

James de Havilland takes a closer look at the intricacies of current machinery

The anatomy of...



Utility vehicle sprayers

How much thought goes into choosing your sprayer?

As was suggested in last month's issue, heavy-duty utility vehicles really start to come into their own when fitted with attachments that can include a sprayer. But how do you select the right sprayer for the job? James de Havilland offers some advice



(ABOVE) British sprayer manufacturers are strong in the amenity sector. Team Sprayers offers a choice of demount designs and choice of standard and shrouded booms. If you have a specific need, you do not need to buy 'off-the-peg'.

(INSET) The Toro Multi Pro 5800 reflects the demand for a vehicle that is well adapted to spraying duties. When looking for a demount sprayer, it pays to try out a system actually fitted to the vehicle you want to use it with.



Hardi sprayers include the Boss range of demount models. By offering a wide specification choice, as well as models tailored to fit a range of utility vehicles, the company is well placed to meet specific end user needs.



Spray Star sprayers from Ransomes Jacobsen are purpose built self-propelled units. Where a demount sprayer combination will be used full-time as a sprayer, it may be worth looking at a dedicated unit as an alternative.



A low profile, combined with a high standard specification, can make a complete demount sprayer package an attractive buy. John Deere Select Spray and ProGator combinations are increasingly purchased together.

In broad outline, heavy-duty utility vehicles have a nominal capacity of around 1200Kg.

By the time you have accommodated the weight of the operator and any attached sprayer, actual tank capacities can be up to around 800litres. Width wise, booms on offer will include those of up to 12m, the ability to work a portion of a partially folded wide unit offering the potential to operate at a range of narrower widths.

When considering a de-mount sprayer for a utility vehicle, it follows that capacity and width are a good point to start from. A key is to consider is that a higher capacity sprayer need not always be operated with a full tank, and that selecting a boom that may be able to operate at narrower widths may also increase its versatility.

As a guide, it can pay to look to the uses to which the sprayer will be put and how these uses may evolve. A good example is in the application of a growth regulator to fairways. It is obvious that a larger sprayer will help apply the material in less time, but if that same sprayer is also tasked with working on the greens, it needs to be right for that job too.

Other considerations can make actually choosing what is on offer more complex. It follows that the sprayer is designed to demount from the vehicle, the ease of doing this varying not just between the sprayer itself but to the vehicle to which it is attached as well. It is hardly a surprise to see a Deere ProGator married to a Deere sprayer or

a Toro Workman and Toro sprayer. But there are alternatives that are well worth looking into.

The fact that Ransomes Jacobsen now markets the Smithco range of dedicated self-propelled sprayers is also interesting. This move reflects the growing trend for many utility vehicles to end up spending their lives permanently fitted with a sprayer.

Other demount and sprayer considerations

On paper, it is actually difficult to do a proper sprayer comparison. The best buy is the unit that offers not just the right combination of features but also other vital details. These can include boom visibility - some tanks are tall and make it hard to see the offside extreme of the boom at narrow settings. The filters on some sprayers are spread around, making servicing less easy than it could be. You need to look over a sprayer to appreciate these finer points.

Then there are the controls. Simple mechanical controls are typically easy to operate, more complex automatic controllers initially seeming baffling in what they can offer. But in an increasingly regulated world, the ability to record spray data easily can make the investment in some of the more sophisticated controllers worth considering. Automatic rate control also helps improve spraying accuracy, which in turn can reduce costs.



Basic mechanical controls, with boom section shut-off and pressure gauge, are simple to understand and well suited to applications such as applying liquid feeds.



More advanced electronic controllers make precision spraying more straightforward. The key is to work out what is needed and how receptive the operator is to using this type of system.



Sprayers fitted with a fast flow water intake, such as the John Deere HD200 SelectSpray, may also have the option of specifying an electronic flow meter with auto shut off.

As a starting point, the following may help when considering a new sprayer...

