

Brave Christopher battles to fitness

Christopher Yeaman celebrated his 12th birthday last month and as you would expect with any youngster it was an occasion of great joy and happiness. For his mum and dad Carol and Chris, Head Greenkeeper at West Linton Golf Club, near Edinburgh, however, this happiness was multiplied tenfold and joined by equal amounts of sheer relief.

The reason was that Christopher's birthday signalled his departure from hospital after a near six month spell which should bring the curtain down on a four and a half year nightmare for the family.

It began on Boxing Day 1995 on a frozen Swanston Golf Club, where Chris was Head Greenkeeper until this January. Only a short distance from Edinburgh's famous dry ski slope in the Pentland Hills Swanston is a sledding paradise for the local youngsters and Christopher was hurtling down the slope one particularly icy day when his watching mum and dad recognised the danger.

"I rushed to try to stop his sledge but couldn't get to him and he crashed into a fence post," said Chris, who ironically had been the man responsible for planting the post.

Christopher spent six months in Edinburgh Sick Kid's Hospital as a result of his injuries with the first three weeks in intensive care with serious liver damage.

"The same injuries had struck three children before Christopher and none of them had survived," revealed Carol, who gave up her job to look after her son full time.

Christopher did recover, and recover well. He returned to school and got back into the sports he loved and everything seemed fine until last October when he became ill again and internal bleeding was diagnosed.

He was assessed for a liver transplant at Birmingham Children's Hospital, one of only two in the country able to conduct such procedures, and placed on the waiting list for a suitable liver to become available.

"Christopher went into hospital on December 22nd last year and the transplant was eventually carried out on April 26th. He was in surgery for 14 and a half hours. After that everything was again going well until he was struck by a serious infection and had to undergo another five hours of surgery to ease the problem," explained Chris.

During Christopher's time in Birmingham Carol stayed in a house provided by a charity for the parents of long term child patients while Chris started his new job at West Linton and travelled down to Birmingham every weekend.

Christopher was finally transferred back to Edinburgh before being allowed home to a brand new home which he hadn't seen before, right on the golf course - on June 5.

"The support we've received for everyone has been absolutely incredible. Fellow greenkeepers, people in the trade have been wonderful while the golf club has been great. I even got into trouble from the Green's Chairman for being on the course and not at the hospital" said Chris.

"Steve Dixon has been my PR man handling all requests for interviews and drumming up publicity while National Chairman, Elliott Small, has kept in regular touch.



Christopher settles into his new home with mum, Carol and dad, Chris

"We've even had letters from people we've never even met. Two women offered to donate their livers to Christopher, while the local people of West Linton have also been wonderful. We'd like to thank everyone at Ward 4 of the Sick Kid's Hospital in Edinburgh who now know Christopher so well, also the staff and surgeon in Birmingham. We must also thank our parents who did so much to help, particularly Chris's who looked after Christopher's sister, Amy, while we were away," added Carol.

Elsewhere such has been the amount of publicity generated by Christopher's situation others have been doing their bit to help.

Livingstone Football Club, whose Stadium Manager is a relation, held a fun run to raise money to send Christopher on holiday as well as the Children's Liver Disease Foundation and raised £7,000, while some of the players took time out to visit him in hospital.

As well as the holiday Christopher has a lot to look forward to. Having already been a Livingstone mascot he has been invited to be a Rangers mascot - his favourite team - at an upcoming match with Livingstone. He has also been invited to play golf with one of West Linton

GC's Honorary Members. One Sandy Lyle, the former Open and Masters Champion.

"Sandy used to live close to the club and his coach is the club pro here and when he learned about Christopher he gave him a signed putter as well as promising him a game when he's recovered."

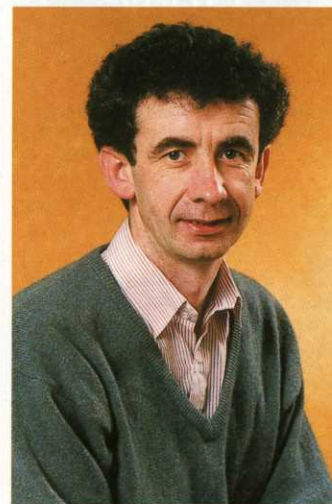
One plea that Carol makes strongly is to ask people not only to carry donor cards but also to inform relatives of a desire to donate organs.

"It is not enough just to carry a card, families must be made aware as well so that they can give permission straight away and save vital time when the organs could be utilised," said Carol, who has written to Tony Blair asking him to change to a system of opting out of donation rather than opting in.

