GI NEWSDESK
The latest news from around the globe

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JERSEY BLOG
We've had a good response to last month's blogging article – and one of the most progressive greenkeeper blogs has emerged on the island of Jersey.

John Critchley, greenkeeper at Les Mielles Golf & Country Club, maintains an impressive blog with frequent updates and images of the team at work on the Championship course which sits in a picturesque conservation area of the island.

Read it for yourself at www.lesmiellesgroundscrew.blogspot.co.uk. It's also pleasing to note the latest entry visible at the top of the text on the homepage.

John says: “I started the blog in October last year to make the members aware of what we're doing and educate them on why we do certain things from unhappy golfers. However when they are informed in advance via the blog, they are more understanding. We also have a busy schedule ahead of us, including rebuilding and adding a few bunkers, tee renovations, and drainage works, so it's a good portfolio for our greenkeeping team. It has certainly created a good communication link between the members and our team. I believe it's shown them we are dedicated and take pride in what we do.

“The feedback from the Club has been positive. Members who you never thought would come to us say they have been following the blog which is great. I feel the majority of golfers don't understand what our job entails. When the weather's bad some believe we either go home or sit in the break room drinking coffee. Actually we're servicing the machines, setting up mowers, cleaning and organising store sheds, doing paint work and all manner of other tasks. It's important to make the members aware we are always doing valuable work.

“The members know they have the option to contact me for more information, it is easily approachable. It's benefitted the membership, the management and it's created a kind of buzz within our team.”

GCMA APPOINTS NEW CEO
The Golf Club Managers Association is delighted to announce the appointment of a new Chief Executive, Bob Williams.

Bob is well known to many within the Association already, having been in golf club management for 20 years, previously Manager at Long Ashton GC and latterly at Chipping-Sodbury GC.

He is also an active member in the South West Region, notably spearheading their educational activities in recent years. Bob also played an active part in the Association's planning group for the 2011 National Conference. He is also currently working with the Association’s Gill Bridle and Backs New University to help develop the education programme there, including preparation of the course content.

He was already scheduled to help with a presentation at the BTME Show at Harrogate in January, and will be attending the Regional Enterprising Conference at Weston-super-Mare at the end of January also.

Bob will formally commence work at Weston-super-Mare at the end of February. He is well known to many in the industry for their help and guidance.”

GEORGE PITTS BECOMES LATEST MG
George Pitts, Course Manager at Yelverton Golf Club, has been announced as BIGGA's latest Master Greenkeeper.

George, who is also Secretary for the Devon & Cornwall Section, lives in Okehampton and described how pleased he was to have been awarded the accolade, while highlighting how important education is.

He said: “Achieving the Master Greenkeeper certificate has been my career objective since completing my HND in 2000. It’s a great process, ensuring you meet the highest industry standards and promote professionalism to the wider golfing community.

“Education and training is key to improving the integrity of the profession and the Association. Thank you to Yelverton Golf Club for their support during the process and to various peers in the industry for their help and guidance.”

Volunteers needed for the BMW PGA Championship
BIGGA volunteers are once again required to help Kenny MacKay and his team at The Wentworth Club for the BMW PGA Championship between May 23-26, 2013.

Assistance will be required for any period of time during the tournament – from all four days to just one day.

The last two days will feature bunker raking. It’s a great chance to see in first hand the preparation for this European Tour flagship event, which will be held on the West Course.

All assistance will be greatly appreciated.

For more information please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator at closgood@yahoo.co.uk or call Clive on 07841 948410 or 01737 810343.
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John Critchley, greenkeeper at Les Mielles Golf & Country Club, maintains an impressive blog with frequent updates and images of the team at work on the Championship course which is as a picturesque conservation area of the island.

Read it for yourself at www.lesmielliesgroundscare.blogspot.co.uk. It's also pleasing to note that it's given a very prominent spot on the club's website – clearly visible at the top of the text on the homepage.

John says: “I started the blog in October last year to make the members aware of what we're doing and educate them on why we follow certain practices. For example, when hollow coring you always tend to hear the same things from unhappy golfers. However when they are informed in advance via the blog, they appear to have been following the blog which is great. I feel the majority of golfers don’t understand what our job entails. When the weather’s bad some believe we either go home or sit in the break room drinking coffee. Actually we’re servicing coffee. Actually we’re servicing the machines, setting up mowers, cleaning and organising store, doing paint work and all manner of other tasks. It’s important to make the members aware we are always doing valuable work.

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WHAT IS PHOSPHITE AND WHAT CAN IT DO FOR TURFGRASSES?

