



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

Unlock the doors to progress through BIGGA's Education and Development Fund - the key to a great future for greenkeepers, golf clubs and the game of golf.

Golden and Silver Key Membership is available to both companies and individuals.

For details, please contact Ken Richardson on 01347 833800 or via ken@bigga.co.uk

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Education Update

Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager, provides an update on the 2006 Continue to Learn Programme and Regional and Section Training.

This month has seen the final preparations of the Continue to Learn Programme that will be part of Harrogate Week 2006. Thanks to the support of the GTC and to the introduction of the new Queen's Suite facility, we have been able to offer an extremely varied, extensive education programme for January 2006. The programme of events commences on Sunday January 22 with five two day workshops that conclude on Monday January 23. Monday also sees the start of five one day workshops.



The BTME & ClubHouse Exhibition starts on Tuesday January 24 with the opening ceremony closely followed by the presentation of BIGGA Awards and the Keynote Speaker, Colonel John Blashford-Snell. Something new for Harrogate is the half day workshops, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, that begin on Tuesday afternoon, alongside the Seminar Programme. Another new event happens on the Wednesday of Harrogate Week when the English Golf Union, the Association of Golf Club Secretaries and BIGGA work together to present a full day of seminars aimed at all golf club secretaries/managers, golf club officials and golf greenkeepers. There are two forums planned for Harrogate, i.e. a Women's Forum and a Student Forum.

The ever popular Careers Fair will return on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to help you find that next job. Another first for Harrogate is the 'Big Debate' that will run on Thursday afternoon and Friday Morning. Presented jointly by BIGGA and the R&A, the 2006 Debate will concentrate on Sustainable Golf Course Management.

The Continue to Learn education programme for Harrogate Week 2006 offers more educational opportunities for more people than ever before. The last Continue to Learn offered delegates approximately 57 hours of education whereas Continue to Learn 2006 will offer more than 120 hours. Watch out for your Harrogate Week programme that will be enclosed in the October edition of Greenkeeper International.

REGIONAL & SECTION TRAINING

Following a decision by the BIGGA Board of Management to transfer funds to top up the Education and Development Fund, we can, once again, offer a full range of subsidised Regional and Section Training Courses. Full details have been sent to all Regional Administrators and Section Secretaries. So now is the time to contact them to request training in your part of the world.

Briefly, all two day management courses will cost £110 + VAT (£129.25), all one day courses will cost £60 + VAT (£70.50). The cost of two day technical courses will depend on the number of delegates. Each two day course is subsidised by a minimum of £600 and each one day course by a minimum of £300.

If you want to organise a course or a number of courses in your Region or Section, contact your Regional Administrator, Section Secretary or BIGGA HQ. It would help us to help you if you had thought about the type of course and when you want the training to take place. A location for the training is useful as is a list of names of those wanting to attend.

Supervisory Management Training for Golf Course Managers

A course accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management and designed specifically for Golf Course Managers will be held at Exeter Rugby Club during late October and November this year.

If you live in the South West and want to gain a nationally recognised management training certificate then this course is for you.

There are four sessions:

- October 25 2005
Leadership and Team Building
 - November 1 2005
Motivation and Using Information to Make Decisions
 - November 8 2005
Delivering Quality and Giving and Receiving Feedback
 - November 22 2005
Problem Solving Skills and Planning Change
- Cost for the whole course (i.e. 4 days) is £450 +VAT.

Contact Paul Stanton at Direction Training and Management, 11 Lynher Street, Plymouth, PL5 1QD, 01752 360004 or visit www.training-management.co.uk.

EXHIBITION 24 - 26 January 2006
EDUCATION 22 - 27 January 2006

Complying with Legislation

Do you often think that the UK and EU legislation covering Health and Safety, protecting the environment and employing personnel is very hard to keep up with? Recently, EU Regulations have imposed onerous legislative practices on many companies and golf clubs.

To ensure that legislation is not overlooked or not complied with we recommend that you consider setting up a system that clearly and simply manages complying with the law. At present there are 18 pieces of identifiable legislation applicable to running a golf club. Each and every piece of legislation should be complied with and a clear audit trail available.

