The heat is on

The BIGGA National Championship 2012 is coming to Ayrshire. Are you up for the challenge?

Irvine Golf Club, Head Greenkeeper, Derek Wilson (right) talks to Jim Cook

Open Championship 2012 Review

BIGGA SUPPORT TEAM JOYOUS AT THE OPEN

All the news, pictures and stories from Royal Lytham & St Annes, inside

The Open at Royal Lytham & St Annes back in 2001

CONTINUE TO LEARN

Education Seminar and Workshops Revealed for BTME 2013

Also Featured Inside

Also Featured

ALSO INSIDE... DOUBLE THATCH FEATURE : AERATORS : BACK 9
Whether it’s the comfortable seat and smooth ride, the ease of maintenance and simple diagnostics, or the advanced controls and superior quality-of-cut, the LF550/570 series of light fairways mowers from Jacobsen offers so many parts to love.

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Open support

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The Open is a great opportunity to remind the golf industry of just how vital quality course management and the thousands of skilled practitioners who provide the excellent playing conditions are particularly bearing in mind the standards that modern golfers have come to expect.

Recently though we have spent too much time counseling and advising members facing redundancy at golf clubs that are undergoing financial hardship. The golf industry is not immune to the effects of the global recession but it is surely a false economy to place at risk the effective management of a facility’s prime asset – its course.

Deterioration in course condition, as we have read in previous editions, has a major downward impact on club revenue so golf clubs must attend event for next year for all course managers and head greenkeepers. Pencil Monday 21st January in to your diary now!

Enjoy the read.

JACOBSEN
LF550/570

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Deterioration in course condition, as we have read in previous editions, has a major downward impact on club revenue so golf clubs are placing their very existence in jeopardy by making skilled, educated, professional course managers and head greenkeepers redundant. Attending the Championship at Lytham provided the opportunity to make representation to many industry bodies that can attempt to influence decision makers at club level and I am delighted that our message was heard loud and clear and was well received. We continue to work hard with our various industry partners on this crucial issue.

As Andrew Mellon departs for warmer climes we welcome Tony Smith as BIGGA’s 25th Chairman and look forward to working closely with him and his Vice Chairman Chris Sealey to continue to implement the Board’s vision for the Association.

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Board Members
Peter Hughes, Kenny MacKay, George Barr, Chris Sealey, Gary Cunningham, Stuart Hughes, Arnold Phipps-Jones, Jeremy Greenwood, Keith MacKay, Sami Collins
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**Change at the top for BIGGA**

New BIGGA chairman Tony Smith officially took the reins from outgoing Andrew Mellon on the first afternoon of the Open Championships.

Andrew Mellon, who is departing to become general manager of Hydroturf in Qatar, handed the badge to current vice-chairman Tony Smith, of Teesside Golf club, who has been a member of the Board of Management since 2007.

Tony thanked the now ex-chairman for his terrific efforts during his tenure, adding “I hope to keep the flag flying for the Association.”

Andrew said: “The members are the strength of the Association. The work you do can’t be underestimated – without you there wouldn’t be any golf courses. We’ve got a fantastic, diverse and passionate team and wish you all the best for the future.”

The Board have formally elected Chippenham Golf Club’s Chris Sealey, who has been the Board Member representative of the South West and South Wales Region for four years, to be Vice Chairman in support of Tony Smith.

Earl of Bath Regional Director for the South West and South Wales Region for four years, to be Vice Chairman in support of Tony Smith. Chris (right) is delighted with his appointment.

**A Technical Move for BIGGA L&D**

As the focus of BIGGA continues to be on developing the Learning and Development pathway for members it has moved to strengthen the L&D Department.

Stuart Green, formerly of Askham Bryan College, has joined as L&D Executive. He joins long serving L&D Manager, Sami Collins and L&D Executive, Rachael Duffy.

Stuart brings a wealth of technical greenkeeping knowledge alongside his valuable experience within the greenkeeper education system having had more than eight years service as a greenkeeper including time at Gleneagles and Hushley Hall Golf Club.

“Tou’re really looking forward to working for BIGGA,” says Stuart.

“Education is fundamental to the professional standing of greenkeepers and BIGGA is at the forefront of delivering and supporting its members.

“This is where I want to be.”

**A Hole in Honour**

As reported in last month’s Greenkeeper International, Carnoustie Golf Links has made the momentous decision to honour the work of John Philip MBE, recently retired Links Superintendent, by naming a hole in his honour.

On Friday 29 June the 383 yard par four 11th hole on the Championship Course, host to seven Open Championships, was officially renamed John Philip. The 11th hole was chosen as it is close to the Greenkeepers’ Maintenance Facility, the nerve centre of John’s operation for the past 27 years.

Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee chairman Gordon Wilson said: “I think everybody knows how important John has been for Carnoustie and bringing The Open back here.”

He also highlighted the role played by the links staff. John said: “I accept this tremendous honour on behalf of everybody on my team, because at the end of the day it is a team effort, and I am just a team leader.

“That is what has made it all possible, along with the investment of the management committee over the years.”

He was a spectator during the 1968 Open at Carnoustie, and explained he had no idea where his love of golf would lead him. He said: “Lotte did I know when I came here in 1968 to the Open Championship to watch Gary Player in the final round that I would end up here.

“It’s been a great privilege and pleasure working at Carnoustie, just as I did at St Andrews.

“Have a great many happy memories from my career and a lot of them are from here in Carnoustie.”

**BIGGA Member hits the headlines in Local US Newspaper**

International member, Sean Sullivan, golf course superintendent at Billings Country Club in Montana, north USA, was featured ahead his involvement in the BIGGA Open Support Team this July.

The coverage shows the interest that being part of this prestigious event can generate, and one of the many rewards being a BIGGA member can bring.

Congratulations to Sean for making his local media aware of his involvement, and of the contribution from the entire BIGGA support team.

A full review of the Open, from Royal Lytham & St Annes, featuring photographs and quotes from the support team, is on pages 12-17.
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BIGGA Announce Seminar Programme for SALTEX 2012

BIGGA is delighted to have once again, been invited by the IOG to present a series of seminars at SALTEX 2012, from The Grandstand, Royal Windsor Race Course, on Wednesday 5 September 2012.

The line-up is as follows:

10.15 am – 11.15 pm: Managing Winter Kill, David Cole, Golf Course/ Estate Manager, Loch Lomond Golf Club

In the winter of 2009/10 the greens at Loch Lomond suffered from devastating winter kill. This session will give an insight to the damage that occurred and the precautions that were taken in 2010/11 to prevent similar problems.

11.30 am – 12.30 pm: From Grazing to Scottish Open Status in Five Years: Chris Haspell, Course Manager at Castle Stuart Golf Club

In this session Chris will discuss his experiences of building a links golf course and it's grow in. He will also describe the journey towards the Scottish Open 2011, the event, the rain and the recovery.

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm: Organic Matter – Friend or Foe, Paul Lowe, Technical Sales Manager, Syngenta

Measuring organic matter levels is becoming very popular, almost an industry standard procedure. This information can be invaluable to greenkeepers and grounds men.

However, how do we decipher between thatch and organic matter and why it is important to do so. This seminar will discuss the various differences between problematic thatch and beneficial organic matter, the problems with working to a figure, the difference between drainage and percolation rates and how you can turn the thatch to your advantage.

BIGGA CPD Credits - 0.5 CPD credits are available for each seminar. A CPD register will be available at the end of each seminar.

ONCE AROUND THE PARK AND HOME, JAMES!

A popular course in Somerset, managed by BIGGA member, James Williams, has bought two new Toro greensmowers to help maintain its 18 hole golf course.

After a competitive demonstration to James, Oake Manor Golf Club in Taunton invested in a Greensmaster TriFlex Hybrid 3420 riding greensmower and a Greensmaster 1000 pedestrian greensmower.

TriFlex is one of Toro’s newest innovations, with its all-electric cylinder drive system – virtually eliminating hydraulic leaks – particularly appealing to James.

“Our greens are the most important thing to us,” he says, “so we don’t want to jeopardise them by risking hydraulic leaks. We felt we could use the TriFlex on the greens with confidence, making it a better investment for us than a hydraulic machine.”

And having invested in the very latest greens-mowing technology, thanks is appreciative of Toro’s commitment to building the TriFlex from the ground up and incorporating customer feedback.

“Toro have built their machines with the likes of us in mind. They listen to feedback from the people who are out on the course every day and have then created brilliant products that are comfortable and easy to use.”

But whether he’s using the newest model or a popular classic like the Greensmaster 1000 – another new addition – it’s the whole life cost and long-term retention of his fleets’ value that keeps James coming back to Toro.

“The robustness of a Toro is second to none,” he adds. “Whenever I renew my machinery I get demos from the top manufacturers, but Toro has always been a leader of the pack.”

The informative day was topped off by an excellent evening of hospitality from Everris, Jacobsen and Syngenta allowing all attendees the opportunity to meet and network with their peers and key players within the industry.
Turf Science goes Live!

Turf Science Live, held at De Vere Carden Park in Cheshire last month (3-4 July 2012), provided a practical, hands-on, go-to guide into some of the latest technologies and pioneering future developments geared to managing sports turf and enhancing the playing experience for users.

Organised by Everris, Jacobsen and Syngenta, the event focussed on exploiting the potential of integrating all facets of turf management.

Syngenta Turf & Landscape Manager, Simon Elsworth, said: “Turf Science Live brings together three like-minded companies, where investment in research and development is integral to the creation of effective and efficient new products, along with the knowledge to put them into practice.”

104 Course Managers and Groundsmen from across the country attended the event, experiencing seven showcase presentations and picking up 2.25 BIGGA CPD credits in the process: • Turf Application on Target • Wetting Agent Technology Unravelled • Where did my Nutrients Go? • Innovation in NPK • True Measure of Reliability • Integration in Action – an integrated turf management approach to improve plant health and reduce disease

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Faster operation with great quality results from the Verti-Drain 7215 is getting the thumbs-up at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club.

The fifth oldest club in England, the 27 hole complex near the major port of Felixstowe, Suffolk features the 18-hole undulating Martello Course, a 6379 yard Par 72 next to the sea with stunning views over the East Anglian coast and Deben River.

The nine-hole Kingsfield course of 2986 yards Par 35 is available for Pay and Play visitors, offering views across the River Deben and marshes and is as challenging as the Martello course, having two Par 5 holes.

The course is currently being returned to its original links condition, with firming up the greens an important task.

Head Greenkeeper Glen Bayfield explains: “We had a 7316 Verti-Drain for 13 years which was an excellent machine, but when it came up for renewal I was looking for a quicker operation, so the 7215 is ideal. Depending on the size of the time used, we can save 2-4 hours on 18 holes.”

He adds that the 1.3m working width 7215 can be used with a variety of tines from 10-22mm diameter, which he rotates throughout the year to achieve the optimum shattering effect, getting air into the turf and creating fissures which get water away and keep greens in play in the wettest of conditions.

“The extra speed makes a big difference, but the Verti-Drain can still work to 25cm (10in) deep and produce a really good quality, consistent hole, which other high-speed machines can’t achieve,” he comments. “It is also very competitively priced.”

Glen praises the build quality of the Verti-Drain, adding that he finds parts easily available and the machine simple to maintain.

“I would expect to get at least 10 years out of this machine – we will work it a bit harder than the previous Verti-Drain which is still going strong and has been kept as a back-up,” he says.

Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club has also enjoyed an excellent relationship with local dealer Tomlinsons. “Alan Brown and his team have been fantastic, so it was an obvious choice to have another Verti-Drain supplied by them – they have always given us good support in the event of a problem or query.

“The Verti-Drain is a simple and effective machine – it does exactly what it says on the tin.”

Calling all BIGGA Members

Have you changed any of your contact details since you last gave them to us? If so, please get in touch with us at BIGGA membership@bigga.co.uk

Contact details can include your email address, phone number, change of address, change of club, etc.

Thanks in advance, for keeping us up to date.

Precision Cutting For Greens

Two experienced BIGGA members in charge at contrasting golf courses in Essex have invested in new John Deere machines introduced specifically to meet the demand from UK greenkeepers for faster, more accurate adjustment on their walk-behind greens mowers.

Arnold Phillips-Jones, BIGGA South East Region Board Director, and course manager at Three Rivers Golf and Country Club, bought three of John Deere’s new 2308 hybrid electric mowers for the greens on the club’s Kings and Jubilee courses, having first seen them at the HTME 2012 - The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition.

The Kings is a near 50-year old course with push-up soil greens, while the Jubilee was built just 12 years ago with sandy USGA specification greens.

The idea was to switch to alternating between ride-on 2500A triplex mowers and hand mowing on all 36 greens. “A five-minute demo from the dealer was all we needed, and all the staff can do it very easily now.”

“The mowers are exceptionally precise,” he adds. Arnold handmows once a week – it’s nearly always on a Friday, as he believes it’s important that the greens look their best at the weekend. All six full-time greenkeepers, including Arnold, have to do six greens each. It’s ‘job done’ for each of them in less than two hours.

He says he and his team of six full-time plus two part-time greenkeepers can cut 15 or 16 greens on a single tank of fuel. Just 30 miles away at Colne Valley Golf Club, owner Tom Smith took delivery this spring of three new John Deere 2205L walk-behind greens mowers (shown above). Tom, BIGGA South East Regional Chairman, has been a greenkeeper for 20 years, and before moving into ownership worked on the course at Merritt Wood College.

Since he bought the proprietary club 11 years ago, it had been his practice to hand cut the greens.

John Deere’s previous 220C models had done the job well for the last five, but it was time to upgrade and Tom also made his choice at HTME 2012.

“The C Series mowers had done a great job for us and the new 2308s give us useful refinements,” says Tom.

“I like the challenge of setting up the whole course, but the greens are the icing on the cake,” he adds. “Nothing makes you feel better as a greenkeeper than when a player compliments you on the state of your greens.”

Glen Gives Verti-Drain the Seal of Approval

Last month’s preview of The Open Championship at Royal Lytham & St Annes, was written by Head Greenkeeper, Paul Smith. The splendid photograph which accompanied it was provided by BIGGA Affiliate Member, Alan Birch.

Unfortunately, due to an error on our behalf, Alan was not captioned within the piece. GI wishes to apologise to Alan and thank him for his contribution, and for the many other occasions he supplies BIGGA with complimentary photography.
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He adds that the 1.5m working width 7215 can be used with a variety of tines from 10-22mm diameter, which he rotates throughout the year to achieve the optimum shattering effect, getting air into the turf and creating fissures which get water away and keep greens in play in the wettest of conditions.

“The extra speed makes a big difference, but the Verti-Drain can still work to 25cm (10in) deep and produce a really good quality, consistent hole, which other high speed machines can’t achieve,” he comments. “It is also very competitively priced.”

Glen praises the build quality of the Verti-Drain, adding that he finds parts easily available and the machine simple to maintain.

“I would expect to get at least 10 years out of this machine - we will work it a bit harder than the previous Verti-Drain which is still going strong and has been kept as a back-up,” he says.

Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club has also enjoyed an excellent relationship with local dealer Tomlinsons.

“Adrian Brown and his team have been fantastic, so it was an obvious choice to have another Verti-Drain supplied by them – they have always given us good support in the event of a problem or query.”

“The Verti-Drain is a simple and effective machine – it does exactly what it says on the tin.”

Precision Cutting For Greens

Two experienced BIGGA members in charge at contrasting golf courses in Essex have invested in new John Deer machines introduced specifically to meet the demand from UK greenkeepers for faster, more accurate adjustment on their walk-behind greens mowers.

Arnold Phillips-Jones, BIGGA South East Region Board Director, and course manager at Three Rivers Golf and Country Club, bought three of John Deere’s new 220E hybrid electric mowers for the greens on the club’s Kings and Jubilee courses, having first seen them at the HTME 2012 - The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition.

The Kings is a near 50-year old course with push-up soil greens, while the Jubilee was built just 12 years ago with sandy USGA specification greens.

The idea was to switch to alternating between ride-on 2500A triplex mowers and hand mowing on all 36 greens.

“A five-minute demo from the dealer was all we needed, and all the staff can do it very easily now. “The mowers are exceptionally precise,” he adds.

Arnold handmows once a week – it’s nearly always on a Friday, as he believes it’s important that the greens look their best at the weekend. All six full-time greenkeepers, including Arnold, have to do six greens each. It’s ‘job done’ for each of them in less than two hours.

