

Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Peter Todd, gives his thoughts for the month

Many of you will have experienced the stop/start growth conditions at the start of the season with some reasonable growing conditions during the first half of April followed by inconsistent growth in the following three weeks.

The gusting easterly winds in early May soon dried out the turf surface stressing the plant and this coupled with low overnight temperatures caused this early growth period to rapidly go into reverse.

With little response from the bentgrasses and Poa seeding prolifically the challenge was on to produce a good putting surface.

We had previously hosted tournaments in the months June, August and September with more growing period to work with, so I was under no illusions about the May date this year and the challenge we faced.



The European Open Support Team will no doubt have done a great job this year

Chuck out your 2009 calendar now!

This Spring required different thinking to prepare The International Course for normal play as well as The Heritage for The European Open. From listening to others the first thing to learn is to ignore which month the calendar says it is when it comes to timing work and concentrate on what the weather and growing conditions are actually doing.

I have known us use modest amounts of irrigation as early as March one year when the plant was desiccating and this year getting wetting agents on early and the use of irrigation as soon as the very dry conditions limited growth certainly helped to reduce turf stress.

Monitoring air and soil temperatures along with daily E.T. levels soon provides the answers you might have to questions such as, Why have my greens stopped growing? What we are not able to do is increase the temperatures?

So taking advantage of every window when these are in our favour, and the use of fertilisers that respond in the prevailing conditions, becomes a must. Knowing when not to do things equally becomes important, such as too early an application of PGRs or using verti-cuts.

With golfers out playing en masse this spring in the sunny, dry conditions their expectations continued to rise as daytime

temperatures at times almost gave the impression summer had arrived.

Despite the fact that they all probably went home afterwards to a centrally heated house for the evening it wouldn't have occurred to them that cold nights affected the greens that they had been playing on that day.

While there are limiting factors to what can be done including the weather, manpower, budgets etc, we still have to produce as good a surface as we can, taking advantage of any opportunities to improve playing conditions.

Let's be honest, ultimately customers are not that interested in what goes on to produce results on the course and the variables that determine the level of success are not all in our control. As golfers expectations have continued to rise consistently, managing these is important now more than ever, as budgets come under pressure.

Where significant reductions in budgets are impacting on some courses' greenkeeping standards it is crucial to communicate the impact of these cut backs in writing to management or committees, including any restrictions placed upon you to carry out greens renovations.

In these circumstances, doing the best job you can on the golf course with the resources available on the golf course is not

enough without also communicating well. Golfers need to feel that the fee they have paid to play is value for money in their eyes, and reflects what they have experienced on the course. We need to make sure it does.

I cannot sign off without thanking my team, all the greenkeepers who volunteered to work at The European Open and to the clubs that released their staff to gain tournament experience with us.

With greenkeepers coming from clubs throughout the country and as far away as Scotland and Ireland it is very rewarding to share our experiences and learn from one another. I would also like to thank all the suppliers who provided additional support for the event that make that important difference.

We remain a close knit industry and it is at tournament times this shines through with great camaraderie on display. I look forward to meeting all the BIGGA Open Support team at Turnberry alongside George and Euan's staff and wish them well for The Open Championship.

Peter Todd
National Chairman



Greenkeepers Training Committee



David Golding, Education Director,
with a monthly update from the GTC

Whether you are an employer, Course Manager, student or working within a Turf Centre we are all part of a partnership when it comes to improving the skills and knowledge of greenkeepers.

The partnership is something the GTC has advocated from day one of the introduction to industry of work-based training. Clearly we all have to do more to ensure the system works and everybody benefits.

Feedback from our recent assessor questionnaire raised several issues and below I have listed the main comments and added my views on how best any assessor should be engaging with the vocational, work-based system.

Employers and any Course Manager who are not qualified assessors may well benefit or relate to the statements made:

1. "The GTC trained me as an assessor but I use my local college for training my staff, where does that leave me with the GTC?"

To assist the GTC Approved Centres with the implementation of N/SVQ's the GTC, in association with a private company, embarked on a programme of assessor training from 1995 onwards.

Over 800 supervisory and management staff on golf courses achieved the D32/D33 assessor qualification.

It is through the assessor training programme that many Course Managers (CMs)/Head Greenkeepers (HGs) now support their staff development in the workplace and when formal qualifications become a goal in association with their chosen Centre-college the assessor qualification should be used.

