



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

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

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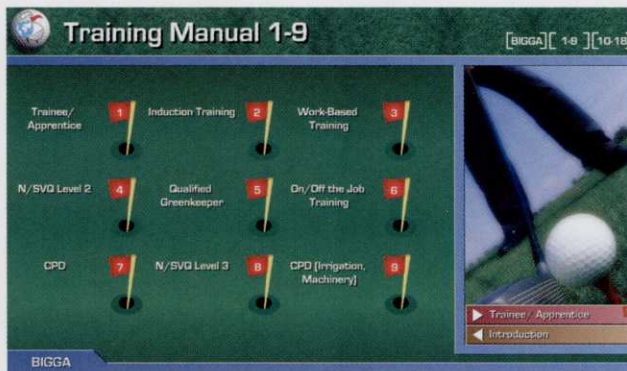
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Education Update

Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, unveils the Greenkeepers' Training and Development Manual.

The first Harrogate Week is now over and my thoughts are turning to a New Year of education and training opportunities. Many of you will have been at the AGM and heard me mention one of the projects that we are involved with. This is the introduction of a web-based Greenkeeper Training and Development Manual that will be launched towards the end of this month.



GREENKEEPERS' TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

When the BIGGA Board of Management set up the Futures sub-committee some five years ago, there were a number of points put forward for discussion. One of these was the need for advice on the recruitment and selection of greenkeepers, advice on how to train them and advice on how to produce the golf course managers of tomorrow.

The BIGGA Board of Management decided that the best method of presenting this advice, given the need to stick to a set budget, was to use the Internet. The Greenkeepers Training and Development Manual has been developed to be a fully interactive resource that will work with any Internet connection. However, it is best viewed using a broadband connection.

Access to the Manual for BIGGA members will be through the BIGGA website, www.bigga.org.uk. Members of the Association of Golf Club Secretaries (AGCS) will be able to access the Manual from the AGCS website, www.agcs.co.uk.

BIGGA members will need to log onto the Members' Pages and select Training and Development Manual, whereas members of the AGCS will be able to access the Manual from their members' area. Golf Club Secretaries will not be able to access any other member's only areas of the BIGGA website.

Once you have been connected, the Manual defaults to a Welcome and user guide page. This page contains information on how to use the site. You can then enter the main site by clicking on Enter the site and the Intro page appears. You can, if you wish, skip the intro and this page appears. Clicking the Hole 1 flag takes you to this screen.

The manual contains three main types of information and these are: Text, Sub Text and Video. It also contains hypertext links to other relevant web sites.

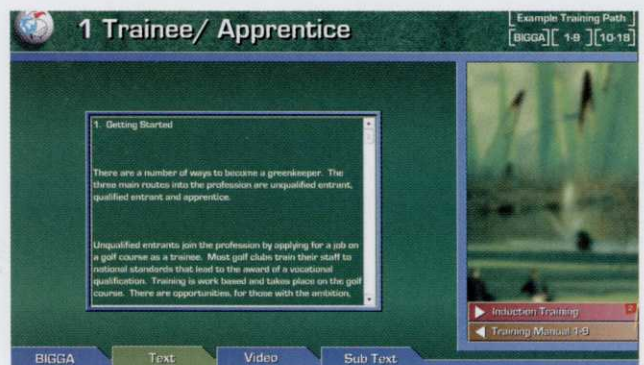
The Text tab takes you to the text related to that page, the video tab takes you to a related video clip and sub text takes you to a list of downloadable options. These options include hyperlinks, draft forms, draft job specifications, draft handbooks, etc. Downloading the draft form should open your default word processing package and open the relevant document.

You can then add your own information and edit items such as the golf club name and print the document. There is also a link to an example training path that shows how the site relates to your needs and to the needs of your staff.

You can enter the manual at any point and you do not need to follow in through hole by hole. For example, if you just wanted to look at the information on Estates Manager, you go straight to hole 18.

