OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NSW BOWLING GREENKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

THE BOWLING GREENKEEPER DCTOBER 2021 VOLUME 80 NO 79

Mike 'Darlo' Darlington celebrates retirement



Living Turf's Max Whatman and Mike Darlington, celebrate Mike Darlington's retirement after more than 50 years in the industry.

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Report Mid North Coast Association Report Patch disease feature by Gary W Beehag & Percy Wong Financial reports Rep's Report & More



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The Bowling Greenkeeper

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President's Report with Mick Woods



CHALLENGING TIMES!

To quote the famous line from the movie Jaws, "Just when you thought it was safe to go into the water again".

Well-thought out structures/plans were

creeping back into our workplaces and the Association Conference all but finalised with presenters and content locked in then the walls came crashing down on June 26th when Sydney was put into lockdown. At the time of writing this the lockdown had passed 115 days. While regional NSW has been spared much of this lockdown, all areas had at least 4 weeks of club closures.

We as an Association have continued to try and work with and for our members throughout this period. We have been having interactions with Bowls NSW, who have been more than obliging taking onboard our concerns and thoughts around how to best navigate the impacts this lockdown is having on our ability as turf managers to provide quality playing surfaces and their ability to get events underway. The cancellation of the NSWBGA Conference; our AGM was deferred to a planned industry day to be held at Engadine BC also cancelled, so we worked to resolve the matter of office bearers and full disclosure of accounts, which are included in this edition.

This a great time to raise awareness and concerns with club boards and greens committees both in report and verbally about the challenges ahead this season, renovations (timing, amount removed etc.) budgets. Working collaboratively with committees and having them aware of what is not always visible to the untrained is not only smart, it is imperative to good and harmonious relationships within the club.

Let's not forget in these times of isolation and limited work to call on those around you, whether it be a phone call, message or for those who can a physical visit. Mental health issues are a real concern and in a tight knit industry such as ours. I would like to think anyone who chooses to reach out to a fellow colleague would get the support they rightly deserve. If there is any of you out there struggling with mental health call out and if you aren't coping there are many great organisations out there, Lifeline, Black Dog Institute and Beyond Blue just to name a few.

On a slightly lighter note, has the Abominable Snowman/Yeti been hiding in plain sight all these years? The similarities are uncanny, is it really Rod Crean who works in the cold at Lawson Bowling Club?





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Secretary's Report with John Flaherty

Well in saying that the past few months have been a challenge is an understatement!

Having spoken to a few of the guys around the Sydney Metro area during this difficult time, working conditions have ranged from entirely stood down, to part time to minimal change. Seeing club's different interpretations of the restrictions has been both frustrating and confusing for many. As I write this, we now have restrictions lifted allowing bowls to commence with clubs allowed to re-open on the 11th October.

Hopefully members will be understanding for those greenkeepers that have been restricted during lockdown and they can quickly get greens back to a standard they're happy with. Renovations will no doubt be a challenging time for many clubs, members will be expecting access, but renovations will need to be carried out to prepare for the following season. The AGM was scheduled for the Conference in August but with that being postponed the executive and committee has elected to hold positions over to 2022 when we re-schedule an AGM. The State Championship Week or Conference will be the most likely date. Our AGM is missed when in a Federation year, so we were confident this was the best outcome for the Association.

The judging for the 2021 Living Turf Greenkeeper of the Year award has unfortunately been unable to be completed. In fairness to nominees, the award will not presented in 2021. In the next edition of the magazine, we will include a story of all nominees and some pictures in recognition of their nomination and work throughout the year.

Good luck with the renovation season ahead everyone and don't forget to check in and lend a hand with your fellow greenkeepers as we get back on track.

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New South Wales Bowling Greenkeepers' Association Statement of Income and Expenditure For 12 months to the 30th April 2021

·	2020	Income	2021
	2,155.00	Membership Subscriptions	1,117.19
	1,000.00	Greenkeeper of the Year	8
	2	Donations/Sponsorship	1,500.00
	245.60	Interest Earned	65.05
	1,525.00	Uniform Sales	
	2,210.40	Championship Week	4,675.10
		Federation Week	2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A 2 A
	7,300.00	Conference	
		Unidentified Income	
	112.87	Profit (Loss) Magazine	- 669.85
	10,128.07		6,687.49
		Evendering	
	501.94	Printing Stationery & Advertising	485.33
	963.84	Telephone/Internet	700.00
	415.00	Travel Expense	
	80.00	Postage	5.50
	195.11	Bank Charges	164.00
		Room Hire	
	60.00	Floral Tribute	195.00
	7,574.00	Administration Costs	6,701.00
		Membership Cards	
	12	Greenkeeper of the Year	
	215.05	Championship, Trophies/Prize Money	
	800.00	Conference Expenses	
	£	Federation Uniforms	
	1,554.60	Uniforms	20.00
	Ŀ	Apprentice Award	
	a.	Depreciation	
\rightarrow	12,359.54	Total Expenditure	8,270.83
_	10,128.07	Total Income	6,687.49
	2,231.47	Profit (Loss) for the year	-1,583.34

