

GI

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

Published by the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

£5.50 MARCH 2015

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Tracey Maddison
traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Contact Us
BIGGA House, Aldwark, Aline, York,
YO61 1UF
info@bigga.co.uk
www.bigga.org.uk
Tel – 01347 833800 | Fax – 01347 833801

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.



Production
Design & Brand Executive
Tom Campbell

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 513
tom@bigga.co.uk



Editorial
Communications Executive
Steve Castle
Tel – 01347 833800
ext 510
steve.castle@bigga.co.uk



Advertising
Business Development Manager
Jill Rodham
Tel – 01347 833800
ext 519
Fax – 01347 833802
jill@bigga.co.uk

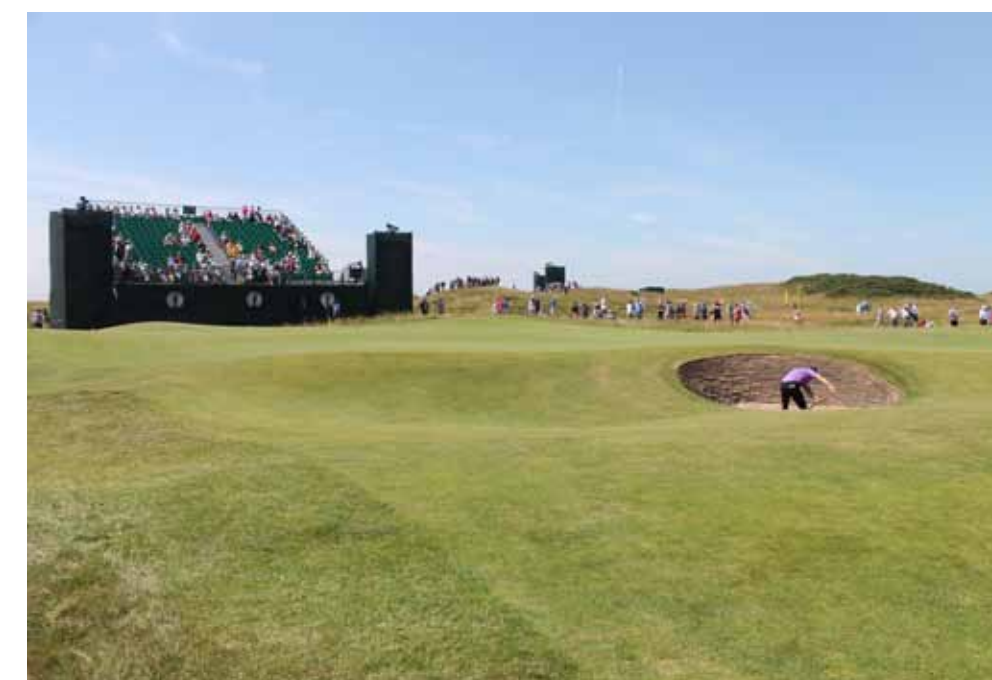
Printing
Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
Tel – 01778 391000 | Fax – 01778 394269

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ISSN: 0961-6977
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WELCOME FROM BIGGA



Open season for career chances

As we emerge from winter the announcement of the BIGGA Open Championship Support Team is a timely reminder that the season will soon be upon us.

With The Open returning to its spiritual home of St Andrews this year we, not unexpectedly, received a huge number of applications to be part of the Team and I know that we have fulfilled the brief given to us by the R&A to provide them with a first class greenkeeping crew. There is a great balance of first timers and experienced campaigners, something the R&A organising team are particularly keen that we achieve and I am thoroughly looking forward to seeing them in July.

Naturally there will be many applicants who are disappointed – we were oversubscribed by more than three to one – but we are totally committed to providing more and more developmental opportunities for our membership. So, my advice is to persevere and keep putting yourself forward for these events.

With the expansion of the BMW PGA Championship support team, the new TPC Sawgrass Initiative sponsored by John Deere alongside our Open Championship activity the opportunity to add top class tournament experience to a CV, which many employers place a really high value on, is increasing year on year. We are working hard to offer even more opportunities – watch this space!

Very recently one of the five BIGGA members who were successful in gaining a place on the aforementioned TPC Sawgrass initiative, James Bledge, unfortunately had to relinquish his spot.

The opportunity for promotion to the role of Course Manager at his club, Royal Cinque Ports, was presented to him.

He was delighted to accept but sadly his calendar of work makes attending the 'fifth major'

an impossibility. This serves as a reminder that nearly all of us have to make some sacrifices or compromises to achieve the career progression we desire. In James's case it was a complete 'no brainer' and I know he won't regret it for a second but it is not always so cut and dry. My view, for what it is worth, is that it is always better to make the positive decision than let inertia get in the way but it is a personal choice.

On that subject you could view a commitment to CPD as a sacrifice, it certainly takes effort above and beyond but is undoubtedly a tool to personal and career development.

I was thrilled to discover that we clocked up our 1,000th CPD Active member last month. This is a significant milestone and evidence, if it were needed, of the extraordinary commitment to learning and development that sits at the heart of the greenkeeping profession.

Thank you to all the members who have engaged with CPD, you make our job of promoting your profession so much more straightforward. I look forward to reporting on our 2,000th member in the not too distant future!

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

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Brora Golf Club's Revolution®

Brora Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper James MacBeath tells us how Farmura's Revolution® has boosted the traditional links course in the Scottish Highlands

Brora Golf Club was founded in 1891, originally a nine hole course which was extended to 18 about ten years later.

In 1923 the committee wanted the renowned course architect and golfing names Brora was to find. This he did in February 1924, arriving by train, walking around the course and departing later the same day. For the previous years of

625, Brora submitted his plan and the course which exists today was born. There have been very few changes to the layout proposed by Brora, the only major alteration extended the 11th hole by 23 yards to convert it to a par 5 and the course overall to a par 72.

Through all these years all greenkeepers that have worked there have had limited staff, equipment and budgets, James MacBeath, the present Head Greenkeeper, said: "As far as I can remember there have only been five Head Greenkeepers here and, although the machinery has changed, all have worked to the same philosophy of how to maintain this unique state piece of land."

Low nitrogen and water inputs, a

managed area and top dressing programme combined with applications of seaweed have kept the playing characteristics consistent throughout the years. First, fast, true and well presented turf, just how a traditional links course should play.

In recent years James has added application of the wetting agent, Revolution, to his programme. This has eliminated dry patches during the warm summers and reduced the problems caused on the edge of greens by sand splash from the bunkers.

He makes two fertiliser applications on greens and surrounds. One early C-Complete 7-0-7, then in mid summer a 6-0-0 nitrogenous with some seaweed applications in between.

Other than that it is only Revolution and soluble iron during the winter months. Trees and pathways receive similar inputs and the rest of the course only gets what nature provides.

With the maintenance practices preparing firm surfaces they ensure that the clubhouse overlooking the green do nothing to add to your sense of wellbeing.

Located just 20 minutes from the well known course at Dunrobin, Brora has many regular visitors who make the long journey north to play this spectacularly scenic golf course.

Who said you have?

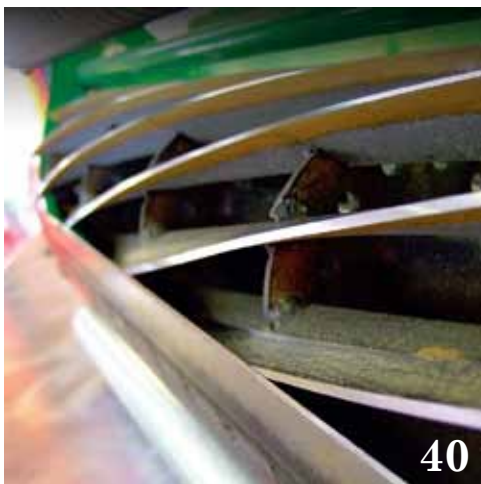
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British & International
Golf Greenkeepers Association



Chairman's Word

BIGGA National Chairman 2015, Les Howkins MG, gives his thoughts for the month

Everywhere you go, always take the Chairman with you...

Just over a month in to my term as Chairman and it's been a very busy time. After taking some time to debrief BTME with our CEO I headed to the FEGGA conference in Portugal. I would love to say it wasn't nice to see the sun for a few days, but that would be a lie!

The programme was packed with excellent speakers and it was interesting to hear the issues facing us in the UK are common across Europe. It was a great opportunity to meet with other Associations from Europe and continue our collaborative work with them. Behind the scenes, FEGGA are working with other bodies to promote the need for a common sense approach to pesticide regulations. Although I use minimal pesticides at Richmond, I fully understand the need to have a range of them available to maintain the diverse nature of UK golf courses.

On my return from Portugal I dumped a pile of washing on the floor somewhere near the washing machine. It took me a few hours to realise my wife and kids were away for half term and the washing was not going to do itself. So, I put all my greenkeeping knowledge and problem solving skills to use and managed to get it done! I then headed off to Heathrow for a flight to Texas for the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show. Read more on this in next month's issue.

February saw excellent Regional Conferences in the Midlands and Scotland. Well done to all those involved in organising, speaking and attending these events. Last month also saw us reach the landmark of 1,000 members on the new CPD scheme – fantastic news, and I would encourage all members to engage with this.

Back home, prolonged periods of cold frosty weather have left the course looking like an arctic tundra. You can't beat nature - it will do what it wants when it wants! The key is to have the course in the best possible condition heading into winter.

A few years ago I remember attending a seminar where the speaker said: "One of the biggest changes in greenkeeping in the last 30 years was the invention of Gore-Tex". He was probably right. Winter golfers have become more and more demanding and this is linked to the improved winter clothing available. We need to keep adapting and improving to meet the increasing levels of expectation.