Hopefully, the golf course and golf club managers of today will be able to use the Manual to design training and development plans for all of their staff, accessing the most appropriate education and training courses at the appropriate time, leading to the managers of today helping to develop the managers of tomorrow.

Access to the site is free to all members of BIGGA and to all members of the AGCS. Non-members of either Organisation can gain access by becoming a member of the relevant Organisation.



Rachael and Gemma would like to welcome 32 new members to the Association and talk about the new benefit of membership.

Membership Update



BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

Gary Muir, East Scotland
Christopher Myers, East Scotland
Michael Peters, East Scotland
Jody Wilson, Central Scotland

NORTHERN REGION

Alan Evans, North Wales
Matthew Lewis, North Wales
Christopher Lumley, North East
Benjamin Robertson, Northern
Karl Smith, Northern
Simon Wathall, Northern

MIDLAND REGION

Liam Chapman, East of England
Tomasz Fraczak, BB&O
Bryan Paton, East Midland
Dean Perrysmith, Midland
David Starkey, Midland
Nathan Webb, Midland

SOUTH EAST REGION

Toby Alexander, East Anglia
Chris Guy, East Anglia
Robert Wickham, East Anglia

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES REGION

Robert Cockwill, South West
Marcus Gilbert, Devon & Cornwall
Adam Jacobs, South West
Scott Johnson, South West
Christopher Waterton, South Wales

INTERNATIONAL

Michael Haberstroh, Germany
Aaron Huntley, USA
Roger Robarge, USA

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Mark Bowley, Essex
John Heaphy, Central Scotland
Roger Clark, BB&O

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Gary McAllister, East Midland

STUDENT MEMBER

Matthew Caple, South West

Mediation Cover is Added to the Legal Helpline

As launched at Harrogate Week we are pleased to announce that the legal helpline now includes provision for professional mediation services.

But what is mediation, and how will it benefit BIGGA Members?

A legal dispute, whether over employment, sales of goods or a claim for personal injury, can be extremely stressful and time-consuming. When a BIGGA Member is faced with a situation where legal action is required, the BIGGA Legal Protection Scheme provides a confidential, 24-hour legal helpline service, which means the member can quickly and easily find out their rights. In certain types of claim, the policy can cover legal fees to instruct a solicitor to represent the member.

However, the legal process is not always the only route available to members, and in some cases it may not even be the best process.

Redressing an issue, usually by claiming financial compensation, is not always the most important aspect. Members can be put off from making a claim for reasons that have little to do with money. In these situations, mediation can play a vital role, bringing potential benefit to both parties involved.

As an example, here are some the reasons why BIGGA Members may be hesitant about taking legal action, or continuing with a case that has already started:

- A preference to reach an agreement rather than go through the court process
- A need or desire to maintain a positive relationship with the other party after the dispute is resolved
- A need or desire for absolute confidentiality - taking a claim through the legal process means that details of the dispute are in the public domain
- A need or desire for an informal process - the legal process can seem daunting, formal and intimidating

These situations are particularly prevalent in employment disputes where the member wishes to maintain their existing employment. However, these situations can apply to any legal dispute.

For mediation services to be possible, both parties must agree to mediate, and the cost of the mediation is shared equally between the two parties, or in a member's case, by the BIGGA Legal Protection scheme. In addition, the process has further conditions:

- Both must agree to the mediator to be appointed
- The mediator to be utilised must be professionally qualified
- The process is strictly confidential
- The outcome is not imposed on either party - both parties have control over the outcome
- The process is "without prejudice" - any matters disclosed cannot later be relied upon if the matter goes to court.

But does mediation work? "Statistically 80% of cases referred to mediation are successfully settled. And clients are able to seek other remedies not available within the court process, such as an apology or a recognition of wrongdoing," said Jonathan Savitt, of Just Mediation,

Members wishing to enquire about the availability of the mediation service can do so by contacting BIGGA Legal Protection legal helpline on 0800 068 1893.



