



Gang mowers, such as the Lloyds Leda, remained the key fairway mowing tool until comparatively recently. Modern ride-on fairway mowers can now deliver a quality of cut that would have seemed far in excess of what was required back in 1977

THREE DECADES OF EQUIPMENT CHANGE

By James de Havilland

Cast your mind back to the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. If it were possible to go back and look at how a golf course was managed back then, what would be the key changes?

For those who have been responsible for maintaining golf courses over the past 30 years or more, the expansion of year round play has to be one of the most noticeable developments. The luxury of a closed season has long gone, with year round pressure to keep the course in tip top condition arguably being the biggest challenge in the past 30 years.

That this demand has coincided with rapid equipment development is either a happy coincidence or a key reason why demands have been

able to rise; it depends upon individual viewpoints. Certainly Norman Fenwick, Course Manager at the Ipswich Golf Club suggests modern aeration equipment is among the mechanical developments that have helped to keep courses in play throughout the winter.

"Modern aeration equipment can be tailored to suit the season and weather enabling you to make it do what is required", he says. "We used to have just the choice of a slitter, chisel or solid tine aerators, these only really working effectively when the conditions were right for them. Now we have a range of needle through to hollow core tines that we can employ to do a specific job. The operation speed and variety of aeration equipment now available is a great help to us".



By the 1980s, Ransomes was producing its own greens mowers, the pictured Motor 180 and Tournament Triplex 171 being early examples. By 1984, the Triplex MarkII had a choice of brush or cutter attachments, quality of cut taking a useful step forwards



The Ransomes-Hahn Tournament Triplex was produced in the US, Ransomes importing it as a response to the Toro Greensmaster III. This first came to the UK in 1970 and was imported by Flymo International. In the USA, Jacobsen was the first to develop a ride-on greens mower in 1968. Powered by a 1.2hp petrol engine, the Ransomes-Hahn offered a 1.70m cut and could be supplied with verticutting, spiking and utility mowing reels. The first machine was sold in 1972, with 300 units having been sold by summer 1974



Evolution in greens mower design gathered momentum quickly, the Ransomes GT models first seen in 1987 featuring Kubota diesel power as an option, full hydrostatic drive and cylinder backlapping

Mr Fenwick is not alone in this view, of course, good aeration now being accepted as one of the key management disciplines that a good greenkeeper can exploit to keep greens and fairways playable, and looking good, year round. That is not to suggest there are hard and fast rules on how and when any type of aeration should be carried out. Individual experience continues to outweigh 'text book' practice, but there cannot be many in the industry who would want to see their equipment list pruned of their aeration kit.

"Mowing equipment has seen dramatic change as well. As recently as the mid-90s the trailed gang fairway mower was still dominant. The development and almost universal acceptance of ride-on fairway mowers has definitely seen an improvement in the quality of fairways", adds Mr Fenwick. "I would not say modern kit is necessarily more productive, but it certainly does a better job. For a start the latest machines will produce more cuts per metre and can be fitted with groomers and brushes".

He also adds that being able to mow in different directions is a key advantage over trailed gangs, a point those who have operated a set of venerable Lloyds Leda or Ransomes Sportscutter units will appreciate. Look at photographs and existing footage of past championships and the way in which the fairways are mown that will help to date them.

Ride-on fairway mowers have also evolved, the early models having cylinder dimensions that are now more likely to be associated with a commercial mower. That is not to say all fairway machines were like this. The Jacobsen LF100 of the early 90's demonstrated the way this type of equipment would evolve into much lighter machines. The ultra light designs now available would no doubt have been seen more suitable for greens mowing back in 1977.

"I think ride-on greens mowers were another key development, these machines starting to make an increasing impact from the 1980's",

adds Mr Fenwick. "Hand mowing will retain its place, no doubt, but the quality of cut offered by current ride-on greens mowers is such that I can see little advantage using a pedestrian machine, even for tournaments. The narrow stripe from hand mowing remains an advantage, but not much else".

The way in which golfing has evolved and course management developed in the past 30 years has been extraordinary. The demands for quality play have been driven by keen golfers. No longer content with playing a handful of local courses, modern golfers have not just greater national course experience but international exposure as well. For course managers this has helped to drive improvements in course quality, and not just for a few months of the year.

