

Education

Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund



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As he enters his final month as an employee of BIGGA, before retirement Ken Richardson looks back over the past 14 years

Stress at work is now included as a hazard that must be considered when doing risk assessments and it's been said there are many outside influences that can increase stress levels - losing your job, moving house, divorce and a death in the family. 1993 ended with my redundancy from the Royal Air Force after 34 years and 1994 began with my father's death, my employment by BIGGA and a subsequent house move. I didn't have a handover when I arrived at Aldwark as my predecessor; had left before I arrived. However, I thought that I could cope OK as, after all, I had coped with regular postings, house moves, changes of job and lots of working away from home. I was coping quite well until, in May, Neil Thomas asked me if I had thought about the education programme for BTME. I can remember thinking 'BTME what?' as I hurried to my office to check the wording of my job description. Sure enough, there was an item saying produce BTME education programme. Thankfully, Neil gave me the names and numbers of several course managers and members of the trade so I could make a start. BTME 1995 brought back the stress as I hoped everything would go OK, that all of the speakers would turn up and some greenkeepers would turn up to listen. I needn't have worried, everything seemed to go smoothly with a two-day Conference in the Majestic Hotel and three days of Seminars in the Royal Hall.



The Conference Programme included papers on European Golf Course Ecology, How to Manage Golf Course Ecology, Obstacles and How to Overcome Them, The Benefits of Turf Grasses to the Environment, Water Management, Irrigation Techniques and Environmental Research.

Looking back it seems that BIGGA was taking a positive stance on environmental management in '95 and that has continued through to the present.

The Seminar programme included: two future

Chairmen of BIGGA, George Brown and Kerran Daly, Anthony Davies MG, Bridie Redican, Iain MacLeod and Jim Cassidy presenting a range of technical papers.

The Banquet entertainer was Tom O'Connor, ably supported by a last minute replacement, Linda Nolan - Who can ever forget Jim Snow's appearance on stage with Linda?

That was the start of my career with BIGGA but what has happened since?

My job has changed in many ways through taking on the additional role of Deputy Chief Executive. The depth and range of education and training for greenkeepers has grown massively. I have produced 13 Conference, Workshop and Seminar programmes for BTME/Harrogate Week. We have progressed from less than 12 MGs to more than 40. I have interviewed more than 400 students and helped to select 14 Toro Students of the Year. I've seen a massive change in the attitude, confidence and professionalism of greenkeepers, I have travelled around Europe and to the USA, attended more meetings than I care to remember but best of all, I have met a lot of very genuine, helpful, friendly greenkeepers, course managers, superintendents, officials, dealers, trade members, club secretaries, golf officials and even golfers.

Technology has brought many changes, computers are everywhere and overhead projectors are historical items like steam trains. Many course managers have become involved in staff training with more than 1000 holding an assessor qualification.

I can remember being asked at my interview what I knew about greenkeeping. My answer was not a lot but I did know a fair bit about education and training and that BIGGA had more than 3000 subject matter experts. I now know a bit more about greenkeeping know a bit more about education and training, and BIGGA now has more than 6000 subject matter experts.

I will be leaving my post with BIGGA on September 28 when Sami Collins, ably assisted by Rachael Duffy, will take over my duties in the new, Learning and Development Department. I am sure you will give both of them your full support.

I have enjoyed my time with BIGGA, working alongside, with, and for, some very dedicated professional people. I will miss you all but I look forward to keeping in touch through GI, the Internet and at Harrogate Week.

Membership



THIS MONTH OUR MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN INUNDATED WITH NEW MEMBERS...

