PUSH THE BOUNDARIES

If I were to list the names Michael Weir, Jim Furyk, Ben Curtis and Shaun Micheel what would they mean to you? Now I'm pretty sure the golfers among you will be able to say that they are the winners of golf's four majors in 2003, but you have to admit that it helps that the names are listed together and in order.

If the names had been thrown at you at the beginning of the year I'm sure you would have heard of Jim Furyk, he was after all, already a Ryder Cup player and you may have known Michael Weir, as he had won the 2000 American Express Championship at Valderrama and was one of a very small band of top quality left handers. However, I'd bet bucket loads that Ben Curtis and Shaun Micheel could have walked past you in the clubhouse without a second look. They probably still could!

Talking of betting it would be interesting to learn what a 10p accumulator would have reached on a successful prediction of the 2003 Major Winners. Having said that I don’t think you would have believed your crystal ball. Let's face it, no Tiger, Ernie, Phil, Vijay or Sergio, you’ve got to be kidding?

I'm equally sure that this time last year Ben and Shaun didn’t have “Win a Major Championship” as one of their goals for 2003.

And I suppose that should be a lesson to us all. We may not know what we are capable of and it may be that if we were to push ourselves forward and accept challenges we might not be found wanting. Holding back because we might fail or, worse, be found out, is a failing we succumb to all too often as unfortunately we seem to think it's better to have abstained than to have tried and failed.

I find with the magazine that often people with a great tale to tell are reluctant to put pen to paper or digit to keyboard. Don't be. If what you want to say is worth saying we’ll find a way of making it publishable. It's the same in other areas. Why not enter your club in the Environment Competition?

As part of the planned expansion programme into Europe, Hunter Grinders were exhibiting for the first time at the Elmia Park & Golf Show in Jonkoping, Sweden. The show proved one of the most successful events the company had attended and was an opportunity to introduce the range of Hunter Grinders to the Swedish market.

The enthusiasm for the Hunter Grinders was generated by the unique features of the machines which were designed specifically for the European market. The machines were shown to be robust and reliable, with a high quality finish and a low noise level. The visitors to the stand were impressed with the versatility of the machines and the ease of operation.

The Hunter Grinders were exhibited in a range of sizes to suit different applications, from small domestic use to large commercial sites. The machines were equipped with powerful engines and were able to cope with a variety of different grass types. The visitors were also impressed with the after-sales service offered by the company, which included a comprehensive warranty and a dedicated service team.

The success of the Hunter Grinders at the Elmia Park & Golf Show has led to an increase in sales in the Swedish market, with the company reporting a 20% increase in sales over the previous year. The company is now considering a further expansion into other European countries, with a focus on increasing its market share in the commercial and agricultural sectors.

Scott MacCallum, Editor
Hugh Marshall

BIGGA Life

Member Hugh Marshall has died after a short illness. He was 82.

As a Northern Committee man for many years Hugh was a staunch supporter of the Association and a regular in national BIGGA golf matches where he was often in the prizes.

In his retirement he returned north of the border to Ardossan where he remained until his death.

He leaves his wife Ann, daughter Fay, son Peter, a former greenkeeper at Moorallerton GC and now working in the trade, and four grandchildren; Craig, Scott, Ann and Elizabeth.

Grinding A Result

At a recent Bernhard’s demo day Jim McKenzie, Courses Manager of Celtic Manor and Stephen Bernhard joined forces to show the benefits of sharpening and promote non-contact cutting as the way forward.

“Before Mr Budding introduced the mower this is how all grass, including golf greens, was cut. Our concept is to sharpen the mower and set the blades with no-contact so they function like a scythe. Critically this ensures the grass is cleanly cut like a scalpel.”

Jim backed up this theory.

“Grass is a much better quality. On the agronomic side less damage is caused to the grass so it makes less demand for water and fertiliser. Importantly this makes the recovery process quicker.”

“Machinery-wise we are making huge savings as we need less spare parts for our mowers. With less mechanical stress there is a reduction in fuel, reduced engine wear and overheating hydraulics. This definitely saves my staff time and me money over the old method,” said Jim.

