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## WESTURF '90



# Giant stride forward for West

Greenkeeping Management's Editor Mike McClennan recently attended the Westurf 90 Exhibition held at Long Ashton Golf Club near Bristol. These are his views of the day.

F numbers tell the tale then Westurf Exhibition 1990 was

a resounding success. More than 80 trade members took advantage of glorious weather to participate in what is rapidly establishing itself as the South West region's premier exhibition. That figure represents a 40 per cent increase in trade participation since the inaugural Westurf exhibition last year. And judging from their response traders were more than enthusiastic about the whole event.

Long Ashton Golf Club, nestling in the hills surrounding picturesque Bristol was the venue and a full car park bore witness to the fact that visitors came from far and wide to attend.

Long Ashton is the home to BIGGA's current Chairman, Ivor Scoones, and Ivor was well to the fore meeting people, making them feel at home and generally seeing that the ex-

hibition was a great success. "It's very hard work but very enjoyable", said a red faced Ivor, sweating after his exertions under a boiling sun.

"This year has shown just what a great demand there is for such an event and the potential for expansion is there for all to see'

The Westurf exhibition was the brainchild of South West area chief, Gordon Child, who has seen the event mushroom in an incredibly short time.

Gordon sees Westurf as an ideal vehicle to promote the Association in the South West, bringing trade and members together for mutual benefit.

This year has seen a great step forward from 1989. Then we had 60 odd stands. This year it is over 80 and some of the big boys have given us

support. "I am pleasantly surprised at the amount of support we have received and I am sure things will continue to grow in the future.

"I feel it is vital, particularly in the South West region, for people who may be spread far and wide to be brought together in an exhibition such as this.

"The good weather has ob-viously helped and many bookings have already been made for next year's show.'

Major companies such as Iseki, Maxwell Hart, I.C.I., Huxley's and Jacobsens all turned up on the day together with a whole host of smaller, localised firms and representatives of training colleges. BIGGA's Executive Director,

Neil Thomas, was rather delighted with the exhibition's success.

"Everything seems to have gone off very well and members are pleased with the outcome. Exhibitions such as Westurf are a marvellous initiative and one I would applaud whole-heartedly.'







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## THE PUTTING GREEN

#### THE PUTTING GREEN THE STIMPMETER – A **USER-FRIENDLY KEY TO BETTER GREENS**

Harold Swash with John Nelson HIS is the fourth in a series of articles in which Harold Swash, Britain's Put-

with members of BIGGA on "What golfers want from putting green surfaces." The title of our previous article, "Doing

the Simple Things Well – The First lesson from Augusta'', was chosen deliberately to show that it is possible to learn from Augusta National, and to counter the view that all we over here can do is sit back and admire the (unattainable) playing conditions we see there.

Of course we must be selective in what we learn and try to apply. But to argue that the so-called 'Augusta image' is inappropriate elsewhere carries the risk of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater", and it would be a tragedy if this applied to the Stimpmeter.

#### Augusta and the Stimpmeter

So, for starters, let's put the record straight about the link between the Stimpmeter and Augusta. It is true that the Stimpmeter is "Augusta's right arm". Without it Augusta could not have got its lightning – fast greens accepted for the US Masters.

But it was the ability to accurately measure green speed which the Stimp meter provided for Augusta. Then, of course, it became possible to control and vary green speed. Augusta then elected (quite separately) to create very fast greens - and even then it had to replace its former Bermuda Rye grass and clay sub-soil with a new sand base and a different type of grass - Bent grass (actually Penncross)

Augusta had the perspicacity to realise that the Stimpmeter could enable them to measure green speed, and that this then made possible controlled variations in that speed. Ever since, the Stimpmeter has been used daily

Mr Hord Hardin, Chairman of Augusta National GC, told me during the 1989 US Masters that the Stimpmeter had become an invaluable and indispensable tool to them. "It proves", he said, "that my Board Directors knows what it is doing. We no longer need to rely on hunch and guesswork". He went on to add, "One reason why its so popular with us is because its so simple. Nothing can go wrong with it.'

So, the Stimpmeter has become Augusta's "right arm". But Augusta didn't invent it. It didn't start at Augusta although it has come to be associated with Augusta and it's lightning fast greens (together with the US Masters and it's Green Jackets).

To adopt it over here, therefore, will not be to perpetuate the "Augusta image". Rather, it will be just a long overdue transplant of a powerful American idea which was invented over 40 years ago and for which the United States Golf Association (USGA) has more recently put together a Stimpmeter Instructional Booklet

The Inventor of the Stimpmeter

The Stimpmeter was actually invented





Three shots of the Stimpmeter in action.



by a Mr Edward S. Stimpson, the 1935 Massachusetts Amateur Champion. Stimpson knew how variations in the speed of consecutive greens - and especially on different parts of the same green-negated the golfer's putting skill. He also knew the frustration of having to rely on subjective 'guestimates' of green speeds.

So he addressed the problem of how to achieve accurate, objective, and statistically valid measurements of the speed of the putting green. The result of his efforts was the Stimpmeter.

#### What exactly is the Stimpmeter?

To quote the USGA, "It is a simple ac-curate device which makes it possible to make a standard measurement of - and place a numerical figure on - the speed of a putting green.

What is the Stimpmeter made of and what are it's characteristic features?