There has been a lot of movement in the job market over the last few months, with the BIGGA job board as busy as I can remember. I would like to think this is a sign that the general golfing market is on the up and the future is starting to look brighter. One of my team, Sam Bethell, is on the move to the other side of Richmond Park to join David Langheim MG at Wimbledon Park Golf Club. Also, the Midland Region's National Board member Rob Welford is moving from Cleethorpes Golf Club to Waltham Windmill Golf Club. Steve Beverley is moving from Immingham Golf Club to replace him at Cleethorpes.

It's great to see Rob and Steve (who both had the misfortune to be my deputies in the past!) moving their careers forward. I wish these three and all other members taking up new posts all the very best for the future.

The recent explosion in social media has allowed many of our members to use it as a networking tool.

My favourite recent post mentioned leaving a copy of GI in the clubhouse for all the members to read. My first thought was "why?"

But after thinking about it, it's a great idea. It's a way of communicating with the golfing public about what we do and why we do it, it also helps demonstrate what a professional industry we have become and may dispel some of the image problems that still blight greenkeeping.

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but this old dog has learnt this one and is going to use it every month. I would urge others to try it - then spread the positive news and feedback you receive.

"A prize will be awarded for the best #takeleswithyou of the year"



Finally, a new social media craze is sweeping the world of greenkeeping. Started by Sam Evans from Oakland Park Golf Club, #takeleswithyou involves members taking a picture of page 7 of last month's GI (shown left, held by Ben Kebby!) in an interesting place, then posting it on Facebook or Twitter.

A prize will be awarded for the best one of the year, so you can take me on holiday, to work...or anywhere!

Let's hope spring comes along this year without any nasty weather-related surprises.

Les

Contact details

Les Howkins MG
chairman@bigga.co.uk

Funding your future

The funding and assistance provided by BIGGA Partners and BIGGA Education Supporters underpins the Association's considerable investment in Continuing Professional Development and all our educational activity. They are investing in the future of BIGGA members, we are hugely grateful and urge you to show them your support



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40 YEARS FOR KEITH



Left to Right: Paddy Ibbotson, Mark Moore, Shaun Cuffin, Keith Kellow, Simon Johnson

Congratulations to Keith Kellow who has celebrated a hugely impressive 40 years of service at Falmouth Golf Club.

Keith began as an Assistant Greenkeeper at the stunning Cornish course when they only had one other greenkeeper in 1975. He became a BIGGA member in 1987 and has retained his membership ever since.

He's worked under three different owners at Falmouth, and alongside the rest of the current greenkeeping

team is currently involved in building several new holes.

When Keith began his career at Falmouth, the maintenance facility was a WW2 Nissen hut which has previously accommodated prisoners of war. Fortunately, times have changed and the team now have a purpose built facility.

Keith's outstanding service was toasted during a celebration evening at the club. He was joined by his wife Marilyn and friends and colleagues past and present.

Current Head Greenkeeper Simon Johnson commented that: "Keith is an excellent member of the team, his knowledge of the course is second to none and is vital to the running of the place."

He has taken two days off sick in 40 years.

Falmouth Club Captain Barry Lawrence presented with an engraved tankard from all the club's members along with a travel voucher worth £500.

SOUTH WEST SECTION TURF CLUB

The inaugural session of the South West Section Turf Club will be held at Thornbury Golf Club on 18 March from 1pm – 3.30pm – and it's free for BIGGA members!

The club will be looking at bunkers and how to improve their construction and maintenance. The day will be spent both on the course and indoors and will focus on auditing bunkers for performance, annual maintenance costs, drainage, lining systems, making a case to change them, being proud of them!

This is a great afternoon of education bought to BIGGA members free of charge thanks to our Section Patrons. Non-member prices are available on request. Please register via southwestsectionbigga@outlook.com

SHORT SESSIONS

BIGGA's London Section have been running a series of educational seminars which are becoming increasingly popular – and they're urging London-based BIGGA members to get involved.

The idea is to engage local greenkeepers in various relevant and topical subjects, with seminars delivered by greenkeepers and members of the trade. On one occasion, BIGGA's Head of Member Learning Stuart Green gave a presentation on CPD and its benefits.

Named 'Short Sessions', the Section are hoping the Sessions will go from strength to strength.

The next Short Session is at Muswell Hill Golf Club on 18 March at 1pm. This will feature a demonstration of the Dryject system and the new rope drainage system, and will be delivered by none other than Billy McMillan.

For more information on this Session, and if you have any questions on the Short Sessions in general, please contact Matt Plested on 07818 410333 or matt.plested@hotmail.co.uk

AMANDA INTERVIEWS... DEREK WILSON

In last month's GI, South West of Scotland Around the Green correspondent Amanda Dorans from Dundonald Links interviewed the Section's new Chairman Frank Clarkson.

This month she caught up with Derek Wilson, BIGGA's South West of Scotland Secretary and Head Greenkeeper at Irvine Golf Club, to chat about his career highlights, his funniest moment in greenkeeping and his passion for Hickory golf.

AD: Great to see you and congratulations on once again being nominated as South West of Scotland's Secretary.

DW: Thanks Amanda. I'm now in my 20th year as Section Secretary.

AD: Where did you begin your greenkeeping career?

DW: I started out in 1975 at Irvine Golf Club before moving on to Turnberry as Head Greenkeeper, where I was honoured to be part of the greenkeeping team for the 1986 Open Championship.

AD: How long have you been in your current role?

DW: I've been Head Greenkeeper at Irvine for the past 29 years.

AD: Share one of your funniest memories with us.

DW: Many years ago, there were four

gentlemen out enjoying their game, and I would describe them as a little worse for wear. They were walking up a very steep banking when one of them fell over and did a roly-poly all the way down into one of our deep sleeper faced bunkers!

AD: What would you like to achieve in your time as Secretary?

DW: My goal would be to see every greenkeeper become a member of the Association.

AD: Do you have any tournament experience?

DW: I've been fortunate enough to be part of many tournaments, amateur and professional.

We've co-hosted the Amateur Championship with Royal Troon, four final Open Championship qualifiers, held the Sunderland Masters over three consecutive years, the British Seniors, the Ladies Home International and the BIGGA National Championship. Upcoming events include the Scottish Youths Championship and the Ladies Open qualifier.

AD: Do you play golf or participate in any other sports?

DW: Yes, I enjoy golf and have a handicap of six. One of my proudest moments as a BIGGA Member during was playing in the Hayter International Cup in Atlanta in 1998. I also enjoy playing in Hickory golf events.



Thank you Derek for sharing some of your great memories and funniest experiences of your fantastic career - I just wish they could all be printed! And, if anyone can guess which course Derek is pictured at, then I'm sure he'll stand you a pint at BTME 2016!

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Greenkeeper Associations from all over Europe gathered in Portugal for the Annual FEGGA Conference on February 13-14.

The coastal town of Lagos, in the Algarve, proved to be an excellent venue enabling the Conference to be split between the Vila Gale hotel, and the nearby Onyria Palmares Golf Club giving a wide range of facilities and the opportunity to stage an Educational Roadshow for Portuguese Greenkeepers.

The Roadshow, supported by Everris & Syngenta, attracted around 45 local greenkeepers and featured presentations covering Soil Tests & interpretation of results, the OnCourse process from the GEO, the benefits of working with an Agronomist, and concluded with a spray calibration practical session delivered by Syngenta. The greenkeepers were enthusiastic and engaged – their concentration very evident as the language

switched from English, into Spanish, and then finally into Portuguese!

The two-day FEGGA conference itself was attended by around 80 people representing greenkeeping right across Europe. The Conference focused on the major issues of Water usage & resource management in Iberia; Education, featuring both the FEGGA programme of Association support operating in Europe supported by the R&A, and the launching of the pilot of an important new initiative from FEGGA which will see Assistant Greenkeepers from across Europe taking on temporary exchange job placements to increase skills, confidence and motivation.

A draft Joint European Position Statement on the use of Pesticides was also debated, and this will continue to be developed over the next three months before coming back to the Associations with more information. Couple this with a

session in which all European Greenkeeper Association activity was discussed and this was a powerful gathering.

At the AGM some amendments to the FEGGA Constitution were accepted to help to continue to modernise, and Giovanni Nava, from Bologna, Italy stood down from the Board after his four year stint being replaced by Joel Nunes of Palmares Golf Club representing the Portuguese Association. The FEGGA Board wish to mark the immense contribution of Giovanni and thanked him sincerely for his time on the Board.

The Conference closed with FEGGA thanking Ransomes-Jacobsen, Toro, John Deere, Syngenta and Campey Turfcare for their support and involvement in delivering some of the education on show, and the Portuguese Greenkeepers Association for their hospitality.

Paul Worster

TYNESIDE TEAM REJOIN BIGGA

We're pleased to announce that the entire greenkeeping team at Tyneside Golf Club have rejoined BIGGA.

The five-strong team at the parkland course in Ryton, Tyne & Wear are now full members of the Association again.

Course Manager David Simpson said: "The club used to pay for the memberships, stopped a few years ago but we've now managed to convince them the sheer value of the greenkeepers being members of such a professional organisation."

The club have recently run a bunker camp and chainsaw training courses.

Pictured from left to right are Steven Richardson, Greg Lee, Michael Gunn, David Simpson and Jeff Cullen.



NORTH AMERICAN SCIENTISTS CRACK CHESTNUT BLIGHT



Sweet chestnut blight caused by the fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica* was first found in the UK in late November 2011 in trees from sourced from a French nursery and planted in Warwickshire and Sussex. The jury is still out on whether the pathogen has escaped into the wider environment.

The same fungal pathogen arrived in the United States over one hundred years ago from Asia on imported Japanese chestnut trees (*Castanea crenata*). It subsequently went to destroy 4 billion native North American chestnut trees (*Castanea dentata*) from Maine to Florida, but US scientists appear to have 'cracked' the problem by using genetic engineering to design an American chestnut tree genetically modified (GM) for resistance to blight.