“Setting up the mower with contact is like driving a car with the hand brake on,” said Stephen.

“With metal rubbing on metal it is only a matter of time before the blades become dull and lose that critical sharp cut”.

“A contact set up means the blades drag the material across its surface, which has the effect of making the grass bleed. This makes the grass far more susceptible to disease, it requires more water and loses definition as it actually grows more rapidly to try and recover.”

Royal Inverdivot GC...

The course is looking the best i’ve seen it

What’s made the difference?

I’m in charge, the head green keepers on holiday!

Back in Europe

Barenbrug has appointed Gerard van Klooster as Product Development Manager for Europe.

For the last three years Gerard has been Research Director for Barenbrug USA, where he set up a testing facility and research department in Virginia. Previously he spent 10 years as head of the company’s Dutch research department. He will now be based at Barenbrug’s headquarters in the Netherlands, with responsibility for the process of innovation and product development of grass species, varieties and specific mixtures. He will also play an active role in the introduction of new products for the international market.

“I am delighted to be working for Barenbrug in Europe again, and to have an exciting new challenge of developing new products,” said Gerard.

“Developing new varieties is a fascinating process, and it’s so interesting to work with new species such as crested or tufted hairgrass. At Barenbrug we continually look at new species as they can help us to give the customer the solution to their problems,” said Gerard.

Commenting on the appointment, Barenbrug UK Managing Director, Paul Johnson said, “Having Gerard on board is an important addition to Barenbrug’s UK operation. The expertise and advice he can provide will help to continually improve the total package of services we offer to UK customers.”
PACE OF PLAY WORKSHOP

Slow play on the golf course is recognised as an issue facing golf course managers worldwide. A unique three day workshop has been developed at St Andrews Links to look at practical ways of improving the pace of play on the golf course.

As the largest public golf complex in the world with over 200,000 rounds of golf a year, the impact of pace of play presents a continual challenge. The Trust has taken successful measures in recent years to improve performance on the Links and has developed this workshop in order to share expertise.

The workshop is an opportunity to exchange experiences and look at practical solutions to improve the pace of play. Aimed at Course Managers and Directors, it is being held at St Andrews Links with involvement from the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in February 2004.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

Former rivals Imants and Redexim, two of the world's leading manufacturers of aeration and decompaction machinery, have announced a strategic marketing alliance.

The union brings together two companies with a vast wealth of knowledge and experience in the manufacture of specialist turf care equipment.

"We have been considering our strategy to target the world markets for some time now. Imants have been highly successful in Europe for many years, but we fully recognised our limited impact in the USA and the rest of the world. This joint marketing venture will give us immediate access to Redexim's worldwide dealer network and will enable us to pool our unrivalled experience in design and development of high quality turf machinery for the mutual benefit of both companies," said Felix Peters, Managing Director of Imants, based at Reusel in Holland.

The Imants rotary decompactors and the Rotoknife slitter/aerator will be marketed as own brand by Redexim, alongside the very well established and highly popular Verti-Drain aerator. However, Felix is quick to point out that the UK, Ireland, Holland and other well-established markets will be specifically excluded from the deal.

"Imants is a highly innovative and progressive company and therefore, direct contact through our own extensive dealership network is essential to us as many significant improvements and design changes are customer driven at Imants," he said.

Imants will continue to manufacture the rotary decompactors and Rotoknife at its manufacturing facility in Reusel. The machines will then be shipped to Redexim HQ in Zeist, Holland, for distribution to its dealers throughout the world.

Redexim already market a wide variety of machines on an international basis including Verti-Seed, Rapid Core, Turf Tidy and the Rink range of top dressers.

RUNNING MAN

Hot on the heels of Eric Barber's World Championship winning performances as featured in last month's magazine comes news of another feat of endurance.

Steve Suttle, Head Greenkeeper at North Foreland Golf Club in Kent, completed the London to Brighton Road Race in seven hours, 35 minutes and 49 seconds to finish 16th but missed out on a silver medal by a mere 49 seconds. It was the 10th time 45 year-old Steve has completed the 54.1 mile race with his best time coming in 1988 when he posted six hours, 42 minutes and 25 seconds while his best finishing position was 7th in 2001.

