

Rachael and Gemma from Membership Services would like to welcome 59 new members to the Association.

# Membership Update

## Read all about it...

With the days getting shorter and the nights drawing in there is no better excuse to catch up on your reading.

BIGGA's lending library is available to all members and stocks over 800 titles on anything from turf management to IT skills and even interview techniques.

You can borrow up to two titles from the library at any one time for a period of six weeks. The only cost to you is the return postage of the books. Search for a book in the members area of the website [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) or ring Brad on 01347 833800 for further details.

In addition to the lending library we also stock three titles that are available to purchase at discounted prices.

### A Practical Guide to Ecological Management of the Golf Course

Published jointly by BIGGA and the Sports Turf Research Institute and written by STRI ecologist R S Taylor, this book is a must for all those Head



Greenkeepers/Course Managers who wish to manage their golf

course ecologically. The book looks at the reasons for managing ecologically, habitat management and specific ecological problems. *Paperback, £3*

### Golf Course Presentation

First published in 1992 and written by John Hacker and George Shiels, this book shows how good presentation and good agronomic practice should be complimentary. *Paperback, £4.95*

### Practical Greenkeeping 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Published by the R&A and written by Jim Arthur, this is the only text book available on British greenkeeping techniques. Covering all aspects of greenkeeping, this book is a must for all greenkeepers of all ages. *Hardback, £29.95 plus £3 P&P.*

## DESIGN A SLOGAN

In the past year the membership department has received a number of requests to issue a new BIGGA car sticker. We are hoping to launch one in time for BTME and Clubhouse 2005 and are appealing to you for help.

Can you come up with a catchy slogan for the sticker? It doesn't have to be too long as the sticker is only going to be 10 cm wide/diameter.

The competition is open to all members and the winner gets to see his or her slogan on the sticker and will also win a 'Highlander' waterproof suit. The closing date for entries is the 31<sup>st</sup> October and the winner will be announced in the December issue of Greenkeeper International.

Please send all entries to The Membership Department, BIGGA, BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York, North Yorkshire, YO61 1UF.

## Message of the Month Winner

Our congratulations go to October's winner, David Edmondson, from Penwortham Golf Club, who's message was posted on the 5th September 2004 under the 'Talk about Turf' section. David receives an 18 litre Gelert Rucksack.

### BIGGA welcomes...

#### SCOTTISH REGION

Victoria Cavinue, West  
Haydn Chambers, Central  
Calum Fraser, North  
Scott McCormick, Ayrshire  
Stuart McSparran, West  
John Muir, Ayrshire  
Darryl Munro, West  
Michael Nicol, North  
Andrew Ramsey, West

#### NORTHERN REGION

Thomas Bradford, Northern  
Mark Davidson, North Wales  
Stuart Earnshaw, Cleveland  
David Finnegan, North Wales  
Adam Gaze, North West  
Paul Gray, North Wales  
Neville Hayden, Northern  
Alex Knox, North East  
Steven Murphy, North Wales  
David Roberts, North Wales

#### MIDLAND REGION

Christopher Baugh, Midland  
John Fenn, BB&O  
Matthew Hartley, East Midland  
Jonathan Horton, East Midland  
Christopher Howes, Midland  
Ian Hurst, East Midland  
Bledwyn Jones, Midland  
Scott Krokoszynski, East Midland  
Mick May, Midland  
Craig Nelson, East Midland  
Nick Nottingham, East Midland  
Lawrence Rawlings, BB&O  
Christopher Richards, BB&O  
John Walshaw, Midland

#### SOUTH EAST REGION

Simon Brown, Sussex  
Edd Bullock, London  
Mark Byron, Essex  
Jamie Goldrick, Surrey  
Andrew Greedy, Surrey  
Andy Hall, London  
Trevor Hammond, East Anglia

Ian Hughes, Kent  
Andrew Jeakings, East Anglia  
Patrick Johnson, London  
Matthew Mansfield, Sussex  
Freddie Murray, London  
Wayne Thrower, East Anglia

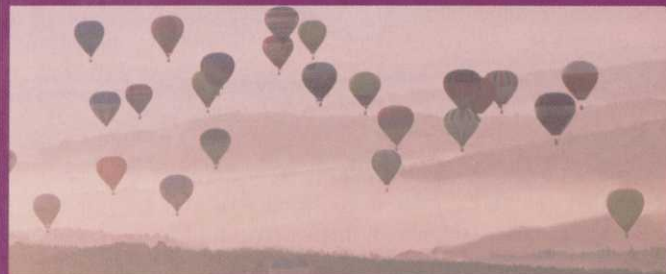
#### SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

