American Dream

Jason Brooks takes us behind the scenes at the Phoenix Open

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WELCOME FROM BIGGA

The huge economic impact of golf

Recently the results of a major study into the Economic Impact of golf in Great Britain & Ireland and across Europe were released (see page eight and the BIGGA website).

Sports Marketing Surveys carried out the study at the instigation of the PGA and with the support of many British and European bodies including both BIGGA and FEGGA. The conclusions show just how big an impact the sport of golf has on the economy producing a turnover of 15.1 billion euros across Europe and over €3 billion in GB&M alone.

The report encompasses all elements of golf-related revenue. It would be inappropriate to try and estimate just how big a proportion of the overall impact can be attributed to golf course maintenance but what is true is that golfers place huge value on the quality of playing conditions they are presented with. They are far more likely to play regularly when their course is well maintained and therefore more likely to add to the sport’s revenue. Equally, improvements in course management over the years have served to make golf in GB&M a 12 months of the year affair, which undoubtedly adds to the revenue it now generates.

The report demonstrates that golf is indeed big business and needs to be run accordingly, adds to the revenue it now generates. As usual they were a varied bunch in terms of age and greenkeeping experience but they gelled extremely well and were a credit to themselves, their employers and the Association. I’d like to take this opportunity to formally thank Stephen Bernhard and his company for his long-term support of this fantastic member opportunity – the ten delegates picked up contacts, expertise and knowledge from their trip to America which will help them significantly in their future careers.

The same can definitely be said for Jason Brooks of Torquay Golf Club who describes in detail in these pages the fantastic opportunity he had this winter to spend time out from his career in Devon to gain such an experience should be commended and will, I am sure, have a very positive impact on his career in greenkeeping.

Jim Croxtton, BIGGA CEO
We enjoy a hassle free income from our land.
American dream

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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited
BILLY’S HALF CENTURY OF SERVICE RECOGNISED AT BTME 2013

In December’s GI (shown inset) we featured Alan Kite, Head Greenkeeper at Sutton Coldfield GC, who had marked 50 years of service at the club. Remarkably he’s not alone, as another terrific servant to the industry was honoured at BTME.

Billy’s good friend Brian Summers added: “I have known him for a good many years and we have grown old together; I wish him all the luck for the future.”

Billy Mitchell has worked at Perranporth Golf Club in Cornwall for half a century and this achievement was a highlight of the South West and South Wales ‘get-together’ in Harrogate. He’s been a key member of the BGGA Devon and Cornwall section since its inception in 1977, and has been happy to remain in the background working away to help the section run smoothly.

He is well known in the BGGA family and has made lots of friends through his many trips to Harrogate to visit BTME. He and his brother John, who has now retired from green keeping, were given Life Membership of the association for all the work they have done to promote BGGA and the Devon and Cornwall section.

They have also been on the Open Support teams throughout the country and hugely enjoyed themselves assisting with the smooth running of the world famous tournament and also mingling with top professional golfers.

Billy is an assessor and helped set up the Duchy College training programme and remains very much involved with the assessing and education of trainees.

He’s also involved with the Links Forum for South Wales and the South West. The promoting of pure links golf is Billy’s passion and he will talk to anyone who is interested in the subject, giving them his knowledge he has gained after 50 years at one of the most unusual links golf courses in the country at Perranporth. He has no immediate plans to retire.

GREENKEEPING LEGENDS AWARDED LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Two hugely prominent members of the greenkeeping fraternity became the latest recipients of the coveted BGGA Life Membership at the recent BTME show.

John Philip MBE (right) and Chris Kennedy (above left, with Walter Woods) were unanimously awarded the accolade - which less than 50 greenkeepers have ever received - at BGGA’s AGM, joining an illustrious list.

John will forever be associated with his work at Carnoustie, where his tireless work brought The Open Championship back to the famous links. He even had the 11th hole on the Championship course named after him after 27 years of service.

Despite retiring last year he remains highly active in the industry and gave a fascinating presentation focusing on the history of the Open Championship and modern course performance guidelines during BGGA’s educational programme at BTME.

Commenting on joining the likes of Walter Woods and Jack McMillan MBE on the roll call of BGGA Life Members, John said: “It’s a fantastic honour to receive such an accolade from your peers. I didn’t know anything about it until it happened at the AGM so it was quite unexpected. I’m sure a few people knew about it but they managed to keep it quiet!”

Chris Kennedy spent 22 years as Golf Courses Manager at Wentworth Club until his retirement last summer. During his tenure he was responsible for presenting the courses for a staggering 52 professional events, and renovated the West Course in partnership with Ernie Els.

He was also presented with Life Membership at BTME and is now looking to pass on half a century of industry knowledge to younger greenkeepers in an advisory capacity.

He said: “I’m delighted that BGGA feel I deserve this accolade. It was a very nice moment for both John and I to be awarded Life Membership and it means an awful lot to both of us.”

BGGA Chairman Tony Smith said: “Both John and Chris have done wonders to raise the profile of greenkeeping through sheer excellence throughout their careers.

“They’ve also helped to inspire many young greenkeepers, many of whom have gone on to enjoy terrific careers themselves.

“The accolade of BGGA Life Membership is only awarded to a select few, they are both hugely deserving of it and I congratulate them warmly.”

MERVIN DOWNING

We were saddened to hear of the death of Mervin Downing, former Head Greenkeeper at Aldenham Golf & Country Club, earlier this year. Here’s Peter Hopkinson, branch manager at George Browns in Chesham, with a tribute to his great friend.

“Greenkeeping recently lost one of the good guys. I first met Mervin Downing 43 plus years ago one evening at Aldenham for a meeting of the BGGA London section.

“I remember we attended various educational seminars at the club - one by a young Jim McKenzie with a slideshow of improvements carried out at Wentworth Golf Club. Afterwards we would of course retire to the bar and the company was always convivial, with Brian Anderson, Martin Smith, John Edwards, Norman Kiley, Jeremy Hill, Michael Peters, David Lowe, Dan Wilson, Derek Mason, Alex Low, Mervin, Alan Moffat of Parkers, Dennis South of Rugby Taylor and many others. By the end of the evening I always seemed to be chaffing happily with Mervin. I was always comfortable in his company - a capable, hardworking man who understood the countryside, liked a pint and a cigarette and a chat. Mervin joined Aldenham in 1987 and worked with Dave Knight and Graham Pooley under the direction of Head Greenkeeper Alec Law. Always cheerful, Mervin was good company.

“Mervin loved all aspects of shooting, vermin control on the golf course, pigeon shooting on the neighbouring farmland and on the pheasant shoot he set up.

“When Alec Law retired in 1993 Mervin was promoted to Head Greenkeeper. In 2000 after 14 years in charge Mervin stepped down, and he continued as course mechanic. He was now able to spend more time with his wife Jenny, daughters Samantha and Melissa and grandchildren John, Molly and Fred. Sadly illness was to strike but Mervin endured the treatment with great stoicism. He passed away on 1 January 2013, and will be missed by all who knew him.”
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GOLF’S BILLION POUND IMPACT REVEALED

A new report supported by BBGGA has revealed that golf is worth over £1.1 billion annually to the economy of Great Britain and Ireland – and a staggering £15.1 billion throughout Europe.

It also reveals the sport is responsible for nearly 80,000 jobs in Great Britain and Ireland and generates employee wages in excess of £3.5 billion.

The report, commissioned by The Professional Golfers Association and supported by leading British and European bodies including BBGGA and FREGGA was produced by Sports Marketing Surveys Inc and highlights the importance of the golf industry across the continent.

Key economic findings across the 27 European Union nations plus Norway and Switzerland, which represent a combined population of 510 million, show the sport is responsible for a minimum of 180,000 full time jobs and employee wages of €4.4 billion.

And based on models employed by the Australian Golf Industry Council (2018) and Golf2020 in the USA (2011), the results show total expenditure per golfer throughout Europe of €1,917 and America (€2,077) golfing counterparts.

Driving economic impact with right men in the top 20 end of year world rankings and nine women in the top 50 of the Asian dominated standings.

International team success is exemplified with the Ryder Cup, Solheim Cup, Walker Cup and Curtis Cup all residing this side of the Atlantic.

PGA chief executive Sandy Jones commented: “Golf plays a significant role both in its economic impact and also in delivering social, behavioural and sporting benefits with the PGA professional firmly at the centre of the golf industry.

“In addition golf is also a huge contributor to charitable causes in Europe and last year generated more than £85 million supporting a range of good causes.”

BBGGA chief executive Jim Croxton added: “Such a comprehensive report is of great value to all stakeholders in the golf industry. The largely unquantified work of BBGGA researchers is invaluable in managing the nation’s golf courses contributes hugely to a sport that is played by several million people and provides nearly 80,000 jobs in Great Britain and Ireland alone. We are grateful for the PGA for leading on this project and all the other stakeholders whose contribution has helped produce this important study.”

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT ROLE AT RJ FOR LEE

Lee Kristensens has been promoted to the role of Product Manager at Ransomes Jacobsen, one of the leading manufacturers of commercial mowers, turf maintenance equipment and compact utility and industrial vehicles, based in Ipswich in Suffolk.

Reporting to Richard Comely, Director of Marketing and Product Management, Lee will manage the design and enhancement of all Jacobsen designed and built Ransomes and Jacobsen branded products and liaise with colleagues at the Charlotte facility in North Carolina, USA with regard to the Jacobsen products.

Commenting on the appointment Richard Comely said: “Lee has an excellent technical background and is a key player in the related industry and will bring further expertise to the Product Management team here in Ipswich. We have some exciting product developments in the pipeline and he will be a great asset to the business.”

MARRIOTT HOLLINS SIGN AGREEMENT WITH SHERRIF

Sherriff Amenity is delighted to announce that an agreement has been reached with Ian Pullan (shown right), the Course Manager of Marriott Hollins Hall, to become the preferred supplier of chemical, fertiliser, seed and all other golf course maintenance requirements.

Marriott provide some of the most immaculate golf courses across the UK Mark Pyneh (left), Sheriff Amenity Director said: “We are delighted that Ian has chosen Sheriff Amenity to be their preferred supplier.

The agreement that has been reached will ensure that Marriott Hollins Hall benefit from our extensive product portfolio. However this is only one aspect of the agreement. We firmly that IT will play an increasingly important role in our industry and Ian will be able to benefit from the latest technology that Sheriff Amenity are able to provide to group customers. This, along with bespoke technical and product training for Ian’s staff makes this an exciting and innovative package for our group customers.

SHOCKWAVE HERALDS A BREAKTHROUGH AT LANCASTER GOLF CLUB

There is no doubt that we have had an awful lot of rain recently but Warren Bevan, Course Manager of the historic Lancaster Golf Club is not a man to let the elements get the better of him. Followig our the wettest years on recrod, Warren has had a real challenge to keep the course looking and performing at its best.

He has met this challenge head on by tackling flooding on the greens with a grim determination. “We had to combat the sheer volume of rainfall that threatened to overwhelm the greens,” said Warren.

To complement his existing maintenance strategy, he requested delivery of an Imants Shockwave as have a large number of the traffic routes as well. The effect on the 18th green has been dramatic, “I’m very impressed”, says Warren. “Following a sudden downpour we had standing water on the 18th green and to my surprise Ian agreed to operate the Shockwave in these extremely wet conditions.

Within 20 minutes of completing a single pass over the entire green, the puddles had gone. The green is still playable over 70 minutes. On less affected greens play was on as soon as within 5 minutes.”

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And based on models employed by the Australasian Golf Industry Council (2018) and Golf2020 in the USA (2011), the results show total expenditure per golfer throughout Europe of €9,111 which is in line with Australia’s €11,917 and America’s (€2,007) golfing counterparts.

While the well-documented economic downturn has hit popular European golf destinations such as Spain and Portugal, golf tourism still contributes €1.5 billion of the annual impact.

On the course, the strength of the game means the economic impact with right men in the top 20 end of year world rankings and nine women in the top 50 of the Asian dominated standings. International team success is exemplified with the Ryder Cup, Solheim Cup, Walker Cup and Curtis Cup all residing this side of the Atlantic.

PGA chief executive Sandy Jones commented: “Golf plays a significant role both in its economic impact and also in delivering social, behavioural and sporting benefits with the PGA professional firmly at the centre of the golf industry. 

In addition golf is also a huge contributor to charitable causes in Europe and last year generated more than €85 million supporting a range of good causes.”

BBGGA chief executive, Jim Croxton added: “Such a comprehensive report is of great value to all stakeholders in the golf industry. The largely unsung work of BBGGA members is in managing and marketing the nation’s golf courses contributes hugely to a sport that is enjoyed by several million people and provides nearly 80,000 jobs in Great Britain and Ireland alone. We are grateful to the PGA and all other stakeholders whose contribution has helped produce this important study.

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He has met this challenge head on by installing Shockwave on the greens with a grim determination. “We had to combat the sheer volume of rainfall that threatened to overwhelm the greens,” said Warren.

To complement his existing maintenance strategy, he requested delivery of an Imants Shockwave 155 from Campney Turf Care Product Specialist Ian Campbell. “I wanted to source a machine to tackle some deep seated compaction problems and encourage rapid dispersion of water in extremely adverse conditions.”

The worst case scenario would be to close the greens until the water subsides, but that’s not how we do things round here. When the course is dosed it results in everything: loss of play, cancelled events, last revenue. We want play to remain unaffected by the weather conditions for as long as possible.”

The Imants Shockwave is a linear decompactor, designed to revitalise heavy wear areas by relieving soil compaction, improving aeration and removing surface water. The important feature for Warren is the working depth – up to 250mm. This is deep enough to penetrate the sub soil layer and allow the water to flow more effectively into existing drainage lines and slits.

Six of the greens have been treated with the Imants Shockwave as have a large number of the traffic routes as well. The effect on the 18th green has been dramatic.

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WHERE DO YOU READ GI?

Jack Davies, Greenkeeper at Five Lakes Hotel Golf & Country Club in Essex, posted this terrific picture on the BIGGA Message Board, showing him reading February’s GI on a boat.

Jack said: “After a spell of prolonged wet weather we now have a sixth lake lying on the fifth carriageway. I thought I could read February’s magazine on the flood while we pumped it out – my boss was a bit sceptical of the plan though! February’s magazine made a great read while I was on the water”.

In what unusual locations have you read GI? Send a picture to steve.castle@bigga.co.uk and we’ll print the best.

A frantic and fruitful February

It’s been a whirlwind few weeks for me – as soon as I returned from BTME I was making preparations to attend the Golf Industry Show in San Diego.

As well as the exhibition itself, which impressed me greatly with its size, scale and the range of exhibitors on display, I dipped into a few of the educational seminars.

If there was a time when we were playing catch-up with American education, I believe that time has passed and we’re now on an equal footing with them.

Education is taken extremely seriously on both sides of the Atlantic – it’s great to see, and it’s about time.

The International Briefing I attended during the Show was valuable, particularly as I’m now lucky enough to look at it from a Chairman’s perspective.

I quickly got the impression that we’re not alone with our problems in the UK – various Associations from all corners of the world share similar challenges relating to the economy and also retaining and increasing membership.

We made plans to host an international gathering during BTME 2014, which is a really exciting opportunity.