BIGGA WELCOMES

MIDLAND		
Martyn	Lumb	East of England
Nigel	May	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Tony	May	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
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Gordon	Snape	Mid Anglia
Amanda	Waters	East Midland
Gary	Wood	Midland
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Dean	Baily	Surrey
Andrew	Barnes	Essex
Simon	Cairns	Essex
Richard	Dwan	Kent
Andrew	Foulds	Surrey
Martin	Gasson	Sussex
Mark	Gemmill	Essex
David	Gray	Surrey
Simon	Mockler	Surrey
Peter	Saunders	Surrey
Robert	Sebbage	Sussex
John	Sewell	Surrey
Jonathan	Sharp	Surrey
Craig	Sheeran	Surrey
Peter	Sparks	Surrey
Adam	Vickery	Essex
Liam	Webb	Surrey
Matthew	Webb	Sussex
Alex	Wilson	Surrey
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Grant	Evans	South Wales
Richard	Hammett	South Wales
Scott	Johnson	South Wales
James	Jones	South Wales
Jonathan	Knight	South Wales
Simon	Lacey	South Wales
Ashley	Lock	South West
Robert	Millman	Devon & Cornwall
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Mark	Parsons	South Wales
David	Patrick	South West
Steven	Price	South Wales
James	Pride	South Wales
Jamie	Saunders	South Wales
Lucy	Sellick	South Wales
Barry	Smith	South Wales
Louis	Stephenson	South Coast
David	Thomas	South Wales
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Mark	Mcdowell	Northern Ireland
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND		
Thomas	Rafferty	Southern Ireland
ASSOCIATE		
Nicholas	O'Connell	South Wales
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Nicklas	Enqvist	Sweden

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DEREK	DALY	Central
STEPHEN	DOCHERTY	West
LEWIS	GLANCY	East
STEVEN	LAUDER	West
CHRIS	MOORE	Central
HOWARD	NICHOLSON	Central
BLAIR	O'NEIL	West
BEN	PETERS	East
CALUM	ROSS	Central
IAIN	SINCLAIR	Central
BRIAN	STEWART	Central
NORTHERN REGION		
SCOTT	ASTBURY	Northern
DANIEL	BENNETT	North West
JAMES	BREEZE	Northern
DANIEL	COOPER	North West
JONATHAN	GLYNN	Northern
MATTHEW	HAYES	North West
ADAM	PORTER	Northern
JULIAN	SHANKS	North East
JAMIE	SMITH	North East
DUNCAN	STEPHENSON	Northern
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JAMES	DEGNAN	East Midland
GRAHAM	DOWN	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
GRAHAM	ECCLES	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
PHILIP	GASCOYNE	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
ANDREW	HALL	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
PAUL	JAMES	Midland
SIMON	LEE	Midland
CHRIS	OWEN	Midland
TIMOTHY	ROOKE	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
GARETH	SURDO	Midland
MATTHEW	WALKER	Midland
STEPHEN	WARNE	East Midland
BEN	WILLOUGHBY	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
WILLIAM	YARHAM	East Midland
MARK	YATES	Midland
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SIMON	DOWNHILL	Essex
LAWRENCE	FENNMORE	Surrey
STEVEN	FLYNN	Sussex
CHRISTOPHER	GURTON	East Anglia
LUKASZ	LISICKI	Essex
ANTHONY	MACLEOD	Surrey
CHRIS	MARKER	Surrey
NICK	MCGOWN	Surrey
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Count on it.



Hobbies

Here's something you didn't know about me...

Name: Nigel Marshall

Club: Belton Park GC

Position: Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Hobby: Physiotherapist for Grantham Town FC



How long have you been assisting Grantham Town as a physiotherapist?

"I've worked at Belton Park GC for 33 years and started assisting Grantham Town FC 25 years ago. I've assisted at over 1100 games."

How and when did you get introduced to physiotherapy and how did you find yourself assisting a football club?

"At first I assisted Grantham FC with First Aid, I then moved on to become a trainer before finding myself in the position of their physiotherapist. I trained to the level of Football Treatment on an Intermediate Course."

What has been the highlight of your hobby so far?

"Working with Martin O'Neil (the Manager of Aston Villa), who managed Grantham Town FC in the late 80s."