Our recommendation to golf clubs is to take a little time to do the following:

- Identify the 18 pieces of legislation.
- Cross check at your club which legislation you know you are fully complying with and tick this off the list. Identify the gaps.
- Once the gaps are identified formulate a 'simple plan' with dates and action parties to comply with the legislation.

- Ensure this plan is published to all departments which should include Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager, Catering, Bar Stewards, Club Committee, sub committees, professional etc. Ensure all departments accept the plan and enrol onto it.
- Close out the plan by producing the key documents and requirements of the legislation and review this regularly to ensure no new legislation has been published.

In the event of an unfortunate accident it is imperative to show that the club fully complied with all aspects of the current law. Unfortunately, from experience we estimate that only 60% of UK clubs can demonstrate this. Don't let it be yours that gets prosecuted as the penalties can included prison.

Jerard Winter is Senior Health and Safety Advisor at Haztek International and can be contacted on 0208 905 7552 or email: Jerrard@haztekinternational.com.

Quick Guide To Paternity Pay

SPP is paid to employees whose wife or partner is expecting a baby.

HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR STATUTORY PATERNITY PAY (SPP)?

To qualify for SPP you must:

- Be the biological father of the child.
- The mother's spouse or partner.
- Have been employed by the same employer for at least 26 weeks up to and including the 15th week before the baby's due (ie when the mother is 25 weeks pregnant).
- Average weekly earnings must be at least equal to the lower earnings limit for National Insurance purposes (£82 a week from April 2005).

HOW LONG CAN I HAVE OFF WORK AND WHEN?

You can choose to take either one or two consecutive weeks (not odd days). Leave can also start on any day of the week. You can also choose to start leave:

- From the date of the child's birth.
- From a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the birth, it must, however, be completed within 56 days of the birth.
- From a chosen date later than the first day of the week in which the baby is expected to be born.
- If the baby is early leave must be completed 56 days after the first day of the expected week of birth.

HOW MUCH MONEY WILL I GET?

The rate of SPP is £106 a week (from April 2005) or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £106.

TELLING YOUR EMPLOYER

You must inform your employer that you intend to take SPP by the end of the 15th week before the baby is expected (ie by the end of the 25th week of pregnancy) unless this is not reasonably practical. You must tell your employer:

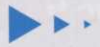
- The week the baby is due.
- Whether you wish to take one or two weeks leave.
- When you want leave to start (You can change your mind on the date you wish to commence leave but you must give your employer 28 days notice unless this is not reasonably practical)

You must give your employer a self-certificate as evidence of your entitlement to SPP.

This information should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. For further information go to the department of work and pensions website www.dwp.gov.uk.

Rachael and Gemma would like to welcome 49 new members to the Association and remind you to take advantage of your benefits.

Membership Update



Discounted Nights Out with your Privilege Card!



With the evenings starting to draw in why not take advantage of your benefit package and treat the family to a night out at Megabowl or catch a film at a Vue Cinema. Your silver privilege card entitles you to discounted tickets at Vue from Monday to Thursday and you can buy one game and get one game free at any Megabowl. This offer is available any time and is for up to six people.

If nights in are more your thing then Dominos Pizza offer 30% off collected pizzas on production of your privilege card. You can also buy discounted DVD's and CD's at powerplaydirect.com if you access the website through www.discountpages.co.uk.

Cosy Nights in with your BIGGA Library Book!

The BIGGA lending library is available to all members and stocks over 800 titles. The library has also recently benefited from several donations. You can borrow up to two titles from the library at any one time for a period of six weeks. The only cost is the return postage of the books. You can find the full list of books available in the members area of our website www.bigga.org.uk. Make your selection and email brad@bigga.co.uk, who will post the books out to you. Alternatively call 01347 833800 and ask for Brad.

WIN

A WEEKEND SURVIVAL COURSE FOR TWO

Spend a weekend existing on what nature has provided. Build your own shelter and spend the night under it, learn about edible plants, survival medicine, fire lighting and navigation. The course runs from Friday through to Sunday, are you man enough to last the weekend?

