It was the end of an era recently when the last G-Plex III ride-on greens mower rolled off the Ransomes Jacobsen production line at the Ipswich manufacturing facility. This was the 3,536th G-Plex built at Ipswich since production began in the UK, back in 1998. Previously at Ipswich since production began the last G-Plex III machine that has come down the line in the past 12 years was the first incarnation of this ever popular mower, the GP160, was built at the Cushman plant in Lincoln, Nebraska in the USA.

Dom La Bella, Team Leader on the G-Plex production line, who has been involved with every machine that has come down the line in the past 12 years commented: “To have produced over 3500 units is a great achievement, especially as around 40% are exported around the world with a majority going to the USA. I am very proud of the team that builds them and it’s a sad day to see a real stalwart of greens mowing disappear.”

“Mind you, we have now changed the line to take the new GP400, which is the replacement for the G-Plex and this is a machine that has taken all the best features of the old mower and added new, modern systems to provide better functionality and operator comfort. We’re confident that we’ll be producing just as many over the coming years.”

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End of an Era
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Dave’s a Pop Master

David Fellows, Head Greenkeeper at Costa Mio Woods GC, in Solihull, won the daily Pop Master Quiz on the Ken Bruce Show on Radio 2 on Tuesday December 7th.

Quiz nut, Dave, who specialises in music, science and nature and other "odd things", scored an impressive 30 out of 35, only missing out on two very obscure questions, to win his head to head, before successfully romping away. Who is your investor of the month with the teamworking closely with the club’s Head Greenskeeper, David Crawford. David commented: “Thomson Perrett & Lobbs are a natural choice for Royal Jersey Golf Club. Not only were they recommended to us and then, subsequently, gave us a very detailed proposal, but there were also sentimental reasons attached to the decision. It will be the first time in 35 years that an outside team of architects has studied the Royal Jersey layout. “One of the key aspects of TPL’s work will be to ensure the course is still a fair test of golf, particularly when you consider how advancements in equipment and golf ball technology over the past 10 years have significantly influenced how far all levels of player hit their shots.”

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Upgrade for Royal Jersey
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BIGGA SUPPORT TEAM
BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP
WENTWORTH, MAY 26-29
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Volunteers are required for the 2011 BIGGA Support Team at this year’s BMW PGA Championship at the Wentworth Club on the above dates. All or any one day would be greatly appreciated.

A great chance to see at close hand the extensive work that goes into the preparation for a major European Tour Golf Championship.

No accommodation is provided. For more information please contact Clive Osgood, Head Greenkeeper, David Crawford. For more information please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator. Tel 07941 948410 or 01737 819343.
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David Fellows, Head Greenkeeper at Costa’s Mead Woods GC, in Solihull, won the daily Pop Master Quiz on the Ken Bruce Show on Radio 2 on Tuesday December 7.

Quiz nut, Dave, who specialises in music, science and nature and other “weird things” scored an impressive 20 out of 20, only missing out on two very obscure questions, to win his head to head, before successfully running away. Who scored an impressive 20 out of 20, only missing out on two very obscure questions, to win his head to head, before successfully running away. Who scored?

2011 BIGGA Scottish Conference on March 1st


Tickets cost £35, which includes tea/coffee on arrival, tea/coffee and pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch. Full details and booking forms will be available and posted to members in Scotland and forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator. Tel 0141 616 3440 or email: pj.boyd@btinternet.com
Electric Gators Are Tried and Trusted

One of the National Trust’s flagship properties, Cliveden House in Buckinghamshire – once the family home of the Astors and later more famously associated with the Profumo affair – has a newly expanded fleet of John Deere TE electric-Gator utility vehicles, supplied by dealer Golf & Turf Equipment of Wokingham in Berkshire.

Use of electric vehicles is now particularly advocated across the Trust, because of their environmental advantages in reducing both noise and fuel consumption. The TE Gators are used every day by Cliveden House Head Gardener Andrew Mudge and his garden and estate maintenance teams, covering 80 acres of amenity grass and borders, as well as the catering department for moving supplies around the public outlets on site.

South East Region Conference

This year the South East Regional Conference was hosted by the Slazenger Section at Plumpton College, East Sussex. Section Chairman, Rob Hudson, introduced the invited speakers who covered a varied range of subjects on what proved an interesting and informative day, with some wide ranging and valid points being made during question time at the end of the day’s proceedings. Speakers on the day were David Blackman, Head of Horticulture, at Plumpton College; Jack McMillan MBE who gave us a fascinating insight into the recent changes on the West Course at Wentworth; Charles Henderson who introduced the STRI programme on organic matter management and Martin Waad, of Syngenta, on early and late season growth.

