Carnoustie

What happened next

ALSO INSIDE...  MAC IN MINSK : ROYAL BIRKDALE : SALTEX
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This Autumn
Strengthen & Sustain
Your Tees & Surrounds with
ProTurf®
12-5-20

Spring & summer tees, surrounds and fairways have been transformed by our exceptional ProTurf 12-5-20, now let ProTurf 12-5-20 strengthen and sustain your turf through autumn & winter, available in 25kg and 500kg bags. Using Poly-S technology and a new multi-nutrient component in granule form, ProTurf 12-5-20 will give you immediate results that will sustain growth for 2-3 months.

This quality is cost effective too. Visit www.everris.com/uk/ProTurf for further technical information and news of our free spreader offer.

A supreme sporting summer

What a summer of sport we’ve had: Andy Murray winning Wimbledon, the British & Irish Lions’ triumphant Tour down under, the Ashes retained comfortably and just recently a thrilling and convincing win for Europe’s Solheim Cup team, their first ever victory on American turf.

Additionally the reassuringly comfortably built Jason Dufner taking the USPGA Championship sealed a vintage year for golf’s Majors. Attention now turns to the qualifying process for the 2014 Ryder Cup which began at Celtic Manor in August.

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Go to www.btme.org.uk to register for your free entry and ensure you beat the queues on the door.

I am delighted that we are now officially sold out for stand space in all of the four Halls and have actually begun a waiting list for additional interested exhibitors, meaning there is the possibility of expanding into an extra 5th Hall.

The comprehensive and excellent Continue to Learn education programme is complete and will be contained within this magazine’s next edition, demand is sure to be high especially for the very popular Turf Managers Conference which features Ohio State’s Professor Karl DANZERBERGER amongst others.

This month entries close for our National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota, at the time of writing there were still some spaces left for this 36 hole event to be played over the excellent Red Course at Oxfordshire’s Frilford Heath Golf Club, a course that will have played host to the European Tour’s Qualifying School only seven days previously. I hope you can take part and compete for the increased prize fund for 2013. Entries also close soon for the fantastic opportunity provided by Bernhards to be part of the BIGGA Delegation to the Golf Industry Show in Orlando in February. If you are not one of the privileged few to have been a BIGGA delegate in the past I would urge you to apply this time around. The combination of education, camaraderie, networking and industry insight that the Bernhards trip provides truly is unparalleled career development opportunities.

This month’s magazine features a fascinating diary provided by David Machinor (page 34) on the trials and tribulations of growing in Belarus’s first ever golf course. Once again the adaptability of this industry’s practitioners is tested to the maximum with outstanding success. Additionally there is an illuminating insight from Huw Morgan on the challenges of adapting to the maximum with outstanding success.
From Belarus with love

Read David MacIndoe’s fascinating diary as he oversees the grow-in at the Eastern European nation’s first ever golf course.

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How a traditional approach is paying off at Burghill Valley Golf Club

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The official monthly magazine of British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association.
Retirement reality hitting home

Having returned from The Open, and after a very busy couple of months for the Association, it dawned on me that this was now the first summer in half a century that I haven’t been working on maintaining and improving a golf course. It is a strange feeling to have no course or staff to manage and no club championships or major events to prepare for. I’m sure anyone who has retired will recognise that slightly unusual disconnected feeling – not only do I miss the work itself and the pride all greenkeepers take in preparing a first-class course, I also miss the daily communication (and fun) with the team, members and visitors. No longer can I throw myself into course projects, renovations and all manner of other work.

I’m fortunate this situation is on my terms having made the conscious decision to take early retirement from Teesside but it has led me to think about any of our members who currently find themselves out of work or who feel the potential threat of redundancy or difficulties at work.

I want all members to understand that the Association is here to help, we have specific Member Benefits that are always available - the Legal Assistance Helpline (0800 177 7893) or our Lifestyle Counselling Helpline (0844 770 1036) – but perhaps more importantly we also have a network of staff and members who can offer advice and support.

The first port of call should be your Regional Administrator who can listen to the problem, and help you find solutions. Recently the Association has heard of employment problems when the situation has progressed too far, and sadly the difference has passed. If you know of someone in difficulty please bring it to our attention as soon as possible.

The Association is doing all it can within the industry to improve general employment conditions for its members, but individual situations need personal tailored help which is out there – so please get in touch at the first sign of a problem.

On a lighter note – clearly turf management is firmly in my blood, for as soon as I retired I found myself managing bowling greens and am currently in demand for all sorts of lawn consultancy!

By time you read this I will be in Woodside for IOG SALTEX. For a variety of reasons last year’s show was considered a disappointment, but I’m hopeful for an improvement this year as the industry needs healthy, strong trade shows.

As always I’m looking forward to meeting Association members, our friends in the trade and catching up with the latest innovations.

For the third year running we have organised some excellent seminars to be held during the event. Whilst SALTEX is mainly aimed at the IOG’s Groundsmen membership it is an important date in the general turf management calendar.

We are delighted to support our friends at the IOG and provide an opportunity for our members in the south east to take part in some excellent education.

The presentations are on subjects as diverse as greens drainage, the management and construction of bunkers on limited budgets and dealing with winter disease on greens and I know it will be an informative and entertaining day.

Once SALTEX ends all the focus switches to our own exhibition, BTME in January. The team at HQ has done a superb job ensuring all the allocated stand space is now sold, and excitement is already building for this the 25th edition of our flagship event.

As we head into autumn after a good summer at last – probably the first decent one since 2006 – I hope you have all enjoyed the warm, sunny weather which we so desperately needed after last year’s relentless downpours and have got plenty of work done on your courses.

I’m jealous!

Contact details
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GI NEWSDESK
The latest news from around the globe

FULL HOUSE FOR BTME 2014

BIGGA are delighted to announce that all the planned stand space for BTME 2014 next January has been sold – however there are still possibilities for anyone interested in exhibiting.

We’ve had a superb response from both returning clients and new companies keen to join the unmissable turf event of the year meaning all of the halls we opened last year are now full.

In fact, we’re very pleased to announce several new companies making their BTME debuts including: Amenity Sales, County Turf, Etesia, Hunter Industries, JK Sonics, JPB, Manafeld Band, Sports Metals and Tom’s Lockers.

However, if you are interested in showcasing your products to thousands of movers and shakers across the whole range of the turf industry please get in touch as we are considering opening another hall at the Harrogate International Centre to meet demand.

To add your name to the list or register your interest please call our Business Development Manager Jill Rodham on 01347 833800 or email jill@bigga.co.uk.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

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Simply visit our dedicated website at btme.org.uk and click on the ‘Register Now’ icon.

NORTH WALES WIN CRICKET BATTLE

The Annual BIGGA cricket challenge match between North West and North Wales, sponsored by Bathgate Silica Sand, was held on 24 July at Ashley Cricket Club.

The North West innings of 154 from 20 overs seemed enough to secure a victory.

However, North Wales battled to victory in a thrilling final over Captain Paul Norton hit 53, only supported by our very own Steve Wragg on 33. Steve also scored 6.2 for his dramatic dive to safety to avoid a run out.

Man of the match: Steve Hemsley. Thanks to all who attended.

Sandra Raper

BIGGA HOUSE CHARITY RUN

Four BIGGA HQ staff have raised hundreds of pounds for charity after pounding the pavements of York on a 10k run.

From left, Membership Executive Elaine Jones joined Business Development Manager Jill Rodham, General Manager Tracey Maddison and L&D Executive Rachael Duffy in a 10k challenge in the city last month.

The quartet had undergone several weeks of training – clocking up the miles in the countryside around Aldwark Manor.

They then had to brave the summer heat on a glorious Sunday morning for the charity run, but managed to cross the line together in an impressive time of 1 hour 7 minutes. They’ve currently raised just under £700 for Macmillan Cancer Support. It was quite an achievement for the team and you can still donate to this extremely worthwhile cause at www.justgiving.com/TraceyMaddison

We’re also pleased to welcome James Whitkaker to the team at BIGGA House as Business Development Executive.

James, who completes our Sales and Administration team alongside Jill Rodham and Susannah Williams, has a wealth of business development and sales experience including working within the health club and cleaning industries as well as a spell working for Mercedes Benz.

He’s a keen AFC Wimbledon fan and has followed them throughout their journey from the lower leagues back to their rightful place in the Football League. He’s also part of the commentary team for Radio Waltham covering some away games and is also a talented amateur footballer.

James said: “I’m delighted to join the team at BIGGA and am already getting to know our client base. I’m confident I can transfer my skills and experience from my previous field-based roles into the turf management industry.

I’m really looking forward to working closely with Jill, the rest of the team, our clients and our members across the country and beyond.”

GCMA CONFERENCE

The GCMA Conference 2013 will take place between 11-13 November at the Hinckley Island Hotel in Leicestershire.

It will feature all manner of seminars, presentations and debates as well as the new ‘Mean Pairs’ where attendees can display their words of wisdom on a visual board. Keynote speakers include trained psychologist ‘Flogging Judy’, Steve O’Toole – Director of Research and Testing at the ROA – and legendary British athlete Steve Hackett OBE.

For much more detail and a booking form visit the GCMA’s website – www.gcma.org.uk

NEW FACES AT BIGGA

The Association is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Regional Administrator for the South West / South Wales Region to replace Jane Jones. Tracey Harvey has been appointed on a full time contract. Tracey is a skilled administrator with a strong track record in event organisation.

Originally from Bristol, Tracey spent eight years at Thornbury Golf club as events coordinator, then moved on to have a spell in event management in the hotel industry specialising in weddings. Her previous role prior to joining BIGGA was a PA for an environmental consultancy.

She said: “I’ve immersed myself in golf ever since the role in Thornbury. My partner and son are both very keen low handicap golfers, and as a family golf is a major part of our lives.

“Everyone is so welcoming in the industry, and very passionate about what they do, and I can’t wait to get to know members in the South West and South Wales. It’s terrific to be involved in the sport again and I’m looking forward to the challenge.”

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BLOGGING AT PERCY WOOD

This month’s featured blog comes from Simon Oliver, Course Manager at Percy Wood Golf & Country Retreat in Northumberland. We’ve had a great response to this so far with greenkeepers really enjoying blogging as a superb tool for communicating with members and visitors alike and helping to remove some of the myths surrounding the greenskeeping profession.

Keep your blogs coming to steve.castle@biggb.co.uk.

Simon explained: “Our blog gives members a detailed up to date diary of what’s going on around the course, allowing the team to carry out efficient maintenance work seamlessly and alert our membership to important information. Feedback has been fantastic showing that clear and concise communication is a must for any successful business.”

There has been unanimous appreciation for all the time put aside to keep everyone informed, resulting in greater respect for yourself and the team. Since our blog began committee meetings have gathered in time as more questions have already been answered.

Our advice to any greenskeeper thinking about creating a blog is to build up your social network connections first, this will allow you to spread your blog further than you originally thought. Also to remember your blog can enhance your CV, so make sure it showcases your ability. See for yourself at http://percywoodatbiggb.co.uk/.

NORRIE WHYTOCK TROPHY TRIUMPH FOR THE WEST

The Scottish Region’s annual Norrie Whytock tournament sponsored by Bayer CropScience was held at Auchterarder Golf Club on 15 August. A strong field assembled to compete for the honour of winning this prestigious title for their respective sections.

Although the weather forecast prior to the day was pretty dismal, the competitors were provided with warm and breezy conditions with a few light showers along the way. Indeed the weather was a distinct improvement on last year’s event that was plagued by heavy showers with play eventually stopping at the 15th following thunder and lightning.

As expected the course was in fabulous condition and praised very highly by all players. Our sincere congratulations to Archie Dunn and his team for providing an excellent playing venue for this competition. The fairways were immaculate, the rough fair and the greens true and firm, what more could the players want!

There were some excellent individual scores returned on the day with 2 players reaching the 36 point mark and a further 3 scoring 35 points. Indeed 2 players returned 3 over par gross scores of 72, Phil Butler (Murrayfield) had to go along with his 36 points.

The chairman thanked Bayer CropScience for their sponsorship and Auchterarder Golf Club for hosting the event and providing the courtesy of the course and use of the excellent clubhouse facilities.

Our partnership with the competition sponsors, Bayer CropScience is essential to the success of the Norrie Whytock competition. Dave Delvin, National Accounts Manager was on hand to present the prizes and to thank all for attending.

Winning team captain, Dougie McIntosh, concluded the proceedings by accepting the Norrie Whytock Trophy and passed on his thanks to all concerned with running the event, to Bayer, to Auchterarder Golf Club and especially Archie Dunn and his team for presenting an excellent golf course for the competition.

Andy Scarr, Scottish Chairman, thanked all competitors for taking part and their continued support of the association.

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ANDREW CURTIS, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CURTIS’S, SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE DAY AND THE SUPPORT IT RECEIVED FROM THE GREENKEEPERS IN THE AREA AND WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO BUILDING ON ITS SUCCESS NEXT YEAR.

Pictured are the winning team of Matt Curtis, Craig Fudge, James Leitch and George Ridley.

The inaugural H Curtis and Sons, Brno and Baronec golf day was recently held at the superbly presented Bristol and Clifton Golf Club - huge credit to Matt Hawker and his team for producing such a fantastic golf course.

The competition was played as a Texas Scramble with 8 teams of 4 taking part. It presented a showcase for the massive strides Curtis’s have taken in the short time they have been in the groundsure industry.

Rico had an impressive display of tractors and utility vehicles for golf courses on show. It was also an opportunity to present the new Baronec 315 Greens Triple which played for the first time at HTML.

Andrew Curtis, Managing Director of Curtis’s, said he was delighted with the day and the support it received from the greenkeepers in the area and was looking forward to building on its success next year.
Beetle mania

Last month the Forestry Commission (FC) sent out a press release begging the public to help find populations of the Asian Longhorned beetle / ALB (Anoplophora glabripennis) and its close cousin the Citrus Longhorned beetle / CLB (Anoplophora citrata). Several outbreaks of CLB having arrived on infested Acer (maple), probably imported from plant nurseries in the Netherlands and originally sourced from China, have thankfully been eradicated over the last few years. ALB was found in spring 2012 at Paddock Wood in Kent (Greenkeeper International July 2012), having arrived in wooden crates from China, and was responsible for the unprecedented felling of virtually all trees across eight hectares.

Hopefully this single ALB outbreak has also been eradicated since FC and FERA have said virtually nothing on the subject since autumn 2012. However, they are clearly concerned that more ALB populations of the Asian Longhorned beetle (Anoplophora chinensis) could arrive in the country.

2012. However, they are on the subject since autumn 2012 (Greenkeeper International March 2013).

Plant health authorities in North America are keeping a watchful eye on Agrihis biguttatus and have already marked it down as a quarantine pest.

And with good reason since a close cousin called the emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis) arrived from Asia and is currently destroying all species of birch and native and exotic ash across a swath of 18 contiguous mid-west, Appalachian and North East states and into adjoining areas of Canada (Ontario and Quebec). It remains early in the season but if this threat ever gets into the UK it will destroy our native common ash (Fraxinus excelsior) before even Chaletia fraxinea (chalaria ash dieback) has a chance to.

The United States has another Agrihis beetle this time a native species called the brown bark borer (Agrilus anxius) which as the common name suggests attacks birch trees.

Native European species of birch have absolutely no resistance to this insect pest which will wipe out native silver birch (Betula pendula) and downy birch (Betula pubescens) if it ever becomes established in the British Isles.

So far there is a British, native ambrosia beetle called oak pin-hole borer. Having been given a new lease of life in oak trees flattened by the 1987 Hurricane, the beetle has graduated over the years from a relatively rare insect of British oak woodland into a huge pest problem for the oak timber trade.

This beetle will make a mess of your club's new designer chip and inset bee hives before it has even been made.