- Centre of gravity. A low tank design may be a better choice when working on slopes
- Boom visibility. From the operators seat, can the extremes of the boom be seen?
- Pump choice. Some sprayers may be offered with a choice of centrifugal or piston pump. Will one design be better for your needs than the other?
- Manual controls. May offer independent boom shut off and will be fine where the main job is applying liquid feeds.
- Automated controllers. Vary in sophistication, but a key plus will be where automated flow rate control is required.
- Booms. Width and ability to operate at narrower width when folded. Ability to fit single or multi-head nozzle holders – triple bodies with standard, lo-drift and high volume nozzles can make life easier when switching between materials.
- Booms. Auto break back useful. Contour following wheels handy over undulating ground.
- Hose reel. A useful extra that can be used to operate a pedestrian boom on delicate turf or spot spray lance.
- Shrouded booms. Useful, particularly when spraying near watercourses and where tight environmental concerns demand minimal risk of spray drift.
- Foam marker. 'Blobs' have increased in popularity.
- Chemical induction hopper. Nice to have, but a low tank fill point will be fine for many users.
- Tank shape. The best designs will ensure the tank can be run completely dry.
- Fast fill point. Worth considering where fast water filling option available. Can have auto cut-off and flow meter.
- Easy clean and flushing. A clean water tank makes it easier to flush the sprayer through when the job is done.

Basic checks to keep spraying accurately

1. Ensure the sprayer is securely mounted to the vehicle and the boom is set so it runs about 50cm from the ground or target.
2. Every day, take out the suction filter and make sure it is clean. Look in the housing and check it is clear. Grease the threads and check the 'O' ring is seated correctly. Hand tighten the filter cap.
3. Remove and check the pressure filter. Again, smear grease over the housing threads. This will help seal the system and reduce the chance of leaks.
4. Pressure equalisation entails checking the pressure remains the same when flow to each boom section is opened and closed. This should always be done before calibrating the sprayer.
5. Grease the PTO shaft and sprayer pump. This should be done on a regular basis when the sprayer is in use and before the unit is first used after a prolonged lay up.



At a special 20%
discounted rate
for all BIGGA
members.

Make sure your wealth stays
with your family after you die

WRITE A WILL

York FM Ltd (BIGGA's pension administrators) offers the following...

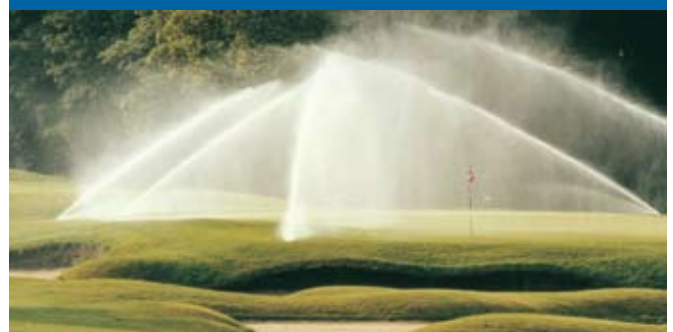
- Will Writing
- Estate Planning
- Lasting Power of Attorney
- Probate Completion



Please call **01904 767377** for details
Contact **Gareth Wigdahl**
or **Graham Carver** for more information

MJABBOTT

LIMITED



IRRIGATION SPECIALISTS

- System design & installation
- Supply of products & spares
- Maintenance & service contracts
- Reservoirs & water management

Bratch Lane • Dinton • Salisbury • Wiltshire SP3 5EB
Tel. 01722 716361 • Fax. 01722 716828
www.mjabbott.co.uk

NEW LOADERS FROM BOBCAT



The launch of the new 700 Series compact loaders adds three new models to the company's family of new generation loaders. The new loaders, all with vertical lift path design, offer several new features and enhancements that significantly extend the range of applications for compact loaders.

The 700 Series comprises a new skid-steer loader model, the S770, a new compact tracked loader, the T770, and a new all-wheel-steer (AWS) loader, the A770.

All three new loaders offer higher rated operating capacities and increased engine and hydraulic power, allowing users to take on new, more demanding applications.

As well as higher performance and power, the new 700 Series loaders offer improved visibility, comfort and uptime protection.

A new forward position that offers a 30% increase in all-round visibility for the operator

www.bobcat.eu



Syngenta's Contact+ fungicide active for turf, Medallion TL, has gained approval for use by turf managers.

Medallion TL targets disease pathogens on the leaf surface, but also has the same effect on Fusarium disease spores in the thatch layer and the soil surface, according to Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson.

"Medallion TL will change the way we think about disease control, not only protecting from disease infection, but also reducing disease spore numbers and lowering the risk of further infection," he said.

"That makes it incredibly effective in its primary role as an autumn and winter Contact+ treatment, but could also have a really valuable effect to prevent disease outbreaks triggered by spring and summer aeration or maintenance activities."