I also attended meetings with the American and Australian Associations and also with GEO over environmental issues – in particular we focused on sustainability.

We will hopefully see real long-term progress as a result of these meetings.

I also spent a lot of time with the BIGGA Delegation sponsored by Bernhard and Company, and they were equally enthusiastic about the week.

They represented a really good cross-section of our membership with a diverse mix of Course Managers, Deputies and Assistants and I know they got a lot from the week.

There was a particularly good mix of ages and characters and I know this experience will stand them in good stead as they progress in their careers.

The delegation were taken round the fabulous Torrey Pines and La Costa courses and said it was unbelievable – another world.

One major difference was, of course, the weather – their winter is similar to our summer! I was also fortunate enough to see these courses and they were truly stunning.

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We made plans to host an International Informing the membership about his experiences.

One thing he said which stuck in my mind was “I wish I could bottle this up and dish it out to all the young greenkeepers in the UK”.

Another highlight was the BIGGA Reception we held on the Monday evening which was a gathering of our members who had travelled to San Diego, and it was so successful we’re looking at making it a regular feature.

On my return from America the Board of Management meet which gave us a timely opportunity to review BTME 2013 and put plans in place for 2014 and beyond.

Feedback from visitors and exhibitors alike has generally been really positive and momentum is already gathering for January 2014.

Towards the end of February the Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations (FEGGA) held its Annual Conference in the picturesque but snowy city of Zurich.

It was fascinating to listen to the challenges faced by the many other Greenkeeper Associations across the continent and realise that they are so similar to those that we face in the UK.

Economic pressure, lack of awareness and appreciation of the profession, legislative/regulatory issues and environmental challenges were the repeated themes, clearly all Associations need to stand together to help the whole profession overcome them.

During the conference Paul Watson, BIGGA’s 2010 Chairman, was elected to the FEGGA Board of Directors, Paul has recently completed a four-year term of office on the BIGGA Board and has excellent credentials and experience to assist FEGGA in their goal to properly represent the profession of greenkeeping at a European level.

Congratulations Paul, you certainly have my support in your new role.

I’m well aware that it’s been far from an ideal start to 2013 weather wise.

However, spring is finally just around the corner so let’s hope it improves, there’s no more snow and we get the dry spell we so badly need.

Chairman’s Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

BOB’S BLOG

We’re continuing to receive some excellent suggestions for blogs posted by greenkeepers across the land. The featured blog this month is Bob Melodie’s at Crail Golfing Society in Fife, Scotland.

Course Manager Bob has used the blog for three years, and it features regular updates, pictures of Bob and his team working on what is one of the oldest clubs in the world.

Encouragingly, it also features on the main website meaning members and visitors alike are able to discover exactly what the team are up to – and why they’re doing it.

Bob said: “I started it mainly to make our BIGGA section website more relevant and up to date. Barely a day seems to go by without a member mentioning to me that they’ve been looking at it, and a lot of the complaints we used to get have stopped because people know what’s happening. It helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed of what’s going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

‘Visitors to the blog also find it informative because we have particular issues at Crail, such as high tides damaging the course in spring and autumn depending on wind direction. It also helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed on what’s going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

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Check the blog out for yourself at www.craelgreenkeepersblog.blogspot.co.uk

MARATHON MAN PLANS TO SKIN COMPETITION

On April 14 Greg Skinner, Head Greenkeeper at Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, is running the Brighton Marathon. He’s running in aid of Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research in memory of a good friend named Paul Glennon who died in 2012 aged 56. They represented a really good cause.

Greg would welcome any donations to this extremely worthwhile cause or small – to donate and for further information please visit www.justgiving.com/Greg-Skinner1

Contact details

For further information, please visit www.greenkeepersworld.co.uk

If there was a time when we were playing catch-up with American education, I believe that time has now passed and we’re on an equal footing with them.
Every year I wonder where the first two months of the year go, when my feet finally touch the ground I realise that it’s March already. This year it has been especially busy as Lee Strutt and I got married the day after returning from the Golf Industry Show in San Diego! After almost 20 years in the industry as Sami Collins, I’ll now be known as Sami Strutt—so don’t go ignoring my emails and phone calls thinking “I have no idea who that is!”

Golf Industry Show

The Golf Industry Show made a welcome return to San Diego in February. BIGGA were represented by Jim Croxton, Tony Smith (Chairman) and myself along with the BIGGA Delegation in association with Bernhard & Co. Although the weather was not what was expected in Southern California, the show delivered a full array of education and exhibitors.

Many familiar faces visited the BIGGA stand and we were able to assist the ten boys from the delegation we handled enquiries for Messrs Norsworthy and slightly older versions – no legal help and advice 24/7.

The annual meeting with GC unary’s education team was as informative as ever with discussions taking place regarding the education offered at our shows and how this can be enhanced, administration matters (boring for most but invaluable for us) and exchanges of ideas to improve what we do. A big thanks to the BIGGA delegation for your company and I hope you have now all recovered!

Learning & Development

Sami Strutt, BIGGA Learning & Development Manager, with an update on education issues

Future Turf Managers Initiative

Applications for the inaugural Future Turf Managers Conference are now closed with 45 applicants vying for 20 places. The selection process will have taken place by the time you read this and next month I will report on who’s been successful.

TOBO

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2013

This year we celebrate 25 years of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award. With past winners including Ryan Grant from Turnberry and Murray Long from Bruntingthorpe as well as our most recent winner, Thomas Flavelle, this prestigious award is highly sought after. Applications for the 2013 Award have been sent out to all colleges and training providers offering Sportsturf qualifications. If you are studying for a Diploma in Greenkeeping, Diploma in Golf Course Supervision; SVQ Level 2 or 3, National Certificate or National Diploma courses and are a resident in the UK or the Republic of Ireland, you are eligible.

To be entered for the amazing opportunity of winning the eight-week Toro Scholarship to study at the University of Massachusetts, visit Toro headquarters and travel to Orlando for the Golf Industry Show, you must be nominated by your greenkeeping tutor. If you believe that you could be the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2013, talk to your tutor today about applying.

BIGGA Membership

The membership team reflect on current news and affairs affecting you, the BIGGA member

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Member of BIGGA equips members with the resources and connections to progress their career. Thanks to BIGGA’s Gold and Silver Key Fund contributors BIGGA are able to allocate funding to enhance professional development by offering financial support, training aids and a CPD scheme to members.

• Save money by receiving your own monthly copy of Greenkeeper International (GI) as part of your membership, a monthly round up of the latest news, views and technical articles from the turf industry.

• Gain access to enhanced member-only content by logging into the members area on the BIGGA website.

• Take advantage of education funding through - Refund of fees - Subsidies - Higher education scholarships

• Take advantage of Assistant Development Seminars – ‘So You Want to be Promoted’ – Essential Skills for your Career Development – is being delivered by experienced Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers across BIGGA’s 26 sections.

Look under the Events section on the BIGGA website for dates and information.

• Register for CPD – by planning and reflecting on your learning experiences you can enhance your development and advantage your career.

• The benefits of membership are not just there when you are looking to further your career, members also have personal benefits including accessing to -

• Legal helpline – access to legal help and advice 24/7.

When you have a legal problem it can often be a highly stressful time of your life. It is often difficult to know who you can talk to and the cost of getting the advice that you need can often be expensive. As a benefit of BIGGA Membership members have access to the Legal Assistance insurance package arranged by Gallagher Heath, access to a comprehensive legal helpline that offers advice on a wide range of legal services.

The legal helpline is provided by Irwin Mitchell, one of the top 10 UK law firms. The helpline is operated by a team of dedicated advisors, all legally qualified to give you the legal advice that you require. The typical areas of law that the legal helpline can give advice on are:

• Family law
• Employment law
• Property law
• Consumers

Full Members Personal Accident Insurance

This insurance provides cover for accidental bodily injury which occurs during the operative time of cover which results in death, loss of limbs or sight, hearing and speech, permanent disability or temporary disability. There are additional payments for medical expenses, funeral expenses, hospitalisation, bodily injury resulting in a coma, continuing and relatives travel expenses.

Lifestyle Counselling

Helpline and online support is available to all BIGGA Members and their families

This upgraded service for all BIGGA Members and members of their immediate family living at the same address can help with a range of problems from practical everyday matters to sensitive or emotional issues. Specialists will help members deal with personal relationship problems, problems with colleagues in the workplace and other issues affecting their general wellbeing.

Counsellors and information specialists are also trained to help members with practical problems like debt.

The helpline is complemented by a comprehensive online information and support service, through which members can access information and advice on a range of issues and problems which often impact on everyday life. Topics are wide and diverse and include relationships, childcare issues, consumer issues, stress and health and fitness. Information is updated regularly by a team of experienced counsellors and information specialists.

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With almost 6,000 members, can you afford not to be a part of Europe’s largest greenkeeping organisation.
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Many familiar faces visited the BIGGA stand, including the able assistance of the ten boys from the delegation we handled enquires about the services that BIGGA offers as well as selling a couple of memberships in the process.

For the delegation it is a full-on week with almost every minute filled. We did however manage to fit in a couple of birthday celebrations one evening for Messrs Norsworthy and Farker, with the able assistance of some Hooters Girls (young and slightly older versions – no comments please boys!).

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Future Turf Managers Initiative

The funding provided to student member typists is such that they are still able to receive first class support and guidance. Typists are also encouraged to keep them up to date with the latest guidance and provide support for those who are looking for work. A small number of our members have recently been appointed as education advisors, helping those members in their respective areas.

Future Turf Managers Initiative

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With almost 6,000 members you can afford not to be a part of Europe’s largest greenkeeping organisation.
What a difference a year makes when you’ve taken delivery of a Wiedenmann Terra Spike G338 HD. Ombersley Golf Club purchased Wiedenmann UK’s charity platinum-painted deep aeration roller last January, and coincidentally was also celebrating 20 years of operation. In truth, the Kidderminster club would have purchased the Terra Spike a year previously but got a little bit caught up with other tasks during the summer. From October onwards, when the days became shorter, we really started to reap the benefits of sustained frequent aeration. The transformation in the quality of the turf was evident to everybody.

 Exactly a year on, Ombersley happily reports that they’ve had no closures what so ever and that drainage on the course has never been better despite the last 12 months being almost the wettest on record. “We’ve remained open when others around have had to shut their investment. What a difference a year makes when you’ve taken delivery of a Wiedenmann Terra Spike G338 HD,” comments Andy Halfpenny, General Manager.

“Member of greenkeeping staff, so from our perspective aeration is truly earning its keep. I’ve even been fortunate to take on another bringing in additional business so our Terra Spike is a machine that’s better despite the last 12 months been almost the wettest on record. We’ve pretty much stuck to that in the spring, autumn and winter but got a little bit caught up with other tasks during the summer. From October onwards, when the days became shorter, we really started to reap the benefits of sustained frequent aeration. The transformation in the quality of the turf was evident to everybody.”

“We’ve received many positive comments from members and visitors alike, and the feedback has been extremely positive. The course is now open all year round and we are able to keep it in top condition, even in the winter months.”

“From a practical point of view, the Terra Spike is an efficient and effective machine. It is easy to operate and maintain, and the service and support from Wiedenmann UK has been second to none.”

“The Terra Spike has helped us to maintain a high level of turf quality, which is vital for our customers and visitors. We are also able to reduce our reliance on chemical treatments, which is good for the environment.”

“Overall, we are very pleased with the Terra Spike and would highly recommend it to other clubs looking to improve their turf quality.”

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KUBOTA ADD PRECISION TO POWER WITH NEW 100-INCH MOWER DECK

Tractor and groundcare specialists Kubota has introduced a new Lantec 100-inch flex mower deck available exclusively on its high performance and market leading F3680 Out Front Mower.

The F3680 is the most powerful out front mower in the Kubota range. With a 36hp engine and Auto-Assist 4WD as standard, it is designed to offer maximum manoeuvrability and versatility whilst being able to tackle the most demanding commercial mowing operations. The F3680 also includes a host of features to increase operator comfort and reduce fatigue, such as hydrostatic power steering, adjustable seat and conveniently positioned operator levers.

Dave Roberts, Kubota’s General Manager, commented: “The introduction of this new mower deck is part of Kubota’s ongoing commitment to add value to the product and the service we provide our customers to ensure they can complete their work efficiently and effectively.”

“The patented Lantec design integrates five 21-inch mower pans, uniquely pinned together and belt driven, giving a 100-inch wide cut with the precision of a 21-inch walk-behind mower. For turf professionals, this means a larger area can be cut in a shorter space of time, saving them valuable time and money.”

The 100-inch mower deck, called the 100 EFK, is only available on Kubota’s F3680 as this model has the ideal horsepower requirements for a 100-inch cut width. The solution has been designed so all the deck pans articulate independently. It degrees up and down to follow the ground contour with walk-mower precision which reduces the possibility of scalping. Other features include hydraulics all fed up outer pans to minimize width for transport and an adjustable deck height ranging from 1 inch to 4 ¼ inches with ½ inch increments with no tooling requirement. Adjustable internal baffling also allows for standard rear discharge or mid to optimize performance in a variety of positions.

WIEDEMANN UK’S PLATINUM CHARITY TERRA SPIKE KEEPS OMBERSLEY GC OPEN

What a difference a year makes when you’ve taken delivery of a Wiedemann Terra Spike GXi8 HD. Ombersley Golf Club purchased Wiedemann UK’s charity platinum-painted deep aerator last January, and coincidentally was also celebrating 20 years of operation. In truth, the Kidderminster club would have purchased the Terra Spike a year previously but too many weather-enforced course closures meant they had to delay their investment.

Exactly a year on, Ombersley happily reports that they’ve had no closures whatsoever and that drainage on the course has never been better despite the last 12 months being almost the wettest on record.

“Andrew Halfpenny, Course Manager, said: “We’ve set up a programme to aerate eight days a month on tees, greens and aprons. We’ve pretty much stuck to that in the spring, autumn and winter but got a bit out of step with other tasks during the summer. From October onwards, when the days became shorter, we really started to reap the benefits of sustained frequent aeration. The transformation in the quality of the turf was evident to everybody. We’ve remained open when others around have had to shut”. We've set up a programme to aerate eight days a month on tees, greens and aprons. We’ve pretty much stuck to that in the spring, autumn and winter but got a bit out of step with other tasks during the summer. From October onwards, when the days became shorter, we really started to reap the benefits of sustained frequent aeration. The transformation in the quality of the turf was evident to everybody.

“We’ve remained open when others around have had to shut bringing in additional business so our Terra Spike is a machine that’s truly earning its keep. I’ve even been fortunate to take on another member of greenkeeping staff, so from our perspective aeration is truly working and is our key critical task.”

BRITISH SUGAR TOPSOIL GUIDE LAUNCHED

British Sugar Topsoil – who recently exhibited at HTME for the first time and have already agreed to return next year – have launched a free booklet outlining how topsoil can be used on golf courses.

They’ve teamed up with Peter Jones Associates Ltd to produce the eight-page technical ‘Essential Guide’ which is a must for those involved in the golf course industry. It’s freely available as a download from British Sugar TOPSOIL’s web site www.bstoptop.co.uk or by calling 08702 102134.

