Walter Woods – ‘more sand, Honeyman... more sand’

Memoirs of a greenkeeper!

In his own words

Walter Woods BEM is the most recognised greenkeeper in the world and his memoir is an opportunity to recount his reminiscences and thoughts to the profession both young and old.

Starting his working life down a coal mine Walter then worked at his home-town, Tillicoultry’s, golf club in the late 1950s where his hard work and ability as a county standard player brought him to wider attention. He moved to Bracken Golf Club in 1965 where he and wife, Caroline, worked on the course and in the clubhouse.

The family moved south to Stanton-on-the-Wolds GC in Nottinghamshire in 1968 before, a short time later, he was appointed Head Greenkeeper at Notts (Hollinwell) GC, a job he had coveted since he had arrived in England.

The chance spotting of an advert for a job of Links Superintendent at St Andrews created a dilemma for Walter but the lure of being formed in 1987 with Walter as the first Chairman.

In addition to Walter’s experiences of four Opens, and the myriad of other tournaments that he prepared the course for he also includes much of his own greenkeeping philosophy and many of his own anecdotes covering the period.

His last Open was in 1995, won by that golfing maverick, John Daly. Walter had asked to have a flag signed by the new Champion when he was taking part in a photo session by the Road Hole Bunker the following morning but was greeted by abuse when he made his request in person. In response Walter asked Daly and his entourage to move as far away from the area as possible. He never did get his flag signed. When he finally retired after 21 years as Head Greenkeeper at St Andrews for the rest of his days. A must read for anyone with an association with the great profession of greenkeeping, those who have had the privilege of knowing Walter can hear his voice as you read and there is much to learn, and much to raise a chuckle.

The production of the book owes much to the hard work of Walter himself, but also to Barry Beckett, of Toro, without whom the project would not have reached the successful conclusion that it has. The book will be included in the New BIGGA Members’ Welcome Pack for the next two years; it will be available on the BIGGA stand at BTME 2012 for anyone wishing a copy while Walter will also be available during the Show to sign copies.

Scott MacCallum

GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY 2011

The final of the Tacit Golf Management Trophy at The Mere Golf Resort and Spa, last month saw victory for The Players’ Club, in Bristol.

It was the culmination of a series of regional events held up and down the country which produced a great final. Teams from all over the country qualified for the inaugural Tacit sponsored Golf Management Trophy; these included: Umpminster; Blingley St Ives; Romford; Rothley Park; Gay Hill; The Players Club; Verulam; Bracken Down; Morriston; Newport; Test Valley and Liphook.

The format of the competition was a team comprising of greenkeeper, Club Captain, Secretary and Green Committee Member – fourball better half with two best scores counting.

The idea of the competition was to pay for prizes for the club rather than individual gain, with prizes as a momento of the day.

Regional rounds saw the winners going away with sets of embroidered flags for their course, while the final winners also took home an additional full set of pros and cups – a prize worth in excess of £2,000, as well as individual blackletter waterproof jackets and fleeces.

“We have enjoyed tremendously getting involved with BIGGA and the Golf Management Trophy,” said Tim Webb, Managing Director, at Tacit.

“This is a fantastic vehicle to promote the relationship between Greenkeepers and their Club Management. Relationships often forged on the golf course can then be more easily transferred to the boardroom or committee room making communications between Clubhouse and Course smoother and more beneficial in both directions,” he said.

“I know all of the clubs have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the regional events and then getting to the final.”

“We are really excited about we venues which we have been promised for next year and we will try and get a complete listing out by January, so clubs can see which venue would be ideal for them.”

Tactic is also trying to increase the coverage to give all clubs in Great Britain a chance to play. However, the entry will be limited to the venue capacity, so please get your entries in early if you wish to partake.

“I look forward to making new friends and meeting up with old ones over the forthcoming events. See you there,” added Tim.

Results: 1. The Players’ Club (Bristol) (-11) 131 - Andy Graham (Deputy Head Greenkeeper), Paul Heyburn (Hon Secretary), Terry Parsons (Captain), Peter Atkin (Vice Chairman); 2. Liphook (-9) 133 cpo; 3. Rothley Park (-9) 133 cpo; 4. Test Valley (-9) 133

The photo is of left to right: Jim Croxton, Andy Graham, Paul Heyburn, Terry Parsons, Peter Atkin, Tim Webb (MD Tacit), Jane Jones.