It is an extruded aluminium bar, 36 inches long, with a V-shaped groove extending along it's entire length. It has a precisely milled ball-release notch 30 inches from the tapered end (the end which rests on the ground). The underside of the tapered end is milled away to reduce bounce as a rolling ball makes contact with the green.

The V-shaped groove has an included angle of 145 degrees thereby supporting a golf ball at two points 11/2 inches apart. A ball rolling down the groove has a slight overspin which is thoroughly consistent and has no deleterious effect on the ensuing measurements.

The ball-release notch is so designed that a ball will always be released and start to roll when the Stimpmeter is raised to an angle of approximately 20 degrees from the horizontal. This insures that the velocity of the ball will always be the same when it reaches the tapered end

#### How is the Stimpmeter used?

First, you need the Stimpmeter, together with golf balls, 3 tees and a measuring tape.

There are 6 steps to be taken: Step 1: Select a level area of the green approximately 10' by 10' square. (The level can be checked by laying the Stimpmeter flat on the green and placing a ball in the V-shaped groove. The movement of the ball will show whether or not the green is reasonably level.)

Step 2: Insert a tee on the green near the edge of the area selected to serve as a starting point. Holding the Stimpmeter by the notched end, rest the tapered end on the ground beside the tee and aim it in the direction you intend to roll the ball. Put a ball in the notch and SLOWLY raise that end until the ball is released and starts to roll down the groove. Then, keeping the tapered end on the same spot. repeat the same procedure with two more balls

Step 2: Insert a tee on the green near the edge of the area selected to serve as a starting point. Holding the Stimpmeter by the notched end, rest the tapered end on the ground beside the tee and aim it in the direction you intend to roll the ball. Put a ball in the notch and SLOWLY RAISE that end until the ball is released and starts to roll down the groove. Then, keeping the tapered end on the same spot, repeat the same procedure with two more balls

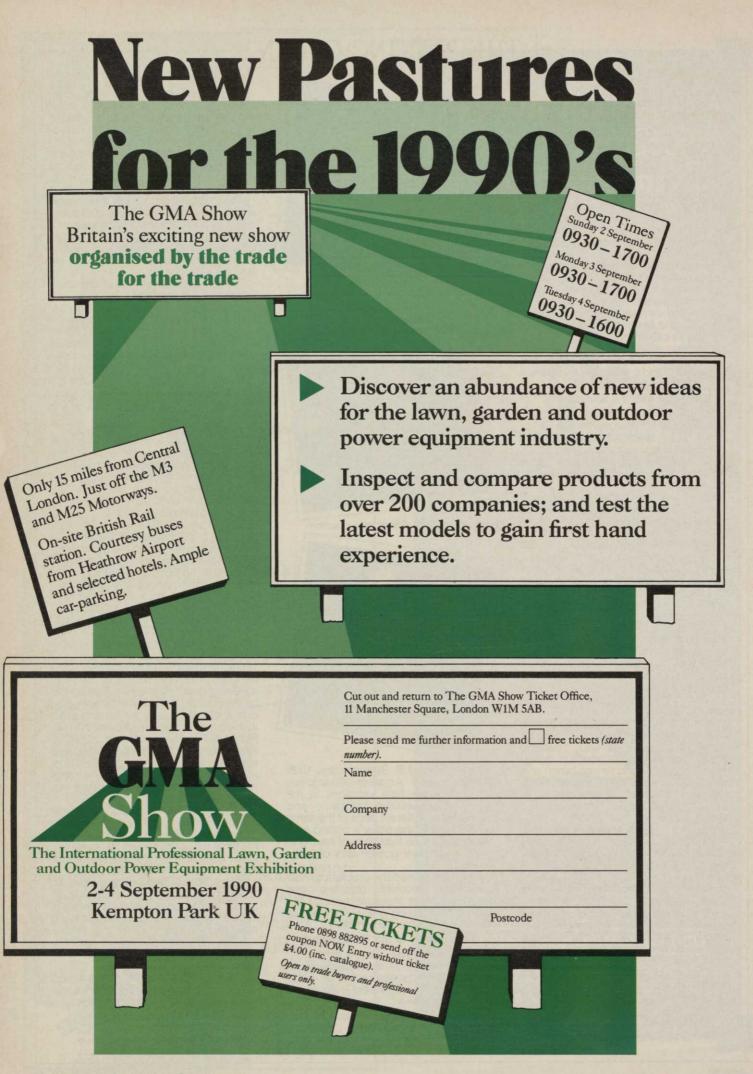
STEP 3: All three balls should come to rest not more than 8" apart. (A pattern larger than 8" is of dubious quality and the three roll series should be repeated). Insert a tee to mark the average stopping distance of the three balls.

Step 4: Repeat Step 2 using the second tee as the starting point and the first tee as the aiming point; i.e. roll a series of three balls along the same line but in the opposite direction.

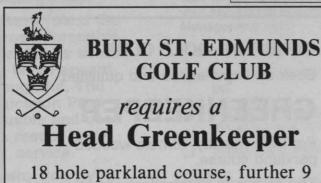
STEP 5: Repeat Step 3 thereby establishing the average length of the second series of rolls.

STEP 6: Measure the two average distances - for the first and the second series - and calculate their average.

To be continued in next month's issue . . . .



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## RECRUITMENT

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Recruitment continued on Page 50.

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