To enter all you have to do is introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA. Make sure your name goes on their application form as the person who referred them and we will enter your name into the draw. Remember the more new members you refer the more chances you have to win! The draw will take place on October 1 and the winner will be announced in the November magazine.

Call either Rachael and Gemma today for a new member application form.

Days Out with your Section

Have you lost your section fixture list? Why not visit the BIGGA website and look under the news and events section. You will find a comprehensive list of all that's happening in your area. If you do not have access to the website then read your section notes to the back of this magazine for news of the latest golf days and seminars going on around you.

BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

Philip Dick, Ayrshire
Mark Grace, West
David Kelly, East
William Kelly, West
John Macintyre, West
Kurt Mackintosh, Central
Robert McIerle, West
Andrew Paterson, West
Gordon Sangster, West
Stephen Sheehan, West

NORTHERN REGION

Robert Bancroft, Sheffield
Ian Cropper, North West
David Cunningham, Northern
Leslie Gower, North Wales
John Horan, Sheffield

Richard Hugue, Sheffield
Jake Jervis, Sheffield
Andrew Lavender, Sheffield
Gary Parsons, Sheffield
Anthony Sharp, Northern
Paul Spires, Sheffield

MIDLAND REGION

Andy Bailey, East of England
Lee Driver, BB&O
Paul Dunstan, Midland
Garreth Ferris, BB&O
Graeme Glen, BB&O
David Herring, Mid Anglia
Steven Mapes, Midland
Keith Smith, East Midland

SOUTH EAST REGION

Simon Glover, Surrey
Ben Goodyear, Surrey
Graham Hudson, Kent
Chris Mallion, Kent
Lachlan Morrison, London
Tom Parker, East Anglia
Cameren Porter, Surrey
Jamie Reeves, Surrey
David Willis, Surrey

SOUTH WEST/WALES

John Elsbury, South Coast

NORTHERN IRELAND

Anthony Corrigan
Christopher Smith
Rodger Warrin

OVERSEAS MEMBERS

Per-Ove Lysvold, Norway

CORPORATE MEMBERS

David Maas, USA
Kim Maas, USA

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Nicolas Leuty, Sheffield
Neville Tomblin, London

STUDENT MEMBERS

James Telfer, Kent
Craig Finnegan, Northern

SEPTEMBER'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 a Digital FM Scan Radio/Alarm. The radio can stand alone or can be clipped onto a belt with headphones for when your on the move. Our congratulations go to John Bowness of Deanwood Park Golf Club.



Going Automatic

If you're a greenkeeper, superintendent or owner looking for ways to improve the efficiency of your irrigation system, ask yourself if the key to efficiency is right at your fingertips - literally!

*Continue
to learn*

Start your search for enhanced efficiency at the control board or PC keyboard you use to control your irrigation. If it's been more than two to four years since your irrigation control system was installed in new construction, or updated, it's likely you could update your control system and enjoy significant and measurable improvement in your irrigation efficiency.

New control system technology minimises consumption of resources such as water and electricity, and it optimises the look and playability of your course. So stop drumming your fingers on that keyboard and start crunching some numbers.

NO CONTROL SYSTEM?

Let's begin by considering the different types of control systems in use. They include: no irrigation control system, manual controls, stand alone satellite controllers and central satellites/decoders control systems. The last two types are considered automatic irrigation systems, and we will focus on these.

You may ask how a golf course can have no control system at all? One way is for the course to have no irrigation system. This is most common on courses in northern climates, many of which are designed in the 'Traditional' or 'Old School' manner. Nature, not irrigation, is typically relied upon to provide 100 per cent of the water the golf course receives. Can such a course be 'improved' with an irrigation system? It depends on your definition of improvement, but consider this example of how the industry is changing - a full irrigation system has been installed in recent years on the 99 holes (five 1/2 golf courses) at St. Andrews Links in Scotland.

Management at the 'Birthplace of Golf' decided to supplement rainfall to maintain consistency. This decision was probably the result of the pressure for play (high player traffic) that these prestigious courses receive and the heightened expectations of today's golfers.

