Gidman elected as new EIGCA President

Simon Gidman, well known to many BIGGA members who have attended the Golf Design Courses he and Howard Swan have held regionally and at Harrogate, has been elected as the new President of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects at the first Annual General Meeting of the EIGCA. Peter Harradine was re-elected as Vice-President.

Following his election Simon immediately thanked outgoing President David Williams for his work and guidance since the inception of the new Institute. He paid special tribute to David's reorganisation of the Institute's Committee structure and his work on Continual Professional Development courses.

"It is a great honour to be elected as President of the EIGCA. I look forward to working to further develop the role of the Institute in the coming year within the golf industry and beyond. The next twelve months should be an exciting period for the EIGCA particularly with our intention to hold a conference in the autumn devoted to the planning of golf and real estate communities," he said.

He first entered golf course architecture with Hawtree in 1983 after studying Landscape Architecture at Leeds Polytechnic between 1979 and 1982 and prior to that having worked as a professional golfer for six years. In 1991 Simon set up his own golf course architecture company and has now designed more than 35 golf courses throughout Europe. He has served on the Committee of the EIGCA and before that the BIGCA for many years and has chaired the Institute's sub-committee investigating safety margins on golf courses.

Here's mud in your eye!

Assistant Greenkeeper Jamie Gill got more than he bargained for during a recent demonstration of the Terralift machine at Stowmarket Golf Club. Invited by Head Greenkeeper, Roger Eade, who has been with the club for 30 years, Terrain Aeration Services probed to a one metre depth using their Terralift aeration equipment and injected compressed air at 10 bar into an area of the fairway which slopes towards the river Rat. Although the blast lifted the turf for two to three metres around the probe hole, the surface settled and TAS moved the Terralift further down the slope.

"As the machine is capable of injecting air up to 20 bar, we decided to up the pressure," remembers TAS director, Lynda Green.

Here’s mud in your eye!
Leatherhead GC sign new Textron deal

Textron Golf and Turf has signed a three-year agreement with Leatherhead Golf Club in Surrey to supply a range of turf maintenance equipment from their Jacobsen and Ransomes brands.

Stewart McMillan, Leatherhead’s General Manager, is in the process of upgrading and improving the facilities at the members club that includes replacing their older turf maintenance equipment and installing fairway drainage in the next five years.

The first batch of equipment arrives shortly and includes an LF-3800 light fairway mower, two Greens King IV greens triples and a Frontline 728 ride-on rotary for the semi rough. Inclusive to the agreement is a package of operational and technical greenkeeper training programmes to ensure that we get the maximum benefit from the equipment.

Completing the package are two petrol-driven E-Z-GO golf cars.

“I’m delighted with this agreement between Textron and ourselves as it will ensure that we have the very best equipment to provide superior playing conditions for our members as we approach our centenary in 2003,” said Stewart.

Creating an instant park at the London Eye

Tillers Turf, took just one day to transform an area adjacent to the British Airways’ London Eye into a green landscape park. To complete the job on schedule turf was supplied by the company in 20sq metre big rolls to cover 2,000sq metres of prepared ground located in the shadow of the landmark “big wheel” on London’s South Bank.

The laying of the turf was sub-contracted by Tillers to Talbot Farm Landscapes and the main contractor for the job was Surrey firm, Waterers Landscapes.

As temperatures soared into the 80’s Tillers Turf Managing Director Tim Fell, was on hand to ensure that the turf was being well watered following laying.

“The park was to open to the public just three weeks later, so it was vital that the turf got off to the best possible start,” he explained.

Perryfields plans series of wild flower seminars

Due to the growing interest in native Wild Flower meadows, DLF-Perryfields are planning to hold a series of Wild Flower seminars throughout the year. They will cover the production, selection and management of native meadows. The seminars will be targeted at Architects, Landscapers, Contractors and Advisors.

DLF-Perryfields, the UK’s fastest growing Wild Flower seed specialist offer a superb range of Wild Flower Mixtures. Their catalogue is beautifully illustrated with colourful photography as well as a very comprehensive section on the management of Wild Flowers. Each mixture carries both common and Latin names for the flowers, colour of flowers, flowering period and growing height,” explains Derek Smith, Amenity Sales Manager.

The range of mixtures is suitable for amenity landscaping and habitat recreation.

Wild Flower seed is harvested from second generation plants which is derived from primary stock. This is collected from wild plant communities in the UK and this, together with new in-house production facilities, ensures improved seed quality of native origin.