After a substantial lunch Simon Macsherry, from Sports, spoke on turf maintenance and disease control, followed by Kevin Half MGr who highlighted the attention to detail in the finer points that make the difference on a well presented golf course. MGD

At the close of the day the Chairman thanked all the speakers for their presentations. He also thanked members of the Trade for their support in events in the Region and Sections throughout the year, and the team at Plumpton College and sections who looked after us so well on the day.

Links Superintendent Leaves Trump Course

Paul O’Connor, appointed last year as Links Superintendent at the controversial Donald Trump golf course currently under construction, near Aberdeen, has left his job. Reports in local media suggest that Paul, who was previously at Carnoustie Links, was dismissed for refusing to be part of a ‘campaign of intimidation’ against people who had refused to sell their land to facilitate the project.

According to the press reports Paul refused to follow orders to build a huge mound of earth behind the home of one of the local residents. It is understood an employment tribunal is to meet.

Rebrand for Limagrain

Limagrain UK has re-branded its professional seeds portfolio as Symbio, reflecting the global nature of its parent company’s business. Heritage businesses such as Gardet, Nickerson and Sharpes ranges, the LG brand now encompasses cereals, maize, oilseed rape, peas and beans, vining peas, sugar beets, fagaceae, root and leg beans, together with environmental and conservation crops.

Limagrain UK is the local agricultural and amenity seeds operating company of Group Limagrain, an international co-operative group specialising in agricultural and horticultural seeds, plus retail products. Group Limagrain employs more than 6000 people: over 1,200 in research, has subsidiaries in 38 countries, sells in over 100 countries and has an annual turnover exceeding €3.5 billion. It is owned by its 3700 farmer members.

The company has a heritage of seedsmanship, combining more than 60 years of experience in many areas of the world, from the USA to Argentina.

Plugging a Hole in the Market

Jeremy Parkman, former greenkeeper and inventor of “Bunker Plug,” has been appointed Technical Sales Executive at MJ Abbott, providing a direct link between golf courses and the groundbreaking product.

“At this time of year, bunker maintenance is unquestionably one of the biggest headaches for Course Managers and Greens Staff and is often one of the most complained about areas of any course. Bunker Plug is an extremely efficient and very cost effective solution to the problem of flooding. Simple and efficient, quick and easy to fit with a host of other advantages, Bunker Plug is liked by Greens Staff because it eliminates pumping and associated problems, while improving playability,” said Jeremy, who was a greenkeeper at Dale Hill GC, in Kent, until recently.

With new attachments for surface drains and other problem areas on the course being launched at Harrogate Week 2011, Bunker Plug is proving more and more popular on courses around the U.K. and with plans to launch in Europe and the U.S.A., the future looks bright.

MJ Abbott, sole Distributors of Bunker Plug, say the innovative product deserves its place on any course.

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Seven members of the Club Managers Association of Europe (CMAE) have joined an elite band of individuals who have gained the Certified Club Managers (CCM) qualification.

The Club Managers passed the seven hour examination, which focuses on 10 key club management disciplines, including financial, leadership, facility and food and beverage management, to join just 15 CMAE members to achieve the qualification.

They are: David Cook CCM, Barhill Golf Club, Surrey; Tristan Hall CCM, Aldwickbury Park/Redbourn Golf Clubs, Hertfordshire; Andy Campbell CCM, Barassie Jacobsen Regional Manager Scotland and Ireland; Jim Callaghan CCM, Botshol Castle Golf Club, Glasgow; Padraic Flattery CCM, Athenry Golf Club, Galway; Christopher May CCM, Emirates/Dubai Creek Golf Clubs, Dubai, UAE; Mark Anderson CCM, Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, The Lansdowne Club, London.

The seven became the latest Club Managers to pass the CCM examination, a qualification recognised as the global industry benchmark. The CCM is open to suitably experienced managers who aim to become the best in their business and wish to develop their careers.

“Congratulations to those who achieved the highest recognition available in their profession,” said Jerry Kilby, CMAE Chief Executive.

“They are now one of 15 CMAE members who have achieved the qualification since its European launch in 2007, and join many of our colleagues in the USA and Canada, where the qualification has been established for many years.”

