GOOD MOVE FOR MASTER GREENKEEPER PHIL

One of BIGGA’s Master Greenkeepers has been appointed Course Manager at Goodwood’s two highly acclaimed golf courses.

Phil Helmn MG, former Golf Course and Estate Manager at Heythrop Park, and who featured in GI back in June last year, has taken the reins at the West Sussex venue.

Phil will be working closely with Andrew Brown, Head Greenkeeper of The Downs course, and Simon Berry, Head Greenkeeper of The Parks course, along with the rest of the greenkeeping team.

Phil’s extensive experience includes the construction and grow-in of four courses. One was in Florida under the direction of acclaimed golf architect Tom Fazio, the second was in Cyprus designed by Tom Mackenzie of UK based architects Mackenzie and Elbert, The Watermark Club and finally Heythrop Park Resort. Phil’s early career saw him work at Morecambe Golf Club, Camberley Heath and Cullompton Park.

He said: “I have been a greenkeeper all my adult life and I love my career choice. Goodwood is a quality brand and specifically the golf courses are highly ranked and revered. It will be a fantastic challenge to help Goodwood improve even further on its recent successes and ranking.

“Myself and the entire greenkeeping team have some big plans for the future so it’s an exciting time to be here.”

Phil joins Goodwood at a significant time as the James Braid designed Downs Course celebrates 100 years of golf this year, and to mark the occasion Goodwood will be hosting a number of high profile events throughout the season.

LIVERPOOL FAN IN OLD TRAFFORD CHARITY ABSEIL

A greenkeeper Liverpool fan is putting football rivalry to one side for charity when he steps off the 76,000 capacity stadium’s roof in aid of The Christie, an organisation which raises funds for vital cancer research and treats more than 40,000 patients each year.

Now Paul, who says he doesn’t like heights, is to give something back so that other people suffering from cancer have a better chance to be as fortunate as I’ve been.

“Basically I would urge every bloke to check themselves regularly. As it happened my lump was found when I was having a general check-up, but if you do find something unusual go straight to your doctor, catching it early is so important.”

Phil’s abseil will be on Sunday 23 March and you can find out more and sponsor him at justgiving.com/philpearse – all contributions will be very gratefully received!

PHIL’S ‘TRACTOR AID’ TO FLOOD-HIT SOMERSET

A Course Manager who combines his greenkeeping role with his job as a farmer has ridden to the rescue of a flood-hit Somerset farmer after seeing his plight on TV.

Phil Rowbottom is a BIGGA member, head man at Woolley Park Golf Club and member of the National Farmers’ Union – and was moved by a TV interview with Somerset farmer James Winslade who has lost 800 acres of his 940-acre farm to floodwater, with the water chest-high in his kitchen.

James managed to save his 500 cattle but had lost all of his cattle feed. So Phil joined forces with neighbour Andrew, an agricultural contractor, and loaded 25 tons of cattle feed onto their tractors. They then set off from Phil’s proprietary golf club near Wakerfield, West Yorkshire, at 5am on February 13 to make the epic 225-mile journey to Bridgewater, which is at the heart of the badly affected Somerset Levels.

Travelling at a top speed of around 30mph, ‘Tractor Aid’ arrived 11 hours later to meet a grateful James at nearby Bridgemoor market.

Phil said: “I’ve been watching the news for the last few weeks and saw what a mess the Somerset farmers are in. I saw an interview with James and you couldn’t fail to be moved by it, even more so as a fellow farmer. The water was chest-high in his kitchen and he has lost almost everything, and the pictures showed the only way he could get to his farm was by boat.

“I just thought as a fellow farmer, I could help him, and the thing he really needed was cattle feed. James’s feed which he had been storing over winter is now rotting in sheds, it’s terrible.

“I don’t have any cattle on my farm but I borrowed some feed from local farmers and set off. The support we had on the journey from the public has been fantastic, it makes me really proud.”

Meanwhile the rest of Woolley Park’s greenkeeping team – Phil’s son John, Andy Seaman, Richard Thompson, Stuart Mason and Pete Colley – have been working to keep the course open despite 100ml of rain in January.

John said: “Golf and agriculture are inextricably linked as they are both so dependent on the weather. If golf courses are underwater for too long the grass rots, and it’s the same with crops in farming. We’ve been hit by the relentless rainfall as so many other golf courses have, but luckily our site drains well and is high up.

“We made a few calls and mentioned ‘Tractor Aid’ on Twitter and it’s gone on from there. We felt Somerset had been neglected by the media so hopefully this has reminded everybody of the seriousness of the situation down there.”

Their amazing journey has caught the public’s imagination with Phil even being interviewed live on the BBC’s ‘One Show’. "I don’t have any cattle on my farm but I borrowed some feed from local farmers and set off. The support we had on the journey from the public has been fantastic, it makes me really proud."

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