"Not so long ago green speeds were not necessarily known, with few golfers even knowing what a Stimp Meter was. Now green speeds are better understood," adds Mr Fenwick. "We now aim to get our green speeds as similar as possible and use Stimp readings as a tool. A few years back, this would have been seen as excessive even when preparing for a tournament. Now we try to maintain consistent readings year round. Yes, demands have certainly changed".

So would Mr Fenwick like to roll back the clock, and find himself in charge at the Ipswich back in 1977? In a word, no. The pressures in 1977 were still there, make no mistake, but they were a different set of pressures. Reverting to what are now obsolete practices is not something he would relish. It would, however, be a revelation to see how modern practice would have been received back in 1977.

"We have higher levels of staff training and standards are certainly a lot higher," he concludes. "So now we have the equipment and staff to help ensure the course can be maintained to an extremely high standard. The key pressure is to maintain a consistently high quality throughout the year."



The tine armoury that can be fitted to a modern aeration tool, such as the Wiedenmann Terra Spike models, is considerable. For many, the impact this type of equipment has had on the modern game is considerable, enabling many courses to remain in play year round



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New Products



NEW GREENS MOWERS

John Deere's new 180C and 220C models are among the lightest walk-behind greens mowers currently available to greenkeepers and groundsmen. Based on the previous B series machines, these new C Series mowers feature increased durability and reliability, and have been designed to meet the latest emissions and environmental regulations.

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John Deere's latest addition to the T-Series range of Gator utility vehicles, the new TH 6x4 diesel model, is faster and more powerful than its predecessor, while also offering improved braking, increased carrying capacity and enhanced operator comfort, especially on rough terrain.

 www.johndeere.co.uk



GPS-BASED GOLFERS AID

Using the latest satellite positioning technology to measure distance around the golf course, Caddy Lite, a new pocket-sized British electronic development from GolfPlus, is set to help golfers of any ability to improve their game and to reduce their scores by knowing their live yardages.

 01494 795110
or visit www.golf-plus.co.uk



WHERE THERE'S MUCK THERE'S A MUCK TRUCK

Steve Eaton first used a Muck Truck back in 2003 and was so impressed that he didn't buy the Company, but he did start up a new venture called Severnside Plant, dedicated to selling the product and one of Muck Truck's biggest dealers.

The Muck Truck has a carrying capacity of 6 cu ft. (220 litres) and can climb up to 38 degrees carrying a quarter of a tonne.

 0845 838 5480
or visit: www.mucktruck.co.uk



LET US SPRAY

Rochford Garden Machinery has been appointed distributor of the Inter range of compression and knapsack sprayers.

This comprehensive line-up of sprayers include a starter model in the 1litre capacity Intereko 1.5 unit featuring wide opening mouth, Viton closing valve and adjustable conical nozzle.

 01963 828000
or visit www.intersprayers.co.uk



80 SERIES BREAKER

Bobcat has launched the new Bobcat HB280 hydraulic breaker, the smallest model in the company's 80 Series. Like the other breaker models in the 80 series, the HB280 is designed to meet customer requirements for improved performance, efficiency and reliability.

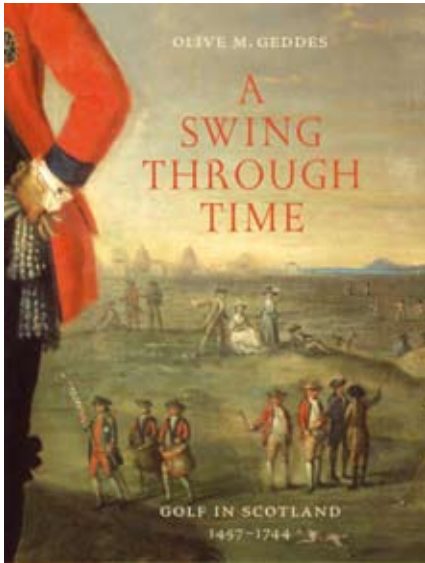
 www.bobcat.com



A SWING THROUGH TIME

NMS Enterprises Ltd, has launched a revised edition of A Swing Through Time: Golf in Scotland 1457-1744. Enlightening its readers about the 'Dark Ages' of golf, the book travels through time on a journey from the games early illegitimacy to the establishment of the first golfing societies and clubs in the mid 1700s.

