



AVAILABILITY OF SPARE PARTS AND ACCESSORIES

If you plan to keep your trailer long term, always check the availability of spares for the trailer before you purchase. Can the manufacturer guarantee spares for your trailer in ten years time? Are parts and accessories for your trailer reasonably priced? How quickly can parts and accessories be sourced and how far do you need to travel to find them?

SERVICING

Your trailer should be serviced regularly to ensure optimum performance. It is worth checking if your nearest service centre or workshop is within reasonable travelling distance of your home. Trailers, just like cars, must meet the legal requirements on tyres, brakes and lights.

WARRANTY AND CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Ensure your trailer, if bought from new, comes with a warranty and check what it actually covers. You should also check that there is a customer support service available to deal with any queries or questions you may have.

SECURITY

Invest in a coupling lock and wheel lock to deter thieves and for additional peace of mind and always insure your trailer.

RE-SALE VALUE

It is useful to research the re-sale value of the trailer. If you are planning on part exchanging or selling your trailer in a few years, its depreciation and re-sale value should be taken into account before purchasing.

TOWING

It may be worth testing a particular make or model of trailer before you purchase, to test how it feels to tow. There are various trailer hire companies that will offer daily or weekend trailer hire.

It is essential that you have the appropriate vehicle to tow your choice of trailer. You will need to refer to your vehicle manufacturers handbook for your vehicles towing capacity.

If you passed your driving test after December 31, 1996, you will not automatically have category B+E on your driving licence, which allows you to tow trailers up to 3500kg. Without this category you will be restricted in the weight of trailer you can tow without taking an additional test. Go to www.dvla.gov.uk for further details.

Do not overload your trailer - it is not only illegal but may affect the stability of towing and could compromise the safety of you and other road users.

PURCHASING SECOND HAND TRAILERS

If purchasing a second hand trailer, it is recommended that you note the serial number of the trailer and contact the manufacturer to confirm that the seller is the registered keeper before you purchase, the manufacturer should maintain a database of registered owners to help reduce theft. The manufacturer may have been informed by the police or the original owner if the trailer has been stolen. For a charge, The National Plant & Equipment Registry (TER) can also cross reference the Police National Computer (PNC) for reported stolen trailers.



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Products shown: RTV900 (above), ZD28 (below left), L3200 (below right)

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- Sep 12th ▶ Newark Showground, Nottinghamshire
- Sep 14th ▶ National Stud, Suffolk
- Sep 19th ▶ Sandown Park Race Course, Surrey
- Sep 21st ▶ Royal Bath & West Showground, Somerset
- Sep 26th ▶ Worcester Rugby Club, Worcestershire



For further information contact your local Kubota dealership or call: **0800 023 1111** or email: **kubotalive@kubota.co.uk**



www.kubota.co.uk

Just to prove a utility vehicle can offer ATV rivalling abilities, this six-wheeler is running two up, with full weather protection thrown in for good measure. There is also room for a load in the cargo bay on the back too. A machine like this, with prices from around £7,300, offers a lot more for the money than a top of the range ATV.



All Terrain Vehicles - Worth another look?

James de Havilland weighs up the pros and cons of ATVs.

For a large number of golf courses, a utility vehicle with a petrol, diesel, electric or even LPG fuelled power unit remains the default personnel transport tool. ATVs now come in variants with platforms, diesel power or even as road legal 'quadracycles'. Is this enough to make them worth considering as an alternative?

Do a few simple sums. Take a box stock petrol working ATV in the popular 350-400cc size range. Opt for a two-wheel drive manual model such as a Honda Foreman 350, buy a trailer to go with it and the combination will weight in at under £5,000. For a similar amount of money, a petrol utility vehicle, such as the Kawasaki Mule 600, has room for two and comes with a 180kg capacity load platform as standard.

Spend a little more and well respected entry level utility models - specifically targeting the 'golf' market - offer even more. Take the E-Z-Go MPT1200G from Ransomes-Jacobsen. Again offering two seats and a healthy 363kg cargo bay capacity, this simple tool again makes an ATV seem costly.

A further twist is the fact that an ATV 'rider' should wear a helmet. Although course risk assessment may deem this unnecessary, the word 'helmet' and 'ATV' are considered by many to be linked.

