
The Creme
de la Creme
Experience

the most comprehensive Golf Club exhibition in Europe

Continue to Learn

Continue to Learn with BIGGA at Harrogate, in January 2002, when the National Education Conference and Workshop Programme runs alongside the extended BTME Exhibition. The formal conference is presented in a new format to allow delegates maximum flexibility to gain the most from their visit. The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition Seminars provide an opportunity to mix the Exhibition with a range of Seminars allowing all delegates the opportunity to Continue to Learn. New for 2002 will be the Golf Club Show Education and Training programme which is aimed primarily at Golf Club Owners, Golf Club Secretaries and Chairmen of Green. This programme incorporates the very successful Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century, run jointly with STRI, with a range of seminars. Both programmes are open to all delegates, although members of BIGGA receive preferential rates. The Key Note speaker is Roger Black and this Session is free to all delegates. Finally, the very successful Careers Clinic will run alongside BTME.

National Education Conference
Monday 21 January and Tuesday 22 January, The Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

- Causes and Prevention of Turfgrass Stresses
  Dr James Beard, President and Chief Scientist, International Turfgrass Institute
- Global Warming and the Golf Course
  Keith Weatherhead, Cranfield University, John Bradwell, Turf Seed UK and Augustino Gaude, Turf Seed UK Ltd, Ruth Mann, Turfgrass and Plant Pathologist, STRI
- Redesign and Reconstruction of Golf Course Features
  Jim Moore, USA Green Section; Brian Pierson, Golf Course Constructor; Donald Steel Group, Golf Course Designers

Preparation for Winter Play
Ed McCabe, Course Manager, Brokenhurst Manor GC; Arthur King, Brokenhurst Manor Golf Club; George Shiel, Consulting Agronomist

Workshops
Monday 21 January and Tuesday 22 January, The Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

- Golf Course Design 1: Environmental Management; Emergency Fire Alarm; Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century. All workshops run concurrently with Conference Sessions

BTME Seminars
Wednesday 23 January, Spa Royal Hall, Harrogate International Centre

Keynote speaker: Roger Black M.B.E. represented Great Britain at the highest level in the world of athletics, both as an individual 400 metres runner and as a member of 4 x 400 metres relay team.

- Seminar topics are as follows:
- Bunker Renovation, Biological Disease Control, Higher Education in Sportsturf - MSc, 24 Staff, 18 Holes and a 6 Month Season, A Career in Greenkeeping, Germs, Gadgets and Inventions, Sulphur Burner Technology, Is It Right for You?, Preparing for the Ryder Cup in 2005, Designing the Future with Strategic Planning, Turfgrass Management, Training and Professionalism go Hand in Hand.

Golf Club Show Seminars
Wednesday 23 January, Majestic Hotel


Two Exhibitions
Running the Golf Club Show alongside the well established BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition is an exciting new concept which will enable golf club industry personnel of all disciplines to research and meet their product and service needs under one roof at the Harrogate International Centre. As such, visitors will be well rewarded for attending an event which enjoys a unique atmosphere and continues to be eagerly anticipated by exhibitors, delegates and visitors alike.

Banquet
The weeks events are rounded off on Thursday 24 January by the BTME/Golf Club Show Banquet, which is open to delegates of both shows. Returning to the Majestic Hotel, the Banquet stars the comedy duo Brahms and Liszt supported by the Nightjars.

JANUARY 22-24, 2002
HARROGATE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, ENGLAND

Visitor hotline 01347 833833 Exhibitor hotline 01347 833800 Online www.btme.org.uk Email reception@bigga.co.uk
Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by January 8, 2002

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You’ve got mail!

If you’ve got an email account, and want to keep up to date with the latest news and events from the turf care industry, drop us an email, and we’ll add you to our ever increasing list of online subscribers.

We’ll then inform you of any forthcoming features and events via email.

Simply send an email to: updates@bigga.co.uk quoting your name and Membership number, and we’ll do the rest!

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Gaining Control

Duncan McGilvary’s article in last month’s magazine under the heading “Should we lead or should we be led” has already produced exactly the type of response he requested.

He ended the piece by urging you to respond and to show the ‘powers that be’ within the golfing world that we are ready and willing to take on the responsibility necessary to ensure not only the efficient management of our golf courses but our own futures.

As I write, the November issue has only been with you a few days but we have seen, by our standards, a huge post bag. You can read some of the responses on the Letters page.

All agree that the job would be far easier if qualified professional Course Managers had the autonomy to make decisions on the well being of the golf course without having to consider the opinions of a group of lay people in the shape of a Green Committee.

However, Duncan’s point was also about how to get to that ideal state of affairs and how do qualified professionals persuade golf clubs that they should be given a freer rein to get on and do the job.

As one of the correspondents says, “we wouldn’t tell an electrician how to wire a house or a mechanic how to fit a new engine.”

The difference in golf, however, is that while an electrician and mechanic have one right way to do a job and many wrong ways, in greenkeeping there is a perception, rightly or wrongly, that you can choose from a range of approaches. That brings “opinion” to the table and, let’s face it, everybody has one.

The Course Manager has, therefore, to persuade the Green Committee that his opinion carries more weight than that of the collective group of club members who make up that Committee.

Put it another way. The Committee can feel that, unlike on issues such as wiring houses or fitting engines to cars, its opinion on matters agronomic is worth hearing. Of course that, in the vast majority of cases, is nonsense and a typical case of little knowledge being a dangerous thing. However, subjects on which a Committee can, and does, have valid comments to make are the obvious matters of course fitness and fault finding.

If the Committee can tell a Course Manager about a broken sprinkler head, or a litter bin which hasn’t been emptied for weeks, it can then make the jump to wondering if the agronomic welfare of the course is also being similarly ‘neglected’.

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That brings “opinion” to the mix.

Turf industry recovers

According to the Turf Growers Associations 11th market survey, carried out during the summer, members are well placed to meet this demand over the coming year, having recovered well from the floods of autumn 2000 and the cold, wet start of 2001. Autumn and spring sowings are largely in balance with crops heading towards maturity at sufficient levels to meet projected sales during 2002.

However, the survey shows that a market slow-down was being anticipated by members with sowings planned for this autumn leaning towards prudence.

According to TGA spokesman, Graeme Forbes, events occurring in the USA and Middle East since the survey was completed have heightened concerns also of a global slowdown and even a recession.

"Any fall in consumer confidence is likely to have a knock-on effect on the house building market, which is a key outlet for cultivated turf," he commented.

"Clearly turf growers will be watching home and world events closely as they go through the winter and approach the spring sowing period."
A call for regulation

Donald Steel reiterated his call for regulation of clubs and balls at the sixth American Society of Golf Course Architects International Golf Conference held in St Andrews recently.

During the same conference in 1997 he had urged the lawmakers to exert tighter control on the manufacture of clubs and balls, and suggested that the lawmakers consult with architects on the subject.

At St Andrews this year, he reminded society members, who include 150 leading North American golf course architects, of his earlier statement and what has happened in the interim.

"In those four years, the advance in the realms of the manufacture of clubs and balls has perhaps been more dramatic than in any other four year period in the entire history of the game. There is no wish to be over dramatic, but there is certainly a definite fear that the situation is riding out of control," he said.

After its latest St Andrews meeting the Society declared that there should be a "line drawn in the sand soon" or technology could render many courses obsolete.

SGM Masterclass

The latest innovations on the newest models of Textron machinery were unveiled to greenkeepers and officials from 90 top golf courses at a recent Scottish Grass Machinery Fine Turf Masterclass.

The open day followed a recent announcement by SGM that it had sold 100 Jacobsen fine turf mowers, in deals topping the £3 million mark, in the past 12 months. SGM estimate that the sales of Jacobsen equipment accounted for 55% of all fine turf equipment sold in Scotland last year to top courses including the Roxburghe, Royal Burgess, Airdrie, Alloa and Blairgowrie.

The event was split into three fine turf areas where specialists in tees, fairways and greens had the opportunity to exhibit the latest innovative designs. Ian Bridges, Regional Manager of Textron, demonstrated the new Greensking VI greens machine, which is the lightest mower in its class due to the resourceful use of metal and components.

The day ended with an opportunity to participate in the machinery driving competition and the chance for delegates to perfect their golf swing with John Caven and Neil Marr, from Meldrum House Golf Club. Each delegate left with a computer-generated profile of their golf swing.

"The day was one of our most successful open day's yet. Again, Textron had a great range of new products and it was a good opportunity for our customers to meet with the experts," said David McInroy, Managing Director of Scottish Grass Machinery.

Satellite operation

To extend the areas serviced by their existing specialist distributors, Sovereign Turf has set up a number of new satellite operations to supply turf and grass seed. Mill Race Nurseries, one of the largest wholesale nurseries in the South East of England, and Sibleys Green Nurseries based at Thaxted operate under the umbrella of Sovereign's distributor Crowley Turf.

"This move is part of our on-going expansion plans designed to double the business in five years. It provides experienced agents who can promote our turf and seed to landscapers, local authorities and sportsturf managers," said Steve Williams, Sales Manager.

St Andrews Bay

Sam Torrance, Europe's Ryder Cup Captain has opened the Torrance Course at St Andrews Bay the £50m golf resort, spa and conference centre, his first ever course design.

The 7200 yard, par 72 course set on cliff tops overlooking St Andrews will be joined next summer by its sister course the Devlin providing 36 holes of true championship golf.

"I've been asked to design courses previously and said no, but it's only once in a lifetime that you get asked to build a course with such a dramatic setting - especially at St Andrews. This time it had to be yes," said Sam.

The £7m design is part of the exciting new resort that opened earlier in the year, the vision of Don Panoz, an American pharmaceutical magnate. St Andrews Bay is the first European property of Chateau Elan Hotels and Resorts.

"Our investment has been significant at St Andrews Bay and our next phase of development is on schedule including the Devlin course. Although this year has been a difficult one for the entire UK tourism industry, we've developed a product and level of service that provides a point of difference to both the business and leisure sectors," said Don.
Allen Power open day

Allen played host to nearly 200 dealers and their salesmen in a recent series of demonstration days in Scotland, the north and south of England. The first day at Murrayshall Hotel and Golf complex near Perth was well attended by dealership representatives from all over Scotland and the far north of England.

The entire range of Allen equipment was at the disposal of dealer sales personnel to test and try the machines in a variety of demanding situations. Also in attendance from the suppliers was Mark Barnett from Honda who went through the new engines and Tim Mitchell from Friedly Robotics who manufacture the Robomow robotic mower recently taken on by Allen.

The culmination of the road shows came at Blenheim Palace, near Oxford. Over the two days 100 dealers and their staff had the Allen range presented to them against the stunning background of Blenheim.

Try the Samuel Ryder Cocktail!

Celtic Manor has developed a cocktail in honour of the club's successful bid to host the Ryder Cup in 2010. The 2010 might well have appealed to seed merchant, Samuel Ryder, as it is produced with ingredients which are based on grasses and herbs.

They include Zubrowka vodka, each bottle of which contains a blade of Bionis Grass; Pikesville Rye Whiskey, and Galliano, the famous Italian herbal liqueur in a distinctive bottle.

Preparation
25ml Galliano
25ml Zubrowka Bison vodka
20ml Pikesville Straight Rye Whiskey

Preliminaries
Stirred not shaken over ice. Chill the glasses and shaker with ice and drain when ready for use. Add ingredients to shaker and stir vigorously for 30 seconds then strain into glass.

Presentation
Garnish with the tip only of a sprig of fresh mint and a 1cm twist of lemon, preferably organic.

Support boost for Hydroscape

Simon Squires has joined the Hydroscape Group as the company's UK Technical Support Manager.

Simon's brief covers all technical aspects of the Hydroscape Group's distribution interests, ranging from Toro golf irrigation products, Otterbine Barebo (water) aerators, Global Atmospherics electrical storm warning systems to Sweetwater International sulphur burning units.

Simon recently worked closely with St Andrews Links Trust officials as Contracts Manager responsible for the second phase of the £340,000 irrigation update of the Old, New and Jubilee courses, completed in May of this year.

Prior to that, he managed phase one of the St Andrews project, involving irrigation for approaches, greens, tees and fairways on the Eden, Balgove and Strathclyrum courses which was completed within budget and ahead of schedule, in 1999.

"We are delighted that Simon has become part of our team. He will fulfill a key role in providing technical support for the complete product range which we, a national distributor specializing in the use of water resources and its management - primarily in UK sports turf markets - view as extremely important," said Graeme Francis, Hydroscape's Marketing Manager.
Professional concern

I would like to thank Duncan for having the guts to stand up and say what he believes and to air his views in public.

I have spent most of my greenkeeping career working on the continent except for three years when I returned to work in the UK at one of Duncan’s average members’ clubs. All I will say is that the politics at this club caused a constant fight between me, trying to do my job as a professional, and amateurs trying to tell me what to do. We had four Club Secretaries in two years! I am not saying that all members’ clubs are like this but I believe that, after talking with many colleagues, the majority are.

I talked with a leading consultant who advised me to return to the continent. His reasons were quite clear. The greenkeeping profession has come so far in the last 15 years but the attitude of the committees has not changed for the last 30 years and herein lies the problem. So where does that leave us. Good Course Managers become disillusioned and yes many are leaving the industry. Last year a drainage company advertised for a contracts estimator. I talked with the Managing Director of this company and he asked me what on earth is going on within the greenkeeping industry. He informed me that 70 Course Managers had applied for the vacant position. Need I say more?

We have a choice in life. You can either accept your present position or do something about it. In my case I left my club in the UK and am now working in Scandinavia where I am treated as a professional and allowed to exercise my abilities and management skills that I have acquired over the last 27 years.

So what is all this nonsense about golf professionals and interested club officials wanting to get involved in greenkeeper training? Where were these people 20 years ago when we as an industry were educating ourselves as they did not want to know? As for greenkeepers not wanting to take on the demanding role of training here is one greenkeeper who did the opposite.

When I worked in Switzerland there was no greenkeeper education system at all and no contact between the greenkeepers themselves. The greenkeepers learned their profession by making mistakes and learning from them. I brought all the greenkeepers together by organising the first Swiss Greenkeepers’ Golf Championship, and followed this up by organising education days at my club. I then helped create the Swiss Greenkeepers Association and set up the first ever greenkeeper education programme in Switzerland with David Golding of GTC using the Level 2 Training log book that we had translated into French and German. I did all this without any help from golf professionals or club members. I did all this for the love of my profession and to help my fellow colleagues and the end result is better maintained golf courses for the Swiss golfers and a greenkeeping profession that is now recognised by the Swiss Golf Association, with a far higher profile for greenkeepers in their country.

So after 15 years of going forward do we now need amateurs telling us what to do? Do these people not realise that if there is a problem today that they are the ones who have created it? What are golf club committees afraid of? It really is quite simple. You employ the best Course Manager that you can, give him the budget, staff and materials that he needs to maintain the course to the standard that everyone wants and then leave the professional to get on and do his job unhindered.