For further information on the full range of products, see www.kubota.co.uk Tel: 01844 268 000

For demanding daily use, Kubota offers a powerful and versatile choice.

The Kubota range of groundcare machinery delivers outstanding performance, simple operation and legendary reliability. From powerful and versatile tractors to high performance mowers, find out why Kubota is the practical choice for professionals.

Contact your local dealer to book a test drive today.

*Conditions apply to 2nd year warranty as standard*
MOOR HALL GC ROLLS OUT THE RED IRON

Moor Hall Golf Club in the West Midlands has become one of the first in the UK to put Toro’s new GreensPro 1200 greens roller through its paces.

Course manager and BIGGA member Wayne Ganning (shown inset above) included the machine in his replacement Toro fleet package after the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) recommended greens ironing to help improve the smoothness and trueness of the Sutton Coldfield course’s greens. As he explains: “We didn’t get a great deal of use out of the iron last summer because of all the rain, but when we did use it the results confirm that smoothness and trueness improved. Also, surface performance achieved near-tournament levels with speed, which makes us more productive,” he adds.

The GreensPro is just one of several new arrivals at the 18-hole parkland course, after the club replaced an eight-year-old Toro fleet reaching the end of its useful life.

Wayne’s other new mowers include a Groundsmaster 3500-D and 4500-D, and a Reelmaster 6700-D. “I’ve particularly noticed that the 4500-D rotary mower has a much quicker grounds speed, which makes us more productive,” he adds. A machine Wayne did get plenty of use out of during the washout summer was the SandPro 3040 bunker raker. “We bought a front plough as an optional extra and it pushed all the sand up despite the rain and really helped us to get the bunkers back into play more quickly after a downpour.”

MOVE FOR MACGREGOR

MacGregor Forest & Groundcare have recently been appointed as the authorised dealer for the Redexim Charterhouse professional Golf and Turf Management machinery range, in the North West Scotland area.

As a well-established business with regional branches in Inverness, Fort William and Shetland, MacGregor Forest & Groundcare work with a host of national names and have an excellent market share in the areas they serve.

Commenting on the agreement with MacGregor Forest & Groundcare Depot Manager Callum Sim said, “the decision to work with Redexim Charterhouse was customer driven as we had noticed an increase in demand from our clients for Aeration, Overseeding, Top Dressing and both natural and synthetic turf maintenance equipment.

Our subsequent market research confirmed the quality and established reputation of the Redexim Charterhouse product range and we have also found the dealer support and back-up to be excellent.”

THE ALL-ELECTRIC eFLEX. OUR QUIETEST GREENSMOWER EVER.

The Greensmaster eFlex from Toro, our first lithium-ion battery-powered electric greensmower. This revolutionary power source is far superior to lead-acid batteries, being cleaner and far more efficient. What’s more, the eFlex battery is designed to last five years, cutting as many as nine typical greens on a single charge. And with minimum downtime and low maintenance costs, the eFlex will even save you money in the long run.

Of course, its superior cutting technology delivers the finest putting surface and playing experience you would expect from Toro, but added to this, the mower is clean, environmentally friendly and, crucially, incredibly quiet. All this and more, make the eFlex the perfect choice for golf clubs looking for a green solution, especially those with hotels and guest accommodation.

Call 01480 226800 or visit toro.com
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As he explains: “We didn’t get a great deal of use out of the iron last summer because of all the rain, but when we did use it the results confirm that smoothness and trueness improved. Also, surface performance achieved near-tournament levels with productivity, which makes us more confident than the vibrating rollers we used to use. We’re hoping it will help us cut back on mowing, too, which should help improve sward health.”

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BSSH PRODUCES NEW COMBINED CATALOGUE

British Seed Houses has produced a new product catalogue which combines its Grade ‘A’ amenity grass seed and fertilisers in one booklet.

The new-look catalogue details the comprehensive range of products available from the UK’s largest privately-owned grass seed company and has been well received by customers.

Amenity sales manager Richard Brown said: “We look to improve the catalogue year on year to ensure it is a well-laid out, informative guide. It was a natural progression for us to combine the seed and fertiliser catalogues together, rather than having separate ones, as it was felt more appropriate for our customers.

“Our products are closely interlinked and our technical sales representatives advise on both seed and fertilisers. They have specialist knowledge and experience to help professionals in the golf, sports and landscaping sectors to find the correct grass seeds and fertilisers to benefit and improve their facilities.”

The representatives operate throughout the UK and are also FACTS qualified (Fertiliser Advisers Certification Training scheme). The British Seed Houses product catalogue is available to download at www.bshamenity.com

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It’s bonnie
by the Clyde

How have Gordon Kerr and his team brought PGA EuroPro Tour events to a course which only opened less than three years ago? And what are the technical challenges associated with such a young course? Steve Castle travelled to Scotland to find out.

The “opportunity of a lifetime” is what Course Manager Gordon Kerr calls Mar Hall. For those who have had the privilege to have set foot on the new £4 million layout situated on the banks of the River Clyde beneath the striking silhouette of the Kilpatrick Hills, it’s easy to see why.

In 2007 Gordon was approached to oversee the creation of an 18-hole golf course within the grounds of the five-star Mar Hall Resort. With a provisional opening date of 2010 in mind, the challenge was on—and he accepted.

Gordon, who lives just four miles from the course and is an avid golfer himself, recalls: “It was a dream to be involved in constructing a course from scratch.” Gordon and his five-strong team, who moved to Mar Hall from nearby Geddesoch House Hotel and Golf Club, immediately went to work on the plans devised by renowned architect Dave Thomas and his son, Paul, who he says he relished working closely with.

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However, though Mar Hall represented a timely opportunity,
construction coincided with the onset of the economic recession. With funds limited, the Course Manager had to rely on ingenuity, local knowledge and, more than anything, the adaptability and effort of his team to deliver on the owner’s chief objective - a course that would allow golf all year round.

Unperturbed, ground was broken and Gordon turned to tried and tested local contractors and asked colleagues to take on the roles of dumper truck-drivers and excavators. Together they moved an already 160,000 cubic meters of sub soil – mostly stony shingle – and were ready to start building proper.

“We do get a fair bit of rain, but 80 per cent of the course is built on the riverbank’s shingle ground. It was a good starting point as far as drainage is concerned.

“We’re not permitted to drain water straight into the Clyde so we created an irrigation reservoir and four wetlands as catchments areas. The water regained from the 11th, 12th and 13th holes ensures the course is self sufficient for irrigation water.”

The sub-soil was redistributed by the Mar Hall team on their convoy of dumper trucks and then moulded by skilled shapers into greens, surrounds and bunker complexes. Ironically, it was those sand traps that would prove to Gordon’s next ‘hazard’.

The original plan was to turf all the bunker faces and install pipe and gravel for drainage. He intended to embark on the painstaking and costly job until, at the last minute, he was introduced to two techniques he’d never seen before - hydroseeding and Aquadyne. They proved to be shrewd alternatives.

“Aquadyne is a sustainable drainage product that removes water as efficiently as pipe and gravel,” he explains. “It was a bit sceptical at first but I spoke to a couple of greenkeepers who reassured me it was the best long-term option.”

The Aquadyne was soon inserted and connected to the existing fairway drainage during winter without damage to the shaping of the bunkers or what would be the fairways or green surrounds. This meant that all 54 bunkers could be shaped.

They were then hydroseeded in just two days, saving a massive amount of manpower, machinery and materials.

“These techniques saved us both money and time without compromising the condition of the bunkers. Can you imagine how time-consuming and expensive turfing would have been in comparison? It also meant we completed all of the required work in just two days.”

However, the he says that ultimately it took the hard graft of his team to realise the full benefits of the switch to Aquadyne.

“In the winter our guys would dig trenches by hand and connect the Aquadyne to the fairway drainage we’d already put in. It means that you now hardly ever see a bunker with water in it. Both those techniques saved us a lot of money, as did using our own guys on occasions we could have used outside contractors.”

With the drainage installed, Gordon turned to a contractor he knew he could trust to carry out the final shaping, Greentech of Stirling. Their experts delivered the finishing touches using vital root-zone prior to seeding. That left the Mar Hall greens staff with another steep learning curve - seeding the greens.

He admits the seeding process was the most stressful stage of the whole construction.

“I’d never seeded greens before, and when I spoke to other greenkeepers they told me all sorts of horror stories about the seed blowing away or root-zone being washed out.”

“The greens are fescue bent, and we’ve got dwarf ryegrass on the tees and fairways to make them hard-wearing.”
construction coincided with the onset of the economic recession. With funds limited, the Course Manager had to rely on ingenuity, local knowledge and, more than anything, the adaptability and effort of his team to deliver on the owner's chief objective - a course that would allow golf all year round.

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"The greens are fescue bent, and we've got dwarf ryegrass on the tees and fairways to make them hard-wearing”
As it turned out, it would take a huge effort from Kerr and his crew to see the project through. “I remember we had seeded the first nine greens, but the wind really got up one evening so I was here at 11pm watering the greens to try and stop the seed blowing away. I’m sure some guys who’ve done this sort of thing before don’t think it’s a big deal, but to me it was because I was doing it for the first time.

“By June 2009 the greens and tees were all seeded and grown in by ourselves. The greens are fescue bent and we’ve got dwarf ryegrass on the tees and fairways to make them hard-wearing which seems to have worked very well.”

This left just the fairways to be seeded, but as so often is the case in the West of Scotland, the weather intervened. With a short window between July and September of 2009 to get the seed down, Gordon said the task grew increasingly demanding with each passing day.

“From July onwards it never stopped raining and the pressure was on to get the seed down. Even on sunny days the ground conditions just weren’t dry enough, and we didn’t want to compromise on quality.”

Luckily, with ten good days of weather forecast around mid-September, and with the contractors on standby, it was suddenly all systems go. Fairways and rough were ploughed, harrowed, and stone buried before the seed could finally be drilled in. Though the elements had conspired against them, Kerr says the job was achieved with long hours, good weather and a few fish suppers along the way.

“We were working shifts between 6am and 9pm. Looking back it was an amazing feat.”

Mar Hall opened in May 2010 and, since then, the 6,507-yard course has steadily been gaining popularity among a mixture of members, pay-and-play visitors and hotel guests. “We now have over 100 members, but we need to ensure we accommodate everyone who wants to play here.”

The first chance to show off his and his team’s hard work to a wider audience came one week last August.

“We applied to hold the Mar Hall.com Scottish Classic PGA EuroPro Tour event because we wanted to put Mar Hall on the map, and we were confident it was up to the standard required,” he says. “Everyone was very proud when we were awarded it. It was probably the best week of weather all year. It was brilliant.

“Obviously the course is still young and you always want to improve, so I’m delighted to say the EuroPro will be returning this August. This time around we want it to better still.”

Reflecting on the experience as a whole, Gordon is delighted at the achievement of bringing a course to championship standards from a piece of paper.

“It’s been a great adrenaline rush. At times, of course it was stressful but it’s still been a dream for me to see a course through from an architect’s drawings to a major televised tournament.”
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Beetles, bacteria and **Acute Oak Decline**

Hot on the heels of his exclusive article focusing on chalara ash dieback, Dr Terry Mabbett returns warning of another threat, this time to the UK’s oak trees.

Great Britain lacks an official national tree emblem. Moves are afoot to adopt Pinus sylvestris (Scots pine) as Scotland’s ‘national tree’, while our two native oaks (Quercus robur and Quercus petraea) are obvious choices for England and Wales as ‘English Oak’ and ‘Welsh Oak’.

Over the years a number of leading figures have intimated that Britain should have a ‘National Tree’. The Mayor of London Boris Johnson chose an English oak. But don’t get too carried away because a fast moving lethal syndrome dubbed ‘Acute Oak Decline’ (AOD) could wipe these iconic native oak trees from our landscape.

First reaction from many greenskeepers might well be “what’s AOD?”. Sadly it’s been killing trees in the UK for at least seven years but the problem has received relatively little publicity. There are several reasons for this. Initially AOD was regional and largely confined to Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. It’s now epidemic throughout East Anglia and spreading rapidly across the Midlands and into southern England. Affected trees are being found in Wales and as far north as Nottinghamshire.

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caused by the interacting activities of a bark boring beetle (Agrilus biguttatus) and at least one bacterium. Many of the bacteria associated with AOD are completely new to science. Agrilus biguttatus has been known in the UK since the nineteenth century but until now as a relatively rare insect associated with dead or naturally declining oaks. This complicated association is why AOD is classified as a ‘decline’ rather than a disease. The word decline usually infers gradual but there is nothing gradual about AOD which can kill a mature oak in less than five years.

Two eye-catching external symptoms of AOD are profuse bleeding of dark coloured fluid from between the bark plates and tell-tale ‘D’ shaped exit holes on the trunk left by adult beetles after hatching from the pupae inside the tree.

Internal symptoms are tissue necrosis (thought to be caused by the pathogenic bacteria) and extended galleries near the necrosis and created by beetle larvae tunneling in and around the phloem (food conducting tissue) and cambium. Cambium is the lateral meristem composed of dividing cells and responsible for growth in girth of the tree. This is the damage which appears to deliver the death blow to AOD affected oak trees.

AOD is particularly cruel because it only appears in oak trees over 50 years old. Government scientists at Forest Research appear to be a long way away from unraveling the exact mechanics of AOD and until they do there is no hope of any control measures.

An added problem not yet widely appreciated is the interacting effect of oak processionary moth (OPM), a serious insect pest of oak trees featured by Greenkeeper International (Beware of OPM on the Golf Course) in January 2012. Experience in Germany, where the insect pest (OPM) is rife, shows infested oaks with additional extensive damage caused by Agrilus biguttatus.

OPM is currently confined to London with a small satellite infestation in Berkshire and yet to spread into areas of the UK where oak trees are suffering from acute oak decline.

Indications are that if these two separate problems (OPM and AOD) came together on a wide scale the combined implications for oak trees in damage and death could far outweigh what they are capable of individually.

about the author
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Dr Terry Mabbett is a disease, pest and weed control specialist with forty years international experience covering research, advisory and journalism.

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English oaks on the golf course

English oaks are not widely planted on golf courses, especially near to greens, and for good reason. The English oak tree’s root system is far reaching and able to undermine greens from a distance, and therefore years of investment in professional sports turf. Nevertheless, mature English oaks are common features on many golf courses, mostly as ‘relics’ from farmland, woodland and country estates, on which the courses were built — and also due to their sheer longevity.

Many courses have oak trees of 100 to 200 years old and it is not uncommon to find some with specimens of 400 to 500 years or more. As such they are large sentinel trees occupying prime positions and in this context are essentially irreplaceable. Indeed a nationwide survey would almost certainly show UK golf courses to be important custodians of ancient and veteran trees and English oak in particular.

Not only the mature English oaks on the golf course add to the landscape, because oak trees in the woodlands, hedgerows, meadows and parklands contiguous with golf courses play an important part too. More than any other deciduous tree the English oak adds extended colour to a golf course. Leaves in their attractive tan coloured autumn condition remain on trees right through November and well into December.

Once down on the ground English oak leaves with their high tannin content (tannin is a natural preservative) stay crisp and dry causing few problems for turf grasses beneath and are relatively easy to clear up and remove.