While the GTC funded and coordinated much of the assessor training for our sector, we are not the organisation responsible for standardisation meetings as this is down to the network of GTC Approved Centres e.g. colleges.

2. "I haven't used my assessor qualification for some time therefore I have never attended a standardi-

sation meeting at a Centre so do I need to achieve the A1 award?"

If you have not had a candidate(s) registered with a Centre for some time, it is not necessary for you to attend standardisation meetings.

However, when you choose to register a trainee on a vocational qualification including the apprenticeship scheme, the Centre should immediately ask whether you have the assessor qualification D32/33 or A1. If you hold the D32/D33 award you do not need to gain A1. The Centre will subsequently carry out a standardisation meeting with you to bring up to speed with the current National Assessor Standards.

By engaging you, the Centre benefits by your participation in the learners training AND assessment but I appreciate this is not the case with all Centres.

Quality Assurance is key to the success of any vocational programme and Centres have to show Awarding Body representatives (External Verifiers) that the Centres Internal Verifier has all of his/her assessors assessing to the National Standards.

How can this easily be achieved when some Centres have learners on golf courses all over Britain?

It is a false impression that assessors attached to a Centre must attend a meeting at the Centre.

The Internal Verifier at any Centre is the key person in the standardisation process and he/she can keep their assessor team "up to standard" remotely through the visits they have to make to the learners workplace. Updating can happen one to one as well as in group sessions.

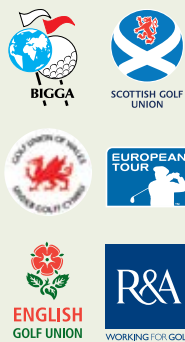
It is the remoteness that seems to give some Centres the excuse NOT to use qualified assessors and this I find an unacceptable reason not to use YOU as it is the CM/HG who is best placed to train and assess your learners SUPPORTED by the Centre staff.

3. "I am keen to be more involved with my staffs development and assessing but the college don't seem to want to use me"

In Brief

David explains how following the circulation of a questionnaire to all assessors trained by the GTC he sees the quality of vocational qualifications still needs to be monitored by YOU...

The GTC is funded by:



As mentioned in the above point it is down to you to point out to your chosen Centre that a) you are a qualified assessor and b) you are keen to support the learner therefore please engage me formally in the training and assessment programme and if appropriate ask for an IV updating session just to remind you of the assessment options.

4. "I am too busy to do assessing, it's the colleges job to train and assess my trainee, not mine!"

The GTC embarked on the assessor training programme believing that the person best placed and competent to train and assess staff skills is the CM/HG. It is they who work with the student daily.

The GTC appreciates the workload on CMs/HGs especially at the moment however, I also believe you are only as good as your team. A well trained skilled team can be a Course Manager's greatest asset and the time involved in the training and assessment of staff soon pays dividends.

So often I hear from Centre staff that the CMs/HGs don't want to be involved in the training and assessment process.

The GTC has excellent examples of when the CM/HG-Centre staff-learners are all working to an agreed training plan and is a win-win system for all concerned.

I suggest that the N/SVQ system is like a three link chain. The Centre is the middle link, whose role it is to keep the other two links connected.

One link being the learner and the other link is the CM/HG and if one link is not playing their part and that puts more stress on the other two.

Finally, thank you to everyone who completed the questionnaire and hopefully I have answered some of the queries raised.

The GTC, in still promoting the Skills Agenda, is looking at sources of funding to train those CMs/HGs, and where appropriate Deputies, who do want to be formally involved in their staff development, but funding is a story for another month!

Contact Details

David Golding
GTC Education Director

01347 838640
david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC
Aldwark Manor
Near York
YO61 1UF

www.the-gtc.co.uk

Learning & Development

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development,
with an update on education issues



Festival season is approaching, so I hope you've all got your wellingtons and kagools at the ready. I know that I will not be camping this summer (or ever!), but I hope if you are the sunshine gods are kind to you and that you don't end up resembling a muddy monster from the deep!



BIGGA Library

Thanks to the support of the Learning and Development Fund contributors, several new books have been added to the library in the last month.

As you will see from the titles (some of them are brilliant!), they mainly concentrate on management issues but several of them will be useful, even if you're not in a management position.