George Cooper, South Coast  
John Cox, South West  
Abi Crosswood Devon & Cornwall  
Ramsden Daniel, South Coast  
Paul Foot, South Coast  
Rhys Morris, South Wales

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

William Bradley, West Scotland  
John Bragger, Sheffield  
Shaun Chapman, Sheffield  
Charles Johnson, West Scotland  
Geoffrey Mawer, East Midland  
William Myers, USA  
Peter Phillips, London

# WIN A CHAMPAGNE BALLOON FLIGHT



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 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.

## OCTOBER'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 Michael Frappell from Lamerwood Golf Club.

# Course Feature

## More than just a Golf Club

**Reigning BIGGA Golf Environment Competition winners, Kenwick Park, is much more than 18 holes of golf as Scott MacCallum found out.**

Members of Kenwick Park Golf Club, in Louth, Lincolnshire, have options not always available to those at other golf clubs.

They can stick the clubs in the back of the car and hook up with a few fellow members for a friendly fourball or leave the clubs in the garage whip out the walking shoes and binoculars and spend a few hours strolling along the club's nature trail or watching wildlife from one of the two hides within the confines of the club.

Kenwick Park is more than just a golf club and it was this fact that was recognised by the judges in the R&A supported BIGGA Golf Environment Competition sponsored by Scotts, Symbio and now WRAP, when they voted the club the 2003 National winner.

The success came following a concerted campaign over the last five years which had seen the club winning runners-up awards and regularly being mentioned in dispatches by the judges and also becoming the second English club, behind the De Vere Belfry, to attain Committed to Green status.

"It meant a lot to an awful lot of people," said Ian Shepherd, Chairman of the club's Environment Panel.

"Clearly not every member is interested but the level of enthusiasm within members and staff really made it all worthwhile and generated a lot of excitement. As a result the work of the Environment Panel has received a lot of support."

The Panel had been the brainchild of club Secretary, Paddy Shillington, who had experience of moorland and heather management from a previous role. He passed the Chairmanship of the Panel over to Ian after being advised by the taxman that people who work for the club shouldn't be involved in the actual management of it.

"When Ian took over and was able to formalise what we had been doing and apply his considerable skills to it, it really took off," said Paddy.

He is equally sure that it was the club's overall involvement and interest in the environment, as well as their previous track record in the competition, which led Kenwick Park to winning a competition for which the roll of honour carries some prestigious names – Hankley Common, Lindrick, Temple, The Dyke, Broadstone and Ipswich.

"Every year we've moved forward and each time the judges have returned we've done what has been asked of us



and what we promised we would do. If they hadn't given it to us it would have been a travesty of justice," he laughed.

And perhaps it would have been, as a look at what has been carried out at Kenwick, a club which as only formed in 1992, shows the height at which the bar has been set for future winners.

The catalyst for all the good work was indeed the Environment Panel which, in addition to Ian, comprises an ornithologist; an expert on butterflies and moths; a botanist; a bat expert and two foresters, as well as, in a non-voting capacity, Course Manager, Geoff Henderson, who was a farm manager at the Kenwick Estate before becoming involved with the golf course when it was under construction.

"We started with two principals. The first being that the golf must come first as, if we didn't have a golf course the Panel wouldn't exist to do the work. Secondly, the activities of the Panel mustn't be seen as a drain on the club's resources. We didn't want members to feel that their subscription money was being used for something that perhaps they weren't interested in," explained Ian.

With that in mind the first objective was to raise some funds and this was done initially with a successful quiz night run in the clubhouse. Since then there has been regular golf events including night golf with luminous equipment and a barbecue while there is now two regular Environment Panel events on the calendar - a Texas Scramble and barbecue over a spring Bank Holiday and a Fur and Feathers Stableford competition in the first weekend in December with vouchers for a local farm shop as prizes.

"With an income you can then get more funding by applying for grants and we've been successful in our applications for money for wild flower planting, hedgerow planting, planting reeds, and constructing an island. We're also hoping to be successful in gaining grant aid for our major composting project," said Ian.

Paddy is quick to praise Ian for his ability to secure additional funding.

"This is where Ian is brilliant. It is all in the application and locating the potential grants because all the people with the funding want to do is spend it on something which can't be criticised. It's a great opportunity for golf," said Paddy.