Greenkeepers who suspect ‘acute oak decline’ on their courses are advised to report their suspicions to the UK plant health authorities* but should not expect a lot of support or even a visit to confirm the report.

This is because the small team of scientists working on AOD at Forest Research is completely overwhelmed. The vast majority of sites on the Forestry Commission’s AOD Distribution Map are reported by landowners and will not have been visited by Forest Research Scientists or had samples taken for testing and confirmation.

Despite the seriousness of AOD at this very moment the government has provided relatively little funding for research.

This has been left to the goodwill and generosity of charities like Woodland Heritage.

Chalara ash dieback was the result of an alien plant pathogen allowed to enter the UK despite years of unheeded warnings and corresponding negligence by the UK plant health authorities. As such it has become a political pathogen with government now throwing everything at the problem to avoid further embarrassment. The agents causing acute oak decline are entirely different. Agrius biotita is a native ‘buprestid’ (metallic glossy bark boring) beetle. The associated bacteria - though new to science - were probably present in the UK all along, but simply not identified.

This difference has meant AOD not receiving the level of attention and investment afforded to chalara ash dieback but that could change anytime now with AOD spreading quickly throughout the country and causing increasingly widespread and heavy lethal damage in the UK’s native oak tree population.

In the not too distant future the UK government will be faced with what looks likely to be a farcical attempt to save our two most important native trees, English oak and common ash. UK golf courses will be much the poorer if they disappear. If we did lose English oak the country could end up like Mauritius which displays the ‘Dodo’ on the country’s coat of arms.

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*Tree Health Diagnostic Advisory Service. E-mail: ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. Tel: 01420 23000
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The trip of a lifetime

Their first educational seminar held at San Diego Convention Centre was ‘Greens Aerification and Water Management by Numbers’, and over the next two days they alternately explored the Golf Industry Show and joined BIGGA’s Learning and Development Manager Sami Strutt on the BIGGA Stand. Another seminar – ‘Sure Ways to Increase Plant Health’ followed by the famous Torrey Pines course - a PGA Tour venue.

Here’s a selection of their comments and photographs from what proved to be an unforgettable week...


The trip began with the them jetting from Heathrow to San Diego, and after a Golf Day at Encinitas Ranch Golf Course they enjoyed two superb course walks. The first was at La Costa Resort & Spa.

“It was fascinating to see how the industry is run over there, and they’re just as passionate as we are. Some of the differences were surprising. One of the courses we visited had a Superintendent who’d come to the club straight from university and he had a team mostly of labourers rather than turf professionals, so that was interesting.

“The GIS was on such a large scale it took two days for me to take it all in! Some of the education took place within the main halls of the exhibition which I also thought was a good idea.

“The delegation were a really good range of ages, jobs and courses. My room mate was Derrick Johnstone from the Wentworth Club, and it was a great opportunity for us to compare the similarities and differences between his club and mine.

“I can’t imagine why you wouldn’t apply to be part of this. It was my first visit to America and it was superb – I’d urge you to apply for next year’s delegation.”

Asa English, Deputy Course Manager, Rothley Park Golf Club

“Torrey Pines was just world-class, I got so much out of it.

“Tim Johnson – Assistant Greenkeeper, The Wentworth Club

“Torrey Pines was just world-class, I got so much out of it.

“We’ve swapped email addresses and phone numbers so if we have a greenkeeping related issue, we can share it with each other. I’ve already urged the guys at Wentworth to go for next year’s trip because it’s unmissable.

“Derrick Johnstone – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, The Wentworth Club

“IT truly was the most unforgettable experience I have ever had in my career”

Richard Jenkinson – Deputy Course Manager, G West

“It truly was the most unforgettable experience I have ever had in my career. To have the opportunity to attend and be part of such a friendly group is really very difficult to explain.

“I can safely say that I learned plenty of things I can apply to my current place of employment and I made new friends for life.

“It’s impossible to pick out one outstanding highlight as I enjoyed every single moment of the trip and can’t quite believe that it all went so quickly! However one of the obvious highlights were our tours around Torrey Pines and La Costa. One of the fascinating things for me was the difference between them even though they are just ten minutes drive apart. The management style is similar yet the terrain and the composition of the courses are completely different. Torrey Pines is on a cliff and La Costa is closer to the riverside meaning totally contrasting styles of course. I now have an understanding of what previous delegates were talking about when they said it is a very tough but life changing week.”

Richard Jenkinson – Deputy Course Manager, G West

“All I can really say is thank you to Bernhard’s, BIGGA and the everyone who I went to San Diego with. I’ve made some very good friends for life, and you’ve made a normal greenkeeper who’s just starting out in the industry feel very welcome after one of the best weeks of my life”

Tim Johnson – Assistant Greenkeeper, The Wentworth Club

“I would just like to thank Bernhard and BIGGA for the fantastic trip to GIS in San Diego. All those that attended had a career changing experience.

“The way things are put together and run is a credit to both teams. The delegation successfully gave the best impression of our association. Thanks again to everyone involved. If you have not yet been part of the delegation give it some serious thought next year. This is a mind blowing opportunity. If you have applied before and missed out keep applying one day your time will come!”

James Parker – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Close House Golf & Country Club

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Richard Jenkinson – Deputy Course Manager, G West

“It truly was the most unforgettable experience I have ever had in my career to date. To have the opportunity to attend and be part of such a friendly group is really very difficult to explain.

“I can safely say that I learned plenty of things I can apply to my current place of employment and I made new friends for life.

“It’s impossible to pick out one outstanding highlight as I enjoyed every single moment of the trip and can’t quite believe that it all went so quickly! However one of the obvious highlights were our tours around Torrey Pines and La Costa. One of the fascinating things for me was the difference between them even though they are just ten minutes drive apart. The management style is similar yet the terrain and the composition of the courses are completely different. Torrey Pines is on a cliff and La Costa is closer to the riverside meaning totally contrasting styles of course. I now have an understanding of what previous delegates were talking about when they said it is a very tough but life changing week.”

Richard Jenkinson – Deputy Course Manager, G West

“All I can really say is thank you to Bernhard’s, BIGGA and the everyone who I went to San Diego with. I’ve made some very good friends for life, and you’ve made a normal greenkeeper who’s just starting out in the industry feel very welcome after one of the best weeks of my life”

Tim Johnson – Assistant Greenkeeper, The Wentworth Club

“I would just like to thank Bernhard and BIGGA for the fantastic trip to GIS in San Diego. All those that attended had a career changing experience.

“The way things are put together and run is a credit to both teams. The delegation successfully gave the best impression of our association. Thanks again to everyone involved. If you have not yet been part of the delegation give it some serious thought next year. This is a mind blowing opportunity. If you have applied before and missed out keep applying one day your time will come!”

James Parker – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Close House Golf & Country Club
Their first educational seminar held at San Diego Convention Centre was ‘Greens Aeration and Water Management by Numbers’, and over the next two days they alternately explored the Golf Industry Show and joined BIGGA’s Learning and Development Manager Sami Strutt on the BIGGA Stand. Another seminar – ‘Sure Ways to Increase Plant Health’ followed by the famous Torrey Pines course – a PGA Tour venue. Here’s a selection of their comments and photographs from what proved to be an unforgettable week...
From the ashes

Steve Castle spoke to David Jeffrey, Head Greenkeeper at Machrie Bay Golf Club on the Isle of Arran, who recently experienced every greenkeeper’s worst nightmare.

“Just five days into 2013, the two maintenance facilities at Machrie Bay were destroyed by a ferocious fire. David lost almost all of his equipment plus personal effects — including diaries he had kept detailing work on the course during his 13-year tenure at the picturesque course on the island off the west coast of Scotland. He recalls: “My wife told me the Secretary had seen smoke coming from the direction of our two sheds and they were both gone. The first thing I had to do was inform my employer of the fire, a terrible thing to have to do. I then got in my car and drove to the course which is about six miles from my house.”

“When I got there I could see it was just utter devastation, it was absolutely catastrophic. The sheds were in ruins and I realised I’d basically lost 13 years of work. Everything I’d built up over that time and was proud of had all been reduced to rubble. I lost almost everything machinery wise. I had two John Deere machines that were away for servicing so luckily they escaped, but everything else went. It’s the small things that you fine tune over the years that are the worst things to lose. For example I’d set up the scarifier so it was almost perfect for the course.”

“The intensity of the fire was incredible, it even bent my stimp-meter and pinch bar.”

“But the biggest blow was the loss of his collection of paper diaries. Since his arrival at the club in October 1999, he painstakingly kept notes of all work completed on the course – no matter how small – along with information on weather conditions. He updated this twice a day meaning he had created a unique record of life at Machrie Bay.”

“If someone asked when we had done some particular work on the course I would be able to pinpoint the date, and what we had done almost to the hour, and why we’d done it. It was such an important resource, meant a lot to me and that can never be replaced.”

“We’ve had to hire tractors and borrow everything else from my friend Stewart Fotheringham at Shiskine Golf Club. He has let me use all sorts of equipment from a greens mower to waterproofs.”

“Stewart’s assistance is a fine example of how neighbouring golf clubs can really help each other out in difficult times. He’s been at Shiskine for 30 years and said: “David would have helped me out if I was in the same situation, and it’s a really close island community here. I saw the aftermath of the fire and it was just total devastation, but I’m here to help out any way I could.”

“Obviously he needed machines quickly and I was happy to lend him whatever he needed. Pretty much everything went in the fire, so he even needed small things like waterproofs. It’s just been a terrible time for everyone but David will pull through.”

“Remarkably Machrie Bay has remained fully open throughout and this was extremely important as it hosts competitions on an almost weekly basis throughout the year as well as attracting thousands of visitors. David’s entire green staff consists of himself and a young apprentice who was on holiday at the time of the blaze.”

“Police investigations are ongoing into the fire and it’s being treated as ‘suspicious’. David added: “We’re waiting on the insurance. You have to make an inventory of everything you had for the loss adjustor, and for weeks I was waking up in the middle of the night remembering something else which I’d lost.”

“It’s also going to be a frustrating wait to get the new sheds in place. The council insist we need full planning permission for a new shed which will take eight weeks, then it’s three weeks to get them here.”

“David urges greenkeepers who have personal possessions on site to insure them – he was unfortunate that he was storing items such as his motorbike on site because he was in the process of building a domestic shed at home.”

“I have had to come to terms with the fact that certain things will never be replaced – of course, the diaries are the main thing.”

“But we have 340 members, and we’re very busy all year round, particularly in summer where we have so many visitors to the island who want to come and play the course. There’s no way people should have to stop enjoying golf here because of what’s happened, and we were determined no rounds would be lost. It’s a beautiful setting, we call it God’s country up here and we weren’t going to let the fire wreck things.”

“It’s been a terrible few months for David and the owners of the Course – Dougarie Estate – but he remains hopeful that Machrie Bay will emerge stronger from this calamitous start to the New Year.”
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But David, who has just one other member of staff, has kept the nine-hole course open thanks to sheer determination – and the terrific help he’s received from a neighbouring club.

I met David for the first time at BTME 2013 – and he visibly winced as he described the worst moment of his working life.

It was 8.45am on the morning of Saturday 5 January when his wife received a frantic phone call from the Club Secretary of Shiskine Golf Club, around four miles away from his course.

He recalls: “My wife told me the Secretary had seen smoke coming from the direction of our two sheds and they were both gone. The first thing I had to do was inform my employer of the fire, a terrible thing to have to do. I then got in my car and drove to the course which is about six miles from my house.

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“Remarking on what Machrie Bay has done to come to terms with the fact that certain things will never be replaced – of course, the diaries are the main thing.

“But we have 340 members, and we’ve very busy all year round, particularly in summer where we have so many visitors to the island who want to come and play the course. There’s no way people should have to stop enjoying golf here because of what’s happened, and we were determined no rounds would be lost. It’s a beautiful setting, we call it God’s country up here and we weren’t going to let the fire wreck things.”

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Images on this page of Macharrie Bay: The splendid first 1st green (above), 1st tee (far left) and the 8th hole (left). Courtesy of Hamish Bannatyne.
IMAGES ON THIS PAGE OF INISHARNE BAY: The splendid first 1st green (above), 1st tee (far left) and the 8th hole (right) Courtesy of Hamish Bannatyne
American dream

How did TPC Scottsdale prepare for the biggest spectator golf event in the world last month? BIGGA member Jason Brooks sent off his CV and found himself on the support team for the Phoenix Open in Arizona – here he describes a fascinating few months on both a personal and professional level.

I’ve been Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Torquay Golf Club for eight years, and through BIGGA I have met great friends from across the UK and overseas who share my passion for the profession.

I’ve been on the support teams at The Open Championship and the PGA Championship – and these occasions left me wanting more, to experience an extended period of tournament preparation somewhere special. I decided I was going to make a real effort to secure a position somewhere that would add to my professional skills and open new doors for me in my career.

The Dream Begins

My Greens Chairman was very supportive, so I sent my CV to a host of people including Carl Roth, Senior Vice President of Agronomy for the PGA Tour. He got me in touch with Jeff Plotts, Director of Golf Course Maintenance at TPC Scottsdale. We had a great chat, he confirmed he would like me to spend five months of the winter there and the dream of joining the team at the Waste Management Phoenix Open was becoming reality.

Due to visa difficulties I contacted Mike O’Keeffe who told me all about the Ohio State University (OSU) programme, and me joining this world-famous programme would allow him to complete my move to Scottsdale as an intern. Besides helping me out with the highly complex visa application process, he explained other aspects such as salary and taxes.

Good Morning Scottsdale

There are two courses at TPC Scottsdale, the Stadium course (which has held the Phoenix Open since 1987) and the Champions course. Both have an incredible 45,000 rounds played annually.

The summer temperatures are brutal, with average highs of over 40°C. The entire course is Bermuda grass until the start of October when the huge overseeding process begins to turn the course from warm season grasses to cool season grasses for the milder winter. It is a huge undertaking – the course is closed for two weeks during which the Bermuda will be verticut, scalped then the debris collected before the overseeding can begin. Apart from the greens a perennial rye grass/fine fescue 80/20 mix is used for all the other areas.

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Wet Wet Wet

As the tournament loomed the height of cuts were gradually lowered apart from the rough which remained at three inches. The large desert areas had to be edged and more decomposed granite used where needed.

The pruning of bushes, shrubs and trees were carried out and player walkways were renovated and defined. I was part of a team checking bunker depths were consistent with four inches in the base and two inches on the slopes. It’s a couple of weeks work as there are 79 bunkers.

We gave the 16th special attention as it has so much media focus on it during the week. A local landscaping team was brought in to assist in renovating all the desert area between the tees and the green, adding new cacti and desert shrubs where needed.

Unfortunately we then saw record low temperatures and severalfronts which really held back any growth. Then we had some of the hottest temperatures on record which meant hand watering was needed on fairways to treat hot spots, it was a balancing act due to the fact that Brandon Reese – the Course Superintendent – wanted the course to play firm and fast.

As little water as possible was used as well as heavy rolling with a road roller to firm up the fairways, approaches and greens. All was progressing well until we had nearly three inches of rain in two days before the tournament, which is a lot by anyone’s standards especially considering the average rainfall for the year is eight inches. We spent a 12 hour day on the Sunday repairing damage from the rain, there was debris everywhere and water was needing to be pumped away from any low lying areas. It had to be in good shape for Monday for a Pro Am.