It would appear though that this solution is difficult to accept at members’ clubs in the UK. I believe that it is something to do with power.

Education of greenkeepers. Let’s look at a recent advert in the October issue of Greenkeeper International. Hartpury College are looking for an experienced greenkeeper/sportsturf specialist to teach the skills and management of golf courses. The college is committing substantial resources to the development of its sports facilities. So why do I feel insulted when I see a salary of £16,800 offered for this position when a Course Manager can demand between £30,000 and £35,000? Do these colleges not understand that if we are to raise the standards of greenkeepers’ knowledge today then the only way is to attract the top people from the industry into the education system to impart their knowledge. Offering £16,800 is hardly an incentive, is it?

So is Duncan right or wrong? I believe that he is right to be concerned about our profession. The way forward for the future is always going to be difficult until golf clubs accept the fact that today’s greenkeepers are professional, educated and very committed to giving first class playing conditions if only they are allowed. They do not need interference from a Chairman of Green, Club Secretary or Golf Professional. By implementing a golf course policy document which will guarantee continuity on the course when committees constantly change and by communicating with members can we assure that the course will be maintained and managed correctly for the next generation of golfers.

Leave it to us

Re: Duncan McGilvray’s article in the November issue.

I could not agree more with Duncan’s article. After being a Chairman of Green for 10 years at my own golf club and now working on another I have first hand knowledge. Chairman of Green and Green Committees interfere far too much with greenkeepers.

They would not tell an electrician how to wire a house nor would they tell a mechanic how to fit a new engine. Greenkeeping is a very professional job with lots of skills. Let’s hope a lot of other greenkeepers write in.

We must lead. Not be led.

Well done, Duncan.

Harold Blackshaw, Assistant Greenkeeper
Onneley GC, Staffs

Run by committee

With reference to Duncan McGilvray’s article in last month’s magazine.

I feel that the issue is a very complicated one. As a greenkeeper of nearly 30 years I think that while we still have an industry that is run by mainly well meaning amateurs we have got a problem. Committees change too often and they don’t have the right credentials to do the work that they put themselves up for, and there’s the problem.

However I feel that will change as they become aware of their responsibilities in law. We are already seeing the shift in secretaries from the retired RAF types to the ex banking men and even women.

Only when the present private members’ club structure changes will any of us be allowed to take on the responsibilities that we crave and know we can do.

It will happen but it will be legislation that will force the issue in the average members’ golf club.

Dave Goodridge, Head Greenkeeper
Denbigh GC

Redexim clarification

I enjoyed the piece in the September issue about the Bargoed Golf Club, but I think the writer must have had trouble reading his short-hand.

I was somewhat bemused by the statement “the course uses a Wiedemann verti-drainer” as there being no such animal. VertiDrain is a Redexim Trademark and while it has been used as a verb over the years the name cannot be used in conjunction with Wiedemann.

The piece of equipment used at the Bargoed Golf Club is indeed a Redexim VertiDrain, and is verified by turning the page and finding a picture of our machine in storage on a pallet!

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Dive Goodridge, Head Greenkeeper
Denbigh GC

You’ve got m@il!

If you’ve got an email address book that we can place you into our exclusive email address book. We can then keep you up-to-date with news and event information as soon as it happens.

Send an email to: reception@bigga.co.uk

Remember to include the word “updates” in your subject field

December 2001 Greenkeeper International
Bernhardt’s ten to hit Orlando

Was it really a year ago, I thought, when my diary showed the October week allocated to the selection of the second BIGGA Delegation in association with Bernhard & Company? A year since we selected the ten BIGGA members to visit the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association Conference and Show in Vancouver? What a memorable event that had turned out to be, greatly benefiting our delegates who have since passed on their experiences in a number of both formal and informal ways to fellow greenkeepers. It was a pleasure, therefore, to hear from Stephen Bernhard of the success of the visit from his company’s perspective and of his wish to support a second Delegation, this time to the 73rd GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando, Florida.

The itinerary looked daunting and the geography considerable, with the five BIGGA Regions to be covered in five days but with much to be gained - not only for those selected but also for the runners-up who will be assimilated with their trips to BTME 2002 in recognition of their being worthy representatives of both Section and Region. It is not only the candidates who gain but also those who undertake the interviews.

From my own viewpoint, I interviewed 23 members during the week and again this year that proved to be a valuable learning experience. I feel sure, also, that both Stephen and Sam McLean learnt much from the exercise. Two Regional Board representatives joined each Regional Panel. I was ever present while Stephen joined us for the Northern and Midland Region interviews with Sam taking over in the South East, South West and South Wales and Scottish Regions.

Members had been asked to submit a personal profile including details of education and training and career summary as well as membership history within BIGGA. They had been asked to explain why they warranted selection for and would benefit from the Orlando visit. They would need to demonstrate an ability to represent BIGGA in a public relations role at an international event. From these criteria we developed wide ranging interviews which proved both demanding and stimulating.

At the end of each day, difficult decisions had to be made, decisions on the one hand which would elicit elation while on the other disappointment would be marked. I believe the chosen delegation represents a broad cross-section of our membership and there is every reason to believe that they will be equally as successful as the Vancouver Delegates in representing BIGGA and the greenkeeping profession. No jolly is this - as last year’s intrepid travellers found out. The ten selected are already embarked on researching the visit - in terms of such issues as climatic and geographic differences, budget comparisons, personnel employed on American golf courses and educational development of staff. All this will contribute to the knowledge and experiences to be gained during the trip which they will need to record with notes and photographs for presentations to fellow greenkeepers on their return.

Bernhard & Company are a leading supporter of our educational and training programmes and we at BIGGA greatly appreciate this initiative over the last two years. Members can only gain from the experience as will the Association. The impact of the Delegation in Canada was considerable and I have no doubt this will again be the case in Orlando. Coupled with the Old Tom Morris Award to Walter Woods during the Show, BIGGA’s international standing and leadership role within the greenkeeping profession will most certainly be further enhanced.

The Delegation

Midland Region
- Philip Gates - Trentham Golf Club
- David Winterton MG - Maidenhead Golf Club

Northern Region
- Tony Smith - Hudston Hall Golf Club
- Patrick McAteer - Nefyn Golf Club

Scottish Region
- Ronnie Bunting - Kilmacolm Golf Club
- Neil Thomas
- Sam McLean

South West & South Wales
- Ian Willett - Thorpeness Golf, Hotel & CC
- Tony Dunstan - Mill Hill Golf Club

South East Region
- Jeff Mills - Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club

Scottish Regions
- Ian Paton - West Kilbride Golf Club

South West & South Wales
- Jeff Mills - Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club

South East Region
- Ian Willett - Thorpeness Golf, Hotel & CC
- Tony Dunstan - Mill Hill Golf Club

Bernhard’s Managing Director, Stephen Bernhard, explains his thoughts behind the scholarships

Earlier this year Bernhard & Company were delighted to host 10 British greenkeepers to represent our industry by attending the Canadian National Turf Show in Vancouver. The visit was a great success, new friends were made and the connection between the British and Canadian greenkeepers was strengthened.

Bernhard’s are delighted to again take the initiative in further developing this relationship with international greenkeepers by sponsoring another group of ten BIGGA members to travel to the GCSAA National Show in Orlando next February.

The interview process has again been enlightening. As before, many personal views have been expressed by candidates. Certainly the need for more effective local communication has become widely felt. Education is being asked for but at a local level and with greater involvement from suppliers. Bernhard’s embrace this view.

We believe that involvement of this type in the British industry and sharing knowledge and experiences of our American customers, will boost standards of working practices and knowledge of participants on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the world is moving again into a cycle of economic constraint, we will all need to become more effective. That will mean working smarter and with greater flexibility. By hosting events of this type, Bernhard’s enjoy the opportunity to listen to what our colleagues in the industry are saying, learning how best to help them by supplying grinding equipment that also works smarter and meets the real needs of the market.

During this trip to Orlando, visitors will enjoy an opportunity to see a totally different type of “destination golf experience”. Hopefully the information that they gather will be disseminated to their colleagues at home, for that is the objective of this venture.

Bernhard’s feel that it is essential, this year, that each BIGGA Region and every individual Section ask their locally selected representatives to spend some time with members sharing the experiences of the trip during an evening presentation.

Once again, we have a varied and interesting group of British Greenkeepers who will represent our industry in Orlando. Bernhard & Company are proud to be the sponsor and wish all those travelling an interesting and thoroughly enjoyable experience.
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To find out how Express Dual and Anglemaster, the world's fastest mower grinders, can dramatically improve your golf course, cut costs and save time... call 01788 811600 today!
December and January membership renewals

If your membership expires on 31 December 2001 or 31 January 2002, you should have received your membership renewal pack by now. If you haven’t please contact Membership Services. Your pack will contain a pre-printed renewal form, please check all your details are correct, if you have any changes please use the spaces provided. Don’t forget to sign the form on the reverse and return to BIGGA HOUSE with a passport sized photograph of yourself.

Also included within your pack will be a Time to Renew Newsletter informing you of any new benefits or services or any changes to existing ones. Please take the time to read this, as it is aimed at keeping you up to date with all the latest news in membership. If you require any application forms please contact Tracey or Susannah, in the Membership Services Department, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwick, Alresford, Alde, York Y061 1UE, or ring us on 01347 833800, fax 01347 833801, email tracey@bigga.co.uk, susannah@bigga.co.uk or click on www.bigga.org.

BIGGA WELCOMES...

Scottish Region
John Ratsone, Central
Euan Mac Donald, North
Craig Mackay, North
Kevin McGinley, Central
Alexander Storrie, West
Graham Sutherland, West

Northern Region
Lee Fletcher, N West
Scott Parls, Northern
Lee Richardson, Northern
David Ireland, Northern
Andrew Strange, NWest
Kyle Stoker, N West
Andrew West, Northern

Midland Region
Harold Blackshaw, Midland
Graham Blund, MidAnglia
John Button, Mid Anglia
Philip Byers, Midland
Benjamin Cameron, Midland
Maxwell Fuller, BB&O

Northern Ireland
William Black

Republic of Ireland
Daniel Crowley
Keith Lovesson

International Members
John Jackson, Austria
Frances Poole, France
Edward Elliott, USA
Kenneth Nice, USA
Troy Russell, USA
Dean Bakers, Canada

Associate Members
James Finlayson, Central
John Dobson, Northern
John Marriott, Northern
Simon Squires, Northern
Len Emery, E Midlands
Daniel Berkeley, London
Colin Murphy, N Wales
Oliver Sutton, Rep Ireland

S E Region
Stephen Coates, Surrey
Edward Dawison, London
Gregg Hall, Kent
Neil Karatos, London
Sean O’ Carn, Sussex
Jason Burns, Sussex
Michael Scholes, Kent
Eric Simmonds, Northern
Roger J Smith, Kent
Raymond Victoria, Sussex
James Wesley, Kent
Benjamin Whitley, Kent
Jarme Wright, Kent

S West Region
Karen Dewberry, S West
Martin Lane, S West
Howard Morridge, S Wales
DATE NEEDED
Jen Storer, S Coast

Northern Ireland
William Black

Republic of Ireland
Daniel Crowley
Keith Lovesson

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Len Emery, E Midlands
Daniel Berkeley, London
Colin Murphy, N Wales
Oliver Sutton, Rep Ireland

Corporate Members
Stewart Finney, Sheffield
Revielle Parke, Sheffield
Martin Buckland, N West
Chris Stansfield, BB&O

Student Members
Alasdair McLennan, West
Michael Robinson, N West
Scott A Wildman, N West

Bigga Welcomes the following new members:

Bigga's welcome the following new members:

Oliver Sutton, Rep Ireland

December’s Monthly Membership Draw Winner
Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA sportswatch. Our congratulations go to December’s winner, Jonathan J Scoomes, of Caversham Heath Golf Club.

BIGGA Christmas Gift ideas

BIGGA’s leisurewear, branded with the BIGGA logo, would make perfect gifts for Christmas. Quality clothing made by Cutter & Buck, Peter Scott and Sun and Rain with prices starting from £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. Choose from...

Cutter & Buck BIGGA logo Classic Polo Shirts
Available in sunflower and navy for only £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. Sizes Medium, Large, XL or XXL available.

Peter Scott BIGGA logo Jumpers
Available in three styles: (1) Round neck, available in navy and charcoal, sizes from 40" to 46", £34.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. (2) V-neck long sleeve available in navy only, sizes from 40" to 46", larger sizes available on request: £34.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. (3) V-neck no sleeves available in navy only, sizes from 40" to 46", larger sizes available on request: £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

Sun & Rain Waterproof Caps
Available in navy, consisting of a jacket with matching trousers with a drawstring waistband. Sizes from M to XXL: £59.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

Slazenger Baseball Caps
Available in khaki with light blue peak, one size fits all with adjustable strap: £12.95 inc VAT, post and packing.

BIGGA Members Lapel Badge
BIGGA have introduced a new "Members" enamal lapel badge. Available to all members at the special rate of £2.50 inc VAT, post and packing.

Elliot Small
Immediate Past Chairman
Name: Elliot Small
Golf Club: Tallaght GC
Association Position: Immediate Past Chairman
How long have you been a member of BIGGA?
From the start
Where do you hope the Association will be in 10 years time?
Still working for the good of all members and being given credit by some for work that has been done.
For what would you most like to be remembered?
Being Chairman in the Year 2000 and hopefully for doing the best I could over the last 30 years to improve our lot.
For what would you least like to be remembered?
For along with the late Harry Diamond and Bert Cross being the b******s who woke poor greenkeepers at 5am for duties at The Open (poor souls only had two hours sleep). Sorry lads!
Why did you take on a more important role in the running of the Association?
I’m old enough to remember terrible conditions greenkeepers used to work under and wanted to do something about it.
Name one thing which would improve the Association?
Bring the GTC in with BIGGA and make every golfer play for education and training.
What is your claim to fame (None, not acceptable)?
Riding in the Royal caravale in the Duke of York’s security car to the opening of BIGGA HOUSE. I even had the cheek to wave to the crowds.
Describe BIGGA in 15 words
An Association where all the members are of equal importance from apprentice to Course Manager.
Do you believe that most sprinklers are like any other? Then be surprised, they're not.

Only Toro for example, offer a choice of sprinklers designed to uniquely fulfil specific tasks in the world of sports turf management. Two, the unique seven nozzle V1550 and the new 800 series pop-ups are ideal for golf course work. A third, the Toro 640 anti-vandal pop-up, is designed specifically for use on (not around) football pitches and large areas of sports turf open to the public...

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December 2001 Greenkeeper International 11
This month, Ken Richardson, BIGGA’s Education and Training Manager, explains the new minimum BIGGA membership qualification which should be introduced next year.

Education the key to membership

TORO Competitions
Full details of the TORO Student of the Year and Excellence in Greenkeeping Competitions are given elsewhere in this magazine but I would like to add my and Sami’s congratulations to Andrew Pledger and Huw Morgan.

