



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

BIGGA GOLDEN KEY and SILVER KEY MEMBERSHIP

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 discusses the department's latest projects

Following an extremely successful Harrogate Week programme when we offered more education sessions than ever before, our thoughts turn to Harrogate Week 2008. Yes, we have started to plan for next year and we hope to have a full programme of workshops and seminars to meet all needs. You can have your input to the Continue to Learn programme by telling us what and who you would like to see. Contact me: ken@bigga.co.uk or: sami@bigga.co.uk

Compost Seminars in the North West

Environlink North West are presenting three seminars on the commercial advantages of using compost at three golf clubs in the North West Section.

The venues are:

- 8th March 2007
Penrith GC, Penrith 9.30 to 13:00
- 14th March 2007
Worsley Park GC, Manchester 9.30 to 13:00
- 15th March 2007
Blundells Hill GC, Liverpool 9.30 to 13:00

Programme:

Issues of sustainability including recycling targets and diversion from landfill have resulted in the dramatic growth of the composting sector. The composting process can produce high quality fertilisers and soil conditioners.

These workshops aim to demonstrate, not only the chemical, biological and physical benefits of using compost but also the financial advantages of compost use in a commercial situation.

Topics for discussion:

- What is compost and how to purchase it?
- The benefits of using compost
- Compost production and specification
- Quality standards (BSI PAS 100, WRAP specifications) and quality issues
- Compost versus conventional fertilisers: cost comparison
- Specifications for sports turf applications
- Compost use: tools and resources for the sports turf professional

These workshops are aimed specifically at the Sports Turf Industry and will be conducted by Ron Alexander an American horticulturalist and compost specialist with over 21 years experience in the US and UK.

The seminars are free of charge and include refreshments and a light lunch.

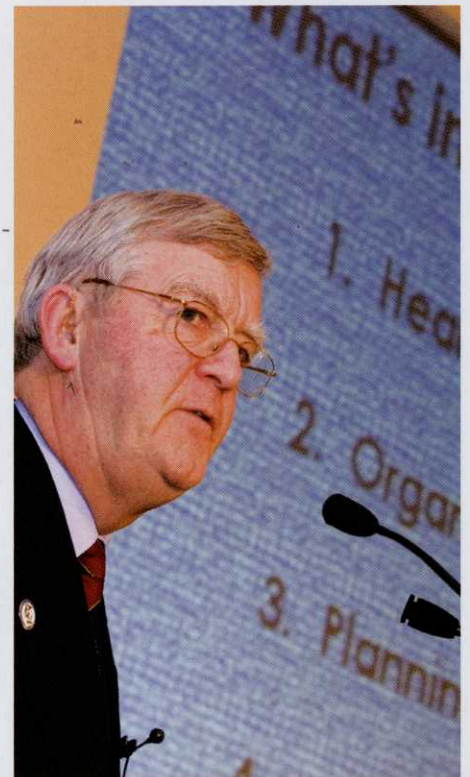
Contact Linda McGeechan on: 01925 813200 to reserve your place.

Safety Management System sponsored by RANSOMES JACOBSEN

Some of you may have seen the launch of the joint AGCS/BIGGA Safety Management System at Harrogate. It is designed to give all golf clubs the tools to develop their own Health and Safety System, making clubs healthier workplaces, to reduce costs due to accidents and injuries and to, hopefully, reduce club insurance premiums.

The System will be Internet based and all members of BIGGA and/or the AGCS will have free access. We are working hard to put the finishing touches to the System and we hope that it will be available on both Internet sites by the end of March.

As this package is worth approximately £5000 to each golf club, it makes sense for all greenkeepers to be members of BIGGA.

