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TURF MATTERS

Who'd be Neil Stubley?

Neil Stubley is the Head of Courts and Horticulture at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club – that's Wimbledon to you and me.

Neil's team produced a fleet of outstanding courts again this year in weather not necessarily conducive to the growing of grass.

The surfaces looked supreme but, for whatever reason, this year there were rumblings of discontent. A few players slipped over during the early rounds, some injured as a result, and there was the odd uneven bounce, though not to any greater extent than from any other year. However, it has meant that the "state of the courts" had become a talking point, filling column inches in newspapers and websites and time on the airwaves.

Players were asked about it during press conferences and been compelled to make comment at either ends of the critical scale while armchair critics have been out in force.

One piece of criticism came from an unlikely source, however – a fellow Head Groundsman who entered the twittersphere to have a pop at Wimbledon and show off his own courts.

He was obviously extremely proud of his own work and may have thought it would give his own team a bit of a boost, but he might perhaps reflect on the wisdom of entering the fray with implied criticism of a fellow groundsman and his team.

The industry faces enough ill-informed comment from outsiders without having to defend itself from those inside its own walls.

Tall poppy syndrome, or whatever else may have been the motivation, I think we all know that in this industry we look after each other and offer support not public criticism.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

 You can follow us on Twitter @TurfMatters

Distributed every two months to sports turf professionals, independent schools, universities, local authorities and buyers of turfcare machinery and products.

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www.turfmatters.co.uk

Next magazine distributed October 2017

CELEBRATING
PARKS AND
OPEN SPACES

Hundreds of communities across the UK came together to celebrate the UK’s parks and green spaces as part of the Fields in Trust Have a Field Day activity.

The events were as varied as the parks that hosted them, from small picnics among neighbours to large community festivals with thousands in attendance.

After a busy weekend, the following week was also important for parks and green spaces. The long-awaited Ordnance Survey green space map was launched, which will make it possible to determine an agreed baseline for the quantity of accessible green space across the UK – and to monitor how the pressure for housing and building development affects the overall quantity over forthcoming months.

Fields in Trust will combine this newly available resource with new research currently in progress to identify the contribution that green spaces make to health and well-being outcomes across the UK.

Fields in Trust submission to last year’s Parks Inquiry called for a change in the way public green space is conceived, not simply as a drain on spending that requires a considerable amount of money to maintain – but rather as an asset which can be deployed to achieve longer-term savings and happier communities.

The CLG Committee’s Inquiry accepted the overwhelming body of evidence that parks are beneficial to communities.



INNOVATIVE:
The MAQA

For ten years BeamRider, from Fleet Line Markers, has pushed boundaries in productivity, accuracy and quality of line marking. Still positioned as the only laser guided, automated line marking machine worldwide, BeamRider puts aside 3/4/5 triangles and string lines, through the creation of laser-guided perfect right angles and straight lines in a matter of seconds. 2017, however, brings new innovation with the MAQA – a new era of marking, with no strings or measuring tapes, just pure GPS guided line marking from start to finish. For Iain McGuffie, Managing Director and master-mind behind Fleet’s innovations, a need to continuously develop innovative products is fueled by his desire to provide a solution for problems surrounding productivity, costs and quality.

Marking method	Number of pitches	Time	Resource	Cost
Traditional string	20	2.5 hours per pitch	2 persons	100 hrs. x £20 per hour = £2,000
Laser guided	20	0.58 hours per pitch	2 persons	23.2 hrs. x £20 per hour = £464
GPS guided	20	0.5 hours per pitch	2 persons	10 hrs. x £20 per hour = £200

“In understanding the extent of this often-arduous task, Fleet has always focused on different ways in which we could make a Groundsman’s job easier,” said Ian. This theme of innovation has resonated throughout the grounds maintenance sector throughout the past decade, which has also witnessed the demise of dry marking powder due to improved paint science. The main battle, however, has been quality versus cost. Fleet Line Markers has worked hard to maintain paint quality, utilising the best raw materials to create

paint that is brighter and whiter than before, with the added benefits of no re-wetting, instant dispersion of concentrated paint and soft settlement technology. The introduction of ready to use products such as DROO, has also enabled grounds staff to mark a full sized football pitch with as little as 1.1 litres of paint. All would agree that the initial mark of a pitch is one of the most time-consuming jobs, where pin point accuracy weighs heavy. However, recent advances in laser guided and GPS line marking has improved productivity by up to 75%, whilst placing any concerns over line accuracy as a thing of the past.

The statistics included in the table above demonstrate this point effectively. But the main issue surrounding innovation in line marking is a resistance to change. “Our next hurdle lies in helping conventional grounds staff see and perceive the benefits of line marking through GPS,” said Ian.

ECB FIRST TO TRIAL HYBRID PITCH

The England Cricket Board in conjunction with SIS Pitches have taken ground breaking steps to install two SISGrass wickets at the National Cricket Performance Centre in Loughborough. The ECB is the first to install a trial wicket using SIS Pitches’ latest innovation in the world of hybrid surfaces, SISGrass

Universal. Combining speed, mobility and laser precision, SIS Pitches’ hybrid pitch system is the latest addition to the company’s technology. The pitches combine a majority of natural turf grass with around 5% of twisted yarn. In football, that has led to improvements in stability and durability.

Neary Grinders arrive in UK

Stockport based Cheshire Turf Machinery Ltd can get down to some serious relief grinding now they have installed a Neary 555 SRI professional grinder, complete with workstation tail lift – the first of its kind in the UK.

The new addition from the Neary stable raises the standard of table-top style grinders to a different level. It delivers the quality of spin expected of a Neary grinder and provides professional relief grinding with automatic blade indexing to make the job even easier.

What sets the Neary 555 SRI apart from similar machines is the integrated relief grinding facility. Not only is this excellent value for money grinder incredibly easy to set up, it is the simplest



WORKING TOGETHER: Ian Robson, Prosport, and Mark Woodward, Cheshire Turf Machinery

machine on the market to use. It has a fast, efficient action for spin grinding and delivers an even sharper, longer lasting relief angle on all professional mower blades.

Director of the TORO dealership, Mark Woodward, knows how important it is

to return the cylinder blades back to manufacturers' specification. All Toro professional mowers leave the factory with relief ground cylinders and most mower servicing contracts include a requirement for relief ground edges.

"We are sharpening more than 2,000 cylinders annually, from all different sports, all demanding the highest standard. Football clubs such as Manchester United, Manchester City and Liverpool as well as many prestigious golf clubs and local authorities come to us because we deliver excellent technical support. The new Neary relief grinder is part of our continuing strategy for improving the services we offer."

Marketing team at Kubota strengthened

Kubota UK has strengthened its marketing team. Caroline Brown, Shannon O'Connor, Sophie Sprowell and Victoria Nemer now support Kubota's Marketing Manager, Karen Tipping, to help continue to drive brand awareness and support the company's products and aftersales proposition.

"In order to maintain the reputation of the brand and continue our growth across all industries, we must ensure our marketing team is as strong as it can be. In the last two years the team has increased from one to six people, highlighting the commitment and investment Kubota places on marketing and the support for our dealer network," said Karen.

"It's fantastic to welcome Caroline, Shannon, Sophie and Victoria into the marketing team. These key appointments will prove to be pivotal as we move forward."

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PRICE TURFCARE TO HAVE RIGHTS TO RYAN PRODUCTS

Price Turfcare, the recently established business founded by Ransomes Jacobsen's former International Sales Director, Rupert Price, has been awarded the UK and Ireland distribution rights for the Ryan range of turf maintenance equipment.

For an initial six-month period from June 2017, Price Turfcare will be the joint distributor together with existing distributor, Ransomes Jacobsen. Following the transition at the beginning of 2018, Price Turfcare will become the exclusive UK distributor of Ryan branded products.

Supported by a group of former colleagues with over 100 years of experience in the groundscape sector, Price Turfcare has bespoke warehousing and distribution facilities near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, with excellent road links via the A14 trunk road to all parts of the UK and to Europe's largest container port at Felixstowe.

"I've known Rupert for many years and he is hugely respected within our industry. He has 20 years of experience, mostly in senior sales management positions with Ransomes Jacobsen, so he knows our product portfolio very well. His decision to form his own company was a considered one; he has recruited a group of former colleagues with similar experience, to provide sales, parts and service support," said Pat Cappucci, President and COO of Schiller Grounds Care.

SUCCESS:
Rupert Price



EARNING THEIR STRIPES:
Cub Cadet Infinicuts

Mowers made their mark at Wimbledon

MTD Specialty Turf Products – formally ATT – has completed the order of 18 Cub Cadet Infinicut mowers to The All England Tennis Club at Wimbledon. The Cub Cadet Infinicut™ is a visually striking machine and has one of the shortest footprints of any walk behind mower on the

market allowing ultra-low heights of cut. The order comprised 15 21" models and three 30" variants and just three weeks before the tournament commenced, the grounds team took time out to line them all up for a photoshoot.

The Cub Cadet Infinicut, with LiPo battery power, was

supplied on trial for the 2016 tournament and was so successful with the grounds team, and for that matter the BBC because it made no noise during their daily briefings to air, that a firm order was placed.

"The new Infini mowers leave us a quality cut that is paramount to our operation here at Wimbledon," said Head Groundsman, Grant Cantin

Tennis courts need a mower of 21" width in order to facilitate equal striping over the courts, and the 22" Infinicut was easily adapted to accept 21" cutting reels.

They also took delivery of a number of SMARTUltraGroomer cassettes to go into the 21" units. These cassettes remove debris, resulting in a smooth surface, with no detrimental effects. The cassette will also remove seed heads in Poa annua turf and on newly established courts, it can help reduce the ingress of Poa annua by "grabbing" individual plants before they get a chance to take hold.

KUBOTA PARTNERS WITH MPS

Kubota UK has launched a new four-seater utility vehicle, the RTV-X1140. The new model, builds on the popular predecessor, the RTV1140, and not only supports professionals in their day-to-day activities, but provides exceptional comfort and safety as standard. Designed to provide greater power and performance, the RTV-X1140 enables operators to transport both cargo and crew with its two or four passenger configurations. Users can single-handedly transform

the 1102" cargo bed to two additional back seats in three steps, allowing for the safe transportation of four adults. Dedicated to delivering a high standard of performance, its four-wheel drive and unrivalled 10.8" ground clearance enables smooth travel over any terrain, while its hydraulic bed-lift makes light work of dumping tasks. The three-cylinder liquid-cooled Kubota diesel engine also offers a robust 24.8 HP, supported by its Variable Hydraulic Transmission for increased power and traction.

Leeds line up with Pitchmark

Leeds United Football Club's groundscrew team have been using Pitchmark Ecoline+ line marking paint since 2015 and are currently adding a fourth Eco Club spray line marking machine to their kit.

Ecoline+ is one of the most advanced low volume ready-to-use marking paints available. When used in combination with Pitchmark's Eco markers and special nozzles, the atomising technology allows you to mark a football pitch with as little as 1.5 litres. Kiel Barrett, Leeds United's Head Groundsman, and his team use Ecoline+ in the Elland Road stadium and across all eight First Team training grounds and Academy pitches.