The new titles are:

- Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best on People at their Worst – Dr Rick Brinkman.
- Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most – Bruce Patton
- Coaching at Work: Powering Your Team with Awareness Responsibility and Trust – Matt Somers

- How to Form a Team: Five Keys to High Performance – Centre for Creative Leadership

- How to Launch a Team: Start Right for Success – Centre for Creative Leadership

- Maintaining Team Performance – Centre for Creative Leadership

- Customer Service Training 101: Quick and Easy Techniques That Get Great Results – Renee Evenson

- Toxic People: Decontaminate Difficult People at Work Without Using Weapons or Duct Tape – Marsha Petrie Sue

- The Art and Science of Communication: Tools for Effective Communication in the Workplace – Les Brown

To view the list of available books you can either request a printed Library List or you can go to the Members Section of the BIGGA Website and click on Lending Library, you can then search by Category or by Author.

Once you have found the book(s) you are interested in you can see if it is 'Available' or 'On Loan'.

If the book you are after is 'On Loan' you can either telephone or email your request and it will be sent to you on its return.

You can borrow up to two items for a period of up to six weeks.

The only cost to members is return postage to BIGGA HQ.

The funding provided by Golden and Silver Key Sponsors is used to produce training and career aids, DVDs, CD Roms, field guides and provide refunds for training fees and subsidised learning and development courses. The funding also helps support seminars, workshops, courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

Many young greenkeepers owe their career progression to the assistance they've had from the Learning and Development Fund. An equal number of established greenkeepers have also been able to access the fund to continue their professional development thanks to the donations of the Golden and Silver Key Sponsors.

Higher Education Scholarships – supported by Ransomes Jacobsen



Funds are still available for Higher Education Scholarships. You could be eligible to apply for a scholarship of up to £1500 if you:

- Are a greenkeeper member of BIGGA
- Are working as a full-time greenkeeper
- Have been a BIGGA member for a minimum of two years

Courses that could be eligible for a Scholarship include: NVQ Level 4 Sports Turf Management, Foundation Degree, HNC, HND, MSc and BSc

Updates and Reminders

Master Greenkeeper

Congratulations go to Tim Anderson from Naperville Country Club in Illinois, USA on achieving the Master Greenkeeper Certificate. Tim is the 49th greenkeeper to achieve the Certificate.

Continuing Professional Development

The current CPD year ends on June 30. Send in your claim forms to ensure that you receive your 2008/09 Continuing Professional Development Certificate.

Contact Details

Sami Collins
Head of L&D
sami@bigga.co.uk

Rachael Duffy
L&D Administrator
rachael@bigga.co.uk

01347 833800 (option 3)
www.bigga.org.uk

Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors



Golden Key Individual Members: WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.
Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Hamish Campbell, Neil Whitaker, Robert Maibusch.

CONTINUING TO INVEST

Ransomes Jacobsen, and its affiliate company Jacobsen, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, continue to invest in new products that demonstrate their unrivalled commitment to the sector, despite the economic downturn.

With the support of parent company, Textron, both companies are launching new mowers into the golf and municipal markets in 2009, while continuing their commitment to environmental management.

In the U.S., Jacobsen launched the new R-311 batwing rotary mower earlier this year at the Golf Industries Show in New Orleans,

Louisiana. They also launched the innovative Eclipse 322, a hybrid ride-on mower with electric drive to the cutting cylinders with a choice of motive power from a

battery pack or diesel engine.

Here in the UK, Ransomes Jacobsen will be unveiling a significant new Ransomes mower at Saltex in September 2009 for the municipal sector, and are continuing to invest in the Jacobsen golf mowers built in Ipswich. The companies have also recently introduced a new range of cutting cylinders with a 45 degree relief, another first for the industry.



The new Jacobsen R-311 launched earlier this year.

NEW RECRUIT

Building on success, the STRI is adding to its South East Consultancy Team to cater for an increasing and diversifying demand for its services.

STRI has employed Sports Turf Agronomist, Charles Henderson, to add strength to the Southern Team. Charles, originally from East Yorkshire, has spent the last four years as a Sports Turf Agronomist for The New Zealand Sports Turf Institute.

Prior to the NZSTI Charles studied a HND in Turf Science and Golf Course Management at Myerscough College and a BA in Landscape Management at the UCL.