Any disappointment he felt in missing out in the medals disappeared however when the team scores were added up and it transpired that Steve's team, Thonet Roadrunners AC, had won the team trophy. The Len Hurst Belt is 100 years old and is the most prestigious trophy ever won by the club.

"It compares to a non league club winning the FA Cup," said Steve.

While the London to Brighton distance is the equivalent of two marathons Steve is also quite adept at the "shorter" marathon distance with a best time of two hours 46 minutes and 50 seconds while only last September he ran three hours, three minutes and 23 seconds.

WELSH RFU CHARITABLE TRUST GOLF DAY

South Wales Section's local Toro and Massey Ferguson distributor Ted Hopkins & Son contributed to the Welsh RFU Charitable Trust Golf Day which was held over the new Welsh National course at the Vale of Glamorgan Resort by sponsoring six teams of four people.

Pictured below is the winning team of Peter Lacey, Steve Mills, Tim Lawrence, AGCO, and Jamie Probert, receiving their first prize of golf bags from the Chairman of the Coors Brewing Company.

In the background (back left) is former Wales and Llanelli international, Rupert Moon.

The charity raises money for those people injured as a result of sporting activities and the day raised over £5000 for the cause.
ANY IDEA?

During the hot summer months a small number of lady members at Bridgnorth Golf Club in Shropshire contracted a severe rash on their legs - between their ankles and knees. This rash has proved to be particularly persistent and is still in evidence some two months after it first appeared.

"All the ladies in question wore long trousers - it was on one of the few rainy days in August. As far as we are aware only six ladies have been affected and we have no reports that any of the men have suffered a similar rash. Clearly chemicals/fertilisers are the first place to look but none had been used for a fortnight prior to this incident," said Gordon Kelsall, the Club Secretary.

"We wonder if any of your readers have had any similar experiences during the hot summer months. We would be very interested to hear from any clubs who have had similar problems," he said.

Gordon Kelsall, Hon. Secy, Bridgnorth GC, Stanley Lane, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4SF.

REAR OF THE YEAR

Chris Yeaman, Course Manager at West Linton Golf Club, near Edinburgh, is a popular man around town. Well he is with the older women, with whom he is now known as "Rear of the Year".

Chris made a starring appearance in the town's 'Calendar Boys' calendar - the male version of the famous WRI nude charity one which became the film Calendar Girls.

Appearing in all his glory, except for a pair of socks and golf shoes, in September, Chris is pictured tending the flag and his rear end has come in for some favourable comments from the townswomen. In fact he is regularly asked for his autograph.

The calendar, which features 50 West Linton males, is raising money for breast cancer and such has been its popularity Chris has appeared on GMTV in nothing but his birthday suit - fortunately shielded from full view - and interviewed by none other than Eamonn Holmes.

"The interest in the calendar has been amazing and we are delighted with how much money we've been able to raise," said Chris' wife, Carol, who added that the idea for the calendar had come before the famous WRI one had become known about.

PREPARING FOR 2006

The Royal Liverpool Golf Club (Hoylake) has signed an agreement with Toro to help prepare its famous links course for The Open in 2006 - 39 years after it last hosted the championship in 1967.

After assessing a number of different manufacturers, the club has signed a five-year deal with Toro that will see the company's turf maintenance machinery used exclusively in the run-up to The Open. All the club's course machinery will be replaced within two years.

"We have used some Toro in the past, but with The Open coming up we needed to find one manufacturer which could give us the best deal for both high-quality machinery and support. We took 12 months to assess Toro against other manufacturers and it came out top for ease of operation, maintenance, quality and value for money," said Links Manager, Derek Green.

The deal covers a wide range of equipment, including greens, tees and fairway mowers, as well as the Sidewinder units for sideways-shifting cutting units for surrounds and aprons and Workman utility vehicles.

As the second oldest golf club in England, the Royal Liverpool is a leading example of traditional golf at its best. The 18-hole championship links course on the Wirral, also home to the Amateur Championship, is eagerly looking forward to the 2006 Open.