Seed has been supplied for many of the UK’s most prestigious landscape and recreational projects, whether it is Wild Flowers for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link or Blue Water Shopping Centre. This has undoubtedly led the Pro Flora range to become ‘the professional choice’.

For more information about the seminars or to receive a catalogue please call Derek Smith on 01386 793135.

Open Championship comes back to Royal Troon for 2004

The 133rd Open Championship will be played at Royal Troon Golf Club in July 2004. This will be the eighth time that Royal Troon has hosted the Open and will come just over 80 years since Coombe Hill professional Arthur Havers won the first Championship to be played over the Ayrshire Links in 1923. He still remains the only European winner there. Justin Leonard was the last Royal Troon winner clinching the famous claret jug in 1997.

To E and not to B

Andrew Jeffery, who wrote the article “Under One Roof” in the April, works at Golf Club Eichenreid and not Bichenreid, as it appeared in the piece. Apologies for the error.
Demands for quality turf set to grow

Turf buyers, specifiers and installers are being urged to place orders sooner rather than later for quality seeded turf required for landscaping projects during the year.

The advice comes from the Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) which is forecasting shortages of cultivated turf, and higher prices, over the coming 12 months due to continuing delays in re-seeding caused by the wet weather experienced nationally since last September.

Returns from the TGA's members' survey carried out in December 2000 reveal that the total turf area sown by members last autumn was 20 per cent down on predictions made in the members' survey of June 2000 and 20 per cent down on the total area sown by TGA members in the autumn of 1999. "The optimism of last June's survey has been washed away by three months of autumn rain, the fuel blockades and, now, the foot and mouth crisis," commented TGA spokesman, Graeme Forbes.

"From reporting good business and good prospects in the summer of 2000, a number of turf growers have seen sales fall by 60 per cent. This was highlighted by last December's TGA survey in which a staggering 79 per cent of respondents described current trade as ranging from fair to very poor.

Whatever the weather!

A new computerised weather station is being employed by one of Sovereign Turf to help maintain consistently high production standards of their quality turf - whatever the weather.

"Information fed into the computer assesses rainfall and the irrigation required to maintain the correct moisture level for the grass," said Mac Bailey, General Manager at Sovereign.

"The weather station has made a dramatic difference as we can now predict the necessity for water up to 10 days ahead. The system only applies the correct amount, at the correct time, without any wastage."

This is the first year the system will be fully utilised, following successful trials last year. Linked to tensiometers - used to measure the amount of water in the ground - readings are taken every 15 minutes and the weather centre also takes into account wind and humidity.

Water levels were previously checked every other day by taking readings in the field and these were used to predict five days ahead.

New General Manager for C+P Soilcare

John Warren has been appointed General Manager of C & P Soilcare. John joins the company with a background in mechanical engineering and 18 years of senior management experience with local companies. He studied and qualified at Suffolk College and has since achieved incorporated engineer status with the Institute of Engineering. John, who is 40, lives at Haughley Green and is married with two sons.

Latest recruits graduate to EIGCA

Following their recent successful conclusion of the Professional Diploma course of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects, Miss Ljubica Jovicic (far left) and Richard Myers (left) now join the Institute as Graduates. Both were awarded Distinctions in the Graduation ceremony held in April in Surrey, England.

Myers, with a Landscape Design degree from University of Greenwich, London also gained the Barenbrug prize. Jovicic, a Croatian who has played golf for her country, and an engineering graduate from Zagreb University, becomes her nation's first qualified Golf Course Architect.
A very fishy tale indeed!

Carl Horrax, Course Manager at Salisbury and South Wilts GC found himself in the news in a most unexpected way last month when he was called upon to comment on the downpour of goldfish and koi carp which landed on the golf course.

Golfers took cover when it started raining and when the returned to their game the fairway was covered in the fish.

"It's not a particularly believable story but I drove over the area about ten minutes before I got the call and everything was fine then, so if it had been a prank I would have seen them," said Carl, who appeared in the local and national papers as well as on television and radio. It is thought that a mini whirlwind may have sucked up the fish from a garden pond and dumped them on the course.

Golf Course Solutions

Two well known faces in the industry have formed a new company covering course surveying, agronomy and golf course design.

Steve Jones MG, formerly the Superintendent at The London Club and Bill Farnham, who has been involved in golf course design for over 25 years and had an article on Global Positioning System survey work published in the May 2000 edition of Greenkeeper International have formed Golf Course Solutions.

"We are proud of the client base we have built up in such a short period, having providing our services to such clubs as, Sunningdale, Loch Lomond, The Oxfordshire, Chart Hills. GCS also offer a worldwide service, and we already have clients in Poland, Spain, France and USA," said Bill.