MANUAL SYSTEM CONTROLS

Manual systems typically have no automatic controls. Such a system might consist of a series of quick coupler valves and the quick coupler key and sprinklers are moved around the course until watering is complete. Or it might be a series of sprinklers that are installed with manually operated valves so they can be activated as desired. Today's manual systems are usually a combination of both examples, as well as hoses that greenkeepers can drag to areas requiring extra water.

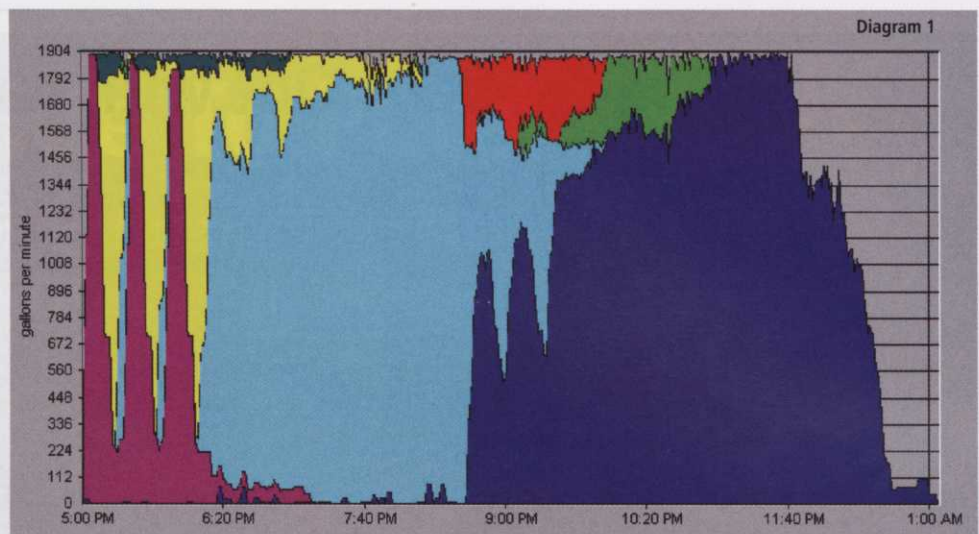
While manually controlled irrigation systems are comparatively inexpensive to install, they offer few other benefits. They can waste precious water (no rain sensors or automatic shut-offs) and put great demands on your staff's time, perhaps even including controlling or moving equipment in the middle of the night. Achieving desired results, appealing appearance and playability, using manual systems demands a significant, ongoing investment in labour. That's expensive, not efficient.

AUTOMATIC CONTROL SYSTEMS

Now let's look at automatic irrigation systems. Earlier, we defined two types of systems - semi automatic and fully automatic.

Semi automatic systems typically have remotely located controllers, in most cases one or more per hole. Sometimes called satellite controllers, they allow the greenkeeper to set up the irrigation schedule for each hole by adjusting zone run times, sequences, start times and active days for watering. By doing so, the greenkeeper can be virtually certain that his watering instructions will be carried out precisely as planned.

Fully automatic systems have a central controller that allows the greenkeeper to adjust when, where and how much water is applied. These automatic systems are more consistent and reliable than a manual system. Sprinkler run times are controllable and can be adjusted as necessary. Most controllers have a percentage adjust so that as the weather gets warmer or cooler and irrigation requirements change, it is fairly simple to make adjustments.