"What we were looking for was supreme quality in our marking paint," says Kiel, "we want the brightest and it has to be quick drying but also

very cost-effective." With these criteria laid down Kiel had a demonstration by Pitchmark in 2015 and was immediately impressed with the results, putting his order in to one of their dealers, Countrywide Turf and Amenity. He says he is also very pleased with the high level of service and support he gets from Pitchmark and equally praises the consistency of the product.

Ecoline+ is manufactured using the best pigments on the market combined with advanced binders to make the paint bright and durable. At the same time it is water-based, biodegradable and environmentally-friendly.

In the busy Leeds United groundscrew schedule Kiel wanted the paint to be quick drying so they can be watering as soon as possible after



application. They use Eco Club battery-powered spray line markers to achieve the most accurate lines without ghosting and find the machines straightforward to use and easy to maintain.

"On match days the speed at which we work relies heavily on the quality we get with the Pitchmark system," adds Kiel, "we made the right choice

and I would recommend it to anyone."

Used at top level professional sport the Pitchmark results are seen on TV across the best leagues in the world and Ecoline+ was the paint of choice for every stadium at FIFA World Cup Brazil 2014™ and UEFA EURO 2016 France™.

Pitchmark is a British company based in Bristol.

NEAT:
Ecoline+ is the
paint of choice at
many prestigious
events

WHAT A FINISH!



With its 34HP 3-cylinder diesel engine, HST transmission, bi-speed turn and twin wet-type disc brakes, the Kubota STW34 is in a league of its own. Especially when it comes to servicing the needs of amateur and professional football clubs. The STW34 can be teamed up with all implements recommended by the FA pitch improvement programme, including a mid mounted side eject cutting deck and rear mounted hopper to collect grass cuttings. A spacious panoramic air conditioned cab is also available for the STW34, offering class leading visibility and unbeatable operator comfort whatever the weather. Powerful, versatile and efficient, the STW34 is the best signing a football club can make. For more information about Kubota's diverse range of world-class groundcare machines and aftersales support service, visit www.kubota.co.uk or call 01844 873190.

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For Earth, For Life


FIRST NEW DEALER APPOINTED

Six months on from his appointment as Central Area Territory Manager for Charterhouse Turf Machinery, Richard Lucas has made his first new dealer appointment in the form of Charles Groundcare. Responsible for the Shropshire region, Charles Groundcare will be distributing the Redexim range of products for both natural and synthetic surfaces.

Richard joined Charterhouse in November with his new role seeing him take over responsibility for the dealers and sales in Central UK, as well as working together with some key customers.

"Now I've found my feet in this new role it's good to be adding valuable dealer support within my area. The Charles



Groundcare team deliver fantastic sales, service and technical support and I look forward to working with them in the coming months to further enhance the offering to new and existing customers in this area."

Charles Groundcare, a division of Charles Stores Ltd, has grown from strength to strength since gaining a John Deere Dealership ten years ago. They now represent a range of brands catering for residential,

landscaping, groundcare, golf and sports markets.

"We're delighted to be working together with Charterhouse and adding their vast selection of machinery to our portfolio. The Redexim range is continually being updated and refined and is renowned for being versatile and efficient, meeting the demands of today's ground professionals," said Ian Trevor, Charles Groundcare Sales Manager.

■ Richard is pictured with Ian.

SHERRIFF AMENITY ACQUIRES TERRA FIRMA

Sherriff Amenity has acquired Terra Firma (Scotland) Ltd, one of Scotland's largest specialist suppliers to the amenity and local authority markets.

The purchase will allow the two businesses to combine existing technical expertise and broad product ranges to provide land managers, local authorities, contractors, groundsman and greenkeepers in Scotland with a full agronomy service, research driven advice, new product innovation and access to an extensive local distribution network.

"Terra Firma joining with Sherriff Amenity is a really exciting prospect. The combination of both companies' industry knowledge, experience and customer service ethos will form a strong, sustainable and service focused business model moving forward," said Simon Gough, founder of Terra Firma.

"We are delighted to welcome Simon and his team from Terra Firma into Sherriff Amenity. The acquisition will strengthen the business in Scotland and provide synergies across the business which will ultimately benefit our customers," said Chris Clayton, Managing Director of Agrovista.

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Cub Cadet

Cosby's sward conversion

Cosby Golf Club Head Greenkeeper, Thomas Flavelle, pictured, is in the process of preparing the course for a sward conversion programme.

To help him get the course best prepared for the change he has been working closely with Andy Lane, of Headland Amenity.

Thomas came into the role in 2015 with a clear strategy to implement a sustainable maintenance regime.

"During my degree, and some time spent studying in America, it's evident that there's a shift in the way courses have to be managed. We're losing more and more chemicals as the years go by so the focus must be on creating sustainable greens to give surfaces the best chance of thriving through



the winter months. Here at Cosby we're trying to conduct a sustainable regime with the main aims of lowering organic matter to try and encourage finer species into the greens."

Thomas intends to embark on a five year project to achieve a 50/50 (or better) Bent to Poa split. To give the Bent seed the best chance, Thomas has enlisted the help of Andy to assist

with a feeding and soil preparation programme.

"Andy came in and created a nutritional regime. Following the results of some soil samples we began a full Headland programme on the greens, tees, approaches and fairways."

"When I started at Cosby we struggled with some hydrophobic areas on some of the greens and improving those areas was one of my first tasks. Andy suggested we use a combination of TriCure AD and Turf Complex which quickly improved the drainage and dry-down characteristics. We've continued to use TriCure AD on a monthly basis and have cured the hydrophobic areas and seen no new areas form."

Thomas faces the challenge

of managing three different green constructions at Cosby; sand based, clay push-ups and one USGA spec green.

"We achieved fantastic results in the first year, in particular noticing how quick the uptake is – you notice the differences very quickly. We also use the Weathercheck service and follow Mark Hunt's WeatherBlog."

They're currently awaiting the results of some soil analysis which could signal the start of Bent seed applications.

"What we didn't want to do is put the Bent seed down before the soil conditions were correct and consequently lose the newly germinated seedlings through further maintenance procedures."

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Reesink enjoy first year success

Reesink Turfcare is marking its first year as Toro distributor following the acquisition last July by Royal Reesink N.V. of the turfcare activities of Lely in the UK, Ireland and Denmark. And it's been a successful 12 months.

That's according to Managing Director, David Cole, who believes that Reesink Turfcare began life with a great legacy in place.

"Lely had an excellent record as distributor of Toro turf machinery and irrigation products in the UK for over 30 years, and Reesink brought with it 60 years' unrivalled experience as Toro

distributor in the Netherlands.

"While no guarantee of success, it provided a solid start; and when The Toro Company and St Andrews Links signed a long-term partnership agreement under our new watch it spoke volumes about the trust and commitment the 'home of golf' had in Reesink's supply structure and the service and support we offered."

David added that Reesink has enjoyed healthy sales, while market and revenue performance have been good and client retention has been excellent.



SALTEX WINNERS AT WEMBLEY

The opportunity to stand on arguably the most famous pitch in world football on the day of the FA Cup Final is a dream for many, but for four sports turf students from Northern Ireland – the dream has become a reality.

Gavin White, Jon Crawford, Michael Dundee and John Kennedy, from CAFRE College, in Antrim, Northern Ireland, were part of the Wembley grounds team at the FA Cup Final. This was their reward, as well as a 'big' IOG national, student-led sports turf challenge.

Sponsored by Ransomes, the competition made its debut at the 2016 SALTEX, where the four CAFRE students competed



against student teams from four other UK-based horticultural colleges.

"When we heard we'd beaten all the other teams and got our hands on the trophy, it felt like we'd just won the FA Cup!" said first year sports turf

student, Michael Dundee.

The team met with Wembley Stadium Head Groundsman Karl Standley on the morning of the big game between Chelsea FC and Arsenal FC, and were briefed on the day's pre-match proceedings

before getting straight into morning preparations.

All colleges interested in participating in the 2017 SALTEX College Cup should email Dan Prest at dprest@iog.org for more details.

This year's event will be held at the NEC in November.

PRESTIGIOUS: Karl, Gavin, Jon, Michael and John on the hallowed turf

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SPORTS SEED

SISGrass continues global rise with hybrid pitch in Norway



The Lerkendal Stadium in Norway has become the first stadium in the country to have the revolutionary SISGrass hybrid pitch technology installed.

Home of Rosenborg, Norway's most successful football team, the Lerkendal Stadium installation took just seven days to complete.

The reigning champions began the new season on April 2, with SIS Pitches beginning the SISGrass transformation on March 24. The installation was completed despite a large amount of snow and temperatures of -6°C in the evenings.

SIS Pitches' first project in Norway arrives on the back of a maiden installation in Sweden last month, where the Gamla Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg received a SISGrass makeover.

The rise of SIS Pitches and the SISGrass hybrid pitch technology in Scandinavia adds to a brand that is becoming increasingly more global following

other projects in Spain, Turkey, Dubai and Israel.

Anders Øien, Groundsman at Rosenborg FC, has expressed his satisfaction at the SISGrass installation.

"We would like to thank SIS Pitches for their hard work in the installation of SISGrass at Lerkendal stadium.

"We are really satisfied with the cooperation and professionalism of SIS Pitches and already we have had a very positive response from the players."

SISGrass Director, Ivo Lamot, said; "Our first SISGrass pitch in Norway represents the way SISGrass is moving in the global market."



HARPENDEN SWEEPS UP WITH TRILO

The 18-hole parkland course on Harpenden Common in Hertfordshire features a mixture of mature woodland and gorse. "The club has used a Trilo SG400 vacuum sweeper for many years now, but the introduction of a scarifying unit has changed the dynamics," said Head Greenkeeper Sean Brocklehurst. "The hundreds of trees we have which line the fairways and other areas means that every autumn we have a huge problem with leaves" explained Sean. "We knew we needed a multifunctional unit and the SG400 ticked all of our boxes."

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Sharing the knowledge

Turf Matters' Laurence Gale – seen here 'on a roll' – attended the Dennis and SISIS Cricket Seminar. He was impressed...

Dennis and SISIS have again hosted another successful cricket education event, which attracted well over 160 practising Groundsmen to St Albans School, Woollam Trust Playing Fields.

The event follows on from the hugely successful 'For the Groundsmen by The Groundsmen' series of seminars that has now become an industry must attend series of Cricket education days.

The St Albans event was a mix of indoor presentations and outdoors practical sessions, kindly organised and hosted by Ian Smith, the Schools Turf Consultant. It has been a long ambition of Ian's to host a practical demonstration day of cricket pitch renovation techniques, making good use of the facilities he has on hand at St Albans School.

Robert Jack from Dennis, began the day giving a warm welcome and thank you to all those who had taken the time to come and support the event, with a special thank you to all of the key sponsors and guest speakers.

Company sponsors were: Boughton Loam, Cricketworld.com, Durant Cricket, Ecosol, Headland Amenity, Limagrain, Powerroll and RT Machinery.

Guest speakers: Alex Vickers IOG; Keith Exton, Perfect Pitches; Andy Mackay, Sussex and Hove HG; Andy Clarke, IOG; Ian Smith, St Albans Trust Turf Consultant; Rob Kendle, ATB Sports Solutions and Darren Matthews, Ops manager for Ecosol.