Dr Terry Mobbett

BLOGGING AT PERCY WOOD

This month's featured blog comes from Simon Oliver, Course Manager at Percy Wood Golf & Country Retreat in Northumberland. We've had a great response to this so far with greenkeepers really enjoying blogging as a super tool for communicating with members and visitors alike and helping to remove some of the myths surrounding the greenkeeping profession.

Keep your blogs coming to steve.castle@bigpig.co.uk. Simon explained: “Our blog gives members a detailed up to date diary of what’s going on around the course, allowing the team to carry out efficient maintenance work seamlessly and alert our membership to important information. Feedback has been fantastic showing that clear and concise communication is a must for any successful business.

“There has been unanimous appreciation for all the time put aside to keep everyone informed, resulting in greater respect for myself and the team. Since our blog began committee meetings have halted in time as most questions have already been answered.

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John Young

GOLF DAY SUCCESS AT BRISTOL AND CLIFTON

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The competition was played as a Texas Scramble with 8 teams of 4 taking part. It presented a showcase for the massive strides past year's event and the course is in quite superb condition. The weather was quite reasonable, but as expected the wind was strong and at times quite blustery.

Regaining champion the North Section could not replicate the form from the previous 2 years and failed to collect the prize this year. In the end only 2 points separated the winners and runners up with Ayshbury putting up a valiant effort of 96 points - Iain Barr the main contributor.

However, the honours were reserved for the West Section with an excellent total of 98 points. Dougie McIntosh from Carkhins Braes led the team with 35 points and grossed the other 3 over par score. He was ably assisted by Alaina Read (Williamwood) with 31 points and our former Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd who pointed a great score of 32 points. Former Regional Chairman Stuart Taylor (Glasgow) made up the team on the day and know he would not want me to mention his points tally!

Andy McAtee, Scottish Chairman, thanked all competitors for taking part and their continued support of the association.

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John Young
Following the Greenkeeper International survey, we’ve revamped the Membership pages – and we want you to get involved.

As before, this section will highlight the many benefits BIGGA membership gives you, but will feature you, the members. We want to hear your stories and experiences – so whether you’ve found a new job through BIGGA, got help through our Legal Helpline or Lifestyle Counselling, worked at a high-profile tournament or even won a golf competition we want to hear from you!

SUPPORT AUTUMN EVENTS IN YOUR SECTION

This month we’re urging BIGGA members to support events in their area. We’ve got the Regional Conferences coming up – more details on this page – but members across the UK are busy organising all manner of educational and golfing events for your benefit.

General Manager Tracey Maddison said: “Many of the members give up their own time to plan, organise and deliver excellent educational events so you can imagine how dispiriting it is when only a few people turn up. We’re very aware that everyone is busy but it’s vital that they are supported, and if you don’t attend you really are missing out.”

There are many ways to keep up to date on what’s going on – the Events page on the BIGGA website, our Facebook and Twitter pages plus Section Facebook, Twitter and web pages. There’s also a monthly round-up of Events in each region in Around the Green – so there’s no excuse not to be fully brief on what’s happening.

For example, September alone features BIGGA Seminars at SALTEX (4 September), an East of England v GCMA match (12 September), the North Wales Autumn Tournament (18 September), the Northern Section Autumn Tournament (19 September), the Essex Section Autumn Day (24 September), the Scotland North Section Autumn Day (24 September), the Essex Autumn Trophy & Blind Pairs (30 September) and the Sheffield Section Autumn Competition (30 September). This is just a quick example of what’s happening, so get out there and get involved!

Big up to Tracey, and begin to plan your way. Call 01480 226848 or visit TraceyHarvey@bigga.co.uk for details soon!

£10 members, £20 non-members, further details soon!

BIGGA Midland Regional Conference
– Wednesday 6 November at Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, Botcheston, Leicester LE9 9FH. £15 members, £25 non-members, further details soon!

BIGGA South West & South Wales Regional Conference – Thursday 7 November at the Phoenix Golf Club, Brinsworth, Rotherham S60 5PA. £10 members, £20 non-members, further details soon!

British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS
(Pull Members only)

Personal Accident Helpline 0800 2083 650
Assistance Card Legal
Assistance 0803 202 4095
Lifestyle Counselling Helpline 0800 177 7891
www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst
elaine@bigga.co.uk

Clive Osgood
01737 819343
carineosgood@yahoo.co.uk

Sandra Raper
07866 366966
SandraRaper@bigga.co.uk

John Young
07776 242120
johnyoung@bigga.co.uk

Northern & Midland
Elaine Jones 01347 833800
elaine@bigga.co.uk

South West & Wales
Sandra Raper 07841 948110
tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk

South East
Tracey Harvey 07911 861112
tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk

Scotland & Northern Ireland
Clive Osgood
01347 833800
clive@bigga.co.uk

Norther & Midland
Tracey Maddison
07923 601942
tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk

Regional Offices

BIGGA

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Tel: 07923 601942
Elaine Jones
elaine@bigga.co.uk
Tel: 01347 833800

Twitter @BIGGALtd
elaine@bigga.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2013
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BIGGA REGIONAL CONFERENCES

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British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
NEW SCOTTISH CENTRE GIVEN FULL APPROVAL

Lever Training Ltd, based in Fife, have received full approved centre status from the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) to deliver and certificate awards within the areas of Horticulture and Sportsturf across the landbased sector.

Wayne Roberts, Managing Director at Lever Training Ltd, said: “The landbased sector plays an important part in the UK economy, supporting many different areas including the soft fruit industry, production horticulture, woodlands and forestry and leisure and sporting activities.

Being able to provide sustainable long term employment and business development across the country is important to success. It is therefore vital that employers have ready access to training that directly supports employers and candidates in the workplace and fully considers the seasonality of work.”

Working with employers from their base in Fife, Lever Training are able to provide work-based delivery, assessment and certification fully in the workplace across Scotland and the North of England. This reduces the time candidates are away from the workplace and maximises the learning opportunities that modern organisations can provide.

Wayne added: “The number of requests that we receive leads us to believe there is an ever increasing demand from the sector for specialist workbased delivery, carried out completely in the workplace and we are excited to be now meeting and supporting this demand.”

For more information on the range of courses being offered, Lever Training can be contacted at learning@levertraining.com or by contacting Jackie Cummins, Learning Manager on 01592 780709/719.

SLIC MOVE BY PROVIDER PROVIDER

SLIC Training are offering a 16 week ‘starter’ course in Land Based Engineering free of charge. If you are based in Coventry, Warwickshire and Leicestershire and service your own land based equipment you have a fantastic offer for you. They are the largest Horticultural training provider in the UK and currently work with a number of national landscaping and grounds maintenance contractors.

They have received Government funding to engage with companies in Coventry, Warwickshire and Leicestershire to offer a ‘starter’ course in Land Based Engineering mechanics.

The course is made up of a number of units taken from a Level 2 Diploma in Work-based, Land-based Engineering.

The course is FREE OF CHARGE. This is a fantastic opportunity to get some 1:2:1 training.

AND FINALLY...

A reminder that the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Final will be held on 17 September at BIGGA HQ. Good luck to all eight candidates who were listed in last month’s Greenkeeper International.

Next month’s issue will feature coverage of the final plus an interview with the eventual winner.

The EDGIT PRO™ is the easy solution to a time-consuming problem. Forget spending countless man-hours edging the same bunkers, pathways, flowerbeds and kerbs.

The EDGIT has been created to dramatically reduce labour: it is the all-purpose answer to the predicament of creating perfect edges with a string trimmer.

Contact Details

Stuart Brown
stuart@bigga.co.uk

Rachael Harvey
rachael@bigga.co.uk

Sami Strutt
sami@bigga.co.uk

01347 833800 (option 3)

www.bigga.org.uk

Do you have what it takes? Download an application form at www.bigga.org.uk by clicking on Education.
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They have received Government funding to engage with companies in Coventry, Warwickshire and Leicestershire to offer a ‘taster’course in Land Based Engineering mechanics. We can offer this to your eligible, existing staff, over the age of 19 years old – FULLY FREE OF CHARGE.

The course is made up of a number of units taken from a Level 2 Diploma in Work-based, Land-based Engineering Operations for which the learner would receive accreditation. This is a fantastic opportunity to get some 1:2:1 training.

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The EDGIT PRO™ is a trimming & edging guide attachment for Stihl straight shaft trimmers. It indicates where the trimmer’s string is cutting and holds the trimmer’s spinning string in the groove. The EDGIT’s 14” disk rotates around a boundary like a measuring wheel guiding the string (and acting as a barrier between the operator and any debris production) as it cuts a quick, clean, precise line.

The Master Greenkeeper Certificate is awarded to those greenkeeper members of BIGGA who have reached the highest standards of greening and golf course management.

It is a prestigious industry award gained by:
- Experience as a greenkeeper
- Through formal and internal training
- Golf course management assessment
- A rigorous, two-part examination

All Full, Associate and International members of BIGGA are eligible to join and earn Stage 1 Credits. Applicants must be Course Managers (Superintendents/Head Greenkeepers) to progress to Stages 2 and 3.

Do you have what it takes? Download an application form at www.bigga.org.uk by clicking on Education.
**EX GREENKEEPER JOINS BAYER**

Bayer CropScience has appointed turfgrass protection specialist, Dr Colin Mumford as their new Technical Support Manager. He brings a wealth of experience and replaces Dorin Pop who has moved elsewhere within Bayer.

Colin has been involved in the sports turf industry for nearly 25 years. With hands-on, course management experience, Colin was previously Head Greenkeeper at North Weald Golf Club in Essex, before returning to full-time education where he gained a BSc (Hons) in Landscaping and Amenity Management from Writtle College, as well as an MSc in Sports Surface Technology and an Engineering Doctorate (EngD) from Cranfield University.

Since completing his studies Colin has worked in New Zealand as the Technical Officer for the New Zealand Sports Turf Institute, which exposed him to a variety of artificial and natural turf sports surfaces. Colin returned to the UK and spent two years as Technical Manager for an artificial sports surface specialist, where his role was to develop the company’s products and services, as well as advising clients on the construction, maintenance, and redevelopment of artificial sports surfaces.

Colin has become a respected authority within the industry and has presented at national and international conferences. He has had several papers published and has also written numerous articles for trade journals.

He said: “This is a very exciting opportunity for me at Bayer CropScience. It offers me the opportunity to utilise all the skills and knowledge I have accumulated in the sports turf industry, and I’m looking forward to supporting turf managers in developing effective and practicable solutions in crop protection.”

**BARONESS MOWER IS WELSH WIZARD**

The Head Greenkeeper of Llandrinod Wells Golf Club has given his full backing to horiness after purchasing one of the company’s Barons Mowers.

Head Greenkeeper Eric Read is pictured with Terry Harrison of Terry Harrison Machinery after they delivered a new Barons 315 Greens Mower to the Powys-based club.

Eric said: “After trialling several brands of Greens Triplex Mowers the Barons Mower was an easy choice. Many outstanding features came to the fore, such as the excellent traction on our hilly course, its agile manoeuvrability and its exceptional quality of cut, with minimal impact on the greens. I see it as the only machine which achieves such a high quality finish.”

**BIGGA SEMINAR AT SALTEX**

Michael Fane, Senior Technical Area Sales Manager for Europe, will be co-presenting with Dr Simon Watson from Syngenta as part of the BIGGA seminar programme on Wednesday 4th September.

Their seminar and an integrated approach to disease management on golf greens, takes place at 1pm in the grandstand. One BIGGA CPD point is available to CPD-registered greenkeepers who attend.
The Head Greenkeeper at Llandrinod Wells Golf Club has given his full backing to barness after purchasing one of the company's Greens Mowers.

Harrison Machinery after they delivered a new Baroness 315 Greens Mowers.

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NEW PRODUCTS
The latest products on show at SALTEX

WESSEX AND SNOWEX AT SALTEX

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BUFFALO HUNTING AT SALTEX

Allett Mowers launched their latest Buffalo 345 all-purpose pedestrian cylinder mower at SALTEX, shown as one of the great all-rounders in the Allett line-up, the model will have large diameter cutting cylinders which give them the ability to cut longer grass, even in wet conditions. The new Buffalo 345 sees a range of improvements to a machine developed primarily as a sportsground mower. The engine is now centrally mounted on the chassis, giving the user a better view of the cutting area. There is a larger diameter front roller to give straighter lines and less flattened pressure. One handed fitting and removal of the grass box can be made possible by adding a handle and grass box hop in place of arms. This new grass box hop is also extended to the rest of the Buffalo range.

KUBOTA JOIN FORCES WITH BROWNS AND LISTER WILDER

Kubota teamed up with two of its dealer partners at SALTEX 2013 to demonstrate its market leading and high performance range of tractor and grounds care solutions. The company joined forces with George Browns and Lister Wilder on stand D20, giving visitors the opportunity to see Kubota’s extensive range of solutions for the grounds care sector, including some of the latest introductions and innovations for 2013.

New solutions for 2013 that featured on the stand included Kubota’s recently launched RTV400Ci utility vehicle and the M6060 wide range tractor. Kubota also displayed a number of its popular compact tractors and ride-on mower solutions at the show.

GROUNDSCARE AT SALTEX

GroundsCare Products, sole UK importers of Turf Teq and ZipLevel products, ran live demonstrations of these unique landscape maintenance and survey products. The Turf Teq range consists of:
- Edge/Trencher
- Power Brooms
- Rough-cut Mower
- Surface Preparation Rake
- Snow Plough

...all powered by the hydrostatically-driven Turf Teq walk behind tractor with 13hp Honda engine. New for this year is the revolutionary ZipLevel high precision survey level for landscapers, civil engineers and the construction industry. Easier to carry, set up and use than a laser or automatic level, the ZipLevel does not need line of sight, and reads out results on a digital display: no maths needed.

Also on display was the Rotowash walk-behind, flat surface pressure washer. Now available in two sizes, the machine offers working widths of 530mm (21”) or 280mm (11”). Model 600 is ideally suited to cleaning large areas such as car parks or multiple tennis courts. Model 400 is more manoeuvrable and easier to use in restricted areas such as domestic patios. Both are supplied with a 9m hose and lance so they can be used as a traditional, static washer if required.

VAST ARRAY OF PRODUCTS FROM CHARTERHOUSE

SALTEX is always a good opportunity to update yourself on what products are available - and there was no better stand to do that on than Charterhouse Turf Machinery.

The company has a vast array of equipment to maintain natural surfaces and grow synthetic ones.

With end of season maintenance in mind turf managers’ attention will turn to scarifying, top dressing and aerating of grassed areas or rejuvenating synthetic ones.

On stand was the recently launched Redexim Verti Drive, 1157, part of the new high-speed 157 series that feature lighter weight machines. Suitable for use with a tractor or from as little as 80hp, the 1157 weighs in at just 150kg but offers a production of 1.76m² working width together with a depth of up to 150mm (6”). Alongside were examples from Charterhouse’s extensive range of oversenders, from pedestrian split units to high capacity disc senders, and the company’s Trakka topdresser fine.

Continuing the theme of lighter units, the new Redexim Verti-Top 1200 for synthetic turf maintenance is a physically smaller machine that will be of particular use in more confined spaces. It is still a high work rate machine, but weighing in at only 360kg. It has all the features to maintain synthetic turf by removing, cleaning and redistributing the infill material, but with only the need for a 22hp tractor with a 400kg lift capacity.

TORO LAUNCHES PREMA AT SALTEX

Two mowers, the first for the amenity and landscape sector, and another for golf, headlined the Toro exhibit on the Lely – turf greens partnership. In addition, Toro launched PREMA – a brand new programme for quality pre-owned Toro turf machinery.

Pride of place on Stand No A05 was the LT3340 heavy-duty triple mower. Designed for high productivity grass-cutting on jobs from parks and roadside verges to schools and caravan sites, this machine also gives a great finish. Optional all-weather cab and high levels of comfort keep operators working longer. While easy access service areas help reduce running costs and increase profitability.