Details of the Student of the Year Competition for 2002 will be sent out in the New Year and copies of brochures and entry forms will be available at BTME.

Minimum Qualifications
The BIGGA Board of Management meeting, held on 9 October 2001, endorsed the introduction of a minimum qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf, or equivalent, for all NEW applications for membership received after 1 February 2002. This decision will be subject to the approval of the AGM, which will be held on Wednesday 23 January 2002, at the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate.

Why introduce a minimum qualification?
It is Government policy that all adult workers should be paid or working towards, at least, an N/SVQ Level 2 qualification.

BIGGA aims to improve the qualifications and status of greenkeepers.

Greenkeepers want greater recognition and better pay.

Anyone working as a greenkeeper at a golfing establishment should be competent ie. should be able to do the job without supervision.

N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf comprises seven Units which include basic greenkeeping tasks such as mowing, raking, brushing, scarifying, applying top dressing, fertilising, repairing divots, irrigation, applying pesticides, rolling, course preparation, machinery, construction, estate maintenance and plant identification. Therefore, competent greenkeepers can easily become qualified.

BIGGA Membership after February 2002

• All current greenkeeper members will retain full qualified greenkeeper membership.

• All greenkeepers, not currently members, applying for full greenkeeper membership, from 1 February 2002 will need a minimum qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf.

• All greenkeepers, not currently members, applying for membership, from 1 February 2002, who do not hold a minimum qualification, will be offered Greenkeeper Assistant Membership.

• The subscriptions for both full Greenkeeper Membership and Greenkeeper Assistant Membership will be the same ie. Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper £85, Deputy Course Manager/Deputy Head Greenkeeper £67, Greenkeepers aged 21 and over and under £33 and International members £33.

• Greenkeepers and greenkeeper assistant members will receive the same membership benefits except that unqualified members will not be able to vote at National, Regional and Section meetings nor will they be able to hold office.

• Greenkeeper assistant members may request to be upgraded to full greenkeeper membership once they become qualified.

• Any full greenkeeper member who is unemployed or leaves the Association for two years or more will be offered Greenkeeper Assistant Membership on return.

• All current full greenkeeper members, whether qualified or not, will be enrolled onto the BIGGA CPD Scheme automatically.

• All greenkeeper assistant members will have their Membership reviewed after five years.

• All full greenkeeper members will be granted continued full membership if they continue to pay a subscription and work as a greenkeeper at a golfing establishment.

• Those greenkeepers who have held full greenkeeper membership but are not currently working as a greenkeeper at a golfing establishment but remain connected with the Association, greenkeeping or the fine turf industry, should be granted continued full membership.

www.btme.org.uk
Keep checking the BTME microsite for the latest news on the various education and training options available at BTME2002

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With all the skill of Klondike prospectors during the gold rush the judges for the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping and the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award unearthed two nuggets as the 2001 Toro Champions.

Huw Morgan, Course Manager of Wildenesse Golf Club in Sevenoaks, and Andrew Pledger, First Assistant at the Hertfordshire Golf Club, are worthy winners of two of the most prestigious competitions the Association has to offer.

Each year the quality available for the judges to "pan for" becomes higher and higher, a real sign that the industry is in rude health and that the golf courses of Great Britain and Ireland are in safe hands.

Huw has been a prominent BIGGA member for many years while Andrew has transferred for a successful career in retail management to make a similar impact in his new profession. Both are ideal ambassadors for the Association for the next 12 months.

Huw, who won a trip to the GCSAA Conference and Show and visits to Toro's Headquarters in Minneapolis and California, a Toro Workman 2100 utility vehicle and £250 for his team, emerged for a strong group of finalists which included Alan Purdie, Head Greenkeeper of Crail Golfing Society; David Murdoch MG, Course Manager of Liphook Golf Club and Alan Strachan, Head Greenkeeper of Royal County Down.

Each received a Toro Greensmaster pedestrian to mark the achievement of reaching the National Final.

Main: Huw Morgan and Andrew Pledger
(Front) Alan Strachan, David Murdoch, Huw Morgan and Alan Purdie
Toros 2001

continued from page 13

Andrew won a six week study course in Massachusetts and visits to the Toro headquarters in Minneapolis and California as well as the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando.

Runners-up in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Competition were John Stuttard, of Askham Bryan College and Wyke Ridge Golf Centre, near Leeds, and Ewan McCabe, of College of West Anglia and Gog Magog Golf Club. Each wins an all expenses paid trip to Harrogate for BTME 2002.

The other student finalists who each won through to the National Final from their regions were Mike Robertson, of Myerscough College and Penrith Golf Club; John Williams, of Teagasc, in Dublin, and Athy Golf Club; James Murphy, of Old Head Golf Club; Mark Wilshire, of Pencoed College and Llanishen Golf Club, and Mark Cummine, of Langside College and Buchanan Castle Golf Club.

Thanks to all the regional judges who took part in the early stages of the event and the final judges - Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping: Bob Buckingham, Toro's European Sales Manager; Bruce Jamieson, Toro Consultant and former PGA European Tour Director of Agronomy; Walter Woods, former Course Superintendent of St Andrews Links, and Neil Thomas, BIGGA's Executive Director. Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year: Andrew Brown, of Toro; Pete Mansfield, Lely (UK) General Manager Turf Products; BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Jim Paton, and BIGGA's Executive Director, Ken Richardson.
New Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year, Andrew Pledger, swapped the world of retail management for the life of a greenkeeper, and is delighted that he did.

Supermarket Swap

It takes a lot of guts to throw up a successful career and go back to square one in a job about which you know the bare minimum for a significant pay cut.

That's what Andrew Pledger did, and what's more he announced his desire to make the radical step to his wife when they had just returned from honeymoon. But for both Andrew and his wife, Karen, this bold step paid off, less than two years later, when he was announced as the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year winner for 2001.

Andrew had been working his way through the managerial ranks of Sainsbury's when he got the urge to find a job in the golf industry and having looked at both the general management and the greenkeeping sides of the business decided that greenkeeping offered the better long term prospects.

He had started with Sainsbury's as a butcher but his talents were soon spotted and he was soon running the beers, wines and spirits department, and then the dried goods and fresh foods departments in addition to working on a special internet shopping project.

Very much on the promotion ladder it was a sudden climate change within Sainsbury's which saw pressure placed on stores to achieve that persuaded Andrew to look elsewhere.

"It became clear that you could no longer have ideas of your own and make a difference individually and I wasn't enjoying it any more," he said.

He was Sainsbury's golf event organiser for the South East region and he decided that golf was where he wanted his future to lie.

"I didn't start playing golf until I was 19 and I really fell over heels with the game and realised that I wanted a career in the game. Given my retail management training, general management might have been an easier option for me but I believed that in greenkeeping, once you've been trained, there are opportunities for you around the world and it was a career that you could pick up and take wherever you wanted to take it," said the 30-year-old, as we chatted, along with Karen, in the Key Room in BIGGA HOUSE the morning after his triumph.

Having made that decision the difficulty would perhaps have been finding a golf club willing to take on a 28-year-old with no greenkeeping experience to his name whatsoever but in this aspect his bravery deserved the piece of luck which came his way.

"I saw a position advertised in the local paper for an assistant at the Hertfordshire Golf Club and Karen told me to apply for it. I spoke to both sets of parents to get their opinions and told Karen that the money would be considerably lower than what I was on at the time. But she said just to do it."

They were both concerned about how Andrew's CV would look to a potential employer given that it contained little of direct relevance to the position for which he was applying and how he could convince them that he deserved an interview.

"He made a point of going to the club to present his application personally so that they could put a face to the letter when they came to read it and see the personality behind it," explained Karen, whose own well paid job was able to cushion Andrew's drop in salary.

The man to whom Andrew now owes quite a debt of gratitude is Richard Shepherd, Course Superintendent at the American Golf-owned course, who took a chance on him.

"Richard was a plumber before he became a greenkeeper so perhaps he saw something of himself in me," said Andrew, whose golf handicap, you won't be surprised to learn, has gone up since he started his new job.

He can still recall the cold and wet November day in 1999 when he took his first steps as an assistant greenkeeper.

"When I came in I didn't really know what the job involved but I did know it was about caring for grass and not just cutting grass. The first job I did was changing holes and tee markers but it was more a case of going round with one of the guys and helping him."

Andrew was well aware that to make a success of his new career he would have to learn as much as he could as quickly as he could.

"I got the promise that I would go to college at my interview but just missed the intake for that year's day release at Oaklands College. So I started in September of 2000 which helped quite a lot because it gave me a few months to learn about greenkeeping before beginning to learn it formally. Once I got there I was able to throw myself into it more."

And throw himself into it he has to the extent that when the application forms were sent out for the Toro Student of the Year Award Andrew's lecturer, Andy White, approached Andrew as the student they regarded as having the best chance of winning, That confidence was well placed as Andrew impressed the regional inter
view panel of BIGGA’s Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson; Lely (UK) General Manager Turf Products, Pete Mansfield; and BIGGA’s National Board Member and Course Manager of Old Folds Manor GC, Ian Semple, and won his way to the National Final.

“I felt the interview had gone well and was confident as I’d put a lot of effort into my portfolio and it has gone forward for a City and Guilds award and I was delighted when the letter arrived saying I was through.”

Having arrived at the final he revealed in meeting his seven fellow finalists as well as the Toro Award Excellence in Greenkeeping finalists and the judges.

“It was nice because it was the first time I’d been in a situation where I’d socialised with greenkeepers and been in a room with so many elements of the golf industry and meeting people like Walter Woods who is right at the top of the profession.”

“When the two runners-up were called my heart was thumping but, literally, a couple of seconds before Ken Richardson said my name I felt inside that I’d done it.”

He is looking forward to his prize, a six week study course in Massachusetts and visits to the Toro headquarters in Minneapolis and California as well as the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando but feels that one of the most important elements is that his CV will now stand out from the crowd.

“Now all of a sudden it is Andy Pledger, Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.”

He was seated at the same table as last year’s winner Jonathan Cleland and before the night was over they had enjoyed a long chat on what the new incumbent would expect over the next 12 months.

“He said to throw myself into it as it is such a good opportunity and said that while in America people would be interested in me as I was a foreigner and they’d be keen to know how I’d got there,” explained Andrew, who is looking forward to perhaps meeting up with Karen, who may well be in the States on business during his stay.

Andrew was promoted to First Assistant a month before the final but his ultimate goal is to become a Course Manager at a 36, 54 or even 72 hole complex.

“It would be then that the skills I learned in retail management would become more useful - managing people, managing budgets and dealing with the customers and the hierarchy within the golf club.

“American Golf is such a large company - you could liken the company to a supermarket chain - there are the opportunities for me and others to move within the group.”

“I just believe there is more to life than earning a lot of money and if you find a job which you have a passion for you should go for it.”

Supermarket Swap

“The Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping winner to taking £5 off Andy then when the words ‘Huw Morgan’ came out of Ken’s mouth I virtually passed out. Surprised was not the word, I just could not believe it,” admitted Huw, whose pessimism was born from the fact that he felt his course inspection, carried out in October and in the week after the club’s course maintenance week, may count against him.

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“Nothing went through my head, just emptiness. It didn’t sink in until I left the room after dinner and went into the bar for the first proper drink with the lads. Everything else was a blur.”

The “lads” were the other three finalists, Alan Purdie, Head Greenkeeper of Crail Golfing Society, who won the Scottish Final; David Murdoch MG, Course Manager of Liphook GC Huw’s fellow finalist drawn from England and Wales, and Alan Strachan, Head Greenkeeper of Royal County Down GC, the Irish Champion.

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“I don’t know if this has happened before but the four of us sat together at the dinner rather than be spread out among the rest of the tables and that was genuine friendship. I do believe I’ve made three great new friends during the day and a half we were together for the final and we have promised to get together for a drink at Harrogate in January.”

Huw is well aware of the doors such an Award can open and is sure that if he continues the upward path his career is taking he has the potential, and the ambition, to progress even further.

“Although I’ve won this Award I wouldn’t class myself as being at the top of the profession, but it can be a massive step up for me in my career as long as I go with the flow and keep on doing what I’ve been doing for the last couple of years.”
Huw Morgan couldn’t believe that the next two words were “Huw Morgan” but he’s getting used to being known as the 2001 Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping winner

Looking long term Huw has a vision of what he’d like to be doing in his career. “I’m ambitious and anyone with a passion for the job would want to be standing on the 18th green at the presentation to a new Open Championship with the television camera on my face having prepared an Open venue. Long term I’d like to do that.”

Huw does have experience of working on a links course having spent three years at Southerndown. “I love working on links land, it’s more of a hands-on craft job and it is drier. The wet course in the winter is every greenkeepers nightmare and you don’t get that on a links. Southerndown was a lovely golf course but the only way to progress my career with regard to pay and conditions was to move to the sunny south east and that was only possible because the Wildernesse, at Sevenoaks, in Kent, had accommodation with it.”

Huw had always wanted to be a greenkeeper, encouraged by his father who was Honorary Secretary of Pontardawe Golf Club in Swansea and a former Chairman of Greenkeeping. “I used to work at the golf club in the summer holidays’ and went straight to college from school to study greenkeeping,” he explained. It was through his father that he got his first big break in his career. “I’d just finished college and got a job with Swansea City Council looking after a nine hole course on my own and my father was playing in a member guest day at Fairwood Park Golf Club. It had just been bought by an oil millionaire but all the staff had left when the farmer who’d owned it previously sold, so the guy was left with a golf course but no staff. My father told him about me and he said to go and see him the following day. He looked at my credentials and said ‘The job’s yours. You start tomorrow,’” recalled Huw.

“I told him I’d have to hand my notice in first but he said if I couldn’t start that Friday he’d give the job to someone else, so I spoke to the council and managed to get out of my contract.”

So at the age of 19 he was put in charge of an 18 hole golf course with two experienced men who he took on and the backing of his father, whose greenkeeping knowledge and passion for the game was invaluable.

The faith the oil millionaire in a raw 19 year-old was repaid in full as the course was awarded the Welsh Professional Championship - televised by BBC Wales - five years later, just before Huw moved to Southerndown.

“For a club like Fairwood to have a tournament like that was absolutely fantastic,” said Huw. Since moving to Wildernesse in 1993 Huw has assembled what he describes as a “fantastic team” who benefit with a cheque for £230 as part of the prize. This recognises that success in the Toro competition is not down totally to the individual.

“This is a team Award as well as recognition of the money the club has spent recently on facilities.” Again displaying an honesty which you don’t always find Huw said improvements to the course had slowed over the last four years.

“It is behind the scenes that has been the main focus of our effort, particularly in creating our new Course Maintenance Facility,” said Huw, of the club and its members who have enthusiastically entered into the long term investment in excellence.

“The superb end product justifies all the earlier meetings and consultation necessary to push ahead with the project and I am only sorry that one of the prime movers, Reowan Dougal, 1996 Captain, sadly died before the final completion.”

The Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping is not the only national award Huw has won as he was also the 1987 Young Groundsman of the Year. So what is it that marks him out from the crowd to the extent that he wins two prestigious industry awards?

“I’ve always been a confident person and I’m lucky that I do tend to pick things up quickly. For example I completed my phase one and phase two in the same year at college and I picked up computing quickly after a two day course at Harrogate,” said Huw, who admits to being a controversial character, when it comes to BIGGA.

“I know a lot of people on the Regional and National level have to be fairly sensible about how they approach new ideas and can’t always go for radical change but we, down at Section level, like to fire ideas at the Association and say what we should be doing. Sometimes it can be construed that I’m firing a bit from the hip but it would be a pretty dull world if we said nothing and nothing moved forward. It’s important that we keep bombarding the National Board and the staff with things as it keeps everyone on their toes.”

He is looking forward to his trip to the States while he is sure the Club, particularly the treasurer will be delighted with the Toro Workman it will receive as part of the prize but he doesn’t feel winning the Award will make a massive difference to him personally. “The golf club are so good to us anyway. All the staff are treated with respect and I don’t think the membership could be any more pleasant to us than they are already. I’d like to thank BIGGA, and Toro for the work and investment they put into staging this event,” he concluded.
Roland Taylor looks at the machinery that is available to tackle those specialist jobs.

Recently, flicking through an exhibition catalogue, it was clear that for virtually every manual type of operation that is needed to keep a golf course, estate or garden in top condition there is now a machine to carry out the work.

Winter is for many a time of renovation, refurbishing and clearing up after Mother Nature has done her worst. Having machinery for doing a specific task saves time and makes the job far easier and more pleasant to carry out.

**Pumps (portable)**

With the high rainfalls we now have in this country, flash flooding is becoming quite common and the removal of unwanted water a fairly regular task for many. There are plenty of pumps on the market, but how portable are they? If you are having to manhandle a pump on your own then its weight is going to be foremost in your mind, especially when carrying it over long distance. So, it is important to check the weight and dimensions (the addition of fuel needs to be taken into account) before making a choice.

There are other specifications also to consider. In emergencies the flow rate should be top of the list so that the removal of unwanted water off the site is as fast as possible. The distance from source to where you want to dump it will have a bearing on size. There is very likely to be another problem that the pump is going to have to deal with - the water will be full of foreign matter. A pump that can handle both liquids and solids is the best option. Continually having to unblock filters in freezing water is not a job anyone would relish. A self-priming trash pump can effectively do this task by sucking the solids out of the water. The size of the solids they can handle can be as large as 40mm. If a unit is going to be left unattended then it should have safety features to protect it. If the water source dries up will the pump run dry without damaging it?

**Digging holes**

Whether it is planting trees or putting up fences when it comes to making holes you can throw away the spade. Earth augers are the answer and take all the backache out of creating a hole. They come as portable, one or two-man units or as an attachment for a tractor or skidsteer and are available in a wide range of diameters and lengths.

As one manufacturer says there is an art to creating a hole with an auger and they advise that it should be done in stages rather than a straight bore. Where trees are being planted the sides and bottom of the hole need to be loosened, so the roots of the tree can easily grow into the surrounding soil. This is especially important where clay is present.

**Woodland work**

At this time of the year there is every chance of wind damage and branches often get torn down or are left hanging dangerously. Clearing this up does not always warrant the cost of bringing in a specialist, so there are occasions when it has to be dealt with in-house. Chainsaws will take care of any large diameter branches on the ground. For the smaller branches caught in the tree there are manually operated or power driven pole pruners. These are especially useful as they are operated by one person and eliminate the use of ladders, which
Equipment

would require another member of staff to be in attendance for safety reasons.

An engine driven pole pruner is basically a 10" chainsaw head that is driven through a telescopic shaft, which can be extended, to any length up to about 5 metres. The units are said to be light and easy to handle and more importantly the operator keeps his feet firmly on the ground.

Other extendable equipment now available includes long reach hedge trimmers. The cutterbar can be set to an angle and the length of the extension shaft varies depending on the model. In addition to hedges these are especially useful for trimming tall shrubs and evergreens.

For those courses that include areas of woodland, clearing dead bracken and undergrowth is likely to be necessary at some stage and for this the answer is a heavy-duty brushcutter or clearing saw. In recent years there have been a number of ride-on brushcutters coming onto the market. These units have a wide cutting width and can speed up the operation considerably. Some models are said to cope with saplings up to 4cm in diameter and reduce the vegetation to mulch.

The hand-held units are especially useful for areas where access is limited. On very rough terrain the back-pack versions are a better
proposition. With clearing saws there is generally a choice of interchangeable heads that will deal with grass, undergrowth and saplings.

Old tree stumps can be a problem as they usually take years to rot away. The answer in their case is a stump grinder. If the diameter is relatively small then a hand-operated model will be suitable. For larger ones there are the bigger pedestrian machines. They are easy to use and will quickly grind the stump down to well below the surface and out of sight.

**Trenches**

When it comes to laying new drainage pipes, water or electrical supplies, a mechanical trencher is the answer. For a larger operation there are tractor attachments available, but on short runs a pedestrian unit or one fitted to a mini skidsteer type of machine might be more practical. These units are capable of taking out a 12" wide and over 36" deep trench, fast.

As many of the tasks mentioned here are one-off situations it is worth considering short-term hire as a more cost-effective solution.

If labour resources are limited or time is short then mechanisation can provide the answer, so it is worth investigating what is available locally to either buy or hire.
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Coast to Coast

Scott MacCallum headed to the west of Scotland to visit a new course designed by the same man who gave us Kingsbarns on the east.

There is a degree of rivalry in the MacCallum household based on the fact that I come from the east coast of Scotland while my wife is a west coaster. I have to put up with little slights like “East is best, but West is best” and complaints about how cold she finds the east. But I counter with official Met Office statistics which confirm that it rains 365 days of the year in the west, while the east coast has sunshine records which better even the Bahamas. Usually we agree to differ.

Recently I was able to blow the east’s trumpet about the wonderful new Kingsbarns Golf Club which just happens to be on the east coast, just a couple of miles from St Andrews, the Home of Golf... which is also to be found on the east. However the west is fighting back and has sunshine records which better even the Bahamas. Usually we agree to differ.

Ali stair Connell, was brought in as Golf Course Director and is relishing the opportunity of being involved in such a wonderful project.

"There would be no point in building a new course which was inferior to the great courses it has around it. Southern Gailes is going to be a traditional Ayrshire golf course with a traditional Ayrshire clubhouse while we also have 40 executive style villas and a hotel with leisure facilities," said Alistair, who explained that it would be a pay and play course aimed at the American market as well as local golfers.

"The land is probably one of the last traditional links sites in Scotland and under construction in Irvine, in an area which already, even to this East Coaster, must rank as one of the richest golfing seams to be found anywhere in the country. It borders two fine courses. Western Gailes and Glasgow Gailes with Royal Troon and Prestwick within shouting distance. The ambition is that the new course will more than earn its place among such exalted company."

Ironically the man charged with ensuring the project comes in on schedule and on budget is from the east. Alistair Connell, was brought in as Golf Course Director and is relishing the opportunity of being involved in such a wonderful project.

"There would be no point in building a new course which was inferior to the great courses it has around it. Southern Gailes is going to be a traditional Ayrshire golf course with a traditional Ayrshire clubhouse while we also have 40 executive style villas and a hotel with leisure facilities," said Alistair, who explained that it would be a pay and play course aimed at the American market as well as local golfers.

"The land is probably one of the last traditional links sites in Scotland and is certainly one of the last traditional links sites in the west of Scotland. It is not on the actual coast but is within 400-500 yards of the sea and the aim is to create a links golf course," he explained, as we drove around the course.

Southern Gailes was conceived when Irvine Development Council decided that it wanted to develop an area of wasteland and put the project out to tender.

"It could have become industrial units or anything really but our company, the only one which was proposing a golf course, was the successful bidder."

The next step was to appoint an architect and such was Kyle Phillips' reputation, having made such a magnificent job with Kingsbarns, he was asked to look at the site.

"Everyone knows he designed Kingsbarns on the east coast which is a pedigree golf course and the Directors of the company felt he was the man for this one. He looked at it and was very upbeat about what he found," he recalled.

The original routing plan was completed in June 2000 and the sod cutting ceremony performed in August of last year.

Kyle has visited the site every four or five weeks since and there have been considerable changes to his original thoughts and design.

"You can easily do contour drawings but when you see the earth moving you can tweak the design then," explained Alistair.

Kyle Phillips has used the four corners of the compass on the design and has cleverly shielded the golfer from the massive paper mill building which is a few hundred yards from the site on the vast majority of the holes.

"It is a bit of an eyesore and if people are here to play golf they'd rather be looking out to sea than at a paper mill," he said.

The course also boasts the distinctive Phillips' greens.

"He has his own thoughts about greens. You could say that some of them could be defined as square but he has target areas on which he looks to give potential pin positions. You certainly wouldn't describe them as an American-designed green."

Alistair and John Souter, who are Co-Directors in Grass Technology International were asked if they would be interested in looking after the new course.

"It was the likes of Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Wildlife and we had to liaise with them and agree on the final spec of rootzones etc to assist with the planning requirements," he said.

"That was how I got involved initially and then I was asked if I would be interested in coming to work for the company and having had a greenkeeping background for over 30 years I did miss the day-to-day involvement of golf and it was something I felt I could get my teeth
One of the distinctive Kyle Philips greens under construction.

into,” said Alistair, who currently works four days a week at Southern Gailes.

“My role now is Golf Course Director and I’m part of a team of directors and it is my role to oversee the construction of the course, act as the middle man between Kyle Phillips and the Directors and grow-in the course to a playable standard.”

One of the main decisions taken was to put together an in-house team to do the construction.

“To construct a golf course you can have an open cheque book but we had a budget to build a course and felt that it could be done in-house at a cost that wouldn’t frighten anyone off. We’ve proved it can be done. We’ve used a subcontractor to do some of the muck shifting and hauling of materials and we’re still on target to come in on budget.

“We also employed one shaper, Jeff Puff, an American based in Wales who was brought in on the recommendation of Kyle Phillips and he does all the shaping to the architectural drawings and works closely with Kyle.”

Alistair put together a crew comprising greenkeepers from neighbouring clubs who can do the finishing work and the growing in of the course and they have all had to get used to the problems of working on pure sand.

“Wind is the problem. The name Gailes says it all and for a large percentage of the year there is a wind blowing from one corner of the site and it sometimes proves difficult to stabilise the sand. At the early stage we had a state-of-the-art irrigation system from Rainbird installed with which we’ve managed to minimise the blow-out.

“We have 85% take at the moment and the other 15% can be done during the work carried out over the winter.”
The team stripped a 15 acre site on the edge of the course of rootzone and used some of this to build the two and a half metre high dunes which define much of the course's perimeter. Such is the quality of natural rootzone Southern Gailes has been able to sell some of it to offset cost.

"It's been used to construct football pitches in Glasgow including Murray Park the new state-of-the-art Glasgow Rangers training facility while we've also offered it to other local golf clubs."

Part of the site includes EEC grassland areas and the planning restrictions meant that no dune structure could be higher than two and a half metres above ground.

"We are now on those critical grassland areas which were part of the old overgrown Dundonald golf course over which Southern Gailes is laid out and the grasses have lovely fescues in them and we want to retain those indigenous grasses to retain the links feel."

Another element which had to be taken into consideration was the trees with 32 acres of fir trees on the site. "The site is about 320 acres but about 33 acres were fir trees planted when the Government were giving tree planting grants in the 70s."

"We had no problem with the planners who said the trees were a blot on the landscape and a contractor came in and gave us a price for removing them and the money we made from the job gave the construction crew and the rest of the staff a nice Christmas party last year."

The areas around the proposed villas are Scottish Natural Heritage and SSSI sites boasting some fine flora and fauna and Alistair is working closely with Jonathan Smith, of the Scottish Wildlife Group, to ensure everything is done to maintain these areas while there are also trying to establish wetland areas on the course as well.

Areas of the course are rife with heather and gorse and we are taking plugs of these to transplant in other parts of the course to create an older look," he explained.

At the moment the winter work will be continuing, weather permitting with turf from their 60 acre turf nursery being used to for the bunker revetment.

"Hopefully we will have some play in July of next year and if not we'll wait until the August, but as we speak we are quietly confident that a given a good break with the weather in the winter and spring we will remain on course."

One of the aspects which pleases Alistair the most is the employment the new project is bringing to the area.

"We feel we are putting something back into Ayrshire by way of jobs. We've got a clubhouse, a golf course and will have a hotel and it will bring tourists to the area and that brings jobs."

On a personal note Alistair hasn't yet made up his mind about the future.

"I would like to stay for three years and by then this course will be complimenting the other very good courses it has around it, but beyond that I don't know what will happen."

Once matured the new Southern Gailes course will, undoubtedly and some might say unfortunately, become another valuable addition to the west coast's case when it comes to the great east-west debate.
As a member of the Greenkeepers Training Committee, BIGGA is actively involved in raising the standard of Greenkeeper Training. The range and quality of training now available means that there is a training course for every greenkeeper which should improve the quality of greenkeeping and help to produce quality golf courses.

Golf Course Managers should ensure that their staff are trained to the highest standards, beginning by selecting a training provider that meets the criteria laid down by the GTC.

There is a clear link between education, training and economic success and if you think that training is expensive then try ignorance.

Ken Richardson
Education and Training Manager,
British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
Tel: 01347 833800
Email: education@bigga.co.uk
Website: www.bigga.org.uk

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) is continually striving to raise the standards of Golf Course Maintenance and Management and they are totally committed to ensuring that the range of qualifications are relevant to the Sportsturf sector and used by Employers for recruitment and by trainees for their own personal development.

The Government endorsed awards range from National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQ's) to the more academic Higher National Certificate (HNC)/National Diploma (ND)/Higher National Diploma (HND) in Golf Course Management and the Degree in Sportsturf Science.

The qualifications are continually under review by the National Training Organisation (NTO) in association with the GTC. The quality of the delivery of these awards by the network of GTC Approved Training Providers is also constantly monitored by the GTC.

For up to date independent advice on qualifications, education and training courses contact the GTC on:
Tel: 01347 838640
Email: golf@the-gtc.co.uk
Website: www.the-gtc.co.uk
ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE, Warren Farm Campus, Weston-on- Özney, Oxford, OX3 1BY Contact: Alan Brown or John Revis Tel: 01865 317749 Fax: 01865 359591 Email: alan.brown@abingdon-witney.ac.uk Website: www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk Information: National Certificate in Horticulture, National Diploma in Horticulture (Turf Options). Higher National Diploma in Horticulture (Turf Management Option) all available full or part time. Block release courses: NVQ Level 2 Greenkeeping, NVQ Level 3 Greenkeeping and Specialist Maintenance, NVQ Level 4 Amenity Horticulture. Short courses: FEPA spraying, chairlift and childcare courses.

