John began his career at his home town club of Pitreavie in Dunfermline after a spell there learning his trade, he moved to Newmarket GC as Head Greenkeeper and moved to his home town club of Pitreavie in 1979.

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He has always been willing to discuss many matters with Course Managers and greenkeepers at all nearby clubs. Many a time I have turned up at Carnoustie on a Sunday morning in winter to drop my son off at their football and wandered down to the course where I would find John busy on the course. I would always end up missing the first goal after getting into some technical discussion or other.

In 2000, his services to greenkeeping were recognised when he was awarded the MBE, an honour he received from the Queen.

**Hole in honour**

Earlier this year when it was announced John Philip was retiring, Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee agreed to meet the 11th hole on the Championship course after him, this is an extraordinary honour to bestowed on an extraordinary employee. John Philip has trained and inspired a number of staff who have gone on to become Course Managers of some of the most prestigious courses in the UK and Ireland.

He has always been willing to discuss many matters with Course Managers and greenkeepers at all nearby clubs. Many a time I have turned up at Carnoustie on a Sunday morning in winter to drop my son off at their football and wandered down to the course where I would find John busy on the course. I would always end up missing the first goal after getting into some technical discussion or other.

In 2000, his services to greenkeeping were recognised when he was awarded the MBE, an honour he received from the Queen.

**Fond Farewell to BIGGA Chairman 2012**

BIGGA’s chairman, Andrew Melina is leaving his position as Golf Operations Manager at Elmwood College having been appointed as General Manager of Hydroturf International in Qatar. Hydroturf are the Middle East’s leading golf course and landscaping supply company.

Andrew who will take up his new post on September 1st has been with Elmwood for nearly 12 years, having been a student greenkeeper initially and then working through from Greenkeeper instructor to his present position.

At the latest BIGGA Board of Management meeting Andrew informed the Board of his circumstances and it was agreed that he will step down from his role of BIGGA chairman during the Open Championship at which time Tony Smith of Trenesse Golf Club, the current vice chairman, will take over for the year beginning his intended full year of office at the AGM in January.

In the two and a half years Andrew has been involved on the Board of Management he has served the membership with great drive, passion and commitment. The entire board and staff of the association wish to recognise his huge contribution to BIGGA and wish him all the very best with his new challenge.

Andrew said, “BIGGA has always been a great support to me, from the very first day I became a Greenkeeper, and will be in my current role. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve on the Board. I wish Tony the best during his term as Chairman.

The professionalism, the passion, and the friendship I’ve witnessed during my time at BIGGA from the members, the staff, and the Board has helped me understand why BIGGA is so important within this industry. I’m confident it will go from strength to strength under the current leadership and continue to further develop its support to the membership.

I’ve made many good friends and I hope to keep in contact. I am sad to be leaving, but excited at the new opportunity I have. I’d like to thank everyone for their support to me, and wish everyone the very best going forward.”
As John Philip retires from Carnoustie he leaves a great legacy, writes Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust

John began his career at his home town club of Piteavie in Dunfermline after a spell there learning his trade, he moved to Newmarket GC and then to Greenkeeper/Professional, for a number of years before coming back to Scotland as Deputy Links Supervisor at St Andrews in 1979.

Many people perhaps don’t realise that John was quite a proficient golfer in his day. In 1985 he moved to Carnoustie Golf Links, which was in extremely poor condition at the time, as Links Supervisor. It had hosted the Open in 1975 but because of the condition and other factors it had dropped off the rota. John, with the support of Jock Calder, Chairman of Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee, turned the Championship course around into the condition it is today, where it has been recognised to have set the benchmark for Open Championship venues in 1999 and 2007.

Under his tenure Carnoustie has also staged the 1991 and 2001 Scottish Ladies’ Close Amateur Championships, the 1992 Amateur Championships, the 1995 and 1996 Scottish Open, the 1997 and 2008 Scottish Amateur, the 2002 British Boys Championship, no less than eleven Dunhill Links tournaments and this year, in his final week, the British Ladies Amateur Championship.