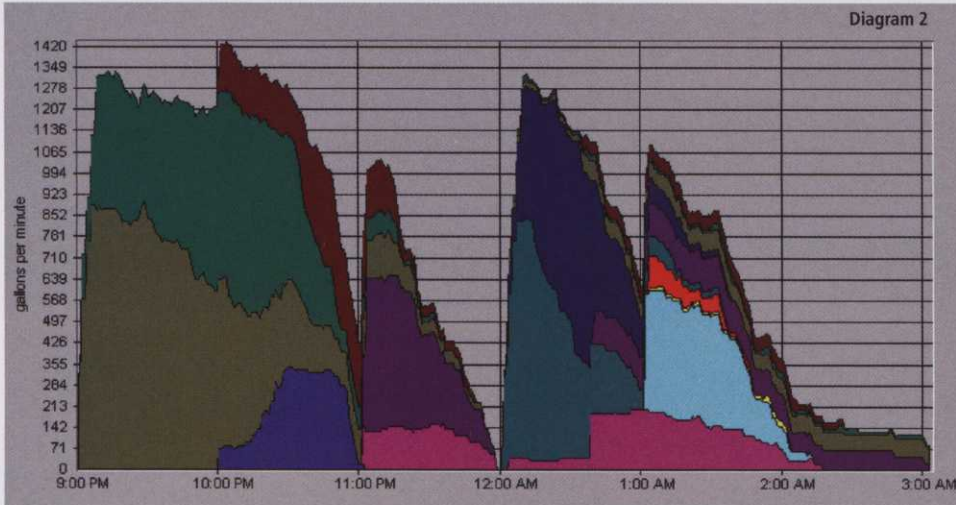


They are less labour-intensive, as usually one or two workers can handle any desired spot watering, maintenance and repairs. This allows the greenkeeper and staff to concentrate on other projects because the time required to manage the irrigation is minimised.

The major difference between a semi and fully automatic system is the cost of a communications cable and a central controller. If the pipe, wire, fittings, pumps, sprinklers and controllers cost the same with each system, a fully automatic system costs approximately five per cent more than a semi automatic one. One look at the benefits and you could agree it's the best five per cent you'll ever spend.

Are there downsides to automatic controls? There are issues to consider, including the potential for lightning damage and considering all the wiring involved in a Fully automatic system. Today, however, surge and lightning protection equipment lessens these concerns significantly. Computer complexity and potential language barriers have also been minimised as today's operating systems are user friendly and available in several languages.

Kenne James discusses the advances in irrigation systems and the benefits of an automatic control system.



AUTOMATIC SYSTEM BENEFITS

A fully automatic system offers the Golf Course Manager and greenkeeper many advantages.

- First, they can make changes in sprinkler run times, start times - in fact, everything that can be changed from the field controller - all from the central controller. This not only saves time driving around the course to make adjustments, but because it's so easy, it can be done daily, not just weekly or monthly, which is commonly when most semi automatic systems are adjusted. This flexibility results in consistently accurate watering daily, which produces further turf benefits and cost savings.
- They provide 'flow-management', which means the central software can schedule each station to run at a precise time and in combination with exactly the other sprinklers necessary to 'maximise' the flow output of the pump station, while ensuring that the flow velocity of water in every pipe in the system is kept at a safe level. These are huge advantages, because a pump station that operates at its designed optimum output through the entire irrigation cycle will be extremely efficient. This alone can result in electricity cost savings of five to 15 per cent to move the same amount of water. This also reduces long term maintenance costs by protecting the pipe network and eliminating pump station 'cycling' (See Diagrams 1 and 2).
- Reporting is enhanced, as the central controller allows the greenkeeper to see what is currently operating, what has already been watered, what is scheduled to run, how much water is scheduled, etc. The greenkeeper also has access to failure or error reports without having to tour the course daily. This data is accurate and updated by the minute. Some courses also choose to employ many of the advanced features available with fully automatic systems, such as radio remote control, weather station input and GIS mapping of the entire golf course (See Diagram 3).

THE BENEFITS OF AN UPGRADE

In a recent survey by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) respondents were asked what industry change in the past 10 years had made the single largest improvement in managing their irrigation system and reduced costs? The top answer, by a large margin, was a computerised central control system.

A central control system is a tool that helps greenkeepers and superintendents perform their jobs more efficiently and effectively, and

it typically frees up time for them and their crews. Automatic control systems are powerful, loaded with features and offer numerous benefits, yet they are rarely utilised to their fullest.

Most greenkeepers use only the tools and features they need and are comfortable with. Surveys have shown that operators utilise only 40 per cent of most systems' capabilities, so it's clear that training and ongoing education will help greenkeepers derive the greatest benefits. This is especially true, as upgraded versions of control system software are typically introduced every two or three years.