The event was officially opened by Mark Illott, St Albans School Cricket Professional and former England Test

player and Essex County cricketer who spoke about his career and how he admired the important work of the Cricket Groundsman and was pleased to know they are finally getting the recognition they deserve, with such events.

The morning sessions covered a wide range of topics, centred on the benefits of undertaking a thorough end of season renovation, first up was the renowned Soil Scientist, Alex Vickers, who himself is a practising volunteer cricket groundsman and player. Alex's key message was to have a better understanding of what your needs are in terms of carrying out your annual renovations.

There are too many clubs, invariably undertaking a renovation programme without understanding what they really need to address, often wasting valuable time, money and resources.

Out of an audience of 160 plus, only a handful carry out regular core sampling to access the soil profile of their square, therefore understanding what is going on beneath their feet.

Alex then, showed several core samples and explained what issues could be identified by a simple inspection of these cores that clearly identified the level of thatch content, soil breaks, rooting depth and density.

Couple with the fact if you sent

IN DEPTH:
Far left:
accessing core
sample in the
field. Left: Alex
inspecting
the wicket



IN ACTION:
From left,
applying loam
with SISIS
Truspread;
brushing up
the wicket;
discussing cores

WHAT CAUGHT MY EYE WAS A BRAND NEW INFLATABLE PITCH COVER THAT WILL ENABLE CRICKET GROUNDSMAN TO HELP PRODUCE BETTER PLAYING SURFACES...



samples off for a soil particle size analysis / nutrient and pH status, along with loss ignition test, you would be able to have more information on hand to help you make better decisions on your maintenance and renovation requirements.

Rob Kendle of ATB Sports Solutions was next up giving an informative talk on the modern methods of undertaking cricket pitch renovations and pitch reconstructions, using such machines as the Koro fraise mower, tractor mounted scarifiers and spreaders.

The morning session was concluded with a Q&A session by Keith Exton and Andy Mackay who had inspected a number of core samples brought in by a number of delegates attending the day.

Again, this centred around identifying the physical characteristics

of each core sample and identifying the level of thatch content, root depth / density and any root breaks giving relevant feedback on the results of their findings.

During the lunch break, the delegates were able to talk to many of the sponsors and look at the vast range of Dennis and Sisis equipment being shown on site, Powerroll also brought some of their cricket rollers for people to try out.

However, what caught my eye was a brand new inflatable pitch cover, designed and patented by Durant Cricket, who have been working closely with Keith Exton to develop this new product, that will enable Cricket Groundsman to help produce better playing surfaces, particularly at the start of the cricket

season. This new tented environment (mobile greenhouse) will allow the groundsman to control the amount of moisture / air temperatures by the use of humidifiers, blowers and heaters.

There will no doubt be other add on's in terms of the potential to fit lighting rigs and watering systems to further enhance the performance of this new innovation.

For me, the best part of the day came after lunch, when the delegates were split into three groups and sent off to see practical demonstrations of renovation techniques going on, at three different cricket squares.

Square 1: Saw Andy Clarke and Ian Smith discussing renovation techniques on a budget, using a range of Dennis and Sisis equipment, they showed each group the process of a

REVEALED:
Durant's inflatable pitch cover (top right); the Dennis/SISIS equipment; drilling; Ian Smith talking renovations; planed off pitches

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Deep drill aerator attracts interest

Ecosol Turfcare's Deep Drill aerator, demonstrated by Steven Bailey, attracted plenty of attention at the cricket day. With its depth potential of 450mm, the Deep Drill has been one of the most successful tools in cricket's armoury, eliminating compaction, improving drainage, encouraging grass growth and providing optimum ball conditions for players.

Steven was able to move up and down the St Albans School playing field, showing Cricket Groundsmen how the Deep Drill differs from conventional aeration equipment because it drills out holes, unlike the punch action spikers that force tines into the square to create the ducts. The drills are used to break through horizontal soil pans/

breaks, marl layers and areas of weak cohesion between different loams or soils, extracting and aerating in one process without surface damage. Water movement can then be accelerated away from the square's surface faster but the primary effect is that the grasses develop much deeper rooting.

"The ECB pitch advisers often recommend Deep Drill," said Ecosol operations manager, Darren Matthews, who was supervising the demo. "They regard it as one of the most important things to have happened in cricket square maintenance."

End of October is usually the optimum time in the season to make the best use of Deep Drill, but it can vary due to soil moisture levels and maturity



of the sward following renovations. Ecosol Turfcare operates on a contract basis and can also offer Koroing, levelling and re-seeding. Bookings are being taken now for this autumn.



good thorough renovation of a square, starting with the cleaning up of the square, removing as much surface debris as you can, scarifying in two/three directions, rectifying surface levels, applying the seed and loam.

It was also good to see the full range of dedicated cricket machinery/tools on offer from Dennis & SISIS, ranging from hand tools, Tru lutes, mowers, cassette systems, scarifiers, spreaders seeders and brushes.

Square 2: Saw Keith Exton, Perfect Pitches, and Darren Matthews, Ecosol, give a demonstration of two different ways to carry out deep aeration of a cricket square using a fast acting Weidemann solid tine spiker fitted with 10mm tines and the unique Ecosol Deep drill using 8mm diameter drills both able to achieve depths up to 200-220mm. Prices for this type of work based on a ten pitch square would vary between £300-£600. Deep aeration of cricket squares is a skilled operation, in the wrong hands you could end up doing more damage. Timing of this work is generally completed in the autumn when the soils

are at the right moisture content

Both forms of deep aeration are now becoming a popular method of deep solid tine aeration, the ability to get deep down into the square has many benefits. Especially when it allows, the opportunity to get some additional

HOW IT'S DONE:
Scarifying the wicket;
taking cores





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DENNIS AND SISIS, ALONG WITH IAN SMITH, MUST BE CONGRATULATED FOR PUTTING ON ANOTHER FANTASTIC CRICKET DAY

- loam dressing deeper down into your soil profile, Ecosol have in recent years offered the drill and fill option. Both companies offer a wide range of services too clubs that include renovations, aeration and reconstruction works.

Square 3: Saw Rob Kendle, of ATB Sports Solutions, give a demonstration of some of the specialist equipment he now uses to renovate and reconstruct cricket squares. On show was the now popular Koro Fraise mower, which can be set to take off surface vegetation from 3mm-15mm. Taking off any more would be deemed a reconstruction job requiring the need to power harrow, reset levels and over sow. He also demonstrated some tractor mounted scarifiers and topdressing machines.

Dennis and SISIS, along with Ian



Smith, must be congratulated for putting on another fantastic cricket day, the day could not have gone any better, a great venue, a full turnout, superb food and hospitality, exceptional weather and a wealth of experienced speakers delivering a packed programme of presentations and active demonstrations.

I cannot wait for the next one.

Look out for Laurence Gale's feature on cricket pitch renovation on the Turf Matters website www.turfmatters.co.uk



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More than judging the size of the holes...

Laurence Gale looks back at aeration from earlier times and marvels at how the task has been revolutionised



I am amazed, how our turfgrass industry has changed in terms of the amount of machinery, knowledge and resources that are available for the practising groundsman/greenkeeper compared to when I started back in the early 1970s.

I remember working at Cocksmoors Woods Golf Club and the only machinery on hand was a tractor, two sets of gang mowers, two auto Certees, two Atco cylinder mowers and a Pattison spiker.

How times have changed for the better. Most golf courses today have a vast array of equipment to enable the greenkeeper to do his job more efficiently. I vividly remember using the Pattison spiker to aerate the greens, a ball ache of a job, and not the easiest piece of equipment to use at the best of times. The only other notable aeration tools on hand back then was a Sarrel

roller, and a Sisis outfield spiker.

Knowledge and understanding of soil physical properties has always been important for professional turf managers when making decisions about maintenance operations and when carrying out reconstruction works. Precise soil knowledge, including information on boundaries between soil types, should result in more accurate use of fertilisers, pesticides and effective management practices, thus ensuring that the final managed outputs result in the production of economically safe, consistent, playable natural sports turf surfaces.

However, today with the advent of a better understanding of soil and plant water relationships and the drive to produce better playing surfaces, the industry has, over many years, seen the development and innovation of many different types of beneficial aeration equipment.

Regular and seasonal aeration is essential to ensure turfgrass quality is maintained throughout the playing seasons of most fine and field turf facilities. The impact and cost of not carrying out these operations can be high, resulting in lost or cancelled fixtures, which will have other impacts for club members and users, often resulting in lost revenue for the facility.

The ability to retain a good balance of

macro pores in soil structure is essential for maintaining grass plant health. It is when these macro pores are either reduced in size, or filled with water, that we see deterioration in surface playability and resistance to wear.

The main contributing factor that reduces and damages pore spaces in soil is compaction, typically caused by compression forces normally associated with play and use of machinery, particularly during wet weather periods.

The variety and choice of implements and devices now available is excellent, providing different tine sizes, operating widths and shattering features that can meet the requirements of any facility and, more importantly, do not disturb the playing surface, allowing play to continue after use.

Aeration generally, should be carried out on a regular basis when weather and soil conditions allow, however, you may contribute to surface deterioration if you aerate during bad weather when the surface is saturated and likely to smear. Timing is the key to successful aeration. Aeration is carried out to complement other seasonal renovation programmes, such as dethatching, topdressing and overseeding, which are usually completed in the spring and autumn.

Also, there are times when a one off or specified deep aeration programme

Toro's ProCore SR54 deep tine aerator: The impactful compact



The Toro ProCore SR54 deep tine aerator is ideal for those in need of a machine that is lightweight and compact, but doesn't compromise on productivity and impact. As the lightest machine in Toro's SR series, it is perfect for use on fine surfaces requiring a 'soft touch'.

It can be towed by compact tractors of at least 16hp, such as the 29hp TYM T293 or 35hp T353, and with its 54ins aerating width, can cover a productive 3,345m² per hour. The aerator's hydraulic depth control can also be operated from the towing tractor, making any adjustments to depth quick and easy.

Using the SR54 reduces soil compaction at a sub-surface level, promoting healthier plant growth from the root up. This is thanks to its ability to aerate lower soil levels by creating channels up to 10ins in depth, through which oxygen, water and vital nutrients can travel far into the soil. The results of this are noticeable, but you'd be hard pressed to spot where the SR54 has been working.

While it can puncture clean deep holes, the 528kg SR54 is compact and light, making it the ideal choice for use on more delicate surfaces such as golf greens and surrounds or cricket squares. This combination of deep aerification and light tread quickly helps to produce smoother, healthier and better playing surfaces, which can be further improved with the rear roller option.

Other optional attachments and accessories include a range of solid and coring tines to suit specific aeration applications, and a handy storage stand to keep the machine in prime condition when it's in-between jobs.

Despite its lightweight credentials, the ProCore SR54 is durable and can tackle challenging aeration conditions with ease. This impactful aerator offers great performance and quality wrapped up in a conveniently sized, compact package.