AGGARD BRYAN COLLEGE, Archam Bryan, York, North Yorkshire YO1 7JR Contact: Central Admissions Tel: 01904 772211 Fax: 01904 772288 Email: db@aggardbryan.ac.uk Website: www.aggardbryan.ac.uk Information: National Certificate in Horticulture. National Diploma in Horticulture (Turf Options). Higher National Diploma in Horticulture (Turf Management Option) all available full or part time. Block release courses: NVQ Level 2 Greenkeeping, NVQ Level 3 Greenkeeping and Specialist Maintenance, NVQ Level 4 Amenity Horticulture. Short courses: FEPA spraying, chairlift and childcare courses.

BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, Full Place, Burchett's Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 6OT Contact: Tel: 01628 824444 Fax: 01628 824995 Email: enquiries@bcba.ac.uk Website: www.bca.ac.uk Information: Full-time programmes - BTEC First & National Diploma. Part-time programmes - NVQ 2 & 3 Amenity Horticulture, Sports Turf, Amenity Horticulture, Horticulture & Sport Turf options. Short courses - Greenkeeping for golfers, NVQ1 competence, competence, spray operation training courses.

BRINSBURY COLLEGE, Pulloxhill, West Sussex, RH18 9TG Contact: Tel: 01730 877400 Fax: 01730 875222 Email: studentservices@brinsbury.ac.uk Website: www.brinsbury.ac.uk Information: H nvQ1 - Amenity Horticulture (practical options only), BTEC First Diploma Horticulture (practical options only), National Certificate Horticulture (practical options only), National Diploma Horticulture (practical options only). NVQ Level 2 Amenity Horticulture all available full time. 

CANNINGTON COLLEGE, Cannington Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2LS Contact: Philip Sharpe Tel: 01278 656844 Fax: 01278 656595 Email: p.sharpe@can.edu Website: www.cannington.ac.uk Information: BTEC First Diploma Horticulture, BTEC National Diploma Horticulture, BTEC Higher National Diploma Horticulture. Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture). Foundation Degree in Horticulture (Foundation Degree in Horticulture).

EAST DURHAM and ROSKILDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Houghall, Durham, DH1 3GQ Contact: T: 0191 386 1515 Contact: Email: enquiries@edhcc.ac.uk Website: www.edhcc.ac.uk Information: Full-time courses: National Certificate in Horticulture/Greenkeeping and Grounds maintenance 1 year; National Diploma in Horticulture/Turf Care 2 years; National Certificate in Horticulture/Greenkeeping and Grounds maintenance 1 year. 


HARTFORD COLLEGE, Hartford House, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 3RE Contact: Sara Jane Waterman Tel: 01452 790944 Fax: 01452 790679 Email: enquiries@hartford.ac.uk Website: www.hartford.ac.uk Information: Courses available - First Diploma Horticulture, National Certificate Horticulture, National Diploma Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Horticulture, Foundation Degree in Hor...
This guide is not exhaustive and a full list of GTC approved training providers can be obtained from the GTC. The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) are continually reviewing the approved status of training providers offering greenkeeper training courses. Anyone with a query regarding greenkeeper training should contact the Greenkeeper Training Committee at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Aine, York YO61 1UF, Tel: 01347 838464 or visit their website at http://www.the-gtc.co.uk

**Available courses guide**

**SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE**, Sparsholt, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 2RT Contact: Ray Broughton Tel: 01962 776441 Fax: 01962 776287

Information: The College of West Anglia offers a full range of courses for Greenkeepers including; NVQ Level 2 Sports Turf, Greenkeeping and Groundsmanship, NVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Maintenance. GTC Craft Certificate, GTC Certificate in Golf Course Supervision, TDLG Assessors awards. FEPN, Chain saws, M01. Other Courses: National and First Diploma in Horticulture and Garden Design.

**WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE**, Email: leamingtonspa-morrisonm@warwickshirecollege.ac.uk Website: www.warwickshirecollege.ac.uk Information: Greenkeeping Courses: HNC Sports Turf & Golf Course Management (Day Release 2 year Programme), NVQ Level 2 & 3 Day Release and Workbased Diploma (we come to you), two year NVQ in Horticulture with Turf Option; IGD Intermediate Diploma (evening class) Certificate in Turf Irrigation; Short Courses: Introduce your Committee to Turf Culture; Competing for the Greenkeeper: Varied throughout the year - ring for details. FEPN, Chain saws Certificates, TDLG, First Aid. Also RHS General and Diploma, PH.1, PA2A and PA6.

**Writtle COLLEGE**, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 8PB Contact: David Campbell Tel: 01245 424200 Fax: 01245 424246 Website: www.writtle.ac.uk Information: SPORTSTURF PROGRAMMES NVQ Level 2 - Sportsturf; NVQ Level 3 - Sportsturf Maintenance; NVQ Levels 1, 2 & 3 - Amenity Horticulture. HNC - Sportsturf Science. HND - Sportsturf and Golf Course Management. Other Programmes: National Certificate. National Diploma With Sportsturf Option; BSc (Hons) Sportsturf Science and Management. BSc (Hons) Horticulture, BSc (Hons) Landscape and Amenity Management. NVQ 2 and 3 Service Engineering, First Diploma Agriculture (Mechanisation), & 6 Agricultural Mechanics Certificate. FEPN, Chainawr, Tractor Driving.

**GREENMOUNT COLLEGE**, Antrim, County Antrim BT41 4ET Contact: Declan Gallagher Tel: 028 94 426794 Fax: 028 94 426794 Email: declan.gallagher@dardni.gov.uk Website: www.greenmount.ac.uk Information: Day release courses in (a) NVQ Level II Greenkeeping and Sportsturf, (b) NVQ Level III Golf Course Supervision National Diploma in Horticulture with Turf option FEPN, Health & Safety and a range of short courses.

**TEAGASC COLLEGE**, College of Amenity Horticulture, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin DUBLIN 9 Contact: Pat Suttle Tel: 00353 18040212 Fax: 00353 18040212 Email: college@botanic.teagasc.ie Website: www.teagasc.ie Information: Black course courses in greenkeeping providing Level III Certificate by the National Council of Vocational Awards: Level III Certificate in Golf Course Management; 3 year full-time course. National Council for Educational awards a National Diploma in Horticulture (Greenkeeping specialisation).

Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife KY15 4BT Contact: Ann Bain Tel: 01334 608822 Fax: 01334 608800 Email: a.bain@elmwood.ac.uk Information: Full time National Certificate Greenkeeping, Block Release SVQ Level 6, SVQ Level 3 Sportsturf block release and Outdoors available; and SVQ Level IV/HNC Golf Course Management available as full time, block release and distance learning. HNC Golf Facilities Management, HND Golf Facility Management subject to validation for 2002/3. PDA for football and cricket available both block release and Outdoors. FEPN and OSAT, chainaws, chainsaw, tractor, climbing and rescue techniques and Health and Safety short courses etc available.

Gosta Training Ltd, 5 Clydevale Centre, 4 Florence Street, Glasgow G3 6BJ Contact: Iain Forbes Tel: 0141 240 2772 Fax: 0141 240 2453 Email: Gosta@gosta-training.co.uk Information: SVQ III and IV also Modern Apprenticeship in Amenity Horticulture for all options including Sportsturf and GTC Training Manuals. Autumn Release/Block Release from November-March. Short courses including Pesticides, Chainawr, First Aid, Abrasive Wheels, Manual Handling, Fire Extinguisher and First Aid Training. Consultancy service for Site Risk Audits, Machinery Risk Assessments, Machinery Permit to use system, COSHH and Noise Assessment, Health & Safety Policy development.

Laingher College, Rutherglen Campus, Buchanan Drive, Rutherglen, G73 3PF Contact: Colin S Urquhart Tel: 0141 647 6300 Email: colinm@perso.net/laingher.ac.uk Information: SVQ 3 GCA. ING. INGA. Full time and part-time courses in Greenkeeping, Groundsmanship, Golf Course Management, Horticulture, Land and Environment and Applied Ecology. Short courses for land-based industries including Risk Assessment and Pesticides.

Oxtridge Agricultural College, Eccleston, By Burscough, West Lancashire, Liverpool L36 2AY Contact: Steve Miller Tel: 01942 855387 Fax: 01942 855377 E-mail: stef@oxtridge.ac.uk Website: www.oxtridge.ac.uk Information: HNC in Golf Course Management (Part-time); Full-time National Certificate in Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management; SVQ Level II and GTC Manual (Day and Block Release); SVQ Level III Sportsturf (Day and Block Release); SVQ Level III in Ground Care Machinery, Full range of Amenity Horticulture, Landscape and other land based subjects at HNC and INGA, National Certificate and SVQ Levels; Short Course - FEPN, Chainawr, InKB, First Aid.

Penrith College, Penrith, Bridgend, CA9 5SS Contact: Paul Discombe/John Sullivan Tel: 01698 352672 Fax: 01698 352601 Email: pdiscombre@bridgend.ac.uk Website: www.bridgend.ac.uk Information Courses: NVQ Sportsturf Level 2 & 3, NVQ/GTC NVQ in Turf Management. Short courses: Pesticide application, Chainawr Operation and many others. TDLG Assessors Courses.

CG COLLEGE, Cymmer, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbot, Gower Peninsula, Neath Port Talbo

Welsh College of Horticulture, Newport Midd, Flintshire, CH7 6AA Contact: Graham Wright Tel: 01352 843080 Fax: 01352 843080 Email: graham.wright@wcw.ac.uk Website: www.wchw.ac.uk Information: Full time - Higher National Diploma in Turf Management. Part time - Day and Block Release Higher National Diploma in Turf Management. Block Work - NVQ Amenity Sportsturf Level 2 & 3. Briefing Days - NVQ Level 4 TDLG Assessors Courses 33, 34. Data Courses - FEPN, Chainawr Certification, First Aid, C.ED.

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Richard Windows takes up the cudgels against the dreaded thatch

IN THE Groove

An essential attribute of golf greens is that they are firm underfoot and free draining. Unfortunately this condition is often difficult to obtain due to the presence of thatch beneath many putting surfaces. Thatch restricts drainage and naturally holds water, producing a soft, spongy turf. Consequently, thatch control is one of the main aims of the greenkeeper. The recent availability of two deep scarification units in the UK will provide the greenkeeper with a much more efficient and less disruptive form of thatch removal, providing golfers with higher quality putting surfaces.

The fight against Thatch!

Thatch is an organic material, which can naturally accumulate in the soil profile, as grass leaves and roots go through a continuous process of senescence and death. Organic build up is possible in every kind of plant community, but in intensively managed turf areas the process is accelerated due to excess growth from possible over application of fertiliser and irrigation water. In a healthy soil/turf situation, natural microbial action will start to break down this organic 'litter' and it will subsequently become incorporated into the organic fraction of the soil. When the rate of dead plant tissue accumulation exceeds that of natural microbial digestion, thatch in the soil profile accumulates.

Excessive thatch can restrict the free passage of water through the soil profile as the pore spaces between the soil particles can be reduced or blocked. This type of damp, often nutrient rich environment is a relatively attractive place for grass roots to colonise, especially those of annual meadow grass. Therefore thatchy soil profiles gen-
The advent of the newly developed deep scarification machines will provide Greenkeepers with a more effective method of thatch removal; the Graden VS003 Verti-cutter and the Sisis Auto-Rotorake 600 are the two machines currently available. Both operate similarly and can achieve penetration to a depth of 40-50 mm on most types of soil. The former was developed for use on Australian cricket pitches. The study by the USGA Greens Section showed that a deep scarification machine fitted with 2 mm blades impacts 7.9% of the turf surface and one fitted with 3 mm blades impacts 14.1% of the surface. It is clear to see that these figures are almost double and triple the surface area impacted compared to more conventional 12 mm hollow coring. As every greenkeeper knows, the key to good quality playing surfaces is the production of a free draining, homogeneous soil profile, containing little or no thatch. Historically, the favoured and arguably the most effective method to remove thatch was by hollow coring. Not only is this operation largely unpopular amongst golfers, as the surface is disrupted and levels often compromised, it is also a relatively inefficient technique for thatch removal. A recent survey carried out by the USGA Greens Section has highlighted this inefficiency. For instance, the total surface area impacted by a hollow coring operation using 12 mm tines with an intensive hole pattern of 50 x 30 mm is only 4.91% (Hartwiger & O’Brien). Obviously this means a large amount of the surface (95%) remains totally untreated and therefore little improvement to these areas is made.

The next generation of Thatch removal

The concept of a deep scarification operation is proving to be effective and popular among greenkeepers to achieve this goal. The 2 mm blades used during late August/September, when grass growth is still active, is providing a very effective approach to removal of these layers. This operation should then be combined with the top dressing of good quality sandy material so that surface level disturbance is minimal. For serious thatch problems, or management of creeping or velvet bentgrass greens, use of the 3 mm blades through the main playing season will also provide the greenkeeper with an effective tool against continual thatch build up and removal.

Grooving for Golf

Many golf greens contain thin 2-3 mm layers of buried thatch in the top 40 mm of the soil profile, which are very difficult to remove by conventional coring as the layers re-seal themselves soon after treatment. These thin layers can inhibit the free passage of water through the soil profile and encourage lateral rooting and differential drying amongst the layers resulting in the loss of surface uniformity. This is wholly undesirable as free draining, homogeneous soil profiles that can support deeply rooted, uniform grass stands are one of the fundamentals of turf management. Therefore it is vital to remove these layers and the deep scarification operation is proving to be effective and popular among greenkeepers to achieve this goal.

The concept of a deep scarification operation is a good and exciting one. It has been popular in the U.S. and Australia for a while now and early assessments in the U.K. are very encouraging indeed. The simple fact that more thatch material is removed, allowing more air and therefore natural thatch break down to result makes it very popular amongst Greenkeepers. These desirable attributes are further complemented by the fact that disruption is minimal and superb grooves for top dressing and over seeding are left behind. Therefore the concept of deep scarification provides the greenkeeper with a valuable tool in the constant battle against the arch enemy that is thatch.


Richard Windows is an STRI Turfgrass Agronomist covering South Scotland. Richard and the rest of the STRI team can be contacted on 01274 565131, email: info@stri.co.uk or visit our website http://www.stri.co.uk/
Are you Ready?

BTME is coming up fast!

Well, what do you know? It’s December so look at what’s right around the corner... apart from Christmas and New Year! Yes, it’s Harrogate time again and this year the week is shaping up to be bigger and better than ever before.

At the time of going to press 175 exhibitors have confirmed their attendance at the Show while the new Golf Club Conference and Show, aimed at Golf Club Secretaries, Managers and Owners giving Harrogate a unique one-stop-shop feel, looks set to make a promising debut.