urrent Assets	2021	2020
NZ Bank	7,446.54	2,704.42
/elfare Fund	1,000.00	1,000.00
tock	1,688.00	1,708.00
fagazine Debtor	717.50	2,200.00
ivestments	16,602.91	21,602.91
ash on Hand	285.17	108.13
Total Assets	27,740.12	29,323.46
on-Current Assets		
omputer ess Accumulated Depreciation		
	0.00	0.00
otal Assets	27,740.12	29,323.46
ess Liabilities		
/elfare Fund eimburse Petty Cash	2,123.24	2,123.24
otal Liabilities	2,123.24	2,123.24
Total Assets over Liabilities	25,616.88	27,200.22
ccumulated Funds		
alance 1st May 2020	27,200.22	29,431.69
ess/Plus 2021 Gain/Loss	-1,583.34	-2,231.47
otal Equity	25,616.88	27,200.22
	000	000

Financial Statements 2020/21



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Rep's Report September 2021

First of all, I would like to say hello to all the bowling greenkeepers who I have not seen for some time. We will miss Mike Darlington's report now that he has retired. I considered Mike a good friend and hope that Mike really enjoys his welldeserved retirement with his family. He was a great Rep and a great guy.

I would like to start by saying that after 22 great years working at Globe, I am looking forward to starting the next stage of my career working at Living Turf. It was a sad day when Globe retracted from the turf market after nearly 50 years supplying to the turf industry.



Living Turf's Bowlo's - Max Whatman & Mike Darlington

Regional Update | Jeff Bowtell 0438 011 045

Steve Britt (Pictured right) of Valentine Bowling Club is retiring in November after 38 years. This comes after Valentine Bowling Club decided to go with two synthetic greens (November). A true "legend" of the Newcastle Greenkeeping Industry. He is retiring to Southwest Rocks. (500 metres from the bowlo!)

Steve Hutchinson (Kahibah Sports / Bowling Club) has taken the opportunity to have a hip replacement. He is on the mend and back at work in two weeks.



Moisey & Britty (circa 1981)

Greater Sydney Region

Most clubs in the Greater Sydney Region have been locked down since Saturday June 26. Most bowling greenkeepers have been on very limited hours, making this an extremely difficult time. Many greenkeepers have started renovations early without bowlers being present. The general feeling is the fact there will be busy bowls programs once clubs are reopened for players. Clubs will be unlikely to open until on or around October 18.

After talking to Chris Mumby, (CMR Turfworks) there are still some significant works being carried out on greens.

- 12 x resurfaces (two conversions to Greenlee's Park and ten conversions to "Tiff Dwarf").
- Plenty of aeration, scarifying and shatter master work.

Also, importantly, remember that the NSW Government has committed \$50 million to the Greater Cities Sport Facility Fund. The grant closes on October 8, 2021.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance for future reports, soil testing or supplies.



Sincerely,

Craig Campbell | 0499 027 027 Technical Sales Representative

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Widespread doughnut-shaped patch disease symptoms require diagnosis and solutions

Gary W. Beehag and Percy Wong

Introduction

The word "patch" has been associated with numerous roughly, circular-shaped disease symptoms on bentgrass and couchgrass bowling and golf greens. Brown patch, microdochium patch, spring dead patch (Figure 1) and take-all patch are well-known examples. The identity and basic ecology of their causal agents (*Rhizoctonia solani*, *Microdochium nivale*, Ophiosphaerella spp. and Gaeumannomyces avenae respectively) have long been known and are satisfactorily managed by fungicides and cultural methods.



Figure 1: Classic spring dead patch symptom on a dormant Tifdwarf bowling green (Photograph courtesy of Gary Beehag)

However, the annual recurrence to greater or lesser degrees of newer or novel "crescent and doughnut-shaped" symptoms in recent decades on bowling and golf greens (Figure 2) in many coastal regions raises several questions. First, what are their biological nature and causal agent(s)? Second, what accounts for their continual recurrence? Third, how may they be effectively managed in the long term?



