John began his career at his home town club of Pritiey in Dunfermline and after a spell there learning his trade, he moved to Newmarket GC as Head Greenkeeper/Professional, for a number of years before coming back to Scotland as Head Greenkeeper/Professional, for a number of years before returning to his home town club of Pitreavie as Head Greenkeeper in 2003. 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 sons 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 Philp was retiring, Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee agreed to name the 11th hole on the Championship course after him, this is an extraordinary honour to bestowed on an extraordinary greenkeeper. The hole was subject of a full report in the next issue.

Fond Farewell to BIGGA Chairman 2012
BIGGA’s chairman, Andrew Mellon is leaving his position as Golf Operations Manager at Elmwood College having been appointed as General Manager of Hydroitrf International in Qatar. Hydroitrf 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.

As John Philip retires from Carnoustie he leaves a great legacy, writes Gordon Moir, Director of BIGGA.

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 is widely 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 Murrahde and Buddon courses. While not involved in the construction of the Buddon Course, which was built in 1979, he has since rehab 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 on to become Course Managers at some of the most prestigious courses in the UK and Ireland.

Alan Strachan at Walfen Heath and Gary Johnston 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 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 Trenside Golf Club, the current vice chairman, will take over for the remainder of the year before 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 I still in my current role. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve on the Board. I wish Tony Smith all 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.”

Markus Klausmann: Student of the Year for GOSTA
GOSTA has been training golf course greenkeepers and landscape employees in the West of Scotland since 1982. Managing Director, Lesley Lowrie took the decision to commence their training, in conjunction with their employing golf clubs. The employee was Markus Klausmann, a smart, happy, German student who originally came from Wildtal, a small village right at the edge of the Black Forest, an area of Southern Germany.
As a trained chef Markus relocated to Scotland to charge both his life and career. He worked as a car cleaner and hospital porter for nearly three years in order to finance his golf to Edinburgh until he was successful in finding employment on a golf course. During that time he also attended English Language School in Edinburgh. Markus commented “to say English was bad would be an understatement.”
He went on “by sticking to my plan to only behind Scotsmen and not mix with other German students at the language school I quickly began to grasp English!”

If you are interested in SVQ’s, Modern Apprenticeships or short courses (Certificates of Competence) in your area please contact GOSTA Training on 0141-556-3999.