He says he and his team of six full-time plus two part-time greenkeepers can cut 15 or 16 greens on a single tank of fuel. Just 30 miles away at Colne Valley Golf Club, owner Tom Smith took delivery this spring of three new John Deere 2208L walk-behind greens mowers (shown above). Tom, BIGGA South East Regional Chairman, has been a greenkeeper for 20 years, and before moving into ownership worked on the course at Merritt Wood College.

Since he bought the proprietary club 11 years ago, it had been his practice to hand cut the greens.

John Deere’s previous 220C models had done the job well for the last five, but it was time to upgrade and Tom also made his choice at HTME 2012.

“The C Series mowers had done a great job for us and the new 220Es give us useful refinements,” says Tom.

“I like the challenge of setting up the whole course, but the greens are the icing on the cake,” he adds. “Nothing makes you feel better as a greenkeeper than when a player compliments you on the state of your greens.”

Celebrations at the Wentworth Club

Chris Kennedy’s retirement was marked by a glittering evening in the Wentworth Club’s Ballroom attended by hundreds of colleagues, suppliers, members and friends.

A number of tributes from amongst others the Wentworth owner, Richard Caring, Chris gave a moving speech in which he thanked many people who had assisted him along the way including some of his mentors from the greenkeeping fraternity.

Pictured from left: Chris Kennedy and his partner Jill, Rita and Jack McMillan, Brenda and George Brown.

An Open Return

Last month’s preview of The Open Championship at Royal Lytham & St Annes, was written by Head Greenkeeper, Paul Smith. The splendid photography which accompanied it was provided by BIGGA Affiliate Member, Alan Birch.

Unfortunately, due to an error on our behalf, Alan was not captured within the piece. GI wishes to apologise to Alan and thank him for his contribution, and for the many other occasions he supplies BIGGA with complimentary photography.
It is an absolute honour and a privilege to have been elected by the Board of Management to the role of Chairman of this great Association. I have been a greenkeeper for 48 years and an active member of BIGGA from its inception, at Section (Cleveland), Region (North) and Board levels.

I arrived at Royal Lytham St Annes Golf Club for the recent Open Championship as a member of the Support Team and minibus driver and left as Chairman. Pretty good promotion!

I have, of course, been Vice Chairman for the last eighteen months during which time Andrew Melko has given an enormous amount of time and expertise to the Association – for ever and above what any of us could have expected. He has guided us through some very stormy waters to such an extent that the general feeling of both staff and members is now one of optimism and excitement, looking forward to the future. Andrew will be a difficult act to follow and I know I speak for all of you in wishing him all the best in his new career overseas. He will be welcome to return at any time and will be sorely missed, not only by myself but also by the members, headquarters staff and his colleagues at Elmwood College and the Regions.

When I began my career at Abbeydale Golf Club in Sheffield I never thought I would have the opportunity to serve in this role. I have the flexibility to fully commit to the Association with distinction for many years. It was great to have the opportunity to recognise both gentlemen for the important roles they have played and I wish them well in their retirement.

I am also fortunate that my personal circumstances, my wife Lesma and I have two grown up children who have given us three fantastic grandchildren, mean that I have the flexibility to fully commit to the role. Our social life including our passion for amateur dramatics may have to take a little bit of a back seat for the next year and a half though!

I am grateful that my employers are fully supportive of this opportunity and I would like to thank Gary Evans, the head greenkeeper, and the whole Tesseide team in advance for all their hard work. The Open Championship itself was fantastic, with the on site team, led brilliantly by Paul Smith, presenting the course in magnificent condition despite appalling weather conditions. I had the privilege of being part of the early morning set up team on the Tuesday and Wednesday and witnessed first hand the extraordinary attention to detail and hard work the team put in. It was also great to see the BIGGA Open Support Team once again do a first class job, it is humbling to witness so many BIGGA members take time out of their busy lives to play a part in the Open Championship, well done guys, you did the Association proud once again. I also like to congratulate Tracey, Rachael, Sandra and John on the excellent administration of the team before and during the event.

During the week there was a presentation made to the recently retired Regional Administrators, Peter Latre (Northern) / Midlands Regions and Peter Boyd (Scottish Region) who both served the Association with distinction for many years. It was great to have the opportunity to recognise both gentlemen for the important roles they have played and I wish them well in their retirement.

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As BIGGA moves forward it is vital that we continue to react to the needs of the industry and our members. I wish every member good fortune as we continue to react to the needs of the industry and our members. I wish every member good fortune as we continue to react to the needs of the industry and our members.

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I wish you all a fantastic 2013 and the very best for the future.

Tony Smith, BIGGA National Chairman
tony.smith48@ntlworld.com
Chairman’s Word

A welcome from newly appointed BIGGA National Chairman, Tony Smith

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When I began my career at Abbeydale Golf Club in Sheffield I never thought I would have an opportunity such as this to serve the profession of greenkeeping and I intend to work tirelessly along with my fellow Board of Management members, Jim Croston and our dedicated team at BIGGA House and in the Regions.

My job at Teeside Golf Club, where I have been Course Manager for 32 years, will allow me to dedicate sufficient time to be an active and involved Chairman and I am very much looking forward to attending many BIGGA events and meeting as many of our members as I can. The golf industry is facing a difficult time and many of our members are coming under sometimes intolerable pressure as golf clubs deal with declining revenues. The Association must play a strong part in supporting those members whilst continuing to work with other industry stakeholders to remind them that no golf business can thrive without a well maintained and managed course.

I am also fortunate that my personal circumstances, my wife Lesa and I have two grown up children who have given us three fantastic grandchildren, mean that I have the flexibility to fully commit to the role. Our social life including our passion for amateur dramatics may have to take a little bit of a back seat for the next year and a half though!

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Beawor Lakes Golf Club GEO Certified™

Regarded as an “outstanding natural woodland refuge just outside London,” and one of the finest inland courses to be built in Britain in the past twenty years, Beawor Lakes has added another important accolade – recently being awarded GEO Certified™, golf’s international ecolabel signalling comprehensive commitment and achievement around sustainability.

The 18-hole golf course in Berkshire meanders through a backdrop of beech, oak, pine and beech trees and three open lakes that were originally part of Windsor Great Park and part of the hunting grounds of the Kings of England since the 11th century.

The original design by Gil Hockley under the direction of Martin Hawtree retained much of the original landform, using tree coverage and nature of the area as a unique backdrop to the course that rolls around the Beawor estate.

Managing Director, Carl Robertson added, “We have integrated sustainability into our decision-making from every day- time operations and members is now one of optimism and excitement, looking forward to the future. Andrew will be a difficult act to follow and I know I speak for all of you in wishing him all the best in his new career overseas. He will be welcome to return at any time and will be sorely missed, not only by myself but also by the members, headquarters staff and his colleagues at Elmwood College and Golf Club.

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GEO Certification

Grass Agromics

...the missing piece that makes all the difference

NUTRITION | HEALTH | MANAGEMENT

Fertilisers | Wetting Agents | Biostimulants | Pesticides | Adjuvants & Spraying Aids

Bearwood Lakes Golf Club GEO Certified™
Last month, I headed off to interview candidates for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award. Following my whirlwind trip of the country, where I took in St Albans, Tonbridge, Bristol, York, Stoke on Trent and Perth, we selected six candidates to go forward to the National Final taking place at BIGGA House on 16 and 17 September.

The finalists are:

- Aaron Launchbury from North Herts GC
- Neil Ivamy from Trevose Golf & Country Club
- Peter Thompson from Sunningdale Golf Club
- Jane Jones; Sandra Raper; John Pike;

The workshop programme will also feature many of our very successful workshops and presenters including:

- The Open Championships 2012 – Thank you to the BIGGA Open Support Team

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Greenkeeper Liaison Role:
- Richard Whyman, Burnham and Berrow GC

First tee representatives:
- Richard Whyman (as above)
- Paul Jenkins, Westcliff GC

Team leaders and mini bus drivers:
- Kevan Glass, Brokenhurst Manor GC; John Kennaugh, Chippenham GC; Billy Merritt, Beacon Park GC; Richard Saundersons, Mowsbury GC; John Wells, South Herts GC

Support Team:
- Darren Atkins, Royal Norwich GC; Jane Merton, Worthing GC
- Geoff Broadhead, Shaplestone Golf Centre; Robert Bemment, Immingham GC;
- Beverly Blair, Southwark Park GC; Graham Bhum, The Orang GC (Australia); Robert Bramwell, The Westwold Club; Jason Brooks, Torquay GC; Mark Brooks, Sunningdale GC; Allan Donlevy, Ashton-in-Makerfield; Aas English, Rothley Park GC; Simon Forsyth, Jack’s Point (New Zealand); John France, Furthlicher GC Bad Waldsee (Germany);
- Mark Fry, Wepleydon GC; John Geddes, McDonald GC; Philip Graham, Bishop Auckland GC; Paul Griffiths, Seaford GC;
- Bruce Hicks, Boston GC; Robert Hill, Chichester GC; Stephen Hopkins, RAF Cottesmore GC; Brian Hunter, McDonald GC; Matthew Hutchinson, Hassocks GC; Richard Jenkins, Orchard Development – G-West; Darren Jones, Blackmoor GC; Ashley Marshall, Matfen Hall GC; Steve Mason, Stocks GC; Douglas McIntosh, Cahrun Braures GC; Rhys Norville, Remuera GC; Paul Roberts, Baron Hill GC Ltd; Gavin Robson, Burton-on-Trent GC; Robert Sandlands, Greengrave over-Sands GC; Ben Screener, Abridge Golf & Country Club; Andrew Slingsby, Halifax West End GC; Tom Smith, Cohn Valley GC; Sean Sullivan, Torwood GC; Paul Young, Whitefields GC

In addition to providing a greenkeeper to raise the bunkers for every match on Championship days, this year Paul Smith and the BWA asked BIGGA to provide an early morning preparation team and a late night clean team.

We also weren’t without challenges this year due to the amount of rain that fell in a short space of time and the water table being high. Many people were asking why the bunkers weren’t emptied, they were but the water just kept rising! All in all it was a fantastic week where the team showed true team spirit being called in to work at all sorts of early times, it just showed what a fantastic industry this is and when it’s needed we can all pull together. So well done Support Team 2012, a good job done, roll on Muirfield 2013.

Learning & Development
Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, with an update on education issues
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Board Members
- Andrew Mellon, Elmwood College Golf Club
- Tony Smith, Tresise Golf Club
- George Bar, Worthing Golf Club
- Gary Cunningham, Trentham Park Golf Club
- Stuart Greenwood, North Berwick Golf Club
- Jeremy Hughes, Vale of Langsdon Golf Club
- Arnold Phipps-Jones, Stock Brook and Three River Golf and Country Club
- Chris Bealey, Chippenham Golf Club

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- Peter Thompson from Sunningdale Golf Club
- Christopher Watson from The Grange GC (Australia)
- Andrew Turnbull, W J Rogers, Sami Collins, Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn Bergmann
- Jaey Goodchild, Graham Wiley

The finalists were but the water just kept rising!

The teaching programme is shaping up to be another not to be missed event!

We will be welcoming Dr Thom Nikola, The Docthe of Green Speed, from Michigan State University.

Thom is a specialist in putting green management that maximizes turfgrass health, investment and customer satisfaction.

He will be presenting several sessions during the week including a one-day workshop on the ‘A, B, Cs of Putting Green Maintenance’, a session on the Turf Managers Conference and a Seminar Session.

The workshop programme will also feature many of our very successful workshops and presenters including:

- So You Want to be a Golf Course Manager – Peter Jones and Kevin Hunt
- Moving into Management – Frank Neuerburg
- Irrigation System Management and Design – Adrian and Dennis Mortram
- How to be an Outstanding Manager Parts 2 and 3 – Shona Garner (above)

IT Business Administration – Jacky Lowe

Postcode Update for NPTC Certificate Holders – Jon Allbutt

Basic Budgeting and Golf Club Finance – Jerry Kilgour & Duncan Ritchie

New and returning workshops include:

- Health and Safety Documentation – Jon Allbutt
- The Grass Plant – Dr Paul Miller
- The Soil – Dr Paul Miller
- Basic Golf Mechanics – Hanfried Steuer
- Diagnostics and Problem Solving – Hanfried Steuer

With a full seminar programme and the introduction of Focus On sessions, this will be an education programme not to be missed!
**INDUSTRY UPDATE**

The latest turf industry news from around the globe

**Bringing Biology back to Turfgrass Management**

Golf's sustainability movement strides forward as more and more people combine their commitment and action with innovation. New solutions—from supportive programmes to innovative products—work in tandem to make a real difference.

The two organisations have come together to help raise awareness and understanding, backed by practical solutions. The Golf Environment Organisation (GEO), and The Great Turf Company, both started and headquartered in Scotland, are each focused on bringing greater sustainability into golf.

GEO is a stakeholder-funded not-for-profit organisation working to guide, support and motivate the global golf industry around sustainability, administering golf’s international reaudit, GEO Certified™ and delivering practical guidance and programmes that are followed to earn the distinction.

The Great Turf Company has invested a great deal into developing biological solutions for the finest turf, with a unique ‘Activated Microbial Turf Management’ methodology designed to restore natural balance in turf and soil.

“Thier range of turf nutrition products includes compost teas systems and naturally sourced granular and liquid feed formulations to optimise turf health naturally, reducing chemical dependency. Teeding the soil and maintaining a healthy soil environment, which is key to healthy turf. Current users of these products include Open Championship golf courses and Premiership football clubs.

Strong, healthy turf is fundamental for golf and achieving this in an environmentally-friendly, safe and cost-effective way was a motivator for MacRitchie Dunes who introduced The Great Turf Company’s biological approach during the time they were working toward their GEO Certified™ award. Estonian Golf and Country Club also recently began using Great Turf Company products, adopting an outlook in which sustainability is factored into their selection of products and maintenance practices. The Club is currently in the GEO OnCourse™ programme and working toward GEO Certified™.

Ian Morrison, MD for The Great Turf Company commented:

“We have made it our mission to advocate the benefits of good soil biology for a safer, sustainable future for turfgrass management. Without biology soil is merely dirt; but with a thriving microbial population soil becomes the complete solution to plant health. We share GEO’s belief in golf’s potential to deliver real and valued results for sustainability, and we are very proud to support GEO in growing the business of sustainable golf.”

GEO Chief Executive Jonathan Smith said of The Great Turf Company: “As a growing, forward-looking business, it says a great deal that they would support the not-for-profit work that GEO does to foster credible sustainability progress in golf clubs and developments around the world.”

**POPPY DAY**

Allot Mowers has recruited Poppy Roe for the newly-created position of marketing executive, based at the company’s manufacturing centre in Hixon, Staffordshire.

Rejoining a sales director, Leigh Bowser, Poppy is now assisting with a full range of marketing activities for Allett professional and domestic cylinder mowers. These activities include liaising with and supporting Allot’s appointed distributors and end user networks, organising press releases, advertisements, promotional events and exhibitions as well as website management and digital marketing.

Poppy brings to her new position extensive experience gained within the automotive industry employing both traditional and electronic marketing techniques, skills that will be invaluable as Allett strengthens its position in the UK and further afield.

Poppy expressed her delight in being offered a role in a British engineering company that designs, develops and distributes products for distribution worldwide.

“Allett Mowers has a fantastic ethic and everyone is passionate about the business and the products they produce,” she said.

**Kubota Arrive in Harrogate**

Harrogate Borough Council is making good use of the powerful Kubota M9540 utility tractor, covering some 540 square miles in the spa town itself, home to the IBGGA Turf Management Exhibition each January.

Purchased principally to tackle mowing duties with a new Major TR1600 rotary trailed gaff mower, the 90hp M9540 was delivered in time for the start of this season. Transport Manager Alan Smith explains: “The groundsmen have an eight-day mowing round to cover the large areas of grass in parks, playing fields and open spaces, and have to travel 20-30 miles from the depot for some jobs.”

One feature of the M9540 which has not met with particular approval from the operators is the 36x36 speed transmission with hydraulic shuttle, operated via a steering column mounted lever.

**E-Z deal for Bromsgrove**

Bromsgrove Golf Centre, situated in the heart of Worcestershire, has taken delivery of a second fleet of E-Z-GO RXV golf carts from local dealer, TH White of Riddington. E-Z-GO is a Textron Inc. company.