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The Action Begins

My jobs for the week were mowing greens in the morning then cutting fairways in the evenings. In total we had about 65 staff working during tournament week, in our pre-tournament meeting we were told it can get a little crazy during the week as there will be a large crowd and most will be drunk!

The course was ready for the Monday Pro Am although very wet, but the weather forecast for the big week was good. The height of cuts were greens 2.875mm, tees, approaches and fairways 10mm, intermediate rough 1.25 inches and rough three inches. Due to the large numbers of spectators we received a police escort to the course in the afternoons from our compound which was surreal – spectators were filming us on their mobiles.

Another frost on Thursday meant start times were put back by an hour, and some rounds could not be completed as it was too dark. This delayed us getting out on the course for the evening jobs and meant more cutting in the dark. Spotters were posted at any hole that a player had marked their ball to make sure that the marker was replaced at the same spot should any mowing need to done. Any more frost delays could have meant the tournament continuing into Monday which would have been a real headache for everyone.

Friday fortunately had no frost and play started on time with the remaining 1st rounds completed before the 2nd round started. A new record Friday attendance was registed of 121,901. Fantastic weather and local favourite Phil Mickelson leading the tournament then swelled numbers to a new record Saturday attendance of 179,022.

Cooler weather and a clash with the Superbowl on Sunday lowered crowd numbers to 58,791 giving a massive overall total of 525,821. Mickelson won despite a late challenge from Brandt Snedeker.

We did have one brief opportunity to sit in the coliseum on the 16th for the remainder of the day, it certainly is different with unbelievable crowd noise and Mexican waves!

“The coliseum on the 16th is certainly different with unbelievable crowd noise and Mexican waves”

The experience was amazing, I wish I had considered going through the OSU programme before. I really would recommend it to greenkeepers wanting to train at a top course and add important experience to their CV. If you’re interested contact Mike O’Keeffe at okeeffe.1@osu.edu

I was also lucky enough to receive a scholarship from Syngenta which covered health insurance and other fees. This was a reward for my efforts, and I was very honoured to be one of the five selected for it.

I have to thank my family Anna, Callum and Kate, who let me sacrifice my time away from them in order to fulfil an ambition. Also thank you to Mike Wells, Eddie Adams, Cal Roth, Jeff Plotts, Mike O’Keeffe and Torquay Golf Club and to Brandon and his team for making me so welcome at TPC Scottsdale.

It truly was the experience of a lifetime, all arising from sending a few emails.

The Waste Management Phoenix Open is one of the PGA Tour’s most popular tournaments and attracts over half a million fans - the most to attend a golf event anywhere in the world. It’s been held annually at TPC Scottsdale in Arizona in the South West of the USA since 1987.

Its 16th hole has become one of the most famous in golf as a ‘coliseum’ of around 20,000 seats is erected around the 160-yard par three, generating a raucous atmosphere similar to a football match with spectators cheering shots that land on the green and booing those that miss. It was the location for a famous Tiger Woods hole in one in 1997. This year the tournament was won by local favourite Phil Mickelson.
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“The coliseum on the 16th is certainly different with unbelievable crowd noise and Mexican waves”
There are essentially two main types of dedicated petrol powered pole saw on offer; fixed length units with a reach of up to around 3.0m and telescopic designs that may extend to perhaps 4.50 to 5.00m. The saw element will be based around a 10, 12 or possibly 14in guide bar.

Combination tools, where the working element can be swapped between a brushcutter, saw head or myriad of other tools are a further alternative. These are well worth considering where a pole pruner is less likely to see anything other than occasional use.

The downside is that combination tool prices are typically higher than dedicated tools. A pole pruner attachment on its own could cost over £300. Quality rigid pole saw prices vary a great deal, but budget around £400 as a starting point.

Some designs allow the standard shaft of rigid units to be extended to 500 or 1,000mm. These extra lengths can be bought at a later date, but if you need longer reach consider telescopic units from the outset. These will carry a premium of typically £50 to £100 but this can be less than opting for an extended non-telescopic design.

Reach and power

For safety, a pruner needs to be operated at around 60 degrees to the branch. This is to allow pruned material to fall without hitting the operator. As such, the actual reach of a pruner is less than its total length. As a rule, it pays to buy a longer pruner than you may think you need.

Although combination tool power units are increasingly offered in two-stroke or four-stroke designs, dedicated power pruners are more likely to stick with a two-stroke of around 20 to 30cc developing 0.6 to 1.5kW in power output. But you may find more powerful units on offer. The key consideration is weight as a heavy tool can be difficult to place accurately. Vibration levels on some designs can be quite high so consider this if the tool is to be worked for extended periods.

In most cases, a body harness is supplied to help support the weight of the tool when moving it around, but a support harness may also be supplied for use in work. Working a pole saw is straightforward for thin, lighter branches. These can be cut in one action from the top down. Thicker and heavier branches need cutting with care.

Think before you prune

James de Haviland looks at how to prune troublesome low branches and explores some of the best products on offer.

Can you prune and chop as you wish?

When we last looked at power pruners, we mentioned the need to work within any Tree Preservation Orders. A TPO is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999. Typically made by the local planning authority (usually a local council), a TPO can protect either a specific tree or applied more broadly to protect trees within a specified area.

A TPO is most commonly used in urban and semi-urban settings and is aimed at protecting trees for the public’s enjoyment. Generally a TPO takes into account the ‘amenity’ value of a tree or woodland and can include its nature conservation value or its visual ‘impact’. If a tree is not visible or accessible from a public place a TPO will not usually be enforced.

On a golf course, you should never just assume everything is OK and you can treat trees as you like. A tree subject to a TPO should be listed in a way that its ‘owner’ or person responsible for its protection is aware of its status. But these issues can get forgotten, so it can pay to check. Hedges are not covered by TPOs, but as a tree or in a hedge may be. TPOs are public documents and can be inspected at the local planning authority’s office, or online.
Telescopic power pruners, such as the pictured Stihl HT 131, enable the operator to trim branches up to 5m from the ground. These are popular tools, but care needs to be taken when cutting heavy branches. This is to protect both the operator and the tree.

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It is best to cut back towards the trunk progressively in sections to reduce both the weight and volume of material falling. This will help protect the tree and prevent a long branch swinging back and clouting the operator.

For a clean cut at the trunk, larger branches should be undercut by a third before sawing through from the top. The aim is to produce a clean cut that allows the ‘wound’ to heal quickly and prevent disease entering the tree. As a guide, keep the cut close to the trunk but retaining enough branch bark at its base to grow over and heal the ‘wound’.

Capacity wise, most pole pruners will tackle a 40cm diameter branch if the saw chain is sharp. That is not to say working up to this size is recommended but a good sharp chain can allow even a modest pruner to tackle quite a hefty branch.

As a rule, it is always better to prune lightly and leave a cleanly cut truncated large branch that can then be properly sawn off close to the trunk with a chainsaw. In most cases it is best to leave this to a trained arboriculturist, particularly on specimen trees.

**Makes and models**

Stihl and Husqvarna remain the key initial ‘power tool’ choice for many professional users; these two companies have the widest product offering and have strong dealer support pretty much throughout the country – although of course there are alternatives.

So what should you be looking for? Job one is to work out what you want the tool to achieve. For many a key job is to just take out the odd branch that catches when mowing. A light pruner that can be carried on a mower at the beginning of the peak mowing season in spring could be just the tool for the job. Opt for a combi tool, and the head can be swapped to allow a line trimmer to be fitted to deal with the odd patch of difficult to reach grass too. A good option where one person would otherwise need to go back to fetch tools to finish the job after mowing.

Telescopic power pruners are pretty much the best option for most users as these tools have extra reach ‘built in’.

A downside is that these pruners do not take kindly to rough handling, operators sometimes allowing the cutting head to drop to the ground when cutting and damaging the shaft. Unlike a brushcutter, the cutting element needs to be sharpened and lubricated too. If a pruner needs to be ‘forced’ to cut, the shaft can get damaged, compromising the tools longevity.

With regards to power, a tool with greater capacity may get the job done faster but it may come with a weight penalty.

For occasional use this is less of an issue, but consider the type of harness on offer. A good harness can make heavier tools easier to move around and operate when not working to full reach.

There is tremendous choice when it comes to both dedicated power pruners and combination tools that can be fitted with a pruning head. The latter, such as the pictured Solo 109LG Combi system, is a versatile choice that will enable the power unit to be used for other jobs such as brushcutting.
It is best to cut back towards the trunk progressively in sections to reduce both the weight and volume of material falling. This will help protect the tree and prevent a long branch swinging back and clouting the operator.

For a clean cut at the trunk, larger branches should be undercut by a third before sawing through from the top. The aim is to produce a clean cut that allows the ‘wound’ to heal quickly and prevent disease entering the tree. As a guide, keep the cut close to the trunk but retaining enough branch bark at its base to grow over and heal the ‘wound’.

Capacity wise, most pole pruners will tackle a 40cm diameter branch if the saw chain is sharp. That is not to say working up to this size is recommended but a good sharp chain can allow even a modest pruner to tackle quite a hefty branch.

Makes and models

Stihl and Husqvarna remain the key initial ‘power tool’ choice for many professional users; these two companies have the widest product offering and have strong dealer support pretty much throughout the country – although of course there are alternatives.

So what should you be looking for? Job one is to work out what you want the tool to achieve. For many a key job is to just take out the odd branch that catches when mowing. A light pruner that can be carried on a mower at the beginning of the peak mowing season in spring could be just the tool for the job. Opt for a combi tool, and the head can be swapped to allow a line trimmer to be fitted to deal with the odd patch of difficult to reach grass too. A good option where one person would otherwise need to go back to tedious tools to finish the job after mowing.

Telescopic power pruners are pretty much the best option for most users as these tools have extra reach ‘built in’. A downside is that these pruners do not take kindly to rough handling, operators sometimes allowing the cutting head to drop to the ground when cutting and damaging the shaft. Unlike a brushcutter, the cutting element needs to be sharpened and lubricated too. If a pruner needs to be ‘forced’ to cut, the shaft can get damaged, compromising the tools longevity.

With regards to power, a tool with greater capacity may get the job done faster but it may come with a weight penalty.

For occasional use this is less of an issue, but consider the type of harness on offer. A good harness can make heavier tools easier to move around and operate when not working to full reach.

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<th>The How To Series</th>
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<td>How to conduct a one-to-one meeting</td>
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<td>How to conduct a team briefing</td>
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<td>How to prepare for an appraisal</td>
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Download and learn

“How To...” guides are now available exclusively to BIGGA Members, on a range of Human Resource topics.

These short, handy guides provide practical, step by step guidance on a range of subjects. The guides can be downloaded and used to help you develop your knowledge and implement new processes within your workplace.

To access the “How To...” guides, log on to the BIGGA Members Area at www.bigga.org and click on Member Resources.

The ‘How To...’ guides are brought to you thanks to the continuing support of the contributors to the Learning and Development Fund.
What do you feel you are perceived by golfers?

The majority of greenkeepers feel they are respected by most of their club’s members, but this can be undermined by a lack of understanding of what is required to maintain good playing qualities and a small proportion of golfers who do not respect them and question their abilities. More and more golfers have started to view greenkeepers as professionals in the last five years, but, according to the men themselves, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

How many hours a week do you work in the summer?

During the summer months virtually every greenkeeper in Britain works more than the UK full-time average of 37 hours a week. For the 36 per cent that work more than 50 hours, that works out at a minimum of eight hours and 20 minutes a day, six days a week. The equivalent of working 8am-6.20pm with a one-hour lunch break from Monday to Saturday.

What level of interaction do you have with club golfers?

The vast majority of greenkeepers are attempting to interact and communicate with their members, but many feel their voice isn’t always heard. This is a two-way street so look out for ways to learn more about course maintenance and don’t be afraid to ask your greenkeepers questions. They know what they’re talking about and will always be willing to help.
How do you feel you are perceived by golfers?

The majority of greenkeepers feel they are respected by most of their club’s members, but this can be undermined by a lack of understanding of what is required to maintain good playing qualities and a small proportion of golfers who do not respect them and question their abilities. More and more golfers have started to view greenkeepers as professionals in the last five years, but, according to the men themselves, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

There definitely is a mixed perception of greenkeepers by golfers. There are those who can appreciate the difficulties in maintaining year-round quality surfaces, and then there are those who expect to play a well-maintained course whenever they want, whatever the weather with no disruption to play from greenkeeping practices. The latter tend to view the greenkeeper as the enemy and see any course closures as his fault. Unfortunately, they can often be the more vocal.

As people who just mow grass and cut down trees, there is no understanding of what and why we do work, but I ask them: “What would happen to their garden if they walked up and down it 200 times a day?”

I think they view us as very important in the overall running of the golf club. They realise that without us there would not be a course for them to play on. They also think sometimes that we do things to annoy them (aerate, top dress etc.) but in reality these tasks are essential and the majority of the membership totally understand the actions we take. We have a good relationship with our members but it has to be worked at; communication at all times with them is the key to a good relationship.

We teamed up with Today’s Golfer magazine to discover BIGGA members’ opinions of golfers – the first ever such survey of the nation’s greenkeepers. Read on for the thought-provoking responses.

The vast majority of greenkeepers communicate with members... 74% of golfers directly blame greenkeepers if the course is below expectations... almost half of golfers repair pitch marks badly.

These are just some of the fascinating findings after Today’s Golfer surveyed BIGGA members recently, and published the results in their latest issue.

Today’s Golfer acknowledged that golfers are quick to criticise when they feel elements of the course are unsatisfactory, but slow to praise greenkeepers when the course looks good and plays great. So they contacted us and together we came up with the survey. Its aim was to help golfers across the UK understand more detail the skill and hard work that enables them to play on well maintained courses and show greater appreciation of the huge amount of work that goes into maintaining a golf course.

Thanks to the BIGGA members who responded – the results were very interesting – and all responses will remain anonymous. Today’s Golfer enjoys a large readership and BIGGA hopes that this survey will not only raise the profile of greenkeeping but educate golfers on the intricacies of the industry.

It’s clear that communication and education are the key words when it comes to increasing the respect golfers have for greenkeepers, and a lack of understanding of a greenkeeper’s role is a real bugbear. On a lighter note, some of the responses revealed some hilarious and bizarre tales of strange behaviour from golfers – turns to what’s the funniest/weirdest thing you’ve seen a player do/say? For more.

The survey is reproduced here in full with the kind permission of Today’s Golfer.
How good are golfers at putting divots back?

- Average 58%
- Bad 25%
- Good 12%
- Very bad 4%
- Very good 1%

It seems we’re a bit better at replacing divots than repairing pitch marks, but with 29 per cent of golfers still below the required standard there is plenty of room for improvement. It only takes a few seconds to replace a divert or fill one with sand (if it has been provided). It also goes a long way to improving the look and playability of your golf course and can save the greenkeepers valuable time that could be spent repairing or improving other areas of the course.

In some European countries golfers need to pass a test to be allowed to play golf which includes a section on etiquette and course care. Do you think this would be of benefit in the UK?

