

STUDENT RETURNS AS TEACHER



George Pitts at the Cannington Golf Course

George Pitts, a former top golf course management student at Cannington (Somerset), has recently returned to Bridgwater College's Cannington Centre for Land-based Studies to inspire future generations of students, as the new Programme Manager for Sports Turf and Greenkeeping.

George studied at Cannington between 1997-2000 for an HND in Golf Course Management, for which he received a Distinction – and awarded the Top Student prize, the BIGGA South West Cup, for his Dissertation.

He has been involved in the golf industry for 12 years, working at various golf courses including: St Mellion International – Cornwall; Pallazzo Arzaga Club - North Italy; Sherfield Oaks – Hampshire; Bovey Castle – Devon.

George said: "I'm very passionate about the golf industry and the quality of our courses in particular. I've enjoyed training employees and seen the benefits it can achieve not only to the sports surfaces but also to a persons self-esteem and confidence. I've made many contacts and many close friends within the Greenkeeping industry.

"At Bridgwater College's Cannington Centre, where we have a 9 hole, 18 tee links-like golf course, we are concentrating on promoting equal opportunities by offering courses to suit all situations. We are raising awareness in nearby schools by promoting sports turf careers. We invite industry professionals to contribute to our courses to ensure the courses are as industry specific as we can.

"We will also be offering a new NVQ Level 3 in Sports Turf, starting this September, which will be run in conjunction with BIGGA South West and BIGGA South Wales regions."

BUSHEY HALL GOLF CLUB

One of Hertfordshire's golfing gems, Bushey Hall GC, has just appointed Neil Fergie as the new Course Superintendent to take the course to new levels of excellence. Neil (37) who heralds from the home of golf, East Lothian in Scotland, brings to Bushey Hall 17 years of world-class expertise.

Neil's impressive international career includes five years working at Muirfield in Scotland – one of the world's most prestigious courses. Muirfield has hosted the Ryder Cup and 'many Open Championships. Neil was part of an eight-man team responsible for bringing the course to such a high standard that it could hold major tournaments at any time of year.

Neil has also worked as Greenkeeper and Superintendent on courses in Moscow, Russia and as far away as Trinidad and Tobago in the West Indies at Tobago Plantations Beach & Golf Resort. It was here that Neil was responsible for the overall management of 72 staff. During this time Tobago Plantations hosted the European PGA Seniors Classic Tours 2000 – 2005. This event was televised worldwide and the course was widely acknowledged as a first class championship golf course.



When asked about Bushey Hall Golf Club, Neil responded; "I initially visited Bushey Hall as a consultant, I was immediately impressed by its beauty and the extremely friendly atmosphere both on the course and in the clubhouse. I'm very proud and excited to be working at Bushey Hall. I'm very ambitious for the course; my goal is to make the course the best it has ever been and to be one of the best in Hertfordshire. In 1–2 years I would love the course to be ready to host tournaments for adults and juniors at amateur and professional levels.' Neil added, "my message to anyone in Hertfordshire interested in joining a golf club would be, come and join Bushey Hall Golf Club and be part of the English golfing paradise that's about to happen – watch the old become new."

NEW EIGCA PRESIDENT

Scottish course designer Ken Moodie has been elected President of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA), succeeding Mark Adam, who has held the position for the last three years. David Krause has taken over as Vice-President. Moodie said: "During my presidency, I'm especially keen to work on strengthening our relationships with the other professional bodies in the field, such as the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the Society of Australian Golf Course Architects (SAGCA). We are planning a joint world summit on golf course architecture in 2010, which will be a great opportunity to share our thoughts on the global development of the profession and the game of golf."

Education is a key part of EIGCA's remit, and Moodie is committed to strengthening the Institute's training programmes. "Our diploma course is continuing to grow, but we must keep improving it," he said. "We also plan to expand the areas of research we already support and carry out, including – learning more about the impact of club technology on course design – so that our members are better placed to design golf courses that will be playable long into the future."

Seven EIGCA members form the Council – the President, Ken Moodie, and six members, each of whom have responsibility for chairing a committee, as follows: David Krause, PR & Promotion; Thomas Himmel, Professional Development; Rainer Preissmann, Membership; Howard Swan, Education Board; Peter Fjallman, Finance; and Mike Wood, Environment.