Figure 2: Late-stage "doughnut-shaped" symptom on a Tifdwarf bowling green (Photograph courtesy of Percy Wong)

Last year, visits to bowling clubs in greater Sydney, and this year, a second visit to northern NSW and southern Queensland, and speaking to greenkeepers at numerous bowling clubs provides some information about the widespread extent of the problem. Furthermore, the opportunity provided by club visits and co-operation of a select number of enthusiastic and motivated greenkeepers has shed some light into the biological nature and possible causal agents.

Their observations indicate that the crescent and doughnut-shaped symptoms, as opposed to the classic entirely blighted patch as seen in spring dead patch (Figure 1), are now more common and widespread. This is particularly the case on Tifdwarf bowling greens rather than on Greenlees Park couchgrass. Nonetheless, other hybrid couchgrasses in Australia like Champion, TifEagle and Santa Ana have also displayed disfiguring doughnutshaped symptoms. These symptoms are not easily managed by the usual registered fungicides used against traditional patch diseases. Therefore, these symptoms tend to recur every year, often at the same locations. The missing link in these observations is determining the exact identity of the causal agent. So, until we know what the pathogen(s) are, we will be guessing as to which fungicides to use in order to obtain a predictable outcome.

Laboratory isolations and diagnoses?

Previous work conducted in 2000 by Dr. Marcelle Stirling (Queensland) yielded *Gaeumannomyces-Phialophora* and Leptosphaeria-like fungal isolates from numerous unhealthy couchgrass samples collected from bowling and golf clubs along coastal Queensland and northern NSW. Greenkeepers had called the condition "summer decline".

Further isolations conducted by the authors to date have identified not only *Gaeumannomyces, Magnaporthiopsis* and *Ophiosphaerella* from infected couchgrass roots but also several other ectotrophic rootinfecting (ERI) fungi. Some fungal isolates have yet to be formally proven to be the causal agents and taxonomically described. Further work using DNA methodologies is required to definitively determine their identity. Unfortunately, there has been little funding from the turfgrass industry bodies to carry out this work.

Coincidently, recent work conducted in the United States has also isolated and identified species of *Gaeumannomyces*, *Ophiosphaerella* and *Magnaporthiopsis* and other fungal isolates from diseased couchgrass (bermudagrass) varieties on golf greens. They postulate that the various fungi may be involved in a disease complex causing couchgrass decline.

Cases of novel turfgrass-pathogen combinations causing turfgrass disease are documented worldwide. In some combinations

Continual recurrence of symptoms

Here, it is pertinent to discuss the concepts of "disease complex" and "disease trading". A "disease complex" is a combination of two or more fungal or microbial pathogens causing a disease. One pathogen is the primary causal agent and others are secondary or minor pathogens. However, if the primary causal agent is managed by a fungicide which does not affect the secondary pathogens, then one of the secondary pathogens could then become the dominant pathogen and may even exhibit different disease symptoms. This phenomenon is called "disease trading" by plant pathologists.

It must be noted that the isolation of one or more fungal isolates from diseased turfgrass does not necessarily mean a cause-effect relationship exists. Pathogenicity (ability of a pathogen to cause disease) requires proof using a procedure called Koch's postulates, which can be carried out in a glasshouse under controlled conditions.

The continual recurrence of ring-like symptoms on greens can be due to a number of reasons. It is possible that the satisfactory management of the classical patch diseases like spring dead patch and take-all patch has led to disease trading, so that the less pathogenic fungi also present in the patches may then have become the dominant pathogen. Many of these ERI fungi are not sensitive to the commercially available fungicides used to manage the classic patch diseases. As such, these ERI fungi will continue to attack the grass roots and cause the patches to enlarge and become doughnut shaped rings, where the centres of the patches in some diseases may recover and become green again.

One reason for this phenomenon is the development of antagonistic or suppressive microorganisms that have been encouraged by the presence of the pathogen itself, causing a decline phenomenon within a few years. A well-known example is take-all decline of cereals, where the antagonism is so widespread that the disease can disappear completely after 3-5 years. However, other ERI pathogens may persist by continually growing outwards from the green centre which harbours the antagonistic microorganisms.

Since the ERI pathogens inhabit grass roots and stems in the thatch layer, they can survive from year to year and express the disease symptoms most spectacularly in the same locations, often in early spring and late autumn, when these pathogens are still highly active and the host is either coming out of dormancy or becoming dormant.

Impact of cultural and renovation practices?