"Because medical procedures have progressed so much in the last few years there are actually fewer organs available for transplant than there was. At Birmingham the transplant unit is only operating at half capacity because of a lack of organs," explained Carol.

Meanwhile Christopher is settling into his new home, gaining his strength and getting ready to start at his new school in September.

Gordon McKillop: New STRI Chief



Dr Gordon McKillop has been appointed as the new Chief Executive for STRI. He officially takes over the role on July 10.

Dr McKillop joins STRI from the Central Science Laboratories in York. CSL is an agency for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF).

He joined CSL in 1978, where he progressed from the Science Team to Science Manager, to his current position of Commercial Business Strategy Manager, working on strategies to further the commercial development of CSL.

Growing up in Glasgow, he studied at the University of Glasgow before obtaining his PhD from Reading University. In 1997 he was awarded an MBA from Henley Management College.

Dr McKillop is looking forward to the challenges of his new appointment. He brings with him qualifications, skills and experience which will enable him to combine business management skills with science in his role as Chief Executive.

Henry Bechelet, a former Turfgrass Agronomist with STRI, has returned to take up the position of Advisory Agronomist for the North East.

Henry, who left to work with VITAX, has spent the last 8 years gaining extensive commercial experience of the Turf Industry in Technical Sales. Henry's previous advisory work experience, combined with his knowledge of the Turf Industry and a BASIS registration, has enabled him to commence visits to his client portfolio from his starting date on May 30.

Henry is the second employee to return to STRI this year. In January Tim Colclough was appointed as an additional Advisor for Scotland, having spent a number of years in education.

Newsflash from the South West/ South Wales region

The South West and South Wales Course Management Trophy due to be held at the Manor House, Castle Coombe, on August 22 has been changed to Monday August 14.

For further information contact Paula Humphries Tel: 01288 352194



Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club.

Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star.



Name: Michael Keogh

Club: Glencorse GC

Position: Apprentice Greenkeeper (4th Year)

Age: 21

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?

Three years

2. What education are you currently undertaking?

SVQ Level 3, Management Course (Evening Class)

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?

Cutting Greens

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?

Strimming the burn

5. What job other than greenkeeping might you have ended up doing?

Police Officer

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

My boss, Ian Bell, and ex first Assistant, Gordon Trotter

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?

A wide spread minimum wage structure for apprentices

8. What are your hobbies?

Golf, bowls, swimming and going to the gym

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?

Education Opportunities

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?

To be a Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager abroad

Chinese students graduate at Elmwood

Students from Shenzhen University in the South of China have completed their Professional Development Award for the Advanced Certificate in International Golf Course Management at Elmwood College, Cupar.

The 24 week course endorsed by the R&A; China Golf Association and the GTC was set up with the College's link with Shenzhen University in China.

Golf is a growing sport in China and the students who attended the college were very dedicated with a high work ethic.

On their return to China they will either work in the Golf Industry or education and training degree programmes being the first people in China to gain a Golf Course Management qualification. However, some of the students have made the decision to stay on at Elmwood College to further their qualifications, working at Golf Courses around the area, applying this to their HNC/HND programme.



Academy's abundant academic accolades

Success was the theme at Huyton Civic Centre on Merseyside when eleven members of the Knowsley Metropolitan District Council Greenkeepers Academy were presented with their NVQ Level 2 Certificates in Sports Turf, by the Mayor of Knowsley, Councillor Bob Maguire. Shaun Guinen was also awarded his prize for outstanding theoretical work and Darren Ricketts collected his prize for outstanding practical work.

A bonus prize of a computer was given to the Academy by the Whiston Pathways Group.



The picture above shows eleven apprentices, Stephen Ellis, Shaune Gynane, John Lawrenson, Darren Ricketts, John Morgan, Shaune Johnston, Charles, Johnson, Terry Daintry, Stephen Holmes, Daniel Carney and Lee Begley with their

awards, Paul Morton and Paul McGrail from Myerscough College, Terry Hill, Business Manager from Knowsley Contract Services and Councillor Maguire. The twelfth apprentice, Paul Goodman could not attend the presentations.

A bolt from the blue wreaks havoc

This picture ably illustrates the power of the lightning and the caution that should be shown on golf courses when thunder storms are in the area.

This tree was beside the 8th green of the Kingfisher course, at Mannings Heath Golf Club, and Course Manager Billy McMillan witnessed the strike.