A team at State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), and led by Dr William Powell (a molecular biologist) and Dr Chuck Maynard (a tree improvement specialist), has designed and developed American Chestnut trees with blight resistance equal to that of Chinese chestnut (*Castanea mollissima*) using a gene sourced from the wheat plant.

Fungal pathogens like *C. parasitica* (and *Chalara fraxinea*) which infect systemically do so by synthesising specific chemical toxins (poisons) to destroy the host plant's defence. In the case of *C. parasitica* the chemical toxin is oxalic acid, one of the

chemicals implicated in skin rashes caused by the stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Dr Powell knew that many symptoms of chestnut blight were caused by oxalic acid, synthesised by the fungus, and that wheat possessed an enzyme called oxalate oxidase which break downs and detoxifies oxalic acid.

The team identified the wheat gene which encodes the production of oxalate oxidase and inserted it into the American chestnut genome. The genetically modified American chestnut trees not only produced the enzyme but were also resistant to infection by *C. parasitica*. By detoxifying oxalic acid genetic modification radically alters the relationship between the American chestnut tree host and the *C. parasitica* pathogen. The latter is effectively downgraded from a fungal parasite to a fungal saprophyte which now lives on the bark of the tree without causing significant harm.

Resistance to blight was recorded at all stages of the process including leaf assays, small stem assays and most significantly when trees inoculated with the fungal pathogen remained as healthy as control trees that had been inoculated with sterile water.

These GM American chestnut trees produced in the laboratory have only two genes (the wheat gene and a common selectable marker gene) which do not occur in the natural American chestnut genome

with its 40,000 genes. A selectable marker gene is one introduced to an organism to help researchers be sure that the resistance-enhancing gene is present.

Next step was the submission of a detailed application to the US federal agencies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which will carry out a rigorous review process. They must now approve the GM American chestnut trees before they become available to the public for planting. The process should take around five years.

This is the first time the approval process will have been used for a tree that is ultimately destined to be planted in the wild. The process has been applied to many crops, orchard and plantation trees, but not to species that are native to U.S. forests. In the meantime Powell and Maynard will produce as many GM American chestnut trees as possible, perhaps 10,000, so they are ready for planting if and when the approval process is complete.

Sweet chestnut coppice is widespread in East Sussex and Kent where it provided timber for fencing and woodchips for energy as well as a biodiversity rich ecosystem. In this latter respect sweet chestnut coppice is an important feature of many golf courses in both East Sussex and Kent.

Dr Terry Mabbett

OPEN 2015 SUPPORT TEAM FOR THE HOME OF GOLF ANNOUNCED

Here are the BIGGA members who will be joining the home greenkeeping team for the 144th Open Championship at St Andrews in July.

The R&A have again asked BIGGA to supply a support team of greenkeepers and they will kindly be providing accommodation, food, refreshments and uniform.

Arriving at The Home of Golf on Sunday 12 July, the team will be required to rake for the players during the tournament itself, and may also be needed to help with early morning preparation work and evening divot duties until the Claret Jug is lifted on Sunday 19 July.

The team is a combination of dozens of new faces together with more experienced team members. One of many joining the team for the first time is Joe Curtis, Course Manager at Gloucester Golf Club.

He said: "I've applied a few times and I'm over the moon to be selected this year, I would have been happy to get on the team any year but the fact it's at St Andrews makes it extra special."

"I've always wanted to join the team at one of the best courses in the world and I'm really excited to be given this opportunity. I'm keen to see how everything is managed during a tournament of this magnitude, I was a greenkeeper at Celtic Manor for a few Welsh Opens and it will be interesting to compare and contrast."

"I'm also keen to network, meet people in the industry - and I'm a big golf fan too, I've never been to The Open, so I'm counting down until July already!"

Thank you to everyone who applied to be part of this year's team.



Tony Bartram - Greenkeeper, The Richmond GC
Robert Bemment - First Assistant Greenkeeper, Immingham GC
Sam Bethell - Greenkeeper, Wimbledon Park GC
Ben Bouchier - Senior Greenkeeper, Maxstoke Park GC
Nigel Broadwith - Course Manager, John O'Gaunt GC
Alex Brougham - Assistant Greenkeeper, Trentham GC
Joe Button - Greenkeeper, Meltham GC
Nigel Colley - Course Manager, Rothley Park GC
Sean Cunningham - First Assistant Greenkeeper, Mortonhall GC
Joe Curtis - Course Manager, Gloucester GC
Luke Elgie - Assistant Greenkeeper, Rushmore GC
Asa English - Deputy Course Manager, Rothley Park GC
Stuart Ferguson - Course Manager, Dundas Parks GC
Jaey Goodchild - Course Manager, Bowood Golf & Country Club
Paul Griffiths - First Assistant Greenkeeper, Seaford GC
John Gubb - Course Manager, Bedfordshire GC
Thomas Heaney - Greenkeeper, Malden GC
Richard Hood - Head Greenkeeper, Sharpley Springs GC
Stuart Imeson - Head Greenkeeper, Dunstanburgh Castle GC
Graham Ives - Head Greenkeeper, Louth GC
Stephen Jack - Head Greenkeeper, Pitreavie GC
Tim Johnson - Greenkeeper, Wilmslow GC
Robert Jones - Head Greenkeeper, Enville GC
Jamie Martin - Head Greenkeeper, Gifford GC
Anthony McGeough - Head Greenkeeper, Richmond (Yorks) GC
Daniel McGuckin - Greenkeeper, Middlesbrough Municipal GC

Billy Merritt - Head Greenkeeper, Beacon Park GC
Kevin Moore - Head Greenkeeper, Whitwood GC
Darren Moxham - Course Manager, Saltford GC
Ronnie Myles - Course Manager, Buchanan Castle GC
Andrew Naismith - Assistant Greenkeeper, Worthing GC
Ian Nichols - Greenkeeper, Orsett GC
Edward Parsloe - Assistant Greenkeeper, Minchinhampton GC
Kaye Pierson - International Greenkeeper, Pinehurst Resort (USA)
Matthew Pratt - Assistant Head Greenkeeper, Giron GC
David Rieck - International Greenkeeper, Golfclub Schloss Monrepos (Germany)
Phil Rowlett - Deputy Head Greenkeeper, John O'Gaunt GC
Rob Sandilands - Head Greenkeeper, Grange-over-Sands GC
George Senior - Greenkeeper, Prestbury GC
Wayne Sewell - Head Greenkeeper, Worplesdon GC
Tom Smith - Deputy Course Manager, Wickham Park GC
Karl Smith - Head Greenkeeper, Longley Park GC
Sean Sullivan CGCS - International Greenkeeper, The Briarwood Golf Course (USA)
Christopher Taylor - Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Willesley Park GC
Simon Torr - First Assistant Greenkeeper, Bearwood Lakes GC
Sam Voss - Head Greenkeeper, Forest Hill Golf & Country Club
Ken Ward - Greenkeeper, Harrogate GC
Bruce Watson - Head Greenkeeper, Cardrona Hotel Golf & Country Club
Tom Wright - Assistant Greenkeeper, Long Ashton GC



Further to the obituary last month, here is a full reprint of George Malcolm's first column as Chairman from June 1991. Many of his comments are still relevant today...

Openness is the name of the game



In October of '89 I was asked if I would consider becoming vice-chairman, this being seen as the next step forward in my committee career in view of my position of seniority on the Board and with the logic of choosing a new chairman from the North, Ivor Scoones coming from the South West. This is an added touch of good housekeeping which prevents the election of, say, three chairmen from one particular region and avoids any feeling that a region is being neglected in any way. In that sense, I suppose I'm serving a double role in that I reside and work in the North but I'm a Scot, so both areas should feel well represented.

Asked by Paddy to be vice-chairman, my first reactions were, naturally enough, both delight and apprehension; because I didn't know what the job really involved. I wanted to do the job, and recognised the honour that was being bestowed upon me but needed to be certain that the whole of my work team and my Club committee at Middlesbrough Brass Castle would be solidly behind me. Thankfully I've had the whole-hearted support of them all and they couldn't be more co-operative and enthusiastic. Before actually committing myself with a positive YES I asked Paddy many questions. For example, I needed a rough idea of just how much time I would need off work.

My mind was set at rest on all counts, and I was already prepared to give up any proper holidays during the intensive two year period, something that most of the board members gladly and willingly do for the good of the Association. I'm lucky also in having my wife Marion as a strong support.

One thing I really want to do in 1991 is ensure that those 'quiet asides' that often happen in places like hotel lobbies and across the bar get an equal airing in board meetings. If a person has something to say, but will not face the board with the same whispered comment, then I have no time for that comment. I'm all for putting my cards on the table and I'll encourage others to do likewise, for we are not operating some sort of secret society - rather the opposite - and openness will be the name of the game.

With the difficulties encountered regarding the previous magazine - which became something of a destructive force in 1990 - now resolved; and with Greenkeeper International already heralded as a giant step forward in promoting the real spirit of the Association, I earnestly hope this will be an era in which we can make great progress. There's little doubt that Ivor served during a tough period and this may have made his term less than perfect. My view of the chairman's position is not seen through any rose-tinted specs, but I believe that along with responsibility there should be a time when holding office is a great joy.

Now that our consolidation is assured I envisage the Association going from strength to strength, ably supported as we are by the R. and A., who have been a tremendous help and source of encouragement. Without them we would be the poorer and whilst we hope in the distant future to be self-sufficient there is no doubt in my mind that they have been and remain true friends of BIGGA and have shown their true colours in so many ways. By way of an addendum to that statement; it is a great bonus for BIGGA that the unions and the controlling bodies of golf have 'bitten the bullet' so to speak and brought the cause of greenkeeping education - and a great many other issues vital to our cause - nearer to an ideal. The next decade under the Joint Golf Course Committee promises to be quite something.