Simon added that it is the additional activity in thatch and soil surface that gives Medallion TL its Contact+ credentials.

www.greencast.co.uk

TWO-WHEEL DRIVE MODEL



John Deere has added a new two-wheel drive model to the 5E range of utility tractors. The 55hp open station 5055E is the only model in the range offered with 2WD, but otherwise features the same specifications as the 4WD 5055E, 5065E and 5075E models.

The 5055E is a small, lightweight and manoeuvrable machine, perfect for use as a general-purpose utility tractor with or without a front loader, for example. This new tractor is suitable for a wide range of customers, including caravan parks, equestrian centres, garden centres, greenkeepers and groundsmen, growers, landscapers, local authorities, public amenities and smallholders.

Lift capacity is 1.8 tonnes at the hitch balls, and the tractor can be fitted with a choice of two mechanical self-levelling or non self-levelling loaders, with lift capacities of either 873kg or 989kg to a maximum lift height of 3.38m. A fold-away roll-over frame is fitted as standard, and a two-post sun protection canopy is available as an option.

www.deere.co.uk



MICRON MICROWIPE

Five plant species are defined as 'Injurious Weeds' under The Weeds Act of 1959 although a handful of otherwise notorious weeds are conspicuous by their absence.

The five are common ragwort thistles (creeping and spear) and docks (curled and broad-leaved) – are proscribed due to their overwhelming competitive effect on other useful plant species in agricultural and amenity situations, and through their intrinsically rapid growth rates and prolific rates of reproduction.

Once established and allowed to grow, spread and multiply during late spring and early summer these weeds become difficult if not impossible to shift. However, if hit early in the year while still in a sluggish vegetative state, all five of these heavy-weight weeds are easily and quickly dispatched using lightweight and easy to use hand-held herbicide applicators.

Herbicide applicators of choice include the Micron Microwipe, a light-weight, hand-carried applicator that delivers highly targeted doses of herbicide onto individual weed plants. Microwipe is ideally suited to the control of docks.

www.micron.co.uk

SIGN OF THE TINES

Tired of stop-starting your aerator to change broken and bent tines, or unclog cores? Losing precious man-hours and money buying and applying new ones? What about time wasted collecting core-debris and repairing post-aeration turf damage?

Toro's ultra-durable Titan Tines offer precise, concise holes for faster recovery and a smooth finish.

Boasting a clean-cut performance, Titan Tines are manufactured from a unique heat-treated metal alloy that provides maximum strength and resistance while allowing for thinner tine walls for improved core-pull and hole quality and will last three to four times longer than standard tines.



With over 150 tines to choose from, there's one to suit every turf application, soil situation and Toro aerator, from the popular ProCore 648 pedestrian machine to the ProCore 864 and 1298 tractor-mounted models. Titan Tines are also compatible with most leading manufacturers' models.

"Our intensive renovation programme involves hollow coring the greens and tees across all 36 holes in spring and late summer. In addition, a similar operation is required twice yearly on 1.5 acres of grass practice area tees. Solid tine aeration work also features as part of a range of cultural practices, particularly the use of star tines," said Peter Todd, Courses Manager at The London Club.

"The abrasive nature of our sand rootzones places much greater wear on tines so it is important to choose ones that can last as long as possible.

"We've found Titan Tines – the hardened-tip ones in particular – are best able to cope with such heavy usage and wear," said Peter.

500 SERIES BRUSH CUTTERS

The new 500 series from Husqvarna provides professional brush cutters with high performance and reliability as well as sensational ergonomics and manoeuvrability.

Within the 500 series is the new 545RX with its optimised shaft length and bevel gear angled 35 degrees. The gear was designed so that a high torque is available and the cutting equipment is parallel to the ground, helping to achieve the best cutting results.

Husqvarna's X-Torq® engine technology enables the 545RX to deliver rapid acceleration and high power over a wider RPM range. X-Torq® also increases fuel efficiency by up to 20% while reducing exhaust emissions by up to 75%.