Specification

- Aeration width: 54ins
- Aeration depth: Up to 10ins
- Hole spacing: 2.5-4ins
- Productivity: 3,345 square metres per hour
- Tractor size: 16hp PTO minimum
- Tractor lift capacity: 682kg
- Tractor PTO: 400-500rpm
- Weight (with PTO and top link): 528kg
- Warranty: Two-year or 500-hour limited warranty.

► of work may be deemed necessary, this often entails using specialist equipment such as the deep drill, compressed air and hydra-jet water aerators, that can penetrate to depths of 1metre or more and offer a sand / soil backfill of material.

A good example of this has been the Ecosol Turfcare Drill and Fill machine that has been used on many county cricket grounds to improve the soil density of their cricket squares. This machine has also been a popular choice when renovating golf and bowling greens.

Another revolutionary aeration technique that has become popular at cricket grounds, has been the work advocated by Specialist Cricket Contractor Keith Exton, who for a number of years has been using a modified Wiedenmann XF aerator, using pencil tines to deep aerate a cricket pitch during the playing season, aiding the recovery of his wickets after play.

In recent years, we have also seen the advent of quicker, more flexible hollow and solid tine deep aeration, punch action machines, notably those manufactured by the likes of Campey Turf Care, Redexim Charterhouse, Weidenmann, John Deere, Ransomes Jacobsen, RECO, Groundsman Industries, Ryetec, Sisis, Toro and Wiedenmann.

Then there are the linear type aerators, such as the Imants Shockwave, Imants Rotoknife and sand cat, Blec Ground Breaker and Charterhouse Verti-knife that also compliment the choice of aeration methods for keeping the surface open and free draining.

Terrain Aeration were one of the pioneers of compressed air systems, enabling the hiring of their Terralift and Scamper aerators to break up deep pans. In the last couple of years we have seen Campey Turfcare selling and hiring out the now popular Air2G2 Machine.

A wide range of aeration techniques are now used on winter sports pitches, using both tractor and pedestrian aerators. The Sisis Quadraplay with a set of knife tines is now becoming a popular method of aerating and renovating

local club pitches after matches.

Most if not all Premier/Championship club groundsmen have reverted to pedestrian walk behind spikers, such as the Toro Pro Core 648 and John Deere Aercore 800, to help reduce compaction and keep the pitch free draining. Many of the fibre reinforced pitches are prone to firming up, so it is essential they implement a regular aeration programme of work to reduce firmness.

Nowadays large sports facilities (schools, universities, local authorities, golf clubs and professional rugby and football clubs) tend to invest in their own aeration equipment, whereas grassroot clubs will hire in the equipment on a need only basis.

There are plenty of good sports turf contractors who will come and aerate your facility for a reasonable price, you may have to pay something between £350-£500 per pitch depending on how far they need to travel.

Many groundsmen and greenkeepers also use aeration techniques to help incorporate feeding products, wetting agents and fungicides into their rootzones.

With an increase in the damage to turf caused by nematodes, particularly in golf and football facilities, the ability to direct products directly into the soil profile using aeration techniques has been useful and effective.

The total range, size and diversity of aeration equipment on offer today is immense, so you need to understand your needs and requirements before you hire or invest in a suitable aerator.

Take time to research what products are available, seek advice from fellow professional / volunteer grounds staff, go and visit other sports venues, arrange demonstrations. Go on line, most manufacturers provide excellent information on their websites.

The benefits of aeration are universally known, there are plenty of books and online resources that confirm this, maintaining good macro pore space in the soil profile is a key element in the success of growing grass and having a free draining playing surface.



Sheer volume of rain was a shock

Yelverton Golf Club in Devon has a problem with rain – too much of it! In order to deal with the deluge Course Manager, Kristian Summerfield, took delivery of a Redexim Verti-Drain 7316 from Charterhouse.

The 18 hole moorland course, set on the edge of Dartmoor, is very wet due to thin and rocky topsoil that's susceptible to compaction – that and the annual rainfall that tops 2500mm.

Despite his 23 years of greenkeeping experience, including nine years spent in Holland, the amount of rain Kristian received during his first year working at Yelverton came as quite a shock.

"It was more than I was expecting and with very little artificial drainage we're really relying on regular aeration work to improve the surfaces natural draining ability. Our previous aerator was very heavy meaning that when the tines hit the many large rocks in our soil structure at such a force,

the tines were just bending – and with the amount of aeration work we need to conduct, we were getting through tines at a rate of knots."

Having previously used the Verti-Drain 7316 during his time at the club in Holland, Kristian was confident that it would be the right model for the demands of the Yelverton course.

"We needed a unit light enough for work on the greens but something big enough for viable use on the fairways. Steve Dommert, from Devon Garden Machinery, came to demo the machine and it confirmed what we thought."

With the significant weight reduction compared to their previous machine, and slower motion of the tines, the 7316 rides over any large rocks instead of forcing through them, avoiding unnecessary extra costs.

"We're out once a month on the greens, tees, approaches and fairways with 8mm tines in use between April and October" said

Kristian, who is supported by a team of four greenkeepers.

"When it's time to conduct the aeration work we start at 3:00am to try and get round before the golfers catch us up. We're all pleased with our choice, it's ticking all of the boxes so far and it's nice to be back working with a unit that I'm familiar with."



HAPPY: We're all pleased with our choice, says Kristian Summerfield, right

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SISIS Aeration

The SISIS Javelin Aer-Aid tractor mounted aerator is an essential tool within any integrated turf management programme.

This is the conclusion of extensive trials conducted by the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI).

The STRI research, over four months, saw three trial plots set-up to examine the effects of the SISIS Javelin Aer-Aid with air injection, one with the Aer-Aid without air injection, while the other plot was left un-treated.

In particular, the STRI's Dr Christian Spring and his team of researchers were looking at how and if the Javelin Aer-Aid had an effect on the hardness of the turf, root depth, water infiltration and disease.

"The SISIS Javelin Aer-Aid was really effective in reducing compaction," said Christian. "In measuring the penetration depth, we ran the Aer-Aid over the surface and found that the probe was able to penetrate further into the soil profile, indicating that compaction throughout the entire trial site was

significantly less than areas that were left un-treated."

"It became obvious that the Aer-Aid improved maximum root and depth within the soil profile and also had the benefit of increasing the depth of the average rooting mass. The reason or the rationale for this improvement was likely to be a result of the increased air space in the soil profile created by the air injection and the fracturing that resulted from that."

"The use of the SISIS Javelin Air-Aid proved beneficial in helping to reduce the conditions in which Microdochium Patch occurred on the trial plots. Plots that were treated with the Aer-Aid, with the air injection switched on, appear to have significantly less disease than the un-treated plots during a period of disease pressure throughout autumn."

The Aer-Aid can be used all year round on both fine and outfield turf, with its unique feature of moving air uniformly throughout the root zone – not just where the tines have penetrated.

The power

Lack of rainfall to date across many parts of the country has resulted in grass areas on the golf course, sports pitches, parks, amenity areas and domestic gardens being in real danger of drying out. Watering will help in the short term but water shortages could add to the problem. Conversely, recent heavy downpours on compacted grass areas can leave standing water, rendering them unusable and stopping play. Often, the very action of normal aeration, use of machines and foot traffic leaves areas compacted and panning occurs, creating areas where drainage is poor, and oxygen and nutrients do not reach the grass roots. Terrain Aeration has been providing a long-term solution to this for over twenty five years and the

process actually dates back to the nineteen-seventies.

One-metre deep penetration using the Terralift machine not only relieves compaction, it is also the vehicle for injecting water and nutrient storing polymers and dried seaweed. The whole process has a beneficial effect that lasts many years – some golf courses treated over fifteen years ago for example, have only recently asked for return visits to renew the treatment.

It works like this. The Terralift hammers a hollow probe one metre into the soil using a JCB road breaker gun (this is because the ground is usually so compact at depth that it needs this hammer to break through). Once the probe has reached one metre depth, compressed air is released up to a

Wiedenmann Terra Spikes continue to meet customer goals

When courses and pitches are in constant play quick, reliable aeration is essential. Wiedenmann Terra Spike owners routinely report covering all 18 golf course greens in a day or a full size rugby or football pitch in three hours. The combination of speed and accuracy also proves a winner when weather conditions are unpredictable because they offer a "greater window of opportunity" and as a consequence earn their keep that bit faster.

The GXi8 HD is especially popular for its versatility and readiness to access all areas and is just one of Wiedenmann's eleven different models. Offering a host of benefits like Quick Set Heave, Quick

Set Depth and Quick Fit, all these patented systems make the operator's job straight forward. Heave and depth can be set quickly and accurately with a simple, central tool free adjustment while a full set of tines can be changed in less than 15 minutes.

One owner who consistently praises his GXi8 HD is Michael Slack, Course Manager at Cowglen Golf Club in the south side of Glasgow.

"The GXi8 HD does a truly great job. It's so quick but the best thing for me is that two tine heads go into the soil simultaneously so the machine is always absolutely balanced; it's not digging in one side, then the other. The action

of deep aeration

maximum of 20Bar (280psi), the Terralift being the only machine using such high air pressure, which is needed to fracture and fissure the soil.

On the tail end of the air blast, dried seaweed is injected which sticks to the walls of the fractures and fissures and, over time, expands and contracts with the moisture content in the soil – similar to “breathing” underground. Incorporated with the dried seaweed is the water storing polymer, such as Broadleaf P4 which is a high performance, long lasting hydrophilic (water and nutrient storing). This polymer will swell with water enabling the roots to take it up (rather than the polymer taking it from the roots). As it is a polymer it will continue to work within the soil structure

for many years – so helping with better use of irrigation water and addressing drought conditions.

The 1½” probe holes created by the Terralift machine are backfilled with aggregate to provide a semi permanent aeration/ventilation shaft, helping to keep the whole aeration process working. The top 1” should be topped with the usual top dressing to encourage grass growth over the probe holes. The probe is withdrawn and the process repeated using two-metre centre spacings on a staggered grid pattern – this means that each shot interconnects with the previous ones. The Terrain Aeration process is ecologically sound, there is no mess and once the green, tee or pitch has been given a light mow it's ready for play to resume.



and finish is totally smooth,” he said. “Often we follow on with a cut but the amount of impact on the surface is negligible. If we haven't a competition or it's relatively quiet we get round all greens in a day or we'll do them in two mornings.”

Hot on the heels for that coveted best seller spot in the Wiedenmann fleet is the new Terra Spike SL6 launched last year at Saltex. Smart in every sense, the beauty of the SL (S for Super, L for Light) is that it reaches well beyond the depth of a shallow aerators and can effectively tackle the important area that lies below surface between 100 mm and 210 mm. An innovative cover is one

of several bespoke features designed to keep the SL's weight to just 470kg. An updated version of Wiedenmann's patented TwinDrive takes up less room and moves the centre of gravity closer to the tractor. Other developments include a built-in tine return system and additional shock absorbing facility.

Among the first clubs to snap up Wiedenmann's fine turf aerator turf was top Shropshire course, Market Drayton GC.

“It came along just as I was looking for extra depth,” said head greenkeeper, Simon Cotterill. “Our previous micro-tine machine operated to about 100 mm but going to 210 mm just suits us better.”