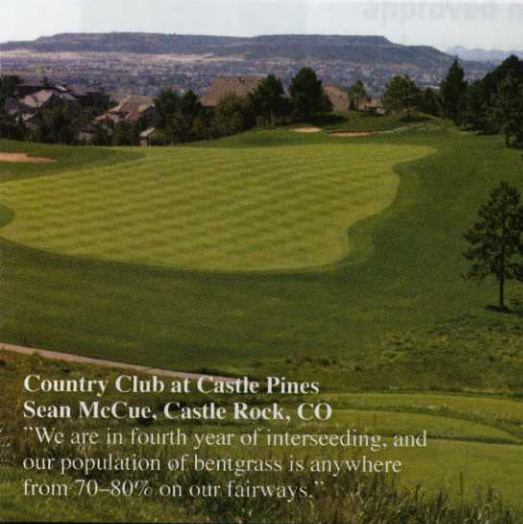


Ken Richardson at launch of SMS

TEE 2 GREEN

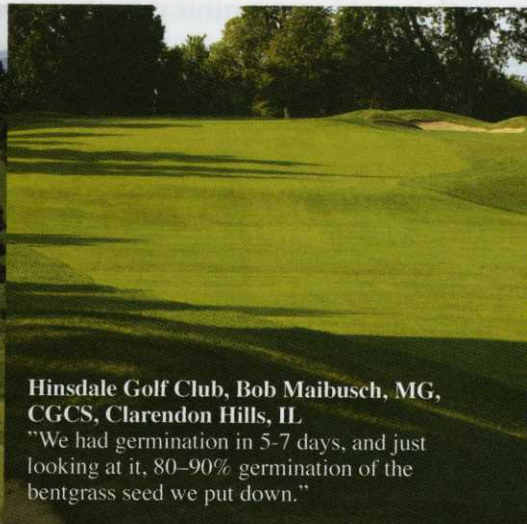
'Interseeding works for us'

HERE IS WHAT WILL WORK FOR YOU



Country Club at Castle Pines
Sean McCue, Castle Rock, CO

"We are in fourth year of interseeding, and our population of bentgrass is anywhere from 70-80% on our fairways."



Hinsdale Golf Club, Bob Maibusch, MG,
CGCS, Clarendon Hills, IL

"We had germination in 5-7 days, and just looking at it, 80-90% germination of the bentgrass seed we put down."



Stone Creek Golf Club
David Phipps, Oregon City, OR

"I've been doing it for two years now, and I've seen an overall improvement of appearance, vigor, and turf quality and texture in all my greens."

"I WILL CONTINUE TO INTERSEED TO KEEP GETTING ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS OF BENTGRASS OUT THERE AND TO HELP ME COMPETE AGAINST THE POA ANNUA POPULATIONS IN OUR FAIRWAYS"

Sean McCue, Country Club at Castle Pines, Castle Rock, CO

These superintendents, from both private clubs and public golf courses across the country, say that interseeding with the advanced bentgrasses from Tee-2-Green is a highly effective method for improving turf.

The interseeding process is simple: After you aerify, put down one of the aggressive Penn bents from Tee-2-Green, such as the Penn A's & G's, Seaside II, PennLinks II, or Penneagle II. Over time, as you slowly build up your seed bank, the aggressive Penn bentgrasses will grow and spread to become

the dominant turf on your greens, fairways, and tees—even out competing many unwanted weeds, including *Poa annua*.

Soon, you will begin to notice that your playing surfaces are growing more dense and playing more consistent. And because the advanced Penn bents are more disease resistant and tolerant of extreme conditions than other bentgrass varieties, your course will be easier and less expensive to manage. The key is to follow these simple interseeding techniques.

"I'VE SEEN AN OVERALL IMPROVEMENT OF APPEARANCE"

David Phipps, Stone Creek Golf Club, Oregon City, OR

The best part is that when you interseed, you can dramatically improve your golf course without disrupting play. Your members and players won't even realize until they

notice a better-playing course. To improve playing conditions on your golf course, don't renovate, interseed with the advanced Penn bents from Tee-2-Green—the finest, most trusted bentgrasses in the world.

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or

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BIGGA welcomes Vanessa Depré as our new Membership Services Officer along with 33 new members to the Association

Membership Update

First Impressions

"Hello! My name is Vanessa Depré and I have just joined BIGGA as the new Membership Services Officer.

I am now 26 years old and I was born in Belgium but spent most of my youth in Surrey. After returning to Belgium and completing my Marketing Bachelor in Brussels I rushed back to England two years ago to work as Communications Executive for The British Horse Society (BHS), Kenilworth, Warwickshire.



PROFILE	Name:	Vanessa Depré
	Pets:	Two cats
	Favourite food:	Steak and chips
	Favourite music:	The Cranberries
	Favourite film:	Firefly
	Hobbies:	Swimming and retail therapy
	All time hero:	Mum and Dad

At the BHS I was responsible for the website, media relations, marketing and writing for various publications (among other things).

I moved to York at the beginning of January and am very excited about my new role within BIGGA. I look forward to meeting as many BIGGA members as I can. I already met quite a few of you at Harrogate and would like to thank you all for making me feel so welcome.

If you need my help in any way or if you have constructive ideas on how to improve BIGGA's membership package email me on: vanessa@bigga.co.uk or ring me on: 01347 833800."

Show Success

Having just joined BIGGA in the middle of January I have utterly and truly been pushed into the deep end. In my second week I was off to Harrogate with no idea what to expect of BIGGA's flagship show. I was very pleasantly surprised and met many friendly faces during this hectic event.

Not having any previous shows to compare Harrogate week 2007 with I am having to rely on Gemma, who told me that Harrogate was a great success this year, even though the "big boys" were missing.

There was a great buzz at the show and both nationals and internationals had positive feedback. We recruited many new members and had a lot of renewals. Our new BIGGA clip on blazer badges were very popular. If you didn't get a chance to buy one at the Show they are also available directly from the BIGGA Headquarters for £26 on: 01347 833800.