The engine and starter have also been designed using Smart Start® technology so the 545RX starts quickly and with minimum effort. In fact resistance in the starter cord is reduced by up to 40%.

www.husqvarna.com/uk



	How do you combat damage being caused to irrigation systems during winter?	Do modern, computerised, automatic systems help with early warnings of such problems as non-uniformity in application?
Keith Martin Course Manager Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club 	<p>We drain our system and tanks down, protecting both pipe work and heads from frost damage. With our pump station being in a heated room there is also no chance of any damage occurring during very cold periods.</p>	<p>The installation of moisture probes within greens can be a great tool to monitor soil conditions, helping with both setting appropriate programmes and helping conserve the amount of water actually needed.</p>
Jeremy Hughes Course Manager Vale of Llangollen Golf Club 	<p>At the end of October, the system drain valves are opened and the two lowest irrigation valves will also be left open, the pump is drained off and drain plug removed. The intake submersible pump is removed for service, both tanks are left full.</p>	<p>My system is an old TW2 controller and while it will notify us of problems in the system and then run diagnostics to identify it quickly, we can only gauge uniformity and effectiveness of the coverage with visual assessment.</p>
Ken Barber Course Manager Staverton Park Golf Club 	<p>A powerful generator is used to blow the pipe-work through with air to clear the entire system of water. This ensures that the coldest of winters will not have any effect on the system.</p>	<p>Our greens have no steep undulations, which makes life a little easier, yet we had some localised Dry Patch problems last year. In some cases this may be due to wind exposure. I plan to water less often, but for longer, to encourage deeper rooting.</p>
Dave Langheim Course Manager Wimbledon Park Golf Club 	<p>We shut down our irrigation system around October, and drain off from the lowest points of the course. We blow out the pipes with compressed air to ensure they don't freeze over the winter months.</p>	<p>Very much so. Modern systems are so hi-spec now that you should never see non-uniformity in application. I think irrigation technology has evolved so much in the last ten years that non-uniformity is no longer an issue.</p>
Pete Gross Deputy Course Manager Ashbury Golf Hotel 	<p>We winterise both our systems each year to protect them. This means draining the whole system and also shutting down the controller so no signals are being sent out to the valves. Each of our pump houses are insulated and heated.</p>	<p>Valve-in-head sprinklers can show you how much each individual sprinkler is putting down and is instantly recognizable, however they don't say whether the sprinkler is rotating so uniform coverage still needs to be picked up visually.</p>
Aaron Small Course Manager Donaghadee Golf Club 	<p>At the start of November we drain the irrigation system at two low points on the course and we drain the main pump in the pump house. Also the pump house is heated just in case of any freak frosts.</p>	<p>We have a 35-year-old system that regularly gives us trouble. I prefer to check core samples and do visual checks than to rely on it. We do the weather for the MET office so we are very accurate on rainfall which helps a lot.</p>

IRRIGATION

Irrigation is the subject of debate

<p>Is it important for golf courses to be seen as leading the way in terms of respecting environmental issues of high water usage?</p>	<p>Where do you source your water from and is this an ideal system for you?</p>	<p>Water restrictions were placed on many areas of the UK in 2005. Is a problem keeping your course watered with these in place?</p>
<p>Yes, it is very important. Machrihanish Dunes follows an environmentally responsible management approach to our water resources with the aim of minimising water use and to protect and enhance water quality in and out of our course.</p>	<p>We have 19 well points from which we draw water. It is then pumped to a holding tank. This system works well for us as we only irrigate greens and tees. Also, we only use water only when necessary so we don't need to store huge quantities.</p>	<p>The abstraction licence we hold is adequate to more than fulfil our needs. The only problem we could have is during droughts the well points could run dry, but this hasn't happened yet.</p>
<p>It is important that we are seen to be intelligent in our water usage and what we can do to reduce the amount of water we need to use, so hand watering is an essential part of our water management program.</p>	<p>The source of our water is the stream that runs down through the course and feeds into the river Dee, which flows along four holes of our course. A submersible pump in a holding area feeds both irrigation tanks.</p>	<p>No we don't have any problems as we extract from the stream and do not take any mains water. We have a licence to extract up to 3.2 million units over the year and never get anywhere near this volume.</p>
<p>I believe water is used to excess on some courses, especially those with fairway irrigation. I aerate my fairways as regularly as I can afford, which promotes deeper rooting and more drought tolerant. Plus the more desirable bent/fescue grasses often predominate.</p>	<p>We are very lucky, since our water is sourced from a spring fed lake, which never seems to drop. The pH is a little too high for my liking, but having a natural water source allows me to easily carry out compost tea brewing.</p>	<p>Even with the spring fed lake, it does not necessarily mean I use it without consideration, since I tend to hand water when restrictions are in place. The occasional deep watering followed by syringing during very hot weather helps reduce plant stress.</p>
<p>When you have areas of the country with hosepipe bans and you're throwing on water, it's very important to respect environmental issues. I think golf courses should be at the forefront of using the least amount of water possible.</p>	<p>Our water is from the mains. Is it ideal? – No. I would love to use the nearby lake, but due to its toxicity, can't. Our course rebuild over the next few years will incorporate a new system and we're looking into bore holes.</p>	<p>The club was told to cut down, before my tenure began in 2008, and they did. They tended to over-water here years ago and the sprinklers were so poorly positioned that water was wasted. We cut that by placing half-circle sprinklers at roadsides.</p>
<p>Yes, and even more so for us with five and-a-half courses. This is why modern control systems and sprinklers are such useful tools. If the back of a green is sheltered, it can be watered less than the front with valve-in-head sprinklers as opposed to a block system.</p>	<p>Our water is all delivered from above and held in reservoirs. With the amount of courses we have, bore-holes or mains water wouldn't be able to produce enough water, as well as the cost being prohibitive.</p>	<p>Our main problem with keeping the courses watered is the actual amount of greens – over 100. Because of this we closely monitor usage and available water resource and adjust programmes accordingly.</p>
<p>For me to respect environmental issues better I would need a new system. This would save electrical energy, reduce hydraulic shock and provide better control of water use. Unfortunately there's no chance of a new one in this economic climate.</p>	<p>We source our water from a bore hole and mains water. The bore hole cannot keep up with the system in a night's watering so it gets help from the main. At least from the bore hole the plant is getting the majority of natural water.</p>	<p>As yet in Northern Ireland we have no water restrictions but we do keep it to a minimum. Often golfers perceive that greens are watered to soften them not that we water them to keep them healthy.</p>