His outstanding work on restoring the Championship course is well documented but what must also be remembered is that he played a similar role in improving both the Murramore and Buddon courses. Whilst not involved in the construction of the Buddon Course, which was built in 1979, he has since rebuilt 16 of the 18 greens.

He has been a regular speaker at various greenkeeper seminars and conferences of the years both in the UK and abroad and has also assisted Elmwood College where he has given presentations and field studies on grass species and identification.

In his time at Carnoustie he has also trained and inspired a number of staff who have gone onto become Course Managers at some of the most prestigious courses in the UK and Ireland. Alan Strachan at Walton Heath and Gary Johnstone at Portmarnock are two that come to mind.

His training has also been recognised by Carnoustie as they have promoted the Championship Links head greenkeeper Sandy Reid to his present position at the latest BIGGA Board of Management meeting Andrew informed the Board of its circumstances and it was agreed that he will step down from his role of BIGGA chairman during the Open Championship at which time Tony Smith of Trenside Golf Club, the current vice chairman, will take over for the year beginning his intended full year of office at the AGM in January.

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**Hole in honour**

Earlier this year when it was announced John Philp was retiring, Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee agreed to rename the 11th hole on the Championship course after him, this is an extraordinary honour to bestow on an extraordinary greenkeeper and will be the subject of a full report in the next issue.

**MARKUS KLAUSMANN: STUDENT OF THE YEAR FOR GOSTA**

Markus Klausmann was the Student of the Year at GOSTA in 2012. Markus has been training as a greenkeeper and landscape employee in the West of Scotland since 1982. Managing Director, Lesley Lovie took the decision to commence his training at 15 years old.

He has been a regular speaker at various greenkeeper seminars and conferences of the years both in the UK and abroad and has also assisted Elmwood College where he has given presentations and field studies on grass species and identification.

In his time at Carnoustie he has also trained and inspired a number of staff who have gone onto become Course Managers at some of the most prestigious courses in the UK and Ireland. Alan Strachan at Walton Heath and Gary Johnstone at Portmarnock are two that come to mind.

**As John Philip retires from Carnoustie he leaves a great legacy, writes Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust**

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In 2000, his services to greenkeeping were recognised when he was awarded the MBE, an honour he received from the Queen.

**Carnoustie Legend Bows Out in Style**

Derek Gould & Duncan Herd

BIGGA is sorry to have recently learnt of the sad news of the passing of two long serving members Mr Derek Gould and Mr Duncan Herd.

Derek, who lived in Sheringham, Norfolk was a long standing member of BIGGA and BIGGA Dunce who resided in Longniddry, East Lothian, was a long standing member of the BIGGA and BIGGA Dunce.

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The 2012 Scottish National Tournament took place at Ratho Park Golf Club on Wednesday, 20th June. Ratho Park, situated 30 minutes from Edinburgh city centre, provided an excellent setting for the competition. The parkland golf course, designed by James Braid was first established in 1928, although the history of the club can be traced back to the 19th Century through a merger with Conisbourne Golf Club on land that is now part of Edinburgh Zoo.

In 1955, the club purchased the estate of Ratho Park with the mansion house transformed into a magnificent clubhouse. Conditions for competitors considering June’s inclement weather.

The course was in typically excellent conditions over the previous weekend, and with all golf tournaments, the weather plays a significant role in competition scoring and the enjoyment for players. With the exception of a couple of light showers in the afternoon, the weather was excellent and very much welcomed by all. Although playing numbers were down on the previous year, a very competitive field assembled for the tournament. This was highlighted by an extremely close and hard-fought duel between 3 times winner David Simpson of Crieff Golf Club and Scottish Regional Chairman, Stuart Taylor of Glasgow Golf Club for the Scottish Championship. Both returned an excellent one under par score of 68 with the Chairman prevailing on count back over the last nine holes. Kenneth Mitchell from St Andrews Links Trust won the Friendship Trophy for the best nett score of 67 using his handicap of 5 to good effect.