I hope you all enjoyed yourself and I would like to say a big thank you to all who came down to Harrogate to support us. I hope to see you all again next year.



BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

Ian Craig, West
Jeff O'malley, East
Kevin Webster, East

NORTHERN REGION

James Heaton, Northern
John Williams, North Wales

MIDLAND REGION

Ross Cook, Berk, Buck & Oxon
Alan Higgins, Midland
Alec Horsburgh, Berk, Buck & Oxon
Ian Richards, Berk, Buck & Oxon
Thomas Weaver, Midland

SOUTH EAST REGION

Dorian Ansell, Essex
Darren Burton, Kent
Douglas Butler, Surrey
James Collins, Kent
Mark Halverson, East Anglia

Lee Hamilton, Kent

Graham Hipkin, Essex
Kevin Hungerford, Sussex
Andrew Naismith, Sussex
Alan Smith, Essex

Timothy Stigwood, East Anglia
Wayne Syres, Kent

STH WEST & WALES REGION

Gerald Clark, South West
Ben Cuming, South Coast
John Halley, South Coast
Benjamin Hollands, South West
Mark Tucker, Devon & Cornwall

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hugh Farry, N Ireland

INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS

Kristian Munk, Denmark
Robert Lof, Sweden



STUDENT MEMBER

Sven Livesey, 42

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Ian Vanson, North West

GOLD KEY MEMBER

William Tuer, East Midland

Harrogate week PRIZE DRAW

Congratulations to the four people who won a Nokia 6233 mobile phone at Harrogate week:

*Marcus Phelps from Filton GC
Robert McCabe from Flamborough Head GC
Joshua Taylor from Thawnhurst Manor
Francis Kempster from Glen Gorse*



FEBRUARY'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a monthly draw to win a £10 Music Voucher. Our congratulations go Norman Fenwick of Ipswich Golf Club.



Control of Substances Harmful to Health (COSHH)

BIGGA'S new Health & Safety series produced by Xact



All employers are required to assess the risk of harm to their employees' health from exposure to substances used or encountered within their working environment. Generally, these are thought of as chemicals used for work such as cleaning products, pesticides, lubricants etc. They can usually be easily identified from the product container which will carry a hazard warning label depicting the particular hazard posed by the substance. Manufacturers also have a duty to supply safety data sheets which have information on the physical and chemical properties of the substance. Less commonly understood is that COSHH also applies to dusts generated by work and biological risks e.g. Lymes disease as well.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD START BY

- Making an inventory of the substances used and encountered within the workplace and then categorising these as hazardous or non-hazardous. Remember to include dusts, fumes and biological type hazards which may be generated by work or are encountered in the workplace.

Hazardous substances are usually identified by hazard warning symbols on the packaging:



IRRITANT
OF
HARMFUL



CORROSIVE



TOXIC



DANGEROUS
FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT



HIGHLY
OF
EXTREMELY
FLAMMABLE



OXIDISING



EXPLOSIVE

- Ensuring that manufacturer safety data sheets are available for those products classified as hazardous. The manufacturer or supplier is obliged to provide these by law
- Assessing how these products are delivered, stored and used within the working environment. As well as planned uses, the assessment should also include disposal of waste containers and surplus materials, unplanned events such as spillages, fires etc

From the assessment of use decide who could be harmed and how from use of the substance. As well as the direct users other persons need to be considered e.g. cleaning staff, the general public, Club members, neighbours. When assessing the risk of harm consider how people may come into contact with the substance

- Inhalation of dusts and vapours
- Skin absorption of liquids and gases
- Ingestion from eating, smoking etc
- Injection from sharp edges

The duration of exposure also needs to be taken into account as the degree of harm is directly related to the time spent using the substance. Many substances have workplace exposure levels which give an indication of the safe level of exposure over a working day. This information can be found in the HSE publication 'EH40 Occupational Exposure Limits'

- Decide on the control measures to limit the exposure to as low as reasonably practicable e.g. stop using the product, use something less harmful, use engineering controls and as a last resort issue/use personal protective equipment.
- The control measures should be briefed to persons using the substance and monitoring carried out to ensure that the safety controls are observed.

As can be seen a COSHH assessment is all about how a substance is used. It should be remembered that a manufacturer's safety data sheet which details the properties of a substance is not a substitute for a COSHH assessment.



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DARK NIGHTS, DARK THOUGHTS

For some time I have pondered with the idea of offering my support and help to those among us who struggle to control their drinking. My name is Alan and I am a grateful recovering alcoholic. I am also a Course Manager and at a course with a high reputation and am active within BIGGA.

I haven't drunk for well over 3 years now and I no longer have that craving for alcohol that always ended up the same way – depressed, fearful of being found out, and living a life of pretence. My present state of mind and way of life has proved to me that life doesn't have to be the way it was.

