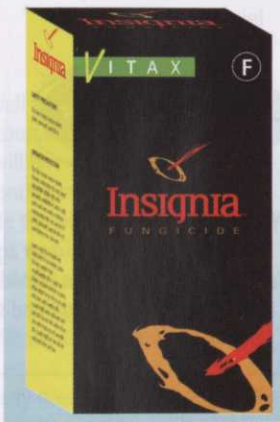
With this protection, one application should last for the duration of the period where there is a high risk of disease development. Application should be made at the first sign of disease or when conditions are favourable for disease development.

"During trials Insignia was applied at up to four times the registered dose rate to test for phytotoxicity and it came through with flying colours," said Vitax's Clive Williams.

"We also discovered side benefits which include an increase in stress tolerance, an increase in nitrogen uptake potentially leading to a greening of turf."

Insignia, which is active against Fusarium Patch, Red Thread and Dollar Spot, is available as a water dispersible granule in a container sufficient to treat 2,000 sq.m. of turf.

For further information telephone: 01530 510060.



NEW FRONT HITCH OPTION

Kioto compact tractors can now be fitted with a front hitch for mounting mowers, sweepers and other equipment.

Two models are available – one with a 800kg lift capacity for 35hp and 40hp models and the other with a 1500kg lift for 45hp and 50hp models. Both are close-coupled to the tractor so a good balance is maintained.

The hitch assembly is supplied with a front 1000rpm PTO incorporating an electro-hydraulic engagement that provides a soft start to avoid shock loads on machinery. The heavy-duty link arms float independently by 50mm to allow for uneven ground and fold vertically for transport.

The equipment, which is distributed in the UK by Rustons Engineering, costs £3,500, excluding fitting.

For further information telephone: 01480 455151.



BUNKER AID

Rake Up is a new clip on support lifting the handle clear of the sand and inviting its use. Raising the rake a few inches it can then be lifted without touching the sand either by hand or by being hooked by a sand iron. Replacing the rake also doesn't disturb the raked sand.

Available from Newart and Accessory Distributors the Rake-Up is priced at £3 and comes in packs of 10s or 50s. It is self adjusting to various handle sizes.

For further information telephone: 020 8275 0018.



NEW MODELS JOIN RANGE

Lloyds has added further models to its range, with the latest greens mowers being the Paladin TG and Paladin Dual.

The PaladinTG has the addition of a groomer, which is fitted closely between the cutting cylinder and front grooved roller.

The Paladin Dual has been developed to give the adjustment demanded by the requirement of today's fine turf managers for the very best finish.

This has been developed from the Lloyds Paladin TG but provides the same features as the TG without the groomer fitted. The front grooved front roller can be located closely back to the cutting cylinder, ensuring the shortest roller distance, to follow the tight contours of golf greens etc. The dual adjusters located on each sideplate effect the front roller adjustment.

Available in 21" and 24" widths the Paladin Dual and TG are supplied with infinitely variable height adjusters, grooved front roller, and choice of 9 or 11 bladed cutting cylinders, and 11 bladed on the with groomer on the TG.

For further information telephone: 01462 683031.



Peter Boyd
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Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
 Tel: 01476 550115

SCOTTISH REGION

North

Two new members to report this month, they are both from Newmachar GC and they are David Steven, and Mark Rae. Welcome to the Section lads.

Harrogate has come and gone for another year and went well again with the turnover of visitors very high again, and a good representation from our Section. I did not get down this year myself, so no real gossip as yet, but no doubt it will all come out before long. Our thanks to all the staff down at the BIGGA headquarters for organising the whole event, and making it such a success. Ben Brooks, from Newmachar, would like to thank Mike Dooner, from Thorntree Amenity, for his trip down to Harrogate, Ben received this for being the young greenkeeper who supports his Section at outings and seminars.

The Scottish Conference at Dunfermline College is on March 2 and hopefully the weather will hold for the members who will be travelling some distances to go to the event.

The 200 club is being run Hugh Mclatchie and it is going well again. There are still some tickets available if anyone wants to join up. If you do not want to renew your tickets then please send them back so as they can be sold onto someone else, and no offence will be taken.

Dale Robertson the new Section Secretary has set up Moray Old course for our spring outing on May 27. It is a quality championship course and I am sure there will be a good turnout for the day. Dale can be contacted on

Dalengc@hotmail.com and mobile 07711274525, and home number 01224 821574.

The feedback to the Level 3 Fastrack has been good with quite a number of our Section interested. The biggest hurdle I have found in trying to get people interested in taking it further, is in the availability of the funding. The members in Grampian Region have no problem in accessing funding through Elmwood, but for other members of our Section in the Highlands and Ross and Cromarty it is different where the members have to access their own individual funding. This can make things difficult particularly if the club which employs them is not interested in funding their staff to improve their qualifications. There is a group of about 10 required to do this Fastrack course using Elmwood as a training provider and anyone interested can contact me on 01997 420155 or 07766 956521. The course takes about one year to complete and should improve the person's ability to do their job if attained.

Not much else to report so until next month
 Iain Gunn

NORTHERN REGION

North East

Well another BTME is over again and many thanks to Terry Charlton, of Turf Care, for once again providing transport for the North East Section.

During the show we gained some new members for the Section from as

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