Harrogate Week Prize Draw

Our congratulations go to James Barley, of Trefloyne Golf Club, David Nelson, of Robert Trent Jones, and Steindor Ragnarsson, a student at Elmwood College, who all won a Highlander Waterproof Suit in the daily Membership prize draw at Harrogate Week.

FEBRUARY'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 David Gladwin, of Carmarthen GC.



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Harrogate week

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BTME



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As Easy as ABC



You never stop learning so, in conjunction with the GTC and lecturers from some of the UK's top greenkeeping colleges, GI has launched a new series which gives the developing greenkeeper the chance to add to their knowledge with some useful advice.



Gordon McGinn,
South Ayrshire Council



REFLECTIONS

A building is a very heavy object. The bigger the building the greater the weight, therefore the stronger the foundation needs to be to support it. When starting out on a career, the early stages are the foundation stages. The higher that you want to 'rise' in the industry the stronger the foundation you need to provide.

Everyone has acquired a range of knowledge and understanding particular to their own interests and experiences. Even though that may appear to have no relevance to the specialist discipline of greenkeeping many areas can be employed as an aid to understanding.

E.g. when you applied for your first post you may have prepared with training in interview skills, etc. Why? So as you could compete more successfully with the other candidates and exclude them from the post you have applied for.

Apply the same principle to golf greens; you want to make the fine grasses so successful that they can compete with and exclude a particular pest, e.g. Poa annua. Identify the strengths of the fine grasses, the weaknesses of the Poa annua - a bit like the stone, paper and scissors game from school days, each has a strength and a weakness.



Poa Annua



Fescue

FINE GRASSES

Weakness: The fine grasses have narrower leaves (smaller solar panels), so they take in less light and make less sugar, and as sugar is used in the formation of living tissue, they grow more slowly.

Strength: The narrower leaves transpire (sweat) less so the plants can survive much drier conditions.

COARSE GRASSES E.G. POA ANNUA

Strength: Broad leaves (bigger solar panels) so they take in more light, make more sugar, therefore make more living tissue, therefore they grow faster.

Weakness: The broader leaves have a bigger surface area so transpire more than fine grasses and they need much moister soils to stay alive.

CONCLUSION

Provide your fine turf with a sandy texture, open structure and keep irrigation to a minimum. The fine grasses will survive and exclude the Poa annua that will die of thirst. The above is a very simple example of applying the principle of 'Competitive Exclusion'.

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YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

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

Letters ▶▶▶

A Fescue Debate?

I am writing to express my surprise at the lack of discussion that the recent excellently researched articles on fescue greens has started. I would have thought there would have been a certain amount of argument, but it appears that no-one (apart from people who are already growing fescue) is remotely interested!

I think cutting heights on poa greens have got so low, and green speeds have got so high, that it is now extremely difficult to transfer from "predominantly poa" to "monoculturally fescue". Gone are the days, even at the seaside, where people would cut at 4 - 4.5mm and have 50% poa with some fescue and some bent.

Nowadays it seems to be a direct choice between butchering the greens to 3mm all summer and putting on sponges all winter, or accepting the stimpmeter reading is going to max out at 9 (unless there's a drought) because you can putt on firm fescue greens that are as good in February as they are in July.

We could argue all day about the need for speed or the environmental issue, but as far as I am concerned, none of the greenkeeping arguments actually matter here at all. Surely the grass that we should be aiming to grow on our greens is the grass that the architect who designed our course intended for us to grow on our greens, or the grass that was predominant when the course was laid out.

If your course is laid out on a clay soil, with hazards tucked close into the fronts of the greens, then don't feel pressured into growing fescue because it's the "in" thing to do, because the architect understood that meadow grass would dominate and designed the course to be played with soft surfaces.

Likewise, if you are working on a 100 year old links course, then you will no doubt be doing everything in your power to keep your greens as firm as they were when the course was laid out, in order to protect the integrity and subtlety of the design. That's because we all know the only way to provide our members with year round golf (that's what they pay an Annual Subscription for, after all) on firm surfaces that repel all but the best struck approach shots is to plant and then encourage the growth of fescue and do everything in our power to keep the dreaded poa from invading.