After receiving the Scottish Challenge Cup, Stuart Taylor thanked Vice Captain, John Dea, the committee and members of Ratho Park for their hospitality and for the courtesy offered to players. A Quaich was presented to the Vice Captain, who then paid tribute to the captain of the previous year, and Billy Hudson and his team are to be congratulated for producing a course in superb condition for the competition. As with all golf tournaments, the weather plays a significant role in competition scoring and the enjoyment for players. With the exception of a couple of light showers in the afternoon, the weather was excellent and very much welcomed by all.

Widespread recognition of golf’s positive social and environmental impacts is gathering pace – and is being led by a group of clubs who have shown the way toward ever-stronger achievements and credible communications through the GEO Certified™ ecolabel.

Sweden’s Forsgårdens Golf Club is a leader among leaders, stepping up in 2009 as one of the very first golf clubs to become GEO Certified™. Three years later, they are the first club in the world to be re-certified by the Golf Environment Organization. Re-certification is a vital point of credibility for all ecolabelling, demonstrating how sustainability can extend deeper into decision-making and communications over time, and affirming the important ‘continual improvement’ principle that makes sustainability a mindset and a practice.

The GEO OnCourse™ programme was easy to follow and made sure we thought about a wide range of practical areas and there were suggestions for improvements as we went along. The on-site verification with Matt Johnas was extremely constructive and led to new ideas and motivation for the future. We will fly the GEO Certified™ flag with a great deal of pride.”

“GEO was founded to make more people aware of its importance to take their stewardship of the land seriously. In the last few years we have become more aware of and active, making sustainability a consideration in every decision we make.”

“Having worked on the development of many industry certification programmes and ecolabels, from forestry to fisheries, I have seen landmark points in time, when something significant demonstrates a clear path to a more sustainable future. This is one of those moments.”

“GEO was founded to support clubs in their sustainability actions and bring forward real, transparently reported results; steering away from one-time awards that risk bringing complacency, in favour of driving continual improvement.”

“It is to Forsgårdens’ considerable credit that through this re-certification, they demonstrate clear and quantifiable improvements across a comprehensive range of issues. Amongst all the processes and protocols, we are reminded that it’s positive individual, personal engagement and action that really matters.”

Ole Rager-Kusk, an independent verifier accredited by GEO, conducted the initial certification and the recertification and found that Forsgårdens upheld a considerable credit that through this re-certification, they demonstrate clear and quantifiable improvements across a comprehensive range of issues. Amongst all the processes and protocols, we are reminded that it’s positive individual, personal engagement and action that really matters.”

Coventry GC First in England to be GEO Certified™

Coventry Golf Club is the first golf club in England to be awarded the international ecolabel GEO Certified™ in recognition of outstanding sustainability efforts.

Established in 1887, the club celebrated its 125th anniversary this year and also the centenary of the re-location of the course to Foleshill. Many of England’s nearly 2000 golf courses are community based clubs like Coventry, making this an important example of how sustainability can be embraced with positive results for the environment and the economic performance of the golf business.

Phil Weaver, Coventry’s Head PGA Professional & Course Manager and Chairman of the PGA of Great Britain and Ireland, was part of the driving force behind the journey through the programme that led to the GEO Certified™ ecolabel, and remarks, “We recognize the pressures on the environment at large and understand that golf clubs have an important responsibility to take their stewardship of the land seriously. In the last few years we have become much more aware and active, making sustainability a consideration in every decision we make.”

“The GEO OnCourse™ programme was easy to follow and made sure we thought about a wide range of practical areas and there were suggestions for improvements as we went along. The on-site verification with Matt Johnas was extremely constructive and led to new ideas and motivation for the future. We will fly the GEO Certified™ flag with a great deal of pride.”