Ian reinforced the view adding that the funding bodies usually have an objective in mind which must be satisfied.

"For example our wildflower project was alongside the public footpath because it had to have a public amenity element to it," said Ian, who did say that Kenwick's position in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty helped when it came to attracting grant aid.

When the club began down the environmental path the first job was to audit the flora and fauna already on site and since then they have introduced a card system which means that if any member sees anything he or she feels might be of environmental interest it can be logged.

"That way we've got a record year-on-year of the species which are thriving or which might be distressed. Our ornithologist also gives us a quarterly report on what he's seen and his view on how things are progressing. We use the information to assess whether our habitat management is making a positive impact," explained Ian, who added that the club database currently contains well over 1200 different species of flora and fauna with the biggest increase coming on the moth record as a result of the moth expert using his moth trap to collect and identify more varieties.

"We've also had help from Bob Taylor, of the STRI, in identifying fungi found on the course."

The club also boasts three extremely fine black swans and while they are, in themselves, quite splendid they also have a more practical benefit to the golf course.





The Kenwick Park team.



Geoff Henderson, Ian Shepherd and Paddy Shillington.

"They were donated by the Club Chairman and as they are particularly territorial they have been extremely beneficial in keeping away Canada geese and coots which had been making a mess of our fairways," said Ian.

The club's environmental work spreads further than merely the golf course with the clubhouse and surrounds also coming under the Environmental Panel's spotlight.

"We've got bottle banks and recycle newspapers while we also have low energy light bulbs throughout the clubhouse and signs on all the light switches telling people to switch off when not required.

The man responsible for co-ordinating the environmental work with that of the regular course maintenance is Geoff, who has a team of six to manage the 200 acre site which contains areas of woodland, parkland, grassland and lakeland.

"It is a very diverse variety of areas we've got to maintain," agreed Geoff, who is proud of the club's reputation as having one of the finest courses in the area and one which can provide a test for all levels of golfer from the holiday golfer to the category one player and PGA pro.

"We clear areas within the trees to keep the golfers happy and cut the long rough on a regular basis while the areas not regarded as in play are maintained with a view to protecting and encouraging wildlife. We also have a lot of lake banks and dykes to maintain," said Geoff, adding that virtually every project is carried out in-house.

The most recent member of the greenkeeping team was employed because the new composting project requires extra labour – there are sacks placed strategically around the course for the dumping of clippings which will hopefully be replaced with bins which can be accessed by machinery rather than emptied by hand.

It is envisaged that the compost produced in the scheme will be put back onto the course, thus reducing the amount of fertiliser required.

"The environmental element has added a certain amount to the workload but it means we have also altered some of the ways we've done things as opposed to making extra work. For instance there are some areas we haven't cut back as much as we have in the past and some areas we've cut differently to encourage different types of wildlife.

"You do get a 'feel good' factor from the work and it is a super place to work in any case," said Geoff, who added that his team enjoyed on-going education through Myerscough College and locally sourced training courses.

Paddy is quick to point out that having such a comparatively young golf course creates a lot more work that would normally be found on one which is more mature.



The reservoir



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"In the time I've been here we've built 11 tees; altered 11 fairways; built a reservoir and added to the clubhouse. We're not standing still on any front and we always feel we are better this year than last year and better last year than the year before in terms of presentation and definition of the course. We're not there yet, but we're not far off."

The prize for winning the Environment Competition was £2000 and a weather station which has proven to be a big hit with the club not least in its ability to predict disease.

"On one occasion we had a prediction that conditions were absolutely right for fusarium and within three or four days we had it, but we had been able to put preventative measures in place," said Geoff.

The money has been put away towards the cost of a composting machine together with that won at the local Lincolnshire Environmental Awards which were chaired by the botanist David Belamy.

"He made a few comments at the presentation and was really singing the praises of golf and golf courses. He thought, and has thought for sometime, that they are wonderful places for wildlife," said Ian.

Ian is also quick to point out how successful the Environmental Panel has been in influencing some of the club's decision making,

"The reservoir project, at around £24,000 is the biggest the club has undertaken since it opened, and was done with a long term aim of guarding the club against water shortages in the future as well as the obvious short term benefits.

"The Panel contributed around £1500 to the project and also planted the hedgerow behind it to finish it off. The original design was the most economical way of storing water and was a rectangular shape but because of advice we'd received we were able to influence the design to incorporate attractive bays and a shallow area designed to encourage bird life."