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Table G4: Perennial ryegrass – close mown trials (mown at 4-7mm)

Cultivar	Fineness of Leaf
Cabrio	8.3
Barsignum	7.3
Bargold	7.1
Monroe	7.1
Aiken (LA)	6.9
Clementine	6.9
Dickens 1	6.4

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Transforming Greenock Morton's fortunes



Scott MacCallum catches up with Mark Farnell, Head Groundsman at Greenock Morton, a man used to making the most of what he has got.

There is groundsmanship going on all around us at every time of day, or year, and at so many locations that it would render your Sat Nav hoarse should you set out to visit every one.

Issues are being identified, solutions uncovered with the nett result that more often than not the best result, given the circumstances, and budget, are achieved. The word budget is key here as, outside of a select few venues, money is tight and a groundsman uses his wits to bring about what he or she desires.

One such is Mark Farrell, Head Groundsman at Scottish Championship Club Greenock Morton FC, who, through an excellent working relationship with Richard Haywood, of Campey Turfcare, had his pitch Koroed in exchange for hosting an industry open day.

Mark had work carried out on his pitch which would otherwise have stretched his budget to breaking point while Campey had the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of their Koro machine. In addition 70

groundsmen and women saw first hand how a pitch can be transformed in a remarkably short space of time.

"I know Richard very well and we agreed that it would be great to put on an event in Scotland and I told him that Morton's pitch would be available to use and that it would also help us as we're not a big club," explained Mark.

Greenock Morton came within a successful play-off campaign of reaching the Scottish Premiership last season. Defeat to Dundee United, in the semi-finals, ending what had

DRAMATIC:
Cappielow Park

AH, THE RAIN. COMING FROM MANCHESTER MARK THOUGHT HE KNEW ALL ABOUT RAIN. HE WAS ABOUT TO LEARN MORE. THE WEST OF SCOTLAND DOES EXPERIENCE MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF RAIN WITH LOCALS JOKING THAT WEBBED FEET ARE AN OBVIOUS GIVE-AWAY

► been a remarkable season of over-achievement for a club which had only been promoted from the 1st Division the previous year. In fact they had identified their ambitions for the year as Championship survival.

However, by Mark's own admission, home ground Cappielow, just a few hundred metres from the banks of the Clyde, boasts the type of pitch which is not generally seen at the likes of Parkhead, Pittodrie or Ibrox.

"What we have is about as close as you could get to a council pitch in a professional football club – we have a great deal of play and the construction is not what it would be

at other clubs," explained Mark, a Mancunian, who has been Head Man at Cappielow since 2005.

"It is soil based, and that's not changed since we started playing at the ground in 1874, and we have no drainage or irrigation. All the sand we've applied over the years has worked its way into the soil structure."

But Mark doesn't get the opportunity to nurse his pitch through a season, as there are three teams which call Cappielow home – Morton's First Team, Morton's Reserve Team and the Celtic Development Squad, who travel down from Glasgow to



play in Greenock. "If we count only the main matches, last season we had 53 games on the pitch and that doesn't take into consideration the community and corporate games which are also played. It's close to 100 games a season."

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With the priority Morton's first team games it is a real battle against the tide as Mark can often face a game on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

"The main problem is getting onto the pitch to do what we need to do, and do it when the conditions are right. I often find that if we've had a game on the Monday it will rain all day Tuesday and then a game on Wednesday and you only have time to prepare for that and not to any time to do anything other than that."

Ah, the rain. Coming from Manchester Mark thought he knew all about rain. He was about to learn more. The west of Scotland does experience more than its fair share of rain with locals joking that webbed feet are an obvious give-away for anyone coming from the area.

"We used to go on about Manchester being wet but it's wet up here, I can tell you. Last year was one of the best we've had recently in terms of rainfall but the year before we had over 1000mm in just four months. In the December we had 388mm alone."

The Campey day afforded Mark the opportunity to get some work done on the pitch which would not otherwise

happen. "I have a lot of poa – a lot of good poa – but the plan was to try and get some more rye grass into the surface so what we did was take off about 70% of the top surface, because the soil here is good, and leave about 30% of the strong plant. We'd never done it before and while it's not a bad surface here, it's never going to be one of the top pitches in Scotland as it's overused, with no drainage and no irrigation.

"What we were looking for is a satisfactory surface for the year which will play ok," said Mark, who added that Morton's Manager, Jim Duffy, is happy to leave him to get on with his work and never questions or complains.

"He knows the game, been around a long time and he knows what I'm like with the pitch and leaves me to it."

With a background in golf Mark, worked at two of the most prestigious clubs in the country, The Oxfordshire, under David Gower, and Loch Lomond, under Ken Seims, as well as at Myerscough College. So he has a strong knowledge of the grass plant and soil structure and he brings that to bear at Cappielow.

"What I've learned is that you have to be tough on the plant. You've got to be brutal on the plant to make it strong and really scarify heavily. If you just chuck on your feed the plant will just sit on the surface happy as Larry and play poorly.

"You have to leather the plant to make it strong and to work on a soil based pitch because otherwise you won't get any root stabilisation. It is just down to proper hard core groundsmanship."

And that's mechanical, not chemical.

"We don't spray for anything here. We just use cultural methods and because no two sites are the same what we do here won't be the same as would happen anywhere else."

It took Mark around four years to become really familiar with his pitch and understand how it worked.

"When you've got a surface that you use from one year to the next you do get to know where the water gathers or the dry areas are, and generally how it operates. I do get organic build up from one year to the next and I've got keep on top of that, but I speak with a lot of guys at the bigger clubs and they work completely differently. They are able to feed, cut, feed, cut, feed, strip out and start again so they don't really need to know their pitch to the same extent."

If Mark is jealous of those at bigger more glamorous clubs he certainly doesn't show it and he has embraced his Scottish and Greenock way of life ►



NOT FAR OFF HALF OF THE 42 CLUBS IN SCOTLAND ARE NOW PLAYING ON ARTIFICIAL PITCHES AND THAT HAS ARISEN FOR FINANCIAL AND NOT FOOTBALLING REASONS.

completely different to the pressure Paul is under. They want perfection and Paul has to deliver.”

Mark has been able to introduce one of the game's newer innovations to Cappielow however, but not quite on the same scale as those in Madrid.

“I've got a small lighting rig for next year – 12 lamps – and it does the trick. With so many games the goal mouth areas take a pounding so the lighting rig enables me to focus on that and bring them back as much as we can.”

Mark sees the rigs as one of the key tools that have arrived in recently years, along with the DESSO pitch, but it is the synthetic pitch revolution in Scottish football which concerns Mark and their influence on his adopted country's progress as a football nation.

“Not far off half of the 42 clubs in Scotland are now playing on artificial pitches and that has arisen for financial and not footballing reasons. If it was purely to do with first team football and providing a surface for



fans to come and watch their team it would be played on grass. If Scotland continues to fail to qualify for tournaments the number of artificial pitches at our clubs may well be a reason for that. They are not going to help improve talent at a nation level,” explained Mark.

Mark is looking forward to the new season, one in which Morton are looking to build on the success of last season and they will be doing so on a pitch which is as good as can be achieved given the resources at his disposal – and the relationship built between Mark and Richard at Campey's.

A perfect example of proper hard core groundsmanship.

► mixing with fans – he is one himself – opposition fans as well as fellow groundsmen and greenkeepers.

However, he did get a taste of life at one of the game's giants recently when his long time friend, Paul Burgess, invited him over to Madrid to look at his facility at the Bernabeu and take in the El Classico between Real Madrid and Barcelona.

“The pressure I'm under is

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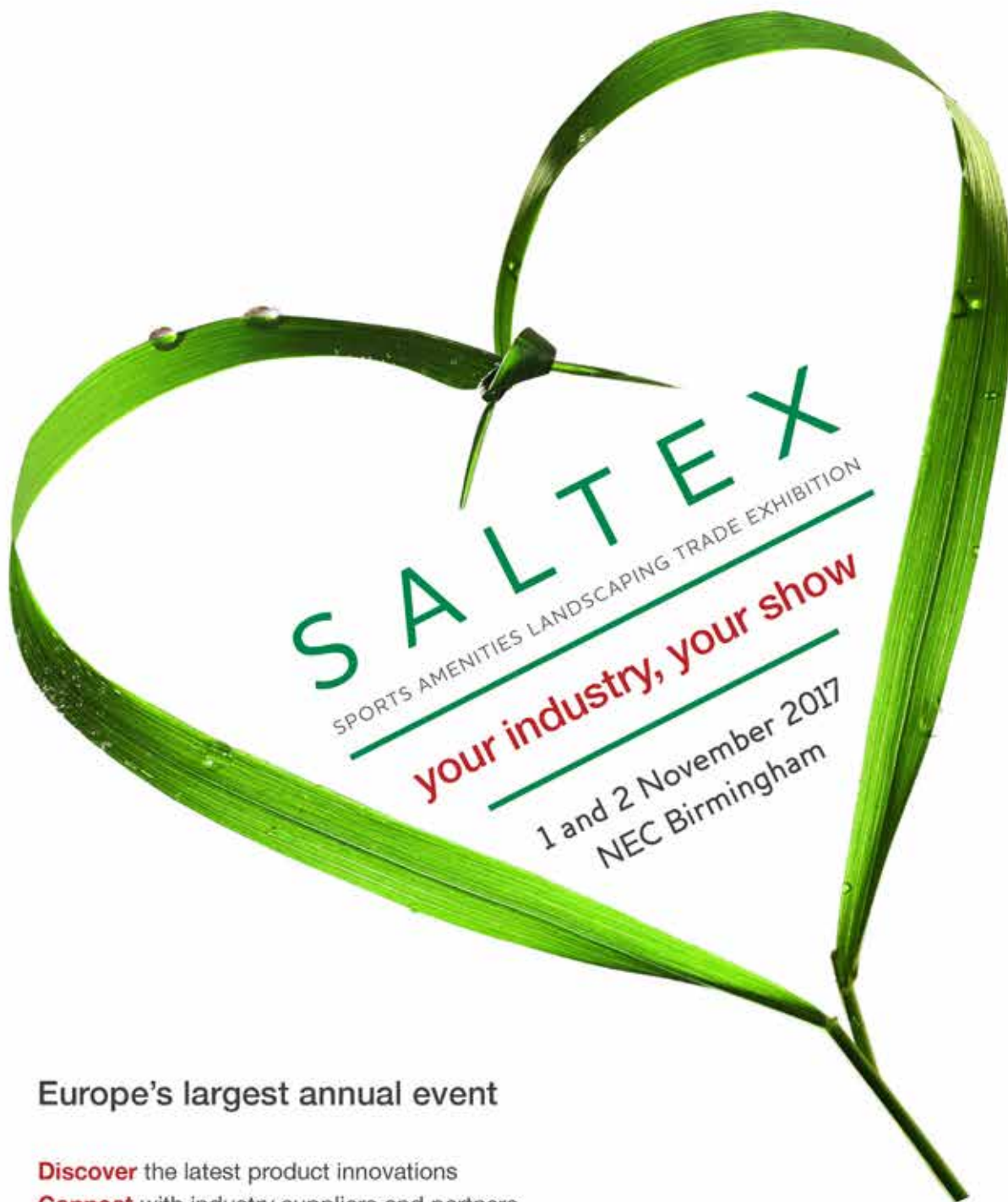
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INSTITUTE OF GROUNDSMANSHIP

Building on tradition at

by James Mead, Head Groundsman

The grounds team of eight have had an exciting but demanding year here at Rugby School. We have three terms within the academic year, providing natural and synthetic surfaces for a number of sports. The 450th anniversary of the school has not just added an extra demand but a sense of sentiment around our work.