Weaver worked in close consultation with colleagues Club Captain Keith Lindsay, Club member Professor Ian Froster, and past Captains and President Robin Bussell in drive the project forward and became the first Golf Club in England to achieve this prestigious award.

A First for Two Clubs with Green Credentials

Southwood and Brockenhurst Taste Victory

The first of the South West and South Wales Region’s Golf Management Competitions, sponsored by Tacit, had taken place and two clubs have secured their places in the finals of the event.

The South Coast Section event was recently held at Liphook GC where the winning team from Southwood GC came in with 82 points to place 10th. The team from Brockenhurst GC with 81 points. Both teams have won a place through to the final which is taking place later in the year at Porthcawl Heath GC.

Just missing out on a place in the finals were Wareham GC at third place on 80 points and Test Valley GC in fourth place on 79 points. The nearest the pin competition was won by Paul Compton from Wareham GC and the longest drive competition was won by Chris Hudson from Southwood GC.

BKGGA South West and South Wales Region would like to thank Tim Webb and Tacit for their support of the region in sponsoring these events.

Championship Qualifiers

Scratch, Stuart Taylor, Glasgow GC

Nett, Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews Links Trust

The 2012 Scottish National Tournament Prize List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Scottish National</td>
<td>RF Meehan Trophy</td>
<td>Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews</td>
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<td>Tournament</td>
<td>Links Trust</td>
<td>Links Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendship Trophy (Nett)</td>
<td>Trophy</td>
<td>Stuart Taylor, Glasgow GC</td>
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<td>(Nett Champion)</td>
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<td>David Simpson, Crieff GC</td>
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<td>68 +1 69</td>
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<td>Paul Murphy, Fife Golf Trust</td>
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<td>Steven Robertson, Newmacher GC</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>83 +18 65</td>
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<td>M &amp; M Trophy – Best Assistant</td>
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<td>Craig Berry, Leven</td>
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<td>77 +7 70</td>
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<td>SIGGA Trophy – Best Veteran</td>
<td>Trophy</td>
<td>Charles MacDonald, Crieff GC</td>
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<td>73 +3 70</td>
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<td>St Mungo Trophy</td>
<td>Trophy</td>
<td>Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews</td>
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<td>– Section Team Winners</td>
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<td>(Central Section)</td>
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<td>Charles MacDonald, Crieff</td>
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<td>Quaich – Trade Prize</td>
<td>Trophy</td>
<td>Kevin Brunton, Greenside</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifiers</td>
<td>Links Trust</td>
<td>Links Trust</td>
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GI NEWSDESK
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The course was actually unplayable over the previous weekend, and Billy Hudson and his team are to be congratulated for producing a course in superb condition for the tournament. As with all golf tournaments, the weather plays a significant role in competition scoring and the enjoyment for players. With the exception of a couple of light showers in the afternoon, the weather was excellent and very much welcomed by all.

Although playing numbers were down on the previous year, a very competitive field assembled for the tournament. This was highlighted by an extremely close and hard-fought duel between 3 times winner David Simpson of Crieff Golf Club and Scottish Regional Chairman, Stuart Taylor of Glasgow GC for the Scottish Championship. Both returned an excellent one under par score of 68 with the Chairman prevailing on count back over the last nine holes. Kenneth Mitchell from St Andrews Links Trust won the Friendship Trophy for the best nett score of 67 using his handicap of 5 to good effect. After receiving the Scottish Challenge Cup, Stuart Taylor thanked Vice Captain John Doa, the committee and members of Ratho Park for their hospitality and for the courtesy offered to players.

A Quaich was presented to the Vice Captain, who then paid tribute to the hard work of all greenkeeping staff and remarked that the club was delighted to host the tournament. Congratulations to all who took part and we hope to see everyone next year at Ratho GC for the 2013 tournament.