Next up was the new Toro Reelmaster 3550-D. Weighing in at just 900kg, Toro claim it’s the lightweight fairway mower on the market, and have dubbed it the lightweight fairway champion. It floats effortlessly over contours without leaving any unwelcome impressions on the turf.
NEW PRODUCTS

The latest products on show at SALTEX

WESSEX AND SNOWEX AT SALTEX

Atlet Mowers launched their latest Buffalo 345 all-purpose pedestrian cylinder mower at SALTEX. Known as the great all-rounders in the Atlet line-up, the robust and sturdy mower has large diameter cutting cylinders which give them the ability to cut longer grass, even in wet conditions. The new Buffalo 345 sees a range of improvements to a machine developed primarily as a sportsground mower. The engine is now centrally mounted on the chassis, giving the user a better view of the cutting area. There is a larger diameter front roller to give straighter lines and greater pressure. One handed fitting and removal of the grass box have been made possible by hydraulic arms and grass box hop in place of arms. This new grass box hopper has also been extended to the rest of the Buffalo range.

KUBOTA JOIN FORCES WITH BROWNS AND LISTER WILDER

Kubota teamed up with two of its dealer partners at SALTEX 2013 to showcase its market leading and high performance range of tractor and groundcare solutions.

The company joined forces with George Brown and Lister Wilder on stand D220, giving visitors the opportunity to see Kubota’s extensive range of solutions for the groundcare sector, including some of its latest introductions and innovations for 2013.

New solutions for 2013 that featured on the stand included Kubota’s recently launched RTV400Ci utility vehicle and the M6060 wide range tractor. Kubota also displayed a number of its popular compact tractors and ride-on mower solutions at the show.

BUFFALO HUNTING AT SALTEX

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In perspective of forward speed, the Buffaloes have a fixed clip rate and anyone hunting for a cylinder mower that will cut long and wet grass will find that the 200m diameter 8 blade cutting cylinder is designed to cope well in these conditions. The hydrostatics-wide front wheel drive setting is made easy with a single point adjustment from the cylinder and the

GROUNDSCARE AT SALTEX

GroundsCare Products, sole UK importers of TurfTeq and ZipLevel products, ran live demonstrations of these unique landscape maintenance and survey products. The Turf Teq range consists of:

• Edger/Trencher
• Power Brooms
• Rough-cut Mower
• Surface Preparation Rake
• Snow Plough...

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THE WORLD'S FIRST UTV WITH POWER TAKE OFF

Leading off-road vehicle manufacturer Polaris has announced the BRUTUS range, the world’s first purpose-built side-by-side utility vehicle with front-end Power Take Off.

Based on the Polaris Ranger, BRUTUS comprises three models – BRUTUS HD, BRUTUS HD and BRUTUS HD PTO. The line was built to be the most versatile, most capable and most comfortable side-by-side utility vehicles ever created, enabling users to complete more tasks without spending more time and energy. The new BRUTUS models are specifically engineered for individuals and businesses that seek durable all-terrain vehicles.

The ability to operate several front-end attachments provides users with new levels of versatility, and ultimately, a cost-effective and more productive work solution.

The Pro-Tach™ attachment system, standard on the BRUTUS HD and BRUTUS HD PTO, delivers the capability to change from one attachment to the next quickly and easily. Creating levels of productivity never before seen in its class, a revolutionary, front-end PTO system on the BRUTUS HD PTO draws power directly from the vehicle’s engine. The high efficiency, mechanical PTO maximizes power to a line of purpose-built, out-front commercial attachments. Featured in the complete line of attachments are three PTO-powered attachments – angle broom, complete line of attachments are three PTO-powered attachments – snow blade, pallet forks and materials bucket – allowing users to sweep, mow, blow, plow and scoop with just one machine.

“The introduction of the BRUTUS product family is part of our commitment to offer customers innovative and relevant vehicles that best suit their needs,” David Longers, Polaris Vice President, Off-Road Vehicles (ORV) and ORV Engineering said. “Throughout our 60 years of engineering experience, strategic alliances with other industry leaders and our incredible network of dealers, we are able to provide the commercial market with the most productive, reliable and versatile vehicles.”

The BRUTUS models offer a 24-horsepower diesel engine with hydrostatic transmission which delivers all the torque and power needed to get the job done. An innovative treadle pedal allows travel in forward or reverse without shifting gears, providing an ideal setup for commercial applications. BRUTUS vehicles provide a class-leading six inches of suspension travel, which combined with On-Demand True All-Wheel Drive, allows for safe and comfortable transportation of passengers and cargo over virtually any terrain.

BRUTUS models are the first side-by-side utility vehicles that use a multi-link coil over De Dion rear suspension to deliver superior ride-quality. The rear suspension supports a 566.9kg (1,250lb) cargo capacity and minimizes suspension sag when fully loaded.

NEW FROM RJ

Ranomes Jacobsen returned to SALTEX with a host of new products for both the municipal and golf sectors. The Ipswich-based manufacturer launched the Ranomes Spider Mini II, a smaller version of the unique remote-controlled mower for mowing steep banks.

From the hekki brand comes the all-new TJA 8800 and 8100s comprising of models rated at 80 and 100 PS respectively. These powerful and versatile workhorses are suitable for landscape and groundcare contractors, farmers and local authorities, where a range of implements can be used for a host of tasks.

Aimed primarily at local authorities and those looking after large landscaped areas, the Spider Mini II is a smaller version of the unique remote-controlled mower for mowing steep banks.

Also making debuts at SALTEX were the Turfco products in the UK market. The new TriWave 40 trailed spreaders, trim mowers, turf aerators, mowers, rough mowers, top dressers and accessories and machine parts.

If you were unable to stop by the GTE stand you may still enter by sending an email with full name, company name, address and telephone number to katie@GlobalTurfEquipment.com before Sunday September 15.

The Atom 450 Deluxe is designed for gardeners with large areas of lawn to edge. Also on the stand was the updated ATOM BUNKER EDGER – now celebrating its seventh year as a leading product for the golf industry from the DJ golf and groundcare range. It has a powerful easily-maintained Mitsubishi two-stroke engine.

The BUSHRANGER EDGER (seen for the first time at IOG SALTEX two years ago) made another appearance. Aimed primarily at local authorities and those looking after large landscaped areas, the Bushranger Iron is ideal for producing more sharp edges, especially up close to raised paving because of the drop-down wheel.

GLOBAL TURF EQUIPMENT OFFER SUPERCAR PRIZE

“Global Turf Equipment (GTE) – the UK branch of the world’s largest independent seller and exporter of pre-owned golf course equipment – offers a supercar experience as a prize at SALTEX.”

Serving golf facilities in more than 80 countries worldwide, GTE offers owners, operators, and golf course superintendents substantial cost savings with fiscally-prudent alternatives to brand-new machines. GTE prides itself on its reputation for high-quality, low-hour, off-leasing equipment.

GTE recently established an overseas partnership with County Mowers as part of long-term plans to offer late model lease return mowers and equipment to UK golf courses.

“We met golf course operators, owners, superintendents and others at SALTEX,” says Jim Searby, President, GTE. “As we now warehouse and service products in the UK, it’s easier than ever for European courses to take advantage of our exceptional value propositions.”

In addition to receiving the latest company information, visitors to GTE’s stand in SALTEX were invited to enter a prize draw. One lucky person will win the opportunity to drive a luxury supercar (Lamborghini Huracan and / or Aston Martin) for two hours around a famous track like Silverstone, Goodwood or Thruxton.

An inventory of fairway mowers, green mowers, rough mowers, top dressers and spreaders, trim mowers, turf aeration, turf spayers, turf vacuums and blowers, utility vehicles and more is available.
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EXCLUSIVE DJ TURFCARE MACHINES HIT WINDSOR

DJ TURFCARE showed their exclusive range of fine turf, golf and sportsturf machinery on stand K35 of IOG SALTEX. The PLUGGER PLINS Pro HD scarifier features hydrostatic-drive and uses both solid and hollow tines. It is highly manoeuvrable and is ideal for super-stiff grass maintenance in more difficult areas, being easy to transport and handle. It is particularly useful for large areas of fine turf, and cricket and bowling clubs have found the PLINS incredible in restoring compacted squares.

The second-generation ATOM EDGE RS, both professional and domestic, with new Mitsubishi engines were also on show. They are tougher, easier-to-use and have improved controls. The Atom Professional Edger Pro 580 is aimed at local authorities for kerb use and the Atom 450 Deluxe is designed for gardeners with large areas of lawn to edge. Also on the stand was the updated ATOM BUNKER EDGER – new celebrating its seventh year as a leading product for the golf industry. The new powerful, two-stroke engine.

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Also making debuts at SALTEX were the Turco Wideflap1 1550 top dresser and the Turco TriWave 40. The 1550 is the most advanced addition to Turco’s Wideflap family, offering unprecedented control and precision. It has more capacity, is easier to load, has programmable presets, nite calculation and can tackle a wider range of applications. The new TriWave 40 trailed overseeder can be towed behind a utility vehicle, quad bike, barker rake or tractor, providing added versatility and is the easiest to operate of any overseeder on the market.

The Smithco Spray Star 2000 was another SALTEX debutant; this dedicated spray vehicle features an ultra low-profile 757 litre (200 gallon) capacity tank, hydrostatic drive and a liquid-cooled diesel engine.

TYM DEBUTS AT SALTEX WITH LELY

A new addition to the leading turf machinery distributor’s portfolio, Lely UK has exhibited TYM tractors at IOG SALTEX for the first time. On stand A15, as part of its Lely – Partners in Turfcare exhibit, which also includes Toor, and Bob outdoor maintenance equipment, Lely displayed a number of TYM tractors.

“TYM tractors are fast becoming the tractor of choice for golf clubs, sports stadiums, local authorities and landscape contractors,” says Jeff Auguise, turf products national sales manager at Lely UK. “There’s a wide range of models from 23hp to 100hp to cater for all needs, and we showed off the 23hp, 35hp, 43hp and 100hp units at SALTEX.”

All TYM tractors benefit from a reliable and powerful four-cylinder diesel engine that maximises fuel efficiency. Dual-air filter elements protect and extend engine life, and a heavy-duty, four-wheel-drive front axle offers greater traction where needed.

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Carnoustie

What happened next?

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It was impossible to speak to Sandy Reid and Craig Booth in their recently refurbished maintenance facility without first acknowledging the elephant in the room.

The pair worked with John Philp MBE for many years before his retirement – a man credited with bringing The Open back to this most traditional of golfing venues, and was even honoured when the 11th hole on the Championship Course was named after him. But it was significant that, on the day of its renaming, John was quick to salute the efforts of the team who had supported him throughout his long tenure.

On a blazing hot afternoon on the East coast of Scotland, just days before The Open began 40 miles south at Muirfield, two of that team were keen to discuss their progress over the past 12 months. Sandy (Links Superintendent) and Craig (Head Greenkeeper of the Championship Course) were effervescent in their affection for Carnoustie – and honest about some of the problems they've had to deal with, problems which may surprise some.

I began by asking Sandy - a former curling champion and a scratch golfer - to define his role, a title which is normally the preserve of American greenkeepers. He replied: “It’s the three Head Greenkeepers that run the courses - I’m basically the buyer! The Head Greenkeepers largely think for themselves so they’re in control of their own work, and primarily accountable for it too. As good as John was, when I was the Head Greenkeeper of the Championship Course I didn’t necessarily want him interfering with my work. Call it stubbornness if you like, but you don’t want constant advice. He was always there for guidance but you want to make the decisions yourself and learn from them. I therefore try to manage the Head Greenkeepers in a way that I like being managed myself.

“This way of working allows the Head Greenkeepers to plan ahead, not just for the day or the week, but for months in advance. In turn, this means the staff are more dedicated to the courses as the information from the Head Greenkeepers is more consistent. At least we try to run it that way!

“I’m not really that involved with, for example, setting cutting heights and other routine tasks, or what Craig, Steve Mitchell (Head Greenkeeper of the Burnside Links) and Colin Law (Head Greenkeeper of the Barnside) should or shouldn’t use as a fertiliser. I may give some guidance and help confirm their decisions but I don’t dictate what they should do. All three courses

Carnoustie have 30 full-time greenkeepers, four staff in the workshop and employ eight seasonal staff. The course is sand-based with a black sand rootzone. The greens are predominantly bent, with around 50% bent, 30% fescue and 20% poa on the Championship Course. The Barnside is around 50% bent, 15% fescue, 35% poa, and the Burnside Links has more fescue with less bent. The poa is mainly poa annua var. reptans rather than poa annua var. annua.

The team’s aeration programme varies. They vertidrain greens in November with either 8mm and/or 13mm tines, last year they were top dressed after the 13mm.

In summer there’s a lot of hydro-jet work on the Championship Course, with the team injecting seaweed to encourage root development with varying forms of solid and star tining taking place on the other two courses.
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run similarly anyway, with similar products and shared machinery.”

Sandy has been at Carnoustie since 1997 when he joined as Assistant Greenkeeper after spotting an advert in a local newspaper, having spent time at nearby Letham Grange Golf Club. Craig joined as a trainee greenkeeper a year earlier, so with over 30 years at Carnoustie between them they are steeped in the culture of the place. They’ve also been involved with countless projects on the course – the latest an exciting redesign of some of the current par threes on the Buddon Links.

Sandy said: “Pull Quote: The Buddon is seen as the third course and we wanted to strengthen it by lengthening the course and reducing the number of par threes. Over the years we’ve lost holes for various reasons and two holes have been made out of one, so we hope these changes will improve the challenge.”

Both Sandy and Craig readily admitted their fortune at having excellent resources at their disposal. But they were equally honest about the problems they’ve had to overcome – mostly caused by the Barry Burn. It may be famous worldwide for troubling the world’s best golfers, but did you know it once flooded the course so badly it washed away an access bridge crucial to the greenkeepers?

Sandy recalled: “There was a bad flood in September 1985, but it didn’t happen again until September 2009, and since then we’ve had floods of varying severity. We had water in the pump house which badly damaged our irrigation system and the halfway hut near our maintenance facility. However, the biggest problem was that our main access bridge to all three courses got washed away. Craig and I were 30 seconds away from driving over it when it collapsed in front of us. We had to live without that for six months until it was rebuilt and take different routes all over the place – and it’s a 340 acre site. It wasn’t until it was gone that we realised just how important it was.”

Craig added: “We’ve been looking at ways to either prevent the flooding entirely or limit the damage. We’ve raised the 17th fairway, raised embankments, raised bridges and consulted with Angus Council to see if they can help us. We’ve also highlighted areas where we intend to install extra drainage because we’ve had to just pump the floodwater away – floods leave this layer of silt which water struggles to penetrate.

“We’ve been here since 1996 and there’s no doubt that over the last few years, we’ve experienced more intense periods of really heavy rain. Before it would rain normally for a couple of days - but it’s the two or three hours of intense rain that causes problems. Flooding can be a problem, just as it unfortunately is at so many other courses in the UK, but I feel we’re making real progress.”

Sandy was quick to hail the work ethic instilled by John – and he looked back with great pride on the team’s preparatory work before The Open in 1999, which he was involved in as soon as he arrived.

He said: “The intensity of the work and attention to detail struck me immediately. We knew we had got The Open so for two years beforehand we focused on the Championship Course with some big jobs such as renovating the third fairway. I loved it.

“I remember we felled trees behind the 15th and 16th to create mounding for spectators. We also built a new putting green, returfed some of the rough as well as returfing all the bunkers. All of the work has always been done in-house, we have the resources to do it and a supportive committee.

“The whole team do a great job, we’ve always had a good relationship with the club and very passionate about the area which comes through in the end product – we have three terrific courses here.”