McMillan Tankard

The annual McMillan Tankard over Sunningdale was won by one of the house team greenkeepers, Tom Bremer. Played recently over the New Course at Sunningdale, Surrey Section members had the pleasure of playing the course – as always in fantastic condition thanks to Murray Long and his team, all with the added pleasure of the heather looking magnificent in full bloom.

Tom won on the day with a score of 37 points. Tony Bremer finished runner up with 35 points. He was presented with his Tankard by Jack and Rita McMillan, an hat been tradition for over 30 years.

Bunker Edger cuts your time

The Atom Bunker Edger from DJ Turfcare is the smart way to keep on top of bunker work. Time-saving and cost-effective, this tough machine is easy to use and maintain. Trusted by golf greenkeepers throughout the UK. Ask the turfcare experts. Call us today.

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The chance spotting of an advert for an opening at the Links GC in 1978, Walter set about immediately he set about the interview and in 1979 was offered the job of Head Greenkeeper at the Links.

It was the culmination of a series of regional events held up and down the country which created a dilemma for Walter but the lure of England.

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Walter then worked at his home greenkeepers in the worlds and his memoir is an opportunity to recount his reminiscences and thoughts to the profession both young and old.

Almost immediately he set about improving the education and motivation of four Links Trust staff, as well as his own communication skills, in a job which required the most effective approaches were adopted.

Walter prepared The Old Course for four Opens – 1978, 1984, 1990 and 1995 – and the book gives an insight into the behind the scenes activity at each of these.

As one of the prime movers behind the formation of BIGGA, Walter describes the background to this including the proposal and ultimate rejection of a move to join with the PGA.

Following discussions between Walter and Sir Michael Donalda, the Secretary of the R&A (now BIGGA President), the ground work towards forming a new Association, covering all of the UK and beyond was funded by the R&A and BIGGA Association, covering all of the UK and beyond was funded by the R&A and BIGGA.

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When he finally retired after 21 years as Links Superintendent he was bestowed the Freedom of the Links, allowing him to play golf at St Andrews for the rest of his days. A must read for anyone with an association with the great profession of greenkeeping, those who have had the privilege of knowing Walter can hear his voice as you read and there is much to learn, and much to raise a chuckle.

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The book will also be available on line to members for the cost of postage and packing.

Scott McCollum

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Results: 1. The Players Club (Bristol) — 313; 2. Andy Graham (Deputy Head Greenkeeper), Paul Heyburn (Hon Secretary), Terry Parsons (Captain), Peter Atkinson (Vice Chairman), 2. Tom Webb (MD Tacit), Tony McMillan, as has been tradition for over 30 years.

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Played recently over the New Course at Sunningdale. Surrey Section members had the pleasure of playing the course – as always in fantastic condition thanks to Murray Long and his team, all with the added pleasure of the Ryder Cup ambassador John Daly joining in.

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November is a bumper month for learning and development within BIGGA with four Regional Conferences taking place around the country. On November 16 the South East Conference takes place at Stockbrook Manor Golf Club, in Essex, with an exciting range of speakers covering a range of sports surfaces. Included in the programme are Darren Baldwin, from Tottenham Hotspur FC; Peter Craig, from Essex County Cricket Club, while golf is represented by Richard Whyman, Burnham Club Manager, Ashburnham Golf Club; Chris Haspell, Course Manager, Castle Stuart Golf Links and Mark Hunt, Technical Director, Headland Amenity Ltd are the principle speakers.

To alleviate any travel issues the Northern Region is holding two Conferences on consecutive days in two venues on either side of the Pennines.

The first will be held at Cookridge Hall GC, Leeds on November 29, with the second the following day at Bishworth GC, Manchester. Speakers for both include: Mark Hunt, Technical Director, Headland Amenity; Dr Keith Duff, Golf Environment Consultant, and Bob Hardy, Secretary, of Vale of Llangollen Golf Club.

Full details for all of the Conferences can be found on the Events Section of the BIGGA Website.

Be sure to take advantage!

Rolawn Restores Stonehenge

Rolawn's Medallion® turf has recently been laid around the ancient stone circle at Stonehenge, as part of its annual restoration programme. The installation was carried out by specialist contractor Parsons Landscapes Ltd.