You have asked me what I would like for the Association in the future and I can answer without hesitation. Sooner rather than later, I want to see every greenkeeper in Britain and Europe join this marvellous Association and share in our future. How to get outsiders with us is a matter that taxes us all, but I believe that as a tool of recruitment the magazine has a major role to play. It is the only continuous promotional link many of our members have with the Association, especially those who for reasons unknown choose not to join in the many extra-curriculum activities, and I would like members everywhere to offer the hand of fellowship to his neighbouring greenkeeper - along with a copy of Greenkeeper International - and an invitation to join. Nothing would please me more than to learn of a BIGGA greenkeeper visiting another course where he knows the greenkeeper is not a member and inviting him for a pint and a pep talk. The merit of increasing greenkeeper power by strength of numbers is an easy enough banner to wave and the value a member gets in the package is, without argument, the bargain of the century! That, in a nutshell, is my principal goal and perhaps in the coming years of actually seeing greenkeeper's clamouring to become members - wishful thinking? I believe not.

I'm also constantly reminded of the address given by Bobbie Gee at Harrogate and would like to see all greenkeepers take her message on board and promote themselves in a more vigorous and spirited fashion as true professionals. Without the greenkeeper the world of golf would be in a sorry state and it doesn't matter what level they may have reached, third assistant or course manager, they all play a vital part in the well-being of a hugely profitable industry and should share in the bonanza - it's really up to the individual to go out and do a bit of banner-waving for themselves and their proud profession!

It would be remiss of me not to mention education, but I will do no more than suggest the BIGGA Master Greenkeeper Certificate route as the one sure way in which individual growth will be demonstrated and the path upon which the future of our profession depends. David Golding is opening up whole new vistas in that sphere and greenkeepers everywhere have never had better educational opportunities to improve; and prosper thereby. We should never lose sight of this fact.

In conclusion, I feel that to be chairman of the Association is not unlike being a course manager. Like greenkeeping, it calls for hard work and dedication, but the whole task is greatly rewarding and the results are worthwhile beyond measure. That dedication is reflected in every board colleague and I hope every member has an appreciation of how much hard voluntary work is put in on their behalf. In addition we should not lose sight of the debt we owe to the staff at Head Office. As a final shot, perhaps it would be a bright idea for the board - or small sectors of it along with the Executive Director - to visit regional meetings for open forum. Perhaps in twelve months we shall talk again and I can give you my reflective observations. You can be sure we will not have stood still!

Elected to the lofty heights of chairmanship in April, **GEORGE MALCOLM** took time out to tell David White something about himself and of his aspirations for the Association in the year ahead...



Take a shot at the Majors with Luke Donald and Network90.com for your chance to win £50,000

Network90.com, a private networking site co-founded with former World Number One Golfer Luke Donald, is giving anyone currently working in the golf industry the opportunity to win £50,000 as part of its launch this month.

New members to the site can win the £50,000 by registering their profile at www.network90.com, using the VIP code N90G1 for immediate access, before the start of the Masters on April 9th by simply correctly picking the winners of each Major in 2015.

Golf on Network90.com launches on the back of incredible success in the world of football. Fully endorsed and with FIFA presidential candidate, Luis Figo, as one of its Founding Partners, Network90 has helped facilitate over £100m worth of transfers and jobs in Football since it launched.

Network90 - Golf, which is dedicated and only available to the golf industry, is open to all Greenkeepers, PGA Members, Club Staff, Tour Personnel, Association Officials, Media, Industry Figures and Business persons connected to the global golf business, giving members the ultimate platform to expand their business network within their industry.

Once registered, you'll be able to take advantage of a host of features that only those who have joined will benefit from including exclusive business opportunities, the biggest jobs market in Golf and all the latest industry news so you can stay up to date with news as it breaks.

Packed with bespoke features and tools, Network90.com is backed by former World Number One Luke Donald, who said: "Network90 - Golf is incredibly exciting for the Golf industry, anyone looking to develop their career in golf at whatever level should take advantage of what the site has to offer.

"In the modern era, it's crucial that as an industry, golf keeps up with the rest of the world of sport so that it can grow and I'm delighted that the sport now has a platform like this that allows people to connect so easily."

Graham Macnair, Founder of Network90, said: "We're very excited by the potential that Network90.com offers the golf industry and are delighted to have had a player of Luke Donald's stature come on board and assist in the site's development. As a former World Number One, it gives us great confidence to know that if we weren't offering something of real value to the industry, he wouldn't be involved so heavily.



"What we've recently seen in the golf industry is that clubs are restructuring and opportunities that may not have existed previously are now starting to open up. In today's industry, everyone has the potential to develop their careers and their business through efficient networking. We've already seen what a powerful business tool Network90.com has proved to be in football, having helped facilitate in excess of £100m of transfer fees and jobs, and we think Golf as a whole will really benefit from a private online networking environment, and with a £50,000 prize up for grabs, there's no better time to join."

To join the exclusive Network90.com club and to enter the £50,000 prize promotion, please visit www.network90.com.

Enter Now to win the £50,000

Anyone who joins using the VIP code N90G1 before April 9th will be eligible to enter the cash promotion. On registering with the site, Network90 will ask you to invite three of your industry contacts to join via email. Once this is complete you'll be directed to the competition and presented with a table of players taking part in each of the season's Majors, if you successfully select each of the Major winners you'll win £50,000.*

*Terms and Conditions apply, to view please visit www.Network90.com

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GI INDUSTRY UPDATE

The latest turf industry news from around the globe



ONE SHOT FOR INDIGROW

Indigrow has developed a unique range of concentrated products designed to help turf managers save money, time and packaging disposal. All of the range is packaged in disposable sachets with the complete range at 2-4 sachets per hectare.

This saves precious resources from point of manufacture all the way through to final application. Recent advances in both product and packaging technologies have allowed this innovation. The removal of the water constituent whilst retaining efficacy has been our major concern in manufacture. The water added in the spray tank takes its place.

Tank mixing products can be of great benefit to the turf manager, and the time and cost savings on labour and fuel are just the start. The reduction in spraying activities on greens especially will reduce compaction from machinery and man hours. The highly concentrated products in Indigrow's OneShot range are fully tank mixable with a wide range of fertilisers, fungicides and Primo Maxx. Adding these highly concentrated products to planned liquid or foliar fertiliser applications ensure that the plant gets the additional benefits from seaweed, amino acids and wetting agent, promoting excellent turf health and a reduction in turf stress.

Compass Bio-Active OneShot is a plant stimulant and soil conditioner in the form of a pure seaweed, fully soluble powder. It is manufactured from *Ascophyllum nodosum* seaweed using gentle spray drying technology to avoid excessive thermal degradation. It has been certified as 100% organic, and can therefore be used as part of an organic feeding programme. Seaweed has been used for centuries in turf grass nutrition for its known benefits. It naturally contains plant growth hormones, trace elements, vitamins and amino acids.

Turbine Reaction is a plant Biostimulant and stress relieving agent containing 16% of plant available free L-amino acids, which, when applied to plants suffering from environmental stress can help improve turf health and quality. Turbine Reaction OneShots help turf recover from drought, frost, fungal diseases and pest attack and are rapidly metabolised by the plant.

Magnum One Shot is a highly concentrated penetrant wetting agent designed to give economical yet superior turf wetting and water penetration on hydrophobic soils. It can be used to aid the spread and penetration of foliar fertilisers and certain chemicals such as carbendazim in the soil.



NEW AT RT

Jim Cassidy has been appointed as area Fine Turf technical sales representative in the Rigby Taylor's Midland region.

Jim has worked in the greenkeeping industry for the past 38 years on a range course including Ashridge and Hankley Common with spells in Germany and Portugal. His most recent position was as Regional Course Manager, responsible for seven courses around Birmingham.



HEADLAND EXPAND

Headland Amenity have expanded their sales capacity in the North of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland with the appointment of Dave Howells as Technical Sales Manager.

Dave's experience has taken in greenkeeping at golf clubs around Europe as well as sales. He is no stranger to Headland, and their unique products, as he previously worked for the company for 10 years before embarking on other projects.

As Technical Sales Manager, Dave's main responsibility will be to support both existing and new customers.

NEW JOHN DEERE LAWN TRACTORS

John Deere is adding new models to its extensive range of lawn tractors for 2015. These include an industry leading innovation at the top of the range, designed for faster and more economical mowing.

The X590 Multi-Terrain lawn tractor combines higher levels of power, performance and comfort, and is particularly suitable for larger areas of grass (over 8000m²) or more challenging terrain. Twin Touch foot controls, power steering, a hydraulically operated mower deck and an easy start engine provide a car-like driving experience.

Mowing time is much quicker thanks to an industry first on a lawn tractor, the new constant-speed governor. This maintains the tractor and the mower blade speed even in heavy grass conditions by electronically controlling the amount of fuel supplied to the engine.



NEW AT COUNTRYWIDE

Countrywide is delighted to announce the addition of two new Regional Technical Sales Managers, Geoff Fenn and Neil Rogers, to add to its experienced Turf & Amenity team.

Geoff Fenn, former Course Manager at Bedford and County Golf Club (above right), now takes responsibility for the Midlands, East Midlands and Warwickshire whilst Neil Rogers, former Course Manager for Windwhistle Golf Club will be supporting customers based throughout the Devon and Cornwall area.

"We are delighted to welcome two such experienced individuals as Geoff and Neil to our team," said Sam Honeyborne, Countrywide's T&A National Business Manager. "Our growing, diverse customer base of Sports turf managers and professional contractors now operate 365 days a year, so our challenge is to help customers create healthy turf that lasts all year round, in the most sustainable way. Between them Geoff and Neil have nearly 40 years of practical industry experience, so they are ideally placed to understand those challenges and offer the technical and practical support that our customers require."