Adam Martin is a director of the family-owned facility, which was formed in 1993 and is home to Bromsgrove Golf Club. Commenting on the new fleet he said: “As early adopters of the new RXV back in 2009, we were probably taking a slight gamble with this new technology. However, we needn’t have worried as the fleet has performed superbly and we’ve only had five unscheduled service calls in the past three years.

“The build quality is excellent; the carts deliver an excellent ride with very little damage and the number of rounds per charge has been surprising.

“They are certainly very economical to run and have definitely made a significant contribution to the bottom line. We expected good things when we purchased the initial fleet and have not been disappointed; reliability has been excellent, the support from TH White has been of the highest order and it was an easy decision to return to them for the new fleet.”

For more information visit on E-Z-GO products visit www.ransomesjacobsen.com

**What’s your number?**

Our regular and random profile of an industry figure continues with this month’s lucky number...

Name: Barry Eagle
Company: Gripclad Limited
Position: Managing Director
How Long have you been in the industry?
Since 1989 so that’s 23 years in direct Leisure Sales. I had to use a calculator for that!

What do you like about your current job?
No day is the same and that every day is a challenge, so it keeps me on my toes. My business ethic is to have an ability to offer a no-nonsense service enabling problems to be solved with the products that we offer.

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?
Enormous changes for me personally. Back in the day I used to cover seven counties across the south and doing at least 100,000 miles a year serving customers old and new. My business is now website based which means I can offer our products on a National footing. I’m lucky if I do 10,000 miles in a year now. Long gone are the days of “repping” but the personal service is still to be found with Gripclad Ltd.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
Sculpturing a fat free bonus, or in other words I go to the Gym a lot. Chanty runs, spend time with my boys, and play golf!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
I don’t, very simply I can’t plan what will happen in the future, I live for the NOW. You never know what’s round the corner!

What do you consider to be your lucky number?
24

Barry has picked Demelza Hartley of Lowe Maintenance...
Bringing Biology back to Turfgrass Management

GI

INDUSTRY UPDATE
The latest turf industry news from around the globe

Kubota Arrive in Harrogate

Harrogate Borough Council is making good use of the powerful Kubota VR60 utility tractor, covering some 540 square miles in the spa town itself, home to the BISGAJA Turf Management Exhibition each January.

Purchased principally to tackle mowing duties with a new Major TR1600 rotary trailed gauz mower, the 95hp M9540 was delivered in time for the start of this season. Transport Manager Alan Smith explains: “The groundsmen have an eight-day mowing round to cover the large areas of grass in parks, playing fields and open spaces, and have to travel 20-25 miles from the depot for some jobs.”

One feature of the M9540 which has not received with particular approval from the operators is the 36x36 speed transmission with hydraulic shuttle, operated via a steering column mounted lever.

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How Long have you been in the industry?
Since 1989 so that’s 23 years in direct Leisure Sales. I had to use a calculator for that!

What do you like about your current job?
Financial Services and Banking

What do you like to do in your spare time?
Sculpturing a fat free torso, or in other words I go to the Gym a lot. Charity runs, spend time with my kids, put money into the till and into my business.

What would you say is your biggest achievement?
I can’t say I’ve had a major achievement in my career but I am proud of the business I have built.

Do you have any hobbies outside of work?
Not really. I don’t watch a lot of TV any more. I really enjoy the outdoors and have spent a lot of time on the golf course in the last few years.

What is the best piece of advice you have been given?
“Never give up” from my business partner, Dave Eaves.

What’s your lucky number?
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NEW 4X4 GATOR FINANCE DEAL

John Deere Financial has announced a new interest-free finance programme for Gator 4x4 utility vehicles.

UK customers may order any new HPX or XUV Gator model from their John Deere dealer at any time until 30th September 2012. The offer is for 2 plus 22 monthly payments at zero per cent interest, with the amount financed limited to 60 per cent of the retail value. John Deere manufactures the widest range of utility vehicles in the industry.

The four-wheel drive HPX and XUV Gator utility vehicles are ruggedly designed for a wide range of transporting, loading, hauling and general materials handling duties, especially in challenging off-road conditions. These include seeders, sprayers, spreaders, trailers, line markers, snow blowers, containers and tool holders.

Other credit profiles are available on request, and the availability of finance is subject to status and terms and conditions – further details are available at www.JohnDeereFinancial.co.uk or from John Deere dealers nationwide.

The Grass Group can always be relied upon to have new products at Saltex – and 2012 is no exception. No less than two new machines from Trilo and a SMART new multipurpose mower from ATT.

Making its debut is the Trilo C15 (above), a fully mounted, PTO driven rail/scarifier collector with a working width of 1.5m. A multipurpose machine, this robust and compact unit will cut and collect grass from rough or fine areas, scythe and collect leaves, moss, horse droppings and other debris. Fitted with 3m scarifying blades, the Trilo C15 will, in one pass, leave an aerated and well groomed finish – regenerate previously matted and stale ground. The 18 wind paddles fitted to the heavy duty, finely balanced rotor ensure a thorough uptake of material into the 1.1M3 capacity hopper. The material is discharged by operating the rails mounted single acting hydraulic lever which raises the rear of the hopper, allowing compact tidy heaps to be deposited at disposal sites. Specically designed for tractors of 28HP and above, the Trilo C15 has a single acting hydraulic system to operate the hopper emptying mechanism.

ATT’s refined INFINICut pedestrian mower is SMART in many ways. A visually striking machine, INFINICut is a mower first and the world’s only complete, walk behind, turf refinement cutter system second. Energised by INFINIPower, the unit can be powered by a battery unit for those areas close to buildings, and then switched over to the hybrid energy/generator for locations further away – all in the field without the need to return to the workshop. The electronic control offers three different forward speeds for user selection independent of the reel speed. This speed selection is critical for the different SMART cassettes available – be it cutting, scarifying, grooming, vibration levelling or any job that the nine cassettes can carry out.

No fuel, no oil, and that means no chance of leaks on turf and no fumes polluting the atmosphere, according to Broadwood International. The TurfEx HX52000 top dresser is electrically operated with a semi-sealed 12 volt DC motor and is designed to mount in the bed of utility vehicles.

Broadwood International will be at Saltex 2012, displaying their ranges of snow, turf and amenity equipment. In the SnowEx range two new salt spreaders will be on show: www.broadwoodintl.co.uk.
NEW PRODUCTS

The latest products on the market reviewed

GI

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The Verti-top 1200, appearing at Saltex, will find use in confined spaces. The high capacity rate machine has a 1.2m (47.2”) working width and weighs only 300kg that will only require a 25hp tractor with a 400kg lift capacity.

The infill material used in synthetic systems must be kept free of litter, and the upper carpet fibres have to remain free of litter and debris to avoid the accumulation of dirt and bacteria, as well as potentially harmful fragments like glass splinters.

The Verti-top 1200 maintains the synthetic turf by removing cleaning and redistributing the infill material.

The Verti-top’s rotary brush ingeniously removes surface debris and the top 2 – 12mm of infill, and then filters out debris by using a vibrating mechanism.

The Verti-top’s (below) a smaller vacuum sweeper to work at 1.5 metres wide to hard to get areas where ground pressure and dimensions matter.

The Verti-top’s rotary brush ingeniously removes surface debris and the top 2 – 12mm of infill, and then filters out debris by using a vibrating mechanism.

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A call today could get you a great deal

...and you’ll be surprised at the finance packages we could tailor to suit.

www.thegrassgroup.com

The Grass Group

Supporting Professional Groundcare

Verti-Top 1200

Mowers

versaTOP 1000

Verti-Top 1000

Verti-Top 600

Lawn Slope

Verti-Top 800

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BTME is back at Harrogate for 2013, and is shaping up to be another must-attend event, with many exhibitors having already confirmed their spaces, months in advance, as the countdown to 22-24 January 2013 begins.

The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition, incorporating Continue to Learn Education Seminars and Workshops, which start the weekend before and run for five consecutive days, is the ultimate experience for golf greenkeepers.

BTME, widely regarded as Europe’s leading showcase for turf and grounds care professionals and buyers, offers a fantastic opportunity to Browse, buy and seek advice from over a hundred of the top manufacturers and service providers across the world.

Look out for details soon on how to pre-register for your free visitors pass.

The BIGGA show heats up

A look ahead to the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition, and Continue to Learn educational programme for 2013

IMAGES:
A selection from BTME 2012, courtesy of SiRA Studio sirstudio.com
BTME 2013
The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition

incorporating:
BIGGA Seminars & Workshops
20-23 January 2012

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Continue to learn at BTME 2013

BIGGA can already confirm a host of education seminars and workshops, coming your way in January 2013...

Turf Managers’ Conference 2013
Monday 21 January 2013
The Crown Hotel, Harrogate

The Turf Managers’ Conference 2013 will make its return to the Continue to Learn at BTME 2013 education programme.

Taking place at The Crown Hotel in Harrogate on Monday 21 January 2013, the new venue will offer delegates a more comfortable learning environment whilst cementing the success of the Conference as it enters its third year.

The programme will feature some familiar industry names and will introduce new subject specialists to provide an interesting and thought-provoking range of topics for ‘Turf Managers’:

• Dr Kate Entwisle, Turf Pathologist from the Turf Disease Centre, a specialist in disease and pest identification.
• Lorna Sheldon from CWI International a specialist in communication and presentation skills.

With prices held from 2012, this must attend event is being offered to BIGGA members at £99 + VAT (£105 + VAT for non members). To reserve your place at this popular event, telephone or email Rachael Duffy, Learning and Development Administrator on 01347 833800 (option 3) or rachael@bigga.co.uk.

Continue to Learn Workshops

The Continue to Learn Workshop programme will make its return to the Queen’s Suite of Harrogate International Centre on Sunday 20 and Monday 21 January 2013.

Featuring a series of one and two-day workshops including:

Two-Day Workshops
• Essential IT Business Administration for Greenkeepers

One-Day Workshops
• Pesticides Update for NPTC Certificate Holders
• Diagnostic and Problem Solving
• The Soil
• Basic Budgeting and Golf Course Finance
• Pesticides Update for NPTC Certificate Holders

There will be feature sessions including presentations from:
• Thon Nikolai, The Doctor of Green Speed, from Michigan State University
• Curtis Tyrrell MG CGCS, Superintendent from the 2012 Ryder Cup venue, Medinah Country Club, Chicago, USA
• John Philp, retired Course Manager from Carnoustie
• Steve Chappell, Course Manager, PGA Centenary at Gleneagles, host of the 2014 Ryder Cup
• Stuart Yarwood MG, Course Manager, Lymn Golf Club
• Richard Jenkinson, Deputy Course Manager, gWest
• Rob Wills, Assistant Greenkeeper, Remedy Oaks Golf Club

This year we will be introducing a seminar pre-booking system for BIGGA members. Look out for further details in the Continue to Learn brochure.

2013 will see the introduction of ‘Focus On’ sessions. These 1.5 - 2 hour sessions will home in on specific areas, split into different strands including:
• Management
• Technical
• Environmental
• Information Technology

For further details on all of the education on offer, see the full Continue to Learn brochure.

Accommodation

Are you planning your trip to BTME and Continue to Learn 2013?

Reservation Highway is the officially appointed accommodation agent for BTME 2013 providing a centralised point of contact for all your accommodation and travel enquiries.

By following the link on the BTME website you can gain instant access to all of the accommodation rates that have been specially negotiated for the event. All of the rates shown are what you will pay, with no hidden extras. In addition to special nightly rates, Reservation Highway also offers special deals such as 3 night specials, advance purchase and early bird rates.

Reservation Highway can be contacted on +44 (0) 1423 525577.
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The programme will feature some familiar industry names and will introduce new subject specialists to provide an interesting and thought provoking range of topics for Turf Managers:

• Dr Thomas Nikolai - ‘The Doctor of Green Speed’ from Michigan State University, a specialist in putting green management to maximize turfgrass health, investment and customer satisfaction.

• David Bancroft – Turner from 3D Training and Development, a specialist in organisational politics.

• Dr Kate Entwistle – Turf Pathologist from the Turf Disease Centre, a specialist in disease and pest identification.

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• Irrigation System Management and Design

• Moving into Management

• So You Want to be a Golf Course Manager

One-Day Workshops

• The A, B, C’s of Putting Green Maintenance

• The Grass Plant

• Basic Golf Mechanics

• Health and Safety Documentation

• How to be an Outstanding Manager (Part 2)

• How to be an Outstanding Manager (Part 4)

• Diagnostic and Problem Solving

• The Soil

• Basic Budgeting and Golf Course Finance

• Pesticides Update for NPTC Certificate Holders

Continue to Learn Seminars

The Continue to Learn Seminar Programme will feature more than 25 sessions, all of which are free of charge to all visitors.

There will be feature sessions including presentations from:

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• Richard Jenkinson, Deputy Course Manager, gWest

• Les Howkins MG, The Richmond Golf Club

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For further details on all of the workshop speakers, please visit the BIGGA website.

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The BIGGA test

The course offers a behemoth of a challenge and as it has been known to reduce professional golfers to whimpering wrecks is definitely not one for the faint hearted.

Head Greenkeeper, Derek Wilson, said: “The Scottish pro Alan Tait brought three young pros down to play and they were saying ‘it’s only six-and-a-half thousand yards, it must be easy’ then in the clubhouse at the end of the round he said ‘tell them what you scored’ and one, in tears, admitted he hadn’t broken 100!”

A true links challenge, the course sits on sand with fairways divided roughly by thick gorse bushes and heather which lay in wait for any wayward shots.

“If you hit the ball straight you’ll get a good score. Accuracy off the tee is a must because if you end up in the bushes, you’re in trouble,” Derek added.

It was built in 1887 and some of the present character of the course comes from James Braid’s designs in the 1920s. His use of nature as a tool is greatly in evidence around Irvine GC and part of its individualistic charm can be attributed to the great Scottish course designer.

The course has not changed much since then and all the bunkers still sit in their original positions. In the past 25 years, new tees have been built at the 2nd, 6th, 12th, 17th and 18th.

Derek said: “The basic shape of the golf course hasn’t altered and with some of the lengthy carries we have around here, you still have to be trying to hit them with hickory golf clubs? It’s the same with all of the courses down this stretch and you...
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One man who can imagine this is Derek himself as he often plays in the Hickory Championships.

He started as a greenkeeper at Irvine GC in 1975, went to Turnberry in 1981 and stayed there until 1986 when he was offered the job of Head Greenkeeper back at Irvine.

Irvine GC is regularly used by the R&A as a Final Open Qualifying Course and in 2003 the club co-hosted the Amateur Championship with Royal Troon. In 2007, the British Seniors Open was co-hosted with Turnberry and in 2009 the Ladies Home Internationals were hosted at the club.

One of the many pros who have played Irvine was the charismatic Christy O’Connor Jnr, now on the senior tour. “He’s well known for hitting that two-iron on the 18th at the Belfry and he must have sold that two-iron ten times in the clubhouse here! He qualified no bother by playing conservatively with irons off the tees. He said that you cannot win the Open here, just get into it, so he didn’t do anything silly.”

Out on the course itself, the greens consist of around 60% bentgrass and 40% Poa annua and the fairways are mainly bentgrass with small bits of fescue. “We say around here that you don’t play fairway shots from grass, you play from turf,” added Derek.

He explained the reasons as to why sleepers were installed on the faces of several bunkers around the course: “The ones on the 18th fairway have been in over 20 years and the reason we put them in is because they last longer. It’s normally very windy here and the wind erodes the turf. Then you have hanging lies in the bunkers, so we went with an experiment with sleepers after we had seen them at Prestwick Golf Club. For a traditional golf course like ours, it suits it because they are fitted into the banking.”

Earlier this year, sleepers were installed into the large bunker in front of the green on the par-three 16th. This work was done in-house by the six staff on the course and took about two weeks.

“All the front sleepers have wires attached to ones at the back so they can’t fall, so there’s a lot of work in it. If one fell it could cause serious injury so we’ve got to make sure they can’t move at all. We decided to use traditional rail sleepers rather than new ones as it looks better when they are weathered. New sleepers just tend to look like plywood,” said Derek.

The only maintenance the sleepers require is a coat of creosote once-a-year.