During my latter years as a practicing alcoholic I was Course Manager at a club in the South East of England. I can remember doing my job but hating every moment and resenting the people I worked for and worked with. Away from work, life at home wasn't much better. My only friend, or so I thought was the bottle. I was intolerant of everything and everybody and only had one priority – myself!

Since I have stopped drinking, people who have the same illness have shown me the way to get better and gain a life that is quite incredible, where I am totally at ease with every situation and where each day I learn so much more about myself. I know what a stressful job we have. At times, you can feel very lonely and under great pressure. It is only too easy to forget about your woes by turning to the bottle. But your feelings and emotions don't change. The following day things are usually many times worse in your head – mainly because you haven't dealt with anything, so what do you do? – You drink again. Sheer insanity – but this is the nature of the illness. And as for being able to admit you have a problem – it's just impossible.

All I can tell any of you who can honestly identify with anything I have said, is that I am no longer like that. I had to admit my problem, ask for help and work on it one day at a time. It wasn't easy in the first instance. I so much wanted to speak to someone who not only understood my illness but who knew the job as well. At that time it was not possible but I vowed that when totally confident in my sobriety I would offer my help to any who needed it. With this in mind I contacted the board of BIGGA and the way forward for me to offer this help is by writing this letter for publication in the magazine. I am here to listen, identify and show you what I have done to recover from this killer disease.

If you need someone to speak to in total confidence then either phone me on 07939 806795 or e-mail me at alcoholpalan@aol.com. I don't need to know who you are or where you work but only you know if your life is becoming unmanageable. The first step of asking for help is a very difficult one but the longer you take, the harder it gets, and more devastating are the effects on you and those around you.

I am here to help not to preach, so please get in touch if you feel the need.

A friend

DEAR GREENKEEPERS BIG 'G' 4 BIG 'C'

Finding a way to favour the finer grasses is no easy job. The Danish example shows us that working together in groups can help forward progress. It is true to say that people do better when working together.

The problem when favouring the finer grasses is that every situation is unique and the answer for each course is slightly different. The Danes have come up with at least 3 models so far to our knowledge! "Off the peg" maintenance programmes don't tend to work in differing circumstances. You will need to use your own skill, judgement and experience to help find out what is best for you, but you should also try to draw on the experience of others. Talking to each other about your programmes, experiences and even sharing the results from experiments will only help you progress. Pool the knowledge. This will result in better turf for golf, which is what we all want.

If you want to make headway with the finer grasses and fulfil the potential of your greens then get yourselves together. Talking and listening will breed understanding. Believe us, the development of the finer grasses will happen if you work together.

The future of our game depends upon it... it's your honour.

Best regards

Richard Windows, STRI Turfgrass Agronomist
Henry Bechelet, STRI Turfgrass Agronomist

I am currently setting up a free gardening scheme for terminally ill cancer patients called Big 'G' 4 Big 'C'. I will be offering either a full or partial service. The full service will be for people who can no longer fully maintain their gardens and the partial service is for people who can no longer carry out the heavier maintenance tasks. For example, hedge trimming, lawn mowing or border digging. These services will be completely free of charge, but if a donation is made based on the work carried out then it would be gratefully received. The working area for this scheme will be Hampshire, east Dorset and south Wiltshire but if I get enough response then I would consider expanding the area covered.

The main reason behind setting up this service is so that people who were once very active can still enjoy the gardens they have worked so hard creating even if they are finding it increasingly difficult to continue maintaining them. The idea for the scheme came from watching my father and father-in-law, who both have cancer, find it more and more difficult to be as active as they used to be.

At the moment I am asking people to contact me if they are interested in the scheme either for themselves or someone they know so that I can judge the need for the scheme and the resources needed. Please visit <http://www.bigga4bigc.org.uk> to find out more, and you can check for updates at <http://blog.bigga4bigc.org.uk>

To register your interest or support you can contact me in the following ways: Answering Service: 020 8133 2719; Website Form: www.bigga4bigc.org.uk or Email: info@bigga4bigc.org.uk

Many thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.
Edward Smith

OPEN ACCOMMODATION WANTED

The 15 year-old son of a family friend is looking for bed and breakfast accommodation in Carnoustie for the week of the Open Championship. A golf lover, he has secured a position as a Scoreboard Carrier for the Championship but his family are no longer able to attend so he is looking for accommodation within easy access of the golf course and is quite willing to pay.

If anyone is in a position to help could they contact me at the following address:

Richard Barker, 27 Spinney Hill Drive, Loughborough, Leicester, LE11 3LB, Tel: 07919 652950

STIMPMETER PSYCHOSIS

Good to see my old pal Dave Woodbyrne once again sharing his well-thought out arguments with the greenkeeping world in December's letters page. I agree with everything he says about the stimpmeter psychosis we all seem to have bought into, but unfortunately I feel the condition is just a sad reflection of the way we have all become completely obsessed with figures and statistics.