Phosphorus is a major plant nutrient, in plants taken up and used in the form of phosphate (PO₄). Phosphate (PO₄) is very similar to phosphate, only one more side of oxygen in the difference. However, where phosphate is vital for plant growth, phosphite cannot be used by plants as a source of P nutrition and importantly should not be applied to P deficient plants.

Phosphite, derived from phosphorous acid by phototrophic and has to be modified prior to use with a neutralising substance - most commonly potassium hydroxide, producing potassium phosphite - currently marketed as a bio stimulant and promoted as a means to reduce Microdochium nivale.

We have two questions to answer; Does phosphite suppress Microdochium nivale in turfgrasses? And by what means does this occur?

To date field trials and laboratory procedures have produced interesting results. Trial plots composed of three turfgrass species were established in 2010. Initial treatments were applied and the effect on disease incidence and turf quality quantified. Plots are assessed monthly for disease occurrence and turf quality. Results have shown applications of potassium phosphite reduces disease by as much as 50%, compared to untreated controls. Combinations of Chipco Green and PK Plus fully inhibited disease. Rothera and Lindane were partially effective.

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Direct - Phosphite acts as a fungicide, and indirect - Phosphite stimulates the plants natural defences.

Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson. Dr Watson reported that in 2010 the temperatures quickly plummeted, with many areas under significant snow cover by early December. Although temperatures eased in the second week with a welcome thaw, mid-month saw a return of conditions and a further 10 to 14 days snow cover for many areas.

Experience in 2010 highlighted that when the snow thawed, turf without fungicide protection had been seriously hit. However, turf managers who had applied Medallion TL had a clear advantage over the season, with turf remaining disease free.

“Experiences in 2010 caused Dr Watson to reflect on Medallion TL’s performance in the severe winter, and on the importance of adding a phosphite fungicide in the autumn, especially to grass where Microdochium is an issue. The importance of this approach is underlined by the fact that Microdochium nivale can be an identified problem.”

In 2010, Hanbury Manor Golf Club Golf and Estate Manager, Stan Power, applied Medallion TL just prior to 10 days of snow cover. When the snow receded, visual results on the untreated areas were very good and disease free, whilst Fusarium infection had started to occur on untreated surrounds.

Further snowfall through December prevented further treatment, yet when the snow melted the trial greens still showed no signs of disease. On final inspection - six weeks after application - Stan reported all the greens treated with Medallion TL had come through the harsh winter period with no signs of disease.

“Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson, advised the application could be repeated - in the hope that surplus turf under the snow.
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JOIN THE TURF CLUB

Jack Sims, assistant greenkeeper at the Wentworth Club, has started The West London Turf Club—a series of sessions where greenkeepers learn and chat about hot topics in the industry. The first club that GI knows of was set up by Anthony Stockwell at The London Club. Jack is now urging other BIGGA members to get involved.

Jack said: “I started my NVQ2 in sports turf management while working full-time at Ealing Golf Club under Greg Evans. Throughout my studies I felt a little behind compared to some of the other young greenkeepers, but once it was completed I went on to start my NVQ3, again with Distance learning.”

“I still felt I was missing out on that ‘classroom effect’ that I witnessed at school, where people would ask questions that others hadn’t even thought to ask, debate different theories and come to a solution as a group.”

“Greg then told me of a ‘Turf Club’ that was being advertised on the BIGGA bulletin boards at The London Club. I knew this was what I was looking for, other greenkeepers in the same situation, going through some of the basics, as well as more advanced areas and some of the hot topics of the time.”

“In January 2011, I took part in my first ever turf club at The London Club. The organiser Anthony Stockwell gave a great presentation on Creeping bent grass. This was followed by an exercise in which involved breaking down into smaller teams and discussing the pros and cons of different grass species.”

“A month or so later I was stood in front of a screen, talking about ‘Turf Grass for putting Greens’, in a room full of other greenkeepers at Ealing Golf Club. The day was a success so it was announced we would be doing it again the following month at Richmond Golf Club, with a new topic. This was the start of ‘The West London Turf Club’.”

“We are still going strong, and with each one, new faces appear. I have learnt a lot, and met a lot of new people. I would urge greenkeepers up and down the country to get together and do something similar.”

The next meetings of the West London turf club are; 9 January at Richmond GC, 6 February at Ealing GC, 6 March at Richmond GC and 3 April at Ealing GC. For more information contact @jackins1991 on twitter or jackins@hotmail.co.uk, or contact Greg Evans at @gregevansmg on twitter or gregevansmg@gmail.com