With John’s legacy complete, it seems certain one of the world’s most famous golfing venues is in safe hands.
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Sandy has been at Carnoustie since 1997 when he joined an Assistant Greenkeeper after spotting an advert in a local newspaper, having spent time at nearby Letham Grange Golf Club. Craig joined as a trainee greenkeeper a year earlier, so with over 30 years at Carnoustie between them they are steeped in the culture of the place. They’ve also been involved with countless projects on the course – the latest an exciting redesign of some of the current par threes on the Buddon Links.

Sandy said: “FULL QUOTE: The Buddon is seen as the third course and we wanted to strengthen it by lengthening the course and reducing the number of par threes. Over the years we’ve lost holes for various reasons and two holes have been made out of one, so we hope these changes will improve the challenge.”

Both Sandy and Craig readily admitted their fortune at having excellent resources at their disposal. But they were equally honest about the problems they’ve had to overcome – mostly caused by the Barry Burn. It may be famous throughout the world’s most famous golfing venues is in

Sandy recalled: “There was a bad flood in September 1985, but it didn’t happen again until September 2009, and since then we’ve had floods of varying severity. We had water in the pump house which badly damaged our irrigation system and the halfway hut near our maintenance facility. However, the biggest problem was that our main access bridge to all three courses got washed away. Craig and I were 30 seconds away from driving over it when it collapsed in front of us. We had to live without that for six months until it was rebuilt and take different routes all over the place – and it’s a 340 acre site. It wasn’t until it was gone that we realised just how important it was.”

Craig added: “We’ve been looking at ways to either prevent the flooding entirely or limit the damage. We’ve raised the 17th fairway, raised embankments, raised bridges and consulted with Angus Council to see if they can help us. We’ve also highlighted areas where we intend to install extra drainage because we’ve had to just pump the floodwater away – floods leave this layer of silt which water struggles to penetrate.

“We’ve been here since 1996 and there’s no doubt that over the last few years, we’ve experienced more intense periods of really heavy rain. Before it would rain normally for a couple of days – but it’s the two or three hours of intense rain that causes problems. Flooding can be a problem, just as it unfortunately is at so many other courses in the UK, but I feel we’re making real progress.”

Sandy was quick to hail the work ethic instilled by John – and he looked back with great pride on the team’s preparatory work before The Open in 1999, which he was involved in as soon as he arrived. He said: “The intensity of the work and attention to detail struck me immediately. We knew we had got The Open so for two years beforehand we focused on the Championship Course with some big jobs such as renovating the third fairway. I loved it.

“I remember we felled trees behind the 15th and 16th to create mounding for spectators. We also built a new putting green, returfed some of the rough as well as revetting all the bunkers. All of the work has always been done in-house, we have the resources to do it and a supportive committee.

“The whole team do a great job, we’ve always had a good and very passionate workforce. We’re steeped in the area which comes through in the end product – we have three terrific courses here.”

With John’s legacy complete, it seems certain one of the world’s most famous golfing venues is in safe hands.

MACHINERY LIST

• 10 x Toro Triplex’s (6 x 3400S & 4 x 3250S)
• 2 x Toro 5200 Fairway Mowers
• 1 x Toro 3100 Sidewinder
• 7 x Toro Rex 21’s
• 5 x Toro GR1000’s
• 9 x Toro Vortec
• 3 x Kubota PTV’s
• 2 x Toro Multi-Pro Sprayers
• 1 x John Deer Deck,
• 2 x Charterhouse sprayers
• 1 x Forklift
• 2 x Toro Pro-cores (3 tractor mounted, 1 x pedestrian)
• Hunter Irrigation

The competition doesn’t want you to see the Jacobsen ECLIPSE® 322 riding greens mower. They can’t match its ZERO leak points. They can’t provide individual reel control to vary cut patterns. They can’t offer programmable frequency-of-clip from an LED screen. And they can’t get anywhere near the true hybrid fuel savings or legendary quality-of-cut. When it comes to the ECLIPSE® 322, the competition can’t do anything except hope you don’t see it. I guess we just ruined that for them, too.

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Playing a **dual** role

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I first met Huw in 1988 when he was named ‘Young Groundsman of the Year’. At the time he was an aspiring Head Greenkeeper at Fairwood Park GC near Swansea before moving on to Southerndown.

From 1993, he spent 13 years at the Wildernesse course in Kent, gaining his HNC in 2001 and the Master Greenkeeper award a year later. In 2007 the opportunity to manage a top links course enticed Huw to Ashburnham as Course Manager.

His remit was to improve the condition of the course in time for the Home Internationals in 2010. He was assisted by a £120k investment in equipment, as well as an operational budget that would allow the level of expenditure to match increased expectations. Staff training was also a necessary requirement for the work that lay ahead.

The task involved a combination of turf improvement work, creating additional tees and renovating all 70 plus bunkers in under three years. All was going to plan when just prior to the tournament, the club found themselves without a Club Manager. Huw takes up the story. "There secretary/managers departed in five years with the latter resigning just ten weeks before the Home Internationals. “There wasn’t enough time to recruit a replacement and we needed stability when expectations were high, so I offered to fill the position for six months initially. I realised I would be stepping outside my comfort zone.”

Challenges

Huw continues: “By June 2010 when I started my dual role as both Course and Club Manager, the country and in particular this region of south west Wales was in full recession. However I could see the club’s potential and I had a passion to make it work, and thought it was a natural progression after 25 years in managing turf. I was to oversee the management of the course and a temporary greenkeeper was hired for six months to make up the shortfall in course work.

"Finance, golf competitions and matches were managed by the club but I would be in charge of everything else. A steep learning curve followed to gain an understanding of tee booking and other computerised systems, as well as catering, while at the same time working with a new board of directors who had limited understanding of the running of a golf club. The early days meant that the members were not happy to see me in the office, nor were my greens staff! “I needed to be flexible, an effective communicator and have a thick skin - I also needed diplomacy to keep a cool head when faced with an irate member or customer! It wasn’t long before I realised that I needed to organise each day better and avoid tackling too many jobs at once. It was better to complete a smaller number of tasks before moving on.

I had to get a better grasp of computers and to work more closely with other staff, whether it was in the office, bar, restaurant or kitchen. What I brought to the club was passion, experience, understanding golfers’ needs and having a methodical approach to solving problems. This is something which most Course Managers are good at and I had to put this to good use on many issues ranging from blocked toilet drains to failed irrigation pumps.”

Decision Making

After Huw’s successful six months as interim club manager - which included hosting two major events - the club were faced with a dilemma. As is sadly the case with many clubs, membership numbers had decreased resulting in a significant drop in revenue. Ashburnham had a significant number of retired members with just 8% of the membership female, and very few members under the age of 30. It was also noted that there was a reduced interest in competitive golf with friendly golf gaining the upper hand.

Visitor numbers remained steady, but two more courses opened nearby which affected Ashburnham. The reality was stark – the club could not afford to hire both a course manager and a general manager. Therefore the club retained Huw in his dual role but agreed the temporary greenkeeping position would not be filled for the forthcoming season. This meant Huw continuing to be in charge of the course, bar, catering and the professional shop, while being responsible to a board of six elected directors.

Working Progress

Now after three years as club manager, work generally follows a tried and tested routine. He said: “My day starts en route to the club with a brief telephone conversation with the Head Greenkeeper Paul Hopkins, who has over 25 years of experience.

“We discuss work past and present having previously agreed a monthly plan. I generally tour the course every two weeks although I try to squeeze in the odd game of golf with a member or board director to measure course playability. This works well at Ashburnham since much of the work is routine.

"After checking any messages, the real work begins - dealing with any club issues, booking, tee sheet bookings… and much more! Key member concerns tend to be depth of sand in the bunkers, length of rough, greens speed and the weather. “It is also worth noting that since very few members have low handicaps, the course is set up more for their enjoyment as opposed to ‘tournament’ condition. However, Ashburnham is a true links course with an emphasis on firm, smooth turf that encourages the ‘run and putt’ game.”

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Huw continued: “When I first started in 2007, we ran the course with six staff including myself.
Now we’re running with five, which includes an apprentice greenkeeper. We have reduced our operational costs by £10k without having any real negative impact on the course. A detailed review of all expenditure was carried out including wages, overtime and materials purchased and highlighted areas where justified savings could take place.

“All equipment is now owned outright after a five year lease deal ended in 2012. We are due to replace much of the fleet in 2015, giving the club two years free of any leasing costs.

“Since 2007, only two machines have been purchased but we have sufficient equipment to maintain an 18 hole links course.

“All main equipment servicing and repairs are carried out by an external contractor, but on-site which has proved to be more cost effective as opposed to being sent to a dealer.

“Our irrigation system consists of class C PVC pipe in 6 metre lengths which is coming to the end of its useful life and will need to be replaced in the future.

“In terms of maintenance, it is true that I now have a different view being a club manager as to what and when key cultural practices take place.

“The main difference now is that there is no disturbance to the cutting surfaces between early March and mid-October.

“We do not hollow core, only deep tine out of season and spike or sand roll during the summer. Top dressing is limited to the older methods of heavier applications at either end of the season, followed by over-seeding with straight fescue.

“Mowing height remains at 3mm during the summer with regular ‘ironing’ of the greens. Nutrient input is very low and hasn’t really changed in sixty years, using monthly applications of Farmura Porthcawl and Revolution wetting agent.

“Although this works well on the natural links course here at Ashburnham, it may not be as appropriate on shaded or ‘heavier’ inland courses.”

“Although these changes have had no negative effects on course performance. The work has been limited to ‘off-season’, and since his feeding program is minimal and typical of many links, he can make this change without negatively impacting the course.

**Summary**

Huw concluded: “Since becoming a club manager, my priorities are different. Being ‘sustainable’ is more about profit and loss and less about growing foucsers and controlling organic matter content. When you are a club manager, you have a different perspective than when managing the golf course.

“It’s all about impact on the business. For us that means minimal disturbance to the playing surfaces during the main season.

“My main challenges are no longer chaffer grubs and badger damage but membership numbers, revenue and cash flow.”

“Finally, I asked Huw about any advice he had to others who may wish to follow his lead.

“Being flexible, helpful in accommodating golfers’ needs, looking forward not back, being open minded and enthusiastic are all attributes that spring to mind.

“Learn new skills by enrolling on business management courses. Both the GCMA and CMAE run management courses to help prepare for club management. If I can do it, anyone can.”

**about the author**

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Huw is confident these changes have had no negative effects on course performance. The work has been limited to ‘off-season’, and since his feeding program is adapted, and his topdressing practices have been swapped to be a little more strategic than previous practices.

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April 28

After securing a visa I’ve started work on a three month grow-in the quite lovely city of Minsk.

I checked out the course with Maris Gullans, owner of Modo Golf, who have built many courses in Eastern Europe, along with Head Greenkeeper Andrey and our interpreter.

It’s good to get an immediate feel for what appears to be a first-class project and golf course. Heather, pine and silver birch trees dominate the site, a real heathland piece of land that in time and with good management could be as good as the best heathland courses that we take for granted in the UK.

The back nine is under construction, but the front nine which was constructed last year and sown towards the latter part of the year look like a desert. I’ve got a feeling this is not going to be straightforward...

The greens sown with Jacklin bent grass did not survive the winter - how could they after having snow cover for 119 days? 30 days under snow can mean problems, 60 days under snow means you have to accept plant loss, after 90 days expect the worst. So 119 days with a one-week thaw in the middle of January means desiccation to 90% of plant cover.

Tees, fairways and roughs sown with a bent/fescue mix survived better, grass cover is around 70% although some areas are thin, weak and stressed but at least I have something to work with. Snow could sows cover all areas of the course, but it’s now actually lovely and sunny with temperatures of 20 to 25 degrees.

May 13

My second week has been another marathon of 12 hour days, but very enjoyable and with temperatures now approaching 30 degrees, work on the irrigation system is the main focus. It’s quite a major system with extremely deep wells and three big Grundfos pumps. On the nine seeded holes, nine hole academy course and driving range they have constantly been putting out 800 cubic metres a day - I hope they can cope when 18 holes are up and running.

May 27

I saw my second snake on the course – black with yellow markings. I didn’t hang around to take a photo! The hot weather resulted in thunderstorms so it has taken a lot of pressure off the constant irrigation.

We are now cutting all the front nine greens and tees and will cut all the fairways on the front nine this week too. The 17th and 18th greens which we sowed on May 3 received their first cut today at 8mm, another leap forward, and the 10th, 11th and 12th have now all been sown and grass is starting to appear.

May 30

I have secured a second visa until the end of June - via an interesting overnight train journey where I shared an open carriage with three ladies! I’d like to say to my wife Sharon that it was all totally innocent and they even shared some food with me…

It’s good to be back at the course – things are settling down well. We’ve established a better routine and I feel much more in control.

We now have 14 holes seeded and are cutting holes 1 to 13 plus the 18th hole and the 17th green.

We have received a consignment of 1.2 tonnes of green grade fertiliser - florinid 16-28-5 with iron and magnesium – not my first choice but hey, any port in a storm!

The greens have responded well compared to the agricultural products used previously so, for all you cynics out there, it really does pay to...
From Belarus with love

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The back nine is under construction, but the front nine which was constructed last year and sown towards the latter part of the year look like a desert. I’ve got a feeling this is not going to be straightforward.

Day two features full overseeding of the front nine greens to be followed by the front nine tees. The fairways need tender loving care in the shape of plenty of irrigation and a quick application of the only fertiliser available - an agricultural balanced with a lovely prill of approximately 3mm. Great on fairways not quite so good on greens – but my first rule is be adaptable and get on with it.

So the first hectic week has ended with greens and tees on the front nine all reseeded and fertilised.

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use the best products... sometimes!
The last remaining holes have also been seeded. The construction crew are now concentrating on washout area so they remain very busy especially after a storm brought six inches of rain in 12 hours (although there is no official rain gauge, just a bottle of coke with the top cut off).

June 14
The whole golf course is now seeded and is all mine to grow-in, happy days!
There’s much excitement as the John Deere fleet of new machinery started to arrive. I believe my good friend Howard Storey, Product Marketing Manager for JD Europe and Middle East, put in a considerable amount of effort to break new ground for JD in this part of the world.

So construction is finished but of course there are still difficulties in the world of growing turf! The constructors are now driving all over the young grass to clean out, prepare and sand all 80 bunkers.

This is sadly typical in the life of a greenkeeper - we nurture and spoil the young grass and try to present it at the highest levels but as we are all too well aware, nothing ever goes as smoothly as it should.

June 24
We’re now cutting all eighteen greens. The snow mold scars have been eradicated and the reseeded greens are all performing well. As one problem is fixed, however, more arrive - this time in the shape of the construction crew and nature itself.

Temperatures have soared into the middle 30s alongside humidity of 90% resulting in some damping off and Rhizoctonia brown spot showing on several of the greens, particularly the newer back nine. Getting chemicals is a problem here. I asked that they be stocked in my first week on the course but I’m still waiting. It could be an interesting week ahead!

Only the fairways of 14 to 17 are still waiting to grow enough for cutting and then the whole course will progress as one entity.

The Club have approached me to continue to advise them on a full time basis for the rest of the season and to prepare the course for the opening, expected in late August. They would also like me to help the Head Greenkeeper train and develop the new staff. I’m considering my options.

I like the people who are all friendly and helpful - although the language is very difficult. I like the terrain and the character of the course and it would be great to see it reach its full potential.

I know most greenkeepers will understand the ethos of my course, my baby! However I miss my family and friends and Belarus is a difficult place to get to.

July 10
The course is now progressing well, but not without a few expected and unexpected disasters!

I expected washouts, disease and a few minor problems, but I didn’t expect the pump house to be hit by lightning, destroying the phase box and 24 decoders.
A new box was found in Sweden and will be sent to us immediately. Fantastic - until we realised it was being sent by boat – and we’re 1000km from the sea!