Consider upgrading your system to make it more automatic. You may be able to do so without significant construction or excavation. Some older existing systems can even be upgraded to the highest standard with no trenching, so it's worth

asking your irrigation dealer or distributor to assist you in a site analysis. More comprehensive renovations usually produce results that pay for themselves over just a few years and these systems normally remain effective for many years beyond that.

In the search for increased efficiency, it is wise to explore the opportunity of a new or upgraded irrigation control system. Not only do they tend to pay for themselves, they continue to offer savings each time they are used - savings you can use to invest in other course improvement projects.

So which system is right for you? As there is only about a 20 percent difference in cost from the most basic to the most sophisticated control system, the answer might seem clear - the best system available, of course! But the answer actually emerges from a thorough assessment of factors such as your current system, your irrigation needs, budget, climate and so forth.

Worldwide, the trend is clear. Even when considering the many 'developing' countries where new golf courses are being constructed along with the more established and mature markets, over 95 percent of golf courses being worked on today are being upgraded to a fully automated central control system. It's an investment in efficiency.

Kenne James is Senior Marketing Manager - Golf Irrigation, International Business, The Toro Company.





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Course Feature



Colin Robinson

Sweet Harmony

Gareth Jones visits John O'Gaunt Golf Club, which contains two vastly contrasting courses that are kept in harmony by a dedicated Course Manager.

For the keen historians among the readership of Greenkeeper International the name John of Gaunt will be familiar. John of Gaunt, so named after being born in Ghent in 1340, was the third son of King Edward III and took the title of Duke of Lancaster in 1362. The Duke is a powerful figure in history, shaping much of the 14th century. A former adviser to young King Richard II, it was Gaunt who returned from Spain, where he was an Ambassador, to deter the threat of civil war in England.

Unwise decisions on taxation had led to a clash between King Richard II and the Lords Appellant and, with the peasants' revolt just four years earlier, hostilities were high and war was near. It was Gaunt who brought compromise between the two parties, which halted the English going into battle and ensured a period of stability and harmony within the country.

Much the same can be said of Colin Robinson, Course Manager at John O'Gaunt Golf Club, a course so named as the Duke formerly owned the land the course is located on. Colin may not enjoy such a prominence in British history as Gaunt, however if alive today the Duke would surely appreciate the harmony and stability that the greenkeeper has brought between two very differing and demanding golf courses. The John O'Gaunt course, which contains the remains of a moat dug during those uprisings on the 17th, and the Carthagena course maybe split by a single B road, but at times they are worlds apart.

The John O'Gaunt is the club's original course and was opened as a nine hole track in 1948, with the competition of 18 holes occurring in 1950. The par 72, 6513 yard course boasts a superb view when coming up the 18th of the magnificent clubhouse, a converted house that was property of the Burgoyne family, who were gifted the land by Gaunt. Similar to the Gaunt course, Carthagena was opened as nine holes in 1972, before being extended to 18 in 1980. While shorter at 5869 yards, the Carthagena contains larger greens and longer tees than its older sister.



Colin does not divide his team between the two courses

It's not just visually where these two Hawtree & Son designed courses differ, it's also what is underneath the grass that keeps Colin and his 13 man team on its toes. The Carthagena is built on a deep sandy loam that plays a huge role in the course's exceptional drainage. The second course can handle hours of rain, only to be playable hours later, a feat that continues to amaze Colin.

"I have to confess that it bamboozled me when I first started here. One night it really came down heavily, once I got to the course in the morning I went out and as expected puddles were all over both courses, they were soaked though. My previous experiences told me that the course was not playable and I went and told the Secretary that I had to close both courses for the day. He looked surprised that I was shutting the Carthagena but respected my decision. I then went out a few hours later and the water logging had disappeared from the Carthagena and it was ready for action. I couldn't believe how quickly the water had been drained, it's incredible," said a smiling Colin as he recalled that day.

The course was built, purely by coincident, using materials so close to the 2004 USGA Guidelines, that you could be forgiven for thinking that the club transported a USGA Agronomist from the future to oversee the original developments. The sandy base is almost as good as the material that the majority of clubs would have to bring in during the construction process. These elements play the major role in keeping this par 69 open for the majority of the winter months.