A turfgrass disease is the physiological expression of complex biological interactions between a susceptible turfgrass host, a virulent plant pathogen and a whole range of environmental (e.g. temperature) and management-induced factors (e.g. nutrition) all of which are far from entirely understood. The impacts of turfgrass cultural practices, most notably nutrition and irrigation, on these novel diseases are unclear and remain speculative. An NPK balance and pH impact the growth and infection of most if not all soilborne pathogens. Alkaline pH and manganese (Mn) deficiency enhances take-all patch. Nitrogen in excess of optimal levels enhances brown patch and microdochium patch. Observations by the authors over several years and associated comments by a few greenkeepers lead us to conclude that there is a strong association between uncontrolled thatch-mat accumulation and the incidence and severity of these "doughnut-shaped" symptoms. Observations clearly indicate the worst affected greens are those having the greatest thickness of thatch-mat accumulation, for whatever reason. Doughnut-shaped symptoms are not uncommon on grassed banks at some clubs (Figure 3). So, what has changed? Why do so many bowling greens nowadays have uncontrolled accumulation of organic matter?

Suffice to say, physical accumulation of thatchmat is a management-driven issue. There is a suite of mechanical technologies (e. g. scarification, hollow tyning and shaving) and adequate science-based knowledge to combat excessive organic matter accumulation. Many bowling greenkeepers at coastal clubs have stated inadequate time for surface renovation practices because of the boom in barefoot bowls let alone normal play and pennants. Another issue may be the closure in the number of grassed greens at certain clubs, leading to less opportunity for timely and more frequent renovation.

The association between excessive thatch accumulation (Figure 4) and the incidence of root-infecting diseases can be explained from two perspectives. Firstly, decomposing plant material provides an ideal food source for facultative saprophytes such as *Gaeumannomyces, Ophiosphaerella* and other ERI fungi to survive and proliferate. Therefore, emerging grass roots are quickly infected when there is this widespread occurrence of the pathogen(s).



Figure 4: Uncontrolled thatch-mat accumulation beneath a bentgrass golf green *(Photograph courtesy of Gary Beehag.)*

Secondly, accumulated organic and soil colloidal matter irreversibly adsorb pesticides targeting root-infecting pathogens. Hence, only a limited amount and concentration of fungicidally active ingredient reaches the root system to affect the active pathogens. As such, chemical management has often been erratic and less than satisfactory because of excessive thatch.



Figure 3: Late-stage "doughnut-shaped" symptom on a grassed bank (*Photograph courtesy of Gary Beehag*)

Possible impact of microbial antagonism and suppression?

Some greenkeepers have stated disfiguring symptoms are more severe on newlyestablished greens but the diseases slowly decline in frequency and severity over time. We have already discussed the natural phenomena of disease amelioration such as take-all decline, which is the result of a gradual and sustained build-up of populations of bacterial and fungal microbes antagonistic toward the pathogen. Could this be a more common phenomenon? We do not know the answer to this. Is it possible to use some of these antagonistic organisms to control the patch diseases? Again, we are only in the early stages of understanding how to effectively use some of these biological control agents. Commercial formulations based on Bacillus and Trichoderma are widely available but the results have not always been positive. Whether these novel diseases are subject to natural decline remains unknown.

Impacts of re-grassing a green?

Some bowling clubs have provided adequate funds and allowed time for their enthusiastic greenkeepers to sequentially remove the grassed surface of existing greens over a number of years. This may simply involve "shaving" to a depth of around 5mm for the purpose of thatch management. However, at some other clubs the entire surface is removed to an extent requiring re-grassing.

Re-grassing a bowling green demands a lot of planning and execution. Key questions requiring answers are what pre-grassing practices are to be implemented and, from where to obtain the new vegetative material given the widespread incidence of these novel diseases. At this time, there are no predictable or proven guidelines.



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However, we are aware of one instance where vegetative material taken from one green at one club with a history of doughnut-shaped symptoms, caused by an unknown pathogen(s), was used to re-grass another green at another club with no history of the symptoms. Despite careful selection of the material, doughnut-shaped symptoms began to appear on the newly re-grassed green some eighteen months later. Minimising potential transport of infected material between clubs will require some very lateral thinking in terms of biosecurity and hygiene measures.

Preventive and curative fungicide treatments?

At present, definitive answers to the third question remain unknown. The label of certain fungicides state a registration for "ectotrophic root-infecting fungi or ERI. However, the term "ERI fungi" comprise a large number of different genera and species of fungal pathogens and there is a necessity to prove the efficacy of fungicides against these specific fungi, some of which are not even named at this stage. It cannot be emphasised enough that the accurate identification of pathogens to species level is of utmost importance if we are to successfully control these patch diseases.