I might have been stuck out here on the fringes of civilisation for too long, and may be looking at things from the rosy side of the fence, but it is my opinion that 95% of golfers couldn't actually give a stuff about stimpmeter readings, or indeed, more importantly, how fast the greens are. Granted, you are always going to get a few bravado-fuelled clowns who have a burning desire to putt off the front of all their greens, but on the whole, nearly every sensible human being will take true greens over fast ones every single time. Line them up and ask them honestly whether they would give up a 2 feet of speed in the Summer for year round golf, instead of lightning fast in July and unplayable sponges from September to May, and all but the village idiots will bite the hand off you.

So if the golfers don't care, why are we doing it-destroying the structure of our greens by continually pushing past boundaries that we are not actually being asked to cross? Is it the golfers we are trying to impress, because we are incapable of educating them as to why they can't actually have European Tour speeds in April, or are we actually going past the limits in some vain attempt to impress our peer group, scared to death that Joe down the road might tell the boys at the Section event that our greens are a bit sticky. Because if that's the case, then that's really, really, sad.

I sincerely doubt whether anyone ever gives Dave Woodbyrne any flak for having slow greens, even though he maintains them using traditional methods, with traditional cutting heights and traditional stimpmeter readings. I spoke to a number of people who played at Southernness during the Scottish Amateur last Summer, and to a man they had nothing but praise for what they had played over. Which just goes to show that quality greenkeeping is about good communication with your membership and common sense, and is definitely not about bravado."

Kind regards Simon Freeman

GOOD MAINTENANCE IS THE KEY TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Investing in, and getting a return on, a golf course project is not an exact science. There is plenty of evidence from around the world of courses being constructed and then, within a relatively short period, changing hands two or three times before any profits are realised from the business.

As you would expect, there may be many contributing factors behind the success or failure of a golf course. An ill-conceived business plan with unrealistic financial expectations, or over-investment during the design and construction phase, will increase the pressures on the day-to-day operation of the course. Similarly, poor quality of service is often identified as a reason for low levels of repeat business from non-members.



However, one aspect that is often not given due consideration during the early planning stages, and subsequently during operation, is long-term course maintenance. Although it should be recognised as a fundamental element of all golf course operations, maintenance is often relegated on the list of priorities behind clubhouse design or renovation.

A good maintenance regime will contribute to the long-term success of the business. However, problems with the course caused by poor design or construction will increase the pressures on the maintenance staff, quite possibly leading to high levels of reinvestment before the course can realise its true potential.

The simple fact is that developers must take into account the true maintenance requirements of the course when they are planning and budgeting. If a course cannot be maintained to the standards of the developer, course architect or paying customer, then it is unlikely to remain as intended and is never going to become the financial success envisaged.

So what course elements impact so heavily on the level of maintenance required?

The first and most obvious is the type of course that is to be built. Golf courses come in a number of styles and each one requires different levels of maintenance. A traditional links course like Portmarnock, in Ireland, or The Old Course at St Andrews, requires different levels of input (eg, fertilisers, water, manpower) compared to courses such as Wentworth or Valderrama.

Similarly, the intended customer base may well determine the level of maintenance. A municipal course with £20 green fees is unlikely to be presented to the same level as a high-end private members club, or a 5-star resort course charging in excess of £200 per round. Therefore the budget allocated for maintenance must reflect the expectations of the customer.

Golf course architects have a responsibility to their clients to explain the initial construction cost and long-term maintenance cost of their design features. For example, the number and style of bunkers will make a significant difference to the maintenance budget. If bunkers cannot be prepared using a ride-on bunker rake, and must be done manually, this will significantly increase the labour bill for the course, a problem in areas of the world where labour is getting increasingly expensive.

Likewise, if the style of the course requires a lot of definition between the playing areas – that is, three or four different heights of cut – this will increase the budget required for machinery.

A brief list of other course elements that impact on maintenance would also include:

- The number of trees on the course (shade affecting grass coverage, as well as leaf collection)
- Degree of slopes (machines are generally limited to 21 degree slopes to comply with health and safety regulations)
- The total irrigated area (is it limited to the greens and tees or does it extend to fairways and even the rough?)
- The extent of other non-playing but maintained areas such as landscapes or practice facilities and so forth

To this list we can also add the choice of grass type. This is a contentious subject and one that has been addressed in many forums by experts from around the world. There are those that are committed to the traditional, indigenous grass varieties, and others to exploring the opportunities afforded by the hybrid grass types on offer. The key point is that everyone involved must understand the implications of their choice both in the short and the long term.