GOLF COURSE PRESENTATION

By Stewart Brown

The significance of golf course presentation should be known to all Course Managers and greenkeepers and be an integral part of their thinking and attitude towards their profession. It is true that you cannot always judge a book by its cover, but we live in a media-dominated world and people not only expect quality, they expect it to look good too!

Many factors make up a 'quality' golf course – course type, history, players, greenkeeping staff management etc – and presentation is but one weapon in the armoury of management tools at the disposal of the greenkeeper.

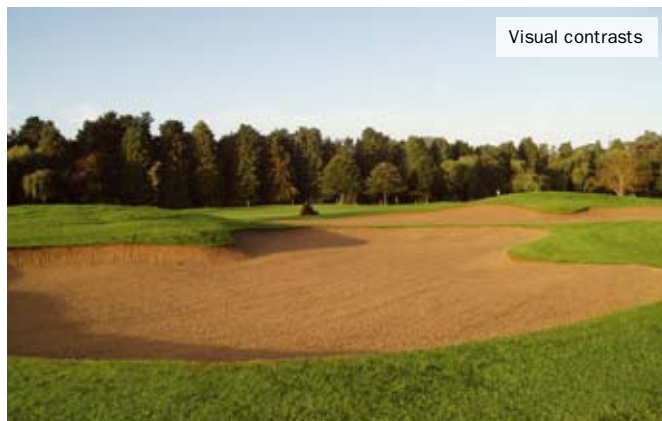
There is no substitute for sound agronomic practices in maintaining golf courses in top condition for play but there are many benefits that accrue from high standards of presentation. However, the most important factor to remember is the course aesthetics or visual appearance should never dominate the requirements of the game or health of the course. Golf course presentation is about achieving a balance between agronomy, playing requirements and course aesthetics.

A RATIONALE FOR GOLF COURSE PRESENTATION

Why then should we be concerned with golf course presentation, knowing it is not a panacea for creating good golfing conditions? Foremost is that it indicates the high levels of greenkeeper professionalism all should be aspiring to. It is the most visibly apparent aspect to the greenkeeper's efforts and shows players and golf course managers/secretaries the standard of 'craftsmanship' being achieved. Greenkeepers who take pride in their work like to demonstrate their high skill levels and knowledge to players and golfing officials. The striped green or neatly raked bunker is indicative of greenkeepers approaching even routine tasks with great care and attention to detail.

Such professionalism reflects well on greenkeeping staff, in most cases players and employers are appreciative of their efforts. Golfers are often 'professionals' from commerce or business and showing them a course presented to the highest standards only elevates the standing of those responsible for the course and its upkeep. When a golf course is presented well, golfers and greenkeepers alike can take great pride in their course and this instils a sense of ownership, which helps to ensure that all involved will want to support and continue their role or membership.

It is generally a fact that people like being associated with quality and success. A course in top condition, presented to a high standard will motivate people to look after their course, maintain such standards



Visual contrasts

or even aspire to higher levels of performance. A young greenkeeper indoctrinated with sound greenkeeping and an appreciation of course presentation, working under experienced and dedicated senior staff will carry this forward when they are managing their own course one day. So future golfers will benefit from this ethos of professionalism and commitment.

Presentation is also good business sense. Golfers want to play at the best courses. They seek a test of their golfing prowess and ability but also an enjoyable experience. A golf course which is aesthetically pleasing to the eye as well as testing of their golfing ability, leads to a rewarding golf experience which players will want to repeat. In contemporary golf course management competition is acute and the well-presented course, even if all other factors are equal, will often have the edge on its competitors.

Finally, for those venues hosting competitions and major tournaments, golf course presentation is a critical factor in determining a positive media perception. It is fact that people will judge the quality of a golf course by its aesthetic appearance even when it is generally well known that such appearances can be deceiving. Just because it is 'green' and highly manicured does not mean it has the best conditions for play! Presentation is particularly important where there is a media presence, where the 'world' will be looking at your golf course and making judgements on what they see on the screen. Television, particularly, is a very powerful medium and can pick on increasingly minute details in course appearance and presentation. Anything untoward or detracting from visual quality will be commented on, often in a negative way that will reflect upon the golf course staff and particularly the greenkeepers.