YES 91%

In some countries where golf is relatively new you have to prove you have enough ability and knowledge to take care of the course and not be a danger to yourself and other golfers, but the history and tradition of golf in the UK means this knowledge is usually assumed here, even from beginners. It’s clear that many golfers could benefit from brushing up etiquette and course care – you can improve your knowledge at www.randa.org.

How well do golfers repair pitch marks at your facility?

- Badly 45%
- Average 39%
- Very badly 12%
- Well 4%
- Very well 0%

Greenkeepers believe fewer than half golfers repair pitch marks to an adequate standard. Make sure you always have a pitch mark repair in your pocket when on the course and ask the pro or greenkeeper if you need guidance on how to properly use it. And remember, just because your ball finished off the green, it doesn’t mean it didn’t land on it.

WHAT ARE THE MOST OVERLOOKED ASPECTS OF COURSE CARE?

There are a wide range of areas that greenkeepers feel are overlooked by golfers, from simple things like properly replacing divots and repairing pitch marks, to things the golfer may not see such as drainage, machinery maintenance and biological and ecological knowledge. It’s obvious that the majority of greenkeepers would be over the moon if golfers did the simple things like replace their divots, repair their pitch marks and rake bunkers properly when leaving them.

- “Drainage. This includes installing and maintaining. When a course floods members are up in arms but when the flooding stops few committees will spend the right amount of money, the excuse being that it does not happen very often and it is a lot of money. If the committee shows no interest in drainage, staff impact and enthusiasm will be minimal as it can be a very dirty, difficult job.”

- “Pitch marks and fairway divots. After that it would be lack of care in bunker repair after use.”

- “Members are completely unaware of the work that goes on behind the scenes to maintain a golf course. The high profile work such as mowing and top dressing they see every day but they have no knowledge of the skills required in other areas. For instance, machinery grinding and servicing requires a good deal of training and skill yet some players still believe that winter work involves us playing cards.”

FORE!

Generally, do people wait to hit into a green you’re working on?

- Usually 78%
- Rarely 14%
- Always 7%
- Never 1%

The majority of golfers wait for greenkeepers to clear the green but with 15 per cent experiencing this issue on occasion some players still need to think about that. No one should have to worry about being hit by a golf ball on the course, whether working or playing. Just think about how angry you get when you’re nearly hit by a ball.

“A golfer would rarely, if ever, play into a green when another golfer is on it, but a greenkeeper cutting or rolling a green or changing a pin position seems to become invisible to them.”

HOW FRIENDLY ARE GOLFERS WHEN YOU COME INTO CONTACT WITH THEM?

- Friendly 59%
- Average 21%
- Very friendly 20%
- Very unfriendly 0%
- Unfriendly 0%

Greenkeepers may not think golfers fully understand their role and do as much as help us could, but they certainly think we’re a friendly bunch. Not one greenkeeper taking the survey said golfers were unfriendly so let’s maintain that by chatting with greenkeepers when we see them.

DO GOLFERS DIRECTLY BLAME YOU IF THEY FEEL THE COURSE HAS NOT MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS?

- Yes 74%
- No 26%

It’s right and understandable that greenkeepers are held to account for course condition, but they can’t control the weather and many face decreasing budgets. These factors have to be taken into account when assessing how good a job is being done. After the wettest summer in 100 years and a horrible winter, it’s likely your garden probably isn’t looking its best, especially if you’re spending less on it. Greenkeepers are fighting the same problems, but on a far larger scale.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO EDUCATE PLAYERS ABOUT COURSE CARE?

Greenkeepers feel that communication and helpful education is the key here, whether that’s the introduction of a short test, more information in media golf coverage, etiquette lessons for new players or regular newsletters and meetings for existing members.

- “When new members are introduced to the club they should have training on the correct ways to repair pitch marks and divots etc. Letters should be included with membership renewals reminding golfers of their duties to protect their course.”

- “We should make time in their lessons to inform golfers of course care and etiquette (which we pro does).”

- “Perhaps educational nights combined with a bit of fun. It takes years to learn how to look after a golf course properly so just teaching relevant aspects would be beneficial. I’ve had members complaining about areas of the golf course and directly blaming green staff only for them to realise after discussions and explanation that the problems are caused by uneducated golfers.”

- “Each club should provide free pitch mark repair tools and educate them to respect their fellow golfers, and have each area of the course as they found it.”

Survey reproduced in full, courtesy of Today’s Golfer
How good are golfers at putting divots back?

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FORE!

GENERALLY, DO PEOPLE WAIT TO HIT INTO A GREEN YOU’RE WORKING ON?

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<tr>
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There are a wide range of areas that greenkeepers feel are overlooked by golfers, from simple things like properly replacing divots and repairing pitch marks, to things the golfer might not even see such as drainage, machinery maintenance and biological and ecological knowledge. It’s obvious that the majority of greenkeepers would be over the moon if all golfers did the simple things like replace their divots, repair their pitch marks and rake bunkers properly when leaving them.

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RESPECT

What could be done to increase the respect golfers have for greenkeepers?

It’s clear that the key here is communication and education as was mentioned in virtually every response. Greenkeepers believe that if golfers know more about what they are doing and why, we would understand the challenges they face and passion and pride they have for producing the best course possible. Ask your greenkeepers what they do. They’d appreciate you taking an interest and you’d benefit from the added knowledge.

“More than half of us don’t maintain bunkers to the required standard. Having to play from the back tees when not playing in a competition.”

“Playing from the back tees when not playing in a competition.”

“Taking trolleys and buggies too close to greens and generally not caring for the course.”

“When golfers don’t accept that the course is shut for reasons beyond our control. For example, waterlogged, frozen or snow. We do not do it for our own gratification, it’s necessary. It would be far easier just to open it than to have to tell several upset golfers that it’s closed, but it’s about the bigger picture.”

“Most golfers want a Rolls Royce, but only want to pay for a Skoda.”

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The standard of general course care and maintenance is clearly a big annoyance for greenkeepers but there are a few other things that drive them crazy too. Taking trolleys and buggies onto tees and too close to greens, leaving litter on the course, ignoring signs, failure to observe health and safety and general moaning all feature prominently in the survey answers.

“I have a moan to the green staff about a subject that is being carried out by direction of the club, which they would have received emails and notices about. When golfers try and bully greenkeepers to change what they are doing for the good of the club.”

What’s the best conditioned course you’ve seen in the UK?

More than 40 courses were named in the survey with championship venues and links courses understandably taking the majority of the votes. It seems Scotland has the best greens with Carnoustie, Royal Aberdeen and Loch Lomond leading the standings with six votes each and TPC Wentworth (four votes) and The Belfry, Royal Porthcawl, St Andrews, Sunningdale, The Grove and Hoylake Grammy natching three.

What’s the funniest/weirdest thing you’ve seen a player do/say?

“A golfer hit a train and then told the driver that he would not have hit it if the train was on time. And someone once mistook a mushroom for the top of his ball. It exploded into bits when he hit it.”

“A golfer hit two balls into a pond off the 1st tee, then threw his clubs and bag into the pond in frustration. He returned 10 minutes later to retrieve his bag and collect his car keys from inside, before throwing the bag straight back into the pond!”

“The funniest thing I’ve seen was a golfer knocking his tee shot into a bin that was level with the markairs. It was a highly impressive two-yard straight right flip shot with a driver and it went in without touching the sides.”

“There was someone who was trying to show off with his remote control trolley and he put it in a pond.”

“A male golfer walking down a fairway with his pants down because his drive didn’t make it past the ladies’ tee.”

What’s the best greenkeepers’ blog you’ve read?

Most golfers want a Rolls Royce, but only want to pay for a Skoda.

Survey reproduced in full, courtesy of Today’s Golfer

What’s your pet hate about club golfers?

A lady golfer at a local club was seen hitting her ball from the turf when fairyway mats were in operation (she had been given a mat by the pro shop). The greenkeeper approached and said she must use the mat supplied. He then observed as the lady stood precariously on the mat and hit her next shot off the fairway. You couldn’t make it up!

“Two ladies taking their tops off and running through the sprinklers on the green on a hot day (and I have the photo to prove it)”

“Once when I was fertilising the tees I heard one golfer ask their playing partner what we were doing. The partner replied, ‘they’re feeding the birds, that’s why we have robins.’”

How good are golfers at raking bunkers at your facility?

Bad 42% Average 38% Very bad 14% Good 6% Very good 0% More than half of us don’t maintain bunkers to the required standard. Having to play from an unraked bunker is one of the most frustrating things in golf and it only takes a minute or two to rake them properly. Remember to leave the rake in an appropriate place so it doesn’t affect play and can be easily found by other players, and ask your pro or greenkeepers if you’re not sure about how to properly rake a bunker.

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It’s clear that the key here is communication and education as this was mentioned in virtually every response. Greenkeepers believe that if golfers knew more about what they are doing and why, they would understand the challenges they face and passion and pride they have for producing the best course possible.

What’s your pet hate about club golfers?

How good are golfers at raking bunkers at your facility?

What’s the best conditioned course you’ve seen in the UK?

What’s the funniest/weirdest thing you’ve seen a player do/say?

How do you help educate your members on your role and the challenges you face?

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Survey reproduced in full, courtesy of Today’s Golfer

Survey reproduced in full, courtesy of Today’s Golfer
By the time you get this report the Scottish Conference will have passed so hopefully there was a good turn out from the North Section. Paul has sent out the 200 club tickets so hopefully you have them all by now and will have noticed we have 3 sponsors again this year Fairways GM and Sherriff Armetry so thanks very much to them for their support.

The Spring outing is at Duff House Royal on Thursday 24 April sorry to keep mentioning it every month but it is important we have as much support as possible. Speaking about the Spring outing I should remind you that a decision was made at the last committee meeting that there would be no more guests allowed at our outings just members and trade.

There has been some movement in the section with Chris Wilson leaving, Petercull Golf Club and moving to the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre and Adam Lawrie leaving Inchnacardoch Centre and moving to Petercull Golf Club. Also Matthew Eyres has gone to Millfield, CAI is sadly leaving the industry but good luck to them all in their new positions.

Ryder Cup presentations were first on the agenda which was the big highlight. I also attended the ‘James Bond night’ and that reminds me I need to get myself some of that gold body paint for my new tees at the Golf Challenge. The theme was James Bond down well, we had a great meal and then the fun began with the casino and the very competitive Anton Martin simulator.

There was a slight downer on the night though—we left 20,000 chips in the careful hands of Stuart Taylor.

Unfortunately he invested them into the wrong market on the night and cheerfully informed us the next day that his bank account had taken a hit, so much for an older head.

I would like to welcome on board our first of new patrons to our section, they are SPI Groundcare and Angus Herti- age. First, many thanks for your support. Other things going on this month in section, Europe Tour player and former Open Cham- pion Paul Lawrie is redesigning West Links for us. Hopefully this will be an extra treat once it done.

Still waiting on some feedback from the section on your interest in our spring meeting being played at Seabrooke on 23 April, if you are keen in attending please advise asap and we can sort out travel plans. We have a bus option available if required.

Looking forward to the Scottish conference at Dundonald at the beginning of March, report to follow in next month’s magazine.

A final big well done to Ritchie Dailly who finished 4th in the Dunhill Links on his win at the Emirates Golf Club on the European tour last month and good luck this month at the Dubai Desert Classic with your newly formed Golf Foundation, the most recent venue to host the Desert Classic is North Ber- Wick West Links in February. In time for this month’s copy, take care David Cordell McCopertic@tigress.co.uk or 07891693548 and Dale Robert- son 07738251734.

WEST

A couple of reminders for those inclined to attend the various educational events, the scheduled conference at Dun- ferdinale is planned for 5 March and you will have received noti- fication about this by the time you read this article, I will report on how things went in the next issue.

The walk arranged for Loch Lomond back in December which was cancelled has been re-arranged for 22 March as a provisional date but please con- tact David McBride regarding this he will be contacting those people who had intimated their intentions to go previously first of all then open it up to others who might turn up. The trip to the Lytham St Annes Open has also been re-arranged for 22 March as a provisional date but please contact David McBride regarding this he will be contacting those people who had intimated their intentions to go previously first of all then open it up to others who might turn up.

The spring outing is con- firmed for 25 April at Buchanan Can- natt Castle golf club and thanks to Ronnie Myles for arranging that I will look forward to playing it as this is a venue I’ve never experienced.

The Autumn outing is 19 Sep- tember at Eastwood Golf club, which will be interesting consider- ing some of the members are going to have been made as a result of the new M77, thanks to Nick Lindsay for arranging the course.

Congratulations to John Garcia in securing the position of head greenkeeper at Elderley green golf club, I hope all goes well and you have every success for the future.

It has been approached to organise a game of football and would like to have a much about game first to select a team and thought it might be okay to organise the south of the river against the north so we will be looking for some candidates that will be in contact with the month for names. Finally, if anybody has any thoughts of who to share or you are interested in the football then please contact me on 07707785920. Thanks for now Robert Patterson mob 07931693548 and Dale Robert- son 07738251734.

RECENT NEWS

What a show this year BTME was, first class education and what made it special to me was the amount of greenkeepers from our Section who travelled down and attended seminars. A couple attended the workshops from Alnmouth here is a golf article with which I think you will enjoy to read through the BTME seminar which will be interesting consid- eration committee: Michael Gunn, James Parker and David Willson.

Our Section has a new Course Manager for the 2013 season at Whitby Bay so expect a few things to be lined up over the next few weeks, further details will be published in the maga- zine.

April 11th an Education event will be held at a local golf club with two top speakers on behalf of the section between 7pm -9pm, details will be sent out to members over the next few weeks non-members are welcome as are anyone from the Cleveland Section.

NORTHERN

I’m sat in glowing sunshine outside the output this week I love the sight thinking this time last week I was knee deep in snow!

A few days of dry weather are forecast so we can get on with much needed work on the course. Interesting times for me at the moment as we are having our hands rebuilt after having been busy moving the machines out and shifting through 25 years of stuff, you know the old boy as stored away and “will come in handy that will one day”.

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NORTH WALES

The season starts here whether you like it or not, week- enders and work colleagues parties now start filling our diaries. The North Wales and North West Sections are opening their season on Wednesday 13 Febru- ary at Davenham Golf Club for 25 happy years so I am delighted to say we can get their thoughts and ideas for next together we could possibly put some good events in the area.

The Autumn outing is 19 Sep- tember at Eastwood Golf club, which will be interesting consider- ing some of the members are going to have been made as a result of the new M77, thanks to Nick Lindsay for arranging the course.

Congratulations to John Garcia in securing the position of head greenkeeper at Elderley green golf club, I hope all goes well and you have every success for the future.

It has been approached to organise a game of football and would like to have a much about game first to select a team and thought it might be okay to organise the south of the river against the north so we will be looking for some candidates that will be in contact with the month for names. Finally, if anybody has any thoughts of who to share or you are interested in the football then please contact me on 07707785920. Thanks for now Robert Patterson mob 07931693548 and Dale Robert- son 07738251734.

NORTHERN

What a show this year BTME was, first class education and what made it special to me was the amount of greenkeepers from our Section who travelled down and attended seminars. A couple attended the workshops from Alnmouth here is a golf article with which I think you will enjoy to read through the BTME seminar which will be interesting consid- eration committee: Michael Gunn, James Parker and David Willson.