At this stage, it is easy to see why ATVs have struggled to make much of an impact as working tools on golf courses. Add the fact that there has mostly been only the choice of petrol models - LPG conversions excepted - plus restricted choice when it comes to platform equipped units, and it is case closed for ATVs. You may as well stop reading now.

Before you do however, there are a few twists and turns that may make keeping an open mind worthwhile. First up are 'quadracycles'. In simple terms, these are ATVs homologated for road use. Fitted with road legal lighting, indicators and being allowed to carry a pillion passenger, these machines have taken Europe by storm. In France, the 'quadracycle' market is put at 40,000 units a year.



At the sober end of the utility ATV scale are machines like the Kawasaki LVF300. Available in both two and four wheel drive versions, this five speed manual model is the ideal type of working bike. Simple, easy to use and light enough to nip around on without causing damage, these models are priced from around £3,900 and will tow a decent 300kg

All Terrain Vehicles - Worth another look?

In the UK, these machines are also starting to sell well. Seen as a safer alternative to a motorcycle, a 'quad' can be used as a ride to work machine by anyone with a car driving licence. What is more, this same machine can also be used off road, just like a 'normal' ATV.

A course separated from its driving range, for example, by a short road trip could find this type of machine a useful tool. Then again, a road legal Kubota RTV or similar would arguably be more useful, particularly in cab form with room for two and a flashing beacon to help other road users see it.

If the 'quadricycle' argument fails, how about diesel power? This is not a new idea, Polaris having produced its own in-house diesel in the late 1990s with the company's then UK importers, EP Barrus, offering its own D-Bat models before that. In six-wheeler form, with load bay at the rear, these latter machines did sell to a few courses.

For several years, independent ATV maker Diesel Quads has been producing a diesel ATV, the Diablo. Currently powered by a meaty Yanmar 850cc power unit, these CVT transmission models are produced in limited numbers in North Wales. They cannot be compared to a mainstream petrol ATV for refinement, but their simple build could well appeal.

It is also worth pointing out that it is possible to buy an ATV with a rear load platform. This type of machine is again, not new, with Yamaha starting the ball rolling with its now long deceased Pro-Hauler back in the 1980s.

Polaris also offered its aforementioned six-wheeler models up until a few years ago too, its role having since been taken over by the six-wheel Ranger utility. So if you want a load platform, current choice is limited to machines that can include Can-Am, formerly Bombardier, Outlander TX models.

Although ATVs continue to struggle to take on utility vehicles that does not mean they will not fit into some equipment buying patterns. As always, an open mind could well see an ATV providing useful service.



Massey Ferguson had yet to announce details of its diesel powered ATVs at the time of writing. As it stands, the company offer a range of what it brands AgTVs, these models having a SpeedRack system that enables attachments, including load platforms, to be added without the need for tools. A 400cc road legal CVT automatic MF400 is priced at £5,300 plus VAT

A nice sunny day, no need for a coat and a quick run across the dunes to check a problem on the ninth green. Do this job on an ATV, and you should wear a helmet. A definite minus in the eyes of many potential ATV buyers. But how many utility vehicles have as much pep as the pictured Yamaha Kodiak 450? This £5,800 machine will pull nearly half a ton and accelerate far faster than most will ever need ▼



▲ Entry level utility units include the E-Z-Go MPT1200G from Ransomes-Jacobsen. Simple, economical and well proven, this type of tool combines a light footprint with a versatile rear load area. An ATV will struggle to compete unless the terrain turns nasty or rutted tracks are in the job mix



Although it looks just like a conventional ATV, this 'quadricycle' from Taiwanese manufacturer Kymco, is fully homologated for road use and, on its third birthday, will need an MOT just like any other road vehicle. With a sticker price of £3,159 (exVAT) the pictured, MXU300RL is well priced for a 270cc machine, but as a working tool it is best viewed as a motorised pair of legs



A cargo box can be fitted to a number of ATV models, but don't expect massive capacity or dimensions. The Can-Am Outlander Max will only carry around 95kg, its high load height also working against it. But fit a trailer as well, and the package starts to make more sense. A 650 Outlander, which is a really powerful ATV with easily enough torque to handle a capacity load, will cost from £6,800



Agricultural users have long asked for a diesel powered ATV, this sector accounting for the bulk of utility bike sales. The Diesel Quads Diablo 850 answers this call, the machine having a dual range CVT automatic transmission and selectable 4WD as standard. It could well appeal to course managers looking for an economical alternative to a utility vehicle, with a price of around £6,500

Another road legal quad, this time showing the other extreme of the power scale. Powered by a fuel injected 760cc V-twin, the Polaris Sportsman 800EFI, weighs in at an eye watering £7315 before VAT. It will get to places that will leave many a utility vehicle stranded, but courses with this demand are few and far between

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SALTEX 2006

Like BTME & ClubHouse, held every January in Harrogate, all Saltex displays focus on labour and money saving products for the effective maintenance and management of turf and sports surfaces.