"It was about 4.30pm around the middle of May and we were a quarter of a mile away when we saw it happen.

"We found debris from the strike 60 feet away some buried six inches into the turf which shows the sheer power," recalled Billy.

"It really does bring home to you the dangers that are around and the need to get somewhere safe during storms," he said, adding that some golfers refused to come off the course during the storm.

In fact that clubhouse was also struck and suffered damage.



Textron put greenkeepers back in classroom

Greenkeeping teams from Clubhaus PLC, owners of 14 golf courses in the UK and six in Europe, visited Textron's International headquarters in Ipswich for training in the operation of turf maintenance equipment.

The training is integral to the recent agreement between Clubhaus and Textron, who have been appointed as exclusive supplier for turf maintenance equipment to the Clubhaus organisation.

"Following our agreement with Textron we now have one of the most modern fleets of turf maintenance equipment and therefore we must ensure that our greenkeeping teams know how to use the equipment to maximum effect," said Guy Buckley, Chief Operating Officer for Clubhaus.

A total of 80 members of the greenkeeping teams will take part in this training initiative where they will be instructed in



all aspects of the equipment including general operation, safe use, routine maintenance and trouble shooting.

"At the completion of the training the

two delegates who have attained the highest pass mark in the written test will win an expenses paid trip to the GCSAA conference next year," said Guy.

The late Eric Palmer

Eric started at work at Sitwell Golf Club then moved to Abbeydale Park Golf Club where he was Head Greenkeeper for many years. He then moved to Hickleton Golf Club as Head Greenkeeper and he worked there until his retirement in 1992. Eric was a stalwart supporter of BIGGA's Sheffield Section and also for many years was a very active committee member of the Section.

Eric was highly thought of in the greenkeeping fraternity and will sadly be missed.

The Association wish to send their condolences to Eric's wife Margaret and also to Andy, his son and all members of his family.

David Eccles: The man from Advanta

Advanta Seeds has appointed David Eccles as regional amenity seeds specialist, for grass. Based in Forfar, he will be responsible for supporting sales of the Advanta MM and Designer from Advanta' grass seed ranges, to sports and landscaping customers throughout Scotland.

"We are very pleased to welcome David to our team. Having worked in the seed trade for over ten years, his experience will prove valuable as we continue to develop the sales of our leading amenity grass seed products. In particular, he will be working closely with Stewarts and Co. at Dalkeith, who distribute the Advanta MM range in Scotland for us," said, Advanta's Amenity Sales and Marketing Manager, Dave Phillips.

David, who has qualifications in management and personnel training and development, has also lectured at the Borders College on horticultural topics. In his leisure time, he plays rugby and golf.

Berhard's get set for demonstrations

Bernhard's is set to carry out practical demonstrations at leading colleges throughout the country. Worldwide suppliers of specialised maintenance equipment for turf care, Bernhard is building on the successful programme of educationals they ran last year. Demonstrations will be complemented by a theoretical seminar on the range of improvements that can be made to turf, by making sure mower blades are kept really sharp.

Leading colleges throughout the country have shown an interest and seminars will be given at Elmwood College, Merrist Wood College and Writtle College.

"We developed the seminar to be of considerable practical benefit to students as they study turf management," said Stephen Bernhard, Managing Director of Bernhard's.

"The knowledge gained is very broad, and links plant physiology to mechanical issues. The financial and practical implications are useful in almost all job applications and will apply when the students become greenkeepers or groundsmen."

In response to demand, this year Bernhard is increasing the number of seminars they are undertaking at colleges.



"Is that a roll of turf I see before me?"

Rolawn has received several orders to provide their Minster turf from the Royal Shakespeare Company's Touring Department.

The turf will be used to cover the stage during the performances of the Company's production of 'The Seagull' at various theatres throughout the UK.

The locations range from Stratford, Norwich, Woking, Milton Keynes, Bath, Sheffield, Newcastle and London.

Rolawn have 18 depots situated throughout the UK and are well placed to deliver fresh turf into each of the locations throughout the production period.

"Rolawn has been approached to provide turf for many unusual sites - from the inside of pubs to steps of Town Halls and we are delighted that we can add the Royal Shakespeare Company to the list and that they will be performing on our turf's," said Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

by Tony Husband



New Director for Rolawn



Rolawn has promoted Guy Barrett to the post of Farms Director.

Guy joined Rolawn in 1980 and has risen "through the ranks" to head the harvesting and production functions which now operate on a large scale supplying millions of square metres of specially cultivated turf throughout the UK.