Have you ever tried irrigating 700 plus heads by hand in 15 hours of 30C of heat?
It’s been a tough time. but as we
use the best products... sometimes!

The last remaining holes have also been seeded. The construction crew are now concentrating on washout area so they remain very busy especially after a storm brought six inches of rain in 12 hours (although there is no official rain gauge, just a bottle of coke with the top cut off).

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It’s been a tough time. but as we...
near the end of my contract there’s a great deal of satisfaction that despite major setbacks with irrigation, fertiliser, delays and washouts we are in a position to hand over the golf course from Modo and their partners GTP services and myself.

July 10

I’ve decided to continue as full-time advisor consultant, trainer, cook and bottle washer till the end of the season.

Sorry to all you guys who were seeking my experience - I am out of circulation till November!

Now I have to assemble a brand new greenkeeping team – no point in advertising for experienced greenkeepers in a country with zero golf courses! So it is back to the wall time once again.

July 16

Started training three new staff this morning. No time to waste as the contractor finishes in four days. So no raking bunkers, flymowing, divoting as normal for new staff – they’re straight in at the deep end cutting greens!

What fun we had, me with no Russian and them with no English - isn’t sign language a wonderful tool? We started at 9.25am and had all 18 greens cut by 5pm. I did have some minor problems getting the Health and Safety message across before cutting could begin.

But that evening I sent three very tired but (I think) satisfied budding course maintenance crew home happy that they had conquered and mastered that wild animal known as the greens mower!

Tees and greens surrounds quickly followed and in less than a week they are becoming quite proficient. Next task will be fairways and roughs and flymowing, but will leave that for the moment.

July 24

I am out of here! Contract with Modo Golf finished – I’m reasonably happy with how the grow-in has progressed although some of the last seeded fairways have suffered with the heavy rain showers and once again, the Modo Golf team are repairing severe washouts.

I am flying into London to meet my family. I think it is true absence does make the heart fonder, I’m looking forward to seeing them all.

I officially start with MGC on 1 August to get the course in top condition for opening on 1 September.
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Burghill thinking bang up to date

James de Haviland finds a blend of traditional and contemporary thinking at Burghill Valley Golf Club

Burghill Valley Golf Club, just outside Hereford, was initially opened as a nine-hole course in 1990 and upgraded to 18 holes in 1992. At 6,255 yards, the par 71 parkland course has evolved admirably, as proved by a 700 plus membership and a full car park midweek.

Steve Lloyd joined Burghill Valley as assistant greenkeeper in 1997. When the club’s Head Greenkeeper emigrated a couple of years later, Steve was promoted to the vacant position – aged just 20. He now heads a team of five and from even a brief look at the course you can tell he is a stickler for detail, with a player’s eye for golf.

“We have 20 greens that cover a total of 0.8ha, on average each one covering around 400m²,” he says. “Where other courses have greens that are perhaps double the size, the challenge here is to hit the greens to get a fair, true and level putt as the reward for a good shot.

The course provides accessible play for Junior members, of which we have 70, whilst still offering a challenge for both our Senior and visiting players.”

It does not take long to establish that Steve is a keen golfer as are all the members of the greenkeeping team, trophies on his office windowsill and a set of well-used clubs proving the point. He suggests it is this keenness for the game that has helped evolve how the course is developed and maintained.

“The club is privately owned but it remains very much a member’s club,” he adds. “Our owner now prefers to buy equipment outright and to renew individual items as required. This suits me as my hands are not tied to having to use just one make of mowers and related equipment.”

So when the existing fleet of Jacobsen mowers passed its five-year birthday last year, Steve was in the position to approach the course owner with a plan that saw the mowers’ cutting units completely refurbished, with just one mower, a well-used Jacobsen AR250 semi-roughs unit, being replaced by a new Jacobsen AR522.

“The remaining Jacobsen mower tractor units were all in good order so I decided to invest in the cutting units,” adds Steve. “The G-lex III greens mowers deliver the quality of cut we demand, so I saw no need to renew them. This will put us in a better position to invest in other equipment. A new sprayer to replace our 15-year-old Hardi is on our shopping list. I would also like to have our own deep aeration unit. If we had a new fleet of mowers, I would not be able to think so much about other kit.”

Those who feel that a team running supposedly ‘old’ equipment are at the mercy of reliability issues will find Steve responding that they look after the kit they use. The entire team have the mechanical skills to carry out both repairs and maintenance. This ensures they have faith in the dependability of their existing mowers as they all use them and have a hand in caring for them.
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"We do not have a one mower, one person policy. We can all operate all items of equipment and we all know how to look after and repair that equipment. Of course there will be occasions when we have an issue that requires outside help, but we have local hydraulics specialists we can call upon if we have pump, hose or motor issues and TH Whites, our Jacobsen dealer, offers superb technical back-up and parts support."

Adding that he and the team also do cylinder and bottom blade grinding in-house, it is clear that Steve is the right person to adopt a ‘replace as needed’ equipment regime. But does that also mean he is unlikely to embrace modern developments such as hybrid and full electric mowing equipment?

"I keep a close eye on mower developments. We have had a demonstration of Jacobsen Eclipse 322 greens mowers and I was impressed by their performance. But I am not ready to make the change yet. This is not down to the electric mowers but more that we are used to hydraulic mowers.

If adopting electric drive for the cutting units I would want to have in-depth training to ensure the mowers were operated correctly. Hydraulic units will allow the mower to work with cutting units that are starting to get blunt. Electric mowers detect the extra power draw and will start to behave differently. Operators need to know why."

If this suggests Steve is stuck in his ways that would be wrong too. Hand mowing of the greens was abandoned a few years ago, the ride-on G-Plex III mowers now do all the greens mowing with a Tru-Turf ‘turf iron’ following as required to deliver a smooth finish. When hand mowing, Steve did cut at 2.5mm to deliver fast greens in summer but now cuts at 3mm and still delivers a consistent 11 on the Stimpmeter that can be increased to 12 and a half feet if needed.

"If there was one item of kit that I would not be without it is the turf iron," says Steve. "Our greens are 55 to 60% Poa and have to put up with 45,000 rounds a year. The size of the greens and heavy traffic, plus our location, mean we will never be able to have a heavy ryegrass and fescue mix on our greens, so a true surface is the key to consistent and reliable speeds. I believe we can only achieve a true surface by using a dedicated tool to roll the greens."

Similarly, Steve does not see the need to overseed the greens, the self-seeding nature of the dominant Poa varieties and relatively long cut of the greens helping to ensure they remain in good fettle; they have not seen fresh seed in six years. Overseeding is carried out but it restricted to walk-off and high traffic areas.

"I think there is room for different approaches to course management in the UK," says Steve. "We adopt a sustainable approach at Burghill Valley because it works as opposed to us seeing it as a requirement. We look after our machinery and use it in the best way to deliver what we want. We use water, fungicides and fertiliser in a thoughtful way as it just makes sense. We are not trying to force grass varieties that do not thrive locally to grow on the course and this means we can manage the greens accordingly.

"This approach could be described as traditional. But as Steve points out, some of the ideas practiced by his grandfather, with whom he worked back in the mid-90s, such as sweeping the greens and fairways, are now coming back into fashion. Regular sweeping has long been practiced at Burghill."

“We prepare for winter by raising the fairway mowing heights and rolling rather than cutting the greens to keep them smooth,” he says. “We treat the greens with respect and do the same with our equipment. My aim is to ensure the course plays well and that we keep the members happy. That is what counts.”

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A Royal course where nature is king

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Royal Birkdale’s special charm is that there are countless parts of the 95ha site close to the Lancashire coast where it doesn’t seem like a golf course at all, so natural are the surroundings. It is dune land par excellence.

Towards the sea are frontal dunes, constantly moved and reshaped by the weather. On the course itself are dozens and dozens of fixed – or grey – dunes covered by natural marram grasses that sway in the wind. This has to be an inspiring backdrop for any golfer.

Many in the world of golf regard it as the ultimate links course, challenging yet fair to all those who play it, and perfect for spectator viewing points. It is firmly one of the elite UK courses chosen regularly to host the Open Championship. Nine have been held here since it first staged the event in 1954.

A lot of trust is required to keep Royal Birkdale close to the top of the Open course ‘leaderboard’, and Chris Whittle, Birkdale’s Course Manager for 19 years, is understandably proud that the eyes of the world are so often on this historic site.

What pleases him so much, as well as looking after such a challenging test of golfing skill, is the trust placed in him to conserve its wonderful natural heritage. He gets enormous job satisfaction – as do the nine full-time staff in the club’s maintenance department – in two quite contrasting ways.

Royal Birkdale is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Less than 25 per cent of the course area is what Chris describes as managed grass. Much of the rest is precious environmentally, both in terms of wildlife and plant life, and looking after it comes within the course care remit every bit as much as the greens, trees and fairways.

The site is renowned for sand lizards, great crested newts and natterjack toads and it’s important to maintain an environment that allows them to thrive. Southern and northern marsh orchids, peat-awort, Baltic Rush and varieties of Helleborine are among the rare plants on the course. Chris and his team are as much custodians of nature as they are professional greenkeepers.

“It’s a privilege to have such a wonderful golf course in such natural surroundings,” says Chris, who is by instinct a conservationist. ‘And it is the roughs that do this magnificently here. Generally he leaves the rough to its own devices. “Nature put that grass there because it should be there, and that’s how we see it,” he says. “We might do an occasional bit of trimming or scarifying if a particular area becomes too difficult, but otherwise we leave it alone. We don’t cut the rough at all. We just mow the semi-rough next to the fairways and we might widen this from five to 10 metres to suit a particular tournament need.”

There’s no getting away from it, Royal Birkdale is quite an evolved course to look after and machinery is all-important. Chris’s equipment policy is quite specific, and always has been. He buys each item of equipment on its merits to do a particular job – there’s no compromise. He trusts his judgment and it’s served him well, both here at Birkdale and before that at Muirfield where for six years he was also Course Manager, presiding over the 1992 Open.

He also trusts his greenkeepers to give the right judgement on each piece of equipment. Out on the course and back at the maintenance department it is John Deere machines that dominate, supplied and supported by local dealer Turner Groundcare of Tarvin, near Chester, and that’s because Chris trusts them to do the right job on the course.

“The worry in the back of your mind that you always had using a triplex on greens and tees was that the hydraulics might leak,” he says.

“Using the 2500 E-Cut mowers means that’s all in the past. It was one of the main reasons for buying them, and I liked the way John Deere responded to the personal concern we course managers had about leakages by coming up with the hybrid design. “I think we actually bought one of the first ones in the UK, and there’s no chance we’ll ever go back now. “I’ve never worked on anything but links courses. I wouldn’t be happy at a parkland, however good it was, and I count myself very lucky to be in charge of Royal Birkdale.”

Conservation is most definitely a serious business at Royal Birkdale. Chris and other course superintendents meet at least a couple of times each year with other coastal landowners and tenants in the region – National Trust properties, council amenities and other golf courses – to exchange information on conservation matters, including formal records of wildlife and plant life numbers and movements.

This collaborative exercise helps to identify trends and makes sure any action that might be necessary.

The club also works closely with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the British Trust for Nature Conservation Volunteers to see that nature rightly remains a priority across the site.

There have been a big effort over the years to increase the emphasis on the managed areas of the course back to natural fine grasses – fescues, and bents in particular. There is still some meadow grass, but Chris says they are winning the battle. Reseeding and round the year management encouraging the wanted grasses is gradually tipping the scales in his favour.

“The way you cut, the way you irrigate, the way you feed and top-dress: they all contribute to this,” says Chris.

“We are a natural golf course and we resist introducing anything that shouldn’t be there. Fescues should naturally be the dominant grass because of the dry sandy conditions, but your grass will always reflect what nature throws at it, so a wet summer may change things and bring in coarser grasses quite naturally. You have to go with that to a certain extent.

Chris says it is essential to define the holes on a course like Birkdale and it is the roughs that do this magnificently here. Generally he leaves the rough to its own devices. “Nature put that grass there because it should be there, and that’s how we see it,” he says. “As a links we have all of nature’s advantages and disadvantages. It’s important to preserve the balance and that’s quite a challenge.”

There are two holes on the Royal Birkdale course that are alike in terms of the surrounding landscape. Looking left and right you will see quite different flora, but what’s adjacent to the managed areas is there because it is native to the land. As far as rough and treasured plants are concerned, Chris has a sensitivity map showing where these are to be found and ‘no go areas’ which are roped off in big tournaments to make sure they are fully protected.

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All of the trimpers mowers at Royal Birkdale are now John Deere 2500E electric hybrids and Chris is a big fan of them. These machines are central to the mowing programme at Birkdale and are used for all tees and aprons work, and alternately with John Deere 220 Series walk-behind mowers on the greens.

Chris believes that it is the quality of cut on the greens, tees and aprons that helps to define each hole so emphatically.

“I want machines that don’t let me down. Mine don’t, and the peace of mind I get from this is priceless,” says Chris.

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The site is renowned for sand lizards, great crested newts and natterjack toads and it’s important to maintain an environment that allows them to thrive. Southern and northern marsh orchids, peat-allow, Baltic Rush and varieties of Helleborine are among the rare plants on the course. Chris and his team are as much custodians of nature as they are professional greenkeepers.

“It’s a privilege to have such a wonderful golf course in such natural surroundings,” says Chris, who is by instinct a conservationist. “It’s a massive job to look after the roughs and protect them.”

Conservation is most definitely a serious business at Royal Birkdale. Chris and other greenkeepers there meet at least a couple of times each year with other coastal landowners and tenants in the region – National Trust properties, council amenities and other golf courses – to exchange information on conservation matters, including formal records of wildlife and plant life numbers and movements.

This collaborative exercise helps to identify trends and makes any actions that might be necessary.

The club also works closely with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the British Trust for Nature Conservation. Chris and his team have been asked to produce an inventory of nature on the site to allow the Trust to carry out a survey and produce an inventory for the whole site.

No two holes on the Royal Birkdale course are alike in terms of the surrounding landscape. Looking left and right you will see quite different flora, but what’s adjacent to the managed areas is there because it is native to the land.

As far as rare and treasured plants are concerned, Chris has a sensitivity map showing where these are to be found and ‘no go areas’ which are roped off in big tournaments to make sure they are fully protected.

The way you cut, the way you irrigate, the way you fertilise, the way you feed and top-dress: they all contribute to this,” says Chris.

“We are a natural golf course and we resist introducing anything that shouldn’t be there. Fescues should naturally be the dominant grass because of the dry sandy conditions, but your grass will always reflect what nature throws at it, so a wet summer may change things and bring in coarser grasses quite naturally. You have to go with that to a certain extent.”

Chris says it is essential to define the holes on a course like Birkdale and it is the roughs that do this magnificently here. Generally he leaves the roughs to its own devices.

“Nature put that grass there because it should be there, and that’s how we see it,” he says. “We might do an occasional bit of trimming or scarifying if a particular area becomes too difficult, but otherwise we leave well alone. We don’t cut the rough at all. We just mow the semi-rough next to the fairways and we might widen this from five to 10 metres to suit a particular tournament need.”

There’s no getting away from it, Royal Birkdale is quite an unaltered course to look after and machinery is all-important. Chris’ equipment policy is quite specific, and always has been.

He buys each item of equipment on its merits to do a particular job for him – there’s no compromise. He trusts his judgement and it’s served him well, both here at Birkdale and before that at Muirfield where for six years he was also Course Manager, presiding over the 1992 Open.

He also trusts his greenkeepers to give the right judgement on each individual piece of equipment. Out on the course and back at the maintenance department it is John Deere machines that dominate, supplied and supported by local dealer Turner Groundcare of Tarvin, near Chester, and that’s because Chris trusts them to do the job right on the course.