Equally, it can work in your favour – as others have said in other spheres, television can make or break you. If the course is presented to a high standard and looks good what harm will that do to your career or the reputation of the golf club? The caveat to this, of course, is that playing conditions are good also. It has to play well and look good. If the media, players or club officials consider the course to look poor you will soon know about it!

You must also understand that the game of golf is highly psychological. A player will be affected by the standard of presentation and course aesthetics. There is some truth in the adage that if it looks good it must be good at least in the mindset of many players. Remember golfers are your customers and to give them what they want is what business is all about. This, however, should never be at the expense of providing quality playing surfaces and golfing conditions. The art, as already stated, is to achieve both criteria.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE HIGH STANDARDS OF PRESENTATION?

Training is paramount. Unless staff are trained and competent in all aspects of course maintenance they will not be able to achieve craftsmanship levels necessary to present a course for play. This is true for aesthetic, agronomic and golfing requirements. After initial training and time to practice, an operative can achieve a level of competency but it is only with further years of experience that the highest levels of proficiency can be achieved.

Planning is crucial to success. Define objectives for the course and implement practices which will achieve them. These need to be attainable



Count on it.



The Green - focus of the game

but should be set to a high standard and clearly communicated to all levels of staff in the greenkeeping team. This is also where the course management policy document comes in as it needs to be communicated to players as well. Course presentation is an important part of the course upkeep and maintenance.

It should be seen that course presentation is an integral part of the maintenance regime and philosophy, not simply a bolt-on extra needed for tournaments. Staff should always strive to achieve excellence and be led by management in this quest.

Machinery is a key component in the achievement of presentation standards. Most operations are mechanised and some, such as mowing, are the most significant in presenting golf courses for play, delineating the areas for play, providing the necessary course definition and the most visually apparent evidence of the greenkeepers work. Mowing alone probably is the single largest factor in quality course aesthetics and appearance. Machinery must be fit for purpose, efficient, maintained and operated with due skill and recognition of the task requirements.

Finance is always an issue. Of course, a budget is needed to procure the necessary mechanical, material and human resources, but all these need managing in a way cognizant of the management objectives for course maintenance and presentation. Having all the resources in the world does not mean success is inevitable. Manage the resources available for greatest effect and efficiency. A little can go a long way if properly directed and controlled.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The most important factor to consider is the course itself and its particular features. All courses are different and each must be considered separately; we are not aiming for all courses to look the same, nor is this desirable. Course presentation should bring out individuality and carry this through for different holes around the course.

Work with what the designer and landscape have provided and endeavour to highlight through course presentation the best attributes of the course. Be mindful, though, of course history, tradition and design

philosophy. Many a golf course has lost its initial design and character through errant greenkeeping practice or mismanagement. We need to maintain integral design features while presenting them to the highest standards of maintenance for play. The environment and 'natural' landscape need to be remembered and not unnecessarily compromised, abused or damaged.

Two phrases come to mind here – 'you cannot improve on nature' and 'nature will always have the last laugh'. Most people in golf course management now know working with nature is a better policy and that this can both enhance the natural appearance of the golf course, aiding aesthetic presentation, and be more efficient in resource utilisation.

Golf courses are valuable habitats for many species of native flora and fauna and these can greatly enhance the golfing experience. Standards of play and particular surface requirements may vary according to golfing standard, player ability and objectives for the club set by management but nonetheless the visual appearance and level of presentation can still be high.

Standards and methods of construction inevitably impact on maintenance requirements but again in terms of presentation achieving a high standard should still be a key objective of greenkeeping staff.

A final consideration is to remember and get the basics right. Simple aspects such as clean furniture, litter removal and course signage are easy to get right and these greatly augment the golf course appearance.