Neil, an affiliate member of BIGGA, is already planning the year ahead with customers in Devon and Cornwall.



AITKENS HOLSTER XL

Rob Clare, BIGGA member and Course Manager of Brough Golf Club, is delighted with the results of his weed control programme. After applying the selective systemic herbicide Holster XL on his greens, hardy weeds such as Daisy, Slender Speedwell, Dandelion, Creeping Buttercup and Clover have all but disappeared.

Like all turf professionals, Rob Clare is no stranger to the tricky question of tackling weeds. Over the years he has tried many products with varying degrees of success. He is mindful that chemical control measures can often be tough on turf, and slow in killing weeds.

He said: "We applied the Aitkens Holster XL to the greens last year knowing it's a very effective method of weed control. The unexpected bonus is that it has no damaging after effects on the turf."

Steve Hardwick, Aitkens Sales advisor, added: "I have worked with Rob for many years and although I know this product is effective in the fight against certain weeds. It contains three powerful weed killing ingredients, while at the same time has a very low impact on the surrounding grass."

Membership News

The latest news from BIGGA

Membership News - the section which updates you on the countless benefits of being a BIGGA member. We're on hand to help.

You can contact BIGGA House, our Regional Offices, our Personal Accident Helpline, Legal Assistance and our Lifestyle Counselling Helpline.

You can also save money with our BIGGA Xtra Benefits scheme. More information can be found in the Members' Area of the BIGGA website.



Contact Details

Tracey Maddison
General Manager
traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Elaine Jones
Membership Executive
elaine@bigga.co.uk

Rachael Duffy
Events & Membership Executive
rachael@bigga.co.uk

Tel: 01347 833800
(option 1 for Membership)



You can follow BIGGA on Twitter @BIGGALtd

BIGGA Regional Offices

Scotland & N. Ireland
John Young
07776 242120
johnyoung@bigga.co.uk

Northern
Sandra Raper
07866 366966
sandra@bigga.co.uk
@sandra4bigganor

Midland
Roger Butler
07525 593 359
roger@bigga.co.uk

South East
Clive Osgood
01737 819343
07841 948410
cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk
@cliveosgood

South West & South Wales
Tracey Harvey
07841 948110
tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk
@biggaswsw

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

Personal Accident Helpline
0207 2048952

Greenkeepers Legal Assistance
0800 177 7891

Lifestyle Counselling Helpline
0844 770 1036
www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst



HOW TO SAVE CASH WITH XTRA BENEFITS

Sam Bethell, who has recently joined Wimbledon Park Golf Club, is just one member to take advantage of the BIGGA Xtra Benefits to save cash for a family day out!

Sam (above at BTME 2015) said: "I've only recently looked into the Xtra Benefits, but I'm really grateful. We were looking to take our girls to the London Aquarium for my daughter's 2nd birthday and it would have cost £63, but we used the discount code and saved £23!"

"Little things go a long way and we were really pleased." To take advantage of this member benefit, click on the Xtra Benefits logo in the Members Area of the BIGGA website.

UPDATE YOUR EMAILS

One of the most regular requests from correspondents in the Around the Green section of GI is update your emails – and it's something that is crucial for you to get the most from your BIGGA membership.

If the team at BIGGA House do not have your correct, up to date email you could be missing out on all sorts of communications from BIGGA and your Region and/or Section. So, if you've recently changed your email address, or you're just unsure if BIGGA House have the right address for you, just call BIGGA House where any member of the team will be happy to change it for you.

This will ensure you do not miss out on any offers, news, events, educational opportunities, competitions or announcements from the Association.

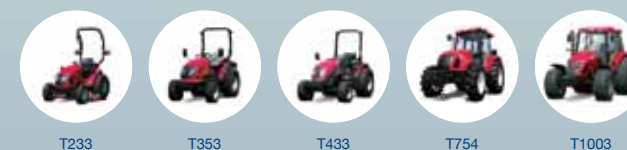
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L&D News

The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

Learning & Development News has the latest updates on CPD and everything related to greenkeeper education

and training, supported by our BIGGA Partners, BIGGA Education Supporters and Individual Contributors –

funding your future. Contact the Learning & Development team at BIGGA House for more information.



Matthew Amy

FTMI DELEGATES ANNOUNCED

The successful delegates for the Future Turf Managers Initiative 2015 made possible by Jacobsen have been announced.

Competition for the 20 places was fierce with a total of 76 applications received. The judging panel from Jacobsen and BIGGA had the difficult task of selecting the final 20, and the FTMI 2015 will take place at Ransomes Jacobsen's HQ in Ipswich from 24-26 March.

The final 20 will be working with professional trainers, Jacobsen and BIGGA staff and their fellow greenkeepers. They will also work closely with five greenkeeper mentors. The expectation is that they will leave the FTMI with a clear understanding of their

future career path and goals and a realistic overview of the expectations that come with the role of Manager.

Sessions include 'Becoming a Leader', 'Interview Techniques and Writing a CV', 'Effective Communication Strategies' and 'Building a Budget' - many of the skills required at managerial level.

The group will also get the opportunity to enjoy a tour of the Ransomes Jacobsen factory on the site.

One of the 20 is Matthew Amy, a First Assistant Greenkeeper who will be travelling to Ipswich from La Moye Golf Club in Jersey.

He said: "I'm really looking forward to the session discussing interview techniques and CVs as I

think that will really help me in the future.

"Above all, I can't wait to meet other greenkeepers from across the UK. Because I'm over in Jersey it's sometimes difficult to attend BIGGA events, so this is the perfect chance to network, learn from the other guys, ask questions and develop my education.

"I'm flying into Gatwick, then hiring a car for the drive to Ipswich - I can't wait!

For the full list of delegates please check the BIGGA website.



Individual Contributors: Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS, W J Rogers, Espen Bergmann, Nick Gray, Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn, Douglas Duguid, Jaey Goodchild, Michael Beaton, David Barker, Greg Evans, Frank Newberry

Contact Details

Sami Strutt
Head of Member Development
07818 405606
sami@bigga.co.uk

Stuart Green
Head of Member Learning
stuart@bigga.co.uk
@Stuart_BIGGA

Deb Burnett
L&D Administrator
deb@bigga.co.uk
01347 833800 (option 3)
www.bigga.org.uk

CPD HITS 1,000 MEMBER LANDMARK

The Learning & Development team at BIGGA House are celebrating after the 1,000th CPD member claimed their Credits!

BIGGA's CPD (Continuing Professional Development) programme was relaunched 18 months ago to ensure it was more inclusive, easier to use and maintain and more modern with the launch of an online Credit recording system.

Members have really caught on to the system and the number using it steadily rose throughout 2014 as greenkeepers took advantage of it to claim credits via educational, networking or professional activities.

The 1,000th member is Anthony Sunney, First Assistant Greenkeeper at West Middlesex Golf Club. He claimed CPD after attending an educational seminar at Oaklands College. He wins a voucher for the Continue to Learn programme at BTME 2016.

Stuart Green, BIGGA's Head of Member Learning, said: "We're delighted to see we've hit the landmark 1,000th member who has engaged with CPD.

"It's proved far more popular than the previous scheme as we can see with these numbers.

"It's important to note that the ethos of CPD has not altered - it identifies you as a professional, competent, knowledgeable and motivated individual who will be a valuable asset to any employer.

"I'd like to thank all of our members who are using the programme, the benefits are clear for all to see. If you haven't joined in yet, why not give it a go. It will help you enormously in your career, regardless of what level you are at."

For more on CPD, including how to claim credits, visit the 'Continuing Professional Development' page in the Members Area of the BIGGA website. If you have any other questions please email cpd@bigga.co.uk or call 01347 833800 option 3



Anthony Sunney



NEW CPD MEMBERS

Congratulations to the following members who have been awarded CPD:

Andrew Laing - Gaudet Luce Golf Club
Michael Ellis - The Point at Polzeath
Sean Sullivan CGCS - The Briarwood Golf Course
Simon Dexter - SRUC (Elmwood)
Joseph Dormer - West Sussex Golf Club
Michael Laheen - Lingdale Golf Club
Andrew Orr - Drumpellier Golf Club
John Watson - Downfield Golf Club
Sam Voss - Forest Hill Golf & Country Club
Stephen Jack - Pitreavie Golf Club
Gerry Bruen - Williamwood Golf Club
Joe Button - Meltham Golf Club
Andrew Noon - Heswall Golf Club
David Cooper - Ladybank Golf Club
Stuart Crossan - Golfpark Bella-Vista
Sam Bethell - Wimbledon Park Golf Club
Era Johan van Zyl - St Andrews Links Trust
Jaime Acton - Rushmore Golf Club
Wesley Lenihan - Ealing Golf Club
Richard Johnstone - Nairn Dunbar Golf Club
Andrew Weeks - Hockley Golf Club
Paul Armour - St Andrews Links Trust
Martin Turna - St Andrews Links Trust
Lee Brady - Muswell Hill Golf Club

Approved & Milestone Achieved
Laurence Pithie MG - Turfmaster One Ltd

Approved TWICE & Milestone Achieved!
Lee Strutt MG - Ochil Developments (GWest)



BARONESS SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations to Mike Riddell from St Andrews Links Trust who has been awarded a Baroness Scholarship.

He will be studying a Level 3 SVQ in Sports Turf Management at Elmwood College.

Also well done to Robert Patton from The Bedfordshire Golf Club who will be studying a Level 3 Diploma in work-based Horticulture at Oaklands College.



JACOBSEN SCHOLARSHIP



It's good news for Sam Bethell of Wimbledon Park Golf Club who has been awarded a Higher Education Scholarship supported by Jacobsen.