More than 15,000 visitors attend the annual three-day event at Windsor Racecourse, Berkshire, where approximately 400 exhibitors display the latest developments in fine turf and sports surfaces; turf maintenance equipment; landscaping; contractors; commercial vehicles; outdoor leisure and facilities and estate management, as well as software and security equipment.

Launched in 1938 as a grounds care show, IOG Saltex has grown in size and stature to cover every aspect of open space management. The show covers every open space profession from groundsmen and greenkeepers to play officers, architects, designers and surveyors.

The Machinery Dealer Village, where dealers and distributors from manufacturers of turfcare machinery and equipment will be able to display their wares, is the latest exciting new feature planned for this year's show. The Dealer Village is designed to enable visitors to inspect and compare a wide range of grounds care machinery and equipment from around the world in one special, dedicated area on the Windsor showground.

The national final of the Skills Challenge Landscape Skills Competition is to be held at Saltex again this year and more finalists than ever will be competing for a possible place at the WorldSkills Competition in Japan, 2007. Four teams of two people will be expected to complete a pre-determined seven metres by seven metres landscape project, from scratch during the three-day show.

The show is open from 9am until 5pm (Tuesday and Wednesday September 5 and 6) and 9am until 4.15pm on Thursday, September 7.

Visitors to IOG SALTEX can register now for their free entry badge at: www.iogsaltex.co.uk or can call the Visitor Hotline on: 0870 429 4524 to order free visitor tickets.



HOW TO GET TO SALTEX

SALTEX is hosted at Windsor Racecourse, which is accessible from the M4, M25, M3 M40 motorways.

BY ROAD:

From the M25:

Leave the motorway at Junction 15, where you'll join the M4, heading west.

From the M4:

Westbound - leave the M4 at junction 6, follow the brown signs for Windsor Racecourse or yellow AA signs for IOG SALTEX 2005.

From the M4:

Eastbound - leave the M4 at junction 8/9, follow the brown signs for Windsor Racecourse or yellow AA signs for IOG SALTEX 2005.

BY BUS:

Windsor Express bus number 700 connects London with Windsor. They depart from London Victoria Green Line Coach Station and you alight at Maidenhead Road, a short walk from the Racecourse.

BY RAIL:

You can travel by rail to Slough station from Paddington or the South West, or to Windsor Riverside & Eton station from London Waterloo. There will be a shuttle bus running from near Windsor Riverside & Eton station to and from the exhibition site every day.

In addition, the IOG has introduced a water taxi service for visitors travelling by public transport.



Where are you on the sustainability ladder?



Asks Steve Isaac, Assistant Director of Golf Course Management at The R&A.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

The R&A Golf Course Committee has defined sustainable development and management as: Optimising the playing quality of the golf course, in harmony with the conservation of its natural environment under economically sound and socially responsible management. Achieving this is a constant challenge for everyone and there is always the opportunity to become increasingly sustainable. In other words, it is possible to keep climbing the sustainability ladder.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

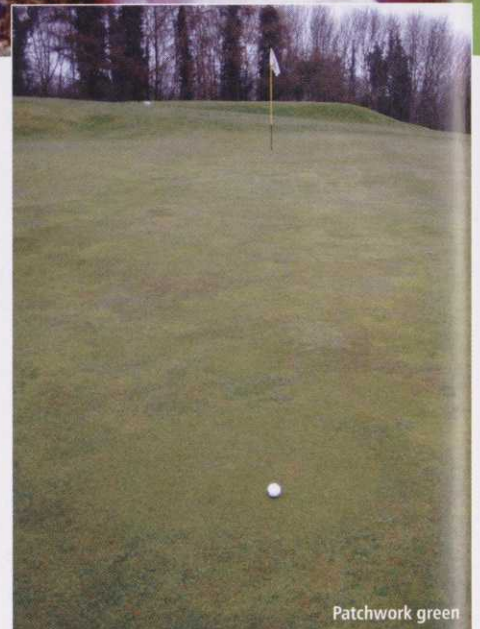
In these terms, the foot of the ladder represents surfaces on the verge of being unsustainable. These will be, for example, greens in heavy shade that support soft, water retentive thatch, dominated by annual meadow-grass, which suffer from disease scarring for months on end, seed head production for months on end and closure over much of the winter - even on occasion through the summer, after heavy precipitation.