Make an impact – consider the view from the first tee and the approach to the last green and clubhouse. Similarly, look in your maintenance facility, what image does this present to the visitor, player or club official? High standards of presentation should extend to all parts of the course. Landscaping around maintenance facilities and clubhouses must be maintained as well and not overlooked by staff purely focusing on the playing components. It is not easy, but sufficient resource, effort and budget should be made available for all ancillary areas as well as the greens.

TO CONCLUDE

Major areas to consider will include mowing practices (patterns and delineation), bunkers (weed free and edged), water features (clean and aerated), course furniture (clean and painted), landscape plantings (weed-free, mulched and litter-free). This is not an exhaustive list but merely indicative of the types of works required to ensure high standards of course presentation.

Finally, remember courses can still be presented to a high standard without chasing the 'great god green', many of our courses (especially links) will 'brown' in the summer but this is natural and understood by most who understand our golfing heritage. Presentation should not be about throwing on the fertiliser and water simply to green-up the course. This suits neither our golfing tradition nor the environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stewart Brown is Team Leader – Sportsturf and Mechanisation, Myerscough College, Bilsborrow, Preston PR3 0RY
Tel: 01995 642305 Email: sbrown@myerscough.ac.uk



THE HISTORY AND MYTHS OF TREES

By John Nicholson

You have no doubt heard many of the myths about trees and woodland which pervade British culture. Not only are there tales of fairies and elves, but there are often more serious myths. How often have you heard ‘plant some poplars they will solve the drainage problem’, ‘if you remove the trees the water table will rise and we will be flooded’ and even once I was told ‘I have been a member 30 years and the trees are the same as when I joined’ all said from the heart with complete conviction.

So let's dispel some myths and look for the reasoned truth of what and why we have the trees and woodlands of today.

For hundreds of years Britain has been one of the least wooded countries in Europe. Yet more than a thousand years ago man learned to manage the British woodland sustainably to supply his need for timber products. The density of woodland and the need for timber varied regionally depending on the availability of alternative materials for building and fuels. Scotland, for example, had an abundance of coal and peat to burn as well as stone to construct buildings where as the more populated fens of East Anglia and Suffolk had a great reliance on timber.

This resulted in alternative management prescriptions of different intensity which in turn gave rise to the woodlands we now see as natural. It is therefore likely that ancient Caledonian pine forest remains as a result of low density population and the availability of other materials, where as the coppice woodlands of Kent result from the high density of population and the demand for poles and firewood and so changing the perception of what now appears natural to man today.

Further, as man became more mobile he introduced species which he favoured such as Sweet Chestnut and Walnut in Roman times, Sycamore in the sixteenth century, the Georgians admired the Cedar of Lebanon, the Victorians the Atlantic Cedar and Rhododendron. Tree species like architecture had fashions, for instance, the 1930s was typified by the Wheatley Elm, the 1960s was Poplars and the 1980s the dreaded Cypress.

We are now obsessed with native woodland but what is native to our shores. The majority of people would undoubtedly reply English Oak! After all, poets and song writers alike have adopted oak as the antipathy of England's green and pleasant land. However, pollen profiles show that in 4500BC the native woodland of the south of England was in fact Lime. Unfortunately, Lime had no timber value and therefore we changed the composition of the woodland to suit our needs. Nelson, Raleigh and Drake required ships and oak was the prime timber.

So how did we manage our woodland? Well, that depended again on what we were trying to produce. Timber was required for planks, beams, and posts. Wood was required for poles and rods for light construction or for firewood or charcoal production. This still affects our language today we for example we say timber buildings and wood fires.

The importance of wood was such that many laws and taxes were attached to it. Until the 17th century you could not harvest over a certain percentage of the Aspen on your land by law. This was to ensure a renewable source for arrow production, tithes were payable on wood but not timber in the middle ages and after the first war the Forestry Commission was formed to ensure that we would not run out of timber to support trench warfare as we had in 1917.

The Forestry Commission was given the task of planting vast areas with fast growing conifer to not only safeguard our shores but to also meet the demand of the post war rebuilding programmes. Thus large areas of what was then thought worthless infertile land were planted with Spruce and Pine.