MARKET PRESENCE INCREASES



Tim Saville

Tim Saville has joined Rigby Taylor as a Area Sales Representative, working in the company's Local Authority team throughout the counties of the East Midlands.

Tim is a qualified horticulturist, having studied at Brackenhurst College and, in the 18 months prior to joining Rigby Taylor, was Head Groundsman at Rampton Hospital.

Trevor Helme has been appointed as the Linemarking Business Development Manager for the North of England and will be assisting the Rigby Taylor area sales team in expanding their linemarking products business.

Trevor brings to the company a wide experience having worked in the Amenity industry for over 15 years.



Trevor Helme

INTERNATIONAL PRIZE WINNERS

A-Plant has won a prestigious Access Industry Training Award at the inaugural International Awards for Powered Access held in Dublin.

Organised with the support of the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) to celebrate good practice, professionalism and quality in the access industry, the Access Industry Training Award was one of ten Awards being competed for by companies around the world and one of three categories in which

A-Plant was nominated.

The Award Judges commented on A-Plant's win: "A-Plant's win has been realised due to the fact that the company has made itself one of the UK access industry's most successful 'one stop shops' for training.

In 2008, the company trained over 3700 employees, and held over 4500 training days for its 2000 staff.

Further to this the company also invested in a new state of the art National Training Centre."

Pictured at the controls of Fenner's two brand new Allett Regal 36 mowers are Head Groundsman, John Moden (right) and his Deputy, Robert Costen.



CUT BY NEW MOWERS

Outfields at one of Britain's best-known and most attractive university cricket grounds will be cut this season by two new Allett Regal 36 mowers equipped with trailed seats.

The ground is Fenner's, home of the Cambridge University Cricket Club for more than 100 years and an integral part of Cambridge University's Physical Education Department which purchased the machines.

Replacing two Allett Regal mowers dating from 1998, the two new machines were specified by Head Groundsman, John Moden, and supplied by local Allett sub-dealer, Rod Widdowson Garden Machinery.

Team Expansion

The UK economy may be encountering choppy waters, but at Fieldfare Amenity it's full steam ahead. An ever increasing demand for services and products - including the innovative and highly successful Liquitec fertiliser - has resulted in us expanding our team.

The latest recruit is Mark Phipps-Jones who will be working

closely with the existing and soon-to-be customers in the amenity sector. Mark studied sports turf management at Writtle College and subsequently gained considerable experience as a greenkeeper in the Essex area.

A keen golfer himself, Mark is a key addition to the Fieldfare Amenity team.



Philip Spencer welcomes Mark Phipps-Jones to the Fieldfare Amenity team.



RETIREMENT

Test and Assembly engineer, Dai Williams, who joined Ransomes Sims and Jefferies in 1959, has retired after 50 years of dedicated and loyal service with Ipswich-based turf maintenance equipment manufacturer.

Dai joined the company in 1959 and because of his age, just 14 years and 11 months old, he worked initially in the Tinsmith's Shop, before beginning a five-year apprenticeship during which he was required to make his own tools which included measuring blocks, punches and various other items.

In 1964, after completing his apprenticeship he was seconded to the Forklift Truck assembly line.

During the early 1970s he was involved with making ploughs, cultivator and sprayers for the Agricultural division, before moving to the Experimental department in New Works. By the mid-70s he was working in the mower division and more recently on the main tractor line, building ride-on mowers. Leading up to retirement and following a recent health scare he was undertaking light duties on this line.

Commenting on Dai's retirement, David Withers, Managing Director said,

"It's people like Dai that are the backbone of this company; you only have to look at our annual long service awards, where those who receive their 20 year certificates are looked upon as just learning their trade! We are extremely grateful to Dai and the men and women like him, who have given such loyal service over the decades."

QUARTET MAKES GOLF DIGEST TOP 100

Four of St Andrews Links' seven courses have been listed in the Golf Digest Top 100 Courses ranking for the first time prompting the magazine to name the town as the world's "pre-eminent destination" for golf.

After only four months in operation The Castle Course has been listed at number 65 in the list, two places behind the New Course. The Jubilee Course has moved into the top 100 at number 92, while the Old Course is in second position overall.

The magazine's biannual ranking of the top 100 courses outside the US is compiled by more than 900 golf course panelists, the editors of its 23 editions around the world and a range of golf experts. The poll appears in the May edition which describes St Andrews as "the game's pre-eminent destination". The magazine praises David Kidd for his work on The Castle Course and suggests it demonstrates the "continuing evolution at the Home of Golf".