UNSEEN INNOVATION



Good design goes unnoticed. Hunter Industries' TTS rotor keeps all the innovation unseen and below the green. Featuring Total Top Servicing, TTS is the no-dig solution for simple and quick maintenance, so golfers have more time to play on. With the world's first DIH- (Decoder-in-Head) capable rotor, you can forget about hundreds of unsightly decoder enclosures on your course. Out of sight, out of mind.

www.huntergolf.com

PLAY ON

Hunter[®]
GOLF

Section Notes

Please email your notes to scott@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of the month

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



Scottish Region



Central

We had a great turnout for the presentation by Andy Russell, of Headland, on a wet evening on February 23 when we were competing against Champions League football on the TV. Those present certainly went away with some food for thought on how to prepare their fine turf areas heading into the winter.

The presentation by Lynn Jopling, of SGEF, which had to be cancelled for snow was rearranged for February 8 and we had a creditable 16 members along for that, which was also good considering some people who would likely have attended were away at the GIS, in Orlando. Sincere thanks to both Lynn and Andy for taking the time to come and share their knowledge with us.

The Spring outing will be held on April 28, at Ladybank, this year and entry forms should be with you by the time you read this. Numbers are limited to 32 players therefore please return your entry form promptly.

The Section Committee has decided to make some important changes to how it organises and runs the outings and other events from now on with most correspondence being by email, therefore to make sure you don't miss out, please contact us with your email address and remember to let us know if it changes. There will also be an entry form available on our website, www.biggacentralsection.co.uk Entries must be paid up front in full and returned with the entry form or you can pay by BACS bank transfer if you prefer and follow the correct instructions,

which are explained on the entry form. We will not accept entries after the closing date or on the day. The draw will appear on the website on April 22.

We also intend running a Pairs' Competition through the season. You should also have been sent an email with an entry form and details of this and again, the information and rules of the competition are on the website.

At the time of writing, we hope that Stan Zontek will give a presentation at the Elmwood Training Room in mid to late April on the changes made to the Congressional GC, in Washington DC, in preparation for the US Open.

Finally, two points from the February edition which was unfortunately didn't appear in the magazine. Belated congratulations to Jon Wood, and his partner, Elle Livanovo, on the birth of their son, Philip Ivan. Jon is the Deputy Course Manager on the Old Course. Someone on the move is Tommy McFadden, who has left St Andrews Links to take up a position as a Deputy Course Manager in Germany.

Gordon Moir



West

Sunshine and showers are the order of the day with some fine temperatures for this time of year, long may it continue. Our course looks rather good and dry for a change, but not for long I dare say, only the disease scars creating a blight on the horizon. Congratulations to Brian Bolland and the staff at East Kilbride Golf Club for having the course in excellent condition recently, coming through the winter with no disease scars (my home club folks).