That has proven to be so successful that one of the two hides owned by the club is about to be erected overlooking the reservoir. The other hide is deep in the natural trail and displays the evidence of one of the more mischievous of species.

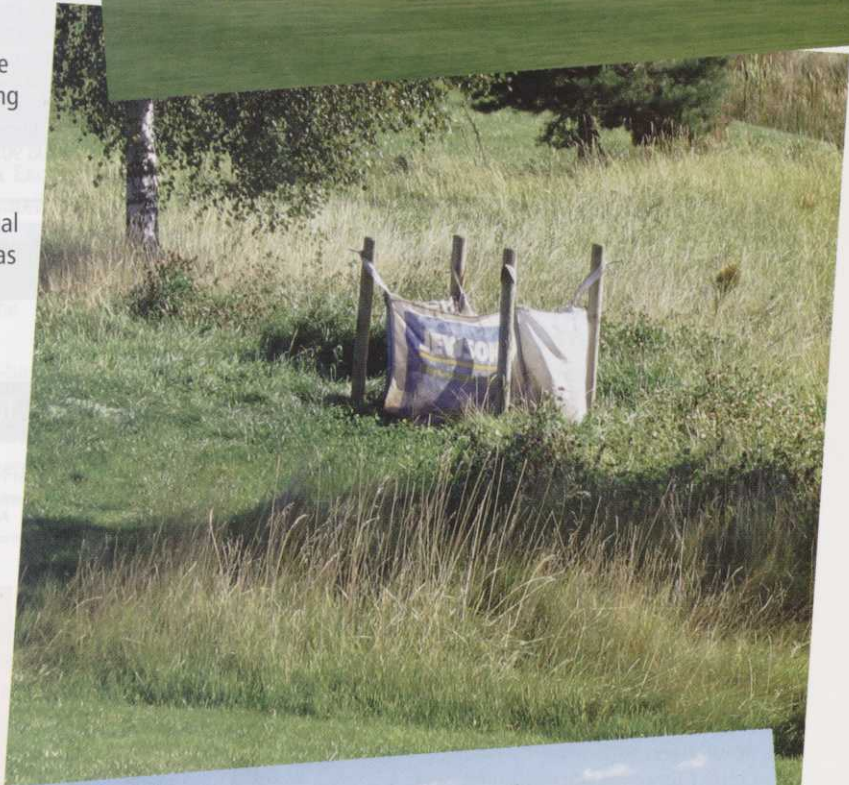
"Squirrels have damaged the door to allow them access and then gnawed their way through the plastic bins in which we stored the bird food. We've had to move it to a metal container," revealed Geoff.

Overall the environmental work has added a great deal to Kenwick Park Golf Club.

"People who may not be the greatest golfers but are perhaps experts in other fields can contribute and they feel that the club is as much theirs as the low handicappers. I know of one chap who comes up nearly every week and wanders around in the evenings. He really enjoys it and gets value out of his membership," said Paddy.

So what would he say to other clubs thinking about perhaps entering the competition?

"It's the best way of getting free advice you could ever have. There is so much benefit in the early days from the judges visit and even if you don't win you still get so much out of it," said Paddy, who can't wait until the three year non-entry period imposed on winners is over so the club can have another go.



## Training

### Tutorial Five

#### Management of training needs

Golf clubs often fail to plan properly and manage their training needs. Good training will lead to improved awareness of the hazards of working and operating in a golf club environment.

The golf club must ensure it has in place a simple to use training needs matrix that clearly identifies all of the personnel in the organisation, their roles and their existing qualifications.

The training needs should have dates put on it and be able to demonstrate the training has been completed. The Greenkeepers Training Committee provide a very useful guide for greenstaff. The training needs matrix should be kept up to date at all times and ultimately be controlled in the club's health and safety management system.

#### Training Requirements

The training courses the clubs should have completed are as follows and a brief description follows;

General Health and Safety Management, First-Aid, Fire Fighting, Manual Handling, COSHH, Pesticide Spraying, Chain Saws, Welding, Hygiene.

#### General Health and Safety management

All Head Greenkeepers should have a knowledge of the current UK and EU Health and Safety laws and how these laws relate to golf clubs. The head greenstaff should gain certification in Health and Safety as a good understanding of the laws will allow much better implementation.

It would also be beneficial, once the Head Greenkeeper has gained this training, to systematically pass his knowledge on to all staff.

