**BILLY MCMILLAN LAUNCHES COURSE CONSULTANCY**

Former BIGGA National Chairman Billy McMillan has formed an independent golf course management consultancy, with services ranging from project management, staff training and development, and golf course greenkeeping support.

With over 38 years’ experience in the golf industry, he is offering help and support to any club that has ambitions to fully realise its potential in a competitive market.

Having spent many years at the forefront of greenkeeping and having also run golf clubs as a General Manager, Billy aims to bring a balance to the aspirations of Course Managers and clubs, helping to make a difference out on the golf course.

“I’m bringing something different to the table”, Billy explains. “Looking at the club from both the golf course and clubs, helping to make a difference out on the course.”

Billy is keen to take a hands-on approach and work alongside the club’s greenkeeping team to help with planning for future success.

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Billy McMillan Associates Limited can be contacted on 07774 632747 or by email at contact@billymcmillanassociates.co.uk.

**COURSE WORK STARTS AT CHERKLEY COURT**

A historic site near Leatherhead has been given the go-ahead for an exclusive golf course. Plans for a golf course, luxury hotel and spa were held up by campaigners who are objecting to the development. But after a hearing at the High Court last week a judge permitted the removal of topsoil and other works to begin.

The par 71, 7000 yard course has been designed by David McLay Kidd, creator of Querwood. The Castle course at St Andrews and Machrihanish Dunes.

**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RETURNS**

This year’s BIGGA National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota will be held at the superb Friilford Heath Golf Club on October 7-8, with a fantastic first prize of £500 worth of vouchers.

The two-day event will be held on the Red course, a classic heathland test. This was designed by five-times Open Champion, JH Taylor, and hosts European Tour final qualifying the week before our visit. It’s an authentic challenge at 6,912 yards, with fast and true greens and fairways that demand accurate drives. The stretch between holes five and nine is particularly notable, featuring a memorable par three hitting over a pond.

We’ve also cut the entrance fee to just £500 which includes a round of golf on each day, plus lunch on both days and dinner on the Monday evening. Please note there is no accommodation provided.

To enter please fill in the application form on page 24 of this magazine, or email your details to nchampionships@bigga.co.uk - ensure you receive confirmation of entry by return email.

**HISTORIC CHANGE AT BRORA**

To mark the occasion the club hosted its first Head Greenkeeper’s day on 10 June and there were some objections at first, particularly as there have been very few changes since the course was laid out in 1924, but when it eventually went to a vote the members were in favour.

Over the winter James and his team worked to build the new tee on the James Braid designed course, and also extended the fairways to allow for the extra yardage.

To mark the occasion the club and Clynelish Distillery, the sponsor of the 11th hole, invited course record holder Jim Miller to hit the first drive from the new tee.

A Head Greenkeeper’s desire to modernise a historic course has led to a significant and historic change of yardage at Brora Golf Club.

James MacBeath, Head Greenkeeper at the club – which is situated some 50 miles north of Inverness - recognised that the back nine was more difficult than the front nine so recommended it be extended by 50 yards, to ensure it became a par five.

James said: “I play off quite a low handicap and found that in the prevailing wind, the back nine and front nine were not balanced. Also, there are not many par 6s around these days. We get many American visitors who are looking for a par 70, so I really felt it was time to modernise.

“I brought my idea to our greens committee and it all went from there. Inevitably there were some objections at first, particularly as there have been very few changes since the course was laid out in 1924, but when it eventually went to a vote the members were in favour.

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“I’m bringing something different to the table”, Billy explains. “Looking at the club from both perspectives, I’m adept to change and meeting the demands of members, guests and visitors. Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes, constructive feedback, and delivering practical solutions to overcome issues can make a huge difference. “I hope to help clubs achieve a quality product tailored to most levels of available budget.”

Having worked at many fine clubs, Billy has an extensive knowledge of many different course types, from clay-based to sandy heathland and everything in between, each coming with their own and sometimes very demanding issues.

He can evaluate current golf course condition and work alongside the club’s greenkeeping team to help with planning for future success. Billy is keen to take a hands-on approach and never shies away from getting involved at the grass roots to help others develop their personal skills.

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100-HOLE CHARITY CHALLENGE

BIGGA member Craig Campbell is jointing forces with four pals this month to attempt the incredible charity challenge of playing 100 holes in a single day.

Former Celtic Manor greenkeeper Craig will head to Ridgeway Golf Club in Caerphilly on 21st June with club members Chris Thomas, Mike Mayer and Alex Mathews, and have worked out they have around 16 hours of daylight to succeed – all in aid of Cancer Research Wales.

Craig is now a groundsman at Cardiff- magnificent Millennium Stadium, but golf is very much in his blood. He worked at several clubs including South Winchester and Stratford Oaks before moving on to Celtic Manor. He has retained his BIGGA membership as he explains: “Everyone can benefit from what other turf managers are doing. The Millennium Stadium provides a unique working environment, which means we are always looking for ways to improve and take on board ideas from all areas of turf management.

“Regarding the challenge, if we can go round 100 holes in 908 minutes and play to our handicaps for the whole day this would equate to a shot every 34 seconds! “We’re looking forward to raising significant funds for Cancer Research Wales.”

Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/RidgewayGolf2013-100HoleChallenge

HISTORIC CHANGE AT BRORA

To mark the occasion the club and Clynelish Distillery, the sponsor of the 11th hole, invited course record holder Jim Miller to hit the first drive from the new tee.
Aerial spraying against OPM - first forecast in April GI got underway in early May. Within hours it was headline news in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. Micron Sprayers confirmed aerial application would be carried out by a Robinson Helicopter equipped with Microair AU700 atomisers.

The target is the 10-hectare Hertridge and Broom Covert near Pangbourne (West Berkshire) to be sprayed twice with Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki. Stewart Stroop of Forestry Commission (FC) said “We know there could be OPM in the woodland environment because we found a nest last year.”

Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive of the charity ‘Butterfly Conservation’ said: “Blanket aerial spraying of a designated wildlife site sets a very bad precedent and is an extremely crude control mechanism – the approach is akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut.” We believe a very bad precedent and is under way in early May. Within

“Many thanks to B,B&O for a great game played in a very friendly spirit. Thanks especially to Larry Peerman and Tony Wood for going the extra mile. The goal was very much appreciated. Thanks too to West Ham and particularly Head Groundsman Shaun O’Brien for the quality of the pitch. Finally thanks to Ken Morris for arranging everything from organising the players, transport, ad hetero, post match speeches and evening beverages back at Riddles. Thanks for the great company and another amazing day guys.”

For most Golf Clubs, like most businesses, marketing has become a key component of success and longevity. So when the St Anne’s Old Links (SMOL) Course Manager, the Professional and a club member chatted over a beer at the Club prizing evening, none of them thought that marketing and greenkeeping at the club would take such an innovative step forward so quickly.

Positioned within yards of Lancashire’s Irish Sea coastline, the club prides itself on having one of the best maintained true Links golf courses in the UK, but maintaining this standard comes at a significant cost. Two of the key individuals responsible for ensuring the viability of the Club are the Club Pro Daniel Webster and the Course Manager Stuart Hogg.

It was whilst discussing the need to market the Club to a wider audience and bringing in visiting parties that Peter Barrett, a club member, suggested an innovative idea. Peter’s son Ali had been developing a helicopter drone which he had used for filming extreme sports. So why not use this same technology to film the course and allow prospective visitors to see the quality and standard of the greens and fairways before they visit?

Stuart then suggested it was not only useful for marketing, but would also enable him, as Course Manager, to gain a more holistic view of the course using the aerial perspective to track progress of the course over time and to help the development of future short and long term improvement projects.

TO THE LINKS IN DERBYSHIRE

AIB is one of the first golf clubs in the UK to have a full aerial video of the complete course available on their website. The results speak for themselves. As Club Captain John Gallacher said: “I am extremely impressed by the end results. Utilising this innovative technology enables us to showcase our wonderful course, providing an enhanced service offering to our visitors and guests. Equally as important it provides valuable information to our Course Manager in terms of course maintenance and development.”

Work is ongoing to refine the videoing techniques and Ali and Peter have now set up a new business - www.heliphoto.biz – to further promote the use of lightweight, high tech drones for aerial filming of golf courses and other sporting events and venues.
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The concern is high for rare butterflies in this woodland including orange tip butterfly (Anthocharis cardamines) and white admiral (Limenitis camilla), as well as the purple emperor (Apatura iris) known to be on sites nearby.

Early May featured strong winds and falling temperatures slowing oak re-olivcation even more. Calm conditions for accurate deposition of droplets are required. And 40-60 per cent leaf expansion, to ensure sufficiently good leaf coverage and a lethal dose of BT insecticide through larval ingestion.

Wind turbulence and insufficient tree canopy cover increase chances of droplets landing on non-target plants. Dog violet and honeysuckle both common woodland and hedegrow plants are the food plants of silver washed fritillary and white admiral, respectively. Pangbourne appears a strange choice of place to begin aerial bombardment with insecticide. After three years of ground spraying only three nests were found last year. One surprised observer told Greenkeeper International: “IFC wanted maximum impact against OPM they could possibly close down Richmond Park for a day to treat the area’s high OPM infestation.”

This would clearly assist siteselectively. OPM has been successfully controlled on Richmond Golf Course for a day to treat the area’s high OPM infestations.

Secondly this is the only time when the larvae start to feed on oak leaves. Consequently the oak leaves produced in spring, sometime during the second half of May, will begin re-foliation and hatching of the L1 (first instar) larvae from plaques of insect eggs on small branches are dependent on temperature. An early spring with higher than normal temperatures increase chances of droplets being delivered to target oaks. OPM larvae in the late L3 to L6 (second to sixth instar) and white admiral, respectively, are the most vulnerable to killing with insecticide. The lower the temperature, the more likely to kill the larva.

The twin synchronised starting point of L1 and white admiral larvae is moving mainly westwards as a nest of infestation is moving mainly westwards. The twin infestation focus on oak trees planted in the London Boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and west towards North Surrey. The infestation leapfrogged the bridge area of North Surrey.

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Aerial spraying against OPM…on time (if not on target)

TORO/LELY MATCH

BtMO triumphed 4-1 over Kent in the annual Toro/Lely Home Counties Golf Final at Upston Park, home of West Ham United.

Kent Section secretary and part-time goalkeeper (!) Stuart then suggested it was not only useful for marketing, but would also enable him, as Course Manager, to gain a more holistic view of the course using the aerial perspective to track progress of the course over time and to help the development of future short and long term improvement projects.

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