LEGACY: Some of the grounds team at Rugby School



We pride ourselves on providing the best facilities possible, with the continuing use of the facilities all year round the seasons merge in to one and the work never stops. The Trinity term for the school finishes in late June, calling an end to all the curricular summer sport. The summer term has five cricket squares and outfields to be maintained. With fixtures running from April to June. As the school strives forward for sporting performance the ground staff have worked together with the director of cricket to facilitate. This close relationship has led to an addition of two natural turf cricket squares for practice use. All the while the team are managing the remainder of the 23.4 hectares of sports facilities, made up of three all-weather pitches, tennis courts and natural turf for a range of sports: rounders, soccer, tennis, netball and hockey.

The 450th celebrations have created a special buzz around the school, allowing us to create the canvas for all the celebrations. During the Lent term, which runs from January to late March, the school hosted an international 7s tournament which

saw a great celebration of the sport and school. A number of schools from around the world joined us on the hallowed ground to celebrate and the lads rejoiced at the chance to show off their skills. The team discussed all the necessary actions to create the best surface for those coming from the southern hemisphere. A healthy regime of aeration over the Advent term (September – December), combined with a slow release organic fertiliser plan, granular and liquid. The foundation was set for the team to create a spectacle for the visitors and all those watching on the live feed around the world.

The work didn't finish there, within two weeks those rugby pitches were prepared for Warwickshire County Cricket Club to use for practice and match day. Using a fine turf management regime, we scarified and seeded to make sure the turf was the best it could be for all those using it. The lads were repairing every scar to level the playing field for both sports, and cutting and collecting with all the variety of equipment we have in the shed.

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Rugby

The end of summer term held a festival on the close which added to the carnival atmosphere, but did not add to the turf's daily dose of sunlight. With part of the close covered in a marquee for two weeks, the festivities came at a cost. The sport still continues here even outside of term time as we host a number of fixtures for the ICC, ECB and Warwickshire County Cricket Club. The team have been working tirelessly scarifying, pre-seeding and seeding to get the turf back to its best ready for the National Finals and ready for the start of the advent term for rugby. And don't forget the watering! This dry summer has made the job even tougher and the sprinklers have been going through the night. But we can't moan about the sun!

The mixing pot of external use of our facilities and the backbone of curricular sports means there's never a dull moment, back to school seems like every week. The staff are ever battling with the elements and calendar to make sure the transition of sports moves seamlessly for everyone here at Rugby School.



ALL SET: For the 7s at Rugby School



Bringing pitch back to life

Leicester Grammar School have both a sand based and water based hockey surface which need slightly different maintenance regimes.

Alongside general blowing and spraying work they conduct weekly in-house brushing of the sand filled surface, and drag-matting on the water-based pitch. When it was time to take the maintenance to the next level they turned to Replay Maintenance.

The school has a reputation for excellence in sport and physical education, benefitting from the 75 acres of playing fields and sports facilities that surround the school. The school has close relationships with Leicester Tigers, Leicester Ladies' Hockey and Leicester Mens' Hockey teams, with current and past pupils representing these clubs at all levels. The two all-weather hockey surfaces at the school are kept in optimum condition by Head Groundsman Ed Ramsden and his team of three groundstaff and Replay Maintenance.

During term time the artificial pitches are used every day for curriculum activities followed by events after school, often totalling seven hours of play per day. Understanding that maintaining the artificial pitches was key to protecting

the school's investment, Ed attended an IOG Artificial Surfaces event where he met Nick Harris, of Replay Maintenance.

With the sand-filled pitch starting to show some early signs of its age they asked Replay, along with some of the other companies they met at the IOG day, to come and assess the pitches.

"Nick was very professional and delivered a competitive proposal for a Replay Service Agreement consisting of a quarterly Revive process on both surfaces, along with a one-off Rejuvenation on the sand-based pitch" explained Ed.

Replay Revive uses a specially developed machine to remove contaminants from filled and water-based carpets. It de-compacts and rotates the infill whilst a series of filters and vacuums remove dust, debris and broken down fibres.

A deeper clean is performed by Rejuvenation – compressed air is delivered into the carpet, de-compacting the surface and driving out the contaminated infill. The pile fibres are cleaned, untangled and restored to vertical before a brush works the new clean infill returning the surface to an 'as new' performance and appearance. It can double the playing life of a pitch for a fraction of the cost of a new carpet.

Field trip was best ever

Kingsdown Golf Club in Wiltshire have taken the initiative to show children from a local primary school how environmental stewardship, sports turf management and the game of golf are positively linked.

Tom Freeman, Deputy Course Manager, coordinated the event and was supported by DLF Seeds who donated wildflower seed for the children to sow around the course.

Children were told about ecology, pollinating species and the benefits wildflowers can bring to the course and its maintenance.

Following the event Tom said: "The day was a great success, the children were engaged and asked lots of questions about greenkeeping, golf and the planting of the wildflowers. Hopefully events such as this will inspire the next generations of sports turf managers, golfers and ecologists. We'd also like to say thanks to DLF and Ian Barnett for supplying us with the seed for the day. Many of the children said it was the best school trip they'd ever been on – and we can't ask for more than that!"

Getting surface water away quicker

Groundsman David Ember of Southampton Solent University, along with three others, has around 13 hectares of grounds and sports facilities to take care of. So when it comes to a nutritional regime they need help – and they need it to be simple and effective. Headland Amenity's Alex Hawkes has been supplying just that.

"We're home to approximately 12,800 staff and students located near to the city centre and the maritime hub of Southampton," explained David.

"We have a diverse set of grounds including three rugby pitches, two full-size football pitches, a 3G pitch and smaller soccer pitches used for 5, 7 and 9-a-side games. The flagship



for us is our stadium pitch, which is home to Team Solent who currently play in the Wessex Premier League."

The pitch will host approximately 60 games this year which is a heavier schedule than in previous years. Despite the stadium pitch being the only surface with a primary drainage system installed, David was having significant problems with the pitch holding water and turned

to Headland's Alex Hawkes for advice. "I asked Alex if there was anything we could try to get the water away from the surface quicker and he suggested we try Terafirm."

Terafirm soil penetrant works by reducing the surface tension of water, minimising lateral water movement and facilitating drainage. It also acts to speed surface drying and open up pore space within the soil during dry down by accelerating natural soil contraction.

"Using Terafirm has made a significant difference. At its worst it would take anything up to 5 dry days to drain away the water from a heavy downpour. Now with the same conditions the pitch would be playable the following evening," said David.

Groundsmen bowled over by ICL Independent School Seminar

Fifty groundsmen from independent schools throughout southern England and the Midlands were presented with a wealth of useful advice and information at the latest ICL seminar, held at Edgbaston Stadium – home to Warwickshire CCC and the Birmingham Bears.

The ICL Independent School Seminar is now in its fifth year.

Emma Kilby, ICL Area Sales Manager for the Midlands and West, who organised and ran the event welcomed delegates with an outline of what they could expect before handing over to Edgbaston Stadium Head Groundsman Gary Barwell.

Henry Bechelet, ICL's Technical Sales Manager gave an informative and entertaining presentation on 'Root Development Technologies'. Areas discussed included what affects turf rooting, the relationship between rooting and nitrogen and what products can help turf managers improve rooting before also speaking about the company's

commissioning of independent STRI trials where he revealed that the results conclusively showed that the use of Sierraform GT consistently increases root development.

Daniel Lightfoot, Syngenta's Business Manager, gave an illustrated talk and demonstration of the company's Greencast turf app and a fungicide update including the new regulations.

This was followed by Robert Jack, from Dennis and SISIS, who gave a presentation on the range of British manufactured turf maintenance machinery the company has to offer.

Concluding the session, Daniel Lightfoot returned to give delegates a greater insight into Instrata Elite fungicide.

After the presentations, delegates were given a tour of the stadium by Gary Barwell. As well as getting a close look at the cricket wicket which would be played on later that evening, they were also shown some of the turf maintenance machinery which

Gary and his team use on a daily basis.

Emma Kilby believes that the day's varied content had been what delegates were looking for and was delighted that the event had been so well supported.

"Today has been a fantastic event and it was good to get so many groundsmen attending," she said.

"These are professional groundsmen that produce surfaces for so many different sports. They come along to the event to learn and to network. It's not just for the head groundsmen – it's for all their staff who got an insight into the integrated turf management and agronomic support available."

Mike Kemmett, Grounds Manager at Harrow School, said the seminar was a great opportunity to network with other groundsmen from schools:

"I've been for the last three events, and hosted last year's when I was at Haberdashers. It's a great event to network and meet other people."



Synthetic success at Bloxham; and there's top

Tom Hall, Deputy Head Groundsman at Bloxham School, in Oxfordshire, has reported excellent results from using SISIS equipment to maintain the school's two synthetic sports surfaces.

With a rich history that can be traced as far back as 1853, Bloxham School is a prime example of great British public schooling. The independent co-educational and boarding school, covers approximately 60 acres of land in the picturesque village of Bloxham and over 400 pupils attend the school.

Standards are extremely high and equally impressive are the first-class sports facilities. Sport plays a significant role in Bloxham life and the school has enjoyed great success in sports such as rugby, hockey and cricket – to name but a few.

As well as a plethora of grass sports pitches, Bloxham also features two synthetic surfaces, and to maintain these; the grounds team relies on a range of SISIS equipment.

"Here at Bloxham, one of the synthetic



surfaces is sand filled and the other is sand dressed. Predominantly we use the surfaces for hockey, but during the summer, we also have tennis, and in some circumstances we use it for cricket."

"We use two pieces of SISIS equipment to maintain our synthetic surfaces – the SSS1000 Sweeper and the SISIS Twinplay Implement Frame, complete with a straight and zig-zag Brush."

The SISIS SSS1000 is a tractor mounted sweeper which can be pulled by any machine. There are no tools required for the adjustment of the brush or the angle

of the draw bar and to make storage easy the draw bar lifts to an upright position.

The SISIS Twinplay tractor mounted implement frame can be fitted with several attachments for the maintenance of synthetic surfaces and Tom chooses to attach the SISIS straight brush and the SISIS zig-zag brush.

"We use the brushes at least three times a week and we use them to relieve compaction within the pile and to evenly disperse the sand over the surface of the pitch," he added.

"I would recommend SISIS equipment to anyone maintaining synthetic surfaces, purely because they're reliable and top performing products."

Karl Brotherhood, Head of Grounds at Solihull School, believes that his new Etesia Hydro 124 DN ride-on mower is 'perfect' for helping him fulfil a number maintenance tasks.