And yes, I'm sorry, but that does mean cutting no shorter than 5mm (ever - apart from maybe club championship week, when you could maybe stick them down to 4.75). Keeping water and fertiliser input to a bare - and I mean bare - minimum, cutting back on as many mechanical treatments (verticutting, hollow coring, etc) as we have to in order to keep the fescue in control.

Top-dressing until we're sick of the sight of blunt soleplates, and accepting that we are going to get constantly harassed by golfers who haven't got a clue what they're talking about. But then you don't need me to tell you that, do you? Because as a custodian of one of this country's most prized and wonderful antiques, you would never dare not look after it properly....would you?

One other point in this whole non-existent debate has occurred to me, and that is the question of why none of the World's brilliant seed scientists has yet managed to breed an annual meadow grass plant that is more efficient? Regardless of how much Jim Arthur hated Perennial Ryegrass, even he must have been impressed by the improvements that were made in his lifetime. To turn a plant that in its original form and habitat takes on the appearance of an ugly green hedgehog squatting in a sea of fine grasses (and who hasn't come up against one of those horrors in the rough of our inland courses) into a beautiful, fine leaved grass that, when planted on a tee or a fairway, actually looks (but unfortunately still doesn't play) like fescue and blends nicely into a mixed sward.

So why can't this technology be applied to *Poa annua*, creating a multi-million pound industry in this country alone, as people rush to overseed their greens with new improved meadow grass cultivars? Is it impossible to alter its characteristics to make it finer-leaved, deeper rooting, less prone to thatch-building, and more resistant to fusarium?

Imagine the possibilities for the greens on our inland courses if we could grow a monoculture of such an improved poa plant, cut it down to 2.5mm, feed it, water it, and sit back with a pint and listen to hordes of members tell us how our greens are as good as Augusta's?

While I'm here, can I take this opportunity to thank Kerran Daly for his highly enjoyable Chairman's column (which made me laugh every month). Also to congratulate everyone involved with this magazine for somehow managing to keep the whole thing fresh against all the odds.

Simon Freeman
The Marchie, Isle of Islay

BIGGA For Life

I would like to thank BIGGA for the Life Membership. I appreciate this and feel proud to own and display it. Although I have been retired from Southerndown Golf Club for 26 years I still keep in touch with some old friends through Greenkeeper International.

On my 90th Birthday I received a great honour from Southerndown, by having gates that lead onto the course named after me – The Walter Jones Gates.

Walter Jones
Life Member

Legal Help

I would like to thank the Association for all the help they have given me with my case against my golf club for unfair dismissal and unpaid wages. A special thanks to Maggie for Legal Advice and Ian Horloran for travelling up for a grievance meeting and keeping the meetings in order. Also, for his good advice during that meeting.

S Butler

A Great Week

The new Harrogate Week has come and gone and what a great week it was. Were you there?

The week was packed with education to suit everyone along with some excellent fringe event seminars. I have to commend the National Board for listening and acting on the suggestion from some members to have a sustainable golf conference and open forum. The anticipation of the conference and open forum stimulated a buzz around Harrogate I have never witnessed before and I have been travelling up north for as long as I can remember.

I'm sure on the Thursday afternoon the members and the R&A, who pushed so hard for its inclusion, felt suitably proud as they looked into a full auditorium of around 280 delegates. The coffee break filled the conference centre with a very healthy buzz of debate and a frank exchange of views. Congratulations all round to the speakers and the delegates for supporting the two days and making it such a success!

The Show was excellent as usual and all of the Stands I visited had had a successful week, which was very important during a pivotal year.

The future of the Harrogate Week now lies in our hands. With uncertainty about who will be exhibiting at the Show next year it is down to us members to give our Association unprecedented support and make sure we attend next year making it even more successful!