Seashore Paspallum is a salt-tolerant grass species originating from the dunes of South Africa. It has been seen by some as an answer to the issue of growing grass for golf in areas with limited potable water resources. However, although it will indeed tolerate high levels of salt in the water, the soil profile itself still requires the salts to be removed through leaching using 'clean' water. If the salts are not removed, over time it is likely to cause a breakdown in the soil structure itself.

It is also yet to be fully understood what the long-term implications of using water with a very high salt content will have on irrigation system components and maintenance machinery. We may not know the definitive answer to this for another 10 to 20 years, but it is safe to say that there will be hidden costs associated with the use of Paspallum.



Spring city



Ride on bunker rake at K club



Watering at Pinehurst

By Andrew Brown

There is also no doubt that changes in climate and stricter regulations governing the use of fertilisers and chemicals will cause a review of suitable grass types over the next decade.

The simple point for any prospective golf developer to remember is that whatever the architect says, the more detail that is designed into the course, the more the costs of maintaining the course will rise. Maintaining a golf course must be effective, efficient, economic and above all safe. If a course cannot be maintained using these basic principles then it will either have to be changed or it will fail altogether.

The biggest issues facing golf courses and golf course development are environmental and economic. The drive to find new markets and financial opportunities for golf must be balanced by the real environmental issues we face today. If this balance is not respected then we will see a rise in anti-golf opinion and further restrictions being imposed from local, national or regional governments.

As mentioned earlier, from an economic viewpoint there is also a balance to strike between the level of investment and the return on that investment. The return comes from a combination of membership take-up (if part of the economic model) daily green fee business, and other money-generating activities held at the facility. To maximise the return a club must understand its customers' expectations.

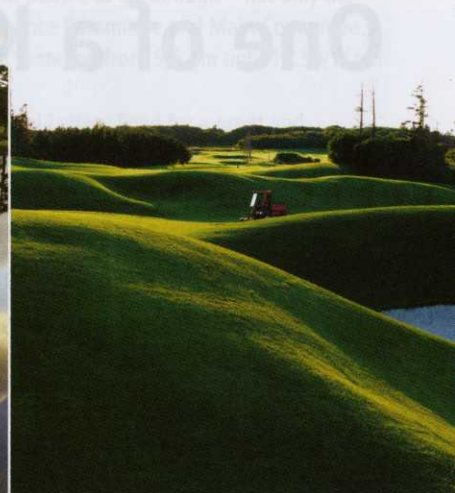
These vary depending on what the customer is looking for from the golf club. Few if any private, male-orientated clubs are being built today. Instead we are seeing more daily fee courses which want to offer the casual golfer the club member's experience without the long-term commitment.

Clubs face a challenge as they compete with others in the area for the same business. This means that each aspect of the club has to be right: from the initial tee-booking process and welcome received on arrival, to the club house facilities for changing and the dining options before and after the round of golf. But of course it doesn't stop at the clubhouse. The experience the golfer has on the course is the single factor that will determine whether they return for a second round in the future.

So what is the golfer looking for when he or she is out on the course? Well I believe it comes down to two words: quality and consistency. That does not mean that every course should be like Augusta in April or Valderrama in September. Neither does it mean that every course should be the same. What it does mean though is that a golfer wants to see a quality of preparation that allows them to enjoy the experience of the course and play a round of golf that won't have them pulling their hair out. Poor greens or severely-penal rough are not going to make any golfer return in a hurry!



Bears Club



PEI Canada

The challenge for the Course Manager is to achieve these dual goals of quality and consistency within the tight constraints of their financial budget and time. The continuous need to do more with less! To meet this challenge the maintenance staff must have good levels of training and education, high quality, productive equipment to use on the course and good support and advice from the other professionals working with the club, be they agronomists, architects, irrigation designers, contractors or suppliers.

The proliferation of legislation affecting what can and cannot be done on a golf course is now taking up a significant amount of the Course Manager's time. A short but by no means exhaustive list of some of the legal paperwork a club must deal with illustrates the problem:

- CDM (Construction Design and Management)
- COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)
- ROPS (Roll Over Protection Systems on machinery)
- EIA (Environmental Impact Assessments)
- CAMS or similar (Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy – affecting the ability to abstract water for use in irrigation systems in the UK)

This item on the list has become particularly relevant today. The increasing pressure on water has led to many courses experiencing restrictions for the first time since the mid-1970s. This pressure is certainly not going to go away in the short term and is more likely to increase. Clubs have recognised the need for a well thought out water management plan to ensure they can adequately justify their water use. Failure to do this could result in further severe restrictions being imposed and even a loss of abstraction rights.

The availability of a reliable water supply is a key factor in the long-term viability of a course. Golf management companies looking to add to their portfolio are unlikely to consider an investment in a club that cannot guarantee its water for at least the medium term. In southern Europe we have already seen developments delayed and even cancelled due to a perceived lack of an available supply, despite the intended use of treated effluent or desalinated water.