Where to from here?

So, to conclude, what are the take home messages? Clearly, effective management of these novel "doughnut-shaped symptoms" and their causal agents remains problematic once established. Continual attention to minimising thatch-mat accumulation is a key cultural practice in which that club management needs to be educated.

At this time, it is unclear if any degree of disease resistance occurs among the hybrid couchgrasses. Proof of disease resistance requires considerable time, effort and cost. In any case, a cultivar may possess a degree of disease resistance against one pathogen under the conditions of the trial but may prove otherwise a few years later in real-life conditions. Other actions to understand these diseases could include a well conducted survey among bowling green members to determine the extent of these novel diseases, provision of adequate funding to precisely determine the causal agent(s) and lastly, the agitation for product development programs by major agro-chemical companies to specifically target these diseases to potentially provide one or more registered fungicides or even biofungicides. After all, there is no shortage of trial sites.

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Around the Associations

Mid North Coast with Craig Hayfied

I was hoping to share details of a very successful Greenkeepers Carnival Day with you all, but we have been touched by the Pangolins' curse yet again and thrown into lockdown along with the rest of NSW. The announcement came just two days before our Carnival was to go ahead. We have now postponed our event for hopefully mid September.

So what does lockdown look like on the Mid North Coast? Well, basically every person that has ever surfed before is in the surf, there's thousands of people walking the beaches, bush tracks and riversides, parades of lycra clad folks panting as they jog by on the foreshore pathways and kids on skateboards and scooters at the local skate park. Oh and no bowls.

Winter has nearly wrapped up on the mid nth coast with warmer weather creeping in. Our last meeting at Hat Head Bowling Club was held under warm sunny skies and Dave's greens looked great. We inspected the few soft patches Dave has in his greens, a real mind boggler. After exhaustive efforts to get on top of the issue, Dave mentioned this season's control method will be a garden spade. I must admit I'm all about that option, when in doubt dig it out! Dave had also installed some new steel plinth around Green 2 over winter and had been getting thru the usual painting and pruning tasks reserved for the cooler months. Andrew, at Hibbard Sports Club, has had a new patch disease show up in recent weeks and has been treating it with broad spectrum fungicides. He mentioned that his usual autumn applications of Propoconazole were missed due to the floods. Moss has been a bit of a challenge with all the wet weather, a sentiment shared by all this past few months I'm sure.

Port City Bowling Club are powering ahead with clubhouse renovations. Nigel tells us that the new grass green will be constructed by Proturf Australia, with a predicted build time of three weeks. A start date in September is to be finalised. The old green will have 200mm of topsoil removed, new ditch walls constructed and fresh topsoil brought in. According to Nigel the new soil will be treated with sonic therapy to reduce the impact of ground pearl and ERI. This involves playing Meatloaf's greatest hits to the soil for five hours straight while it's in transit from Sydney.

At Kempsey we have been flat stick, it's been a busy busy winter and if I've learnt anything it's that builders are the messiest gronks around. The club decided that it was time for an automatic watering system, so no more long summer days on the pipe at Kempsey for me. We used the services of Advanced Pumping and Irrigation to design and install the system and they did a great job. I highly recommend their services. We have Toro heads, a Lowra pump and a 67kL pioneer tank. The install went smoothly, until we found an old concrete footpath that had been covered with soil and turf. Enter the jackhammer. The club also replaced an old ditch wall with a new concrete one, and a new retaining wall and fence down the western boundary. While we were at it, all the old black rubber ditch wall backing was removed and replaced with synthetic grass sourced from Keith at Rink Promotions, a very helpful bloke and a terrific product. I'm going to need a summer holiday to catch up.

That's about it for now, cheers, Craig.

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Dollar Spot (Sclerotinia homoeocarpe),

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Pythium Leaf Blight, Pythium Root Rot, Seedling Damping Off (Pythium spp),

Fusarium (Fusarium nivale, Microdochium nivale),

Take-All Patch (Gaeumannomyces graminis var. avenae), Ectotrophic Root Infecting Fungi (ERI) [Autumn strategy]

> Spring Dead Spot (Ophiosphaerella narmari),

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If you do not wish to use this option, please **fill out the form online at nswbga.com.au** or email contact Rod Crean for assistance with the App on 0408 670 372.



You can also email this form to <u>nswbga@gmail.com</u> or post to: NSWBGA PO Box 791 ASHFIELD NSW 1800

NSWBGA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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