Not too much to report on recently, only the Annual Conference at Dunfermline on March 1.

As usual the venue was first class, with Janice and her staff coping extremely well with all the problems created by impressive numbers of 200. The meal was excellent and the dining staff, headed by Reefa, had us in and out in no time. Congratulations on an superb spread.

The guest speakers of: Simon Watson, Sygenta; Chris Kennedy, Wentworth; Jonathan Harmer, Farmura; Jim Mackenzie, Celtic Manor; Clive Nottingham, Lloyds, and, finally, Chris Haspell, Castle Stuart, all gave excellent talks and had the audience captivated with the different aspects of their talks. Sorry to Chris Haspell for the Skibo Castle call but nerves did play a small part.

Thanks to Sami, from Headquarters, turning up to assist and the National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, that was much appreciated.

Finally, thanks to Peter Boyd without whom the whole thing just wouldn't happen. Once again you have excelled yourself.

All your hard work and organisation was well worth it and I'm sure you will be rewarded in heaven.

On a personal note I appreciate everything you did for the day and the Association.

A couple of things to mention for the coming months - Spring Outing, at Cowglen GC, on May 19; the Scottish National at Duke's Course, in St Andrews, on June 15, and the Autumn outing at Williamwood GC, on September 15.

Unfortunately, nobody has been in touch about news items but if you have something interesting to mention contact me on stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com or mobile 07790823914, or my landline is 0141-942-5554.

Stuart Taylor.



North

I start this month's news with the fact that Bryan Beaton, formerly of Craibstone Golf Centre in Aberdeen, has left to take up the post of Deputy Head at Inverurie Golf Club. He has joined up with Brian Williams who is the Head Greenkeeper there. Good luck Bryan and I hope you enjoy your time there.

The Section would like to thank Gary Smith, of Scotts, and Wilson Morrison, of Fairways, for their continued support with sponsoring of the 200 Club cards.

Robert Hardie, who runs the 200 Club, has asked me to mention that if you can return payment for your cards asap as this will then determine how many cards we have left to sell to the other members and friends. The price of the card, which includes the chance to win £100 each draw, is still £7 which, I think, is great value. There are other tickets available and if you feel you could maybe sell another one to a family member then please get in contact with Robert himself on 07590775957.

The Secretary, Dale Robertson, has asked me to put out a change of date for the Spring outing at Montrose Links. Originally it was to be held on May 19 but we have been shifted forward a week and it will now be on the Thursday, May 26. Forms for the day will be out soon and if you could get them back to Dale asap and remember you could always take a guest along, just to see what we're all about. They don't even have to be a member to come along.

Dunfermline has been and gone for another year. The best yet, by all accounts, with some 200 delegates attending. Once

Around The Green

again full credit to Peter Boyd. Year after year it gets more popular and with the hard work that Peter puts in, the rewards are very satisfying.

Thanks also to the many Section members who made the journey. Some took the car, some took the bus and some even took the sleeper! Remember attending events like these all count towards the Patrons' Award and the chance to attend BTME 2012.

One final piece of information, Dale Robertson, Course Manager at Newmachar, is looking at putting staff through their PA2, Tractor mounted spraying course. Anyone wanting to put staff through the course should contact Dale on 01651 863002 EXT 04. If you speak to Dale then you could maybe come to some arrangement and book the relevant course.

That's it for this month so if you do have any news just give me a shout on 07813889374.

Happy Greenkeeping

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links



Ayrshire

Hello again.

Another month has passed us by quicker than ever! Just when I put the pen and paper away it's time to bring it all back out again and write another report for all you budding greenkeepers out there!

Talking about time passing us by, it has been one year since our good old friend Denis Tweddell left Ayrshire to take up his new post as Head Greenkeeper, in Germany, (he's still there!) I heard from him just last week and all going well abroad, I did remind him that we are still waiting to hold one of our outings over there.....watch this space

I'm sure everyone has their work all carried out for the season ahead and now looking forward to getting back to cutting and that good old smell of cut grass? I can't wait! We wouldn't have it any other way, would we?

The Scottish Conference at Dunfermline was held on Tuesday, March 1, with again

another record turn out. All credit to Peter Boyd for bringing together some of the best speakers we have linked to our profession - another informative day for everyone involved.