The 2012 Scottish National Tournament Prize List

**SGCA Challenge Cup (Scratch Champion)**
- Stuart Taylor, Glasgow GC

**Friendship Trophy (Nett Champion)**
- Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews Links Trust

**Ramsays Trophy – 1st Class**
1. David Simpson, Crieff GC 68 +1 69
2. Paul Murphy, Film Golf Trust 78 5 73
3. Gavin Neil, St Andrews Links Trust 81 6 75

**Pattison Trophy – 2nd Class**
1. Graeme Bolton, G West 78 9 69
2. Ian MacEoin, Tain 78 7 71
3. Thomas Adams, Crieff GC 83 12 71

**Stru Trophy (St. IVES_RUBBER) – 3rd Class**
1. Dale Robertson, Newsachey GC 83 15 68
2. Gerald Broadley, Glasgow GC 94 17 77
3. Bryan Bambery, Glasgow GC 94 16 78

**Dick Mygler Trophy – Best Head Greenkeeper**
Euan Grant, Turnberry Golf Courses 83 14 69

**M & M Trophy – Best Assistant**
Craig Berry, Leven 77 7 70

**BGQA Trophy – Best Veteran**
Charles MacDonald, Crieff GC 73 3 70

**SMUG Trophy**
- **Section Team Winners** - Central Section
  - Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews 67
  - David Simpson, Crieff 69
  - Graeme Bolton, G West 69
  - Charles MacDonald, Crieff 70
- **TOTAL**
  275

**Quaich – Trade Prize**
Kevin Brunton, Greentech 74 0 74

**National Championship Qualifiers**
- **Scratch, Stuart Taylor, Glasgow GC**
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- **Nett, Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews Links Trust**

Widespread recognition of golf’s positive social and environmental impacts is gathering pace – and is being led by a group of clubs who have shown the way toward ever-stronger achievements and credible communications through the GEO Certified™ ecolabel.

Sweden’s Forsgårdens Golf Club is a leader among leaders, stepping up in 2009 as one of the very first golf clubs to become GEO Certified™. Three years later, they are the first club in the world to be re-certified by the Golf Environment Organisation. Re-certification is a vital point of credibility for all ecolabelling, demonstrating how sustainability can extend deeper into decision-making and communications over time, and affirming the important ‘continual improvement’ principle that makes sustainability a mindset and a journey rather than a static destination.

The announcement represents a milestone in golf’s sustainability journey: the first time that any golf club, anywhere in the world, has been re-certified via a destination-based reporting system. It has been an extremely constructive and transparently reported process for golf.

Garden Shepherd, GEO Board Member and former Head of Global Policy for WWF International recognized the significance:

> “Working on the development of many industry certification programmes and ecolabels, from forestry to fisheries, I have seen landmark points in time, when something significant demonstrates a clear path to a more sustainable future. This is one of those moments.”

> “GEO was founded to support clubs in their sustainability actions and bring forward real, transparently reported results; steering away from one-time awards that risk bringing complacency, in favour of driving continual improvement.”

> “It is to Forsgårdens considerable credit that through this re-certification, they demonstrate clear and quantifiable improvements across a comprehensive range of issues. Amongst all the processes and protocols, we are reminded that it’s positive individual, personal engagement and action that environment and society needs.”

Ole Rager-Kusk, an independent verifier accredited by GEO, conducted the initial certification and the recertification and found that Forsgårdens upheld and strengthened a solid environmental performance.

Making more improvements in the three years since becoming GEO Certified™, especially around landscape and ecosystems, energy and resource conservation, waste management, and also more communications with authorities and the surrounding community.

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**Southwood and Brockenhurst Taste Victory**

The first of the South West and South Wales Region’s Golf Management Competitions, sponsored by Tacit, have taken place and two clubs have secured their places in the finals of the event. The South Coast Section event was recently held at Liphook GC where the winning team from Southwood GC came in with 82 points in second place and the team from Brockenhurst GC with 81 points. Both teams have won a place through to the final which is taking place later in the year at Fleetwood Heath GC. Just missing out on a place in the finals were Warwick GC at third place on 80 points and Test Valley GC in fourth place on 79 points. The nearest the pin competition was won by Paul Coney from Warwick GC and the longest drive competition was won by Chris Hudson from Southwood GC.

