

Grass Clippings – 27 January 2022

January rolls on and it's quite extraordinary that this has been such a dry month although we have had consistent frost for most days so far this year. Due to the percentage of moisture in the air now, when the temperature drops after sunset it results in the damp air condensing on the grass plant and creating what is usually called a hoar frost. As grass plant is almost entirely 90% composed of water, a grass blade will easily freeze making the normally pliable grass rigid and inflexible. Once frozen, the simple act of walking on frosted grass will cause it to break and rupture cell walls. And, once the membrane is ruptured, the grass leaf will die back partially or completely.

Golf course grass, mowed shortest on fairways and greens, is therefore less robust than longer patches and is naturally most susceptible to breakage. When frosted grass is walked on or driven on, immediate damage is not seen until about 48-72 hours after the damage has occurred, causing the grass to turn brown and die. The destruction of the grass, especially on the putting surface, opens the door for the growth of weeds and disease, thus compounding the issue and further devolving the overall condition of the course. There is currently frost damage on the course, as anyone who has recently played the 18th hole will observe.

There are a pair of footprints leading up towards the green from the fairway which are outlined in bleach yellow grass. As I mentioned in the last *Grass Clippings*, each morning the course is assessed to ensure Members' safety is taken into consideration when looking at the course condition. When frosty, we also must give consideration for traffic likely to cause damage – feet, trolleys or buggies. If we didn't limit traffic in these conditions, then the quality and the golf course would deteriorate very quickly. Where buggies are driven distinct trails of tyre wheel marks would remain visible through to spring, as



Frost damage tyre tracks

there would be no regrowth while the temperatures are so cold. Even if when the temperatures change, it would give an opportunity for weed seeds and disease to establish and get a foot hold into the surfaces. The increased traffic, during frosty days would increase the amount of compaction on the course which will also have a negative effect.

During our daily operations and decision-making, it is vital that we try and preserve the quality of all the sports' surfaces for the benefit of all Members so it is the best quality it can be, all year round.

On Course for Delivery!

Currently at the Bloomington, Minnesota manufacturing plant, the Toro Company are assembling our next fleet of machines ready for shipping later in the month. The tender for the machinery contract is worth almost one million pounds and the company which is famous for their lush red livery of the machines are preparing the fleet for our course and grounds team to use through the next five years. The tender for the process was begun two years ago, when the invitation was extended to several manufactures to bid for the contract and over the last several summers, demonstration exercises were undertaken, with batches of each of the manufacturer's fleet of cutting and transport equipment being brought to site to put through the paces. During August of 2021, the representatives of all interested parties had discussions with the Marc Newey and Peter Bradburn and the competitive bids were analysed to ensure that the best deal was sought for the Club and that the equipment met the specification required for the needs of each section of the department. The final signing for the fleet was undertaken in September with the contract being awarded to Toro, who pulled out all the stops to assure that continued a working relationship with the Club. This year we shall be increasing the numbers of battery powered machines and phasing out petrol engine transport vehicles. As the technology comes on to the market and is proven reliable, the Club will continue to move towards environmentally sound solutions regards to the power train for the cutting and transport fleet. This is trickle down effect from the car industry, for as the improvements in battery capacity improves, it will effect all forms of vehicle productions in all spheres .When the complete delivery on site, we shall update the membership further on this



The one in the middle is ours!

Peter Seabrook, RIP

The horticultural industry lost one of its most respected elders last week who was a tireless champion for the business. Peter Seabrook is probably most recognized by the public as the face of the BBC's *Gardeners' World* during the 1970's. He began his career in horticulture aged 10. He studied horticulture at Writtle College in Essex, earning a diploma in 1956 (and later an Honorary Fellowship in 1997 and in 2018 an honorary degree).

After a stint in National Service and the commercial horticultural world, his broadcasting career began in 1965 on radio, with the BBC Home Service; he appeared on *In Your Garden* (1965-70) and *Gardeners' Question Time*. On BBC television, beginning in 1975, he

presented programmes including *Gardeners' World* (1976-79), *Pebble Mill at One* (1975-86), and coverage of the Chelsea Flower Show (1976-89). In America he hosted *The Victory Garden* on PBS (1975-97). For the professional industry he wrote for *Nurseryman* and *Garden Centre* from 1964-2003 and *Horticulture Week* thereafter.

He had been garden correspondent for *The Sun* since 1977 up until his death. Peter was awarded an MBE in 2005 and he was the only person in the UK to hold the top three RHS awards for services to horticulture: The Victoria Medal of Honour (in 2003), the RHS Associate of Honour (1996) and the Harlow Carr Medal. Peter had turned 85 in November 2020, he concluded that year in *Horticulture Week* with the words: 'So much to do, so much to learn'. Peter Seabrook was never short of voicing an opinion where it was required and his passion and devotion to the industry was simply infectious. There are few who can communicate and infuse others to learn and find an interest in horticulture, that was Peter's talent. He gained friends quickly, but those bonds lasted a lifetime. His epitaph will probably have to be that he was respected by the industry that he loved, and he will be missed by all professional and amateur gardener alike.

Peter Bradburn
Course and Grounds Manager