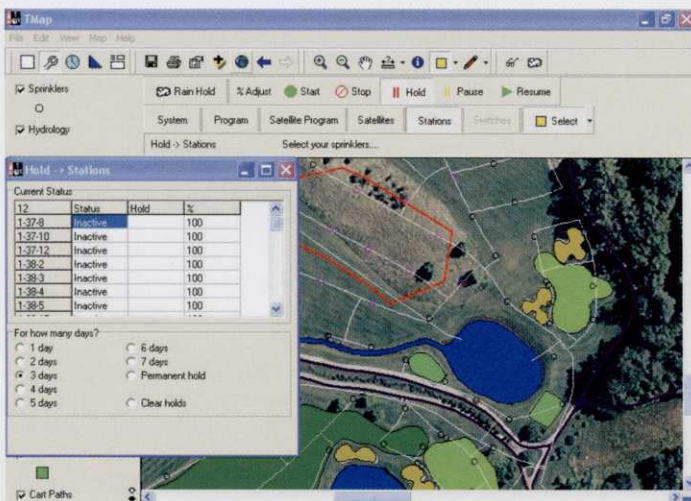
I would like to thank all of our staff at HQ, who worked tirelessly in organising the week and then ensuring it ran so smoothly. Just like greenkeepers they work so hard and sometimes get very little recognition for all of that hard work. We should know better! Thank you all!

Alex McCombie
Parkstone Golf Club

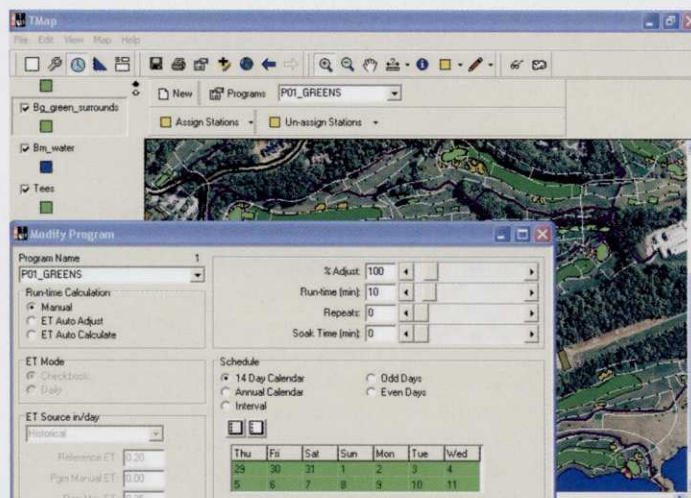
The Way Forward

During the mid-1980s the R&A had the foresight to produce the golf course management document, *The Way Forward*. This document was an attempt to encourage best practice in all aspects of golf course design and golf course management, and over time encourage sufficient development to satisfy the burgeoning increase in demand for the game.

During the past 20 years there have been some outstanding developments. However, during this period there has also been an unprecedented increase in the external factors influencing the development and management of the game, not least of which is climate change.



Here the user has encircled, with a Red boundary, the area that has been placed on a three-day day watering hold



Through the Map, the users can easily make watering adjustments to their irrigation programs and schedules without having to go to the actual database

Historically, both drainage and irrigation designers have used average figures as a basis for design and taken into consideration a 1 in 50 or 1 in 100 worst case scenario. Recent rainfall records and trends seem to indicate that in many circumstances the average is still very much the norm; however precipitation is actually occurring as a boom and bust, famine or fortune, drought or deluge scenario.



This phenomenon has many implications on planning and design. Initially it may be necessary to remove an excess of water from the playing surface by improved drainage techniques; secondly, if we do not consider storage of at least part of this water it will be lost; and thirdly, as natural precipitation is heavier but less frequent the need for irrigation may be increased.

In the 1970s, Adams and Stewart set about the improvement of winter sports pitches by sand slitting. Golf courses have only recently caught up with this technique, which has now become relatively commonplace, especially in new-build work and to existing fairways.