Of course, the fact that the Show now extends to three full days - starting on Tuesday morning and finishing on the Thursday afternoon - gives everyone more time to get round the four halls and more time to conduct business. In this day and age when time is such a precious commodity the opportunity to meet so many of your suppliers under the one roof at the same time is not one to be missed, while the chance to see at first hand many of the issues at the forefront of the greenkeeping industry keeps developing is again invaluable.

The education side is also one not to be missed with the visit of Dr James Beard, for the first time in a number of years, sure to guarantee a large audience.

The Golf Club Conference has a specially tailored educational programme taking in many of the issues at the forefront of a Golf Club Secretary’s or Manager’s job, while the Show has been moved from Hall D to the more conventionally located King’s Suite to give the employers. The GTC Stand Number is now K18.

For the latest BTME information, visit www.btme.org.uk
TURF CARE HISTORY ON DISPLAY AT BTME 2002
BIGGA will be allocating stand space at the forthcoming BTME in January to a display of items which will capture the history of turfcare. Whilst machinery from the old days comes immediately to mind, the Association would like the display to be essentially broad-based and many smaller items will be of intrinsic interest. Can you help in setting up the display? If so, please contact Pauline at BIGGA HOUSE on 01347 833820, or e-mail pauline@bigga.co.uk
Join us in Harrogate for what should be a fascinating trip down memory lane.

AGCO Ltd M17
The AGCO exhibit will include: a. MF Quadkikes (AGTVs), which comprise models from 300 to 500cc; b. MF 292D Lawn Tractor with a new road lighting kit and grass collection system; c. MF 1200 series Compact Diesel Tractors with mid-mounted decks; offering maximum operating efficiency, comfort and economy for year-round work in grounds care. Includes the new MF1235; d. MF 2200 series Tractors from 47-64 hp providing the operator the opportunity to use a single tractor to work with many types of implement. All models are equipped for duties with golf courses and professional amenity users.

Aventis Environmental Science C33
Come and visit Aventis Environmental Science on stand C33 to find out about our latest novel products for the Amenity Industry. There will be details of our forthcoming new Customer Rewards Scheme and also about the latest additions to our website. The ultra low dose Capricorn® Fungicide will be featured along with Rovral® Green (which together make perfect partners in a Programmed Disease Management approach). We also have our premier Selective Spearhead® with an associated offer. Finale® is our new line marking preparation product which can also be used for shrub bedwork. There will also be a competition on the stand, together with our current offers.

Bernhard & Co Ltd B31
New launch to the Golf Industry of very affordable grading packages. Specialist grinding experts Bernhard will be demonstrating at BTME how golf clubs with more restricted budgets can afford to have highly beneficial in-house grinding facilities - by using their ED500 and Knife Rite 1000. These quality machines help keep cylinder mowers producing that vital fine cut. The machines can be purchased - alternatively cost-effective leasing rates can be obtained. Bernhard invites all greenkeepers and golf course managers to Stand B31 at BTME to see their impressive range of grinders including Express Dual and Anglemaster used world-wide by leading golf courses - Blade Rite, Gear Rite, Rapid Relief, Rapid Facer and Rota Master.
Details: 01788 811600 e-mail: info@bernhard.

British Seed Houses A10
Find out more about SO-GREEN - the unique new ryegrass-based seed mixture that will deliver turfgrass that stays green all year round. Described as a quantum leap forward in turfgrass breeding, Grade A26. SO-GREEN has been developed by the Institute of Grassland & Environmental Research (IGER) turfgrass breeding programme funded exclusively by British Seed Houses.
Trials with SO-GREEN have proven its ability to keep its green colour during summer drought. The new turfgrass will also stay greener in autumn and winter when other grass fades. BS will also exhibit other outstanding varieties from the IGER portfolio as well as Avalon velvet bent, Providence creeping bent and more details on the Grade A Club training initiative.

Charterhouse Turf Machinery B33
Charterhouse Turf Machinery has been at the forefront of innovation in the sports turf market for some time. Whether maintaining existing turf or creating new areas, Charterhouse provide the greenkeeper with the full range of equipment from the versatile Carraro tractors, the Pro-seeders, the Scarifiers and the Verti-Drain Aerators which so dramatically improve drainage and stimulate grass growth, to the unique Sprayers which have the very special Rogers Spray Containment System, a vital tool for the ecologically and environmentally concerned. More than this and exclusive to Charterhouse is the mechanised Core Collector range, and new at BTME this year are the range of Top Dressers from Rink which provide excellent durability and versatility. Being established experts in their field, Charterhouse Turf Machinery can provide equipment to meet every greenkeeping challenge. Staff on the stand are happy to answer all technical questions, providing advice.

Cranfield Centre for Sports Surfaces Q85
Cranfield University has established an advisory and educational Centre to meet the sports industry requirement for high-level training, consultancy and research in respect of maintaining, specifying and constructing natural sports surfaces, including golf courses. It has also successfully launched the first European MSc in Sports Surface Technology. The course has attracted a good number of greenkeepers and groundsman from all over the country.
With 40-years of scientific expertise and extensive industrial links in soil, plant and water management, the Centre is endorsed by the IOG and has the support of many leading national sports organisations.
Services offered:
• Industrial consultancy to optimise playability of sports surfaces.
• Contract and academic research to provide leading-edge, technological developments within the industry.
• Training and education
For further information, please contact Inga Wells.

Eagle Promotions A19
In recent years the presentation of the golf course has become paramount. Part of the manicuring relates directly to signage. On course signage needs to be able to stand up to the elements whilst doing a practical job. Our aim, using etched zinc and casted bronze, is to be able to offer every type of golf course whether it be parkland, moorland, heathland, or links, a signage system that suits their environment.
To contact us call 01883 344244. Email info@eaglepromotions.co.uk or visit our website: www.eaglepromotions.co.uk.
Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd are Textron's largest UK dealer, with branches covering the South East of England.
We are continuing our Strategy of constructing natural sports surfaces, racecourses and polo grounds.
Grass Science Q5
Grass Science is a UK based independent agronomy consultancy, offering a complete service for the design, construction, maintenance and renovation of all types of sports surfaces including golf courses, soccer and rugby pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts, cricket facilities, racecourses and polo grounds. It can also assist in amenity, recreational and environmental projects.
Grass Science has formed extensive links with leading golf course and landscape architects, contractors and other specialists, enabling it to meet the increasing demand for a wide range of consultative projects throughout the UK. Grass Science consultants will be on their stand to deal with customers individual requirements.

As well as the Textron franchise, Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd also hold other major franchises including New Holland, Wedemann, and Richard Long.

Garden Innovation Products Ltd A12
Garden Innovation Products UK is a well established company that supply innovative gardening products to both the domestic gardener and the commercial worker. Several years establishment has reinforced our belief that a 1st class service and customer etiquette is everything.
At present, we are enjoying huge success with UNIK(CIVA), the replacement brush cutter head and professional cutting line. This highly sought after product addresses all known problems involving nylon trimmer heads & metal cutting blades and solves them with a simple but very effective piece of kit. View our product video demonstrations online at: www.gardeninnovationproducts.com.

Gem Professional A25
Gem are delighted to announce their new stand location of A25 at BTME 2002. The show promises to be an exciting one for Gem as they exhibit not only the current range of Pro Formula fertilisers and turf dressings but also some exciting new developments in granular products. Gem will continue to use BTME as their major launch pad for new products so come along to Stand A25 and find out what's new for 2002.

Grass Science Q5
Grass Science is a UK based independent agronomy consultancy, offering a complete service for the design, construction, maintenance and renovation of all types of sports surfaces including golf courses, soccer and rugby pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts, cricket facilities, racecourses and polo grounds. It can also assist in amenity, recreational and environmental projects.
Grass Science has formed extensive links with leading golf course and landscape architects, contractors and other specialists, enabling it to meet the increasing demand for a wide range of consultative projects throughout the UK. Grass Science consultants will be on their stand to deal with customers individual requirements.

Hardi Ltd Q6

32 Greenerkeeper International December 2001
Today, the sports industry is one of the fastest growing industries. It is essential that surfaces on which sports are played remain in outstanding condition. Our flexible training programme addresses the business and technical skills required to achieve the high quality sports facilities of tomorrow:

- Our ten, two week short courses are available individually and provide training in specific areas such as "Sports Surface Playability," "Mechanisation for Sports Surfaces" or "Irrigation and Drainage."
- Successfully complete all ten, together with a research project which can be carried out at your own sports venue and you will be awarded an MSc in Sports Surface Technology. You can take up to five years to complete the course.
- Our MSc in Sports Surface Technology is also available as a one-year full-time course. Apply now for entry in October 2001.

Endorsed by The Institute of Groundsmanship and supported by top national and international sporting organisations, this qualification will enhance your future career and salary prospects.

**Bursaries available**

For further details please contact Kathy Graves, Student Enquiries, Cranfield University, Silsoe, Bedford MK45 4DT. Tel: 01525 863319 Fax: 01525 863399 Email: StudentEnquiries.silsoe@cranfield.ac.uk www.silsoe.cranfield.ac.uk
The HARDI 2500 automatic spray working widths and has electric folding.

Hayter Ltd C 41 & 22
The Hayter range of grass cutting machines is of particular interest for those responsible for the maintenance of golf courses. For the greens there is the GM56 pedestrian greens mower and for fairways the FM524 four unit ride on fairway mower is available. For the rough and semi rough look no further than the R314 three unit ride on rotary. Hayter's range of ride on three unit and five unit machines designed with municipal users in mind, are equally at home maintaining large areas of turf on the golf course. For those smaller areas around the course the Harrier range of pedestrian rotaries is the first choice. All these machines can be viewed at the Hayter stand at BTME.

SISIS Equipment M12
SISIS will exhibit a selection of machinery from their large range of turf maintenance and grass cutting machinery, including new introductions.

Rain Bird Europe SARL Q1
The importance of efficient water management has never been greater and, as the industry leader in the manufacturing of irrigation equipment, Rain Bird is committed to the continuing development of more reliable and efficient irrigation products.

Renault M13
Providing professional vehicle solutions for professional users, Renault will be displaying models from its PALES and CERES ranges.

Scotts UK Professional B34
Scotts UK Professional is the UK's leading supplier of fertilisers and chemicals to the turfcare, landscape and amenity industry. Scotts has a heritage of product innovation, including pioneering development of turf treatments and fertiliser technology. Continued investment in Research and Development at Levington Research Station — including the completion of a USGA spec trials green this year - ensures that the chemical and fertilizer ranges continue to provide the very best in product efficacy, reliability, safety and ease of use. Scotts offer the broadest selection of turf fertilizer formulations on the market, a comprehensive range of chemicals for amenity and turfcare situations and important treatments such as the innovative turf management tool Shortcut.

SISI Speedcut Contractors Ltd C17B
Speedcut Contractors Ltd are proud to celebrate 25 years and continue to offer a professional service for all Sports Turf Drainage and Renovation work's. Visitors to our stand, No C17B will be able to view displays of the latest Sports Turf Drainage equipment in action on recent contracts. Experienced Staff will be on hand to discuss any requirements you may have and provide further details of our nationwide services.

May the Massey Ferguson ground force be with you. A range which gets off the ground with the compact MF 1200 series, includes the dedicated MF 2924D lawn tractor and reaches the heights of the MF 4200 series. A range which combines technology and reliability, comfort and quality. A range which helps you to maintain control of your grounds – mowing and loading, cutting and spraying, and more. If your business is ground care, MF will suit you down to the ground.

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Fax: 01455 233815
Hedge cutter launched by Reco

A verge mower and hedge cutter suitable for use with compact tractors has been added to Reco’s Ferri range of groundcare equipment.

The ZME machine can be used in-line or off-set behind the tractor for mowing and vertically for hedge cutting. The flail head can be rotated through 140 degrees from vertical to 50 degrees for mowing the sides of ditches, the position of the head being controlled hydraulically.

Two cutting widths are available - 1.25 and 1.35 metres. Maximum power requirement is 40hp Cutting is performed by Y-shaped hardened steel flails attached to a rotor with internal bearings, which reduces wear.

Cutting height is set by adjusting the rear roller, and a mechanical breakaway device is fitted to protect the equipment from damage if it hits a solid object. The flail head is supported by a strong parallel linkage and U-frame.

For further information Tel: 01480 453151

Redesigned hollow tines

SCH (SUPPLIES) LTD. has redesigned its HTC hollow tine corer. The new improved unit has a redesigned ballast carriage arrangement this allows for a more even weight distribution across the working area. It allows the use of four water ballast containers instead of the previous two.

The 760mm (30”) working width is made up of 6 discs set in two groups of three with a centre bearing. Each disc has 6 closed spoons of 20mm (3/4”). A useful addition would be the purchase of optional slitter blades.

For further information Tel: 01473 329272

Kawasaki engine launch

Kawasaki Commercial Products Division has launched the FJ Series of general purpose engines.

The first model in the series the FJ100D is expected to become widely available to the market next year.

The air cooled, single cylinder, horizontal shaft engines have been the subject of considerable research with design focusing on easy starting, robust performance and reliability.

The lighter weight engines represent another new direction for the Japanese manufacturer extending the model ranges further.

For further information: Tel: 01285 654777

Branches beware - new chainsaws about!

Two new heavy duty professional chain saws have been launched by Italian manufacturer Oleo Mac. The Oleo Mac 971 and 981 are aimed at the most demanding users who want reliable performance day in, day out in extreme conditions.

The two new machines with 70.8 or 80.7 cc engines pack a punch of over 5 hp each to cutting bars of between 18 - 30”. The chain saws combine power, performance and durability with features designed to improve their reliability. An electronic speed governor on the 981 machine guarantees consistent performance and both have an insulated high tension cable to protect the electrics from heat.

User benefits include a decompressor which demands less effort at start up while a nylon air filter speeds and simplifies cleaning and the interval between cleaning sessions is extended thanks to a self-cleaning system which ensures the air reaching the filter is already purged of the coarsest dust particles.

Accidental switch-off is prevented and improved insulation is provided by rubber insulation on the on/off switch.

Major new gang mower

Major Equipment Ltd has launched the Groundsmajor TDR Rotary Gang Mower which comes in both 16” and 20” cutting width.

The machine cuts 12.5 and 16.5 acres per hour at seven mph with the timed overlapping blades leaving a fine cut and strip free finish.

All moving parts are totally enclosed and the aerofoil chambers control the cut material. The rollers not only level roughed ground but also act as a safety barrier preventing stones and other projectiles from escaping the confines of the body.

The two outer decks (wings) are equipped with a three point pivot system allowing each deck to fit into ground contours. The machine can be used in tighter areas as the machine can operate with one or both wings locked in transport position offering a reduced cutting width of 12” and 8”.

For further information Tel: 01524 850 501

Turf anchors from Turfmech

Turfmech has produced the EcoPeg, a fully bio-degradable stake suitable for securing turf, netting, plant supports, erosion control blankets, protective covers and many other materials on flat ground or slopes.