Our Section has a new Course Manager for the 2013 season at Whitby Bay so expect a few things to be lined up over the next few weeks, further details will be published in the maga- zine.

April 11th an Education event will be held at a local golf club with two top speakers on behalf of the section between 7pm -9pm, details will be sent out to members over the next few weeks non-members are welcome as are anyone from the Cleveland Section.

NORTHERN

I’m sat in glowing sunshine outside the output this week I love the sight thinking this time last week I was knee deep in snow!

A few days of dry weather are forecast so we can get on with much needed work on the course. Interesting times for me at the moment as we are having our hands rebuilt after having been busy moving the machines out and shifting through 25 years of stuff, you know the old boy as stored away and “will come in handy that will one day”.

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By the time you get this report the Scottish Conference will have passed so hopefully there was a good turn out from the North Section. Paul has sent out the 200 club tickets so hopefully you have them all by now and will have noticed we have 3 sponsors again this year Fairways GM and Sherriff Amenity Services. The lot is very much to them for their support.

The Spring outing is at Duff House Royal on Thursday 25 April sorry to keep mentioning it every month but it is important we have as much support as possible. Speaking about the Spring outing I should remind you that a decision was made at the last committee meeting that there would be no more guest allowances at our outings just members and trade.

There has been some movement in the section on Chris Walker leaving, Petercull Golf Club and moving to the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre and Adam Smith from Newmachar Golf Club and moving to the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre and Adam Smith from Newmachar Golf Club and moving to Petercull Golf Club, also Matthew Niven from Tynedale GC has been busy moving the machines throughout the course and I hope he enjoys the work especially in touch if you have any notes, no matter how small. Thanks for now Robert Patterson mob 07931639548 and Dale Robert- son 07784517534.

If you go to www.biggacentralsection.org.uk you will find details of the Club’s website as it is their continued support. Companies who sponsor our website are always be the priority for any maintenance of the course should you have any comments or similar. Jimmy Walker.

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Ryder Cup presentations were first held in 1957 was the big highlight. I also attended the ‘James Bond night’ and that reminded me I need to get myself some of that gold body paint for my next tattoo. The theme is down and well, we had a great meal and then the fun began with the cabin and the very competetive Anton Martin simulator. There was a slight down on the way over, we left 20,000 ships in the careful hands of Stuart Taylor.

Unfortunately he invested them into the wrong market on the double and cheerfully informed us the next day that he had had such a bad day, so much for an older head.

I would like to welcome on a regular basis year in year out. Ryder Cup presentations were first held in 1957 was the big highlight. I also attended the ‘James Bond night’ and that reminded me I need to get myself some of that gold body paint for my next tattoo. The theme is down and well, we had a great meal and then the fun began with the cabin and the very competetive Anton Martin simulator. There was a slight down on the way over, we left 20,000 ships in the careful hands of Stuart Taylor.

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**EAST MIDLAND REGION**

I was struggling for inspiration this month for my notes, what with snow laying on the ground for two weeks and now the following week, then considerable rainfall melting it and washing it away when suddenly the news broke…….’Of course of course a Kingdom for my country’.

It was Richard III after all, he’d been deposed 500 years under a tarmac car park in the historic city of Leicester. Richard was transported to a location 300 yards away in the shadow of an 11th century church. In a decision by the Leicester City Council. Richard III is in fact a fascinating English King and has been longromantically associated with the Duke of Gloucester.

**MIDLAND REGION**

The AGM was held, before we were played and was attended by a good number of section members. Outgoing Greenkeeper Mark Stoppes gave an emotional report thanking all the section for their support over the years on his way out. The treasurer’s report and competitions report were read by Tom Smith and Antony Deans, and an AGM AGM was setup for 31st January 2014 and supported by old trusted members to be as smooth and efficient as possible. On April 14 I will be running in the Brighton Marathon.

I shall be running this year to raise money for Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research in memory of a friend, Paul Glosnrun who died from the disease. I have a Just Giving page set up www.Just-Giving.com/Greg-Skinner1 where anyone who would like to support me can donate via the Just Giving page. Honestly though I don’t think that you feel generous enough to support that…… but I’ll go on towards an extremely worthwhile cause.

‘Show that hus friend’ – just a little quip to sign off with… Greg Skinner 07970 095264 greg.skinner92@hotmail.com

**SOUTH EAST REGION**

I would like to start my report with the news that Richard III has moved to Putney Downs Golf Club as Deputy Head Greenkeeper after more than ten years in the job at Edgbaston Golf Club where he started on work experience. Another significant change has taken place, as Lawnsdown Golf Club is in the hands of the new owner, Peter Wilson, who has left Seaford Head Golf Club to start his own business, Telsecam Lawns (TLC).

I am sure that you will all join me in wishing them both all the best in their new ventures. Peter Wilson has done splendid work in securing a large number of members, with local golf clubs supporting the section and he has already arranged a full programme of golf at some excellent venues. Details as follows: Spring Competition & National Championships Qualifier Venue: The Dyke GC Date: 23rd May Sussex Section Away Day Venue: Littlestone GC Date: 1st August; Autumn Competition & National Championships Qualifier Venue: Piltdown GC Date: 1st August; Autumn Competition & National Championships Qualifier Venue: Worthing GC Date: 29th November

Make sure that you get these dates in your diary! They’re finished before they’re finished

**SURREY**

Spring is just around the corner, the grass is growing, the weather is hopefully behind us and education programme will be ongoing put on by all BIGGA staff at BTME again this year. Another excellent show and education programme was the highlight of the week. In particular the highlights of the week was the wonderful sponsors of our section who have shared a wealth of knowledge and experience on a range of subjects. As we know these people are learning more about their roles all the time and pass on that knowledge to others.

As we know times are tough so it’s always good to check that you aren’t missing out on shop

**Greenkeeper**

**Name:** Calvin Baldwin
**Age:** 30
**Club:** Cross Golf Club
**Position:** Assistant

Greenkeeper "Biggie" at work, or "Spit" at banger racing

**How long have you been greenkeeping?** 11 years

**What was about the career that attracted you?** Working outdoors and finishing early

**If you weren’t a greenkeeper what do you think you’d be?** A mechanic

**Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?** Talking to the greens, they look great once they’ve finished

**Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?** Using the Allen Nationals, I’m always getting moaned at for going the wrong way.

**What one thing - other than pay - would you want the greenkeepers’ lot?** Better equipment, a decent pair of waterproofs and happy golfers that say hello

**Hobbies?** Football and Banger racing

**Favourite Band?** Doesn’t really have a favourite band, listen to whatever is on Radio One.

**Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?** The mighty Leeds United and my local team ‘The Surrey Street Squad’

**What is your claim to fame?** Banger raced the ambulance in a banger racing event that appeared in the film ‘Hot Fuzz’
**Around The Green**

passionate talks by Alistair Beggs, Dr Su Hodgson, David Edwards and Derridean colleague, Edwina. We know that you are so not available to attend, so here he will be able to give us all a treat.

We have to give a big thankyou to Derridean College for hosting the seminar, a great venue.

Too many's three competition forms have now been approved to be posted out, with Bull bay golf club being the first. Rainfall call 23 April and I'm sure Andy Peril will give us all a great day, please keep on sending in any forms and cheque's to Carl Crocher ABAP, 246a St. Mary's Ave. Barbour posted on our Facebook group that he was looking for any employment areas now that were secured a place for the season with How Roberts at Heidle Golf Club. Badly Fredly Garner painted company with Macduff golf club after securing their agreement we will all wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

If you see Kev, you wish to share please feel free to contact me. Peter Mayhury is a welcome addition to the team and will be a big boost to the whole team.

**SOUTH EAST**

Spring is turning for a great day out.

Next month, a full and fascinating day about the Allen Nationals, I'm always getting moaned at for going the wrong way. What one thing - other than a par 3, do you think you'd be working on behalf of the section. The election of Officers to the AGM. Thursday 22nd, and the outgoing Chairman and Phipps-Jones (Secretary), Tom Smith (Treasurer), Arnold Wood taking over as Chairman, for their support over his period as Chair.

I am sure that you will all join in the fun. The AGM was held, before the closing date, which was 31 October. The Essex golf course out in great condition and supported by old trusted sponsors for this year's events and education programme. Nineteen teams of four competed in the Essex Golf & Country Club – Golfer of the Year, Liam Calum. One thing you are all well and in good spirits, living in the eternal city, Daniel Lambert, has won the Essex, all the twenty teams that have been finalised and should be here next month. All the best for the year, well done, Burton, which should be during the summer.

**Essex**

**SURREY**

**SUSSEX**

**EDINBURGH**

In his future endeavours.

after 25 years in their employ-

venue.

golf club being our first port of call.

Edward Ainsworth was unwell such stature the village of York's great name, of course the legend that is Gok Wan.

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**Diary of Events**

**BIGGA Regional Conferences**

- **Midlands - 6 November 2013, Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, Leicester.**
  - Contact Sandra Raper - 07866 366966

- **South East - 2013 date and location tbc.**
  - Contact Clive Osgood - 01737 819343 / 07841 984140

- **South West & South Wales - 2013 at Oaktree Arena, Bristol.**
  - Contact Jane Osmon - 01454 270850 / 07841 984140

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**SOUTH WEST & WALES**

**Around The Green**

- **Scotland**
  - John Cunningham, St Andrews Links Trust, Central Section
  - Alistair McPherson, Martin Melville Golf Club, South West
  - Kevin Young, Fairgreen Golf Club, East Lothian
  - Craig Millar, Tullie House Golf Club, Midlothian
  - Euan McEwan, Dalmahoy Hotel & Golf Course, Edinburgh

- **Northern Region**
  - Paul Thorndike, Davenport Golf Club, North Section
  - Steven Sandell, North Devon Golf Club, North Section
  - Roger Taylor, Clifden Golf Club, North Section
  - Scott Cummins, Trentham Golf Club, North Section

- **Midland Region**
  - Ian Davies, Ingestre Park Golf Club, North Section
  - Pat Blake, Nuneaton Golf Club, North Section
  - Rob Fyfe, Warwickshire Golf & Country Club, North Section
  - Rob Torr, Loop Heath Golf Club, North Section

- **South Coast**
  - Ashley Rycroft, Cleethorpes Golf Club, North Section
  - Ian Davies, Ingestre Park Golf Club, North Section
  - Pat Blake, Nuneaton Golf Club, North Section
  - Rob Fyfe, Warwickshire Golf & Country Club, North Section

- **South East**
  - Paul Goodman, The Royal Golf Club of Cornwall, South East
  - Martin Cornish, Launceston GC, South East
  - John Goodchild, Bowood GC, South East
  - Michael Wilkins, Hertfordshire GC, South East

- **South Wales**
  - Gordon Oliver, Aberdare GC, South Wales
  - Danny Cecon, Newport GC, South Wales
  - Paul Tricklebank, Penarth GC, South Wales
  - Euan Kay, SRUC (Elmwood), Central Section

- **Devon and Cornwall**
  - Our February meeting was held at Thorlestone Golf Club, South Devon. After some very wet overnight conditions including snow within a few miles away, we were very pleased to complete this event and thank you to the 50 attendees who made the journey. The golf format for the day was individual Stableford playing for the Toro trophy. Results: 1 John Welford (Warren) 34 points, 2 Pete Newman (Wantage) 35, 3 Gordon Tamblyn (Hull) 31 pts. Gordon also won longest drive and nearest the pin.

- The remaining members were taken on a course walk led by Vic Dyer (Head Greenkeeper). Vic has been at Thorlestone for 18 years and has been Head Greenkeeper for seven years. The attendees saw all parts of the course which was in fantastic condition and a credit to Vic and the team. The walk culminated in a visit to their brand new maintenance facilities. The new complex has been extremely well designed and laid out taking into consideration visual impact and economy of space. I would strongly suggest that if anyone were considering upgrading their facilities to visit Thorlestone.

- At lunch thank you to our sponsors for the day, Devon Garden Machinery and Martyn Lane Golf for sponsoring the day and the prizes. Also, a big thank you to Vic, the Greenkeeping team and all the staff at Thorlestone for helping it become a very successful and enjoyable day.

- Section Minibus was taken up to Harragoe again this year, sponsored by Famura and Sherriff Amenity a big thank you to both for supporting the Section. Nine members made use of this including Kevin Paterson (Treasurer) sponsored by the Region, Martin Cornish (Lansacot) selected and sponsored by Darcy College in collaboration with Anthony ‘Jackie’ James for driving the bus again, especially with the wintry conditions, thanks Jackie!

- **South Wales**
  - Good Morning South Wales, I’ll start by saying WOW what a fantastc HTML this year. Have never seen the show as busy as it was on Tuesday and Wednesday considering some of the machinists were not in attendance and more importantly the horrendous driving conditions on the way up.

- I’ve never seen so many guys from South Wales make the over 500 mile round trip (even the Cradoc team) to join and support the show. Without you guys attending and supporting the trade stands many of the things we are able to do within BIGGA wouldn’t be possible.

- Good old Welsh weather! With the snow finally melted the following week saw over 150mm of rain in places making what has already been a dreadful winter even worse. ‘Please the man upstairs can you please give us a nice, warm, sunny summer we need one please.”

- I can now report our first golfing fixture will take place on March 29 at Fairwood Park GC near Swansea, the event is a stableford format so hopefully we can get as many of you guys attending as possible. Please ask all members of your teams to come and take part, please book your places with Gareth Knight as usual.

- Kind Regards, Peter H
SOUTH WEST & WALES

The weather must be mention- ed - after one of the wettest
December's on record, a solidly
frozen January and a set, cold
and dark start to February (some might call it winter) there are
signs of a reprieve on the
horizon. This morning the sun
is shining, temperatures are up
so slowly and there is a
touch of spring in the air, long
may it continue.

On Saturday the section is
hosting a brilliant event at
Chippenham Golf Club. The
day will involve a course walk in
the morning hosted by Course
Manager Chris Sealey who will
give everyone a tour of the
recently constructed holes and
detail the trials and tribulations
that challenged the club during
and since construction.

Following on in the afternoon there
will be five presentations given by
greenkeepers across from the
region, most of which you will
know.

As promised last month the
years fixtures have been final-
ised and are as follows: Wed 24
April, Atkin Minchinhampton Golf
Club, Wed 29 May Section V
Secretaries The Manor House,
Wed 12 June Summer Tourna-
ment Kingswood GC, Thurs 15
August Section V Welsh Chip-
ping 30bdr, Thu 29 Sept Sec-
tion V South Coast North Wilts
GC, Wed 16 Oct ACGM Pitton GC
and finally Thur 19 Dec Christ-
mas Tournament Ongbourne
Downs GC. Please note that the
Summer Tournament tee times
have been pushed back to 1pm
with light lunch before en route
more of us to make it after a
morning at work.

We will get all of these dates
onto BIGGA South West Facebook and also the
they will be coming out via email
inglist. If anyone is not receiving
Section emails please email Adam
or myself and we will
get your address onto the list
(adam.1.mathew@hotmail.co.uk).