However, as this system allows for relatively rapid removal of water from the playing surface, it may be referred to as a by-pass drainage system when excess precipitation is conducted away before it has time to thoroughly infiltrate the rootzone. In a new-build project this priceless supply of water can be channelled through a series of drainage pipes, lakes and open waterways - flanked with reed beds to filter out undesirable contaminants - to a holding pond. This is then pumped to a storage facility to be recycled as irrigation water, hence conserving an increasingly important resource.

Golf courses were at one time regarded as conservation areas in their own right, a green oasis in the middle of urban sprawl. Conservation measures now far exceed these basic boundaries and demand attention in a modern world. Golf courses have become even greener, with recycling the norm. Removal of surface water has to be done sympathetically and recycled. Application of irrigation water must be carefully calculated and applied, indigenous flora and fauna protected, nutrient and fungicide application reduced to a minimum and the basic archaeological fabric of the site protected.



Count on it.

Adrian Mortram investigates the importance of knowledge and technology when fighting against the varying elements.

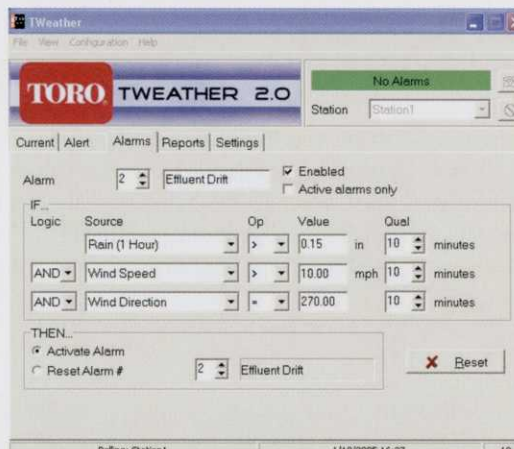
NEW BUILD

The New Dun Laogaire Golf Course, in Dublin, has been designed and built to push back the boundaries as far as possible and encompass these developments. This prestigious project encompasses a 27-hole complex, with 33 hectares of playable surface that constitutes approximately 40 per cent of the total site. For aesthetic and practical reasons, high-tension overhead power lines, which transgressed the site, have been rerouted.

Due to the natural environment surrounding the site, known locally as Ballyman Glen - a proposed Special Area of Conservation, and also proposed for designation as a Natural Heritage Site - there has been a requirement to screen all water leaving the site during the initial construction phase to prevent environmental damage. In accordance with the Environmental Protection statement, it has been necessary to channel all surface run-off through a series of silt fences, establish grips to ponds and create a series of large silt chambers, to prevent the discharge of unsuitable run-off.

Subsequently, the groundwater recharging within the site - by means of recharge ponds, sump, soakaways, and infiltration trenches - has resulted in an ambitious plan to interconnect the drainage water via a 42,000cu metres reservoir to the irrigation system, to collect and recycle the natural precipitation. Reed beds being used as a filter prior to recycling.

Some 140 kilometres of drainage pipe has been installed at a depth of 750mm plus, the system being designed to attenuate for the event of a once in 50 year storm, and was installed with the aid of GPS surveying. The lateral drainage is installed at 500mm plus with sand slitting to the topsoil depth of 300mm to ensure adequate connection with the lateral drainage.



Using the alarm tab, the user has set up an alarm to use with effluent water to control irrigation when the wind or run-off may be a factor due to regulatory issues

As water conservation is of paramount importance in modern irrigation design, accuracy of application is essential. Therefore the irrigation system has been designed to accommodate individual head control, taking into account location, environmental and soil characteristics.

On greens, back-to-back sprinklers allow for differing soil conditions, infiltration rates and vegetation encountered, and between the needs of the putting surface and the surrounds, and prevent minimal overflow into areas of indigenous vegetation. The putting surface has been sown with creeping bent, A4 and A6, while the backdrops of the greens have a predominantly fescue sward to enhance both definition and aesthetics.