When playing the course, each hole offers unique challenges and it is interesting to note that there is just one par-five and two par-threes at Irvine. Five of the par-fours are over 400 yards and the overall yardage is 6,423 yards from the white tees.

The 4th hole runs parallel to the main West Coast railway line which also acts as out of bounds to the left. The raised green can be tricky because a long approach may find the River Irvine and a short one will leave a difficult chip.

Number five is menacingly called ‘Sandface’ and lives up to its name with a gigantic bunker set at the foot of an incline in front of the green. This 279 yard par-four requires a 250 yard carry in the air if a player wants to be bold and go for the green.

The 7th hole runs alongside where the old Bogside racecourse used to be. The racecourse was one of the oldest in Scotland with a history dating back to the 17th century. It was the home of the Scottish Grand National until it was moved, due to the closure of Bogside railway station, to Ayr Racecourse in 1966.

Of the 119 bunkers on the course, the 8th boasts six of them. This, one of the two par-threes, is 180 yards and once again demands an accurate tee shot.
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The par four 14th is called ‘The Specs’ because of the resemblance of two bunkers in front of the green to spectacles. It is also worth noting that the 14th at Carnoustie’s Championship Course is named ‘Spectacles’ for the same reason. There are two flaps on the pole on Irvine’s 14th green. This is because it is two-tiered and two flaps indicate a pin placement on the top tier, whereas one indicates a lower tier pin position.

When you stand on one of the higher tees out on the course, such as the 15th, the industrial past of the area is still in evidence as well as the beautiful nature offered by this part of Scotland. The Arran Mountains rise in the distance on one side whilst the now defunct ICI factory, that made munitions during the Second World War, can be seen between the course and the Firth of Clyde. A busy train track runs alongside parts of the course and smoke rises from factories across the river in Irvine.

The 15th is named ‘Bartonholm’ after a now-demolished mining village which lay just north of the 16th hole. The story behind this miner’s village is interesting as three Scottish amateur champions lived here during the last five years of the Walker all honed their golfing skills. From the tee the story behind this miner’s village is interesting as three Scottish amateur champions lived here during the last five years of the Walker Cup. However, the bunkers at Irvine GC are very pretty.

The 14th green at The Irvine Golf Club is named ‘Spectacles’ for the same reason that Irvine GC is named ‘Spectacles’. It is also worth noting that the Irvine GC is two-tiered and two flags indicate a pin placement on the top tier, whereas one indicates a lower tier pin position. In this case, the 14th green is named ‘Spectacles’ for the resemblance of two bunkers in front of the green to spectacles.

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The Irvine GC Kit Inventory

John Deere 3250B fairway mower
Toro SideWinder with rotary heads
John Deere triple mower
Jact-scan MK2 greens cutter
6 x Jacobsen 528 fair mowers
3 older models and 1 mower
Link Tractor
John Deere 94G compact tractor
Wildannum Terra Spade vert-drain
John Deere hartcore carver
Kinsomes BO diesel

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A tee shot hitting the left side of the fairway is destined for the rough or heather, so an accurate iron shot to the right hand side of the fairway is required here.

The 18th poses a formidable test of golfing skills. From the tee the player is greeted by the sight of two very ominous looking bunkers with gorse jutting out to the right and the rail track to the left. The blind tee shot to reach the fairway must carry 190 yards from the back tees to clear the bunkers. A good target to aim for off the tee is the right hand side of the clubhouse. Even after breathing a sigh of relief due to an accurately placed tee shot, the golfer will notice a green guarded by seven bunkers and a gully at the front.

Even under calm conditions these holes require precision, but imagine the golfer approaching these final holes with a good score under their belt, perhaps with the nerves jangling and palms sweating. Add blustery conditions into the equation and the perils are heightened to a frightening level.

As BIGGA celebrates its 25th year what better way to mark this than to have the National Championship at a course celebrating its 125th year. The record of previous successful National Championships combined with the challenges of the fabulous links course that is Irvine GC make this year’s competition, on 8 – 9 October, one not to be missed.

Irvine GC Kit Inventory
John Deere 335E fairway mower
Torx Sidewinder with rotary heads
John Deere triple mower
Jacto 800 LS grass sprayer
6 x Jacobsen 523B hybrid mowers
(3 older model and 3 mower)
Riedel Tractor
John Deere 946 compact tractor
Arranmass Farm Tractor
Ransomes 804 diesel aerator

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Kubota has been established for more than 30 years in the UK. Their world class excellence ensures they are at the forefront of innovation and one of the leading manufacturers of tractors, ground-care equipment, utility vehicles and mini-excavators.

The company is constituted into three main product categories of Engines; Construction Equipment; Tractor & Groundcare. Earlier this year the company completed a restructuring of their management team with the creation of a new role for Dave Roberts. Dave left the company in 2010 after 21 years of service and has been enticed back to head up Kubota’s three product sectors as Sales and Marketing General Manager.

In addition he has direct responsibility for the tractor division, which has a Kubota Compact Tractor to perfectly suit every need. The ‘V’ series covers the range 12 to 32HP, with the ‘U’ series and ‘STV’ series covering the range 32 to 41HP. They deliver exceptional power output, a host of performance enhancing features, unitised reliability, durability, and economy. They exhibit consistent performance in all seasons over all applications, both in confined and open areas.

With optimum reliability, proficient fuel economy and outstanding versatility, the Kubota range of ‘F’ series out-front rotary mowers and ‘U’ series ride-on cut and collect mowers are of particular interest to Greenkeepers. In particular, the G26 mower finds application in mowing high presentation areas like the front of golf club houses and entrances. These areas demand a clean, clip-free finish and for this purpose a ride-on rotary mower with an efficient collection system is the ideal solution. Kubota’s G26 is the ultimate grass cutting machine for this type of work, with its 25.5hp Kubota three-cylinder ETVCS water-cooled diesel engine and 20.5 litre fuel tank, offering exceptional power and efficiency for demanding mowing operations. The 1.37m (54in) deck offers great productivity for open spaces and larger lawns. The G26 is simplicity itself for any member of staff. Featuring a single pedal operated HST transmission with a top speed of 17kph, it can travel quickly between mowing sites whilst the hydrostatic power steering optimises performance to reduce fatigue during a long day’s operation.

Joint sponsor, Charterhouse Turf Machinery, has also been providing Grounds Professionals with Redexim maintenance machinery for the last 30 years. Probably best known for its iconic Verti-DrainTM aerator, the company’s range is constantly evolving and expanding to not only offer aerators, but also top dressers, overseeders and scarifiers for natural turf.

The company has been developing maintenance equipment for Synthetic surfaces during the past few years and have one of the best ranges on the market. Together, they suit the needs of all Greenkeepers from pedestrian units to treat small areas economically, to PTO driven commercial units for larger spaces.

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Open all hours

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Thirty minutes after Ernie Els remarkably captured the most coveted prize in golf, a large matching red polo-shirted group attracted bemused glances as they posed for photographs on the 18th fairway close to the spot where Adam Scott’s dreams finally crumbled.

The BIGGA Open Support Team 2012, warned by a challenging week knew they had played an important part in the success of the event whilst many lasting friendships had been cemented.

As The 141st Open ended, the exhausted but happy group reflected on their vital role in preparing the bunkers each morning - a mammoth task as the famous old links boasts over 200 traps, match raking, divoting and attending to the practice areas. As the week progressed and the weather finally improved they were able to enjoy the sight of the sun rising across the course during one of their regular 5am starts, something they will treasure for the rest of their days.

The home greenkeeping team led superbly by Paul Smith consisted of his own regular crew of twelve, a further twenty or so local volunteers, four John Deere staff and six more provided by the R&A from other Open Championship venues fully embraced the BIGGA team, including greenkeepers from across the UK and as far afield as Australia and America.

The home greenkeeping team assembled on the Monday to begin bunker preparation from Tuesday onwards. The remainder were all present and correct in time for the traditional Wednesday afternoon start and their first sight of the glorious links during the R&A Briefing by Grant Moir, Director of Rules.

The course was already damp when the first members of the team had been on the course. The home greenkeeping team had left greenkeepers cursing after a horrendous summer, which has left绿keepers cursing across the land. But it was tested to the absolute limit after hours of torrential rain throughout Thursday night and into Friday morning.

Head Greenkeeper Paul Smith described watching the rain clatter down as “probably the worst feeling of my life” – but the tireless work of his extended team and the BIGGA boys and girls ensured that miraculously, play began on time on the second day.

The walkways between holes were at times reminiscent of a particularly damp Glastonbury, and the incredibly high water table meant that some of the bunkers retained standing water despite everyone’s best efforts, illustrating quite how much rain had fallen. But there was not a murmur of complaint from the players, showing what a professional job had been done.

They then trod the same meticulously prepared fairways as Tiger Woods, Tom Watson and Rory McIlroy, springing into action when a hook or slice found the sand. In many cases the divot team worked until 11pm – a whole 18 hours after the absolute limit after hours of torrid conditions. The BIGGA Support Team 2012 wearied by a challenging week knew they had played an important part in the success of the event whilst many lasting friendships had been cemented.

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The absolute limit after hours of torrential rain throughout Thursday night and into Friday morning. Head Greenkeeper Paul Smith described watching the rain clatter down as “probably the worst feeling of my life” – but the tireless work of his extended team and the BIGGA boys and girls ensured that miraculously, play began on time on the second day.

The walkways between holes were at times reminiscent of a particularly dank Glastonbury, and the incredibly high water table meant that some of the bunkers retained standing water despite everyone’s best efforts, illustrating quite how much rain had fallen. But there was not a murmur of complaint from the players, showing what a professional job had been done.

They then trod the same meticulously prepared fairways as Tiger Woods, Tom Watson and Rory McIlroy, springing into action when a hook or slice found the sand. In many cases the divot team worked until 11pm—a whole 18 hours after some of the first members of the team had been on the course.

Support Team Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bunker Girls</th>
<th>Bunker Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A BIG thanks to the BIGGA brigade

The Open Championship was a fine example of team work across the board. It was nothing but praise for the effort of all involved in the running of the golf with special mention of bunker conditions. The BIGGA support team did a sterling job of preparing the bunkers each morning, which was a difficult task under the circumstances.

The course that the spectators and competitors were met with on the Friday morning was not the same course that the Home and BIGGA team faced. Several intensive bands of rain fell early Friday morning, which had not been forecast. It felt as if the weather gods had conspired against us.

Our spirits had truly been dampened and although feeling numb, the whole team rallied with pumps, pipes, generators and squeegees to clear the course and tented village of standing water.

Despite the weather the course stood up extremely well, and虽然 to show its true colours over the weekend. Conditions and show weather improved.

My thanks go to all those volunteers who assisted the Club and Club in preparing the course under difficult conditions. My job well done by all the team!

Paul Smith, Head Greenkeeper, Royal Lytham & St Annes GC

To the team

Thank you for everything that you did to assist at Royal Lytham & St Annes.

It was not an easy week, and it was reassuring to know that we had the back-up of the BIGGA team, and great that I could make an emergency call at 4am and get an immediate response!

The team did a great job in the circumstances in very difficult conditions with very little time for preparation.

I hope that things will be less complicated at Muirfield next year.

Grant Moir, R&A

BIGGA Open Support Team 2012


Second Row: Jason Brooks, Graham Blum, Geoffrey Beausach, Matthew Hutchison, Ben Sweeney, Robert Hill, Andrew Slinglby, Rob, Bruce Hicks, Tom Woods, Tony Smith, Chris Bealey, (kneeling down) - Billy Merritt, John Wells MG, Steve Mason, Douglas McIntosh, Mark Brooks, Robert Sandilands, Brian Hunter, Scott Thompson, Richard Jenkins, Steve Cardle, Sean Sullivan, John Geddes, Jim Croxton

Front Row: Andrew Unwin, Kevan Glass, Paul Young, Miles Todd, Mark Fry, Beverley Blair, Miles Wood, Rhysdell, Tracey Maddison, Sandra Raper, Philip Graham
The Open Championship was a true example of teamwork across the board. It was nothing but praise for the Open support at St. Annes in the morning when faced with dealing with varying levels of bunker conditions. The BIGGA support team did a sterling job of preparing the bunkers each morning, which was a difficult task under the circumstances.

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Despite the weather the course stood up extremely well, and despite the adverse conditions and slow weather conditions, the team did a great job in the mornings in very difficult circumstances with, firstly, wet bunkers and then wet, very difficult bunkers drying out.

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Steve Mason, from Stocks Golf Club, knew he was in for a busy opening morning when his three players all found separate bunkers with their opening tee shots on the notorious par three first – and he went on to rake 17 in total, the highest of the day.

He said: “You have to be on your toes, and I knew it would be a long day from the first three shots. But that’s what we’re there for, and it was an honour not only to walk alongside the players but also to work on The Open course.”

Some enjoyed unexpected surprises, like Miles Todd from Rhuddlan Golf Club. He was expecting a quiet final day when he joined Andres Romero and Chad Campbell’s early morning pairing – so imagine his amazement when footballer Carlos Tevez suddenly appeared as caddie for his compatriot.

Miles said: “I thought it looked like him and I went up and had a little chat with him. He was a really nice bloke and loves his golf.

“From very few spectators at the start, word quickly got round and it had become a circus by the back nine. People were calling out to him and there were photographers running around everywhere, members swelling after every hole.

“I’m not sure Chad Campbell was too happy about it. Tevez kept standing behind him as he played and at one point Romero had to stop Tevez from slamming a club into the bag as Campbell was taking a shot!”

Paul Griffiths of Seaford Golf Club added: “It’s been an amazing experience. It’s my first Open and it’s been out of this world. People would pay thousands to experience this.

“It’s really hard work and everyone finishes the week absolutely shattered. But I enjoyed it so much. I might tell the lads at the club it was rubbish then I’ll get to go next year too!”

John Kernaghan from Chipping Sodbury Golf Club was given the honour of accompanying odds-on favourite Adam Scott up and down the fairways on the final day, and nailed the final bunker of the tournament on the 18th where the luckless Aussie allowed the Claret Jug to slip from his grasp.

The tournament ended with Paul Smith personally thanking the team for their terrific efforts, a sentiment that was echoed by Chief Executive Jim Croxton.

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The team spent their rare spare time recuperating in the BIGGA marquee, with the internet access provided by Sherriff Amenity proving popular yet again.

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See you at Muirfield 2013!
The national final

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Toro Student of the Year 2012

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Six of the best

Name: Stuart Imeson
Age: 20
Golf Club: Dunstanborough Golf Club
Position: Head Greenkeeper
College: Newcastle College

Stuart joined Dunstanborough Golf Club whilst he was still at school, after undertaking his work experience he decided this was the career he wanted to follow. After completing his Level 2, the Head Greenkeeper left and Stuart took the opportunity to take on the vacant position. He entered a risk and Stuart has now been in the role for two years and is relishing the challenge.

Stuart is currently training for his Level 3 and wants to continue on to the Level 4 at Newcastle College. Stuart has a handicap of 20 and enjoys football.

Name: Thomas Flavell
Age: 23
Golf Club: Lingdale Golf Club
Position: Greenkeeper
College: Myerscough College

Thomas began greenkeeping at Lingdale Golf Club in 2007, as an apprentice, following in his father’s footsteps. He is currently undertaking his Level 3 and is wanting to progress onto the Foundation Degree.

He is also very much interested in golf course architecture. Tom is a talented golfer with a handicap of 2. He won thescratch competition at The Leicestershire Golf Club and has represented his county. The golf club uses Thomas’s golf knowledge to provide a golfer’s opinion on the roll of the greens, as part of the weekly course rating.

Name: Christopher Watson
Age: 18
Golf Club: Peterculter Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Elmwood College

Chris got his passion for greenkeeping after spending his work experience at the golf club. He went back after leaving school, in 2010, to work during the summer, before taking on as a full-time apprentice later that year. Whilst at Elmwood, Chris assisted the BIGGA Scottish Level 2 Award.

Chris has recently taken up golf and is slowly improving. His other passions are Scouts and sailing, where in 2011 he was on the lead boat of the Tall Ships, which left Greenock.

Name: Peter Thompson
Age: 25
Golf Club: Sunningdale Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Oaklands College

Peter has been in greenkeeping for five years and is currently working towards his Level 2 Diploma. Peter started greenkeeping at Old Fold Manor in 2007. He is further developing his skills at Sunningdale, under Course Manager, Murray Long.