Thatch and shade create a poor environment for growing any type of turf

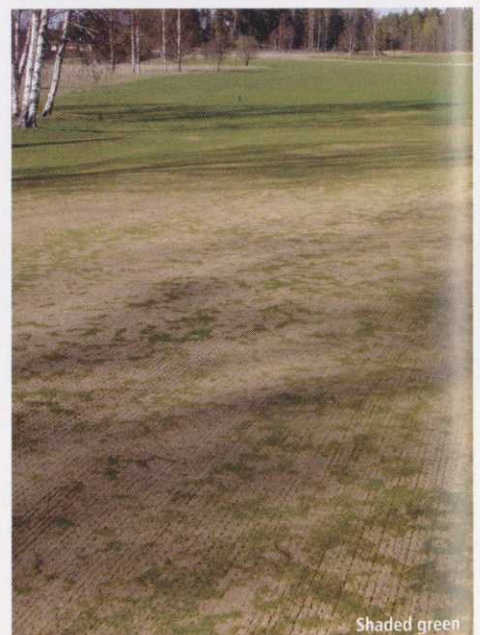
In such a scenario, reconstruction might be considered the only option and a relatively quick way to clamber up a few rungs of the ladder. For those unable to afford this approach, maintenance operations such as coring, deep scarification and top dressing can develop firmer and drier turf, which will be able to take play for more of the year.

Even when you have firmed up the green, if severe shade remains then unhealthy, turf will prevail - prone to disease, heat stress, frost retention and winterkill. Removing trees, even limbs, is rarely popular but in such instances it is either the green or the timber. It is possible to sensitively thin out to gain sufficient light and air movement without clear felling, retaining an attractive backdrop, but without the shadow of death.

Keep working to produce firmer surfaces and it is likely that browntop bent will start to creep into the green, often from the perimeter in. Many who claim to be managing soil push up greens are in reality, after decades of top dressing, working with modified sand profiles with a water retentive base. A reduction in feeding and watering will help continue the trend towards the finer grasses and overseeding may speed up the process - provided you are able to resist the temptation to shave the grass down in a misguided attempt to gain pace. The only long term



Patchwork green



Shaded green

result of this approach will be weak meadow-grass, prone to more disease, heat and cold stress and moss ingress. As the bent slowly increases, the green may well look like a patchwork quilt before the different grasses begin to blend together, as shown in the image opposite.

BEWARE OF VERTIGO!

Once the quantity of bentgrass has developed to produce an even mix of the two grasses, achieved on drier and leaner greens, you may even start to see the odd patch of fine fescue appear to local high spots and drier bunker sand splash zones. This is the signal to start heavy overseeding and to make a further, perhaps more dramatic, cut in fertiliser input. The success of such a programme will also rely on raising the routine cutting height to at least 5 mm - a move which often deters this step towards the top of the sustainability ladder but, if the process is achieved gradually over several years, it can be done without disrupting the quality of the putting surface you present. Indeed, as the proportion of browntop bent and fescue increases, excellent pace can be achieved at a higher cut.

The one thing you must avoid if you manage to reach the heady reaches of the upper rungs, is a return to the environment from which you have come. Pumping on fertiliser and water and lowering the cutter blades, will only result in a much more rapid descent down the ladder. And remember to keep those trees under control.

Remember, the further down the ladder you are, the more reliant you will be on fungicides and irrigation water. Given the uncertainty over future supplies of both, this is not the way to guarantee a sustainable future for the course.