i Email publishing@nms.ac.uk



BOOSTING EFFICIENCY

Toro has launched two new turf maintenance products designed to improve efficiency for greenkeepers and groundsmen – an eco-friendly e2065 Workman electric utility vehicle and a time saving roller attachment for the ProCore 648 aerator.

i www.toro.com



HEAVY DUTY ROTARY

Hayter has introduced a new 21" Heavy Duty-Walk Behind Rotary Mower aimed specifically at the commercial market. Designed and manufactured by Hayter's parent company Toro, the machine will cope with the toughest conditions but is still competitively priced. Particular attention has been paid to operator safety and comfort, especially vibration levels.

i 01279 723444
or visit: www.hayter.co.uk



DOMESTIC CHAINSAW

ECHO has launched a new chainsaw, the CS-270WES.

The CS-270WES provides the operator with a 30cm bar operating on a 26.9cm³ engine. At 3.1kg, this is one of the lightest ECHO chainsaws available, making it very attractive to the domestic user, being easy to operate, and very well balanced.

i www.countax.com



UTILITY BUGGY

DQL (Diesel Quads Ltd) has launched The Utility Buggy 400cc Diesel. Ideal for many purposes, with diesel economy and good ground clearance, the 'UtilityBug' is surefooted and stable over rough terrain, while giving a comfortable ride.

i 01407 839393
or visit: www.dieselquads.com



FROM GOLF COURSE TO BSC COURSE

By Paul Cook

In GI last August I asked “Who’d be a Greenkeeper ... and wrote of my intention to go get myself a degree ... well here I am, writing again, this time from my en-suite room in halls of residence at Myerscough College, Preston. I’ve just sat my first year exams...

Adjusting to college life was tough to say the least – the sudden switch from the long hours demanded by a televised tournament, straight off the plane and into the lecture room, a different lifestyle and a different culture.

Until now free time was precious and had to be maximised, life had consisted pretty much of work/sleep; work/sleep; with only the odd beer here and there ... great huh? But that’s what it took to get me here. Now I found myself having time on my hands - a totally new concept to me and one that was not the joy and wonderful situation I might once have imagined.

Gone are the days of the 5am start, now I could stay in bed all day if I wanted ... and I don’t! My body was used to physical work, lots of exercise, movement, fresh air; I was used to programmes and timetables, schedules and shifts; personal chores and errands and a pay cheque - and now suddenly here I was with nothing/no-one making any demand on my time other than two and a half days worth of lectures, with the rest of my time made up with reading and assignment work – three meals a day, a cleaner making my bed and cleaning the shower. All that was left for me to do was the mental stuff. My body hurt – muscles were missing their previous regime – my head hurt – struggling with the sudden and dramatic increase in exercise!

It all began around four years ago – having saved my hard earned cash I got onto a three-week Turf Management Course at Rutgers University, New Jersey. At the time my career as a greenkeeper in Austria was going well and this course seemed like a good thing to be doing to move me along a bit further.

Mid-Atlantic, 30,000 feet and with plenty of time to think it no longer seems such a good idea after all – I mean “What if I can’t take in what they’re saying...? What if I can’t remember...? What if they ask me a question...? What if I can’t answer...? What if I can’t learn...? What if ... What if...”

A great idea – Rutgers was a great experience! Superb course at an impressively professional establishment - got a distinction too! With all the ‘What ifs’ disappearing faster than dew in the morning sun I left knowing more and wanting more. On the flight home I decided I would do a degree course.

So, decision made – now how to make it happen. Hmmm – a quick check on the ‘credentials bank account’ reveals not a lot. One GCSE (in PE), NVQ II, a spraying certificate and a three-week course didn’t look like enough to get into University. Obviously there was only one approach to take...