Manufactured from degradable plant resin, the EcoPeg measures 125mm enabling it to be hammer well into the ground to provide an anchor against movement or slipage caused by wind or water. As it is made from resin means that it can be used safety in maintained areas where a metal spike might cause damage to a mower blade.

The pegs take between 12 and 15 months to break down, ultimately disappearing completely into the soil. EcoPeg stakes cost £63.22 for a box of 500.

For further information Tel: 01889 271303

December 2001 Greenkeeper International
North

The Section AGM was held recently at Garmouth and Kingston GC. We started the day with the annual Chairmen's lunch. Vice Chairman golf match for the Davao Trophy. I am pleased to report that my team emerged victorious, but only after a play off as it was a tie, so the game replayed the run 3 18th to decide the winner. The course was in excellent condition and thanks must go to Richard Roy and his staff. Dennis St. Aitken of Davao, was in attendance to present the trophy and relay our thanks to the company for providing the cup to play for. We must also thank all at Garmouth and Kingston for a great day.

The AGM passed off smoothly with Stewart McBain taking over as Chairman from myself and John Geddes becoming Vice Chairman. I stood down from the Committee, altogether as in January, all being well. I should like to thank the BIGGA Board and especially Steve George as he has given me so much time. It will be sad not to be involved, but I know I am leaving the Section in good hands and maybe, after over 15 years in various roles, they will be able to see Section in a better position. I am sure this year I am leaving the Section. The staff at Hampden would like to thank you all for your support which is greatly appreciated.

End of this month to do so, after the AGM! The winners of the last draw for October were S. Cruickshank with number 219 winning £30 and T. Dunn with number 222 winning £20. The November winners were S. Sime with number 219 winning £30 and T. Edwards with ticket number 256 being the winner of £20. And before you say it's "fixed" the draw for both months was made at the AGM! The winners of the last draw for this year will be in the January magazine. While I am on about "fixed" I can assure you all that our new Secretary, Mike Dennis, has never purchased their tickets has until the end of this month to do so, after which it will be time for the most read Section news of the year, the February edition of Greenkeeper International.

As we near the end of another year I would like to thank everyone who has supported the Section this year, especially to the numerous golf clubs who grant us courtesy for our tournaments and all the Patrons for their support which is greatly appreciated. I hope you all have had a good year and I can only express my thanks. Hopefully we can build on what we have achieved this year and grow stronger in years ahead.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.

John Crawford.

Central

We extend a warm welcome to our final new member for 2001, Brian Macleod, from Tulliallan Golf Club; in Fife. Brian is Assistant Greenkeeper at Kirkcaldy and a former member of the Association.

The Grand Football Tournament held in Stirling on Sunday, October 14 attracted an entry of 12 teams, travelling from as far afield as Dundee, Coatbridge, Livingston and places in between. Unfortunately the weather couldn't have been much worse with constant rain throughout the whole tournament. However, everyone enjoyed the day with the eventual winners being the team from Tulliallan, led by their non playing Captain, Kenny Thomson. There's going to be a stewards' enquiry into the authenticity of some of their players due to the fact that they were hardly out of puff at the end! Downfield were runners up and 25th place went to Camperdown, who should also be thanked for providing the meal (along with its ribbon) which we had hoped to hold on October 23rd.

Secondly, I would like to apologise for the name wrong in last month's newsletter, and again would like to wish him a happy retirement when it comes.

I would like to apologise on behalf of the committee for our failure to mail-shot all our members with regards to the AGM which we had hoped to hold on October 23rd, however like I say, we can only apologise for this oversight and hopefully learn from our mistake.

On a more positive note 21 members did turn up on the day which was a significant increase on last year's attendance so perhaps this type of venue could be used in the future. Our thanks must be extended to Scottish Grass Machinery for sponsoring the AGM and we hope to have more of the same next year.

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North

The Section AGM was held recently at Garmouth and Kingston GC. We started the day with the annual Chairmen's lunch. Vice Chairman golf match for the Davao Trophy. I am pleased to report that my team emerged victorious, but only after a play off as it was a tie, so the game replayed the run 3 18th to decide the winner. The course was in excellent condition and thanks must go to Richard Roy and his staff. Dennis St. Aitken of Davao, was in attendance to present the trophy and relay our thanks to the company for providing the cup to play for. We must also thank all at Garmouth and Kingston for a great day.

The AGM passed off smoothly with Stewart McBain taking over as Chairman from myself and John Geddes becoming Vice Chairman. I stood down from the Committee, altogether as in January, all being well. I should like to thank the BIGGA Board and especially Steve George as he has given me so much time. It will be sad not to be involved, but I know I am leaving the Section in good hands and maybe, after over 15 years in various roles, they will be able to see Section in a better position. I am sure this year I am leaving the Section. The staff at Hampden would like to thank you all for your support which is greatly appreciated.

End of this month to do so, after the AGM! The winners of the last draw for October were S. Cruickshank with number 219 winning £30 and T. Dunn with number 222 winning £20. The November winners were S. Sime with number 219 winning £30 and T. Edwards with ticket number 256 being the winner of £20. And before you say it's "fixed" the draw for both months was made at the AGM! The winners of the last draw for this year will be in the January magazine. While I am on about "fixed" I can assure you all that our new Secretary, Mike Dennis, has never purchased their tickets has until the end of this month to do so, after which it will be time for the most read Section news of the year, the February edition of Greenkeeper International.

As we near the end of another year I would like to thank everyone who has supported the Section this year, especially to the numerous golf clubs who grant us courtesy for our tournaments and all the Patrons for their support which is greatly appreciated. I hope you all have had a good year and I can only express my thanks. Hopefully we can build on what we have achieved this year and grow stronger in years ahead.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.

John Crawford.

West

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North Wales
Welcome to new members President Vicpl Wintle; James Cope, Robert Galloway and Paul Farrell; Carden Park; Paul Roberts, North Wales GC; Gwylim Jones, Aberystwyth GC, and Richard Brown of Hartford GC.

North West
How does this weather suit you? Hope you are all going to so contact the college. Bus numbers are involved. More info was voted back, en bloc with the proposal, and he accepted the appointment will be beneficial to the Section committee decided to offer the position to Peter Jefford, General Manager of Rufford Soil Technology. The following morning I wish to thank everyone who helped grow the game. This, of course, means extra work when, I am sure, most of you want to get on with your winter work. Still, we must now complain because once again the south of the country is having heavy flooding with rivers bursting their banks and not only land becoming waterlogged, but houses flooded for three feet of water in some cases. I might add that I am writing these notes on November 1, and I am sure that no winter golf is being played in many cases, and possibly little winter work.

North West Section is that we have a new President. Due to the retirement of John Walker for his support during the Autumn Tournament took place at Woodsome Hall GC, sponsored by Scotts UK. Everybody was impressed with the course, views and of course the clubhouse. Well done to Head Greenkeeper Jeremy Eastwood and his team for the course.


North West

The Autumn Tournament was held last month at Teesside Golf Club. The event was well attended and a great day was had by everyone. The golf course was in immediate condition west we are having an Indian Summer, with temperatures as high as they have been for most of the summer, the only problem I can see is that the greens are almost always growing. This, of course, means extra work when, I am sure, most of you want to get on with your winter work. Still, we must now complain because once again the south of the country is having heavy flooding with rivers bursting their banks and not only land becoming waterlogged, but houses flooded for three feet of water in some cases. I might add that I am writing these notes on November 1, and I am sure that no winter golf is being played in many cases, and possibly little winter work.


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Taylor. Our own Section was represented by following members: Russell Allen, Jeff Dickinson, Ian Needham, Adi Porter, Steve Levers, Antony Bindley, David James, Chris West, Jamie Bedford and our Chairman Tony Suttle.

Finally, I would like to thank all the companies who have supported our Section throughout the year especially the following: Banks Amenity Products (Autumn Tournament); Barenbrug (East Midlands v East of England); Banks Amenity Products (Midlands v East of England); Barenbrug (East Midlands v East of England); Barenbrug (East Midlands v East of England); Banks Amenity Products (Midlands v East of England).

The AGM followed the meal and the presentations with the following members being elected to serve the Section for the coming year: Chairman, Jim Cassidy; Vice Chairman, Steve Mason; Secretary & Treasurer, Gerald Bruce; Match Secretary, Steve Mason; Mount Pleasant Golf Club, 36 pts; 2. Nigel Phelan, St Andrew's Hospital Golf Club, 34 pts. The Longest Drive was won by Nigel Phelan and Nearest the Pin by Bob Butley.

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Have you booked your place on the Region's package to BTME 2002, which includes transport, accommodation & entry to the BTME show. This year the seminar sessions are extra.

Richard Whyman

South Coast
Firstly, many apologies for the lack of Section notes for the last couple of months. The problem has now been rectified and normal service has been resumed. As you read this many of you will have played in the winter tournament at Barton-on-Sea and been to the Section AGM. I know your committee work extremely hard on your behalf trying to make the Section a success, so it would be nice to see more people supporting the coming events. We, as greenkeepers, are always busy but we should put time aside to attend Section events. As the New Year approaches our minds turn to BTME. For those who have not made the journey to Harrogate then I can thoroughly recommend it. It truly is a week not to miss as the learning experience continues. Paula Humphries was contacted for those interested in the South West coach trip, which is excellent value for money.

As a Section we must congratulate Adi Archer and his team at Broadstone Golf Club for their success in winning the BIGGA Environment competition this year. We were fortunate to play Broadstone this summer and were able to see how much hard work they have put in to their heathland restoration project over the past years. They are indeed a credit to our section and to all greenkeepers. Lastly, it just leaves me to wish our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from your committee.

Alex McCombie

South Wales
It is with great sadness that I have to inform the members of the recent sudden passing away of Paul Robinson, former Head Greenkeeper of the Pyle & Kenfig Golf Club. Paul had been retired from the club that he devoted his entire working life to, for only 10 weeks.

Paul was a well respected father figure of the greenkeeping fraternity in South Wales and was renowned for his wit and sense of humour. Just being in his company was fun itself!

He was an ardent supporter of BIGGA and was the treasurer of the Section for over 14 years.

It is said that Paul took only one holiday in his entire working life, many years ago, to Malta for a week! From then on in he took his holiday entitlement in half days as he couldn't bear to be away from the course that he tended to and cared for so very much.

A lovely gentleman, generous and humorous, he will be sadly missed.

The final of the Rigby Taylor Matchplay Doubles Competition was held recently at the Royal Portcullis Golf Club, where Daryll Bray and Steve Mills took on Jamie and Herbie Probert.

The match was a tight affair with the conditions making for an exciting finale to the competition. The high winds eventually overcame the driving rain and the sun shone for the remainder of the match, which saw Jamie and Herbie triumph on the 16th green.

The golf course was in excellent condition and those who weren't playing but who supported the match were lucky enough to be treated to a what's what and what's happening to the course in time for the British Amateur Championships next year, from Course Manager David Ward.

Our sincere thanks to Roy Barker and Dave Carvey, our Rigby Taylor representatives, for organising the day and for their splendid hospitality. A truly enjoyable day was had by all!

Congratulations to Kerry Jones, of Garnant Park Golf Club. Kerry who has been the Head Greenkeeper of the club for four years was recently promoted to Golf Manager at the course.

Congratulations also to Huw Morgan of the Wilderness Golf Club, near Sevenoaks in Kent. Welshman Huw recently won the Toro sponsored Excellence in Greenkeeping award to add to his list of achievements.

Don't forget to book your place at the Winter Tournament/AGM/Christmas dinner, at the Pyle & Kenfig Golf Club on Wednesday, December 12. Teeing Off is from 10.00am. The AGM is 3pm and the Christmas feast is served at 5.30pm. Numbers will be limited. Peter Lacey

Northern Ireland
The AGM will have been held at Rockmount Golf Club on November 29. The structure of the new committee for 2002 will be detailed in the January magazine notes.

I would like to congratulate Alan Strachan, Course Manager at Royal Co Down Golf Club on winning the Irish final of the Excellence in Greenkeeping Award which is sponsored by Toro and Lely Ireland. Alan will go forward to compete in the Great Britain Finals later this autumn.

Our three members who travelled over to the National Championship at Royal Birkdale at the beginning of October enjoyed the experience immensely and would like to thank BIGGA for organising the event. Noel Crawford, Andrew Wray and Michael Feeney came in with reasonable scores in the difficult conditions but didn't feature in the prizes this year. Greenmount College in Antrim moved their annual prize day from June to September because of the Foot & Mouth crisis. This year, congratulations go to Jane Beattie on becoming the top student on the NVQ Level II course. Jane is the first female greenkeeper to complete the NVQ course at Greenmount College.

Another training option, which is now offered to greenkeepers in Northern Ireland, is the fast track Level II & Level III Greenkeeping course, run by Myerscough College in Preston. The two courses are currently taking place at Malone Golf Club in Belfast. The advantage of the fast track system is that each level can be completed in 12 months with classroom attendance reduced to six to eight days. The College Tutor presenting both courses, is Owen Mulhins from Dublin. Owen is a final year student at Myerscough completing a degree course in Turf Science. If anyone would like further particulars on the fast track NVQ's ring Bernhard at Myerscough College on 01995642025.

Lastly, I would like to welcome William Black from Tandridge Golf Club to the Section this month.

Ken Henderson

Northern Ireland

YOU'VE GOT MAIL!

If you’ve got an email account, and want to keep up to date with the latest news and events from the turfcare industry, drop us an email, and we'll add you to our ever increasing list of online subscribers.

We'll then inform you of any forthcoming features and events via email.

Simply send an email to: updates@bigga.co.uk quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest!
Classified

Job Shop

Seeking a position at a golf course design/construction company or an Assistant/First Assistant position preferably at a company/club in Scotland-Glasgow or Fife area, but will be open to all offers from UK. Qualifications up to HND in Golf Course Management and a PA1-PA6 certificate. Over 18 months work experience on cool season grasses and two years on warm season grasses. Looking to start in the new year (February-March). JS/129/01.

Enthusiastic and well motivated Head Greenkeeper seeks new challenge in the South East area. Possible interest in working abroad. Relevant qualifications including D32/33. CV available on request. JS/130/01

Classified

Trees

LARGE TREES FOR SALE
NURSERY SECONDS
FROM £3.50 EACH
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TIME TO TALK
www.bigga.org.uk

CLICK ON TODAY!

Visit www.bigga.org.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

FOR GREENKEEPERS  BY GREENKEEPERS  CHAT GREENKEEPERS

Recruitment

DUDDINGSTON GOLF CLUB LIMITED

require a

GREENKEEPER

The structure and management of the green staff at Duddingston Golf Club has changed during 2001, and to support the ongoing development of the course we invite applications for an experienced greenkeeper to join the greenkeeping team.

We seek a qualified greenkeeper, with experience in all aspects of turf management, who is able to work on his own initiative.

An attractive remuneration package is available.