Outside of work, Peter holds a season ticket for Manchester United and is a very keen cook.

Had he not followed his current career path he would have trained as a chef.

Name: Aaron Launchbury
Age: 27
Golf Club: North Foreland Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Havdow College

Aaron came to greenkeeping later in life after a career in the print industry and as a painter and decorator. Aaron joined North Foreland Golf Club as an apprentice and hasn’t looked back, completing his Level 2 in twelve months.

Aaron has been working closely with his Course Manager, Dan McGrath MG, on the Operation Pollinator project. He has started to research new design ideas for alternative habitats for pollinating insects.

Name: Neil Ivamy
Age: 28
Golf Club: Trevose Golf & Country Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Duxby College

Neil started greenkeeping at 16, at the Merlin Golf Club, where he completed his Level 2. He is currently working towards his Level 3 at the Duxby College.

Neil took some time out to indulge his other passion of cricket by playing club cricket in Western Australia. He returned to the UK and spent some time working as a landscaper before joining the team at Trevose Golf & Country Club.

Neil is the club professional at Redruth Cricket Club and has represented Cornwall at Minor Counties level. He also plays golf and has a handicap of 10.

Further reading

A life changing trip

The Toro Student of the Year Award now in its 24th year, offers student greenkeepers the opportunity to expand their experience by meeting and competing with the best.

One lucky winner of this annual award will soon be heading to the USA on an all-expenses-paid study trip of a lifetime, thanks to BIGGA’s Gold Key Sponsor, Toro.

Acknowledged as the highlight of the student greenkeeper’s year, the winner will receive an eight-week trip to the United States, starting next January that includes a six-week study course at the University of Massachusetts and trips to visit the GC&As at the Industry Show in San Diego and Toro’s California base.

Two runners-up will receive an expenses-paid trip to the Continue to Learn Education programme at SYME 2013 in Harrisburg, next January.

The judges interviewed 29 students greenkeepers during a series of local interviews and had the tough job of selecting only six candidates to progress to the National Finals being held at BIGGA House on Sunday 16th and Monday 17th September.

One of the final six pictured, here the incredible opportunity to follow in Matthew Perks’ footsteps to become the 24th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.

The six finalists will arrive at Ad- wards Maus on Sunday 16th Septem- ber and will join the judges and BIGGA staff for an informal dinner. Monday 17th September sees the finalists being provided with a writ- ten task to complete during the day and attending a formal interview in front of a panel of four judges who represent both Toro and BIGGA.

Following final deliberations by the judges the 2012 winner and two runners-up will be selected. The announcement of the winner and runners-up will take place at 5pm. Following a photo shoot, the day concludes with an evening of celebra- tions, including a meal at an Italian restaurant and a game of ten-pin bowling.

To be eligible for this award in the future, you should be a greenkeeping student studying for a qualification, up to Level Three. Entrants are minimised by their course tutor, with their entry audited by their college or training provider.

Our thanks go to all those who entered the 2012 award and who continue to make this Award a flag- ship event of the greenkeeping calendar.

Toro Student of the Year Award
What is thatch?

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Thatch is the layer of intermingled and entwined dead and dying grass stems, leaves and roots which accumulates naturally in between the actively growing turf grass plants and the soil beneath. Thatch is a perfectly natural, normal and important part of a sports turf sward but like all things in life and nature it’s all a question of balance.

An appropriately thin layer of thatch creates a safe cushiony surface for sports or playgrounds, while protecting both turf and soil from traffic that can damage grass stems and leaves and compact the soil. Moreover it can insulate turf from rapid changes in soil temperature and moisture to protect against extremes and deliver more uniform growth. However, once thatch exceeds the optimum in depth and density all sorts of downsides will come into play and cause serious long term problems.

Effect of thatch on turf quality and resilience

Thatch has a marked effect on the quality of sports turf. A too thick thatch layer restricts air movement in the sward, and ability of water, nutrients and other applied materials to reach the grass root zone. Now unable to access oxygen and water and nutrients turf grass plants will readily root in the thatch itself to obtain these essential things for growth. Turf grass with roots restricted to the thatch layer becomes very susceptible and prone to drought stress and once it has dried out becomes very difficult to rewet.

Even when the thatch stays moist other equally serious problems may arise. This dead layer of turf grass (and weed) material, is a natural reservoir for usually dormant fungi but when provided with the right conditions of temperature and humidity will ‘step up to the plate’ and become aggressive disease causing pathogens.
Conditions inside thick moist thatch are ideal for the disease-causing activity of plant pathogens. If the temperature is right and humidity is high with grass plants in a weakened and stressed state, then this combination of conditions is ideal for fast fungal growth and infection of the grass plant to cause disease.

Microdochium nivale (Fusarium patch) and Colletotrichum graminicola (Anthracnose) are permanent features of the thatch layer, although they usually ‘tuck over’ as saprophytes (fungi) that live and feed on dead and decaying plant matter or on weak parasites.

However, when presented with the right conditions they will suddenly become aggressive pathogens infecting grass leaves and spreading quickly to cause Fusarium patch and Anthracnose diseases, respectively.

The overall consequences of excess thatch is an unthrifty and unhealthy grass turf failing to respond to otherwise good turf management practice and vulnerable to long term damage from inclement weather (drought, surface water and frost), as well as infection by disease-causing fungal pathogens.

How thatch forms and accumulates

Failure of turf management practices are the major cause of excess accumulation of thatch. Adopting practices that reduce populations of decomposing organisms and, by the same token, selecting those that do is a recipe for excessive thatch. Key decomposers in the soil under turf are invertebrates like earthworms and microorganisms including both friendly fungi and bacteria.

Modest rates of thatch formation and destruction are comparable and only when the former becomes faster than the latter do problems set in. Research shows how both earthworm and microorganism activities play a vital role in preventing excess thatch accumulation. Good aeration, a soil pH around 6.5 (very slightly acid) and adequate moisture favour the build-up and activity of these beneficial soil animals and microbes.

Problems with thatch are more frequent and acute in compacted soils and those with a high acidic pH simply because ‘decomposers’ and especially microorganisms cannot flourish under such conditions. Poorly balanced fertiliser regimes and the indiscriminate use of fungicides and insecticides are two key factors which can impact negatively and heavily on soil animals and microbes with thatch decomposing capacities.

For instance fertiliser applications skewed too heavily towards nitrogen (nitrate and ammonia) promote not only the development of lush green grass growth but also insect pests and disease that take advantage of this abundant food supply. As the new lush growth is devoured by insects and infected by fungi it becomes dead and dying grass debris adding to the layer of thatch.

Many turf grass pathologies like Microdochium nivale (Fusarium patch) and Colletotrichum graminicola have a quiescent or passive stage where they ‘tuck over’ on thatch as saprophytes and gradually growing into strong and aggressive parasites (feed on living tissues) when conditions are right.

Simply put the thicker the thatch layer then the bigger and better the substrate to support these potential pathogens.

Generally speaking failure to remove grass clippings during mowing will encourage the build-up of thatch especially if the clippings are long. Leaving very short clippings on the turf is less of a problem, the argument being that any addition to the thatch layer by what is an ultra-fine biomass with a large surface area is essentially neutralised and compensated for by the promotion of thatch decomposing bacteria. They feed on the clippings to produce soluble nutrients which is a valuable natural resource fed back into the turf. Naturally fed turf is healthy and resilient turf and clearly requires less synthetic fertiliser and fewer applications of fungicide and insecticide.

Species and varieties of grass traditionally used in turf differ markedly in their capacity for thatch production. As a general rule of thumb, perennial creeping grass species spreading by rhizomes (underground stems) and stolons (stems spreading over the soil surface) are high thatch forming species. Smooth stalked meadow grass (Poa pratensis) and creeping red fescue (Festuca rubra) are aggressive rhizomes, and creeping bentgrass (Agrostis stolonifera) which has stolons are all classic high thatch forming species.

Annual meadow grass (Poa annua) (in spite of its common name) is found in turf as biennial or even perennial biotypes spreading by stolons with accordingly high thatch accumulation. Other species such as perennial ryegrass (Lolium perenne) with bunch type growth habits accumulate considerably less thatch.

How much is too much

The right depth of thatch is essentially a ‘horses for courses’ matter related to species and varieties of grass in the sward, soil growing conditions and the exact use to which the turf is being put. Some tests say up to one inch is okay but general consensus appears to be that anything much over one half inch of thatch, and even one quarter inch for turf on some cold and heavy soils, will start to create problems.

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Poas pratensis and especially the aggressively growing and spreading varieties are reported to accumulate up to one fifth of an inch of thatch per year. This may not sound a lot, but when using the one half inch limit there is clearly not a lot of leeway to play with.

Proactive measures are clearly the best foundation for trouble free turf to this respect. Careful selection of turf grass species for the growing conditions presented and judicious use of fertiliser, irrigation, aeration and top dressing all help to minimise thatch accumulation.

Action in the form of de-thatching using dedicated machinery, such as a scarifier or hollow tine, is something that will invariably be required sooner or later. General recommendations surrounding de-thatching are not to de-thatch when the turf is wet and not trying to remove all in one go.

Ideal time for de-thatching is spring or late summer/autumn and preferably the latter because weeds are more likely to invade a de-thatched area of turf in spring.

De-thatching is commonly part of a wider, integrated turf restoration and re-ignitration programme including top dressing, core aeration and overseeding.

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Modest rates of thatch formation and destruction are comparable and only when the former becomes faster than the latter do problems set in. Research shows how both earthworm and microorganism activities play a vital role in preventing excess thatch accumulation. Good aeration, a soil pH around 6.5 (very slightly acid) and adequate moisture favour the build-up and activity of these beneficial soil ani- mals and microbes.

Problems with thatch are more frequent and acute in compacted soils and those with a clear acidic pH simply because ‘decomposers’ and especially microorganisms cannot flourish under such con- ditions. Poorly balanced fertiliser regimes and the indiscriminate use of fungicides and insecticides are two key factors which can impact negatively and heavily on soil animals and microbes with thatch decomposing capacities.

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Playing with thatch levels

Stephen A.G. Prinn MSc, lecturer at Askham Bryan College, York, with an alternative look at thatch

With today’s budget constraints that many clubs are imposing it may seem ironic that the members and visitors to the course are also demanding more and more visitors to the course are also demanding more and more

Perhaps the constraints that many clubs are working with today’s budget constraints, and the need to get more activity and increase the profit margins, may be surprising to note that an estimated 50% of the course’s profit margins are spent on greenkeeping staff and the extra money being spent on the greens is just 50% of the game played on the greens. That’s 50% of the game played on a little over 1% of the golf course. So the greens are often what greenkeepers are judged on, rightly or wrongly?

This means that the turf on the greens, the playability of the surface, is of great importance. When too much thatch is present the turfgrass environment changes and the effects of this can be seen in the way the ball interacts with the surface. Should levels of thatch become excessive then the disadvantages far exceed the, often, stated, advantages of; providing a uniform look, saving water, and particularly the benefits of: providing a uniform look, saving water, and particularly the benefits of an ideal environment for the playability of the surface.

Several problems are associated with excessive thatch and need to be understood, the most notable issues as outlined by Beard (1973);

- **Increased disease and insect problems**
- **Localised dry spots**
- **Soft, often referred to as, ‘spongy’ surfaces**
- **Decreased heat, cold and drought tolerances**

Thatch provides some pathogens with an ideal environment for the development of disease. Development of these diseases will cause a thinning out or drying of the grass plants which in turn leads to uneven ball roll.

Localised dry spots occur when thatch dries out and become hydrophobic, preventing water, irrigation or rainfall, from reaching the soil surface, lack of soil water moisture will result in poor root growth and possibly the eventual drying of the turfgrass.

Soft surfaces can have several detrimental effects on the quality of the greens. The potential for scalping increases leaving uneven mowing heights across the greens and damage to the grass plant. Foot-printing may also occur affecting the ball, which does not hold the line of a putt.

If a golf club has small greens, coupled with limited space for walk on and walk off areas perhaps due to surrounding bunker placements or the proximity of the next tee, or have limited hole placements within the green and this green has high thatch levels, then those areas which receive the greatest amount of wear will compact the thatch in these areas.

This will increase the ball roll distance in these zones, leading to a putting surface which has variability across the surface for ball roll. There will, therefore, be a variation in ball roll distance across the same greens. Even without small greens high thatch levels may lead poor ball roll due to the softness of the surface.

It should also be noted that when greenkeepers attempt to combat the softness of the thatch by double cutting, Nikolai (2005), found that scalping was much more prevalent on the second pass, resulting in a decline in the turfgrass quality and poorer ball roll.

While an equal increase in ball roll distance could be obtained from rolling rather than double cutting, that may be considered an option, studies from Nikolai (2005), have also shown that the effects of an increase in ball roll distance on a heavily thatched surface only last around 24 hours whilst compared to a green which is relatively thatch free where the effects of rolling may last up to 48 hours.

High thatch levels will also elevate the crown and roots of the grass plant above the soil surface, this exposes the key parts of the grass plant to extremes of weather that may subsequently weaken or kill off the plant.

Higher thatch levels therefore can be seen to lead to poorer playing surfaces, either directly through the surface becoming soft, or indirectly through the side effects of a weaker, or perhaps more stressed grass plant which is less able to deal with environmental factors and this subsequently causes a decline in grass cover.

Decline in grass cover may be addressed with over-seeding, but, seedlings that develop in thatch are more susceptible to injury from weather conditions, traffic and other stresses than seedlings which develop in soil (Turgeon 2007). Producing a weak sword in an already weak sword!

Therefore, it is vital to realise that there is an inverse relationship between thatch accumulation and putting green performance. Thatch can be kept at bay by good maintenance regimes, but invariably mechanical methods will be brought into play. There are many terms that are used in the industry; scarification, verticutting and grooming have all been with us for many years.

Forms of aeration such as hollow coring could also be considered, they do all have one thing in common, they disrupt the playing surface to a greater or lesser extent. Description of the playing surface will affect the playability of the surface.

These operations should also be carried out when the environmental conditions are suitable. Unfortunately this usually coincides with periods of better weather and subsequently more golfers and just maybe with an increase in the comments from the players about the “state of the greens”.

Greenkeepers may suddenly find themselves in a no win situation; the club don’t want the work carrying out, because of the amount of play, whether from members or visiting parties. The greenkeeper may not want to do the work and face the comments about the greens. As for the initial problem, the thatch just continues to get worse and the putting surface quality is once again on the decline.

In conclusion, learn what causes thatch, learn how to deal with it without sacrificing the playability of the surface.

If thatch is a problem, there may be some changes. Last but not least change is good. Remember, if we keep doing what we’re doing, we’re going to keep getting what we’re getting.
Playing with thatch levels

Stephanie A.G. Prinn MSc, lecturer at Askham Bryan College, York, with an alternative look at thatch

With today’s budget constraints that many clubs are imposing it may seem ironic that the members and visitors to the course are also demanding more and more. It is the greens where most of this focus would seem to lie and given that perhaps 50% of the golf course is played on the greens. That’s 50% of the game played on a little over 1% of the golf course. So the greens are often what greenkeepers are judged on, rightly or wrongly! This means the current thatch on the greens, the playability of the surface, is of great importance.

When too much thatch is present the turfgrass environment changes and the effects of this can be seen in the way the ball interacts with the surface. Should levels of thatch become excessive then the disadvantages far exceed the advantages of; providing a softer, more forgiving running surface. The consequences of this would include:

• Increased disease and insect problems
• Reduced water infiltration
• Localized dry spots
• Soft, often referred to as, ‘spongy’ surfaces
• Decreased heat, cold and drought tolerances

Thatch provides some pathways with an ideal environment for the development of disease. Development of diseases will cause a thinning out or dying of the grass plants which in turn leads to uneven ball roll.

Localized dry spots occur when thatch dries out and becomes hydrophobic, preventing water, irrigation or rainfall, from reaching the soil surface, lack of soil water moisture will result in poor root growth and possibly the eventual dying of the turfgrass.

Soft surfaces can have several detrimental effects on the quality of the greens award. The potential for scaling increases leaving uneven mowing heights across the greens and damage to the grass plant. Foot-printing may also occur affecting the ball, which does not hold the line of a putt.