Alan McGregor, Chief Executive of St Andrews Links Trust, which manages and maintains the seven public courses in St Andrews, said, "It is a wonderful achievement to have four courses recognised in such a definitive ranking.

For The Castle Course to be included so soon after it opened is remarkable. It is also pleasing to see some well deserved recognition for the Jubilee Course. This is no mean feat when you see the caliber of the courses from around the world included in the ranking."





Pretty as a Picture

Scott MacCallum visits **Meon Valley**, the subject of last year's Photographic competition winning picture, and discovers a hotel golf complex with a members' club feel

Let's face it, we are all guilty of stereotyping. Scots are all tight-fisted; southerners are all softies; the Welsh all sing and are descended from coal miners, while the Irish all come up a bit short when it comes to grey matter. We all know it's nonsense, but the myth still gets perpetuated on a daily basis.

It also exists in golf. The accepted mantra is that members' clubs are invariably cosy and stuffy with visitors treated as a barely tolerated, but necessary, evil, while proprietary clubs and hotel courses on the other hand have wide fairways, short rough and pile as many people through as can humanly be accommodated.

We all know that while there is perhaps an element of truth in it there are many golf venues which don't fit into that stereotypical model.

One such is Marriott Meon Valley Golf & Country Club, in Southampton, which operates much more like a conventional golfing establishment than many traditional golf clubs and possesses 27 holes that are as interesting as they are challenging.

Attached to a superb, recently refurbished, four star hotel – the 18 hole Meon and excellent nine hole Valley – offer a great test for hotel guests, but the 700 Meon Valley members are lucky to have some great facilities and a golf course which is set up for enjoyment rather than purely speed.



“The last thing I would want is a park. I go with the theory that golf should be a walk through the countryside playing golf as you go. It shouldn’t be a quick whiz around a park where everything is mown at the same height and things are all tidy and trimmed,” said Course Manager, Phil Walker, who has been at Meon Valley for 14 years.

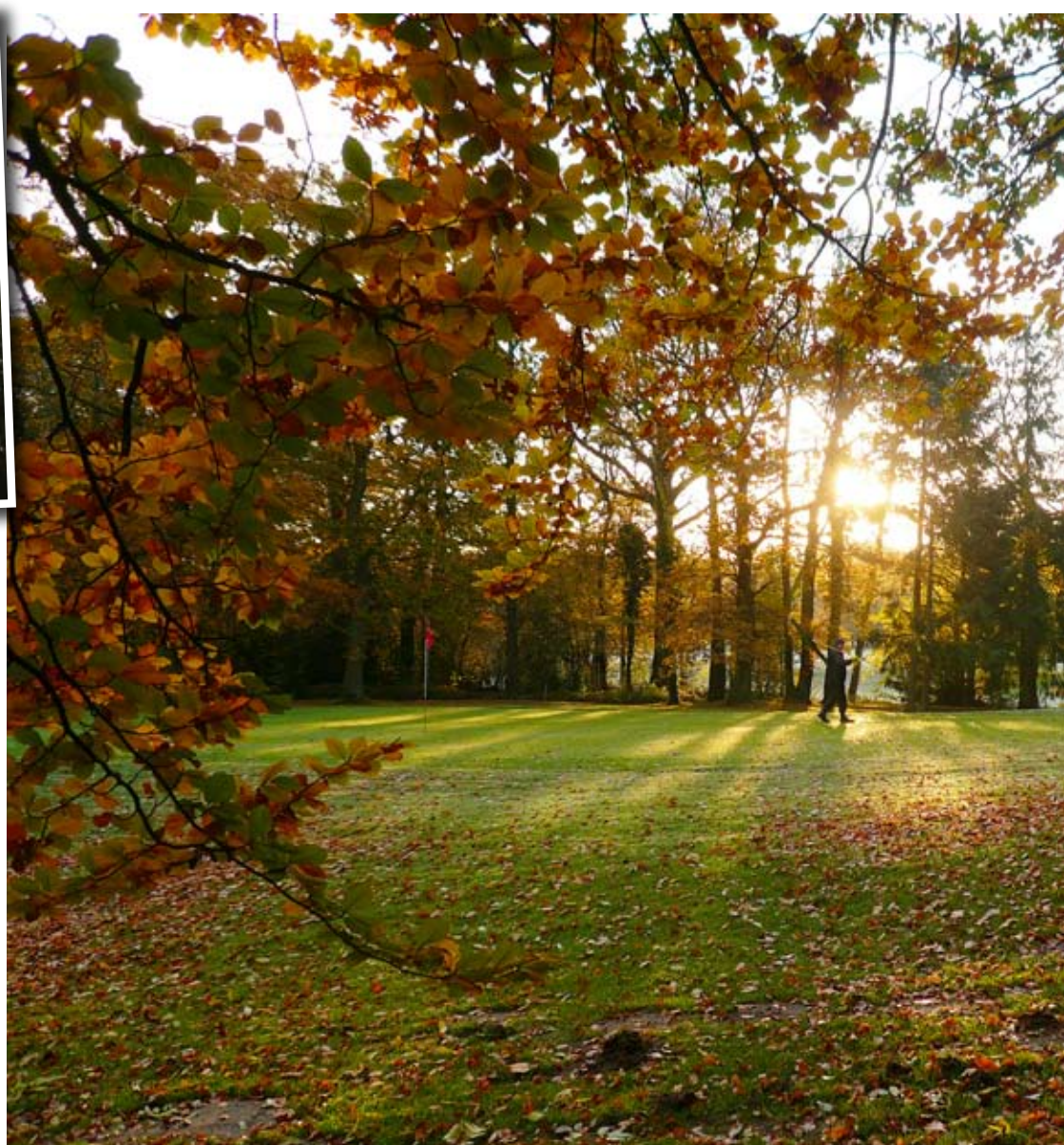
Outside of course furniture there is no corporate look to the Marriott golf venues on this side of the Atlantic and Phil and his fellow Course Managers are left to manage their courses in the appropriate manner for each one.