Of the trampers mowers at Royal Birkdale are now John Deere 2500E electric hybrids and Chris is a big fan of them. These machines are central to the mowing programme at Birkdale and are used for all tees and aprons work, and alternately with John Deere 220 Series walk-behind mowers on the greens.

Chris believes that it is the quality of cut on the greens, tees and aprons that helps to define each hole so emphatically.

“I want machines that don’t let me down. Mine don’t, and the peace of mind I get from this is priceless,” says Chris.

“The worry in the back of your mind that you always had using a triplex on greens and tees was that the hydraulics might leak,” he says.

“Using the 2500 E-Cut mowers means that all is in the past. It was one of the main reasons for buying them, and I liked the way John Deere responded to the perpetual concern we course managers had about leakages by coming up with the hybrid design.

“I think we actually bought one of the first ones in the UK, and there’s no chance we’ll ever go back now.

“I’ve never worked on anything but links courses. I wouldn’t be happy at a parkland, however good it was, and I count myself very lucky to be in charge of Royal Birkdale.”

“As far as rare and treasured plants are concerned, Chris has a sensitivity map showing where these are to be found and creates ‘no go areas’ which are roped off in big tournaments to make sure they are fully protected”
Professional mower performance depends on the correct set-up and adjustment procedures. Although there are design variations in cutting units, most require the same basic procedures.

Accurate height of cut tools including a setting bar and proper instructions are essential for setting up a cutting unit. As a leading British manufacturer of innovative professional grounds maintenance equipment, Dennis helps greenkeepers from around the world to create their ultimate natural turf surface.

Why is height of cut so important?

Why is a sharp, clean cut so critical for a number of reasons, particularly on the greens. If the grass is too long then the accuracy and the speed of the ball is affected.

How do I set height of cut?

Setting the height of cut is generally done using a height setting bar. This is usually supplied by the manufacturer or can be obtained from your dealer. The bar should be long enough to go under both front and rear rollers. There is a threaded bolt with a locking nut that goes through the setting bar. The desired mowing height is measured from the top of the bar to the underside of the bolt head. On a pedestrian mower the bar is placed under the two rollers with the mower tipped back. The underside of the bolt head is placed on the top of the bottom blade. The mowing height is adjusted by raising and lowering the front roller as the rear roller is fixed. When the front roller rests on the top of the setting bar the roller can be locked in position. Both sides must be set to be certain of the same height of cut across the full working width. If this is not the case then a step in the cut will be obvious for all to see.

Can I fit a new bottom blade myself?

In order to achieve a good quality of cut, firstly the cylinder will need to be sharp. This can only be realistically achieved with the use of a cylinder grinder. The bottom blade must be a mirror image of the cylinder. If it isn’t then you will not be able to set the cylinder on cut properly or it will not stay on cut for long. The chances are the two surfaces will have to be set too tightly to achieve a cut which would result in excessive wear.

For further information or a no obligation demonstration, please contact Dennis on 01322 824 777 or visit www.dennissuk.com.

Robert Jack, Area Sales Manager from Dennis Mowers, answers questions on setting up your mower and explains the basics.
Q&A

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Why do greenkeepers use cassette system cylinder mowers?

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Does the amount of blades on a cylinder affect the quality of cut?

- Generally speaking the more blades in the cylinder, the finer the cut will be. Other factors need to be considered such as the diameter of the cylinder and the speed of rotation. When selecting a cylinder, frequency of mowing must be a major factor as the more blades you have in a cylinder the less grass is taken off on each cut.

Can I fit a new bottom blade myself?

- In order to achieve a good quality of cut, firstly the cylinder will need to be sharp. This can only be realistically achieved with the use of a cylinder grinder. The bottom blade must be a mirror image of the cylinder. If it isn’t then you will not be able to set the cylinder on cut properly or it will not stay on cut for long. The chances are the two surfaces will have to be set too tightly to achieve a cut which would result in excessive wear.

For further information or a no obligation demonstration, please contact Dennis 01332 824 777 or visit www.dennisuk.com. For more news, reviews and insightful views, you can follow Dennis on Twitter @ DennisMowers and like the company’s Facebook page www.facebook.com/ DennisMowers or visit www.dennisuk.com/ DennisMowers.

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Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club, England

There’s a reason why the best courses trust in John Deere: our mowers deliver unmatched cut-quality, creating an ideal playing surface on tees, greens, fairways and roughs.

See for yourself.

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Freephone 0800 085 25 22

JohnDeere.com
Sprayer test to pinpoint accurate application

A national sprayer testing scheme is set to be introduced across the amenity and landscape sectors within the next three years. Whilst the testing process will impose a further cost on the industry, Duncan Russell, National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) manager at the Agricultural Engineers Association added that the introduction of the sprayer test scheme has seen an important improvement in the overall standard of spray application equipment, along with a rise in the professionalism of operators. The new rules, implemented as part of the EU Sustainable Use Directive, apply to all boom sprayers over three meters used in agriculture, landscape and amenity. All sprayers should be tested by 26 November 2016 and every five years until 2020, then every three years until 2023, and every two years after 2023. There is an exception for knapsack and hand held sprayers, which do not require testing under the SUD.

“New nozzles are capable of delivering very high levels of accuracy, but they are a wearing part like any other piece of machinery,” according to Tom. “They do need to be replaced when worn, to maintain the desired high levels of accuracy and consistency.”

“Furthermore, changing the nozzles now enables operators to take advantage of the latest developments in nozzle technology for turf applications,” he added.

A new set of Syngenta XC Turf Nozzles cost less that 15% of the value of a typical fungicide and fertiliser tank mix, so the expense would be quickly recouped from more accurate application alone – along with other significant improvements in application techniques and reduced spray drift to achieve enhanced results.

“We are frequently asked how often a set of nozzles should be changed – but the answer depends largely on how much they are used and what is applied. If they were only used for fungicides and growth regulators across a golf course, for example, the nozzles would last an age; but some fertilisers and particularly trace elements can be far more abrasive and lead to high levels of wear if applied regularly.”

Syngenta best advice is to regularly check the consistency of nozzle output across the full spray boom, using a measuring cylinder to collect and record the output from each individual nozzle for 30 seconds; work out the average and if any nozzle deviates from this figure by more than 5%, the whole set is unacceptable worn and all the nozzles should be replaced.

Nozzles that are working consistently can easily be calibrated to apply the required water volume. Tom added that, in the early days of sprayer testing, worn nozzles were identified on 20% of sprayers that failed the test, with leaks on 18% of sprayers. A dripping spray hose, or worse still a leaking hydraulic oil pipe, could have catastrophic effects on the turf if it finally burst on a green – with further costly implications for environmental clean-up.

“On 20% of failed sprayers the sight gauge was also unreadable, which makes accurate filling difficult and impossible to assess accuracy during spraying,” said Tom. “If you have calibrated to difficulty the cost of sprayer test would be quickly recouped, along with fulfilling demands of club managers, players and regulatory authorities for greater justification and accountability.”

Other common problems that lead to sprayer test failures included faulty pressure gauges and missing control labels. Duncan Russell, National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) manager at the Agricultural Engineers Association added that the introduction of the sprayer test scheme has seen an important improvement in the overall standard of spray application equipment, along with a rise in the professionalism of operators in maintaining machines to give more efficient results. Well maintained and tested machinery also retained better second-hand values.

“At a time when costs and budgets are under pressure, the financial losses that could be easily avoided by regular maintenance and simple calibration testing are considerable,” he said. “Even at low levels of inaccuracy the cost of sprayer test would be quickly recouped, along with fulfilling demands of club managers, players and regulatory authorities for greater justification and accountability.”

The new rules, implemented as part of the EU Sustainable Use Directive, apply to all boom sprayers over three meters used in agriculture, landscape and amenity. All sprayers should be tested by 26 November 2016 and every five years until 2020, then every three years; however the NSTS recommends testing every year – which is also seen as best practice by the industry-backed Amenity Assured scheme. There is an exception for knapsack and hand held sprayers, which do not require testing under the SUD.
A national sprayer testing scheme is set to be introduced across the amenity and landscape sectors within the next three years. Whilst the testing process will impose a further cost on the industry, the benefit of more accurate application through a well-maintained sprayer and avoiding further problems will be quickly recouped, along with other significant improvements in nozzle technology for turf applications, he added.

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News

East - Birthday wishes to Jenny Nelson (89) - the section hope you enjoyed Briddon - and George Sturtevant (86).

West - I attended the Norrie Whytrock tournament held at Auchinbread on 15 August with Douglas Macintosh, Alistair Reid, and Peter Boyd, and believe it or not we won, no thanks to my efforts though. I would like to thank my team mates for their good golf on the day and the last minute replacement of Peter who gave a valuable contribution, well done boys. Congratulations to Archie Durns and his staff for once again producing a lovely golf course it is a joy to play even the way I did.

West - Stuart Clayton was on the phone recently and although not out on the road yet, he has informed me he will be going round everybody just to say hello. Stuart has been through a lot in recent months since his car accident, he apologised to me and others but I think his health comes first, so from all the section I would like to pass on our best wishes and hope he makes a full recovery soon.

West - I mentioned David Carson recently regarding his knee operation and saw him recently walking with no problems, nice to see him out and about. Gents, please get in touch if you have any other information to let the other members around the county know, I can be reached on 07790823914 or on e-mail at stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com so don't be shy.

Ayrshire - Congratulations to George Morrison and his partner Maggie who have tied the knot. Best wishes from all the section.

Movers and Shakrers

Central - Three new members are welcome to the section; Gary McLaren from Leven Links, Remi Passiatore from Dunfermline GC and Samuel Zeng who is at Ellwood College. We hope you are able to attend events.

East - One new section member is Sam McCall (Murrayfield GC).

Results

Central - The results of the Autumn outing at Stirling GC should be on the section website, www.bigcgastralionalsection.org.uk.

Welcome new members


Movers & Shakrers

North Wales - Don Rowlands, Deputy Head at Chester GC, has decided to step down from the role after 25 years faithful service. Paul Stanley will take over the vacated role, congratulations Paul and best wishes go to both of you.

Results

Northern - Invitation Day: 1 Paul Davies & S Oliver 42 pts, 2 Rob Turner & D Hughes-40pts 3 Joe Walsh & K Miller 40pts. Nearest pin: K Miller & Tony Gennard.

North Wales - The North Wales v North West cricket match took place at Ashley CC on 24 July and North Wales won, a big thank you to Ashley CC for the facilities and everyone who took part, it was a very entertaining evening. I'm afraid the North Wales v South Wales match at Borth and Tynysta GC on 26 July was cancelled due to under subscription.

Thanks to Sponsors

Northern - An enormous thank you goes to Rigby Taylor and Mike Brear for their fantastic support of our Invitation day at Wetherby GC and their continued support of our section. Big thanks to Wetherby for looking after us and giving us courtesy of the course, the staff were excellent and everyone was really looking forward to it. Thank you to Darren and his team for their hard work setting up a outstanding course. Also thanks to Golf and Turf Machinery for their sponsorship of our match against the Sheffield section.

Sheffield - We would like to thank Mansfield Sand for sponsoring our spring camp. Also thanks to golf and turf machinery/Parris Harris for sponsoring the Sheffield v Northern match.

Welcome new members

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

Events Coming Up

Central - The Section are staging a one day irrigation course at Eltham Golf Course on Wed 25 September in conjunction with the Toos Company and Lely UK with Adrian Mortman of Bumble Associates and Callum Oliphant of Applied Irrigation delivering the course. It will be a mixture of showcasing the latest technology and designs and practical demonstrations of repairing and adjusting sprinklers/ troubleshooting. Attendance is free but numbers are restricted to 40 so you must register with gnicke@standrews.org.uk. There will also be a limit on how many people can attend from the one Club or organisation.

The AGM will be at Eltham GC on 29 October.

East - Our Autumn Golf/Education day will be held at Haddington GC on 17 September, please contact our secretary to find out more details. If you have any information to pass on please contact the editor.

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Welcome new members

Northern - Welcome to your new-look notes pages...

All the latest news from your Section, in your new-look notes pages...
**Midland**

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

**Movers & Shakcers**

Mid Anglia - Congratulations to Steve Cherry who after a brief flirtation with groundsmanship is now back in greenskeeping so good to have you back amongst us.

**Results**

BB&O - Summer golf day: 1.36ts John Quinn; 2.34pts Adam King, 3.33pts Patrick Whelehan, NP- Rob Catlin, NP-Simon Mallock, LD-Matt Smith Nfu2-Brian Witney.


Mid Anglia - Summer Golf Day held at Brookmans Park GC on 6 August. Our thanks go to Trevor Smith and his team for providing us with the course to beautiful condition. Results: 1-4 pts P Fittey and W 2-8 pts G Roove and L Owen, 3-45 pts D Watt and S Roberts. The nearest the Pin prizes went to R Goddard at the 9th and Rob Catlin at the 11th.

**Events Coming Up**

Mid Anglia - Autumn Golf Day at Belchamstead GC on 16 October. Get your entries in ASAP. AGM to follow.

Mid East - Our AGM/Autumn competition will be held at Luttrells GC on 31 October. AGM offers the opportunity for members to put themselves forward for committee selection or form a new committee and complete overthrow the present incumbents...food for thought.

Mid East - November 6, Midland Region Education Seminar at Forest Hill Golf Club. More details next month.

**News**

BB&O - Summer golf event took place at Caversham Heath Golf Club. A great turn saw 52 people take part, and was kindly sponsored by Rigby Taylor. A big thank you to Course Manager John Joness and his team for all their hard work which ensured the course and day was a great success! See results.

BB&O - The Rigby Taylor Pairs Knockout continues - good luck to all teams left in the competition. If anyone is interested or needs any training be it chainsaw or spraying courses etc please fund then please get in touch with our RA Sandra Raper sandra@bigga.co.uk

Midland - A massive thanks to Vassgro Amenity, Farmura, Headland Amenity, Headland Amenity, Farmura, Tuckwells and Rigby Taylor Ltd. Also thanks to our Golfer of the Year sponsor Banks Amenity.

BB&O - The longest drivers and nearest the pin were sponsored by Swan Golf Design and Countryside. Without the continued support of our sponsors these days could not happen and in particular a thank you must go to Graeme Phipps and on the 20th June he celebrated working there for 40 years. I trust that a platinum watch was presented to him.

Midland - Our thanks to Eversfield for this month’s calendar page. Please consider Emma Kilby of Eversfield for your fertiliser and maintenance products. Tel: 07784 111690 or email emma.kilby@eversfield.com

Mid Anglia - AGM Autumn Comp to be kindly sponsored by Farolys of Hinckley in conjunction with John Deere with a tremendous offering of prizes.

Mid Anglia - The committee would like to thank Manusfield Sand for sponsoring our Summer Competition and also Tuffnells for supplying prizes for Nearest The Pin (Mark Blackmore and Longest Drive (Lee North)). The event also attracted Trade members from Banks Amenity, Faroils, John Deere, Attains and also Tracey Maddison from BROGA.

Mid Anglia - A massive thanks to Vassgro Amenity, Swan golf Design, Headland Amenity, Farmura, Tuckwells and Rigby Taylor for your continued support. Banks Amenity also sponsor our Golfer of the Year trophy.

**Thanks to Sponsors**

**Events Coming Up**

Mid Anglia - Autumn Golf Day at Berkhamsted GC on 6 August. Our thanks go to Trevor Smith and his team for providing us with the course to beautiful condition. Results: 14 pts P Fittey and W 2-8 pts G Roove and L Owen, 3-45 pts D Watt and S Roberts. The nearest the Pin prizes went to R Goddard at the 9th and Rob Catlin at the 11th.

**South East**

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

**Movers & Shakcers**

**Events Coming Up**

East Anglia - 9 October, event at Bury St Edmunds if (didn’t even know he was dead), 4 December, Thorensinus turkey trot. Merry Christmas in case I forget.

Suss - The next event is on 20 September at Beaumont Park GC. Please contact Pete Smith for more information and entry details on 07786030113.