The school is surrounded by a 50 acre site including a floodlit artificial pitch, five rugby pitches, four cricket pitches, and

Limagrain's MM range is rapid at King's Bruton

Adrian Davis, Head Groundsman at King's Bruton School, in Somerset, has reported remarkable germination speed and recovery rates from Limagrain's leading MM range of grass seed mixtures.

Sport plays a huge part in the life of all pupils at King's Bruton. The school's hockey teams have reached ten National Finals in the last five years with the Under 16 girls winning the English Schools National Indoor Hockey Championships in 2017, while the rugby 1st XV were unbeaten throughout the season.

Overseeing the safety and the quality of the school's sporting facilities is Head Groundsman, Adrian Davies, who has been in his role for 19 years. Adrian works in a team of five, with two team members tending to the school's impressive gardens while three manage the sports fields.

Cricket and rugby are the two sports that dominate the playing time on the school's sports fields and throughout the year 54 home cricket matches are played over the summer while up to 70 rugby games take place throughout the winter period.

"Switching from rugby to cricket and then back from cricket to rugby can be challenging," admits Adrian.

"We start around mid-April for

cricket and that runs through until the start of August – at which time gives us a window to start preparing for rugby – that's normally about four weeks of growth.

"I have always used Limagrain's MM seed. I have tried others but MM just seems to suit my type of soils here and I think it is the best out there."

"I do an overseeding programme in early April, prior to the cricket season, and obviously your governed by weather but it gives me great results every time – I'm known to have outfields like carpets.

"After overseeding all the outfields, we will be up and ready for September, and then we do another seeding programme in late March. I've always got a really established sward by September which takes me through a really busy 14 week rugby period – where they are played on four or five times a week.

"I get good, quick germination with the MM seed and the recovery is excellent – especially with MM50. The seed seems very disease resistant as well and I've noticed that it actually holds back some of the diseases. I would also say that the inclusion of Headstart GOLD in the mixtures gives the products the



kick-start that you really need."

As Adrian says, the MM mixtures have the added bonus of being treated with Headstart GOLD. This user friendly, non-toxic treatment can help your grass get off to a great start and is perfect for enhancing performance on grass seed coatings for sports fields, golf courses, lawns and amenity turf.

Adrian also believes that the

service he receives from Limagrain simply adds to the overall package.

"I like the fact that the company are not pushy whatsoever in trying to sell me products and I have built up a great relationship with them. They are always around when I need them and I get excellent back-up. This is of course fantastic but ultimately I buy Limagrain seed because it is a good product and it works for me."

marks at Solihull

four junior school football pitches.

After ten years of using a zero-turn mower to keep the grounds intact, Karl felt that the time had come to invest in a new multi-purpose machine.

"I'd seen the Etesia machine in a number of trade magazines and it had caught my interest. I had a chat with Dave Tullett, from Midlands Grounds Machinery, who brought the machine down to the school for a demonstration and it was obvious that this machine was perfect for what we wanted.

"We use it to cut the cricket



outfield and then with the minimal of adjustment, we can use it for the rugby pitches – it's that easy. We can also pick up leaves, twigs, acorns and other forms of debris – it picks everything up – even in wet conditions.

"In fact, the first thing I noticed was how much better it was compared to the zero turn that we had. With our other machine we had to have perfect conditions for it to do a good job otherwise it just wouldn't do it.

"I like the fact that the grass box tells you when it's full and the high lift is a massive help for us too because it saves us double moving everything."

"It will be used all year round because it is so versatile. You can tell that this is a premium piece of kit and I've been genuinely impressed with it. Who knows, in a year or so I may just have another one – that would be nice," he said.


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Edward Bunn is Facilities Manager at Hickstead, one of the most iconic show jumping arena in the world. Still a family-run business, Ed's been tending to the showground since 1983. Having watched it grow from strength to strength, in 2011 he managed a £650k complete reconstruction of its international arena.

Ed says: "We'd admired the renovation work done by STRI at the RDS in Dublin – at the time recognised as one of the best grass arenas in the world. So we turned to them for help with a complete dig out, rebuild and re-drain. We're susceptible to bad weather here, making for a soft, muddy course after heavy rain," said Ed.

"That's why international show jumping tends to be dominated by all-weather surfaces: such as sand arenas... but we've been a grass

course since 1960 and we wanted to keep it that way. So our challenge was: How do we provide consistent conditions, so riders get a level playing field even in torrential rain?"

The answer came from the STRI who pointed Ed in the direction of Barenbrug.

"The STRI recommended Barenbrug BAR SPRINT, which we used across the 1.8 hectare site. We'd considered turfing, but the cost was huge and we knew growing from seed would yield better results – if we had time and weather on our side. We did, and within three years, Hickstead got voted the best arena in the world by international riders."

Last year, Ed looked at Barenbrug's RPR (Regenerating Perennial Ryegrass) technology to assist with repairs. With only a month between summer events, he wanted to trial

the unique cultivars, renowned for the determinate stolons that spread into surrounding areas, quickly filling gaps in sward.

"Last year, I spoke to Sam Horner, at Barenbrug, who agreed to create a one off special mix for us, featuring BAR SPRINT and RPR. Grass seed is a science that continually develops and I was curious to see what it could do for our autumn renovations and repairs.

"We scarified the ring back, taking out 40 to 50%. Then carried out de-compaction work. When you've got a tonne of horse taking off and landing on the same spot, you get a lot of holes and compaction. After that we overseeded with the newly developed BAR SPRINT RPR. Despite a dry autumn, it germinated within three to four days. It's been our best renovation yet, with dense infilled

BECAUSE OF THE SHORT PERIOD BETWEEN EVENTS, WE PRE-GERMINATE THE GRASS SEED; PUTTING IT INTO HESSIAN SACKS AND INTO WATER.

gaps, and a lush carpet-like effect. It'll be interesting to see how it recovers from this summer's shows. And, over the coming years, as the percentage of RPR builds up."

The international arena runs just 16 days a year. However, the condition must be maintained to world-class standards, even when time is limited.

"Because of the short period between events, we pre-germinate the grass seed; putting it into hessian sacks and into water. We put it in on



the Friday of an event, and it's ready to use on the Monday. Then we create a divot mix, using sand and soil, and we just go round and seed the patches. It's a real kick start for the grass," explained Ed.

"We also fertilise a lot, and maintain

and mow, but nothing special. BAR SPRINT RPR isn't a fussy grass seed. It's not delicate, but it still gives us the perfect look – essential when you're on television and live-streaming on the internet – and under the scrutiny of millions of viewers. "

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The Natural Choice

Day of the tetraploid



Wonderful work is being carried out by Top Green which will take sports surfaces to another level. Scott MacCallum dug out his passport to find out more about what is going on.

A message to all turf managers who find themselves battling with a poor quality sward, disease or pest infestation. There is help at hand and it can be found in a little corner of north west France where all your problematic grass issues are being tackled and solutions found. It may take some time but be assured that the work is being done.

Top Green, the seed development arm of Rigby Taylor, are based at Les Alleuds, near Anger, and it is there that test plots containing thousands of cultivar species and varieties are examined, developed and nurtured to identify those most likely to offer salvation to turf managers all over Europe and beyond.

A recent press trip, organised by Rigby Taylor, provided the ideal opportunity for a group of the country's industry journalists to

witness the work that goes on at the Top Green Research facility.

Situated in idyllic rural countryside the Top Green is a highly sophisticated and cutting edge operation, a hint of which comes with the sight of robot mowers silently cutting the grounds around the building.

The surrounding fields contain grass varieties which will undoubtedly be found in the sports pitches and golf courses of the future, but you would do well to track them down. There are 90,000 metre square trial plots at Top Green – 30,000 are planted each year on a three year cycle – and they include every conceivable combination of cultivar species and variety, each one carrying hopes that it will develop into something special.

Brit abroad, Stephen Alderton is Top Green's Assistant Managing Director and a man who knows these plots inside out.

"We test the plots visually three to four times a year, looking for colour, consistency, disease, drought and shade resistance and in doing so someone will walk 30km," revealed Stephen.

At various stages seed from well performing plots will be married together to see if weaknesses can be eliminated and strengths built upon but it is a pain staking process fraught with unfulfilled expectations and disappointments.

The French grass breeding fraternity also carries out its own research with companies sharing out their own seed for blind testing on each other's trial plots, a system which works extremely well.

"You can produce a potential variety which ticks all the boxes we want to find only to discover that we can't scale it up by producing enough seed to make it commercially viable,"

explained Stephen, adding that with 15 years of research and development behind each new variety a fall at the final hurdle can be tough to bear.

Lighting rigs and wear machines are also in evidence at Les Alleuds to ensure that all tested grass experiences the same sorts of issues it would face were it to pass all its exams and graduate as a fully fledged new variety and come up against the studs, spikes, clubs and sticks of modern day sport.

Amid the 50 shades of green (and more) of the grass plots there can also be found a splash of colour with the Euroflor wild flower mixes which have been developed and which prove such an attraction to local authorities and managers of open space, or golf courses, who wish to enhance the overall appearance of their sites.

But for turf professionals everywhere it is the prospect of a new super grass which may allow them to sleep soundly at night and in recent years the development of the tetraploid which sounds like the creation of John Wyndham or something from a Dr Who episode, but is actually one of the most remarkable advances in cultivar performance.

No science fiction here. This is science fact.

Jayne Leyland, is Rigby Taylor's Grass Seed & Line Marking Product Manager, and she has mastered the art of explaining the highly technical background to tetraploids in an understandable fashion.

"Ploidy is a reference to the number of complete sets of chromosomes within the nucleus of each plant cell. Each chromosome is made of protein and is naturally occurring in many plant species. It can also be induced in plants through the application of a natural alkaloid plant hormone," explained Jayne.

FINDING SOLUTIONS:
Top, development trials for wear and disease tolerance. Below, a lights trial at Les Alleuds



BUT FOR TURF PROFESSIONALS EVERYWHERE IT IS THE PROSPECT OF A NEW SUPER GRASS WHICH MAY ALLOW THEM TO SLEEP SOUNDLY AT NIGHT

Alright, perhaps I overstated the understandability factor but the benefits are there to be seen and Jayne is as good as anyone at explaining the remarkable performance achieved by tetraploids.

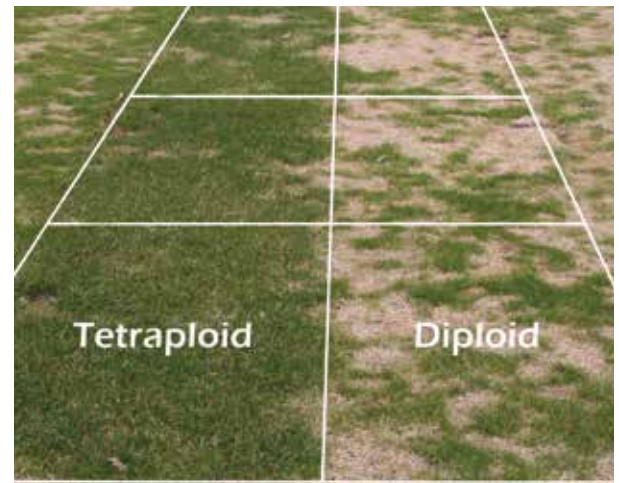
Tetraploid perennial ryegrass boasts high energy seed and strong growth in cooler conditions making it ideal for autumn overseeding and repairs while excellent winter wear



and re-growth helps keep surfaces in play as the season carries on through winter. The high root mass also delivers greater drought tolerance and stability, while it has also proved to be excellent in shaded conditions.