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Speakers on the day were David Blackman, Head of Horticulture, at Plumpton College, Jack McMillan MBE, who gave us a fascinating insight into the recent changes on the West Course at Wentworth; Charles Henderson who introduced the STRI programme on organic matter management and Martin Ward, of Martin Ward Machines, on ensuring early and late season growth.

After a substantial lunch Simon MacIntyre, from Sports, spoke on turf maintenance and disease control, followed by Kevin Ralfe MG who highlighted the attention to detail in the finer points that make the difference on a well presented golf course. At his end, the Chairman thanked all the speakers for their presentations. He also thanked members of the Trade for their support in events in the Region and Sections throughout the year, and the team at Plumpton College for the excellent day on offer us so well on the day.

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Asian Turf Seminar
Registration is now open for the March 14 to 16 Sustainable Turfgrass Management in Asia 2012 conference. Visit www.asianturfseminar.com for more details or download the PDF registration form here.

The first of the three-day conference is 8,000 TBH (about $265), including three lunches, two dinners, and the Asian Turfgrass Field Day. The educational program has been approved for 1.0 education points by GCSAA. Topics this year for the classroom and field day seminars include weed control, grass selection and management in Asia, and practical advice on improving turfgrass playing conditions. Hear from grass scientists such as Dr. Don Loch from Australia, Dr. Jim Brown from the University of Tennessee, Dr. Mitch Woods of the Asian Turfgrass Center, Philip Russell from The R&A, and a session of presentations from Thai superintendents.

This conference is presented by the Thai GCISA and Asian Turfgrass Forum for the Thailand Golf Association, with support from The R&A. www.asianturfseminar.com

Teeing Off for Health and Safety

Golf Course operators and employees are the latest from the local business community in County Durham to have benefited from a free health and safety awareness raising seminar.

The one-day, golf themed event took place at Chester-le-Street Golf Club. It was organised to help golf course employers and employees comply with their legal responsibilities relating to health and safety at work and help reduce accident and ill-health rates.

Organised by Durham County Council’s Saf and Occupational Health Team, the day concentrated on safety issues such as lone working and risk assessment, as well as practical demonstrations including safe use of green keeping vehicles and machinery, safe use of pesticides, safe-use of mobile machinery such as grass cutters and administering of First Aid. As well as council officers, demonstrations were delivered by representatives from the HSE, St. John’s Ambulance, Jon Allbutt Associates and Toro.

Shown above, Jon Allbutt participating in an outdoor workshop on vehicle safety which covered topics such as stability on slopes, vehicle safety features and using the right equipment for the job.

Dennis Mowers Focus on Grass Roots Groundsmen
Following on from a successful series of seminars in 2010, Dennis Mowers is now focusing its attention on the specific needs of Cricket groundsmen. Hosted by Uxbridge Cricket Club, in conjunction with Dennis and cricketworld.com, the specialist seminar will take place on Thursday, February 10 (9.30am registration).

The seminar will combine expert practical tips and information followed by an open forum. Hosted by Uxbridge Cricket Club, in conjunction with Dennis Mowers, along with a session of presentations from Thai superintendents.

This conference is presented by the Thai GCISA and Asian Turfgrass Forum for the Thailand Golf Association, with support from The R&A. www.asianturfseminar.com

UK & Ireland Golf Market Shrinks
A new golf industry survey has revealed a 4% decrease in the number of players in the UK and Ireland over the last year.

The survey reveals Europe’s golf market as a whole has experienced significant growth since the 1990s and the number of golfers has more than tripled in the last 25 years, with golf course supply doubling in the same period.

However, across Europe, while the number of registered players grew by 9% annually until 2005, KPMG’s research suggests that since then, demand growth has slowed down in the second half of the decade to 1% per year, and the current global economic pressures affecting many European countries have taken their toll, with nine countries suffering a decrease in participation over the past 12 months.

The report also recommends the need for more playful courses, six and nine hole developments, which will comfortably sit alongside championship-length courses to encourage new entrants to the game and offer affordable, accessible family-friendly services.

Turkey is highlighted as one of Europe’s success stories where a ‘Junior Golf League’ initiative has proved so popular over the past three years that more than 3,000 additional juniors have been registered.

The country now boasts a growing golf population, 51% of which are juniors.

Other highlights from the survey include:

• From 2000 – 2010, the number of golfers in England and Wales decreased (-63,800 and -14,500 respectively).