It was had by all and some of us
ever found time to catch up
with mates both old and new
following long days in both the
show and Continue to Learn.

Keeping up the support, are you all
at the upcoming Section day
and keep the news coming in.
Jacy Goodchild (07984422905)
(jgoodchild@bigga.org.uk)

DEVEN AND CORNWALL

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successful and enjoyable day.

SOUTH WALES

Good Morning South Wales, I’ll start by saying WOW what a
fantastic HTMC this year. I have never seen the show as busy as
it was today and Wednesday
considering some of the machin-
ery guys were not in attendance
and more importantly the hor-
norous driving conditions on
the way up.

I’ve never seen so many guys
from South Wales make the over
500 mile round trip (even the
Cracoe team) to join and sup-
port the show. Without you guys
attending and supporting the
trade stands many of the things
we are able to do within BBIGA
wouldn’t be possible.

Good old Welsh weather! With
the snow finally melted the fol-
lowing week saw over 150cm of
rain in places making what has
already been a dreadful winter
even worse. “Please the man
upstairs can you please give us
a nice, warm, sunny day we
need one please”

I can now report our first
golfing fixture will take place
on March 29 at Fairwood Park
GC near Swansea, the event is
a stableford format so hopefully
we can get as many of you guys
attending as possible. Please ask all members of your team to
come and take part, please book
your places with Gareth Knight
at your earliest convenience.

Katie Regada, Peter H
This month David Golding - GTC’s Education Director – explains how a call to a GTC Quality Assured Centre can free up funding for training.

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult for the GTC to monitor the Government’s strategy for education and training. But through our involvement with the Lantra Sector Skills Council we ensure the sector has an accredited set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) from which a range of qualifications for greenkeeping are developed. The Governments for England, Scotland and Wales all have different funding strategies and the priority groups can change with little or no warning.

We do endeavour to ensure the Greenkeeping Apprenticeship Week including the content of the work-based qualifications remain the same throughout Britain however funding support and cost for training courses through the GTC Quality Assured Centres can vary depending on the delivery method.

There seem to be accidental barriers created by the various Government funding agencies which prevent employers and potential apprentices from accessing the help that is repeatedly advertised relating to apprenticeships.

I strongly suggest looking at the Golf Foundation, PGA and Golf Unions are all looking to promote the greenkeeping profession through their roles in promoting careers in golf which will all help. The Apprentice Scheme is available for all ages however please check with your chosen Centre for the most up to date information on funding support.

Finally a great supporter of the GTC and the Greenkeeping Association Mr Alan Gumble has sadly passed away at the age of 83.

Alan is probably best remembered for his role as Head Greenkeeper at Patrul Golf Club, Harrogate and the work he put into establishing a greenkeeper training system as a volunteer on the BGGA and GTC Quality Assured Centres.

The BGGA and BRGGA regularly receive enquires from people looking to change career and these are often keen gardeners looking to work in a healthier environment.

Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director, with a monthly update
This month David Golding - GTC’s Education Director – explains how a call to a GTC Quality Assured Centre can free up funding for training for school leavers, career changes and the Apprenticeship Scheme is the perfect pathway to join a profession which offers global opportunities.

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult for the GTC to monitor the Government’s strategy for education and training. But through our involvement with the Lantra Sector Skills Council we ensure the sector has an accredited set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) from which a range of qualifications for greenkeeping are developed. The Governments for England, Scotland and Wales all have different funding strategies and the priority groups can change with little or no warning.

We do endeavour to ensure the Greenkeeping Apprenticeship including the content of the work-based qualifications remain the same throughout Britain however funding support and cost for training courses through the GTC Quality Assured Centres can vary depending on their delivery method.

There seem to be accidental barriers created by the various Government funding agencies which prevent employers and potential apprentices from accessing the funding available plus tremendous barriers created by the various Governments for England, Scotland and Wales and a healthy environment.

Finally a great supporter of the GTC and the Greenkeeping Association Mr Alan Gamble has sadly passed away at the age of 85. Alan is probably best remembered for his time as Head Greenkeeper at Priory Golf Club, Harrogate and the support he gave to establishing a greenkeeping profession. As a general rule across Britain the 16-19 year old group are the Government’s priority for funding support but age is no barrier to becoming a greenkeeper.

The GTC and BRGGA regularly receive enquiries from people looking to change career and these are often keen gardeners looking to work in a healthier environment. There is a structured career path...
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“Highly recommend Gripclad for first class products and fast efficient service” – Gail Carpenter, MD Southport Golf Club

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“This products makes the steps easy and safe to walk on” – Simon Newland, Club Secretary, Academy

“It is truly non-slip, easy to install and we are proud to recommend Gripclad to any golf club with slippery surface issues” – Scott Alchison, Deputy Course Manager, Royal Dornoch Golf Club

“High recommend Gripclad to any golf club with slippery surface issues” – Gail Carpenter, MD Southport Golf Club
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  - £15,500
- Iseki 330, 30hp, 1213hrs, c/w: roll bar, turf tyres
  - £6,500
- John Deere 3720, 45hp, 2hrs, 4WD – choice of 2
  - £13,000

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- Greenmech Arborist 6” road towed chipper, 27hrs
  - £POA
- Timberwolf 9” road towed chipper, 75hp, 547hrs
  - £9,750
- Timberwolf 6” road towed chipper, 35hp, 195hrs
  - £19,750
- Scag 52 mower, 17hp, 52” width of cut
  - £3,000
- Ferris 48 Hydrowalk, 17hp – choice of 4
  - £3,000
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- Vermeer 6” chipper, 30hp, 1097hrs
  - £6,500
- John Deere 1445 with cab, c/w: 62” SD deck
  - £11,800
- John Deere X748, c/w: 48” SD deck + Hi Tip collector – choice of 5 from £3,000
- John Deere 8345RT, 130hp, 3198hrs
  - £18,000
- John Deere 944L, 48” 4WD Flex deck
  - £16,500
- John Deere 1445, c/w: various deck and hours – choice of 10
  - £7,500
- John Deere 1445, c/w: various deck and hours – choice of 10
  - £7,500
- John Deere 1445 with cab, c/w: 48” 4WD Flex deck
  - £16,500
- Kubota BX25, c/w deck and RD collector – 230hrs.
  - £15,000
- Kubota X118S, 48” RD deck and collection – £12,500
- Kubota G18, c/w: 48” RD deck and collection – £17,500
- Kubota G20, c/w: 48” RD deck and 14 Tip collector – £9,750
- Kubota G20S, c/w: 48” RD deck and 14 Tip collector – £9,750
- Ransome Super Certes 61
  - £2,500
- Ransome Matador 71
  - £1,700
- Lloyds Paladin
  - £1,700
- Lloyds Paladin G4Q – choice of 2
  - £2,200
- Ransome Maspaq 1Q
  - £1,500
- Ransome Maspaq 2Q
  - £1,700
- Ransome Super Certes 1Q
  - £2,500
- Ransome Super Certes 61
  - £2,200
- John Deere 2900E Hybrid greens mower, c/w: 22” units – 164hrs
  - £12,000
- John Deere X548, c/w: 48” SD deck
  - £2,200
Recruitment

**Kingsdown Golf Club Ltd**

An 18-hole member-owned golf club in existence since 1880 with a recently constructed driving range and extensive practice facilities requires an experienced Assistant Greenkeeper. This is an ideal opportunity for a committed, self-motivated greenkeeper to join an experienced team in maintaining and developing the golfing facilities, woodlands and ornamental gardens. Applicants should be qualified to NVQ Level 2. Spraying certificates along with a chartered qualification would be desirable.

Please apply either by email to kingsdown@btconnect.com or in writing together with a full CV to:

Neil Newman (Manager), Kingsdown Golf Club, Kingsdown, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 8BS.

---

**Deputy Head Greenkeeper**

(Closing date 22nd March 2013)

The successful candidate will be responsible for assisting the Head Greenkeeper in the management and presentation of a first-class Championship Links and will need to possess the following Qualifications, Experience and Skills:

- Dipped to Level 3 in higher Sports Turf Management and Maintenance.
- Minimum 5 years supervisory experience. Proven ability to plan, organise and direct at a supervisory level.
- Equipped both technically and practically to undertake green keeping duties to the highest standards.
- Experience in the use and maintenance of irrigation systems.
- Proven ability to motivate, lead, develop and mentor others.
- Experience in Health & Safety supervisory management, trained to Level 3.
- First Aid at Work qualifications and spraying certification required (PA1, PA2 & PA6).
- The ability to work in an efficient and effective manner and prioritise work schedules.

Please send CV with a covering letter to:

Neil Newman (Manager), Kingsdown Golf Club, Kingsdown, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 8BS.

---

**Mechanic / Greenkeeper**

(Closing date 22nd March 2013)

The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the workshop and will need to possess the following Qualifications, Experience and Skills:

- Dipped to Level 3 or higher in land-based technology / engineering or similar.
- Minimum 5-7 years experience within the turf industry.
- Knowledge of Health & Safety Regulations.
- Proven ability to maintain and service all machinery to the approval standards of use.
- Experience of grinding equipment.
- Experience in diagnosing and repairing all mechanical, hydraulic and electrical faults.
- Knowledge of Health & Safety Regulations.

Please send CV with a covering letter to:

Neil Newman (Manager), Kingsdown Golf Club, Kingsdown, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 8BS.

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Recruitment

**ROYAL LYTHAM & ST ANNES GOLF CLUB**

Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club require two high calibre individuals to join its dedicated, hard working and progressive team of green keepers. The successful applicants will need to be reliable, hard working and motivated. They will need to excel in all areas and will need to demonstrate a professional and modern approach to green keeping. Being a good team player and excellent communicator are essential skills for both positions.

**DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER**

(Closing date 22nd March 2013)

**MECHANIC / GREENKEEPER**

(Closing date 22nd March 2013)

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**Recruitment**

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Please apply either by email to kingsdowngolf@btconnect.com or in writing together with a full CV to:

Neil Newman (Manager), Kingsdown Golf Club, Kingsdown, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 8BS.

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- First Aid at Work qualifications and spraying certification required (PA1, PA2 & PA3).
- The ability to work in an efficient and effective manner and prioritise work schedules.

Please send CV with a covering letter to: The Secretary, Re: Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club, Links Gate, St Annes on Sea, Lytham, FY8 3LQ

Email: secretary@royallytham.org

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- Extensive experience of grinding equipment.
- Experience of operating Oxyacetylene, Arc and Mig Welding equipment.
- Proven ability in diagnosing and repairing all mechanical, hydraulic and electrical faults.

- Technically and practically experienced to undertake green keeping duties competently, efficiently and to a high standard.

Salaries will be commensurate with experience and in line with BIGGA recommendations.

Full job descriptions can be requested via e-mail – bookings@royallytham.org or by contacting the Assistant Secretary on 01253 724206.

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**Quick ‘Nine Hole’ Quiz Answers:**

2) York City
3) Danny Welbeck and Cristiano Ronaldo
4) Norwich City
5) Barnet
6) Kilmarnock
7) Blackburn Rovers, 8) Portsmouth
8) Norwich City
9) Preston (loan).

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The Back Nine
A column for writers and members to air and share their views on golf greenkeeping topics

Twins Alex and Stephen Edwards are joint managing directors of Inturf, a small family company that has supplied professional sports turf for 25 years. Here they reflect on the enormous potential behind the relationship between greenkeeper and turf supplier

The recent revelations about large-scale drug taking in all kinds of sports, the horse meat in our beef lasagne, and the seemingly endless supply of bankers on the make might create the impression that nothing in today’s world as it should be.

But a sense of proportion is important here.

First, whilst food purity is important for us we should count ourselves lucky that, as citizens in a developed nation, we have clean drinking water on tap and – for most of us – enough to eat.

Second, the fact is that most of the people we meet in the course of our turf growing business are as honest as the day is long – there just aren’t many wrong ‘uns in the world of golf.

Reflecting on this led us to think about the importance of relationships and the power of partnerships.

For a greenkeeper anywhere in Europe today there is an almost bewildering choice of turf suppliers of which Inturf is one.

While that choice down to suppliers who – like us – belong to the Turfgrass Growers Association and subscribe to their aim of advancement of quality turf production and you are still left with a good choice of businesses – any one of which could probably meet your requirements.

So, if the turf is grown to the same standards, how does a greenkeeper choose between them?

This brings us back to the importance of relationships and the power of partnerships and a plea to greenkeepers which might surprise you, coming as it does from two fiercely competitive animals.

Stick with your supplier through thick and thin because doing so will unlock the enormous power of real partnership between grower and greenkeeper.

Of course your grower will make mistakes (as everyone does) but the trick, having chosen the turf and chosen the people, is to stick with the people so that you all have a stake in getting the turf right and keeping it right.

Theodore Levitt was a professor at the Harvard Business School who observed that when a man walks into a hardware shop to buy a quarter inch drill he doesn’t really want a drill he wants a hole in the wall (and he’d probably rather be playing golf).

He isn’t interested in the technical features of the drill just whether it will create that hole he needs.

In our opinion golf is similar to this analogy.

When your members tee off they are not interested in the turf (unless it’s not playing well) what they’re after is a round of golf with all its connotations of competition, companionship and so on.

Working together, grower and greenkeeper can make sure that golfers get the best experience possible and that the best use is made of everyone’s resources.

Long-term partnerships bring tangible benefits through better planning, benefits which – although they remain unseen, mean that golfers, unlike some consumers and sports fans at present, get exactly what they are paying for.

“Working together, grower and greenkeeper can make sure that golfers get the best experience possible”

about the authors
Twins Alex and Stephen Edwards are joint managing directors of Inturf which was started in 1985, assisted by their mother June. They have exhibited at every BTME and the whole family attended BTME 2013. Alex and Stephen have both worked in ‘hands on’ roles as members of site installation crews and have moved on to senior management level. Alex’s main focus is business development while Stephen is responsible for every aspect of production.

The views expressed within this column are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International

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Exciting new additions have been added to the Rigby Taylor ‘R’ range of grass seeds. Joining with industry leading R14 and R9 mixes are new R16 fine fescue mixes for golf courses, R15 for football and rugby pitches, racecourse and polo grounds. And, exclusively from Rigby Taylor, is new Tetrareen, the latest tetraploid perennial ryegrass technology incorporated in R314 and R311 mixes.
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The Back Nine
A column for writers and members to air and share their views on golf greenkeeping topics

Rigby Taylor puts the ahhh! in grass surfaces

Exciting new additions have been added to the Rigby Taylor ‘R’ range of grass seeds. Joining with industry leading R14 and R9 mixes are new R16 fine ryegrass mixes for golf courses, R15 for football and rugby pitches, racecourse and polo grounds. And, exclusively from Rigby Taylor, is new Tetragreen, the latest tetraploid perennial ryegrass technology incorporated in R314 and R311 mixes.

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It’s no surprise that Revolution is trusted by so many turf professionals around the world. It’s the only soil surfactant that goes beyond water repellency issues, providing comprehensive water management and plant health benefits as well.

Revolution’s patented formulation balances air and water in the soil profile, leading to a better root system and improved soil health. By maximizing the potential of your growing environment, Revolution helps turf function more efficiently and perform at consistently higher levels, even under stress.

Try it — and see the benefits for yourself.