Depending on the end product and often the political will of government different management regimes have been adopted over the years, effecting what we perceive as natural woodland.

Originally there were the wildwoods of Britain the naturally regenerated forests which covered the country. So what were the wildwoods? It is

likely that they varied regionally depending on soil type and climate but the general rule is that northern Scotland was dominated by Birch below which was the Caledonian Pine forest then south running from central Scotland to the Humber Oak and Hazel with Lime dominating the south of England. Elm was common through out Britain but only dominated in south west Wales.

Then the need for man to survive influenced the methods used to manage the woodland and therefore changed its composition and character sometimes intentionally to create a crop and sometimes unintentionally by allowing more light into the woodland or by enriching the woodland floor through grazing. Next it was the turn of commerce and politics to have an influence. All these factors contribute to what we regard as natural today.



Beech



Barlavington



1669 – 2005, Rewell Coup

It is known that as early as 4000BC man was clearing the wildwoods by burning to establish clearings for grazing and to establish camps. This created the heathland we know today and the management regime of burning continued up until the Second World War and is still considered by many as an acceptable method of management today.

So the truth is that what most of us regard as natural woodland is in fact highly managed. If one considers that the majority of native species to Britain are not shade tolerant, then one assumes that the wildwoods would have been high closed canopy woodland with little under-storey or areas of dense scrub. Both of which would be quite foreboding places and certainly not attractive to live in.

So man began to create more acceptable habitats by clearing and managing the woods in fact the first book on woodland management was produced by John Evelyn, *Sylva* in 1664 and even at this point Evelyn was concerned with the loss of woodland.

By the time of the Romans, the wildwood was virtually gone and by 1200 AD much of the modern landscape was already recognisable. Nearly all our villages and settlements were present and the proportion of farmland to woodland was virtually the same as that of today.

Management prescription were changing at first we collected timber and wood for our needs in the easiest fashion possible this then evolved into coppice management where stools were grown on to produce a renewable source of poles and as man domesticated animals the need to produce poles above the browsing line led to trees being pollarded. These were possibly the first organised forms of management.

It is interesting that another myth which now pervades is that the only way a tree dies is by some undesirable person felling it. When in fact this does not kill the tree at all. When thought of rationally, the tree will continue to grow from the stool and will more than likely have an

even longer life span as a result. This is demonstrated by the ancient pollards which still exist today.

So is there any such thing as non intervention management? As with all things, man intervenes, often unintentionally and woodlands are no different.

The majority of the native trees to Britain are not shade tolerant and so a woodland can only reproduce on its margins. This is where we intervene either building houses, mowing grass or by cultivating the land. Therefore, removing the woodlands capability to reproduce, we must manage to redress the balance.

The storm of 1987 showed how vulnerable trees can be and should have made us more aware of the fragility of our unmanaged woodlands for it was those that suffered to the greatest degree.

With the modern awareness of global warming it has never been more important to manage and expand our woodland heritage. Management requires the felling of trees something often regarded as sacrosanct however the public must learn that it is essential if a woodland is to remain healthy to remove trees in order to allow those retained to reach their potential.

Further the best way to combat the problem of global warming is to ensure that we have a healthy environment which converts CO2 emissions and we must not forget that that includes all plants not just trees.

Yet, it is rather ironic that we hear so much from our politicians regarding green taxes and yet they fail to invest in the creation and management of our woodland.

Written by John Nicholson Associates www.johnnicholsonassociates.co.uk

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FENCING AND NETTING – HEALTH AND SAFETY

By Bill Lawlor

The erection and maintenance of fencing and netting within golf clubs are routine activities at many Courses. As the activities are seen as routine the associated health and safety issues are not always recognised.

When engaged in these activities risk assessments should be carried out before, during and after the work to address the health and safety issues involved for those who are to construct and maintain them and continued inspection and maintenance to protect both Club users and third parties.

FENCING

The first deciding factor is whether the work is to be carried out by in-house staff or out-sourced to a contractor.