“There is a corporate logo with regard to flags, tee markers, signage etc but apart from that it’s entirely up to us how we set up our courses. Different courses require different styles of presentation and we are spread from Scotland (Dalmahoy) to South Wales (St Pierre), central England (Forest of Arden) and Ireland (Druids Glen). The Course Managers get together about once a year and have telephone conferencing now and again. In fact we had one yesterday to discuss Audubon.”

The Marriott Hotel Group has taken on the Audubon Environmental programme and is looking to have all of its UK golf venues certificated by the end of this year.

“We started at the beginning of this year so we haven’t got long to achieve it but that’s the Marriott way – throw everything at it and make it happen. In one way that’s good because it forces you to get stuck in and get it done otherwise it can sit on the back burner and just drift along,” explained Phil.

The American Audubon programme was adopted by Marriott because it too is an American company but it has seen Phil, and his fellow UK-based Marriott Course



Dean studied at Portsmouth University, two years full time BTEC National diploma in General Art and Design, and three years BA HONS in illustration, finishing up with a 2.2. He also studied GCSE Photography at Peter Symonds Sixth Form College.

A collection of his artwork is shown on the right.

Managers, having to adapt the paperwork to UK terminology.

“We have to convert everything to imperial measurements as the paperwork doesn’t recognise the metric system and one question asks how many acres of prairie we have. Easy, none! Tick the box,” joked Phil.

“Certification falls into sections – wildlife surveys, tree surveys, water conservation and testing and finally outreach education which involves inviting groups of adults or children onto the golf course to teach them about the environment and how best to manage it. The water surveys are possibly the most important as it give an indication of any nitrates or chemicals leaching into the streams or ponds.”

Much of what Audubon does records what is already being done at the club as routine maintenance but it is a great way of reinforcing the environmental message.

“When you start looking into it

you realise that so much of what we do is just the sort of thing that the ecologists are looking for anyway. If we are clearing woodland we’d automatically leave a log pile for animals or insects.”

Becoming certified involves significant investment for Marriott but the company sees it as a serious project and is committed to doing it properly.

“It’s not just a case of getting a little stamp every year but it will involve sending off documentation showing how we’ve reduced our pesticide usage and how we’ve developed areas of land to encourage wildlife or cut water loss through correctly set up sprinklers or repaired leaks. It will also mean keeping a log of wildlife spotted on the course.