#### First-Aid

It is essential as a minimum that the Head Greenkeeper is First-Aid trained by a recognised industry training board such as St John's ambulance or equivalent.

The first-aid training should also be given to a deputy and other members of the club staff such as the Club Manager and, in some cases, the club steward. The important aspect is to ensure that full training is obtained and kept up to date.

#### Fire Fighting

Fire fighting training is essential for greenstaff to aid in the understanding of fire causes and also to enable them, should a fire start, to understand the correct method of controlling the fire. Fire fighting training can be carried out by the club's contract maintenance company. The Head Greenkeeper and all greenstaff should be fire fighting trained and so should the key members of the clubs' staff.

#### Manual Handling

This training is often overlooked by club management and is essential to ensure members of the club staff do not get back and body injuries from poor lifting techniques.

The manual handling courses would cover lifting methods, risk assessments and useful mechanical devices to assist in hazardous tasks. It is essential again that the Head Greenkeeper receives this training and also the bar steward and key members of the catering staff.

#### Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Handling of chemicals is a hazardous activity and must be understood properly and controlled. COSHH is about ensuring that the greenstaff and club staff controls the use of hazardous chemicals. COSHH training courses would allow greenstaff to better understand the fundamentals of a COSHH system and ensure that in the future chemical's do not present a risk.

#### Summary

Training at golf clubs plays a major part in the understanding and management of good Health and Safety and Haztek International will be happy to advise on the club's training needs and prepare the training needs matrix. Please contact Jerrard Winter on 0208 905 7552 email: info@safegolf.co.uk

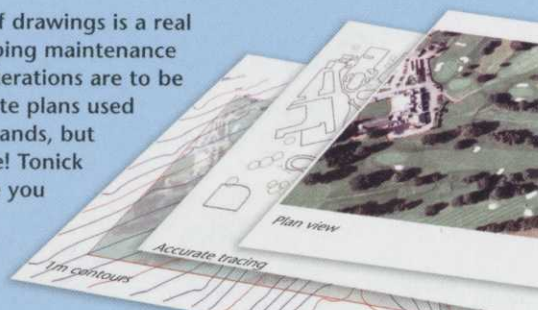
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
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# Ten Point Plan to Top Dressing

Ian McClements, STRI Turfgrass agronomist for Ireland, highlights the ten important points to consider before starting top dressing.

Many head greenkeepers and course superintendents have seen and realised the benefits of a greens top dressing programme, using sandy materials to improve the quality of the rootzone both from a drainage and growing environment perspective.

A story is often told of Old Tom Morris when asked what made his greens so good, he would reply "sand, more sand and the Sabbath".

Old Tom Morris was blessed with good drainage on a links site but many courses since have been built on less than ideal land.



▲ Excessive thatch accumulations can contribute to persistent waterlogging on fairways.

Today some clubs have even used this top dressing strategy to create a "USGA rootzone" above their existing sub-bases rather than endure the costly and disruptive processes of reconstruction.

Indeed it would not be unrealistic to suggest that many older clay-based greens have been transformed through such practices and now support year-round play, a policy that would have been unthinkable in the not so distant past. Success has only been possible when suitable materials have been used with sufficient frequency - and, of course, complemented by other management treatments, particularly aeration.

The evidence to date indicates that suitable green top dressing programmes have generally been beneficial. It may be that sand top dressings could be of value in improving the intrinsic drainage characteristics of some of the poorer soils/sites to improve year-round playability, after all sand has been used as a tonic for wet conditions for centuries. Some of the high profile clubs, with the resources to match, have been top dressing fairways for a number of years now with good results. Right?

However, before committing considerable resources to an extensive programme, consider the following ten point plan. Hopefully this might help you decide if such a strategy is likely to be beneficial or, more importantly, help you decide where best to direct resources to achieve the most cost-effective solution to your problems.

## Soil Type

Perhaps the most obvious assessment to make, but one that is nearly always overlooked. Some courses may be blessed with soils that possess good intrinsic drainage characteristics or are to be found over free draining sub-strata such as gravel or fractured limestone.

Finer textured soils, particularly silts and clays, will have drainage rates that are poorer than coarser textured sands or sandy loams. The

classification of the soils can either be completed in situ on the basis of a hand textural analysis or by sending representative samples to a soil-testing laboratory for a mechanical analysis. Soil types can vary significantly across a golf course and even within a single fairway.

The mechanical analysis will give some useful information as to how the soil may perform, but it is also important to evaluate the structure of the soil as well as its texture. A top dressing programme is not primarily concerned with the modification of soil texture to depth although changes will occur at the immediate surface as the sand becomes integrated with the soil.