He will be undertaking a FdSc in Sportsturf online through Myerscough College.

Wildlife at The Home of Golf

BIGGA Member James Hutchinson recently took up the position of Environmental Officer at St Andrews. Here he outlines the diverse wildlife on the site – from wild orchids to kestrels

The Home of Golf is an extraordinary place - not just for the obvious reasons - but for the vast amount of wildlife diversity on offer.

Take the lesser known Strath-tyrum Course.

Most of this particular gem is built on reclaimed farmland and as a result is liberated by interesting grasses, wildflowers, trees and all sorts of wonderful wildlife. Or, the charming but demanding Jubilee Course with its sand dominated horizons and tall dune systems. There's also the small matter of the world famous Old Course and the Swilcan Burn which houses birds such as northern wheatears, grey wagtails and a kingfisher! Whichever wildlife you take an interest in then the chances are that they can be found on or around one of the seven golf courses.

It would be a very long process to tell you about all the wildlife, ecology, conservation and environmental practices we have on the go, so I've chosen a few snippets.

Castle Course

You could argue that the Castle's wetland habitat has been a resounding success since the course opened in 2008, so much so the team were nominated for Outstanding Environmental Project of the Year in the STRI Awards.

The wetland habitat includes a pond, a couple of lowland marshes, numerous attractive small bridges and a diverse collection of aquatic plants which are a welcome attraction to the UK's water residing critters including moorhens and the elusive water rail.

The course is not only home to an interesting aquatic project but is also a place where northern marsh orchid and pixie cup lichens grow in abundance – both are fantastic to see in bloom. There have also been 38 different species of bird noted from September to November.

There are three deer and literally hundreds of mice and shrews. We've erected a kestrel box at the

far end of the course in the hope of attracting a family to the banquet which is on offer!

The Eden and Strathtyrum's Operation Pollinator areas:

Wild carrot, birds foot trefoil, yellow rattle, ribwort plantain, Bush vetch, rough hawkbit, white clover, harebell, restharrow, self-heal, scabious, common sorrel, sweet vernal grass, false-oat grass and upright bent can all be found growing on one of the 3000m² operation pollinator areas and I can tell you that the bees, hoverflies and butterflies are really grateful for such a proactive project!

The team are now in the process of cutting, removing and verticutting a huge portion of their operation pollinator project thus ensuring next year's growth is as successful as the previous year's growth. There are two owl boxes and a selection of smaller nest boxes on the Strathtyrum too, and in November a peregrine falcon was sighted alongside the resident kestrel.

The Balgove

The Balgove is small but not without its eco credentials. The 3rd green heads straight towards the Old Tom Morris building (which has an eco-friendly sedum roof) and the area to the rear of the 3rd green has patches of coarse and fine grasses which grow at different rates. So, the plan was to incorporate heather from seed for both ecological and visual purposes.

The seed is locally sourced, in fact you probably couldn't get any more local as it was harvested from the Eden Course which is a stone's throw away! The Balgove is also home to one of our Barenbrug seed trial plots which looks at ways of minimising water and fertiliser usage within new grass species.

Old Course Heather and Fungi

During November we undertook a two hour forage on the Old with our resident expert and uncovered

variety of fungi including suede bolete, scaly wood, witch's hat and many others.

The fungi seem to be far more plentiful on the Old Course for one very simple reason: it is actually an old course! It's been in its location for a very long time and as such has built up a good amount of mycorrhizal relationships within the fungi and the vegetation which resides there. These symbiotic relationships can often take years to develop and as a result need little or no disturbance to flourish. This results in a vast and diverse array of fruits throughout the autumnal months – many of which are edible but I really would leave identifying these varieties to the experts.

The heather on the Old has taken a bashing due to the amount of play (heather will not tolerate too much trampling and including caddies there are over 60,000 rounds annually). This is not the only factor affecting this attractive plant – the heather beetle has been eating its way through patches of our heather too.

We are tackling this issue by removing as much thatch and moss from beneath the affected heather therefore removing as much of the beetle's overwintering larvae as possible. We do this by hand rather than spraying pesticides as this is not good environmental practice, and we would run the risk of damaging the population of any other invertebrates which makes our heather their home.

However, our heather seed harvesting from healthy plants has proven to be quite successful of late with a great number of greenkeepers helping out with seed collection. We are incorporating them into the more out-of-play areas, thus assisting the UK's declining bee species in their plight for survival. Ground nesting birds including the grey partridge, skylark and lapwing (all of which are regulars to the courses and are all on the RSPB's Red List Species) will use heather as a nest site.





The Old Course



John Bateson, Jamie King, Stuart Lindsay, Martin Turna, Joe Meakins, Natasha Replinska, Mike Riddell, James Hutchinson

New and Jubilee Courses

Sand martins are noted to be in decline as their wintering grounds often succumb to severe drought conditions. This has a knock on effect on the martins on the East coast of Scotland, so we are undertaking one or two nest reinstating areas on the New and Jubilee courses to assist in helping these fantastic birds.

I say 'reinstating' as I recently discovered that martins used to use the sand faces of low lying blow-outs prior to them growing over with gorse. We recently exposed the aforementioned areas to bare sand and incorporated old drainage pipes cut to 25cm to attract them.

On the Jubilee Course is the Links Trust's main organic recycling station which houses a selection of windrow composting lines. We produce tons of useable material per year which is subsequently given away to the local community's farms and households. This is impressive, but the part I find most interesting is the sheer amount of birdlife present at the station.

Goldfinches, linnets, house sparrows, sparrowhawks and kestrels

can be found, and there have been numerous sightings of a great grey shrike. At the end of the Jubilee are a family of sea eagles which were once extinct in Scotland; they were reintroduced in 2007 and according to Fife's Countryside Ranger seem to be settling in and have recently raised a juvenile.

The St Andrews Links Trust works closely with the environmental governing bodies in the area including Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Marine Scotland and the Local Nature Reserves. An excellent example of this teamwork can be found on West Sands (where they filmed the opening scenes of Chariots of Fire and also part of the Rowan Atkinson sketch at the opening of the London Olympics).

Occasionally, the high tide and easterly winds drive the sea into the dunes creating what we call blowouts which is what happens when the sea retreats taking the sand dune with it. When this is the case, we offer a team of greenkeepers, tractors, trailers and digging equipment to move tons of sand from the beach to the mobile dune system which surrounds the town

and the golf courses. This is done under license from Marine Scotland and in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage.

The dunes are fenced off to help trap windblown sand and also to protect them from erosion by humans. The Countryside Ranger assisted by volunteers subsequently plants the newly created dunes with marram grass to further stabilise the area – a huge amount of work. Is it worth it? Well, the dunes are home to the increasingly rare snow bunting – so the answer is yes.

There's much more going on including the flock of hebridean sheep which mow the fenced off area to the North Sea side of the Jubilee Course thus reducing fossil fuel costs for the Fife Council and consequently creating an ideal habitat for the highly vocal skylark. There's the bird feeding station which regularly attracts a diverse bunch of feathered beauties to the nuts on offer.

So, whichever wildlife you take an interest in then the chances are that they can be found on or around one of the seven golf courses here at St Andrews!

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Men at work - down under

Greenkeeper Chris Allen has thrown himself into volunteering at various events including the Australian Open, Wimbledon and the BMW PGA Championship with BIGGA.

Here he urges other greenkeepers to increase their professional and personal experience by volunteering and working overseas and speaks to the British greenkeeper who played a huge part in the success of the Australian Open 2014

Chris cutting Centre Court at Wimbledon

Greenkeeping gives us a fantastic opportunity to work abroad, as well as the chance to work at prestigious UK courses through summer casual positions. I will be spending this summer working at Walton Heath.

Countless tournaments take place where volunteers are welcome, and I've met many greenkeepers that are making the most of this opportunity, hopefully this article will encourage a few more.

Gaining experience and knowledge from various greenkeepers at a range of facilities - and having fun along the way - can surely only benefit you in the long run.

Getting Qualified

So where do we start? For me, it was a wasted year at golf college before I realised I wasn't even going to get in my scratch team let alone make a living from playing golf. I had done a week's work experience greenkeeping while at school, so I knew it was something that interested me.

I was fortunate to land an apprenticeship at Coombe Hill Golf Club, and I really learned my trade there. High standards were drilled into me from the start and an approachable boss meant you could truly feel fully involved in course improvements.

I did both my Level 2 and 3 whilst at the club, studying at Merrist Wood College. My college project was to play a part in building a new bunker. I was fortunate enough to be trained up on most machinery, and work at a course where the right practice was done as opposed to the cheapest.

The Golden Bear

Maybe it was the influence of several Australian guys at Coombe Hill, but I was very keen to further my greenkeeping experience down under.

I came across an advert on the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association (AGCSA) website - the Australian Golf Club in Sydney were reconstructing the course and greenkeepers were required.

The chance to work with warm season grasses, in 40C heat on a championship course, was a new and really enjoyable experience. Setting up the course for the greatest ever player - Jack Nicklaus - was special and I spent five months there.

For more on my time there take a look at my interview with the club's Course Superintendent Phil Beal.

Wimbledon, Wentworth and Walton Heath

I've always wanted to work at Wimbledon, so when the opportunity arrived last summer I was the most excited I have ever been for a job. I finely tuned my hand cutting and attention to detail, and the Wimbledon Championships fortnight was amazing. I learned the most during renovations, which start the week after the Championships. The use of the Koro, pedestrian scarifiers as well as top dressing and seeding means each court gets a new coverage of grass each year. This work plays a big part in creating a world-class surface.

They take on temporary staff every season many of which have golf experience, so it's a great opportunity to broaden your knowledge.



I also joined BIGGA's Support Team at the BMW PGA Championship, which was a great chance to meet more experienced BIGGA greenkeepers and work on another superb course. Next was a day at Walton Heath for the US Open Qualifier, where Alan Strachan and the team got me really involved with the whole set up. It was another fun and informative day, and all these experiences have improved my CV.