"Shade and wear trials carried out at Les Alleuds have shown how the latest tetraploid cultivars deliver excellent performance in reduced light levels," said Jayne.

"Although relatively new to the amenity market, tetraploid mixtures and blends are fast becoming the number one choice for renovation and repaid of natural and hybrid grass surfaces in a host of environments



including football, and cricket pitches, racecourses and golf course."

Patience is a virtue and with a 15 year lead time on a new variety of cultivar it can be found in bucket loads at Top Green, but with the expertise on hand there, together with Rigby Taylor's ability to bring it to market, those turf professionals waiting for solutions will be rewarded.

■ Turf Matters would like to thank Stephen and Howard, of Top Green, and Richard and Jayne, of Rigby Taylor, for their generous hospitality and excellent company during the visit.

STARK: Tetraploids show greater tolerance to disease attack compared to diploids. Above left, journalists examine the wild flowers



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Behind the scenes at Ransomes

Ransomes is a name synonymous with our industry. The Ipswich-based company has been around in one form or another since 1789 as Ransomes; Ransomes Sims and Jeffries; Ransomes Jacobsen to name but a few and flown under the Textron banner in more recent years.

And that is perhaps the key to the success of the company. Whether it be merging and joining forces with other companies or changing name – Textron Golf is the latest incarnation – it has evolved to meet the needs of the modern age and in 2017 there are more changes – many of them over in the United States – which should ensure that the company is well placed to meet the demands of the modern day.

Andre Andrade, recently appointed Director International Golf Sales for Textron, moved to Ipswich within the past nine months and he took time to talk with Turf Matters about some of the recent, and on-going changes within the company.

"We are currently in the process of moving our entire North American plant in Charlotte, North Carolina, to Augusta, Georgia, and this will be completed by the end of this year," explained Andre, speaking from his office in the Ransomes' headquarters.

"It is an enormous task and the team are doing a phenomenal job in combining the manufacturing lines and ensuring that the systems are in place to guarantee a smooth transition and that there are no consequences to our customers while the work is being carried out," said Andre, who added that the two sites are about 150 miles apart.

The new Augusta plant – split over two campuses the East and the West – is a multi-million-dollar investment and a state-of-the-art facility which will bring untold benefits to the company, and its customers, going forward.

"We had reached the stage where we needed to invest in new tooling and new machines and rather than doing that at Charlotte it was decided to move to Augusta where there was much more space for both Jacobsen and E-Z-GO, which would enable us to have everything in a more centralised location for manufacturing,

administration and logistics."

While there are huge benefits to be had from a single, custom-built facility Andre is also sure that the customer will see benefits filtering through.

"It is our expectation that the improved processes, brought about by the new set up, will see improvements in quality control as we will have new inspection labs and line testing machines in place to ensure quality.

"The manufacturing line itself has a very high ceiling with excellent lighting and is a clean and bright environment, conducive to good manufacturing work," said Andre, a Brazilian, who lived in the States before relocating to Suffolk.

The new facility will give an opportunity to have additional focus on customer service with warranty staff and customer care staff located in one area which will bring communication benefits with customers receiving answers to questions much more quickly.

While the customer should only see benefits from the move, Charlotte-based staff have embraced what is a cross-State change to their lives.

"The staff have been superb. There have been some who have chosen not to move, but those who have embraced the change have been unbelievable. We had staff move over at the beginning of the year, as the two plants have been co-existing, and we needed to ensure a smooth transition and this has worked really well."

The new facility is all part of a new concept for the company – Textron Golf – a merger of E-Z-GO, Cushman and Jacobsen which has created a one-stop shop.



"IN GENERAL, I'D SAY WE ARE STRONG AND PREPARED FOR A BIG FUTURE, AND ONE WHERE WE ARE ADDING MARKET SHARE AND BRINGING IN MORE CUSTOMERS."

"If a customer wants to buy a fleet of golf buggies they can buy E-Z-GO. If they want utility vehicles they can buy Cushman. If they want to buy maintenance machines they can buy Jacobsen or Ransomes. We do have some powerful brands and it means that if the customer comes to Textron Golf we can support them through the entire process."

The company is aware that the world is currently experiencing a great deal of commercial and political volatility and has done what it can to work through these difficult times.

"The weak pound doesn't help us when we have to import products, but it does help us to sell outside of the UK so there is a balancing act there. We are also able to absorb costs to help our customers because of our ability to match currencies.

"In general, I'd say we are strong and prepared for a big future, and one where we are adding market share and bringing in more customers."

So how has Andre and his family adapted to life in Ipswich?

"Well we miss friends and family but one thing that has shocked us here is having to pay for parking everywhere! Why should you have to pay for parking when you are going to spend money!"

Welcome to life in Britain, Andre!



QUAD BIKES

Serious contender 1

Take the Polaris Sportsman ATV and give it Active Descent Control (ADC) coupled with the option of carrying two people and you have the new Polaris Sportsman X2 570.

This is a serious contender for anyone wanting a highly versatile working vehicle for steep hill work, while having the facility to configure the rear dump box for a second seat. Powered by a 567cc, fuel

injected engine, the Sportsman has all the power you need to take two people up steepest inclines, with the Engine Braking System and ADC automatically engaging for optimum traction and control.

If you want the capabilities of a traditional farm pick-up with the agility of a quad the Sportsman is just that, with Electronic Power Steering and the refinement of the world's best-

selling ATV's attributes. Independent Rear Suspension, with 24.1 cm of rear travel, On-Demand True All-Wheel Drive, a massive 556kg of towing capacity and the dump box with its tipping facility for quick unloading make it an easy choice.

The Polaris Sportsman X2 570 is equipped with sealed ball joints, sealed driveshaft splines and sealed suspension bushes.

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Serious contender 2

Take the rough with the smooth

Polaris has announced the introduction of the latest Ranger Diesel UTV with new features to complement its durability and practicality.

The 2017 Ranger Diesel HD comes with more torque, more towing power and a significantly longer lifespan than petrol-powered counterparts. This is a real workhorse with its Active Descent Control for controlled hill descents, automatic four-wheel braking on steep inclines and Electronic Power Steering. A new 7-pin trailer socket now comes fitted as standard and comfort is ensured with the Lock & Ride Pro-Fit cab system and a whole range of accessories.

The new 2017 Ranger Diesel HD is built for purpose with a 1028cc Kohler 3-cylinder overhead cam liquid cooled engine. This proven, high performance diesel engine utilizes indirect injection and delivers smooth power with reduced combustion noise. The compact, heavy-duty design has a cast iron crankcase for durability and an aluminium cylinder head for weight reduction. It is also EPA/CARB Tier 4 compliant. To make life really comfortable, the industry exclusive Lock & Ride Pro-Fit cab system provides a new standard in accessory

integration. The highly modular design offers options from robust canvas doors and a poly windscreen, to premium automotive glass tip-out windscreens and electric windows. The roof and rear panel on the 2017 Ranger Diesel come as standard. The ideal seat height combines with wide foot clearance for easy entry and exit. There's a full ten inches of tilt steering adjustment and room for three adults. The payload capacity on this latest Diesel is 680.4 kg, with a gas-assisted rear dump box that can handle a hefty 454 kg of materials and a full-sized pallet.

When it comes to towing there's 907kg of class-leading towing capacity on tap and when the going gets rough the on-demand all-wheel drive kicks in for more forward traction when it's needed, reverting back to 2WD when the terrain smooths out. And smooth is what this 2017 Polaris Ranger Diesel HD is all

about, from the ride and handling to the descent down steep inclines, the 30.5cm ground clearance, power steering and VersaTrac Turf Mode that unlocks the rear differential for easier, tighter turns that won't tear up the lawn. New Polaris Rangers and Sportsman models (excluding Youth) also come fitted with CESAR security systems as standard.



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GOLFING NOBODY'S



I've only had the benefit of having my own golf bag carried on a few occasions during my long but not particularly illustrious career. On a few occasions that has been on foreign shores, where not taking a caddie can result in death stares from the powers-that-be.

Once in a while, however, circumstances meant that it happened in this country and on some not too shabby courses.

When I was in my 20s my brother carried my bag in a European Tour Pro-Am. I know, who'd have thought it. It was great. He was useless at clubbing me but it did mean I had two hands free to acknowledge the galleries when they burst into applause as I arrived

on the green. Or perhaps it was intended for the pro! Anyhow. No matter I tipped my hat, high fived and even threw a Wilson Ultra towards a young boy standing behind the 13th. It was slightly marred by the fact that I had to apologise to the parent when the ball hit the lad on the back of his head.

The only other occasion I can remember was when playing with a business colleague around The Old Course at St Andrews. Now that did make me feel important and I genuinely felt like a proper golfer when being told that it was 175 yards to the front with a left to right wind and that I should be aiming my 3-wood on the church steeple. That man had faith and on occasions it was justified.

I managed to uncover some of my finest swings of the season and the ball would go within 40 or 50 yards of where I'd been instructed.

Putting was also a revelation. I don't think I can ever recall being so certain of my aiming point on greens and I must admit that my usual ratio of one in six from inside four feet improved to one in four with the guiding hand of my trusty bag man pointing the way.

Looking back working as a team must have saved me as many as 15 shots during the round, admittedly five of those came when he was the one who found my ball in the rough or heather and I'm sure the delight on my face was reward enough for the thorns he had to remove from his body post-search. Which brings me to my

point. How much of the credit should my bag man get for my successfully completing that round of the Old Course and how much credit should the caddie of one of the top stars.

It's said that a caddie should be one of a number of things. A cheerleader. I understand Greg Norman's bagman needed the pompoms and the rara skirts. A verbal punchbag. Seve was prone to sounding off at his caddie if a miraculous escape didn't quite finish five feet from the pin. A joint MD. Phil Mickelson had many board meetings with Bones before committing to a shot.

There is no right way to being a successful caddie and like a football manager security of tenure is non-existent and you are only as good as your last yardage.

As an armchair consultant, and Binky and Tiger Tony can vouch for my ability to assess tricky situations and conjure seemingly simple but outstanding solutions out of nothing more than thin air, I would like to offer some sage advice to young Rory. He seems to have lost his way recently and I can't help but feel that his caddie doesn't quite fulfill any of the three roles and is really just a mate.

Rory has been ruthless when it comes to changing management companies; club manufacturers; national allegiances, not to mention romantic partners but his caddie has been a constant but never been able to refloat the McIlroy boat when it starts to take on water. Through the Augusta meltdowns, inexplicable missed cuts and "head off" moments his bagman hasn't been able to get his man's mind back on the job in a way some other caddies may have been able to do.

Now I certainly don't wish to damage the poor man's career. I just think that a change might do both of them a deal of good and we can again see Rory adding to his Major tally again soon.

■ *Note: Written before this year's Open Championship.*





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