Based in Kent, the nucleus of the business is the survey work, using GPS at sub-centimetre accuracy, usually to within +/-10mm.

The two other main thrusts of the business are quite naturally Agronomy and Golf Course Design both of which tie in with our survey work.

"Having both come from a golf background, we fully appreciate the needs and requirements of the golf club and the Course Manager, we aim to give the client a tool to aid in the efficient and cost effective management of the golf course without sacrificing on quality," said Steve.

Remodelling work for Midland courses

Golf course architects, Gaunt & Marnoch, have recently started significant new remodelling work on existing golf courses in the Midlands.

From their Head Office base in Bakewell, Derbyshire, proposals for work on eight courses in the west Midlands and Cheshire are now underway. The courses vary considerably from vintage courses, such as Atherstone in Warwickshire, Trentham Park and Newcastle in Staffs, through to younger courses such as Brandon Wood, Coventry.

"Four of the courses in this batch are at least sixty-five years old and the oldest is well past its' first century. You can see some common problems, particularly with bunkers and drainage but, invariably there are specific issues like internal and external safety and the impact of new highways which affect an individual hole or part of the course," said Jonathan Gaunt.

According to co-director, Steve Marnoch, the expansion in remodelling work is not simply a response to the ageing process.

"Many of the new courses built in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's have raised the awareness of the golfing public to the high standard of facilities that can be offered at a reasonable cost. Today's British golfer is discerning, demanding and prepared to travel for good quality golf facilities. "Course remodelling can be crucial to the delivery of quality service and customer satisfaction. Linked to our skills as landscape architects, we are also improving golf courses by adding aesthetic interest and artistic flair, particularly in our planting proposals."
Royal Navy give praise for article on maintenance facilities

I write in my capacity as Chairman of the Management Committee of Southwick Park Naval Recreation Centre to thank you for the excellent article about our new Course Maintenance Centre in this month's Greenkeeper International. Several of us in the Centre worked hard to ensure that we achieved both the right conditions for our greenkeepers and a facility that would help us ensure that our most important asset, the course, could be properly looked after well into the new century. We are therefore delighted to receive such a ringing, professional endorsement of our efforts.

There is one point I would wish to clarify however. Your article mentions that the Navy provided £144,000 of funding for the project but in fact, Southwick Park receives no Public funding at all, depending on receipts from subs and green fees for its operating income. Two Naval Charities, the Sailors Fund and the Fleet Amenities Fund provided the £144,000. These charities largely funded the building of the course and facilities in 1976 and have nobly supported us since for larger projects where the Centre has been unable to raise the funding itself.

We are most grateful to these charities and their part in our success deserves proper mention.

Thank you again for the great article and I hope we will see you at our course again in the future.

Commander Roger Ireland, Royal Navy

Retirement for CGSA’s Vince Gillis

Vince Gillis Executive Director of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association of CGSA has announced his decision to retire early next year.

Vince said that as of November 1, 2001 he will have completed 12 years as the Association’s Executive Director and he felt that it was time to give up full-time employment and pursue his personal interests. He has been in association management since 1965. The latter 22 years he has served as Executive Director of three different organizations as well as Acting Secretary-General for an International organization.

He expressed his satisfaction with things that have been accomplished over the years by himself and CGSA and said that he considered it a privilege for him to serve the members of such a dedicated and professional group of people.

He indicated that he is prepared to assist in the orderly transition from himself to new leadership.

Help sought with medical query

Having been a member of BIGGA for a number of years, now retired, I thought that you might find this of interest. A month ago I had a blood test at the hospital which showed that my white cells were down and immune system in danger. I was told that the cause could well have been radiation or baryon.

Well, as a Royal Marine, I landed in Japan in 1945 and may have come into contact with radiation then but I also remember that the moss killer used on the greens contained baryon.

I know I used the moss killer quite a few times and am also aware that some of them were banned about that time because of what they contained. I wonder if any other greenkeepers have had any trouble of this nature.

John Forley, Dursley, Gloucs

lain Taylor to take early retirement

It is with mixed feelings that I bring you the news of Iain Taylor, of Powton, who is to retire early.

I would like to wish Iain all the best. Like many colleagues in the South West of Scotland, I will miss Iain, as he was one of the old school.

Iain was always patient, sympathetic and always available for advice. I will miss Iain’s advice greatly, and footlow is a harder place without him.

Wishing you all the best in the future,

Ian G McNab.

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Simply send an email to: updates@bigga.co.uk

quoting your name and Membership number, and we’ll do the rest - it’s that easy!