Applications with a brief career history and experience/qualifications should be sent to:

General Manager,
Duddingston Golf Club Ltd,
Duddingston Road West,
Edinburgh EH15 3QD

DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

required for 27 hole course,
30m miles north of Hamburg,
accommodation is available

reply to – Head Greenkeeper, Golf Club Schloss Breitenburg e. V.,25524 Breitenburg, Germany

Visit www.bi33a.or3.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

FOR GREENKEEPERS  BY GREENKEEPERS  CHAT GREENKEEPERS

December 2001  Greenkeeper International  45
TURF PRODUCTION MANAGER

CampoSol, a privately owned farming company, based in south west Portugal, are seeking a manager with ambition to assist in the expansion of their turf (sod) growing enterprise supplying the amenity markets of Portugal and Spain.

This is a demanding role and the successful applicant will need to be a good team player and have the ability to be self-motivated. You will need to live in Portugal and preferably speak either Portuguese or Spanish as well as English. Knowledge or experience of growing and establishing crops in a warm season climate is also required. Having a mechanical aptitude is preferred as is knowledge of turf (sod) related machinery although this is not essential.

A comprehensive award package is offered to the successful applicant and assistance will be available for relocation and expenses. All enquires should be addressed to Peter Knight in confidence using the contact details below:

CampoSol LDA, Apartado 123, 7645-909 Vila Nova de Milfontes, Portugal.
Tel: 00351 283 990 010 Fax: 00351 283 998.411 E-mail: camposol@mail.telepac.pt

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Required at
HORNE PARK
Golf Academy Limited

To work on its successful USGA constructed 9 hole Members/Play & Play parkland course with 24 bay Driving Range. The successful applicant must be self motivated with at least 3 years experience NVQ2, spraying certificate, and a sound knowledge of machinery a definite advantage.

Salary negotiable in accordance with experience.

Applications in writing with C.V. to:
Mr. J. McGuire, Head Greenkeeper
Horne Park Golf Academy Ltd. Croydonham Lane, South Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JP

Chobham Golf Club

require an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

An opportunity has arisen for an enthusiastic individual to join our Hard working team. Candidates must have at least NVQ Level 2 and preferably a current Spraying Certificate.

Pay commensurate with experience
No accommodation available

Apply in writing with full CV to: –
Scott Reeves, Head Greenkeeper, Chobham Golf Club, Chobham Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2TZ

GREENKEEPING STAFF

FOR THE GROW-IN PERIOD

Aphrodite Hills Resort – IN CYPRUS

This exciting new development requires staff to assist in the pre-opening maintenance of the course. Candidates should retain knowledge of course maintenance, possess good machinery operating skills and have the drive and enthusiasm required to work in a foreign environment.

Accommodation will be provided with the contract package.

Applications in writing with full C.V. to:
The Golf Course Superintendent, Lantlis Development Ltd PO Box 50203, 3602 Limmassol, CYPRUS.

EXPERIENCED AND QUALIFIED GREENKEEPER

WYKE GREEN GOLF CLUB

For an 18 hole course situated west of London. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, have a good working knowledge of the maintenance of a parkland course together with experience of machine maintenance.

PA1 and PA2 certificate preferred.

No Accommodation provided. £14,000 plus overtime.

Please reply in writing with current C.V. to:
The Secretary/Manager Wyke Green Golf Club (1996) Ltd. Syon Lane, Isleworth, Middx, TW7 3PT

FREE online Job Shop Ads!

If you didn't already know, BIIGA upload all recruitment advertising from the pages of Greenkeeper International to coincide with the launch of each issue. Many Greenkeeper members have found the online recruitment section to be of great benefit, particularly if they have left their magazine at work! They can simply log on at home, to the BIIGA website, and access all of the latest jobs available in the fine turf industry. Also, if a member is looking for employment, their advert will appear in this database for prospective employers to read.

Any member who has found themselves out of work as a direct result of the Foot and Mouth Outbreak may wish to take advantage of the BIIGA website to help find another club. As a special service to members the Association will allow you to post a Job Shop advert on the website, listing your experience and qualifications, offering your services free of charge. Further information can be obtained from the Sales & Marketing Department at BIIGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833800 email: sales@bigga.co.uk

Send your completed order form to: Jennifer Whichello, Cheryl Broomhead or Meredith Foster, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or fax the form to us on 01347 833602. Alternatively, you can also email your copy to jennifer@bigga.co.uk
Wearside Golf Club
require a
DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applications are invited for the position of Deputy Head Greenkeeper. The suitable applicant will be experienced and qualified in all aspects of greenkeeping. A practical knowledge of turf management, machinery maintenance and irrigation systems are essential. Good man management skills and experience in course improvements would be an advantage.

Please apply in writing enclosing a full CV by Friday, 28 December 2001.
The Secretary, Wearside Golf Club, Coxgreen, Sunderland SR4 9LT

2 Assistant Greenkeepers
Betchworth Park Golf Club

2 Assistant Greenkeepers required. Qualification up to NVQ2 or equivalent. Spraying Certificate an advantage. Salary based on experience, salary scales based on the Standing Committee recommendations. Minimum 3 years experience on Golf Courses.

Applications in writing please to:-
Betchworth Park Golf Club, Reigate Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1NZ

The Burdens Group Ltd
require a
PROFESSIONAL TURFCARE EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN

Main John Deere franchise requires Professional Turfcare Equipment Technician. Must be conversant with all products in the industry in this fast growing market. The position will complement our existing team at our North Kyme Depot which serves major companies in the UK today.
A company vehicle and other associated benefits are included in an attractive package.

If you have the experience and enthusiasm to fulfil this position apply in writing enclosing a C.V. to:
Bob Bulbrook, Service Manager, The Burdens Group Ltd, Spalding Road, Sutterton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 2ET
www.burdens.com

DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER
Worthing Golf Club

Applications are invited for the position of Deputy Head Greenkeeper. The successful applicant will be responsible for the day to day management of one of Worthing’s two courses, reporting to the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper.
The applicant must be qualified to at least NVQ3 or equivalent and hold spraying certificates PA1, PA2A and PA6.
The highest standards of presentation are required and experience of managing a team of Greenkeepers is essential.

Applications in writing with full CV should be addressed to:-
Robert Short, Worthing Golf Club, Links Road, West Sussex BN14 9QZ

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Sandy McDivot takes a positive look at the current economic climate

This month I would like, if I may, to comment upon the long-term job security outlook for we keepers of fine turf. I believe this to be a timely exercise seeing as the world economy appears to be in nose-dive mode at the present time. So making the assumption that we have not made any serious tactical errors recently, such as head butting the Lady Captain, or engaging in something other than social intercourse with the Chairman of Green's wife, what is the likelihood of us being voted off as the weakest link. I would say that there are only three potential reasons for such a predicament. The first is incompetence, the second, golf course change of use and the third, a general public shift away from golf to other activities.

The first of these is somewhat irrelevant and should be highly unlikely given that nearly all greenkeepers of dubious abilities have thankfully vanished to other industries, such as the health service or politics. Many moons ago I once worked for a Head Greenkeeper who knew nothing about turf or indeed any other subject and who would only sporadically turn up to work in order to hurl some foul-mouthed abuse at us long suffering assistants before falling into a nearby bunker in a drunken stupor. He was to greenkeeping what Prince Philip is to foreign relations. Yet remarkably he remained in the same position for some six years before all the greens started to take on the characteristics of evil smelling brown porridge and the committee had to reluctantly dispense with his services. Even to this day, one hears comments from old members of that far-off committee stating that this man was the finest greenkeeper the club had ever had, but I disregard such declarations as sad hazy romantic yearnings for the past, combined with acute senile dementia.

So what of the second cause for job loss, that of golf course change of use. Well given the current profit margins available in agriculture, I think the chances of courses reverting back to farmland are somewhat unlikely. But as more and more courses are proprietary owned and the industry becomes proportionately more competitive, then courses could start to be developed into other potentially more lucrative schemes, such as housing construction or equestrian sports facilities. In fact it is entirely possible of a course undergoing such change of use. This, I understand was brought about by negative marker forces, cash flow uncertainties, questionable location and the fact that the course in question was c***p. This I hasten to add, was no fault of the Course Manager but a result of chronic under funding together with employment of a course designer that looked like he had gained his qualifications at catering college.

An unfortunate case, but one that is by no means exceptional. But what of the other potential threat to our livelihood. What are the chances of the game simply going out of fashion and thereby necessitating golf course closure on the grounds that no one would be seen dead playing the game? Preposterous you may think but wait years ago the game of billiards was all the rage. Great halls housing dozens of tables were to be found in every town but who on earth plays the game now. More recently the sport of squash appears to be on a life support mechanism. Even as we speak, sports centres across the land are knocking down the intervening squash court walls and filling the resultant void with trendy new exercise machines. However, it is my humble opinion that on this front we have little to fear. The game of golf seems assured to grow in popularity for the foreseeable future and as a result we greenkeepers will be in ever-increasing demand with resultant theoretical wage increases to boot. The main threat to the growth of the game is expense but as skilled Course Managers are able to maintain their courses to a high standard within tight budgetary controls, I see no problem here.

Then there is the subject of role models that have taken to the game. What a huge benefit they have been. Certainly Tiger is one of the very best recruitment vehicles we could ever have asked for. Then there is Prince Andrew, he likes nothing better than...
to play a round. The fact is the sport is appealing to people from the most unlikely walks of life. Alice Cooper for instance, the boa constrictor loving 70's rock icon of domestic fowl oral decapitation notoriety, has so devoted his life to the game that he has managed to get down to 4 handicap. Smokey Robinson, former soul singer has created his own miracle by replacing his drug addiction with golf addiction.

Robbie Williams the womanising, beer drinking rock star rebel that the youth of the day so admire for his moral standards, plays to a 14 handicap. Likewise that other figurehead of high ethics and gentlemanly behaviour; Chris Evans. Then what about the England football squad. Rumour has it that half of them play golf to single figure handicaps and seeing as they thrashed Germany 5:1, we have living proof that mastery in the art of golf, brings with it the total co-ordination so requisite in the lesser sport of football.

With even the communist republic of Cuba embarking on a golf course construction programme, we can assume that the great game has received full social acceptance throughout the world. But will the public keep playing once they have taken it up?

Well here we have another couple of tricks up our sleeve. For one thing golf is a game that can be played right up to the moment of death of mind and body. Indeed many of the members at the great links of Sludgecombe appear already to have progressed to at least stage one of this condition, if not both. The other weapon in our armoury is that for some reason the game is highly addictive. I do not know the time explanation for this phenomenon but once people get going they simply cannot stop. I know of a friend who has been playing once every two weeks for several years and has yet to score lower than 50 over par. He hates the game with a passion. It destroys him both physically and mentally every time he plays. Yet can he give it up? No he cannot.

Because hidden within the depths of shanks, duffs, twitches and air shots, there is always an effortless stroke that sends the ball soaring towards the target. It is this shot that transports him briefly to his own personal Nirvana and this shot that brings him back a fortnight later for further punishment. Desmond Morris would probably have put the brief exultation of this experience down to our hunter instinct that years to see projectile sent to target, as it was when our very survival depended on a well executed launch of the spear towards quadruped. Sigmund Freud would probably have us believe it is all down to childhood sexual repression and back this peculiar theory up with references to our utilisation of equipment such as balls, shafts and holes etc.

Either way, of all sports, few can match golf in getting the participant to those levels of emotion that explore the boundaries of incontinence. I remember the birth of my son, Dexter, the heir to the McDivot estate (an Austin Montego estate to be precise). Complications set in and towards the end of the 12-hour ordeal there were four doctors and two midwives, each with worried looks on their faces, engaged in a tug of war exercise in an attempt to get the little blighter out. Now that was worrying, but I have to say the tension levels for me did not quite match that experienced when faced with a tricky down hill four foot left to righter for the 20 pence greener. Still I have to say, the elation of actually seeing the little lad pop out was at least equal to that of slotting a 12 footer, for a birdie on the last.

Of course I play little golf these days, due to Mrs McDivot's grave concern that it could lead to me experiencing temporary enjoyment, but I still fully understand the levels of emotion that the game can inflict on the innocent.

So there you have it. Conscientious, learned professionals that we are, we have little to fear as regards us swelling the Job Centre queues. Just study hard, engage in friendly banter with the members, blame the odd brown patch on a mutant nematode and never take a fortnight's holiday in June.

Sandy McDivot
Head Greenkeeper, Sludgecombe Pay and Play
Another much travelled month taking in Germany and Scotland and many points in between.

The German trip was to Dortmund as the guest of the German Greenkeepers Association at their annual Conference and Exhibition. As you would expect it was a superbly organised event with top quality speakers and instantaneous translation of the papers. Among those speakers was GCSAA Past President, Gerry Faubel. In fact I, although a member, was at the helm. It was a real pleasure to pay tribute to him as I always feel that with Claus he is so friendly that he makes me feel welcome even in my own country. But one point that was made was that there is a long way to go on the pitch because they didn’t think the turf was up to it. One point that was made was that they were still having problems with it because it is being stored too close to the stadium and shading was still a problem. We were lucky with the weather, as ever there was a wind to go on the pitch but because they didn’t think the pitch was up to it. Another point made was that the Bundesliga insist that the pitch is in place five days before a match. Having said all that it didn’t seem to bother Schalke as they beat Arsenal a couple of days after our visit in the first phase of the Champions’ League. The real reason for my visit was to speak on the occasion of Claus Detlef Ratjen’s retirement. As President of the German Greenkeepers Association, Claus is a wonderful fellow and a man who nurtured a vision of uniting greenkeepers throughout Europe. He worked unceasingly in this regard and was rewarded when FEGGA was formed in ’96. He was a guiding light behind the Federation and went on to become its Chairman. Greenkeepers throughout Europe have a lot to thank him for.

Although not a BIGGA Show it is an organised event with top quality speakers and instantaneous translation of the papers. Among those speakers was GCSAA Past President, Gerry Faubel. It was a real pleasure to pay tribute to him as I always feel that with Claus he is so friendly that he makes me feel welcome even in my own country.

Next year. Neater to home, those of you who know me well must be amazed that I’ve reached December before mentioning my beloved Sutton United, but one look at the Ryman’s League table will show you why. We’re not too good in the league and we’re out of both the FA Cup and the FA Trophy. As a Vice President of the Club I haven’t been able to get there as often as I should have been as BIGGA business has taken priority but perhaps with the season we are having that is just as well.

Even nearer to home, I thought I’d got away with it when the Gentlemen’s Dinner was cancelled earlier in the year but it came round again. We were lucky with the weather, as ever there was a good turnout and it seemed everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. I must confess that I’d been away on my travels and Mick Haynes and the rest of the team had prepared the course and I was delighted that Mick and the team were given due acknowledgement and appreciation for the great work they had done.

Still on the course it seems that the season just gets longer and longer as, as I write, we are still cutting fairways as least once a week and we’ve only just got underway on our winter programme.

It just leaves me to wish all BIGGA members and their families a Happy Christmas and a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

Clive Gosspodar, Chairman
Ironage Greenkeeper

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