Kent - 19 September, Autumn event at Stene Valley Golf Club. Please advise us of your attendance ASAP.

Surrey - Coming up are The Cresta Cup at Wimbledon Park GC on 24 September and the final for the Surrey Bowl is on the 1 October at Fasholls GC.

Surrey - Merstal Wood College has been booked for early evening educational seminars, which are scheduled to take place on 17 October and November 28.

**News**

East Anglia - Stowmarket in June was lovely thanks to Matt Gill and his team - 50 souls turned up. Prizes were presented by Dick Taylor, Stowmarket Captain. Larry Pearman won the Loo Seat mainly because he hadn’t won it before! Results below.

Suss - 1 August saw 28 members turn out for our section’s summer competition at the glorious heathland course of Pidmore. Many thanks to John and all of his team for the condition in which this pretty course was presented. Thanks again to the sections annual sponsor for enabling another enjoyable day, and also Pete Smith for all his organisation for the event. I would be grateful if you could contact me with anything of interest for future articles - thanks.

Kent - Congratulations to Russ Bains of Chislehurst GC. He and his wife Kelly have welcomed baby Ruben who arrived on 14 August. Congratulations to Lydd GC Course Manager and Kent FC reserve goaler Darren Burton who has managed to qualify again for the Trilby Tour. Be prepared to see him on TV playing his trade in a silly hat.

East - Recent golf day, a big thank you to Tony Stubbinngs the owner of Channels Golf Club plus Ray Clark and his team for the fantastic condition of the course and a golf day to remember, the revised set-up is a true test of golf. Results below.

**Results**

Essex - The next golf day is at Braintree Golf Club on Tuesday 24 September (Please note the revised date). Lunch will be served before we play, with prizing straight after play finishes. Times to be advised. Entries to Anton Kirwan at “Play Golf Colchester” Bakers Lane, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AU or antz16@blisternet.com by Friday 29 September.

Essex - Ben Scrivener is still waiting to hear from those seeking further education. For more information please contact: Ben at gingersnanny@hotmail.com

**News**

BB&O - The Stick

Surrey - The Willmott & Weston duo are launching their Cookbook and TV series after successfully providing the catering recently at The Sunningdale GC McMillan Tankard.

Mid Anglia - Stowmarket: 0-9 Mark Buck 38, Graham Hurrell 31, 10-18: Adrian Hollins 37, Mark Boughton 30; 0-10: David Driver 34, Adam Mullay 32.

Suss - Summer Comp: Winner of Division 1 Richard Webster 40 points. Division 2 Pete Smith with a poor 31 points. Division 3 Kane Smith with just 28 points.

Surrey - The 33rd McMillan Tankard Comp: 1 Craig Ayton 40 pts with 25 scored on the front nine, described as a dream round and the best golf he has ever played. 2 Grant Stevington 173. 3 Brian Bowers 36. Jack and Rita McMillan presented the prizes on a day fuelled with friendship and camaraderie on and off the green.


Thanks to sponsors

Mid Anglia - Main sponsors at Stowmarket were Toro, others were Aldina, Rigby Taylor, Colfier Turf Care, Headland, Tomlinson, Eversfield and Lely UK.

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**Welcome New Members**

Midland

Movers & Shakkers
Mid Anglia - Congratulations to Steve Cherry who after a brief flirtation with groundsman is now back in greenkeeping so good to have you back amongst us.

Results
BBBO - Summer golf day: 1.36pts John Quinn, 2.34 pts Adam King, 3.33 pts Patrick Wheelahan, NP - Rob Catlin, NP - Simon Mallock, LD - Matt Smith NNP2 - Brian Witney.


Mid Anglia - Summer Golf Day held at Brookmans Park GC on 6 August. Our thanks go to Trevor Smith and his team for providing us with the course to beautiful condition. Results: 1.48 pts P Fray and I Wessley, 2.45 pts R Groves and L Owen, 3.45 p D Watt and N Roberts. The nearest the Pin prizes went to R Goddard at the 9th and Rob Catlin at the 11th.

Thanks to Sponsors
Mid Anglia - Autumn Golf Day Sponsors Avoncrop Amenity, Antech Amenity, Vaisano Amenity - Farols, Farmura, Headland Amenity, Allis, Tuckwells and Rigby Taylor Ltd. Also thanks to our Goller of the Year sponsor Banks Amenity.

BBBO - The longest drives and nearest the pina were sponsored by Swan Golf Design and Countrywide. Without the continued support of our sponsors these days could not happen and in particular a thank you must go toGareth Adams of Rigby Taylor.

Midland - Our thanks to Everris for this month’s calendar. Please consider Emma Kilby of Everris for your fertiliser and maintenance products. Tel: 07784 111965 or email emma.kilby@everris.com.

East Midland - AGM Autumn Comp to be kindly sponsored by Farol's and Tonbridge Golf Club in conjunction with John Deere with a tremendous offering of prizes.

East Midland - The committee would like to thank Mansfield Sand for sponsoring our Summer Competition and also thank the suppliers for supporting prizes for Nearest The Pin (Blairkirk) and Longest Drive (Lee North). The event also attracted Trade members from Banks Amenity, Farols, John Deere, Atkins and also Tracey Maddison from BROGA.

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Welcome New Members

South East

Events Coming Up
East Anglia - 9 October, event at Bury St Edmunds I didn't even know he was dead!, 4 December, Thorpeness turkey trot. Merry Christmas in case I forget.

Sussex - The next event is on 20 September at Beaupre Park GC. Please contact Pete Smith for more information and entry details on 077850 20613.

Kent - 19 September, Autumn event at Seven Vale GC. Please advise us of your attendance ASAP.

Surrey - Coming up are The Cresta Cup at Wimbledon Park GC on 24 September and the final for the Surrey Bowl is on 1 October at Foxhills GC.

Surrey - Merstham Wood College has been booked for early evening educational seminars, which are scheduled to take place on October 17 and November 28.

News
East Anglia - Stowmarket in June was lovely thanks to Matt Gill and his team - 50 souls turned up. Pries were presented by Dick Taylor, Stowmarket Captain. Larry Pearman won the loo seat mainly because he hadn't won it before! Results below.

Sussex - 1 August saw 28 members turn out for our section’s summer competition at the glorious heathland course of Pidford. Many thanks to John and all of his team for the condition in which this pretty course was presented. Thanks again to the sections annual sponsor for enabling another enjoyable day, and also Pete Smith for all his organisation for the event. I would be grateful if you could contact me with anything of interest for future articles - thanks.

Kent - Congratulations to Russ Bain of Chadhurst GC. He and his wife Kelly have welcomed baby Ruby who arrived on 14 August. Congratulations to Lydd GC Course Manager and Kent FC reserve golfer Darren Burton who has managed to qualify again for the Trilly Tour. Be prepared to see him on TV plying his trade in a silly hat.

Essen - Recent golf day, a big thank you to Tony Stubbs the owner of Channels Golf Club plus Ray Clark and his team for the fantastic condition of the course and a golf day to remember, the revised set-up is a true test of golf. Results below.

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Welcome New Members

Around The Green

Events Coming Up
Mid Anglia - Autumn Golf Day at Belchamstead GC on 16 October. Get your entries in ASAP! AGM to follow.

East Midland - Our AGM/Autumn competition will be held at Luttrellstown GC on 31 October. AGM offers the opportunity for members to put themselves forward for committee selection or form a coup d’état and completely overthrow the present incumbents... food for thought.

East Midland - November 6, Midland Region Education Seminar at Forest Hill Golf Club. More details next month.

News
BBBO - Summer golf event took place at Caversham Heath Golf Club. A great turn out saw 52 people take part, and was kindly sponsored by Rigby Taylor. A big thank you to Course Manager John Scoones and his team for all their hard work which ensured the course and day was a great success! See results.

BBBO - The Rigby Taylor Pairs Knockout continues - good luck to all.

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Welcome New Members
The Mad Mower Boys are back...and this time it's the hard road to harrogate!

More details coming soon...

South West & Wales

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

Events Coming Up

South Coast - Next golf fixture is at Meon Valley Golf and Country Club on 9 October. We haven't played there for many years so please come and support the event, entries as usual to Kevan Glass at Keepers Cottage, Brokenhurst Manor GC, Swan Rd, Brockenhurst, Hants, SO42 7SG, or glassy2003@hotmail.com.

South Coast - Match against the South West is at North Wilts GC on 26 September, I need a team of 10 so if you want to play please let me know on greenkeeper@gmail.com as soon as possible.

South Coast - The Toro Irrigation Roadshow Seminar is to be held at Sherbourne GC on 23 October. This is a full day educational programme on the importance of your irrigation system, finishing with a workshop on repairs and troubleshooting. Included in the day is coffee and a bacon roll on arrival and a 2 course lunch for the incredible price of £10. The section committee will be assisting in organising the day so entries to Alex McCombie, for more info southcoastsecretary@gmail.com. This will be open to other sections so be quick with your entry. More info next month.

South West - SW Section v South Coast Section at North Wilts GC on 26 September, South West Section AGM at Filton GC on 16 October and South West Section Christmas Tournament at Ogbourne Downs GC on 19 December, enquiries to Wayne Vincent. There are a few spaces still to be filled on Excavator Safety Training Update to be held towards the end of the year, a must-do for all licenced operators in order to maintain their certification, please contact Paul Worster for details and keep an eye on the BIGGA Bulletin boards for more details.

News

South Wales - We've recently received the sad news that Chris Jenkins, Course Manager of Tenby Golf Club and lifelong supporter of the bowling club network in Pembrokeshire, had suddenly died. Our thoughts from everyone in our section go out to all his family and friends.

South Wales - I am now a grandfather at the ripe old age of 34 only a step one thankfully!

South Wales - Our golfing team unfortunately went down 4.5-1.5 recently a big thank to JK and his team at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club for their hospitality and of course the superb golf course set up.

South West - A thoroughly convincing victory of 4.5 to 1.5 was had by the South West Section over South Wales Section at Chipping Sodbury on 15 August, many thanks to John Kermaghan and his team for all of their efforts in preparing a fantastic golf course.

South West - Once again the South West Section will be sponsoring a place to attend BTME in January 2014 to include accommodation, transport and education. Please contact any of the committee members to express your interest in this fantastic opportunity.

Thanks to Sponsors

South West - Many thanks to our section patrons Ecosol, Irritech, Headland Amenity, Countrywide, Greensman and Farmura for their much valued support of section events and training contributions.

Welcome new members


Welcome new overseas member

Ryun Holden - Limpachtal Golf Club
The Mad Mower Boys are back...and this time it’s the hard road to harrogate!

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South Wales - Next meeting is our AGM at Machynys Peninsular GC on Wednesday 16 October
In this first month, Martin Ward, Managing Director of Symbio, explains the basics of good greenkeeping practices and how the company is intent on helping golf course managers and greenkeepers understand what happens below the surface. There is also a series of workshops planned...

The good news is that there are four natural methods that greenkeepers can employ to manage disease.

1) The beneficial microbes form a protective barrier around the roots and root lesions.
2) Some produce natural antibiotic substances to kill pathogens.
3) Pathogens become a food source for the beneficial microbes.
4) Some microbes and bio stimulants encourage the plant to produce hormones called phytochemicals that help it fight off disease.

Fertiliser requirements are also reduced, microbes are made from bacteria, nitrogen and phosphate that live on and hold applied nutrients in the soil but more importantly they help convert the proteins and carbohydrates produced by the grass during photosynthesis and re-employ them around the roots to maintain the nitrogen cycle.

Apart from reduced physical disruption the key changes to management practices required by the modern greenkeeper are to introduce the correct microbial ecology into the rootzone and to keep it alive by the correct use of bio stimulants, aeration, fertilisers and fungicides.

If you want to manage poa annua greens you will need a bacterial dominant rootzone that supports annual plants and feed the biology with simple sugars and carbohydrates.

The basic premise is that healthy grass is less susceptible to disease but the stresses put upon greens, tees and fairways means that the grass is always susceptible to pathogen attack.


crossword

B A 3 1 6 4 2 1 5 7 6
A C B D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

down

1 1978 Alan Parker film whose title is prison slang for an inmate's attempt to escape (8,7)
2 Pertaining to an ancient Peruvian people (5)
3 Device used to control the water level in a cistern (4,6)
4 Permit allowing permanent residency of a foreign national in the UK (5-4)
5 Musical which features the song I Know Him So Well (5)
6 Hat named after the heroine of a George du Maurier novel (5)
7 Small tin sausage (8)
8 Novel which introduced the character Sherlock Holmes (1,5,2,7)
9 US sitcom in which Danny DeVito played Louis De Palma (4)
10 1797 Commodore's hit written by Leonard Bichler (4)
11 Leading newspaper commentaries (10)
12 President of Venezuela who died on 5th March 2013 (4,6)
14 US sitcom in which Danny DeVito played Louis De Palma (4)
15 US sitcom in which Danny DeVito played Louis De Palma (4)
16 Town whose soccer ground is the Falmer Stadium (8)
17 Stage name of US rapper Artis boy (6,6)
18 Ancient Egyptian city, its name associated with two dams across the Nile (5,6)
19 -- --- box; a television, having a low-cut neckline (9)
20 --- box; a television, having a low-cut neckline (9)
21 Ancient Egyptian city, its name associated with two dams across the Nile (5,6)
22 --- Laurie Blue Adkins, English singer-songwriter (5)

quick 'nine hole' quiz . nine questions all about the opening weekend of the premier league season...

1) Which player scored the first goal of the Premier League season?
2) Who was the first player to be sent off?
3) Three players missed penalties on the opening weekend - name them.
4) Which manager was charged by the FA for comments made against a decision - days after vowing to be more subdued in interviews this season?
5) Name the scorer of Norfolk's second goal on the opening day.
6) Which Everton scorer was on Ian Crook's list of season only to be largely ignored by their then manager Neil Warnock?
7) Which 40-year-old striker made a substitute appearance in his side's first game?
8) Who scored Arsenal's goal before it all went wrong against Aston Villa?
9) Name the four players who started Mourinho's first match back in charge of Chelsea who also started his final game in his first spell in 2007.

sudoko

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

monster sudoko

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 shape contains the numbers 1 to 9.

puzzle answers on page 55
In this first month, Martin Ward, Managing Director of Symbio, explains the basics of good greenkeeping practices and how the company is intent on helping course managers and greenkeepers understand what happens below the surface. There is also a series of workshops planned...

Greenkeepers Training Committee

In a new series, the GTC has invited representatives from its Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers to discuss their particular specialism within the sports turf sector.

The good news is that there are four natural methods that greenkeepers can employ to manage disease.

1) The beneficial microbes form a protective barrier around the roots and leaf lesions.
2) Some produce natural antibiotics to kill pathogens.
3) Pathogens become a food source for the beneficial microbes.
4) Some microbes and bio stimulants encourage the plant to produce hormones called phytoalexins that help it fight off disease.

Fertiliser requirements are also reduced, microbes are made from carbon, nitrate and phosphate so they live on and hold applied nutrients in the soil but more importantly they help convert the proteins and carbohydrates produced by the grass during photosynthesis and are degraded by the microbial population in place.

Apart from reduced physical aeration the key changes to management practices required by the nodular greenkeeper are to introduce the correct microbial population to the rootzone and to keep it alive by the correct use of bio stimulants, aeration, fertilisers and fungicides.

If you want to manage poa annua greens you will need a bacterial dominant rootzone that supports annual plants and feed the biology simple sugars and carbohydrates. If you want to grow a mixture of perennial grasses, a balanced fungal bacterial mix is required that is fed by more complex carbohydrates, seaweed, humic and fulvic acids.

20 years have passed since the first products containing microbes became available for turf managers. In the early years they were designed to solve specific problems like black layer, nutrient retention and thatch degradation, based on easily observed actions of common soil microorganisms.