Graft, graft and more graft – returning to work in Austria I set about becoming the best greenkeeper I could be – eventually becoming Deputy Course Manager on a course hosting the European Ladies’ Open. A lot of extraordinary experience there in preparing a course for a televised event. What else would add weight to my case? How about a world-class course, southern hemisphere, warm-season grasses? A three-month stint at the superb New South Wales links course, Sydney, confirmed to me that my skills and knowledge were up to working on a high end course.

Those four years, working horrendous hours and learning, learning, learning, were underpinned by my good fortune to work with some great Head Greenkeepers - each one of them pushing me on and believing in me. So, Brian Piggott, at Buckingham GC; Wayne Beasley, at Fohrenwald GC; Alex Hofingerm, at Eichenheim GC, and Gary Dempsey, at New South Wales GC Sydney – thanks guys.

Getting accepted – graft is one thing, ‘selling myself’ is something else altogether! Trying to convince others that I have what it takes to undertake the demands of a degree course - that I could make the transition from mowing grass to writing essays. To convince them I first had to convince myself! And although writing is something I enjoy writing personal descriptions for UCAS applications, grants and a bursary was, for me, an agonising time.

Gimmee the money – pleasee? This was the tricky bit. While there are many options in terms of finance available to sports turf students, my own case was somewhat unusual. Born and bred in England, I am



STRIKE A POSE!

Just a reminder that there's still time to submit your entry for BIGGA's Golf Photography Competition.

Are you proud of the hard work you have put into making the most of your course? Do you catch yourself admiring it at its spring finest, or wintry best?

The BIGGA Golf Photography Competition allows greenkeepers to display their artistic talents and creative flair, while also earning some publicity for their club.

Photographs will be accepted in three forms -

Prints (nine inch by seven inch), transparencies, or digitally (pictures MUST be at least 300dpi and capable of being blown up to nine inches by seven inches in size).

Anyone wishing to enter should send their pictures to: Scott MacCallum or Melissa Toombs, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO61 1UF (digital photographs should be sent on CD) by July 31, 2007. Alternatively you can email them to scott@bigga.co.uk or melissa@bigga.co.uk

So come on, don't just post your pictures on the bulletin board!

BIGGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Sponsored by 

Fellow greenkeepers and trade members will once again get the chance to play golf and socialise with old and new friends when the BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota, returns to Scotland this October.

The two-day event will take place in the Ayrshire Section, at Dundonald and Kilmarnock (Barassie) Golf Clubs on Monday, October 8 and Tuesday, October 9 respectively.

The main tournament for the Challenge Trophy will be played over 36 holes, medal play, with the best overall gross score producing the BIGGA National Champion.

The registration fee of £85 includes entry into the Championship, lunch each day and dinner on Monday, October 8. Applications are also invited from Associate members who will play for their own trophy. All competitors must make their own accommodation arrangements.

An information leaflet and entry form will be included in next month's edition of GI meanwhile to reserve a place or find out more contact: BIGGA HQ on: 01347 833800. Details are also available on: www.bigga.org.uk

actually classed as an overseas student when it comes to grants/loans because I've worked abroad for several years. It's only thanks to a recent EU directive that I was granted a student loan.

I reckon I'll finish my course with £15,000 to pay off. Adding that to the money I haven't earned during the years I'm studying – well, that's just not useful thinking! I don't think in terms of "is it worth it in financial terms" ... the only 'worth it' question I ask myself is "will this experience help get me where I want to be?" and the answer always comes up – "YES".

Learning to study and handing in that first piece of work - at first the whole learning experience was an inner demon – unsettling me far more than I had anticipated. Never much of a book-worm and many years out of school I just didn't know how to organise my thinking, how to read a reference book, review literature and form my own opinions. But I stuck with it. At times painfully slowly, I put together my first piece of course work. And the time came to hand it in - I knew that I had worked very hard to produce a good and solid piece of work and it was one of the best feelings ... awesome. Life on campus – 26 and only the tutor's older than me – and the girls are too young!

Life on campus is very entertaining. I felt quite old when I first arrived – I'd been told by my friends "oh you'll meet loads of women at college". Of course, that was the case for them – they went to Uni straight from school, they were 18 and so were the girls! For me it was just an expectation shot to pieces.