The designed annual irrigation water usage is 40,000cu metres, with up to 870cu metres per day. However, actual water usage will be very much dependant on climatic circumstances. Data in the form of daily rainfall records, wind speed and direction and evapotranspiration will be recorded on site by means of a weather station.

There is 39 kilometres of irrigation pipework to satisfy the need of 1,200 irrigation heads each set on a five-way swing joint to aid accurate setting, the whole under the control of a Toro SitePro central decoder control system, while variable speed pumps allow for an energy efficient delivery system.

Water recycling capabilities within the golf course are up to 180 litres per second to the reservoir via a 450mm main. There is also a fire-fighting capability from the main pump unit at the reservoir to the clubhouse.

THE MEADOW

In a further attempt to encompass all relevant environmental conditions, five hectares of wild flower meadow has been sown, with the ambitious planting of more than 100,000 trees, to reflect the indigenous population of the area.

In keeping with the sensitivity of the area and the Environmental Protection statement a detailed archaeological survey was undertaken and throughout the initial earthworks a permanent surveyor recorded the site. Minor archaeological finds were identified dating back to Neolithic and medieval times. Within the site, any areas identified to be of significant interest were covered with a geo-textile membrane and buried at depth so that should they be of any interest in the future they may be revisited.

The Way Forward may not be as straightforward for existing golf courses, but current knowledge and technology is available to mitigate most of the problems of the moment, to anticipate some of the problems for the future, and to keep our industry at the forefront of innovative development.

Adrian Mortram is Managing Director of Robin Hume Associates, independent golf course, landscape and sportsturf irrigation consultants.



A typical SitePro weather station and typical installation back out of play

Course Feature

Buying into the Game

Scott MacCallum meets David Croxton, a man who not only bought his own golf club but has risen to become Chairman of the EGU's Golf Services Committee.



Do you remember a guy called Victor Kiam? He was the bloke who "liked it so much I bought the company". From recollection I think it was back in the 70s and the "it" he was referring to was an electric razor and the "company", Remington.

I mention this because David Croxton, was a member of Cold Ashby Golf Club, in Northamptonshire, liked it so much he bought it. Since then he has developed the course to the stage that it is an extremely popular venue with three loops of nine and an attractive clubhouse, while David has risen through the ranks of the English Golf Union and last year was appointed Chairman of the Golf Services Committee. He is also the EGU representative on the GTC. Oh yes, he has also done his bit for the British winter Olympics effort!

He is therefore a pretty rare beast, A golf administrator who is also very much at the sharp end of the game, experiencing first hand the effects of the game's peaks and troughs.

"The club had been up for sale for some time when I thought I'd put an offer in for it. I did have a certain amount of business experience but I hadn't been involved in golf at all and I was taking over a business which had been struggling financially which was the only reason I was able to buy it," recalled David, as we sat in his office overlooking the course.

So what was the magic ingredient? What was it that turned the club around and turned David into a successful golf club owner?

"We started smiling at people," said David.

"People appreciated the fact that we'd taken time out to learn their names and to improve the basic services like providing bacon sandwiches in the mornings."

At the time, by David's own admission, facilities at Cold Ashby weren't brilliant, with the clubhouse an old converted farmhouse offering fairly basic amenities, but the 300 members were made to feel welcome and the club began to grow.



"We built the membership up to around 500 by the mid 80s when golf was enjoying a boom time and we added nine more holes giving us three loops of nine in 1995 when more land became available," said David.

Another measure of the distance in which Cold Ashby has come is the club magazine "Tee Break" an issue of which features snooker world champions, Peter Edbon and reigning champ, Shaun Murphy, who played the course in a charity event last summer.

David is delighted with the expansion of the course from 18 to 27 holes as, not only did it make it much easier to accommodate corporate or society days without causing disruption to his own members, there was another huge benefit as well.

"It was a lot better for greenkeeping. We have a routine - although it doesn't always work - that we close nine holes every Monday for hollow-coring, or top dressing and it means that we still have 18 holes to offer the golfers," explained David.