Course maintenance is a fundamental component of every golf facility. For the course to reach its full potential it should be treated with as much attention to detail as any other aspect of the business right from the initial planning stage through to the on-going operational strategy. If developers, investors and facility managers understand this and commit sufficient resources, they are far more likely to end up with a sustainable course, in all senses of the word, that they can be proud of.

Andrew Brown is Corporate Accounts Manager for Toro Europe.



Pretty Golf

Course Feature

One of a Kind

Sunningdale Ladies' Golf Club is considered the second oldest ladies' club in England. It's unique in that the Captain and Ladies' Committee are responsible for the running of the club. The Committee also appoint the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary, and members are expected to assist in the routine tasks of the day to day running of the club. Melissa Toombs spoke to Head Greenkeeper, Peter Tedder to explore further why Sunningdale Ladies' is one of a kind.



Left to right – Head Greenkeeper Peter Tedder and Assistants Phil Bovington and Dave Barnes

"The ladies used to play on the main Sunningdale course but neither them or the men liked it very much so it was decided a nine hole golf course should be designed, just for the ladies, to keep them out of each others' hair," explained Head Greenkeeper, Peter Tedder.

Over 104 years old, founder Mr Edward Ernest Villiers – a member of Sunningdale GC, started the ladies' club in 1902 – he is thought to have been approached by Mr T A Roberts to form the club, ensuring the ladies would have a course independent of Sunningdale.

"The course was originally a nine hole and went to an 18 hole in the mid 30s," continued Peter, who heads the greenstaff of three.

In 1972 the course underwent a reconfiguration due to the lady members having to move out of their clubhouse and build a new one.



The Queen Mother was Patron of Sunningdale Ladies

The club, which allows men to join, has 60 artisan members, 40 associates, around 40 juniors and 260 ladies. Wednesday is Associates day at Sunningdale Ladies' just as Tuesday is ladies day at traditional golf clubs.

The club also boasts Royal connections as HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother was originally Patron of the club. After her sad death her grandson, Prince Andrew (The Duke of York, Earl of Inverness and Baron Killyleagh) took on the role.

20-10-02

Dear Stanley

I have been asked by the Secty of the S'dale Golf Club, if I would act as Hon. Sec. in organising a committee of Ladies residing in this neighbourhood to start a Ladies Golf Club in connection with the S'dale Club. The following have agreed to serve

Hon Mrs Erskine

Lady Barclay

Lady Dyer

Mrs Edward Villiers

I wonder if you would ask Lady Alice if she would consent to join this committee. I would have written to her myself, but as I have not the honour of her acquaintance I thought I had better write to you. The subs of the club is to be £1-1 a year with no other liability. This will include the use of the new ladies links just laid out the use of the Club house and the Dormy House for luncheon or tea if required. As it is most necessary to have an influential committee to start the Club. I hope Lady Alice will consent to let her name appear with the others I have mentioned.

The Dormy House Club will manage all finance and the committee is really only to elect members and to make suggestions for the convenience of members. I understand that Lady Alice and yourself are shortly starting for India but I hope that will not prevent Lady Alice joining the committee at once, as her advice will be most useful to the Club when she returns.

Please forgive me for troubling you with this letter

Yours sincerely

Edward E Villiers

This letter was written to Lord Stanley at the suggestion of Mr Harry Colt, the Secretary of Sunningdale GC

Despite its location, the club is a poor relation to Sunningdale GC. The lushous, expensive houses that you pass on your way to Sunningdale Ladies' and the name Sunningdale itself, would imply wealth and security at the club, however, on the other side of the fence money doesn't flow quite so easily.

"We are the poor relation without a doubt but we are completely separate golf clubs, we are nothing to do with Sunningdale whatsoever, we are an individual golf club but everyone thinks, because of the area and the name, that we are up there side by side with Sunningdale GC. I mean, because we are pretty much on the same soil structure as them, we can achieve at times of the year the same qualities in certain areas, for instance the greens, but the big problem is that everyone sees us as one," explained Peter.

Phil Bovington and Dave Barnes assist HG Peter with the upkeep of the beautiful heathland course, and it's hard work at times. The club doesn't have an irrigation system. The greenkeepers use hosepipes and sprinklers from taps located around the golf course, which run off the mains.

"It takes about six hours to water the greens properly and about the same time to water the tees. They all have to be done in stages and there's

a certain routine we have to go through to water them, you can't just go out and put all 18 greens on at once because we have meters around the course – so we are looking at three moves just to get the greens watered and similar for the tees," continued Peter, who is regularly out on the course at midnight in the summer months ensuring his greens receive a little water.