When not tending to the 3000 acres of turf under his care for Rolawn, he enjoys playing golf and cricket.

"It is in recognition of his hard work, dedication and success in his role over many years that this appointment has been made. I am delighted to welcome him on to the board and I am certain that Guy will play a key role in the future development of our business," said Ken Dawson, Chairman of Rolawn.



A thunder and lightning storm didn't dampen the spirits at the recent Northern Ireland Section meeting at Killeel Golf Club in County Down. Around 20 played golf but with holes running out a dramatic thunder storm struck and the sensible ones among the players high tailed it back to the clubhouse thus forfeiting any chance of a place in the prizes.

Walton Heath Annual Gentleman's Evening

It has been brought to my attention that BSP Landscapes were inadvertently omitted from the list of sponsors for the recent Annual Gentleman's Evening at Walton Heath.

Those of you who were there will know that Barry Pace not only spon-

sored the 6th hole on Walton Heath's Old Course for the event but also built the very fine bunker that so many of you managed to get into.

Sorry about that Barry.

Derek Farrington
South East Regional Administrator

Students plan Vintage Open at Reaseheath

Golf Course Management students at Reaseheath College, organised the annual Reaseheath Millennium Vintage Open as part of their third year studies.

Held on the college's nine hole golf course, the tournament attracted septegenarian competitors from all over Cheshire.

Veteran golfer Fred Hallworth, 79, proved age is no handicap by winning the tournament run specially for the over 70s.



REASEHEATH
COLLEGE

A member of Hazel Grove Golf Club, Fred received his trophy from sponsor John Hammond, of sand and gravel provider Bathgate Leisure. He also won a golfing weekend, courtesy of Gray Travel, Northwich. Further prizes were donated by The Golf Shop in Crewe.

The winning lady, Mrs Brenda Wright (above) of Ashville Court, Wistaston, Crewe, a member of Reaseheath Golf Club, received her prize from her own lady captain, Maura Murphy.

The tournament, which raised £500 for charity, also featured professional golfer Dave Yates, who was available for advice. Competitors later enjoyed a barbecue.



Thanks from Moray GC

Moray Golf Club would like to thank the following companies - Headland, Terralift, Amenity Technology and Scottish Grass Machinery for sponsoring the environmental survey that was carried out recently over our two 18-hole championship links courses, and adjacent land. We would also wish to thank Scottish Natural Heritage for the award of a 50% grant and Jonathan and Fiona from the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Group for their advice.

The survey was awarded to the Sports Turf Research Institute and carried out at the end of May by senior ecologist Bob Taylor.

We at Moray Golf Club are committed to improving our courses to the benefit of both the golfer and the environment and now thanks to the generosity of the aforementioned companies we will have an environmental management plan that will enable us to realise our goals.

Nell Ballingall, Courses Manager
Moray Golf Club

Address your letters to the Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Aline, York YO61 1UF. You can also fax them to 01347 833801, or email them to reception@bigga.co.uk

Pinehurst tested my cutting degree

I was very interested to read the article about Pinehurst and especially G2 turfgrass. When working in the USA, I spent a considerable amount of time at Pinehurst with Richard Yoe, Pinehurst's machine maintenance director, working on methods of mower set up and sharpening techniques to obtain a better quality cut than was being achieved.

As G2 has such a high shoot density, is so fast growing and is a very juicy grass obtaining a quality cut was proving very difficult using Pinehurst's tried and trusted methods. Maintaining a sharp edge and angle on the bottom blade was also a problem due to regular top dressing dusting because of the denseness of G2 it is very difficult to mat the dressing in, it tends to lie on the leaf.

I was given four Jacobson walkers to experiment with, the normal angle ground on the bottom blade was 5°, this was not enough relief for grass ejection due to the growth rate of G2 and top dressing problems. After experimenting with different angles and set ups on selected greens on No.8



course I found a top face angle of 9°-10° and front face angle of 5° with the cylinder set with .001 clearance from the bottom blade, a quality cut was obtained combined with regular facing of the front free angle a quality cut was maintained.

This regular facing of the bottom blade is a practise that should be used for grasses and is far more beneficial than back lapping, which did not

work at Pinehurst using regular sharpening angles on the bottom blade.

The co-operation and friendliness that I experienced at Pinehurst was second to none. No wonder the lads enjoyed the experience of working with such great people.

Peter Fletcher, Professional
Mobile Grinding, At Austell
Cornwall