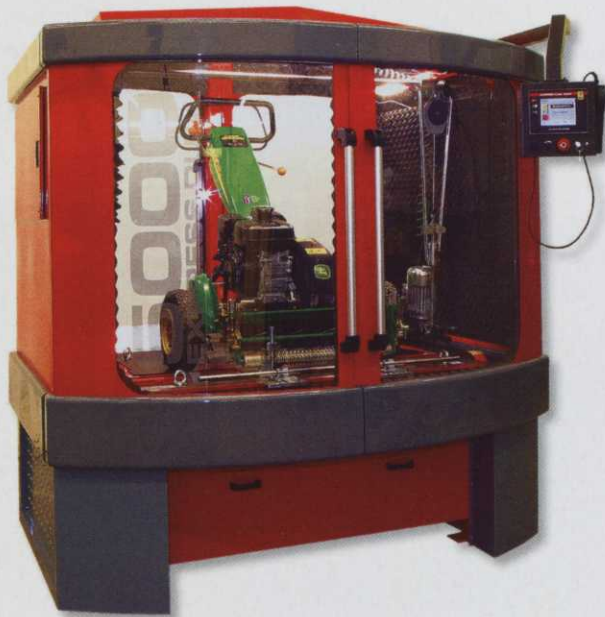
However, while the thought of Colin having a course with natural drainage so good that it copes easily with Britain's typically terrible winter weather and thus helps him avoid an ear bashing from the membership may leave many a Course Manager green with envy, this does have its problematic draw backs come a dry period.



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Course Feature

"The drainage is so good that it means if we get one dry week the course dries out completely and then you have trouble. As well as the obvious problems, we really struggle with our bunker edges. We rely on a nice grass cover around the bunker edges to keep it maintained and in a healthy state, but if it stays dry the moisture is sucked out of the ground, the grass dies and the edges start to crumble," stated the Headman, who with his team dedicated a large part of the winter programme to rebuilding these edges.

This leads to Colin's biggest headache at John O'Gaunt - irrigation. Both courses only have irrigation boxes located on their tees and greens and, while the greenkeeper has widened the irrigation arcs in recent years in an attempt to encompass fairways, it's a problem that doesn't have a straight forward answer.



Colin has widened his irrigation arcs to encompass more of the area around the greens

"The irrigation issue at the club has dominated the agenda for a long while now and I think that will continue to be the case as the summers become hotter and drier, especially in this area of the country. 20 years ago scientists started to talk about global warming and its effects, we probably all thought that it wouldn't happen, but in just two decades you can see that it has happened very quickly. 20 years is not a long time period and no doubt this will lead to more questions regarding the use of water on golf courses."

Those questions are already being asked close to home. Cranfield University, which is situated just 20 minutes down the road from John O'Gaunt, is currently undertaking Government research into water management. Colin gained a MSC in Sports Surface Technology from the same university in 2004 and was asked to take part in the study.

"I completed a survey which was basically asking about mains and irrigation water and how and if I could use a lesser percent on the courses. You can see the view that water needs to be saved and that throwing it on grass is a massive waste. In the near future I think it will become an issue of us losing what we have now. There is pressure on the Environment Agency and the water companies, so restrictions will come into place, certainly on mains water."

It's a factor that Colin is looking to tackle head on. He has been looking for alternatives from using mains water for the majority of his 11 years at the club for both the health of the environment and his course and he believes he has one solution. An exhausted quarry a stone's throw away from the club would make an ideal site for a reservoir, with winter extraction from the stream that dissects the John O'Gaunt course providing enough water to cope in the dry summer months. However this has led to an age old obstacle - the word golf has bumped up the price of the unused land.



The splendid view walking up the 18th on the John O'Gaunt course

"It is just too expensive for us at the moment. It is frustrating because the land is just sitting there and would be great for us. With the ground being pure sand all we would need to do is install a liner and there you have it. Getting a winter extraction would safe guard our water supplies and we would be able to look after the courses all year round. The club know how important it is, they are very good like that, and they will eventually go down this route one way or another, we'll find alternatives if the price on this piece of land doesn't come down to a reasonable level.