Life without a pay-cheque – this is proving one of the hardest things for me – life without a monthly pay-cheque and my bank account only going in one direction and after ten years of a regular pay-cheque and a well exercised overdraft it is for me a very strange feeling to not have that. Very quickly I had to learn to live without the luxuries and adapt to my new circumstances.

Getting a bursary- shortly after starting college we were told about the bursary awarded by the R&A - £1,500 for each year of study. Several of us submitted an application, 500 words on why we should get it and a further 500 words on how it would benefit us. Three of us from Myerscough were successful. This bursary enabled me to fund a laptop and a digital camera, it also paid for me to attend BTME at Harrogate and the BIGGA North-West Section Spring seminar. First Semester over! Crikey – I've done all that?

Looking back, reflecting on what we had covered in just those few months - "crikey, we've all come a long way in such a short space of time..." And now we're into the last semester of this first year - yes, I've had some doubts – the experience was, to begin with, a bit of an emotional roller-coaster but the delight of learning and discovering new things has been such a great experience

Placement year – being a misfit - part of the BSc course involves a year out on a placement – this provides an opportunity to gain practical experience for those who haven't yet worked in the field as it were. For those like me who already have a wide and extensive experience this is



not compulsory we can continue straight on to year two of the course. I was something of a misfit - my level of experience got in the way a bit ...places are usually for new or novice greenkeepers.

Some of the guys on my course have chosen to do the Ohio State programme, going to courses such as Valhalla for the Ryder Cup, Double Eagle Golf Club, and others chose to stay in Europe, working at prestigious venues such as The K Club, Wimbledon and Loch Lomond Golf Club. These opportunities tempted me, but with having eight years experience already I felt the need to expose my self to something I had not done before.

I've chosen instead to take this opportunity and get experience in those things of which I have no knowledge/skill. I've accepted an offer from FEGGA of a scholarship with Polaris World to get experience in construction and growing-in at one of their new courses, designed by Jack Nicklaus, and it's in Spain so it will be all warm season grasses too – another plus for me.

I wonder what it will be like giving up work a second time to return to University when the placement year is up.

Myerscough - a great course – any doubts I may have experienced in my early days were about myself - there have been no doubts at all about my choice of where and what to study. The BSc Turfgrass Science course here at Myerscough is great - with my tutor Dr Andy Owen and the other lecturers all being not only extremely knowledgeable but also

having worked in their respective industries. They bring to the course their personal experiences, demonstrating the practical application of the theory they are teaching. What's next? After the placement year we return to college for a further two years.

And then it's crunch time - back to the world of work! It would be naïve to think that a degree in and of itself will get someone a top job however, I do think that the more young people who do get themselves some higher qualification, raising the bar in terms of understanding what golf greenkeeping is all about, can only be a good thing...

I see a balance that needs to be found combining practical ability with understanding of the science and the art of application. As a Golf Course Manager of the future I expect to be forever learning... things are changing in unprecedented ways - there has never been a more important time to be aware and able to understand the implications of what is happening around us with the environment...

While I don't know what I will be doing once I've finished my degree I do know that I will have a better, broader understanding of our craft ... and passionately believe that higher education is the way forward – for the betterment of the individual and the advancement of our profession.

As we enter summer and with it my placement, to be honest, I can't wait to get back onto the course – to experience that special feeling I get when I step out onto the course, pick up my cart ... smell the grass, hear the birdsong, feel the breeze against my skin and feast my eyes on the beautiful scenery ... a feeling that is beyond words...





News from the Chief Executive

In early July the telephone system at BIGGA House will be updated to include an automated answering service together with a host of other features that are now possible, thanks to the wonders of modern science. Love them or hate them such systems have become a part of every day life and for the Association it presents an opportunity to make some substantial savings. Callers will be offered a short menu of options, one of which will be to speak to an operator for help. The financial gain comes as a result of the changes in jobs for Rachael and Brad who were originally employed in reception. Their original posts become redundant and their non-telephone duties will be absorbed elsewhere in the office. Brad has accepted the position of Membership Services Assistant and Rachael will become Sami's assistant in the Education Department, both of these are replacement jobs and not new ones.