## Compaction and Traffic

Good structure relies upon having a satisfactory blend of aggregates or crumbs as well as macro pores to allow water to move freely through the soil profile. Loamy soils tend to form good structure relatively easily, having a satisfactory range of both large and small pores.

A small test hole excavated to a depth of 300-450 mm will provide some useful information on the degree of compaction, structure and intrinsic drainage characteristics of the soil.

Soil that is easily dug is less compacted, will tend to be better structured and, as a consequence, show better drainage characteristics. Hard, compacted, fine soils will invariably have poor structure.

Under traffic and particularly in wet conditions, soils are easily compressed and destructured. These compactive forces lead to a reduction in natural drainage and poorer growth.

Soils that appear consolidated but which are easily broken up and loosened will respond very well to mechanical aeration treatments, particularly Verti-Draining. The timing of the Verti-Draining operation is however crucial to success.

Thereafter, top dressing certain soils with sand can help to form a

protective layer over the indigenous material, thus helping to reduce the direct effects of compaction on the underlying soil.

## Topography and Contours

Contouring determines how surface water will travel across the ground. On fairway turf, a greater fall is usually required to effect satisfactory water movement in comparison to close mown greens turf.

It is always useful to evaluate your problem fairways in the wettest of conditions. How much rainfall impacts directly upon the surface and how much additional water is collected from other areas of the course? It is not uncommon to find one low-lying fairway that is responsible for the collection of water from three or four higher fairways and roughs.

Mounding between fairways can deflect water and could be advantageous but equally could increase water flow and movement across localised sections of the site.

Catchwater drainage can be crucial in reducing the quantities of water that can impact upon an area below mounds or higher ground and should be used where practical. The least expensive option is to construct shallow swales to deflect surface water to less obtrusive sections of the course.

Contouring can be used to good advantage but flat sites are heavily dependent upon good internal drainage to move surface water quickly in to the soil and on to depth.

## Existing Drainage

Many drainage systems are installed and expected to last indefinitely, yet the longevity and performance of a pipe drainage system is strongly influenced by the quality of construction. Poor drainage can arise from the failure of such systems.

Outlets, particularly open ditches, must be checked regularly and kept clear of debris and silt. Water backing up a ditch line will hinder water movement from adjacent ground, particularly if significant ground is drained to the ditch!

Old stone drains still form the backbone of many drainage systems on old courses today but these can collapse leading to localised problems. Dealing with such sub-surface problems in an appropriate manner will be a priority.

Top dressing in areas with a high winter water table will have little positive impact on drainage but could be a useful mechanism to assist surface water movement to a functional underlying drainage system. The regular maintenance of slit drainage systems will necessitate the frequent application of sand, particularly during installation and in the early years of establishment.

## Environmental Conditions

Many of the poorer draining soils in the British Isles tend to be in the wettest parts of the west. The adjacent graph illustrates the changes that have occurred in our weather patterns over the past 10 years when compared with a 30 year mean. It is apparent that there is a trend towards wetter autumns!

The climate may be getting wetter but small microclimatic conditions on courses may influence fairway performance. South-facing slopes tend to be warmer and will lose more moisture through evapotranspiration.

Trees close to fine turf areas are never a good idea but how can they influence fairway performance? Reduced air movement will lessen the opportunities for drying and shade will again affect evapotranspiration rates. In my experience, I have yet to find a tree-planting scheme that has improved drainage, the converse is often true, particularly regarding alders, willows and poplars.

# Ten Point Plan to Top Dressing



▲ Old fairway drains may need replacing with more appropriate and effective modern drainage systems.

## Thatch

Fairways, like all turf areas, have the potential to produce thatch. Whether it arises through excessive growth production or inadequate decomposition due to low soil pH and depressed microbial activity, it is a real phenomenon that would appear to be an increasing concern on many courses.

A scarification programme will help to physically remove accumulations of organic matter thus enabling water to penetrate to the underlying soil more freely. Modern tractor-mounted scarifiers can impact on a significant surface area. Only scarify when there is active grass growth to promote recovery and be prepared to lift or sweep up the debris.

Such a programme is best combined with an appropriate schedule of aeration work to encourage better water penetration and thatch decomposition. Only when the thatch levels are satisfactory should you consider top dressing. Burying thatch under a sand layer will do little to improve playing conditions in the long term.