Where work is out-sourced then a contractor risk assessment is required. This would require the contractor to provide:

- Proof of competence to carry out the work
- A risk assessment for the work. As a minimum the points outlined in the in-house risk assessment should be addressed
- A method statement how the work will be carried out
- The contractor's health and safety policies and procedures
- The arrangements for First Aid
- Any specific hazards in the area of the Club that may affect the health and safety of the contractor's employees
- How the contractor will protect the safety of Club users when carrying out the work
- Proof of liability insurance that will cover any potential damages or losses by the Club

Where the work is carried out in-house, the risk assessment should include:

- What manual handling is involved?
- Are the components of the fencing carried to site and how are they lifted into position?
- Is the area where fence posts are to be installed guaranteed to be free of underground services of water, gas and electricity cables?
- Where working near overhead power lines is a 40m gap maintained? – Otherwise consult the local electricity company before work commences

If powered equipment is used e.g. post hole drillers, nail guns etc is:

- The operator competent to use the equipment, could you demonstrate this if required
- The operator aware of the hazards associated with the equipment
- The equipment maintained and serviced as per the manufacturer's instructions
- Personal protective equipment required, head, hand, foot and eye protection and issued
- Precaution taken to ensure third parties cannot be injured while it is in operation
- The ground condition and contour suitable for the weight of the equipment involved
- The hazard and risks been discussed with the operators e.g. fumes from combustion engines, torque being transferred to the operator in hand held powered augers, noise, etc
- The hazard of using petrol powered equipment and

the precautions to be taken when refilling the equipment recognised

- Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) assessments will be required where posts are cemented in place or if wood preservatives are used
- Where the site is remote from the Clubhouse or maintenance facility, first aid provision should be held at the site and operators trained in its use
- Where livestock are in the adjacent area, consult with the local farmer before work commences to ensure that livestock do not wander or present a safety risk to the operators and other Club users
- Are there suitable stable stiles or gates to allow Club users and others to cross over the fence where required
- Barbed wire adjacent to public areas should not be used if it is less than two metres from a public footpath and less than two metres high
- Provision of an inspection regime to ensure that fencing remains whole and does not constitute a hazard to club users, employees and other third parties



NETTING

Netting can be used in different areas within the golf club:

- In the practice area/range
- Where a road abounds areas of the club and miss-hit balls may strike vehicles on the road
- To protect persons, houses and public areas from errant golf balls

Inspection of nets that are used to protect persons, houses etc should ensure that:

- The mesh size and strength of the net will not allow golf balls to pass through it
- No holes in the netting have occurred due to impacts that would allow balls to pass through it
- Posts are frequently inspected to ensure the stability of any structure, especially after high winds
- The nets do not have a negative environmental impact on local wildlife, e.g. in some cases nets may require to be made more visible to prevent birds flying into them

As with fencing the erection and maintenance of netting should be subject to a risk assessment. Some hazards and risks are common to all types of netting, these include:

- An assessment of the manual handling required e.g. weight and frequency of lifts, carry distances, single or team lifts etc and whether a manual handling risk assessment is required. This



would apply to both the construction of nets and where practice nets are moved around

- A regular assessment of the rigidity and stability of any structure should be determined especially where structures are designed to be portable. Lightweight structures should be anchored to the ground where possible or be weighted down to prevent movement
- Is work at height required in both constructing the netting and in any maintenance e.g. checking joints and connections, clearing off litter, dead birds, leaves. Those required to work at height should be suitably trained to do so
- That stanchions are covered with sufficiently slack netting to prevent ricochets
- In multi practice nets net screening between the bays will be required to prevent injury to adjacent users. Exit and entry will also have to be configured to ensure that those using the facility are not struck by either clubs or balls from other players
- Where golf balls have to be retrieved from multi-use practice nets by either staff or Club users, a procedure should be in place to ensure that this can be done safely e.g. closing all or part of the facility for use to allow this to take place

Bill Lawlor is Technical Director for Xact - www.xactgroup.co.uk