"It just kills me. The whole team works so hard during the year to get the course playing well and looking nice and then to see it drying up and cracking really hurts. It is a real shame and I know a lot of other clubs will probably share our pain," admitted Colin, who knows the course provides a good service when there is enough moisture in the ground.

Here is where Colin shows the traits familiar to that of John O'Gaunt himself. While coping with the Carthagena's dehydrating problems he is tackling the John O'Gaunt course's wet dilemmas. The top of the original course boasts the same type of quality, quick draining sand as its sister, but the bottom half of the track has different characteristics. The lower end contains a heavier, solid, peatier base, which leads to more quandaries for the Head man.

"When you get wet and warm conditions down there it becomes a real grass factory. The ground is fertile so you don't get good quality playing conditions out of it. I've knocked fertilising on the head and the quality is better now, although it still grows very fast and very green indeed. It is controlled at least now.

"The golfers think it is great as it is really green but as a purist I know it isn't. It isn't all fescue and bent, there is lots of meadow grass. Lots of water loving plants are down that end, so when it is dry they turn their toes up pretty quickly," commented the greenkeeper.

The water table does have a tendency to creep up in that area. The 13th runs along side the club's beautiful stream and has flooded in the past, which caused a surprising problem in the long term.





Colin is looking at irrigation systems, including a reservoir, that can keep the course in a healthy condition when the dry periods hit

"When the 13th flooded I think the club panicked. They want to see the course in a healthy state and will spend time and money to do it, but in this case when I look back we probably would have been best not doing what we did. We installed drainpipes and the water went - great, but now it drains too well, goes brown easily and gets dry lines. I've learnt that when you get one extreme like that you shouldn't over react, just grin and bare it and take a longer term view," stated Colin wisely.

Colin has helped the two Bedfordshire courses come together by keeping his staff united. While numerous 36 plus hole courses split their greens team and keep them on one particular course, Colin has chosen to stick to a different tactic, which he feels has benefited both his staff and the courses.

"Keeping my team together has always worked for me. I can tell any one of my staff to get on a machine and go to any part of either course and they know exactly where they are going and what to do, that's a great help. It also means that we can get big jobs done a lot quicker."

A good example of why this works well is with the club's hosting of the English Schools Tournament in August, a year after hosting the English Seniors. Colin had 11 of his staff working on the John O'Gaunt the day before the competition. They had everything prepared within the day, which would have been impossible with a lower number of staff, and then hit the Carthage the following day in preparation for the second day of the event. It is a system that benefits the staff as well as the two courses.

"I think this method is important for my team. In practice they are working



on two different courses with differing needs and characteristics, so they are getting that great experience and it is aiding their development. It helps their moral too, as they aren't getting bored working on just the one course, a change of scenery can do them good," said Colin, who also writes a piece in the club's monthly newsletter to keep the membership up to date with course developments, an approach that works wonders.

Colin started in greenkeeping in January 1975 thanks to his mother spotting an advert in the local newspaper for an Assistant at Wheatley Golf Club. Now after 30 years within the profession and five golf clubs under his belt he has become very shrewd about the industry and learnt some important lessons. The height of cut in

particular has become a topic close to his heart.

"If you had a room full of greenkeepers and asked them who cut low and then in the dry periods if their greens were stressed out I reckon most would raise their hand. The golfers' perceptions have changed now. What used to be considered fast is dead slow in today's world. A quick green is considered to be a good one by the golfer, which is wrong. So the pressure is on to cut low to get the speed. The major problem is that while golfers' perceptions have changed dramatically, the type of grass that we use has not. Greens would be better for lifting the height of cut, but it is just not feasible and it puts a lot of pressure on us greenkeepers," concluded Colin.

That's one subject matter that equally affects both of Colin's contrasting parkland courses. While the courses may remain poles apart in behaviour you can be sure that Colin will keep them in perfect harmony and that John O'Gaunt will be looking on proudly at the Headman's work on his former land.