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Established in 1887, the club celebrated its 125th anniversary this year and also the centenary of the re-location of the course to Finham. Many of England’s nearly 2000 golf courses are community based clubs like Coventry, making this an important example of how sustainability can be embraced with positive results for the environment and the economic performance of the business.

Phil Weaver, Coventry’s Head PGA Professional & Course Manager and Chairman of the PGA of Great Britain and Ireland, was part of the driving force behind the journey through the programme that led to the GEO Certification™ ecolabel, and reminds us:

> “We recognize the pressures on the environment at large and understand that golf clubs have an important responsibility to take their stewardship of the land seriously. In the last few years we have become much more aware and active, making sustainability a consideration in every decision we make.”

> “The GEO OnCourse™ programme was easy to follow and made sure we thought about a wide range of practical areas and there were suggestions for improvements as we went along. The on-site verification with Matt Johnas was extremely constructive and left us with new ideas and motivation for the future. We will fly the GEO Certified™ flag with a great deal of pride.”

Weaver worked in close conjunction with colleagues Club Captain Keith Lindsay, Club member Professor Ian Foster, and past Captain and President Robin Bussell to drive the project forward and become the first Golf Club in England to achieve this prestigious award.
With the only goal of a cagey final which looked destined for penalties, Pyrford Golf Club saw off the challenge of West Hill Golf Club to retain the JSM Cup.

The preceding rounds of very competitive 5-a-side football were played out during one of the warmest days of the year. The commitment of all the teams to penalties having to decide 2 of the quarter-final matches as well as the semi-final in which Pyrford sneaked past Cuddington Golf Club, West Hill defeated Queenwood 2-0 in the other semi-final.

Before the presentations could take place a penalty shoot-out also had to decide the winner of the ‘golden boot’ for tournament top scorer. Zane Percival (Pyrford) narrowly defeated Ben Edwards (West Hill) during sudden-death penalties, both having finished level on 6 goals at the end of the final.

JSM’s Managing Director David Cole remarked, ‘The commitment and standard of play has been great to see, particularly on such a warm day. Our football tournament in turn is伟大的社会 event and we must thank Toro Lely UK for their support in making it such an enjoyable success’.

Entry to the JSM Cup was open to teams of greenkeeper’s, groundsman and other turf and landscape professionals from around the south-east. First played for in 2008, the competition is held biannually.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee has announced three new dates and venues for their very popular Chairman of Green Workshops. Presented by Laurence Pitcher MGI the Workshops provide a first class introduction to the role and responsibilities of the Chairman of Greens and are a must attend for all golf club officials who have responsibility for liaising with the course management team.

Events will take place as follows:

- **Thursday 13th September 2012** at Priory Barn, Birdspater College, Cunnamling Centre, Ridgeway Hill, Cunnamling, Birdspater T: 024 768 324 85
- **Thursday 20th September 2012** at Conwy (Caernarvonshire) Golf Club, Moelf, Conwy LL32 8ER

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- **Monday 25th September 2012** at Llanishen Golf Club, Hend HR, Cardiff CF14 9UD.
Curtis Cups in recent times. “One of the biggest changes has been the development of Nairn from a relatively small club in the north of Scotland to one that is recognised throughout the world,” he said. “We are all part of a team here, committee and management, and we have all been involved in bringing the club forward.”

The staging of the Curtis Cup followed with the club’s highest entry (23) in Golf World’s recently published Top 100 Golf Courses in Britain & Ireland has ensured Mr Carson leaves on a high. “For me, having the Walker Cup here in 1999 and getting the Curtis Cup in 2012 has been a fantastic conclusion of an exceptional 31-year tenure, saw golf at the club flourish,” he said. “We are all part of a team here, committee and management, and we have all been involved in bringing the club forward.”