There seems to be a great deal of interest, debate and speculation regarding BIGGA's talks with the IOG. I can only repeat my earlier comments, stressing that it is not a 'done deal' and that any firm proposals will have to be approved by the members of both organisations. How this will take place, if we get that far, has yet to be determined. One solution, and arguably the fairest, may be by an independently controlled postal ballot. We are a long way off that stage and I cannot help but feel that some of the Chinese whispers are being blown up out of all proportion. If any member wishes more information or clarification on a matter then I suggest that they contact me direct by telephone, letter, email or in person. Please do not expect me to enter into a loaded debate on a public bulletin board somewhere.

I often see it stated that BIGGA is at a crossroads. Quite frankly I do not know a time when it has not been at a crossroads. The journey since it's formation in 1987 has been far from easy however I would like to think that the greenkeeping industry, and those employed in it, has benefited as a result of the Association's activities and will continue to do so.

I finish with two thought provoking extracts:

'Most of us find change uncomfortable, if not traumatic; yet change can be both exhilarating and desirable. Change tests our convictions and calls into question our intentions and aspirations, clearing a path for growth. It always requires that we make choices - to choose between a reactive and anticipatory course, between being good and doing good, and between suffering change and causing change. The resulting decisions shape our life and how we look at it.' Clement Mok, Communication Arts.

'Are you a professional? How you look, talk, write, act and work determines whether you are a professional or an amateur.' I came across this on www.tipsforsuccess.org which is a website worth a visit. If you have five minutes to spare take a look and see if you can relate to any of the other remarks listed there!

John Pemberton



SCOTLAND – CENTRAL

On the education front we hosted two successful seminars last month. Frank Newberry delivered an excellent two-day Course on "Leadership and Management Skills", in his usual entertaining, and inspiring manner. Everyone left with some positive ideas on how to improve their personal effectiveness within their teams, and also how to develop their careers. Kevin Barker, R&A Rules Official, gave a very informative and enjoyable evening presentation, with excellent video examples to demonstrate the importance of course set up by the greenkeepers, and how it influences decisions on the rules of golf. This sparked much debate, which continued into the bar afterwards.

As Chairman of the Central Section I have to say the first golf tournament of 2007 was a great success, having 60 members of the Section playing Panmure Golf Course on a perfect sunny day says it all. On driving up to the course you are presented with a fantastic view of the course and clubhouse. My first impressions then were that we were in for a great day. I was not disappointed!

The hospitality we received from the Golf Club was first class, and many thanks go to Secretary/Manager, Charles Phillip, for taking such good care of us and for presenting the prizes at the end of the day. His warm words of appreciation to the greenkeeping profession were very encouraging. The food and the service from the staff were all first class, and the clubhouse had a fantastic atmosphere. Congratulations to Gary Nicol, the Course Manager, and his staff for presenting a great challenge for us on a fantastic course with some tricky pin positions. It was clear to all why it deserved to be chosen for the upcoming Open Qualifier. Many thanks Gary and best of luck when it comes.

Thanks also go to the BIGGA National Chairman, Billy McMillan, and the Scottish Chairman, Stuart Greenwood, for taking the time to attend our Section outing, and to Billy for his kind words of support at the prize presentation. Having the opportunity to play with them both, and Gary, on the day was very enjoyable. With Gary onside I was looking forward to some local knowledge to help us get round. I think my score tells you how well Gary knows his course. I enjoyed your company and thanks for a great day. Well played all the winners on the day with some really good scores, on such a challenging test of control. To see the winners and scores for the day and photos visit our website (see end of notes).

Billy caddied for Andy Mellon for the last two holes as a reward for finding his passport, which he had dropped on the 4th hole. Unfortunately Andy couldn't play as well as Billy could caddie. Billy's patience with Andy's wayward game was admirable. Last I heard Andy was rethinking his gorse/broom planting policy at Elmwood, and asking his team to hand in any lost balls they find.

Note to Billy: You don't need a passport to get into Scotland, (Not yet anyway), but rest assured you will always be very welcome anytime.

The Patrons play a big part in supporting us locally, and I assure you that your commitment to the Section is very much appreciated and commented on among the members. A huge thank you to all our members who made it on the day. It's you who make this Section the success it is, and it was great to see so many new faces along with