• Increased disease and insect problems

If a golf club has small greens, coupled with limited space for walk on and walk off areas perhaps due to surrounding bunker placements or the proximity of the next tee, or have limited hole placements within the green then this green has high thatch levels, then those areas which receive the greatest amount of wear will compact the thatch in these areas.

This will increase the ball roll distance in these zones, leading to a putting surface which has variability across the surface for ball roll. There will, therefore, be a variation in ball roll distance across the same green. Even without small greens high thatch levels may lead poor ball roll due to the softness of the surface.

It should also be noted that when greenkeepers attempt to combat the slowness of the thatch by double cutting, Nikolai (2005), found that scaling was much more prevalent on the second pass, resulting in a decline in the turfgrass quality and poorer ball roll.

While an equal increase in ball roll distance could be obtained from rolling rather than double cutting and that may be considered an option, studies by Nikolai (2005), have also shown that the effects of an increase in ball roll distance on a heavily thatched surface only last around 24 hours whilst compared to a green which is relatively thatch free where the effects of rolling may last up to 48 hours.

High thatch levels will also elevate the crown and roots of the grass plant above the soil surface, this exposes the key parts of the grass plant to extremes of weather that may subsequently weaken or kill off the plant.

Higher thatch levels therefore can be seen to lead to poorer playing surfaces, either directly through the surface becoming soft, or indirectly through the side effects of a weaker, or perhaps more stressed grass plant which is less able to deal with environmental factors and this subsequently causes a decline in grass cover.

Decline in grass cover may be addressed with over seeding, but, seedlings that develop in thatch are more susceptible to injury from weather conditions, traffic and other stresses than seedlings which develop in soil (Purgeon 2007). Producing a weak sward in an already weak sward!

Therefore, it is vital to realise that there is an inverse relationship between thatch accumulation and putting green performance.

Thatch can be kept at bay by good maintenance regimes, but invariably mechanical methods will be brought into play. There are many terms that are used in the industry; scarification, verticutting and grooming have all been with us for many years.

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They do all have one thing in common, they disrupt the playing surface to a greater or lesser extent. Disturbance of the playing surface will affect the playability of the surface.

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In conclusion, what causes thatch, learn how to deal with it without sacrificing the playability of the surface.

If thatch is a problem, there may be need to some changes.

But change is good. Remember, if we keep doing what we’re doing, we’re going to keep getting what we’re getting.
The increasing availability of sub-soil aeration techniques can literally breathe new life into tired turf. So before looking to strip off the old turf and starting again, consider if some form of aeration can help. James de Havilland writes:

It would be unfair to single out any item of equipment as the ideal aeration tool. Not only a wide range of aeration systems, from slitters to air injection systems but an endless array of problems too.

So what follows is a general overview of some kit that is on offer with a general truism. If you are experiencing an aeration problem with your tees, greens or fairways, the chances are someone has been through similar problems too!

The Wiedenmann Terra Spike range comprises ten machines with widths spanning 1.35m to 2.1m with working depths of up to 10cm. A Terra Spike can be used to inject dry materials to include dried milled seaweed, compost and other organic nutrients.

The tines on the GXi are closer to the tractor, a small point that in practice can really help stability. The front roller too, this being claimed to ensure a uniform job on undulating greens. Further, although the machine is mainly designed for greens, tees and fine turf it will also cope on fairways which aren’t built on rocky sub soils.

Ecosolve are specialist contract operators with the Drill n Fill aeration system. These two machines, which are also marketed by the company, are specifically designed to provide sub soil aeration. The Drill and Fill is claimed by Ecosolve to be unique in its ability to not only create aeration ducts but also backfill them.

This is carried out immediately, with materials that can be added including soil amendments, such as sand and gravel, nutrients or even bacteria.

In outline, the Drill n Fill drills 24 vertical ducts 90cm deep by 20cm in diameter over an area of 0.85m². The Deep Drill 60/18 aerator has 60 drill bits of 15 to 20mm diameter over an area of 1.8m². This is then backfilled with materials that can be added.

In itself, the drilling process is feasible. The claimed is that this keeps them from clogging and corrosion for soil exchange.

Launched in autumn 2009, the Wiedenmann GXi8 HD is interesting from a mechanical standpoint. Wear and tear is inevitable on all types of equipment, but it is how it is minimized that can really be of value. On the GXi8 HD, key moving parts to include springs and hinge linkages are positioned behind covers at the front of the machine.

The claim is that this keeps them out of the ‘dirt zone’ which in turn can help reduce wear and tear. As a bonus, it also helps to make the unit quieter too.

The centre of gravity is also closer to the tractor, a small point that in practice can really help stability. The drills on the GXi are closer to the front roller too, this being claimed to ensure a uniform job on undulating greens. Further, although the machine is mainly designed for greens, tees and fine turf it will also cope on fairways which aren’t built on rocky sub soils.

A Terralift can be used to inject dry materials to include dried milled seaweed, compost and other organic nutrients.

MAIN ABOVE: The Terrain Aeration Terralift injects air via 2.5cm probe to work down to around 1.0m. A Terralift can be used to inject dry materials to include dried milled seaweed, compost and other organic nutrients.

INSET RIGHT: The Hydrovane independent pump has its own integral cooling pack. Designed to deliver compressed air at 88 litres per minute at a pressure of up to 10 bar, the Aer-Aid system, delivering 44 litres per minute at a constant of up to 127mm and the working width is 127mm. This can be as high as 9km/hr; fast enough to make fairway aeration feasible.

To help indicate a given models performance, Wiedenmann rank its models into XF for units able to work at a high forward speed, XD for extra deep, and XP for extra penetrative. Models with a G prefix are suitable for use on greens and other fine turf.

Terra Spike aerators have evolved to make it easier to set both working depth and, as applicable, the degree of heave. There is no need for tools either. As to tine changing, it should be possible to switch between different sets in around 15 minutes.

This is important as one machine can be employed for soil decompaction and coring for soil exchange.
Aerator options

The increasing availability of sub-soil aeration techniques can literally breathe new life into tired turf. So before looking to strip off the old turf and starting again, consider if some form of aeration can help. James de Havilland writes:

It would be unfair to single out any item of equipment as the ideal aeration tool. Not only a wide range of aeration systems, from slitters to air injection systems but an endless array of problems too.

So what follows is a general overview of some kit that is on offer with a general truism. If you are experiencing an aeration problem with your tees, greens or fairways, there is a good chance someone has been through similar problems too!

The Wiedenmann Terra Spike range comprises ten machines with widths spanning 1.35m to 2.7m with working depths of up to 1.5m. A Terra Spike can be used to inject dry materials to include dried milled seaweed, compost and other melt-down nutrients.

A Terralift can be used to inject dry materials to include dried milled seaweed, osmocote and slow release nutrients. The terrain aeration Terralift injects air via 2.5cm probe and is claimed to send a blast of sufficient force to work down to around 1.0m. A Terra Spike is mainly designed for greens, tees and fine turf. Further, although the machine is mainly designed for greens, trees and fine turf it will also cope on fairways which aren’t built on rocky sub-soils.

The Deep Drill 60/18 aerator is ‘fast enough’ to be worked over wider areas. Aerating approaches and compacted areas of fairways is just one of the uses to which such equipment can be put.

Wiedenmann’s XS8 fitted with a full range of solid and hollow tines. The centre of gravity is also closer to the rear roller too, this being claimed to ensure a uniform job on undulating greens. Further, although the machine is mainly designed for greens, tees and fine turf it will also cope on fairways which aren’t built on rocky sub-soils.

Ecosolve are specialist contract operators with the Drill n Fill aerator and Deep Drill 60/18 aerator. These two machines, which are also marketed by the company, are specifically designed to provide sub-soil aeration. The Drill and Fill is claimed by Ecosolve to be unique in its ability to not only create aeration ducts but also backfill them. This is carried out immediately, with materials that can be added including soil amendments, such as sand and gravel, nutrients or even bacteria.

In outline, the Drill n Fill drills 24 vertical ducts 30cm deep by 20cm in diameter over an area of 0.85m². The Deep Drill 60/18 aerator has 60 drill bits of 15 to 20mm diameter over an area of 0.85m². In itself, the drilling process is claimed to improve drainage by penetrating and piercing compacted layers in turf subsoil. By extracting material, lateral soil movement is also encouraged and this can allow re-establishment of capillary pore space in the root zone area.

The drilled holes can also help improve rooting at the interface between turf and subsoil. Where turf has been laid over packed subsoil, it is unable to get adequate rooting and will tend to be as high as 9km/hr; fast enough to make fairway aeration feasible.

To help indicate a given models performance, Wiedenmann rank its models into XF for units able to work at a high forward speed, XD for extra deep, and XP for extra penetrative. Models with a G prefix are suitable for use on greens and other fine turf.

Groundsman Industries deep tine aerators feature sealed bearings, to reduce maintenance, and have a shock absorbing system on the crank to help reduce noise and vibration. Tector mounted models are offered in 1.2 and 1.8m working widths and can be fitted with a full range of solid and hollow tines.

If you are experiencing an aeration problem with your tees, greens or fairways, there is a good chance someone has been through similar problems too!
rest on the soil and not root. Holes drilled through the turf and into the subsoil will act as penetrable ducts into which turf roots can grow, fastening the loose top zone to the subsoil.

Where the Drill n Fill departs from standard drill type aerators is its ability to remove soil and replace it with fresh material. By adding sand, gravel or a specialist drainage medium, this process can also be used to make the drilled holes semi-permanent.

Another innovative aeration system is the Terralift aerator. This type of equipment works by blasting compressed air down into the subsoil, the sudden blast of air opening up fissures and helping to alleviate a range of subsoil problems including compaction.

A Terralift injects air via 2.5cm probe, and is worked on a staggered grid based on 2.0m centres. Said to send a blast of sufficient force to work down to around 1.0m, a Terralift can also be used to inject dry material. This can include dried milled seaweed, osmocote and slow release nutrients as well as various fungal and microbe-based materials.

The system can also be used to treat areas damaged by oil spills, sending in a bacterial formulation that can be used to digest oil within the soil. It is this type of specialist application that is often overlooked, with digging out problem areas typically being seen as the only answer.

As an aside, the Deep Drill 60/18 can also be used in conjunction with Terralift type equipment. Here, drilling in holes to perforate the surface before using the Terralift will prevent the compacted layer acting like a ‘membrane’. This helps reduce surface uplift and is particularly useful when working on playing surfaces.

Based around its established Javelin vertical action aerator, the SISIS Javelin with Aer-Aid system uses compressed air to help relieve compaction in the rootzone of all types of sports turf. In simple terms, as well as pushing a hole into the turf with its tines, the Aer-Aid element also injects a blast of compressed air too. The aim is to offer a degree of additional decompaction right where it has most benefit.

Aeration is a fascinating subject. The adoption of existing equipment and new techniques continue to broaden the ways in which aeration can be used to help keep turf in good shape. Of equal importance, aeration can be used to rejuvenate tired turf economically.
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**Contacts**

- www.ecosolve.co.uk/golf.html
- www.terrainaeration.co.uk/
- www.sisis.com/golf/

**Other aeration equipment suppliers include:**
- EP Barus Ltd (MTD), Campey Turf Care Systems
- CHG Equipment Ltd
- DJ Turfcare Equipment Ltd Groundsmen Industries

**NEW**

**Wiedenmann**

Introducing a unique 270° swivel blower with whisper turbine. Blows continuously in one direction without the need to back up or turn around. Really quiet. Truly effective.

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Introducing a unique 270° swivel blower with whisper turbine. Blows continuously in one direction without the need to back up or turn around. Really quiet. Truly effective.

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www.wiedenmann.co.uk
All the latest news from our section

Piperdam will be back to work by then following paternity leave. Hopefully Shaun on becoming a dad, you’ll be up 22 hours a day now instead of the normal 20!

Gordon

Pipermuir will be looking to take up the position of Head Greenkeeper at South Staffs GC. Craig has a lot of guys in the area, was recently on a braunna’s holiday (1st Neil Sadler, Portlethen 3rd Jocky Urquart, Rothes 4th Neil Metcalf, Craibstane)

North

As I am writing this report the weather for June and July has been a bit of a worry and I hope that this will all stop and we can get some heat. There has been some movement in the greenkeeping world. John Merchant is now Head Greenkeeper at South Staffs GC and Stewart Brown has moved onto the Silverburn Course as First Assistant at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club. We wish them all the best in their new jobs.

Christopher Watson from Petercruzer Golf Club has won Scottish Region Year 2 Award and has also been nominated for the Tore Student of the Year Award and wish him all the best for this award. I also have to say sorry for not posting the results from the Spring outing at Royal Aberdeen. Better late than never here are the results.

Nearest The Pin


East

This year the summer months have failed to deliver any kind of weather resembling the summer of 2000 to present day. It has been a tough few years for our golfers and our greenkeepers have had to work hard to make sure our courses are in good condition. This proves to Jobb and his staff for their hard work and to Billy and his staff for looking after us and not forgetting our sponsor Rob from Full Circle Irrigation.

The winners...

Dr 1st Neil Sadler, Portlethen 2nd B. Jackson, North East Golf Club 3rd G. Street

G.Baxter

Nearest Pin...D.Gleed and Duncan Cameron

A big thank you to Sandra our regional rep for popping down to see us and helping with the raffle ticket sales were very good so the job is yours for Horforth this year!

We had a brisk EGM for the vacant treasurer position and I duly got voted in. I have known Joe for a while now and he will be a good lad to have on board. I had got together a very strong team with our friends from the Sheffield section but the poor weather didn’t us and good to have the raffle. Ross has it that pressure was put on the lads at Howley Hall from the Golf Club to get it called off because they might be in for a mighty struggle. Thanks to all.

Next up for us is the invitational day at Horforth, 22nd August, another afternoon kick off so I am hoping for a big turn out please. And finally I have a few copies of Walter Wood’s book which I got from a old

Scotland

Congratulations to Craig Perry of the Dukes Course who leaves shortly to take up the position of Head Greenkeeper at South Staffs GC. Craig is a glasses guy in the area, was recently on a braunna’s holiday (1st Neil Sadler, Portlethen 3rd Jocky Urquart, Rothes 4th Neil Metcalf, Craibstane)

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Nearest Pin...D.Gleed and Duncan Cameron

A big thank you to Sandra our regional rep for popping down to see us and helping with the raffle ticket sales were very good so the job is yours for Horforth this year!

We had a brisk EGM for the vacant treasurer position and I duly got voted in. I have known Joe for a while now and he will be a good lad to have on board. I had got together a very strong team with our friends from the Sheffield section but the poor weather didn’t us and good to have the raffle. Ross has it that pressure was put on the lads at Howley Hall from the Golf Club to get it called off because they might be in for a mighty struggle. Thanks to all.

Next up for us is the invitational day at Horforth, 22nd August, another afternoon kick off so I am hoping for a big turn out please. And finally I have a few copies of Walter Wood’s book which I got from a old
Piperdam will be back to work by then following paternity leave. But Shaun is on becoming a dad, you’ll be up 22 hours a day now and instead of the normal 20!”

Gordon

Scotland

Congratulations to Craig Perry of the Dukes Course who leaves shortly to take up the position of Head Greenkeeper at South Stiffs GC. Craig like a lot of guys in the area, was recently on a braaun’s holiday at the 5* Castle Stuart for the Scottish Open. David Dublaw also helped out by arranging the transport and Fraser Robertson, St Andrews Links were in Paris helping out at the French Open. Michael Riddell, (St Andrews) was at the Irish Open, Derek Robson (Dundee) was at the US Women’s Open and Phil haild (St Andrews Links) was helping at Lytham for the Open Championship. It’s fantastic to see our members being asked to assist in this way and also has been nominated for the Toro Student of the Year award.BtMe is back promoting our stand at the BIGGA tUrF MAnAGeMent eXHIBItion at the Harrogate International Centre on 22-24 January 2013. It’s a joy to play even if a few of the pin placements were a bit tricky. It was a lovely golf course which was in great condition considering the weather. I’ve had many messages of sympathy that curiously resembles jokes about my football team. Rangers it’s tough time’s for Gers fans but the jokes make it SO much easier to take (NOT) Stop laughing Shaun Cunningham!