On receiving the presentation he remarked, “It doesn’t seem like 25 years since I first arrived at John O’Gaunt and working with many different people from all areas of the industry, each and every one of those people have helped, encouraged and influenced me in some way during my time here. “I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of those people for their help and support over the years and thank the staff and committee of John O’Gaunt for their continued help and support.”

The Greenkeepers Training Committee has announced three new dates and venues for their very popular Chairman of Green Workshops. Presented by Laurence Pathe MSc the Workshops provide a first class introduction to the role and responsibilities of the Chairman of Green and are a must attend for all golf club officials who have responsibility for liaising with the course management team.

Events will take place as follows:

**Thursday 13th September 2012**
At Priory Barn, Birdspater College, Cunningham Centre, Redway Hill, Cunningham, Birdspater T55 3LS

**Thursday 20th September 2012**
At Conwy (Caernarvonshire) Golf Club, Moela, Conwy LL32 8ER

**Tuesday 25th September 2012**
At Llanishen Golf Club, Hend Nr, Cardiff CF14 9UD

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**25 YEARS FOR STUART AT JOHN O’GAUNT**

EOCEMA Board Member Stuart Hall recently celebrated 25 years service as Workshop Manager at John O’Gaunt Golf Club in Beddington and was presented with a commemorative gift by the Club Captain, Martin Pettit. 2012 is turning in to a landmark year for Stuart, following his selection to be part of the BRGGA Delegation to attend the Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas (courtesy of Berinhard and Company). In 2010 he was also part of the workshop team at Celtic Manor for the dramatic Ryder Cup Matches.

On receiving the presentation he remarked, “It doesn’t seem like 25 years since I first arrived at John O’Gaunt for my first day’s work, hand cutting greens of all things. Since then I have done many different jobs in an ever changing environment, it’s been an enjoyable journey to where I am now and along the way I have met and worked with many different people from all areas of the industry, each and every one of those people have helped, encouraged and influenced me in some way during my time here.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of those people for their help and support over the years and thank the staff and committee of John O’Gaunt for their continued help and support.”
Wood Boring Beetle Flies into the UK

UK plant health authorities are battling to eradicate the most dangerous alien insect pest of trees and shrubs the United Kingdom has ever had to face, Asian longhorn beetle (Anoplophora glabripennis) for at least two years. The annoying activity of beetle larvae weakens trees which collapse and die. So serious is this quarantine pest that tree felling and incineration is required at other normally sacrosanct priorities including Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and nesting birds.

Thankfully none of the three golf courses in this area of Kent (eight miles from Maidstone) for at least two years. The boring activity of beetle larvae weakens trees which collapse and die. So serious is this quarantine pest that tree felling and incineration is required at other normally sacrosanct priorities including Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and nesting birds.

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Chairman’s Word

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

All good things...

I’ve mentioned the weather several times in my previous reports, but I’ve come to the conclusion that I am a jinx, and just as I think we have seen one extreme we witness another. I hope the guys who endured the recent floods are coping and wish them the best in their efforts to restore their courses.

No doubt some of you will have heard the news that I am moving on, so this will be my last official column as Chairman.

I have been offered and accepted a position on the “Dark-Side” as many Greenkeepers refer to it, as General Manager of HydroTurf International in Qatar. It certainly won’t be dark there though, and those who know me must be smiling at the thought of my fair skin under that blistering sun. It will be a new challenge for me, in many ways, but I’m looking forward to it.

Leaving my current employer was a tough decision, as I love the job. Elmwood has been a great experience for me from which I’ve learnt a great deal and I will put that to good use in my new role. The section and location of my new role mean that I will step down from the Chairmanship of BIGGA. That is something I’ll do with some sadness, but also with a sense of satisfaction, knowing that BIGGA is in very capable hands with a dedicated team of staff, well supported by volunteer members through all the Sections, serving on boards and committees to ensure that BIGGA delivers to the members.