Lloyds’ Paladin Mower, which holds a place of affection with many around the world, is celebrating 50 years in production.

The current range of Paladins, although very different to the original model, has kept loyal to the concept of simplicity and efficiency of operation and maintenance. Clive Nottingham, Managing Director of Lloyds and Co

Letchworth Ltd is delighted with the performance of the Paladin over the last 50 years.

“This is a machine which has always been highly rated by the end user. It invariably gives unprecedented performance for the professional looking for the perfect finish. Even in today's demanding sporting world where the expectations are extremely high, the Paladin always delivers on its promise.”

As a special landmark in 1977, Lloyds produced a totally silver Paladin in celebration of the Queen’s Silver Jubilee year. Manufactured from aluminium, the components were highly polished and all the other steel parts werechromium plated. It was presented to Her Majesty and was used at Balmoral Castle.

Eagle’s Fairway Markers...

...will enhance your course presentation.

Eagle’s range of posts, mowers and sprinkler head markers offers the complete distance measure solution.

Call us now on 01883 344 244 for prices and deals.
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Lastly, but certainly not least, thanks again to everybody involved.

Robert N Patterson

50 years Celebrations

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Gi NEWSDESK

Gi NEWSDESK
**GTC ANNOUCES NEW DATES**

The GTC, in association with the EGU is hosting three further workshops as part of a pilot programme to introduce Quality Assured short courses and workshops for golf club officials and managers.

The workshops are: November 9, Old Fold Manor Golf Club, Hertfordshire; November 17, Rotherham Golf Club, South Yorkshire; November 25, Rundridge Park Golf Club, Kent; January 26, Oakdale Golf Club, North Yorkshire; February 22, Cold Ashby Golf Club, Northamptonshire. Further dates still to be announced.

The GTC has engaged the services of Laurence Pilâtre, MG, and one of its Quality Assured Training Providers, to present these workshops. Comprehensive course notes will be given to all delegates attending the workshop. To view the programme visit www.gtc.co.uk.

**AGM Notice**

The Annual General Meeting of BIGGA will be held during Harrogate Week, Wednesday 25th to Friday 27th, in the Queen’s State at the Harrogate International Centre. All paperwork, including the agenda and proxy voting forms will be available on the BIGGA Website from December 20.

**Singing the Greens**

Paul Carella, an Assistant at The Richmond Club, in London, is making quite a splash as a singer and musician. From his first album, Outlaw, on an American radio show, HouseMlash, based in Texas, Paul has been singing seriously for two years playing pull rounds around London and has had two of his own songs from his first album, Outlaw, on an American radio show, HouseMlash, based in Texas.

I had two top 20 finishes out of the best 350 songs each year 2009 and 2010. These songs were called, A Letter For My Brother and Drifter. I also did a guest dj appearance on the show and I’ll be back on again next year,” said Paul, who also played at Guilfest this year, where Raoul Cauvin, Roger Daltrey and James Blunt were among the acts.

You can check out some of Paul’s original songs at www.myspace.com/paulcarella and keep up to date with his music at paulcarella-music on facebook.

**Norrie Whytock Trophy**

this year were the North Section St. Andrews Links. The winners Retired Member, and J. Watson, with a total of 103 pts was the George, Retired Member. Second class golf course.

Archie Dunn and his staff are to be till all the players were finished. and the good scoring continued of play, this did not hinder the field favourable and some excellent teams taking part, the weather at Golf Club recently.

The annual competition for the North Whytock Trophy took place at the usual venue Auchterarder Golf Club recently. With a full compliment of five teams taking part, the weather at the beginning of play was quite favourable and some excellent scoring was recorded. Although the weather deteriorated near the end of play, this did not hinder the field and the good scoring continued till all the players were finished. Archie Dunn and his staff are to be congratulated on producing a first class golf course.

The scoring was its usual high standard. In third place with 88 points was the West Section team comprised S. Taylor, Glasgow GC, D. Reid, Lenzie GC, S. Diamond, Loch Lomond, and C. George, Retired Member. Second with a total of 103 pts was the Central Section comprising P. Murphy, Downford GC, E. Small, Retired Member, and J. Watson, St. Andrews Links. The winners this year were the North Section with a total of 104 pts, team members R. Macrèe, Newmachar GC, J. McCormack, Kirkintilloch GC, R. Pirie, Newmachar GC and finally D. Middleton, Duddingston GC, who recorded the best individual score with 41 pts.