The Australian Open 2014

I recently volunteered at The Australian Open held at the Australian Golf Club in Sydney in November 2014. With the new look golf course almost complete it was going to be interesting to see how it played, and it turned out to be a great feeling of pride and enjoyment.

The whole event was a massive success and the congratulations towards the greenkeepers kept coming, I'd never seen the work of greenkeepers appreciated so much. Sitting near the 18th with the crowd, watching Jordan Spieth sink his birdie putt for the title, I got a real sense of achievement.

The full-time team is 22 greenkeepers including four Brits. They were joined by 25 volunteers working for a nine-day period. The atmosphere was really good. Course Superintendent Phil Beal and his assistant Dave Smith were very relaxed and this transmitted to the volunteers.

I was in one of three pairs hand cutting the greens and my holes included the 18th and 9th greens. The greens were initially double cut, followed by a double roll, but this varied later in the week as the greens were reading too high on the stimp (according to the tournament director). This meant the greens were not rolled at all on tournament days.

Wednesday to Sunday consisted of split shifts. Morning was set up, then back in the afternoon where fairways, tees, approaches and semi rough were cut again. Other afternoon jobs were pitchmark repairing, divoting and blowing debris and paths.

Volunteer - to boost your career!



Paul Worster, former BIGGA Chairman and Course Manager at Minchinhampton Golf Club, is a huge advocate of greenkeeper volunteering. Here he explains why

Volunteering is an integral part of many industries, and is actually surprisingly commonplace given that nearly all of us need to earn money to support ourselves. Examples include unpaid interns, unpaid emergency workers and unpaid charity workers.

Some of these are a prelude to gaining a full-time and meaningful position in many companies, but all of them have positive connotations for the individual. Volunteering is also an established way of improving knowledge, experience or skill. Whether it is volunteering within a chosen profession or looking outside it to find an opportunity that doesn't exist within work, volunteers are usually well thought of by potential employers.

With the new governance structure for BIGGA approved by the AGM at BTME 2015, there are potential opportunities on offer for more members and the benefits of becoming involved in the structure are well worth underlining.

Ever felt stuck in a rut? Busy job but not much variation, and only limited opportunities to develop? Volunteering ticks these boxes at a stroke.

- At the outset – you learn how to:
- Negotiate with people
 - Meet and greet people at events
 - Take meeting minutes
 - Set agendas
 - Write meeting reports
 - Develop action points

All of these are real people skills and all of them come with volunteering throughout BIGGA Committees.

If you want to feel valued and to work as part of a team – in this case the Section Committee – then that would be a great place to start. See how the team develops and how the dynamics come together to bring progress. Being part of a committee gives you an important insight into how your Golf Club Committees should work (and also why they

sometimes don't!)

Make important contacts within the industry in which you work and get yourself known. This above all else is positive for your career and that's the payback for volunteering for BIGGA. If and when you want to get on the job trail, then being involved in the structure is the ideal background as you will already know and be known to some of the people who will make the decisions. In particular those who you most need to impress will already be aware of your skills and feel comfortable around you. This process gives a real headstart on the opposition at that all-important job interview.

All of this gives you an insight into other careers such as administrative positions, or even an avenue into Golf Club Management.

It's a great chance to 'put something back' into BIGGA and into the profession. There have been some great examples of this over the years. BIGGA Chairmen have invested huge amounts of time and skill into the Association and profession and all have gained immensely from the experience.

If any further good news were required – it has been proved that volunteering is actually good for health! Research has shown volunteering in certain situations brings:

- Increased longevity
 - Increased ability to carry out activities associated with daily living
 - Increased ability to cope with own ill health
 - Improved family relationships
 - Improved quality of life
- So, if you want to:

- Gain new skills, knowledge and experience
- Meet and work with new people
- Develop existing skills and knowledge
- Enhance a CV
- Improve employment prospects

Then volunteering is for you!

Q What are our your thoughts looking back on the tournament?

A I thought it was a great success. We did some different things on the golf course, we striped the fairways for the first time, which sparked the place up. That's quite unusual on couch grass.

It wasn't the easiest thing to do – it's not like cutting a cool season grass, you really have to burn the lines in. I thought the greens were excellent, they were a true test. The greens are fairly subtly designed and we managed to get them fairly firm. I wouldn't say they were quick, but the tournament director had a speed he wanted and we met that.

One of the interesting things for me is I'm not a great watcher of golf. If I'm watching golf I'll analyse the course. But watching world-class players play on a course you maintain is a real treat. This was down to the hard work of the team here and the volunteers.

Q: There's talk of the tournament returning next year, what particular challenges did you face and what could be improved on?

A: I thought there was a little bit too much grass on the fairways, they were a little bit soft. That was purely due to timing. I didn't have any Primo on them. I am certain if I can get some Primo on them next year the surface will be better.

I did some applications on the fairways and rough. It was a herbicide and a wetting agent which set the couch off and burnt the leaf. So three weeks before I didn't have enough grass and the week up to the tournament I probably had a little too much. I would be far more confident next time.

Q It's a big achievement for a British greenkeeper to be in charge of The Australian Open course. What was the reason for your move out here and how has this benefitted your personally and professionally?

A: My wife's Australian so she was pretty keen to move over here, and we were finding it hard in the UK to get ahead. I think you can have a better life out here. The cost of living is lower and the weather is better

The Man In Charge – Phil Beal

Chris caught up with Phil Beal, Course Superintendent at The Australian Golf Club, the week after the tournament to get his view on The Australian Open and life down under.



- not to say I don't miss the UK. Professionally, I'm absolutely sure the agronomy is exactly the same all around the world. Do the right things, get your fungicides right and get your programmes right and you're successful.

The only thing that's massively different is the extremes of weather. You have to be right on it. If you're getting

a 35C day and you're not ready for it then you get burnt big time. I think I've proved that when you travel, you adapt. I count myself lucky that I've landed such a prestigious job.

The tournament was good for me to showcase the course. Moving over to Australia is not the easiest thing to do. The first year I didn't have a problem at all. After 12 months I started

to doubt it. I got a little bit homesick but then I started playing cricket and started socialising more. I've never looked back from that point. You put yourself out there to be successful. If you hide and moan about not being able to make friends then it won't work. I've got a very good family and we're very close. That's important too.



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The entry fee of **£95** includes all golf fees, lunch both days and dinner on Monday evening. Please note that there is no accommodation provided.

Name

Address.....

.....

..... Post Code.....

Mobile.....

E-mail.....

Membership No.

Handicap.....

BIGGA Section.....

Golf Club

Payment method (please tick)

- ☐ I enclose my cheque made payable to 'BIGGA Ltd' value **£95**
☐ Please debit my Mastercard / Switch / Visa / Delta card with the fee of **£95**

Card number.....

.....

Start Date Expiry Date

Last 3 security digits.....

Issue No. (Switch/Delta only)

Signature.....

Date

Or E-mail your details to:

rachael@bigga.co.uk

Ensure you receive confirmation of entry by return email.

Deadline for entry is 4th September 2015

Completed entry forms should be sent to: **BIGGA National Championship, BIGGA House, Aldwark, Airedale, York YO61 1UF**

The main tournament for the Challenge Trophy will be played over 36 holes, medal play, with the best overall gross score producing the BIGGA National Champion, who must be a greenkeeper member. The greenkeeper player with the lowest nett score will be presented with the BIGGA Challenge Cup.

There will be prizes for the first five over 36 holes in the gross category. The top three in the nett competition will also receive prizes. After each day of 18 holes there will be prizes for winners of handicap divisions. The BIGGA Regional Team Cup and prize will be calculated from the 8 best nett scores over the first day of play. There will also be various nearest the pin and longest drive competitions, featuring prizes.

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Brora Golf Club's Revolution®



Brora Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper James MacBeath tell us how Farmura's Revolution® has boosted the traditional links course in the Scottish Highlands

Brora Golf Club was founded in 1891, originally a nine hole course which was extended to 18 about ten years later.

In 1923 the committee invited the renowned course architect and golfer, James Braid was to visit.

This he did in February 1924, arriving by train, walking around the course and departing later the same day. For the princely sum of

£25, Braid submitted his plan and the course which exists today was born.

There have been very few changes to the layout proposed by Braid, the only minor alteration extended the 11th hole by 53 yards to convert it to a par 5 and the course overall to a par 70.

Through all these years all greenkeepers that have worked there

have had limited staff, equipment and budgets. James MacBeath, the present Head Greenkeeper, said:

"As far as I can remember there have only been five Head Greenkeepers here and, although the machinery has changed, all have worked to the same philosophy of how we maintain this unique rustic piece of land."

Low nitrogen and water inputs, a

managed aeration and top dressing programme combined with applications of seaweed have kept the playing characteristics consistent throughout the years. Firm, fast, true and well presented turf, just how a traditional links course should play.

In recent years James has added applications of the wetting agent, Revolution, to his programme. This has eliminated dry patch during the warm summers and reduced the problems caused on the edge of greens by sand splash from the bunkers.

He makes two fertiliser applications on greens and surrounds. One early C-complex 7-0-7, then in mid summer a 4-0-8 invigorator, with some seaweed applications in between.

Other than that it is only Revolution and soluble iron during the winter months. Tees and pathways receive similar inputs and the rest of the course only gets what nature provides.

Brora is unique in many ways, not least because they share the land with the local crofting community who have a historic right to graze livestock on the course. Sheep and cattle wander freely around the course, whilst unobtrusive single strand electric fences protect the greens from damage.

Over the years this relationship has helped to maintain the rough at playable heights, but woe betide the golfer who thinks it is wide open. Like all great architects Braid has made clever use of bunkering and subtle changes in angles to protect the greens.