So, the seven steps up the sustainability ladder can be summarised thus:

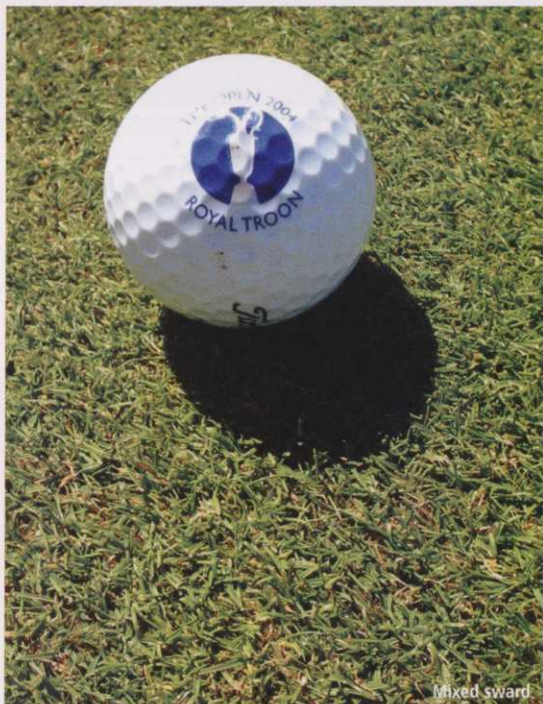
It is possible to take a breather as you make the climb. Rungs might be missing - blocking further progress if the environment you are trying to grow a better green in cannot be improved. After decades of low inputs and intensive cultural management promoting thatch reduction and compaction regulation, there will be understandable grief if your greens continue to sit towards the bottom rung of the ladder. In this regard it is vitally important that you make some assessment of the potential of each green at the outset of the programme. Steps one to three are, probably, the most disruptive in terms of affecting the quality of the playing surface - thatch removal cannot be achieved without impacting surfaces. For many, this process is not the easy option. Set realistic goals over a sensible period of time and regularly reassess where you are on the ladder and whether it is feasible to continue the climb.

From annual meadow-grass, through a mixed sward to fescue/browntop bent

Virtually pure fescue stands, may only be possible from a new construction. Fescue/browntop bent greens may not be attainable by all who care for more mature greens - though these should be the target for those managing links and heathland courses where these species dominate through the green. However, soft, disease-prone annual meadow-grass greens should not be tolerated and everyone should be able to make progress from the bottom rung. It may not be possible to eliminate annual meadow-grass, but the ideal is to reduce it to insignificant levels.

Measuring progress can be achieved through recording changes in species composition, reduction in playing days lost to frost or rain, decreasing fertiliser, water and pesticide inputs. The R&A is in the process of developing tools to quickly and accurately assess the proportion of each grass in the sward, the firmness and resilience of the putting surface and its smoothness. It is all very well bringing about a change in grasses and reducing costs (both economic and environmental) but there has to be the added value of better playing condition over the year and you need the means to measure these. Developing firmer and smoother greens through 12 months will provide this desirable result and we are working to produce tools to assess these aspects of performance.

Climbing the sustainability ladder is all about improving the golfing experience - providing better value for money, better year round playing surfaces and, at the same time, reducing the environmental impact of course management. However, it requires the commitment and support of the club so as not to shake the ladder as you attempt your ascent.



NEW PRODUCTS

PORTABLE PUTTING COURSE

A miniature putting course, suitable for installation both outside and indoors, has been added to Huxley Golf's collection of golf practice, teaching and playing aids.

Known as Mini Links, the fully portable system enables from one to 18 different putting "holes", to be set up in minutes on any firm, level surface. To add variety and more of a challenge to a putting round, Huxley Golf can supply removable hazards (known as props), which are placed between the start point and the pin cup on each Mini Links "hole".

Mini Links can be viewed on-line at: www.huxleymodulargreens.com or by phoning Huxley Golf on: 01962 733222.



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For more information visit: www.drainbelt.co.uk



REPUTATION FOR INNOVATION

Etesia is launching another "first" for the industry with their new Hydro 100 Diesel ride-on rotary mower.

The low decibel levels ensure operator comfort and prevent noise pollution, especially on noise sensitive sites.

Two models in this range are being launched at Saltex - the BLHP with hydraulic high-lift emptying of the grass collector, plus, the ground-emptying BLSP with optional high-tip grassbox.

For more information Tel: 01926 403 319.



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Designed and built by John Deere, the new ComfortGard cab is available for the company's 3020 and 4020 Series compact utility tractors, equipped with eHydro transmission.

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