The team prize was accepted by Jim McCormack on behalf of the North Section from Kenny Liddell, Bayer’s representative in Scotland. Scottish Chairman Stuart Taylor thanked Kenny Liddell and Bayer for once again sponsoring this year’s tournament. The Association wishes to place on record their thanks to the Captain and Committee for the courtesy and facilities and to David Smith, Managing Secretary for his assistance.

Next year’s tournament will take place on 16 August, 2012. Peter J. Boyd

**Regional Administrator**


**Chairman’s Word**

**National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month**

*Well, winter is officially here, and already we have had a few frosts to contend with. When you read this, the clocks will have changed, and the daylight hours drastically reduced. Going to work in the dark, as usual, but coming home in it also, is not far away.

The changing seasons add variety to the job, and every year throws up something new for us to deal with. Last year was the prolonged snow and ice, what is it going to be this year? It’s good at this time of year to reflect on the season past, and learn from what went well, and what didn’t.*

In some ways in the UK we are fortunate with the climate we have to operate in, with less of the pests, diseases, temperature and drought extremes which they suffer elsewhere in the world. But it is not without its disadvantages. We do, on the whole, manage to produce decent playing surfaces for the majority of the year, some with more difficulty than others due to their soil types, drainage, resources, etc.

As the weather worsens the demand for play drops, thankfully, and there is a task to be done protecting the course from damage by spreading wear and protecting all the fragile and wetter areas. The skills demonstrated by our members in dealing with these challenging circumstances allow golfers to continue to enjoy golf in areas which would normally be prone to flood. However, we are not miracle workers, and as many of you will no doubt experience, there is a limit to what can be done. Many courses will experience very wet conditions, and extreme difficulty in doing anything about it.

Hopefully your members/owners will understand that you are doing everything with the resources they provide. It’s not easy, but communication to them at these times is crucial, backed up with evidence and information, so they understand what the limitations are. You can also propose solutions, again backed up with evidence, costs etc, which allow them to make the decision on further investment is worth while for what they desire.

These challenges are not new, and Greenkeepers have always had to deal with this, but it is becoming more difficult as golfers’ expectations now are much higher, even while we face this difficult economic climate. If you are uncertain about how to deal with such a situation, or need any help or advice, I’ll encourage you to seek support from your fellow members. Use the bulletin boards on the website, talk to other Head Greenkeepers nearby, and share your experiences.*

Congratulations to our new National Champion Jason Hunt, and to the other prize winners who took part in the National Championship at West Lancs. I was unable to attend to due other commitments, but I’m reliably informed it was a closely fought contest on a great course, and enjoyed by all.

Many thanks to John Muir and his team for their efforts, to the club for hosting the event and to the sponsors, Kubota and Charterhouse. Alas to our staff who helped organise the event so well.

As the weather worsens the demand for play drops, and there is a task to be done protecting the course from damage by spreading wear and protecting all the fragile and wetter areas.*

The CEO, Jim Croston, has been working hard with the team on the Strategic Review, and is starting to share his findings with the Board. This review cannot be done alone and we require the co-operation and assistance of the section committees. We shall be contacting them to help in this process.

If you look back at how the Association formed, it was by like minded individual members seeking out help and advice from colleagues, understanding that collectively they could achieve and learn more than in isolation.

In a similar way, we would like to ask the sections to support us in learning more about the members we have and how the sections are functioning. You will be doing your Association a great service by helping in any way you can with this work.*

As the Association has grown, and the workload increased, we have relied more heavily on the work of our employed staff. However, there are elements of being an Association which rely heavily upon you, your member - playing a part, which will make it stronger and of more benefit not only to you, but to every Greenkeeper.*

Please, if asked, do what you can to offer your help in greenkeeping career I’ve been fortunate to say that I have never had a Greenkeeper refuse me help. Not many professions would be able to say that, and that is why we are such a strong Association. I hope to see as many of you this year at Harrogate as possible. The Chief Executive and the Board will be presenting some of the plans for the future of your Association, based on the findings of the Strategic Review. It would be good to hear your initial feedback and any further views at that time. Meantime, please feel free to contact me or any Board member if you wish to discuss these matters further.

My best regards, Andrew Mellon 07778 955602 amellon@elmwood.ac.uk*

**Changing seasons**

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