SUNNINGDALE LADIES' GOLF CLUB											S.S.S. 60		Handicap		
HEALTH AND SAFETY (SEE OVER)											Strokes Received.....				
Name						Competition.....									
Marker's Score	Hole	Yards	Par	Stroke Index	Player's Score	Won+Lost-Halved 0	Marker's Score	Hole	Yards	Par	Stroke Index	Player's Score	Won+Lost-Halved 0		
	1	194	3	7			10	157	3	14					
	2	172	3	9			11	236	3	6					
	3	167	3	17			12	236	4	12					
	4	321	4	3			13	256	4	2					
	5	154	3	11			14	155	3	8					
	6	212	3	5			15	133	3	18					
	7	235	4	13			16	285	4	4					
	8	273	4	1			17	139	3	16					
	9	142	3	15			18	149	3	10					
	OUT	1870	30				IN	1746	30						
							OUT	1870	30						
Marker's Signature							TOTAL		3616		60				
Player's Signature							HANDICAP								
Date							NET SCORE								

As soon as Peter took up his post at the club, he pushed for an irrigation system but unfortunately there just wasn't the means to purchase one. "The Committee changed, the Captain changed, so we tried again a couple of years later but there was still no money in the pot, so at this moment in time we can't really see it ever happening but who knows, we'll keep trying. There are a lot of people to go through – not only the Greens Committee but also the Finance Committee and Main Committee."

The greenstaff do most of their watering from 5/6 pm until 10.30/11pm – sometimes 12.

The Club approached the National Lottery Fund for a grant and unfortunately got turned down, "I think they thought we were having a laugh," said Peter. "They saw the name and immediately assumed we were a wealthy club."

The course hasn't undergone any dramatic changes during Peter's 19 years at Sunningdale Ladies,

"We've changed many bunker banks, lots of pathways and a few tee extensions but basically the course is pretty much how it was designed all those years ago. We haven't really made too many changes, we've just altered a few banks here and there," said a dedicated Peter.

"We have tried for many changes, some of them have happened. The club has come quite a long way though in the last 20 years and I think before that the club had stood still for a long, long time."

Peter's dad was actually Head Greenkeeper at Sunningdale Ladies for nine years prior to him taking on the position.

"There's only ever been three full time greenkeeping staff here. One of the changes we were after and have been after for many years actually happened about two years ago, and we were able to get a fourth man. Unfortunately just over a year after that we had one greenkeeper leave and move on, and we were back down to three. We then needed a new piece of equipment so the fourth greenkeeper never got re-employed."



The smaller building to the left used to be the clubhouse before the club underwent its reconfiguration



Course Feature



The greenstaff have named their fourth member of staff - the Procore – Bob

From time to time we have had people come and help over the summer – part time summer help, but not for the whole summer, a few weeks between their university studies and things.”

It's unfortunate that Sunningdale Ladies' seems to have acquired a reputation for being a rich, problem-free club, that's well kitted out - The greenkeepers have a piece of equipment for every job they do but their kit is quite old - and therefore they are unable to get the help they really need. I wondered if HG Peter found himself envious of the copious amounts of kit Sunningdale GC have.

“Without a doubt we do and it would certainly make our lives a lot easier if we had some of that. We do feel that they've got what they've got and we've got what we've got and at the end of the day, unfortunately, that's how it is – there's no malice at all between the two but it would be nice to have that little bit more. We do feel that we're chasing around everyday and there's no time for rest. Certain jobs have to be done at the club and they're done, but with the levels of staff that we've got it's very difficult to get it done,” explained Peter.

Last summer proved to be hard a season for Peter and his team - although they were lucky enough not to have restrictions put on their water usage during the drought.

“It was a slightly harder year for us because of the weather but it was a god send that we still had water so we could still carry on and use it the same as we ever did – I mean we don't use colossal amounts of water anyway, because



Two air raid shelters lie under this beautiful heathland course.

we are only on the mains,” said a grateful Peter.

“This winter we're doing a lot of repairs around bunkers, a tee extension on the 10th tee – doubling the size, the tee at the moment is only about 80 square metres and we've looking at having around 160-180 there by the time we've finished the extension. We have also got an 180sqm tee that needs re-levelling as it's at a downward angle to the hole because it used to be played in the opposite direction. We'll do these jobs in house – we are going to get some help on the second tee by some of the Associates because it is a slightly larger area.”

The club were faced with more problems early last year, when someone broke into the maintenance sheds and stole a lot of the equipment.

“Everything now has to be locked up and alarmed every time we leave – even if we go to the back of the property and we're doing something in the back garage, then we've still got to lock up and alarm the front just in case someone decides to come up the drive and walk away with all of our handheld tools, as they did before.”

Peter worries that the club doesn't always spend the money it should be spending on equipment and jokes, “Women definitely come from the domestic point of view, viewing that a couple of hundred pounds is a lot of money but of course to a golf club, a couple of hundred pounds is nothing to spend!”

“The club itself is a very bubbly place and societies come here year in year out, as they love the course so much,” smiled Peter.