• In absolute terms, the leading countries in golf participation growth since 2001 were Germany (+256,000 = 74% growth), the Netherlands (+204,000 = 146% growth) and Spain (+187,000 = 124% growth).

Download the survey at www.golfbusinesscommunity.com

A New Concept in Raking

The Sandglider rake was conceived by Terry MacKay after his many frustrations with the standard of rakes on his frequent visits to bunkers on golf courses around the world. Rakes were often broken, bent, missing teeth and generally pretty awful. Being a design engineer and former owner of a precision engineering company, Terry decided to design a rake which would address all the problems he had encountered.

Almost five years later, SilverTree Products Limited is ready to launch Sandglider onto the market.

“T there are many advantages to the rake, in addition to its construction means years of useful life while retaining a pleasing appearance after exposure to all types of weather,” said Terry.

“It is easy to use and can be pushed or pulled to equal effect. Dry sand is effortlessly managed and the surface finish superior to a conventional rake. Heavy wet sand is always a problem for a flimsy rake but Sandglider copes,” he explained.

A final redesign of the rake head has virtually eliminated any build-up of sand in the coil and in any event a tap on the ground clears the build-up immediately. The surface finish on wet sand is superior to that of a conventional raked bunker. Having no teeth means Sandglider will not damage bunker membranes.

Sandglider will be priced much the same as any good quality rake available from reputable outlets, under £20 but with a longer lifespan.

For further info contact Terry MacKay on tmb@silvercoast.co.uk (Tel.+44 (0)1624 852183)

For more information, contact Scotts Professional on 019173 201106 email: profsales@scotts.com www.scottsprofessional.co.uk

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As a helpful assistant, I can answer questions based on the information provided in the document. If you have a specific question or need further assistance, feel free to ask!
The year 2010 was rather a momentous one for me - as it may have been for you. Some of you started the old year with a steady job and prospects, but unfortunately may not be starting the New Year in the same happy situation.

For many greenkeepers the old year was a year of change and adjustment; a year of difficult challenges but also, I hope, some welcome support.

I am grateful to my family, and my friends in the industry.

This past year I have cause to be very grateful to my wife and my two sons for their support. I am grateful also to my good friends in the industry, my fellow BIGGA Board members, the hard working BIGGA staff and all our wonderful volunteers.

I am particularly grateful to Minchinhampton Golf Club for permitting me to have a considerable amount of time away over the last two years, and of course I want to thank all my staff for their hard work and support in 2009 and 2010.

At the AGM in 2010 I spoke from the heart in my acceptance speech.

Looking back over 2010 I hope that I have been reasonably successful in framing another notion - that the Board is a clique made up of individuals with limited interest and aspirations of the rank and file BIGGA member.

If you have any doubts about the ambitions of Board members I just ask that you give us a fair chance to prove otherwise. This month, for example, sees the first Development Seminar for Assistant Managers until such time as a new CEO is appointed.

There will be a huge ‘farewell’ for John Pemberton at Harrogate 2011, and I hope members will take the opportunity to personally visit the Show to thank John for his contributions over the years. Keep an eye on the website for details.

The subject of Trade Shows continues to catch the eye.

The subject of Trade Shows continues to catch the eye of the industry.

Let me again assure you that the BIGGA Board continues to be at the very centre of discussions about the future of Harrogate Week.

I want you to focus on the things that will make a difference, and I am hoping my successor will allow me to support him in delivering a number of fronts going forward. Currently on my agenda:

1. Our relationships with our trade partners and other Associations.

2. Member engagement in our services, particularly through uptake of CPD.

3. Support for our volunteers.

4. The CEO Succession. A clear statement of the process.

5. Governance of the Association.

6. Re-alignment of the organisation.

7. Advancement of the greenkeeping profession.

So what is now happening in BIGGA House?

I suspect that many of our members will have concerns about staff changes at BIGGA HOUSE. Let me assure you that all of the hard working members of the HQ team and the Regional Administrators, are highly valued by the Board.

Indeed HQ staff are already making bigger contributions to Board meetings. In doing so they are enriching their contribution to BIGGA’s delivery of its mission.

Meanwhile, the CEO and Board are working very closely together to manage the transition period to ensure a smooth and comprehensive hand-over of the business. This is a very important phase which will require John’s full focus. To that end, Tracey Maddison (Currently Head of Membership Services) will take the role of Acting General Manager until such time as a new CEO is appointed.

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Continued on page 55

January 2011