Checking in:

Well done on a fantastic year on the greenkeeping world. John Merchant is now Head Greenkeeper at Castle Stuart Golf Centre and Stewart Brown has moved onto the Silverburn Course as First Assistant at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, we wish them all the best in their new jobs. Christopher Watson from Petercurt Golf Club has won Scottish Region Year 2 Award and also has been nominated for the Toto Student of the Year Award and we wish him all the best for this award. I also have to say sorry for not posting the results from the Spring outing at Royal Aberdeen. Better late than never so here are the results:

Nearst The Pin

Winner Gary McCandless, 8th Rigby Taylor

Winner Bob Hardie, 11th Craigstone Golf Club

Winner Josh Lester, 17th Longlands Golf Club

Sweep

4th Neil Metcalfe, Craigstone Golf Club

3rd Jocky Urquhart, Rothes Golf Club

2nd Robert Paterson, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

Neil Sadler, Portlthen Golf Club

Trade Winner Pat Allen Symbio

Committee Winner

Robert Paterson, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

Veterans

2nd Peter Boyd

1st Brian Cocker

Apprentice Trophy

Jack Craig, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

Class 3

Niall Bruce, Montrose Golf Club

2nd Steve Frost, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

1st Scott Ribeck, Kings Links Class 2

3rd Stewart Brown, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

2nd Steve Macrae, Deeside Golf Club

1st Brian Cocker, Aithly Golf Club Class 1

2nd Douglas Elick, Hazelhead Golf Club 1st Robert Paterson, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

Scratch

2nd Jocky Urquhart, Rothes Golf Club

1st Neil Sadler, Portlthen Golf Club

Trade Winner Pat Allen Symbio

to John Barr and his staff for the condition of the course which was superb considering, thanks also to the catering staff for providing lovely food on the day and finally to the club for allowing the section to play your excellent golf course. Prize winners this year were Scratch a Red 73, 1st class winner B McAlley (Drumpellier) 36 points, 2nd St Taylor Glasgow 34 points, 3rd C Littlejohn Beadsden 32 points, 2nd class winner G Stewart (Drumpellier) 34, 2nd C Wylie Glasgow 30 (IBS), 3rd D Mclaren 30, 3rd class winner B Sawley East Kilbride 35, 2nd P Livingston 31, 3rd N Manton 31. I would to say well done to all the competitors for their efforts during the season. The top 3 teams were 2012, the total entrants of 34 was a bit more refreshing. Hopefully we can get a few more to turn up for the autumn outing at Frenness on 18 September courtesy of Peter Boyd who is Captain.

The Scottish outing at Rathpark was very interesting entry of 42 players compete for a wonderful variety of prizes on a lovely golf course. Team consisted of Head Greenkeeper Tom Alexander, General Manager Joe Merchant, Assistant at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club and finally thanks to John Young’s first competition as Regional Administrator Sandra Raper who is looking after the Northern and Midlands Regions. Sandra asked me to hand the John Deere Team Championship to the new RCSA Vice President John Young.

The Team Championship winner was again David Wilkinson, M.Lawton, K Barrows of the home club with a score of 56 gross net 55. I thank you lads better get some bunker practice for in the finals of Shalay Hall as there’s plenty of them, I would like to thank the greens committee for providing such an excellent meal. May I also take this opportunity to say thanks to Jim Croston and Rachael Duff for their hard work during the event as this was John Young’s first competition as Regional Administrator and finally thanks to Simon Coultrus from City of Newmarket GC and longest drive went to Simon Coultrus from City of Newmarket GC.

I received a phone call a couple of days later on from our Regional Administrator Jimmy Robertson who is going to host the Northern and Midlands Regions. Sandra asked me to hand the John Deere Team Championship to Jimmy Robertson who is going to host the Northern and Midlands Regions.

What a lovely part of the country to play in, they have some great golf courses but can be tricky, great course to play. It was not a long drive but a short one to the golf course but can be tricky, great course to play. It was not a long drive but a short one to the golf course but can be tricky, great course to play.

The Northern Region

What a lovely start to the day at our Presidents fixture at Scarborough… fantastic weather, super course and good old Ben from Scarborough bumping into Frank Stewart’s car... priceless. Good turn out thanks, 3rd A. Baxter

Dve 2, 1st J.Watts

Div 3 F.Stewart

1st B.Jackson

2nd B.Jackson

3rd G.Street

Trade Winner...Mel Guy and Graham Leece, Ulverston for making me feel welcome on the day. I didn’t have any news for the grated kicked in with a mighty big kicking from us!!

Region to get it called off because of weather resembling the sum-mer update delivered to you. Thanks for the support and the news! Next up for us is the invita-
tional day at Horsforth, 22 August, another afternoon kick off so I am hoping for a big turn out please. And actually I have a few copies of Walter Wood’s book which I got from a old
friend of mine, Monley Harris says they are in good condition and at only £3.99 you a guy in his 90s could buy a new one for me please... tee hee!

Andy Slimsby 01750 660458
andrew.slimsby98@gojeefmail.com

North Wales

Is anyone else fed up with being soaked to the skin, day in and day out? Be honest, I love my job but the for-

growing grass and hellish conditions keep it tidy and under control in air-drying me and the other members of our team to dis-

ction. OK till whistling but next Monday to the greenkeepers at the moment that are feeling the pressure.

On a brighter note we finally played the mid-

summer / spring tournament at Beauport Park GC. We did so successfully after a short illness, our condonces go to his family, friends and colleagues. Our Lewis of Llwynnychek GC celebrates 40 years of service this year and the club recognised this achieve-

ment with a celebration night on the 2nd of May. I was happy to be invited as our new short course short the ‘Lewis Allen’ academic course.

Well that was a bit more of an essay than a short note to keep you informed, will sign off with all the best until next month!

Pete Murray

Midland

Well here we are again, same conditions as last month, still more rain, and then some more rain. The one thing

I do love is putting on my chest waders, however of late I have always been employed to try and get the work and not so I can go fly fishing. I have always wished that I worked on a salmon river running through it, be careful what you wish for. I do not envy those that have the job I do.

The summer tournament at Ooty Park on 11 July was postponed due to the monsoon type weather we have been get-

ting throughout July. The new date is confirmed as Wednesday 5 September. We shall keep any who wish to compete and enter you for the new date unless you require a refund, if so please contact Gary who will be happy to oblige.

The autumn tournament at Druids Heath has also been moved back a week due to a clash of dates. Please note that the date of Thursday of October 25 for your diaries, which will also include the section’s AGM.

Entries for the golf days this year have been disappointing to date, so please consider supporting your section if you can. As a reminder, we would love to see you at any of our golf days or education events we have during the year. Check our section’s Facebook page and website for further information. Our new website can be found at www.biggamidlandsection.co.uk.

North Wales

A steal! Cheques made payable to my friend of mine, Monkey Harris

In my report the course is described as being in good condition, however Allan was Chair for the past 2 years, so long the North of England secretary. Over the past couple of years he has been moving further and further on the course as they are driving me and the other members of the team to dis-

Section. Our latest golf event at Belton Woods resulted in the update on the Mid Anglia Section, Chairman Rob Welford will
discontinue and wish him all the best in his new venture.

Our summer pairs knockout plans to take place on 18 July, a big thank you goes to Rob MacDonald for coming through the year and helping this section to be a fantastic one. Any news of interest to the section please email me on newposition@holland.co.uk. Our summer pairs knockout will be played our second competition

of our latest golf event at Belton Woods, finishing our season high.

So, what is your claim to fame? Led into the question as your scorecard must be the average of your best 10 scores and it must be the same card. This will give you a handicap. A handicap will give you a score on each hole. We then compare the score of each player on each hole and the player with the lowest score wins.

A golfer can get back into greenkeeping for the section please email me on chair@midlandgreenkeepers.co.uk. Once again I can only apolo-

gise for the weather we have been get-

ting throughout July. The new programme for the league was already in our hands and we were only accessible by boat! Not quite as bad as 2007 when the course resembled a silage factory into overdrive leaving

us with areas only accessible by foot.

As for the weather, constant rain continues to pour and we are still waiting on the weather (more on that later), but the departure of our

Chairman Rob Welford will take over as Chairman for the time being.

Really looking forward to visiting

the course into such great condition of the course and to

Kent

Not much to write about this month as the weather is beyond me but I am sure they under-

stand his Scottish tones.

I would like to wish Allan all the very best in his new venture.


during further improvements and events golf days (although the presentations may be a bit quicker now).

At Section level Vice Chair-

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...
friend of mine, Monley Harris says they are in great condition and at only £3.99 you gis a great meal and a drink...very payable to me please...tee hee!

Andy Slingsby
andy slingby98@googlemail.com

North Wales

Is anyone else fed up with being soaked to the skin, day in and day out? I can honestly, love my job but the ever growinggrass and hellish conditions keep it tidy and under control in out driving me and the other members of our team to distraction. OK till whining but anyone else fed up with those greenkeepers at the moment that are feeling the pressure.

We finally played the midsummer / spring tournament at our club last Saturday 12th August at Llangollen golf club and 48 competitors played in a 36 hole stroke play event. Full results for all these players will be posted to Nick Grey for organising the results and posting to the members.

In early August we play the annual Wales match at Aberdovey GC. On 7th August we play the annual match at my home course of the Vale of Llangollen golf club and 48 competitors played in a 36 hole stroke play event and we will get back over as Chairman for the time being.

Jez Hughes was also Midland Region Chairman and Vice Chairman Rob Welford will now assume this position. On behalf of everyone in the section I would like to wish all the new in his very best in his new venture

How the Dutch will ever with the section and also the weather we have all been experiencing in the last few months is beyond me but I am sure they will all find common ground.

Let’s hope the weather we have all been experiencing in the last few months is beyond me but I am sure they will all find common ground.

As for the weather, constant rain has once again left us with a green resemble of a golf course to work your magic upon. I hope that those of you who are in the other parts of the country that have been hit far more severely have the extreme conditions and that, when the weather finally turns and the new grass grows in, you will have some room for that course to work your magic upon.

Our summer pairs knockout is now in full swing thanks to all those who entered this great, full championship. Check the website for the latest results. Don’t forget to contact us with any news that you would like included in this column.

Our autumn tournament this year is now in full swing thanks to all those who entered this great, full championship. Check the website for the latest results. Don’t forget to contact us with any news that you would like included in this column.

B.ONE...2013

Mr Green

Name: Alan Campbell phone: 01244 610022
Email: andrew.buchanan@beaufortparkclub.co.uk

Eone Golf Club

Position: Assistant Greenkeeper

Nickname: Ham/ Hammy

1 How long have you been greenkeeping? 17 years
2 What was it about the career that attracted you? I fell into it by chance, then fell in love with greenkeeping.
3 If you weren’t a greenkeeper what do you think you’d be doing?

4 Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?

5 What thing do you most enjoy doing and why?

6 What one thing - other than pay rise - would improve your greenkeeping life? Improved socialising with teachers and careers advisors, etc, to educate them in the opportunities available and skills required in greenkeeping / golf course management.

7 Hobbies? Cutting (putting and coaching), and pub quizzes.
8 Favourite Music? I enjoy John Otway.
9 Which team do you support (football or otherwise)? Jedford R.F.P.
10 What is your claim to fame? Gaddied in the European Open at Sunningdale, my man finished 2nd!
BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Northern Region
Daniel Brennan, North West Section

Midland Region
Andrew Snow, Warwickshire Section
David Daves, Warwickshire Section

South West Region
Malcolm Munro, Devon Section

South East Region
Michael Hinton, Kent Section

South West Region
Derek Jones, South West Section

Overseas
Jo Lacey (Farmura), England

South Wales
Lee Blackburn, South Wales Region

South Wales
Tim Willson, East Midlands Section

Around The Green

Keeping us up to date!

Rural Life Club etc. Thanks in advance, for following new members

BIGGA welcomes the Pat Manning, Mid Anglia Section
Jeffrey Donovan, Mid Anglia Section
Maurice Sines, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Region
Jan Larsson, Sweden
Overseas Northern Ireland
Josh Collins, South Coast Section
Jonathan Pickett, South Coast Section
Benjamin Sparks, South West Section
Paul Sheridan, Surrey Section

Secretaries
Robert Rous, Southern Counties Section
Geoff Metcalfe, Yorkshire Region
Adam Lachlan, Scotland
Deb Miller, North Midlands Section
Sue Brown, North West Section
Sue Williams, Mid Anglia Section

the blame because, I can put it down to age and the facts that I have never seen so much grass, so there has been little time to think about anything other than cutting. Barton, here on the cliff top has never been so green at this time of year, our fuel costs will be sky high as all of the kit is constantly out.

As I write this in mid-July it is raining again with temperatures around 16c and it feels like autumn.

The John Deere invitation was held at Rushmore Park Golf Club on 10 July, 20 teams competing for a place in the National final to be held at Slaley Hall on 10 August. The winning club was Broadstone, in second place was Remedy Oak and third went to Barton-on-Sea. The course was in great condition a credit to Chris Browning and all of his staff on what has been a difficult year. The few showers we all endured did not dampen our spirits. A well deserved rest!

Looking to the future, Hero has re-scheduled for 2 October, more details in the October newsletter. Your support would be much appreciated.

To all the members at BIGGA, it’s time for the next newsletter, it has been a more difficult year. The few showers we all endured did not dampen our spirits. A well deserved rest!

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South West and South Wales

Firstly, I don’t like to start on such a negative note, however recently the section had to cancel our summer tournament. This was due to be played at Cumberwell Park GC. Apologies go to all members at Cumberwell, including Matt and his staff, I hear and believe the course was in fantastic condition. Although canceling the event was not something we wanted to do, it was very understandable giving the recent conditions, greenerkeepers have been a very difficult job recently, it’s all cut, cut, cut...and rain, rain, rain! During these conditions, if you have staff like we do at Milch, consider yourself very lucky!

Back to a more positive note, dates that you should make a note of are Friday 10 August, a section match v South Wales to be played at Royal Porthcawl GC. This match was won by Devon after a 3 year drought and the trophy went to Devon Captain for the day. The individual prize went to Jamie Gregory (Launcestion) in 1st place with 36 points, winning on count back. 2nd place and the pin Stuart Clayton. Our summer golfif you would like to be considered or would like to support the AGM to air your views and support section golf days like these couldn’t take place without you.

Our next event is October 11 at Clyne Golf Club, the AGM starts at 11am followed by golf at 1pm. Please guys book this time in your calendars and try and support the AGM to air your views and support section golf days.

Thanks all, Peter H
## Diary of Events

Details of your Section’s forthcoming events in 2012 can be found here...