“For instance we’ve planted some wild flowers down by the 17th pond on an area of scrubland that we’d cleared. That came about because we saw it as a project that could work towards Audubon. There



Works of Art

Dean paints almost every day, and can squeeze between four to six hours in a week day, and sometimes up to 12 hours a day at the weekend.

“Being a greenkeeper gives me plenty of free time to be creative. It also provides inspiration and material to fuel my paintings. I’ve also had one or two commissions from the golfers, and am planning to produce a collection of golf course photography in the form of a calendar. This should hopefully go down well with the members,” he explained.

Dean favours oil paints, oil pastels and oil bars, acrylics, and in the last couple of years he has embraced the new medium of digital painting.



“For me this is a step like the one artist took in the past, from egg tempera to oil paints. There is even the same stigma as before, people think because it is drawing on a computer it’s easy...”

This is the furthest from the truth, for starters the pen is harder to control, and the detail is as fine as a single haired brush, if you could get such a thing. Although it is faster to work, more time seems to be spent trying to achieve the finish required.”





was a cost in terms of seed and in preparing the ground but in the long term if it encourages bees and other wildlife it's got to be positive," explained Phil, who also explained that a lot of the on-going work at Meon included tee levelling bunker renovations and sleepered bank retention.

Phil is a self confessed poa fan and has found that by incorporating Primo Maxx into their management programme it is making a genuine improvement to turf quality.

"I'm quite happy to say that I grow Poa as it's one of the most resilient grasses I know. Yes, you get seed heads for a few weeks a year but with Primo the seed heads tend to shrink and we don't get any real problem with them while we get a dense sward all the way through the winter and as long as we apply a preventative strobilurin fungicide in the Autumn we suffer very little fusarium.

"With Primo we don't cut less we just take less grass off. This can be up to 50% which significant and the root mass is definitely improved. A lot of people cut one day and iron the next and we are going to try that as it cuts down the stress on the plant.

"I just think that Poa gets a very bad reputation and every one is afraid to say they've got it. I've managed it for nearly 25 years now and



Course Manager, Phil Walker, who has been at Meon Valley for 14 years.

PREVIOUS PAGE PHOTOS: Top left (inset), by the lake at night; main above, crunch deweying the 6th; and above right, the green by the misty pond.

MAIN ABOVE: The 17th at Fillamor

it's nothing to be afraid of. If you've got it work with it. I'm a firm believer in the maxim you've got what you've got so don't fight it and I believe that if you've got more than 50% poa there is no point in trying to get rid of it as I don't think you'll ever keep it out and you'll probably go mad trying.

"The worst thing is if you've got a mixture of poa and fescue bent. All these grasses grow at different speeds especially in the Spring. Then you've got problems."

The Meon Valley team is very experienced with more than half the guys having more than 15 years' service at the club and they are a talented bunch. Dean McMenemy won last year's BIGGA Photographic Competition with a stunning landscape of the course while, from their mess room up a spiral staircase in the top of an old barn, each breakfast involves some serious collective thinking.

"We do the Daily Mail quiz page every morning and if we get every question correct the prize is that we get half an hour off at the end of the day. It's happened once in nine years. It's the Master Quiz that kills us," said Phil.

Dean's success in the Photographic Competition created a real buzz among the team with many of his colleagues already taking

pictures for this year while there is also talk of a Meon Valley calendar to be produced by the team.

"Dean should really be an artist or a photographer but, because of his artistic flair he's a brilliant greenkeeper – he has a real eye for how things should be presented."

One of the big bonuses of being involved with a large corporate organisation is training and every Marriott employee receives 40 hours of training a year - more than a working week's worth.

"The difficulty we have is to make training relevant for greenkeepers but it is high quality training," explained Phil.

At this point, Dean stuck his head around the door to say he'd finished his job but that he'd noticed some areas of long grass around some of the trees and could he go out and strim them.

"See that. He cares about the golf course. He's spotted a job and thought I'll do that and it's not that he's picked a cushy job, he's going out strimming. That's not something you'd necessarily associate with a corporate environment but I don't think Meon is different from the other Marriott venues where they also have a lot of long service so, while it's not perfect, there must be something right with the Marriott way."

info

Height of Cut In Season:
4 mil 3 mil for major competitions
Out of Season: 5 mil

Fertiliser Regime
Start of year a granular feed at 18-0-36
Monthly liquid feed of seaweed and low N mixed with Primo Maxx
Winter High K feed