Greg Croxton is a partner in the business



"It means that in theory every nine holes is worked on every three weeks but in reality with conflicting demands, competitions etc, they are probably done once a month and we have seen the benefits of this regime through a lot less thatch," said David, who has a close working relationship with Course Manager, Henry Bott, and his team.

"Members don't even know we've micro tined and top dressed by the Wednesday after it's been done."

David has watched golf hit a popularity peak in the mid 80s and then tail off again but he does feel that the game is beginning to make a come back.

"If fees are pitched at the right level there are probably more golfers out there now than ever before but they are a floating group which makes budgeting more difficult. However it is a business and you've got to be prepared to adapt. It wouldn't be right to think you could rely on green fee income but in reality it is fairly predictable," he revealed.

"Indeed the good news is that green fee income has gone up by round 50% in the last five years."

The best scenario is having members as this gives a regular income at the beginning of the financial year but more golfers are looking at alternatives and Cold Ashby have recently introduced a Lifestyle membership for which a member pays a reduced subscription at the beginning of the year and a reduced green fee every time he or she plays.

"It is ideal for those who want to be a golf club member and have a handicap but don't play too often."

Talking of predictability and the ability to adapt, it is anything but a predictable experience when you walk into the Cold Ashby maintenance facility as figuring alongside the usual greenkeeping kit are rows and rows of skis, ski boots and poles.

The course is blessed with some glorious slopes and a decision was

taken to install a drag lift at the top of the 18th fairway and provide the equipment necessary for anyone wishing to take advantage of snowy conditions.

"We've had some super days skiing here in recent years and the 18th fairway is long enough to provide some fun," said David, of an excellent way of ensuring a golf course is used at times when otherwise the outside facilities on a golf course would be, to keep the winter analogy alive, "in cold storage".

With David's son and business partner, Greg, taking on more of the responsibility of managing Cold Ashby on a day-to-day basis it has allowed him to take an increasing role within the English Golf Union to the stage that he was appointed the Chairman of the influential Golf Services Committee.





"Back in the mid 90s I was asked to serve on the Northamptonshire Executive and through that someone asked me if I'd become President of the county, which I did from 1998 to 2000. That led on to representing Northamptonshire on the EGU Executive and then Colin Spurr, currently EGU Chairman, and then Chairman of the Golf Services Committee asked me on-board. That's when I really got more involved and when Colin moved up I became Chairman, which has a four year term of office."

The Golf Services Committee is there to handle any club management or course management issues that the EGU feels it should tackle, which currently include advising clubs on whether they should become community amateur sports clubs which give tax benefits; the retention of membership and how to cope with declining waiting lists and cash income.

"I suppose it all came about from being asked questions. Clubs would ring up if they'd had a problem and ask the EGU for help, as with the recent licensing law changes," explained David.

"It's all about providing a service to golf clubs. We field whatever queries we can ourselves and pass on those without our expertise to consultants or experts in the field whether it be in licensing law or tax. If we are getting a series of calls on the same subject we will look to put on a seminar to cover the issues."

During the golf boom of the mid 90s the EGU, like other golfing bodies including BIGGA, were getting calls from farmers and prospective developers thinking about building golf courses and asking how to go about it.

"We tried to bring out some of the issues and help people avoid some of the many pitfalls.

"That led on to the time when the GTC was set up part funded by the EGU. We have a seat on the Committee and through that work closely with BIGGA and the R&A."

Having, as Chairman of the Golf Services Committee, taken the decision to sit on the GTC himself he has seen at much closer hand the work that goes on.

"I give BIGGA the credit for taking the early lead in greenkeeper training. In reality it was greenkeepers providing their own training. If you were to go into any other industry how often is it the worker who trains himself - it is the employers' responsibility."

That is a point which David is keen to promote.

"I think training is something for which we as the EGU representing the employers together with other employer organisations should take more responsibility and that it should be done through the GTC. A lot of the credit for greenkeeper training falls to BIGGA, and the trade, who pay for a