### August

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1st</td>
<td>East Anglia Golf Event</td>
<td>Royal Norwich Golf Club</td>
<td>Ian Willett Tel. Mobile: 07929 205398 or email: biggaeastanglia.co.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2nd</td>
<td>East of England Event</td>
<td>Belton Woods Hotel &amp; Golf Club</td>
<td>Bruce Hicks Tel mobile: 07931 714922 or email: <a href="mailto:brucehicks1@gmail.com">brucehicks1@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9th</td>
<td>Midland Region Golf Management Event sponsored by Tacit Golf UK</td>
<td>Verulam Golf Club</td>
<td>Sandra Raper On Mobile: 07866 366966 or email: <a href="mailto:sandra@bigga.co.uk">sandra@bigga.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 16th</td>
<td>Scottish Team Event Golf Day</td>
<td>Auchterarder Golf Club</td>
<td>Gordon Moir Email: <a href="mailto:gmoir@stanardrews.org.uk">gmoir@stanardrews.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 22nd</td>
<td>Scottish East Section Tournament</td>
<td>Mortonhall Golf Club</td>
<td>Stuart Ferguson Email: <a href="mailto:stufreg@btinternet.com">stufreg@btinternet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 22nd</td>
<td>Northern Section Event</td>
<td>Hooldforth Golf Club</td>
<td>Andrew Slingsby Email: <a href="mailto:slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com">slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com</a></td>
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### September

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 5th</td>
<td>BIGGA Seminars</td>
<td>Saltex, Windsor Racecourse</td>
<td>BIGGA House, 01347 833800 option 3 or email: bigga.co.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11th</td>
<td>North Wales Section Event</td>
<td>St Melod Golf Club</td>
<td>Jez Hughes, Tel mobile: 07876 776265 or email: <a href="mailto:jenpro69@aol.com">jenpro69@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 13th</td>
<td>North West Section Event</td>
<td>Penwortham Golf Club</td>
<td>Chris Sheehan, email: <a href="mailto:jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk">jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13th</td>
<td>East of England Section Event</td>
<td>Blankley Golf Club</td>
<td>Bruce Hicks Tel mobile: 07931 714922 or email: <a href="mailto:brucehicks1@gmail.com">brucehicks1@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13th</td>
<td>Scottish North Section Day</td>
<td>Granton-on-Spey Golf Club</td>
<td>Dale Robertson, email: <a href="mailto:dauletturnberry@aol.com">dauletturnberry@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 18th</td>
<td>Scottish West Section Day</td>
<td>Ferrenze Golf Club</td>
<td>Fraser Ross, email: <a href="mailto:karen.ross@tesco.net">karen.ross@tesco.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 19th</td>
<td>Scottish East Section Autumn Event</td>
<td>Murrayfield Golf Club</td>
<td>Stuart Ferguson, email: <a href="mailto:stufreg@btinternet.com">stufreg@btinternet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19th</td>
<td>Scottish Central Section Golf Day</td>
<td>Piperdam Golf &amp; Leisure Resort</td>
<td>Gordon Moir, email: <a href="mailto:gmoir@stanardrews.org.uk">gmoir@stanardrews.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 20th</td>
<td>South Coast Section v/s South West Section</td>
<td>Salisbury &amp; South Wils Golf Club</td>
<td>Alex McCombie, email: <a href="mailto:southcoastsecretary@gmail.com">southcoastsecretary@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26th</td>
<td>Essex Section Event</td>
<td>Stoke-by-Nayland Golf Club</td>
<td>Arnold Phipps-Jones, email: <a href="mailto:essexbigga@talktalk.net">essexbigga@talktalk.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BIGGA Seminars at SALTEX 2012

**Wednesday 5 September 2012**

**at The Grandstand, Royal Windsor Race Course**

**BIGGA is delighted to have once again, been invited by the IOG to present a series of seminars at SALTEX 2012. This year we will be bringing you some of the greatest hits from the extremely successful Continue to Learn at BTME 2012.**

**10.15 am – 11.15 am**

**Managing Winter Kill**

David Cole, Golf Course/Estate Manager, Loch Lomond Golf Club

In the winter of 2009/10 the greens at Loch Lomond suffered from devastating winter kill. This session will give an insight to the damage that occurred and the precautions that were taken in 2010/11 to prevent similar problems.

**11.30 am – 12.30 pm**

**From Grazing to Scottish Open Status in Five Years**

Chris Haspell, Course Manager, Castle Stuart Golf Club

In this session Chris will discuss his experiences of building a links golf course and it’s growth. He will also describe the journey towards the Scottish Open 2011, the event, the rain and the recovery.

**1.00 pm – 2.00 pm**

**Organic Matter – Friend or Foe**

Paul Lowe, Technical Sales Manager, Symbio

Measuring organic matter levels is becoming very popular, almost an industry standard procedure. This information can be invaluable to green keepers and grounds men. However, how do we decipher between thatch and organic matter and why it is important to do so. This seminar will discuss the various differences between problematic thatch and beneficial organic matter, the problems with working to a figure, the difference between drainage and percolation rates and how you can turn the thatch to your advantage.

**BIGGA CPD Credits**

0.5 CPD credits are available for each seminar.

A CPD register will be available at the end of each seminar.
Diary of Events

Details of your Section’s forthcoming events in 2012 can be found here...

Date Event Venue Contact

AUGUST
August 1st East Anglia Golf Event Royal Norwich Golf Club Ian Willett Tel. Mobile: 07929 205398 or email: info@biggaeastanglia.co.uk
August 2nd East of England Event Belton Woods Hotel & Golf Club Bruce Hicks Tel mobile: 07931 714922 or email: brucehicks1@gmail.com
August 9th Midland Region Golf Management Event sponsored by Tacit Golf UK Verulam Golf Club Sandra Raper on Mobile: 07866 366966 or email: sandra@bigga.co.uk
August 16th Scottish Team Event Golf Day Auchterarder Golf Club Gordon Moir Email: gmoir@standrews.org.uk
August 16th Essex Section Day Blankney Golf Club Bruce Hicks Tel mobile: 07931 714922 or email: brucehicks1@gmail.com
August 22nd Scottish East Section Tournament Mortonhall Golf Club Stuart Ferguson Email: stufeg@btinternet.com
August 22nd Northern Section Event Birchwood Golf Club Sandra Raper on Mobile: 07866 366966 or email: sandra@bigga.co.uk

SEPTEMBER
September 5th BIGGA Seminars Saltex, Windsor Racecourse BIGGA House, 01347 833800 option 3 or info@bigga.co.uk
September 11th North Wales Section Event St Meloy Golf Club Liz Hughes, Tel mobile: 07876 776265 or email: lizpro69@aol.com
September 13th North West Section Event Penwortham Golf Club Chris Sheehan, email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk
September 13th East of England Section Event Blankney Golf Club Bruce Hicks Tel mobile: 07931 714922 or email: brucehicks1@gmail.com
September 13th Scottish North Section Golf Day Granton-on-Spey Golf Club Dale Robertson, email: daleturnberry@aol.com
September 18th Scottish West Section Golf Day Fereneze Golf Club Fraser Ross, email: karen.ross@tesco.net
September 19th Scottish East Section Autumn Event Murrayfield Golf Club Stuart Ferguson, email: stufeg@btinternet.com
September 19th Scottish Central Section Golf Day Piperdam Golf & Leisure Resort Gordon Moir, email: gmoir@standrews.org.uk
September 20th South Coast Section v’s South West Section Salisbury & South Wiltshire Golf Club Alex McCombie, email: southcoastsecretary@gmail.com
September 26th Essex Section Event Stoke-by-Nayland Golf Club Arnold Phipps-Jones, email: essexbigga@talktalk.net

BTME is back
for it’s 24th year, at the Harrogate International Centre
BIGGA TURF MANAGEMENT EXHIBITION • 22-24 JANUARY 2013

BIGGA Seminars at SALTEx 2012

Wednesday 5 September 2012
at The Grandstand, Royal Windsor Race Course

BIGGA is delighted to have once again, been invited by the IOG to present a series of seminars at SALTEx 2012. This year we will be bringing you some of the greatest hits from the extremely successful Continue to Learn at BTME 2012.

10.15 am – 11.15 am
Managing Winter Kill
David Cole, Golf Course/Estate Manager, Loch Lomond Golf Club

In the winter of 2009/10 the greens at Loch Lomond suffered from devastating winter kill. This session will give an insight to the damage that occurred and the precautions that were taken in 2010/11 to prevent similar problems.

11.30 am – 12.30 pm
From Grazing to Scottish Open Status in Five Years
Chris Haspell, Course Manager, Castle Stuart Golf Club

In this session Chris will discuss his experiences of building a links golf course and it’s grow in. He will also describe the journey towards the Scottish Open 2011, the event, the rain and the recovery.

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm
Organic Matter – Friend or Foe
Paul Lowe, Technical Sales Manager, Symbio

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A CPD register will be available at the end of each seminar.
Do you have any old artifacts from days gone-by?

Perhaps your grandad was a greenkeeper and has something stored away in the loft? Maybe an Association tie, or a journal? If so we would love to hear from you. We are particularly interested in the early part of the last century, but anything you have would be worth considering for future editions of this article.

Please contact us on 01347 833800 or email Elliott Small, BIGGA Past Chairman, elliott.edna@hotmail.co.uk

Back in time looks back at cuttings of greenkeeping news from days gone-by. 2012 is a landmark year, being the centenary of Greenkeeping Associations, as well as 25 years since BIGGA was formed.

Each month we will look back at the current month, but in a different year, from over the last hundred.

Here, we travel back to the not-too-distant August 2001, when the Open also happened to be at Royal Lytham and St. Annes.

It’s amazingly now eleven years since David Duval won the 2001 Open, at Royal Lytham and St. Annes, his only major championship, three strokes ahead of Niclas Fasth.

This August edition of GI featured a final page column from then Chairman, Clive Osgood, entitled ‘Lytham Delights’. The current Regional Administrator praised the BIGGA support team for their work at the Open and also Paul Smith, who had then just completed his first Open Championship as Course Manager.

A feature on the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award (top right) highlighted the finalists of that year and an article by the 2000 winner, Jonathan Cleland, revealed how enjoyable and useful his prize of a trip to the US had been.

This issue also included a survey about aeration by Ray Clark, of Harleyford GC, and Martin Gunn, of Temple GC, an announcement that Roger Black M.B.E. would be speaking at BTME 2002 and a feature on BIGGA’s support team at Lytham.

In the news section it was reported that Ian Willett, Course Manager at Thorpeness GC, had collected a certificate for academic achievement and Brian Sullivan, Superintendent of the Bel Air Country Club in LA, had flown to the Open at Lytham to collect his Master Greenkeeper blazer.
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This month David looks at the education and training ladder for greenkeepers with a particular emphasis on career progression once you have joined the greenkeeping profession.

Stepping onto the first rung of a ladder for the first time can be a hairy moment and often it is with uncertainty as to how high you will eventually climb the ladder, but when it comes to a greenkeeping career, the GTC can help you climb the ladder to the very top!

The golf club employers in Britain have, for many years, been very well served by the tried and tested Greenkeeping Apprenticeship Scheme which has produced many of today’s top Course Managers, and long may it continue.

Government funding has and continues to help many employers opt to employ an apprentice and with the valuable input from the Course Manager/ Head Greenkeeper, progress with the chosen GTC Quality Assured Centre, can be rapid.

The Apprenticeship includes the Level 2 Work based Diploma in England and Wales, SVQ Level 2 in Scotland training with some additional qualifications to benefit the apprentice and course provider. The input from the Course Manager is there to be used for all ages; it is the funding support which varies between age groups.

Some employers offer placements for volunteers and again education and training to become a greenkeeper can commence on day 1 of employment.

The GTC’s Level 2 Training Manual and CD-Rom of knowledge is the best “tool” any apprentice can use in association with their chosen Quality Assured Centre to have their skills and knowledge assessed and recorded.

For those not able to gain any sort of work on a golf course there are courses such as the National Certificate in Greenkeeping offered by several Centres.

This qualification very much complements the Level 2 Work Based Diploma/SVQ as there is both the knowledge and practical elements included with either experience gained at the college’s golf course or work experience organised for the learner on a golf course.

Progression from Level 2 to Level 3 can be smooth IF the employer allows their learner to gain the required experience on the job but often the learner struggles if they are not allowed to become involved in supervisory duties.

However, this is not always possible if the learner is say 17 or 18 years of age.

This is when a training plan agreed between the employer, learner and Centre should allow for progression up the career ladder.

The same progression “stumble” on the career ladder can occur from Level 3 to Level 4/5 but it should never be two steps forward one step back.

Wether progression is through a formal course leading to a qualification offered by a QA Centre or a more informal education and training programme, GTC and its Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers are there to help.

Short courses, seminars and workshops are excellent and are often hosted locally by BIGGA’s Regions and Sections not forgetting as well as the Continue to Learn programme, GTC and training providers are there to help. 

It doesn’t have to be the work based route to get you to the top rung of the ladder but experience and the practical skills, as you climb the ladder, are crucial.

Higher Education has become more and more popular as colleges make the qualifications more accessible.

When it comes to formal qualifications this sector has all bases covered, from the work based Apprenticeship to a Degree and everything in between!
This month David looks at the education and training ladder for greenkeepers with a particular emphasis on career progression once you have joined the greenkeeping profession.

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The golf club employers in Britain have, for many years, been very well served by the tried and tested Greenkeeping Apprenticeship Scheme which has produced many of today’s top Course Managers, and long may it continue.

Government funding has continued to help many employers opt to employ an apprentice and with the valuable input from the Course Manager/ Head Greenkeeper, progress with the chosen GTC Quality Assured Centre, can be rapid.

The Apprenticeship includes the Level 2 Work based Diploma in England and Wales, SVQ Level 2 in Scotland and includes some additional qualifications to benefit the apprentice and employer. With training and education you can become a greenkeeper and in two years it is not uncommon for the apprentice to become a greenkeeper.

For those not able to gain any sort of work on a golf course there are courses such as the National Certificate in Greenkeeping offered by several Centres.

This qualification very much complements the Level 2 Work Based/Diploma/SVQ as there is both the knowledge and practical elements included with either experience gained at the college’s work based route to get you to the top rung of the ladder but experience on the job but often the learner struggles if they are not allowed to become involved in supervisory duties.

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Come and say hello!
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The Back Nine
A new column for writers and members to air and share their views on golf greenkeeping topics

This month, BIGGA Past Chairman, Paul Worster talks about empowering the team...

A well-qualified staff team is an obvious asset to any company. But is this enough? Does simply “sending your guys to college” to gain NVQ-type qualifications, completely meet the needs of the modern workplace?

Sure, the College system plays an important role in every greenkeeper’s personal development. The pathway of his or her evolution from raw apprentice into fully-fledged Assistant Greenkeeper is greatly smoothed by the type of qualifications which impart the skills, the task-specific knowledge, the introduction to Health & Safety at Work and various underpinning Acts, which are all part of today’s workplace. But can we do more?

I believe we can, and with a little time and planning, can really set out along a path of empowerment for our staff.

As an example – a while ago one of our Assistant Greenkeepers wrote in appraisal about feeling stale and stifled. He had realised, as I suspect greenkeepers up and down the country do at times, that career progression can be slow with vacancies and opportunities sometimes being limited. I can still remember feeling exactly the same in my mid-twenties – feeling as though I’d hit the wall in terms of personal development, because vacancies and opportunities for advancement were difficult to come by.

In the case of my excellent Assistant I was able to say that I didn’t think he was stifled at all and that there was plenty of development work that he could do for him which would help his self-confidence, and eventually his career. This included:

• Participation in an Autumn evening presentation to club members about recent work on the course – so he will need to work on a PowerPoint and as a result improve presentation skills.
• The annual update of our Health & Safety System – we agreed that he would carry this out, and then make a presentation to the whole staff.
• Attendance at Green Committee Meetings – to help him appreciate the complexities of committee, and how the Chairman and the agenda are crucial to running a good meeting and making progress.
• Assisting other senior staff in the delegation of daily duties throughout the greenkeeping team – to help his appreciation of the importance of teamwork and the difficulties often faced in delegation to a staff team, each member of which has his own aims and expectations.
• Most importantly my Assistant worked with other members of the team to design and deliver a number of “toolbox” talks and demonstrations for the staff team. These are little basic refresher techniques – e.g. best practice in hole changing, bunker raking, tee marker positioning, greens mowing – all those little things out on the course where attention to detail makes all the difference. He and other colleagues presented these to the whole team out on the course, e.g. in real life workplace situations, and with the proper equipment.

As they were doing this I realised they were actually taking responsibility for the standards at which those tasks should be carried out – not just at that specific time, but in general from that moment onwards. Having taken the time and trouble to design the talks, and then to have stood up in front of the others meant they had invested in the work and these tasks were now their babies. This is about empowerment. These guys are now empowered to confidently watch over others in various elements of routine golf course presentation. These are the points we need to get across to our people – the building of self-confidence and awareness is crucial to personal development. Developed greenkeepers make a larger contribution to the team, and also to an overall professional culture within the Golf Club.

Most importantly the Assistant and I are both in agreement that he has developed as a team member and is also better equipped for promotion within the team or if he pursues career progression elsewhere.

It is also about engagement. As managers and greenkeepers – we need to be engaged with the objectives of our business. We need to understand how our actions and output impact upon the success of the business and the objectives of Committee and members. Golf Clubs are no longer minor institutions, but are serious businesses and need to operate as such at all levels.

Greenkeeping itself as a profession has developed rapidly in recent times, and the signs are that it will continue to do so in the years to come. Now, with the recession and the spectre of economic downturn never far away, a greater pressure is never far away, a greater pressure is
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Greenkeeping itself as a profession has developed rapidly in recent times, and the signs are that it will continue to do so in the years to come. Now, with the recession and the spectre of economic downturn never far away, a greater pressure is brought to bear upon the manager, which requires the delivery of far better products and services than ever before.

Against this background, it is empowered and engaged greenkeepers who will spread a Culture of Professionalism throughout their whole organisation, and deliver course conditions which align perfectly with the expectations and aspirations of committees and members alike.

AUGUST 2012

This column expresses views of the author and are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International
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