The early results sparked off a wave of research initially by professors interested in microbial reactions on turf with Professor Alan Gage at Royal Holloway College, University of London at the forefront. Latterly colleges offering degrees in turf science have played a practical role guiding students through research into a range of topics for their degree theses.

Dr Andy Owen and his colleagues at Myerscough College, a leading GTC Quality Assured Centre, have played a leading role in this respect.

Specific turf research in the UK and the USA has increased our understanding about the myriad of relationships between the grass plant and the chemistry, biology and physical properties of sports turf rootzones. So how do these pieces of information affect the daily management practices of the course manager?

The main areas where healthy soil allows management practices to improve to help produce fast, even, low thatch greens are:

Reduced Physical Aeration (it is still needed but in less disruptive forms)
Reduced Fungicide Use
Reduced poa annual improved perennial grass growth
Reduced fertiliser input

The main change is the treatment of organic matter. Organic matter comprises of dead grass i.e. thatch which is generally considered bad and roots, organic nutrients, soil biomass (bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods and worms), humic compounds and organic acids which are essential for healthy plant growth.

Thatch is also the primary food for fungi. Traditionally thatch has had to be physically removed with costly invasive practices, deep scarification and hollow coring, however aeration provided by micro tines into the thatch layer is sufficient if it is to be degraded by fungus and bacteria.

Thatch is converted to plant food and humic compounds which increase carbon dioxide exchange capacity (CCE) and hence fertilizer inputs but more importantly, the rootzone develops a fungal biomass which we now know is needed if perennial grass is to be grown instead of poa annua.

This means that less top dressing is required to maintain a fast surface, less fertiliser is required for more consistent surfaces and you do not need to stave greens to reintroduce bent and fescue.

Percolation rates are also a function of the biological activity in the rootzone. Previously all beneficial microbial activity is undertaken by aerobic microbes but it is perfectly possible to manage many golf greens without large tine hollow coring, because bacteria, fungus and beneficial nematodes all maintain friable, fast draining, aerated soil.

Regular maintenance and occasional vertidraining should be all that is required for all but the most compacted, thatchy greens.

Disease management is now high on most people’s agendas with the cost and gradual reduction in available fungicides.

The basic premise is that healthy grass is less susceptible to disease but the stresses put upon greens, trees and lawns means that the grass is always susceptible to pathogen attack.

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A significant number of golf clubs have been busy during the past year upgrading their equipment wash facilities to ensure they are in compliance with the new environmental legislation. If you are not one of these clubs we strongly recommend you take action now.

The Environment Agency provide additional measures to ensure compliance with the new EU Water Framework Directive, backed by a Variable Monetary Penalty (VMP) of up to £250,000 for non-compliance. The Waste2Water Recycling Wash-Off System ensures that your facility complies with the new environmental legislation.

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The new Equipment Wash Facility must comply with the new requirements, which include:

- **Compliance with the New Equipment Wash Facility**: The equipment wash facility must meet the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) requirements.
- **Penalty**: Failure to comply can result in a VMP of up to £250,000.
- **Additional Measures**: The Environment Agency offers additional measures to ensure compliance.

For further information, please contact Waste2Water on 01782 373 878 or email info@waste2water.com.

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**GOLF COURSE MACHINERY**

- **Penalties**: Non-compliance with the new legislation may result in severe penalties.
- **Compliance**: Ensure your equipment wash facility complies with the new regulations.

For more information, contact us at info@waste2water.com or call 01782 373 878.

**Irrigation**

- **Contact**: Duncan Ross Land Drainage, 01257 255321, www.duncanrosslanddrainage.co.uk

**Golf Course Drainage**

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**Consortium Ltd**

- **Contact**: Roger Davey, 01823 690216, www.jsmd.co.uk

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- **Tebbutt Associates**
- **Rubber Crumb**

**QUALITY PRODUCTS OF THE WEEK**
- **M B Wilkes**
- **Sands for bunkers & top dressings**
- **Top Dressings**
- **Root Zones**

**BAILERS GM**
- **Balmers GM**
- **Telfairg Street, Burnley, Lancs, BB11 1TQ**

**BUYERS’ GUIDE**

**Invicta Groundcare Equipment Ltd**
- **Used Golf Course Machinery**

**MACHINERY WANTED**
- **ERS Developments Ltd**
- **Machinery Wanted**

**TRACTORS**
- **Trimmers**
- **Hedge Trimmers**

**TRAVELLING HIRE**
- **PETER MANNING**

**WASTE/WASHWATER**
- **Balmers GM**
- **Waste/Washwater**

**WASTE/WASHWATER**
- **Balmers GM**
- **Waste/Washwater**

**TR不明**
- **Contact**
- **Tel**
- **Email**

**NEW SnowEx V-Pro 6000 salt spreader – 800L hopper.............................................................£POA**

**NEW SnowEx SP-1575 Bulk Pro salt spreader – 163L hopper ..................................................£POA**

**New Holland TN75s, 72hp, 3353hrs, c/w: cab, turf tyres .........................................................£12’500**

**Massey Ferguson 1528, fitted with out front brush, 28hp, 430hrs ...........................................£11’570**

**Kioti DK551C, 54hp, 612hrs, c/w: cab, turf tyres .....................................................................£15’500**

**Iseki 330, 30hp, 1213hrs, c/w: roll bar, turf tyres........................................................................£6’5 00**

**John Deere 2720 / 200CX Loader, 31hp, 120hrs.....................................................................£13’000**

**Compact Tractors**
- **Timberwolf TW190FTR 7.5” Tracked Chipper, c/w: 35hp, trailer avail. (sold separately) - ...............................................................**

**Timberwolf TW150DHB 6” road-towed chipper, c/w: 35hp diesel engine - 207hrs ........................................................................................................................................**

**Greenmech QUAD CHIP 6” Chipper, c/w: 34hp T-Diesel engine - 123hrs........................................******

**Greenmech 6” Chipper (15-23) c/w: 34hp T-Diesel engine, rain hyd, feed rollers - 133hrs ...............£7’000**

**Greenmech 6” Chipper (15-23) c/w: 34hp T-Diesel engine, rain hyd, feed rollers - 109hrs ...............£7’000**

**Greenmech 7” Chipper (19-28) c/w: 35hp diesel engine, rain hyd, feed rollers - £10’000**

**Greenman 7.5” SAFE TRAK Chipper, c/w: 55hp diesel engine, track std. system - £10’000**

**Greenman QUAD CHIP 6” Chipper, c/w: 34hp T-Diesel engine - 123hrs........................................£12’750**

**Greenman QUAD TRAK 6” Chipper, c/w: 34hp diesel engine, rubber tracks, 140 hrs, 30 deg. turning, 30.3 deg. 65hp bed, 4-sided Quad Chip blade system - £11’800**

**Tinderwell TR1300CHB 6” road-towed chipper, c/w: 35hp diesel engine - 207hrs ........................................................................£12’000**

**Tinderwell TW150DHB 3.5” road-towed chipper, c/w: 35hp, make avail. (sold separately) - 41hrs ...........................................................................................................................................£12’000**

**Tinderwell TW500SBI 5” road-towed chipper, c/w: 70hp diesel engine - 150hrs ........................................................................£5’500**

**Compact Lime Spreader**
- **V-Pro 2000 – 2400 sq m hydraulic power steering, 1-4 tonne, 2000 sq m, £12’000**

**Greenmech Arborist 6” road towed chipper, 27hrs.....................................................................£POA**

**Greenmech QUAD CHIP 8” Chipper, c/w: 34hp T-Diesel engine, 126hrs, 30 deg. tilting bed, 4-sided Quad Chip blade system - £12’000**

**Greenmech 6” Chipper (15-23) c/w: 34hp T-Diesel engine, rain hyd, feed rollers - 133hrs ...............£7’000**

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**Recruitment**

**Area Sales Managers – Professional Amenity Products**

New & exciting opportunities have arisen for successful Area Sales Managers throughout all areas of the UK.

- **My client** is an UK based fertiliser and specialist amenity manufacturer and distributor with a proven track record and successful reputation for some of the most successful sales staff in the industry.
- **They** have a very wide portfolio of products covering all areas of amenity sales including; fertilisers, fungicides, herbicides, insecticides and other specialist products such as wetting agents and bio-stimulants.

This dynamic client is looking for successful, enthusiastic Area Sales Managers across the UK that have a proven track record in the amenity sector and are looking to work for a forward thinking, dynamic sales driven company. Additional territory areas will be considered on a case by case basis depending upon the candidate’s experience.

- You must be a relationship builder and be willing to go that extra mile for your customers. My client, in return, will go the extra mile with you. They offer a considerable remuneration package based on salary plus commission and attractive OTE earnings are not capped either.
- They do not believe in capping sales so in turn your expected career opportunity with unlimited earning potential?

**To find out more please email a full CV, quoting reference 10175.**

**Sales Managers throughout all areas of the UK.**

**We have a vacancy for a professional Area Sales Manager in our Grasscare Division to cover the Birmingham and Warwickshire area based from our Redditch depot.**

Applicants should preferably have direct relevant experience selling professional ground care machinery to golf courses, contractors, local authorities and large private users. However consideration will be given to enthusiastic, highly motivated applicants who have a passion to progress a sales career within a professional grasscare machinery dealer.

**We offer an attractive package including a non-contributory pension and share incentive scheme.**

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**Crews Hill Golf Club**

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**Assistant Greenkeeper**

The successful applicant will be qualified to at least NVQ2 and have at least 2 years experience in all aspects of Golf Course maintenance. Experience in construction of greens, tees & bunkers and use of mini digger is essential. An understanding of the basic principles of golf course construction is, however, essential. A good understanding of good practice and the ability to work to a very high standard; this is a demanding but rewarding role and a great opportunity for a forward thinking driven individual.

A starting salary plus benefits will be offered to the successful candidate, subject to experience and qualifications, upon proving ability remuneration will be increased.

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**Assistant Greenkeeper**

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If you are ambitious, have a genuine passion for green keeping and you are looking for opportunity, then this could be a perfect start to your career!

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They do not believe in capping sales so in turn your expected remuneration will be increased.

A starting salary plus benefits will be offered to the successful applicant depending upon experience and qualifications.

Interested applicants should apply in writing, with a full CV and cover letter quoting reference 10175 in strict confidence, to: Rebekah@agriRS.co.uk

Head GreenKeeper
Sandlinds Golf Club
Sutton on Sea, Lincs

Sandlinds Golf Club are looking to appoint a Head GreenKeeper with a proven track record to manage their mature 18 hole links golf course to the highest standard. The successful applicant must be qualified to at least NVQ3 or City & Guilds and have at least 5 years experience in all aspects of Golf Course management. A thorough knowledge of the relevant H&S & E regulations, Fine Turf Cultivation, PA1 & PA2 spraying and the Effective Utilisation of Modern GreenKeeping Machinery are mandatory. Also essential are the ability to lead and develop the existing GreenKeeping Team, to maintain budgetary control.

The Head GreenKeeper is also required to plan and execute small scale course improvement projects.

Salary £18k - £20k depending upon experience and qualifications.

To: Miss A M Askew, Club Secretary, Sandlinds Golf Club
The Grange and Links Hotel, Sea Lane, Sandlinds, Sutton on Sea, Lincoln Lincoln LN12 2RA

Or alternatively email your CV with a covering letter to: grangeandslinks@gmail.com

Crews Hill Golf Club has recently purchased £200k of golf course machinery, has a new extensive greenkeeping facility under construction, in addition to the already existing facilities. Starting this September the greens team will be constructing a short game practice facility and an extensive putting green complex. This is an excellent opportunity to gain valuable construction experience.

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Advertise your recruitment here ...
... and online for one month at www.bigga.org.uk/careers from £575+vat for an 1/8 advert Contact Jill Rodham on 01347 833 812

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Find out more about us at www.thwhitegrasscare.co.uk

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Sean Sullivan’s Scottish adventure continues as he finally joins up with The Open Support Team, spends a fortune on merchandise and embarks on an epic journey back to the States

Once in Edinburgh, it was back on a bus headed for our accommodation at the city’s University. Now the official Open experience had begun.

Tuesday morning I was up at 3.30am, on the bus at 4am and ready to start preparing bunkers by 5am. It was wonderful to see all the operations going on at the same time we were raking – all manner of mowing, fine-tuning and security measures.

I was surprised how difficult it was to get the bunkers right - the sand was very different from the coal slag I have at my course. We all did the best we could, and were done by mid-morning. We were then able to walk around the course watching the practice rounds, head to the souvenir shop or watch the golf on TV. It was good to get the first day under my belt.

Second day was the same as the first, except for the Muirfield staff sweepers that followed us through the course. Once done, it was more golf and shopping for my members at Briarwood. I ended up purchasing roughly £900 of merchandise and open rangeland, and is particularly notable for its coal slag black bunkers.

That evening I was able to share a drink with new and old friends. I was up and out at 4.30am to prepare for the first day of the tournament. There was a different air to this Open - the Muirfield staff would take over from us as the dry conditions limited the amount of prep work required, which in turn freed up maintenance staff to do the bunker work.

We then got our match assignments for the first day of the tournament. There was a different air to the Open, this year. Not better, not worse, just different. Because of the restricted size of the first tee area, we did not have the same access to the players as we had last year but as I followed my first round match, I felt more at ease than I did last year as I knew what to expect. This allowed me to focus on how the players handled the hot, dry conditions. The players I followed were struggling to score well, and I ended up raking eight bunkers on the first day.

It’s hard to describe how much of an honour it was to be on the Support Team. Having dinner and drinks with other BIGGA members and swapping stories of our work was brilliant! The second day was similar to the first, the young players I followed were struggling to score well as the conditions got drier and faster.

Of the six players I followed only one made the cut. I raked 12 bunkers the second day and once again it was one of those days that I’ll remember for a long time. I didn’t get a match on Saturday, so I was able to work the practice bunker and then watch the golf.

On Sunday I raced for the defending champion Ernie Els and Richard Sterne. Ernie eagled 17 which really energised the crowd and players – something I’ll always remember. I then made it back to the marquee in time to see Mickelson win his first Open Championship.

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After 17 more hours of flying I got back home at 11.30 pm - then I was up and out at 4.30am

More than 100 years of experience goes into the making of Baroness products, giving unrivalled cutting quality and the very lowest running costs.

For more than 20 years Baroness has been building the LM315 with our very own ‘hybrid’ drive system which minimises the amount of hydraulic lines by using cable drive to the cutting units.

Now available with a 21hp 3-cylinder diesel engine and offering industry leading light weight combined with outstanding traction, the Baroness LM315 is now available to view on your golf course.
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Second day was the same as the first, except for the Muirfield staff sweepers that followed us through the course. Once done, it was more golf and shopping for my members at Briarwood. I ended up purchasing roughly £900 of merchandise, which was followed by two 17-hour work days.

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On Sunday I raked for the defending champion Ernie Els and Richard Sterne. Ernie eagled 17 which really energised the crowd and players – something I’ll always remember. I then made it back to the marquee in time to see Mickelson win his first Open Championship.

That evening I was able to share a drink with new and old friends. I was not leaving until Tuesday morning, so I saw the sights of Edinburgh with some of the guys, before heading to the airport. I ended up trying to grab some sleep there but it turned out I was awake for two days straight, thank God for Red Bull!

After 17 more hours of flying I got back home at 11.30pm - then I was up and out at 4.30am!

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Sweepers that followed us through the course. Once done, it was more golf and shopping for my members at Briarwood. I ended up purchasing roughly £900 of merchandise, which was followed by two 17-hour work days.

The Open experience is not just about raking bunkers behind the world’s best players. It is visiting new places, meeting old friends, making new friends and creating long lasting memories.

There is no other place in the world I would rather be than at the Open and on the Open Support Team and there will be a new tattoo to follow!

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