My sources tell me the lunch refreshments were good as usual and that a certain Iain Barr enjoyed two helpings from the cake trolley - cheesecake, I heard! I just hope there was still some left for George, Iain! Thanks to all the Ayrshire boys that made the short trip up to the Conference, every little helps! I'm sure I've heard that somewhere before?

The Ayrshire Outing is upon us and is to be held over Prestwick St Cuthberts on Tuesday, April 26. I'm hoping to get a wee cheeky day off work, dust off the clubs and put in a decent score to take to the Autumn outing to be held at Turnberry Resort on October 4. Look forward to seeing you all there.

As stated in every report I issue if anyone has anything they would like to be mentioned in the mag or just something they would like off their chest then get in touch!

That's it for another month.

Cheers.

John Mair.

07500874449

Johnmair982@hotmail.co.uk

Northern Region



Northern

Hello everyone hope you are all well and ready for a new golf season. By the time you read this article you will all have received a copy of the new Northern Section fixture list for the coming season. I think you will agree we have some top courses to play. At BTME in 2012 there is going to be an exhibition, "100 years of Greenkeeping Associations", Peter Larter has asked if anyone has any old photos, magazines or diaries, to please get in touch with him or the Section. Hopefully now the days are getting longer and warmer we can all start thinking about starting our spring programme of works. Sorry there is no news or gossip

this month, if you have any please forward it on to me, and I hope to see you at our golf events during the season. As usual please contact me: Frank Stewart, 72 West Park Grove, Roundhay, LS8 2DY. Mob 07947401278, email frankstewart3@hotmail.co.uk.

Frank Stewart



North East

Well surprise surprise I have had some news sent in to me via e-mail, this is from Michael McKenna, formerly of Slaley Hall, Matfen Hall, Hexham and, lastly, Loch Lomond. After working at Loch Lomond as a seasonal last year he met an American Intern called Seth Rainer who worked at the world famous Scioto Country Club in Columbus-Ohio. The course where a young Jack Nicklaus learned the game of golf, Seth had come to the Loch through the Ohio State International Intern programme led by Program Manager, Michael O'Keefe.

After spending the summer working and studying with Seth he realised the level of knowledge and expertise he had gained attending the Ohio State University and working closely with Bob Becker, at Scioto CC, was at a high level. After seeking advice from David Cole, Superintendent at Loch Lomond GC, he decided to contact Mike O'Keefe and look at the possibility of enlisting on the Ohio State University International Intern programme.

That was back in November 2010, now he has been granted a Visa to complete a year of on training in the USA starting, of course, at Scioto CC for the first six months which will also include working at the US Tour Memorial Tournament at Muirfield Village GC Dublin, Ohio. While he is there he is looking forward to learning from Superintendents and colleagues in the States and also attending seminars at the University.

Having received my list of membership I decided to have a good look at it and came up with some strange figures. As I have mentioned many times lately

on how the lack of members we see at golf events in recent years, well I am not surprised. Out of all our members only 23 people had played at sometime. Now take out some of those who had played once upon a time and we are left with a very small band of golfers.

Now for some more stats.

We have five retired members; 11 from various companies, four at college; 11 student members; nine members who are in the wrong Section; six Course Managers; 19 Head Greenkeepers; eight Deputies; six First Assistants; 30 over 21s; four Assistants under 21. Sounds like we have a large membership, doesn't it?

But no, we do not, there are a lot of non members out there I am not going to mention this month on what courses have no members at all leave that for later.

And finally the following dates for competitions. This year so far are Spring at Newcastle Utd GC, April 15, and Autumn at Longhirst Hall GC, September 21.

I look forward to seeing some new and old faces.

Jimmy Richardson



North Wales

Hello again, in the theme of looking for something positive to cling to in this turbulent year. I can think of an amazing group of Bank Holidays coming up, whether you're a royalist or not, I very much doubt you'll turn down the extra holiday. Our first golf day is coming up this month, really good for golf-addict greenkeepers, who must by now be suffering from serious withdrawal symptoms after missing out on the Christmas tournament.

The Spring Tournament is being held at Denbigh GC, on April 13, and with this also being a qualifier for the BIGGA National Championship; I expect the whole field to have their most competitive heads on.

The North Wales/North West Inter-Section Golf Day takes place next month; the venue and date are in the hands of the North West Section, so when