I’d like to thank all the members who have offered their support and advice to me, while I’ve been on the Board, and all those I didn’t meet but whose participation makes BIGGA so strong.

I’ve really enjoyed my time with BIGGA, from the days I started greenkeeping, eagerly waiting for the magazine to see what more I could learn, and to see what everyone else was doing. When I got involved at Section level it was so good to meet so many people who were all willing to share their experience with me and offer support when I needed it. I’d like to thank the Central Section, who I’ve spent the majority of my time with over the years, for their friendship and for teaching me so much. They are a fantastic example of all that is good about BIGGA.

I’ve been fortunate that my employer, Elmwood College, has supported me in every way as I’ve sought to learn more, and in allowing me to spend more time in serving on the BIGGA Board. I’m very grateful to them for that support, and the experience of remodelling Elmwood Golf Course and being involved in the education of so many greenkeeper students. That has been especially hard and it is so good to see so many of them progressing so well in this industry. The team at Elmwood Golf Course have been a great support to me over my 30 months on the Board and their extra efforts have ensured that while away on business everything ran smoothly; some would say even more smoothly! They are a great team and I’ll miss them all.

Through my involvement in the Board I have experienced a wider view of the industry, witnessing welcome support for our profession from all the various Golf Industry Associations and Organisations and the trade. It was great to see such overwhelming support when we celebrated our 25th Anniversary at BTME in January. Our increased collaboration with the various International Greenkeeping Associations has huge potential and it’s good to see the willingness from them to work more closely together in future.

I’m extremely grateful to the founding members of BIGGA, and those members who served on the previous Associations before they merged to form BIGGA. Their foresight and perseverance has served to advance the standards of greenkeeping and the condition of golf courses. Their input to the formation of the GTC, and to the colleges in developing education is something we take far too much for granted today. Conditions of employment now, and the support and the great opportunities available to budding Greenkeepers are in large part down to their efforts all those years ago. There is still much to be done though, and we have a duty to ensure that the Association we have created continues to drive forward education, support for all its members, and recognition of the huge contribution they make to the game of golf, and the pleasure and livelihood it provides to so many.

I would like to thank all the current and previous staff at BIGGA. In some ways they work for the biggest green committee in the country – imagine what that must be like! Their dedication and professionalism provide all the services and benefits BIGGA now brings to its members and I’d like to thank them sincerely for their friendship and continued commitment during an economic period which has not been the easiest for any organisation and brings added pressure to us all.

At the helm we have Jim Creton, who has succeeded John Pemberton as CEO. I’d like to thank both of them for their support to me while on the Board. Their professional management of every aspect of the Association has ensured that BIGGA developed successfully and will continue to do so going forward. I’ve worked closely with Jim this last year and his energy and enthusiasm, and his wealth of industry knowledge will be a great asset to us.

In July, Tony Smith from Teeside will step into my shoes. I’ve known Tony for about ten years now; he’s bought me a few pints in Southport at a conference (I’ve bought my fair share since in return). He has become a close friend, and has totally dedicated to ensuring BIGGA serves the best interests of the members. His considerable experience will be great benefit to the Board and I’ll ask you all to support him and the Board in ensuring the Association continues to be of valuable service to its members.

Part of my new friends during my time in BIGGA, and I will continue to offer any support I can to an association, which has been so much. I intend to continue making the annual pilgrimage to Harrogate to keep up with all the developments in the industry and to catch up with everyone.

My wife and kids have been very patient, thankfully, during my time as a greenkeeper and all the time I spent obsessing about the course, and lately with BIGGA. Although I will dearly miss my new job, I’ll definitely be spending more time with them and I’m looking forward to it. I hope they are!

So over to Tony – I must admit, not having seen me every month for the column is not something I’ll miss, but I will look forward to receiving Greenkeeper International a bit in advance of the next issue. How about you? I’ll definitely be spending more time with them and I’m looking forward to it. I hope they are!

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