With the maintenance practices preparing firm surfaces they become almost impossible to hold from out of the rough.

Although recent warm and wet summers have helped the rough to thicken up, the club and its greenkeeping team are committed to retaining the playing characteristics at Brora and plan to thin the rough out where necessary.

Brora is a traditional out and back links, the 9th green sitting at the furthest point from the clubhouse.

Even with this layout Braid has managed to get each of the four par threes to play in a different direction.

The 9th and 18th play north and south while the 6th and 13th play east and west.

It is perhaps a little unusual that each nine ends with a par three, the 18th at 201 yards uphill to a green with a false front and a severe swale in front is particularly challenging.

The members and visitors watching your trials and tribulations from the clubhouse overlooking the green do nothing to add to your sense of wellbeing!

Located just 20 minutes from the well known course at Dornoch, Brora has many regular visitors who make the long journey north to play this spectacularly scenic gem.

Why not join them?

Understanding fertilisers

Making sense of the multitude of fertilisers on the market can be difficult. With a choice of granules, liquids, and powders – quick release, slow release or controlled release, selecting the right approach means understanding how different products will react.

Headland Amenity's Andy Russell explains the differences

Using a fertiliser is a way of supplying one or more nutrients that are essential to the growth of plants. Efficient and well thought-out fertiliser practices help to produce a strong, healthy grass plant, able to better withstand the rigorous demands of all-year golf.

However, significant over or under application, poor application techniques and applying in adverse climatic conditions can all have a hugely negative impact on turf quality. Understanding more about the make-up of fertilisers - what they contain and how they react - can help to make sure that the eventual result is the one you want.

It's not that there are actually too

many 'bad' fertilisers! Mostly they are just a vehicle to deliver nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium that are essential nutrients for plant growth - sometimes combined with other ingredients.

Unfortunately, some nutrient sources are cheaper than others and this sometimes leads to products being formulated to provide only a colour response rather than to contribute to a wider set of desired benefits such as consistent growth, presentation and overall plant health. To get the best out of a given material, it is important to understand how it will work and what response can be expected under a given set of conditions.

The first place to look for such information is your supplier.

Anyone selling fertilisers should be able to explain the make-up of their product.

What are the sources of nitrogen? Ammonium and nitrate nitrogen will provide an almost immediate response, even in cool temperatures, whilst urea or perhaps sources of organic nitrogen will require warmer soil conditions before they are able to have an effect.

Where does the potassium come from? Maybe it is supplied as potassium chloride – a cost-efficient popular source with a relatively high salt index (burn potential) or maybe it exists as a slow-release organic material.

Hopefully, your supplier can use the information on the label to



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ANALYSIS
Nitrogen (N)
Total 5.0%
Urea nitrogen 2.1%
Ammoniacal nitrogen 1.1%
Nitrate nitrogen 1.4%
Organic nitrogen 0.4%
Phosphorus pentoxide (P2O5) Total 2.0% (0.8%P)
Soluble in neutral ammonium citrate & water
Potassium Oxide (K2O)
Total 10.0% (8.3%K)
5.2% soluble in water
Magnesium oxide (MgO)
Total 1.0% (0.6% Mg)
Calcium oxide (CaO)
Total 2.0% (1.4% Ca)
Humic acid
Total 7.2%
Low in chlorine

Density and sizing of granules is important to ensure even distribution

Selecting the right type of fertiliser is key



explain the 'ingredients' and their role in achieving the desired results. With slow or controlled release products, it may or may not state what proportion of the nitrogen (for example) exists in that form. This is of course extremely important information as it will have a huge bearing on the expected performance of the product.

You would expect a fertiliser with 75% of its nitrogen in a stated controlled release form (CRF) to work for much longer than an equivalent product with only 40% controlled release nitrogen. You might also expect the second product to be significantly less expensive than the first, as the CRF portion is likely to be the most costly element of the fertiliser to produce.

The physical characteristics of a fertiliser are important considerations when it comes to uniformity of application and response, how easy or difficult granular products are to spread or how tank-mixable liquids are with other desired partner products.

Fertilisers containing unmatched granule sizings are not evenly distributed by rotary spreaders because the larger, heavier particles are thrown further from the spreader than smaller, lighter particles. Another factor here is the density of granules. Light granules are not thrown far by pedestrian rotary spreaders meaning that a greater number of passes are required to achieve the desired outcome.

Many fertiliser companies put their liquid formulations through extensive testing to confirm that they are compatible with other complimentary products in a tank-mix solution. This not only gives peace of mind that the proposed applications will not damage turf, but also will not result in costly and time-consuming cleaning of spray equipment following blocked nozzles and filters where incompatible products have been used.

Soluble fertilisers are dry formulations that can be dissolved in water and sprayed out as a liquid. Good quality solubles will not contain impurities that can block filters and will dissolve rapidly in the spray-tank as long as enough water is available.

Cost, or rather value for money, is a key aspect of fertiliser selection but is difficult to evaluate without the types of information above. It is easy to understand that a 20kg bag of fertiliser contains 20% less product than an equivalent 25kg bag and, like-for-like, will not be good value if they cost the same. The least cost-effective fertiliser is the one that does not perform in the way you expect or for as long as promised, so it pays to understand the different technologies involved and their strengths and weaknesses.

There is now new regulation surrounding product labelling and any hazard warning symbols previously used on fertilisers are changing due to the new CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) legislation. This has come into force across all of Europe, directed by the United Nations, to help in the creation of a "globally harmonised" set of warning symbols that are applied to all types of product labels and which will be recognised around the world.

This new legislation has resulted in the replacement of the orange hazard warning symbols by new, red diamond symbols. The final deadline in the EU for the application of the CLP legislation in the labelling of ALL products is 1 June 2015.

Some old stock with the previous orange warning symbols may remain in circulation but has to be used or relabelled by 1 June 2017.

Old CHIP hazard symbol	Hazard	New CLP hazard symbol
	Harmful/irritant/toxic	
	Corrosive	
	Dangerous to the environment	
	Oxidising	

Grass species selection

In his final article, Dr Paul Miller explores grass species selection, and the impact of turf management practices on the ability of a plant to fulfil its biological requirements

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is often described as 'survival of the fittest', but that phrase wasn't his; he preferred instead to talk about species as 'better designed for an immediate, local environment'. I want to think about what that means for our grasses and fine turf management.

In previous articles I've tried to discuss the grass plant in three ways; firstly thinking about the nat-

ural habitats of grasses, secondly considering grass plant structure and the roles of its component parts, and thirdly identifying some of the important physiological processes taking place within the plant. I made the assumption, given the pressures on our industry to continually produce more with less, that it is a good thing to understand our grass plant and the way it works, and have tried to explain some of those ideas. In this final article I'd like to try to pull some of

this together and discuss them in relation to fine turf management 'on the ground', concentrating on the ideas of grass species selection, and on the impact of turf management practices on the ability of a plant to fulfil its biological requirements.

Lets go back to Darwin and his statement – what does this mean for us? Well, my interpretation is that we get the grasses that suit the environment we have been given or that we create for them; the envi-

ronment being the combination of climate (temperature, humidity, light intensity, precipitation, day length) soil (texture, structure, compaction, pH, nutrient levels, soil biology) and other 'selection pressures', for example levels of play, frequency and height of cut, aeration practices, irrigation practices, in fact everything that goes into a turf management programme. Of course not all of those components of environment are in our control, but some are.

In conversations with other industry professionals, and in relation to the development of golf into parts of the globe where experience and skill in turf management are limited, we really can't start with the question 'what grass do we want to grow here', but would be wiser to consider 'this is our environment' (technical, financial, social); given that, what grass will do the best job for us?

So, for example, *Agrostis stolonifera* (*A. palustris*) is a desirable grass because of its potential density, texture, colour and quality of performance under intensive maintenance, and is often the first choice grass for cool season turf.

It is also a tempting choice in transition zone and even warm-season environments, but it remains a cool season grass, and so will naturally be stressed in transition zone and warm season summers and need a lot of 'life support' in order to remain free of disease. Implications are for increased irrigation demands, syringing, fertiliser use and disease management.

I illustrate using an extreme example, in Picture 1, which is a golf course in Asia, attempting to grow creeping bent greens in a monsoon summer – the combination of 30°C, torrential rain almost daily and complete humidity meant it was stressed to the point of giving up. I never did establish if this was strictly speaking a disease, or the condition of 'wet wilt'. In either case this was, in my view, a square peg being forced into a round hole, and it didn't work.

A more positive example a little closer to home is that of Castle Stuart Golf Links near Inverness. The development team of this new course wanted to create a links golfing experience, a large part of which would be achieved by growing fescue-dominated turf throughout the golf course. There was no point in sowing fescue into any old soil and crossing their fingers - for their vision to be realised they needed to ensure the right growing and maintenance environment was created. So, strenuous efforts were expended to use a lot of sand with carefully selected organic amendments, in order to create a very close resemblance to the soils of original links locations for golf. They also recruited a Course Manager (Chris Haspell) with experience from Denmark of fescue-only swards where chemical availability was essentially zero. To simplify the story, a huge amount of work went into creating a square hole for the desired square peg;

the results in terms of superb turf quality and the successful staging of three Scottish Opens are testament to that thoughtful, detailed and professional approach.

Of course not all of us are involved in building golf courses in Asia, or indeed in Inverness, but the same thinking can be applied to common practices such as overseeding. Ladybank Golf Club in Fife is a well-known heathland course where strenuous efforts have been made in recent years to reduce organic matter levels in the topsoil layers through the STRI Programme. With progress having been made on that objective, the Course Manager Colin Powrie, is in a position to try and increase the fescue component of the sward by overseeding. There is recognition that this could not be attempted until the right conditions had been created. Again, creating a fescue shaped 'hole' for a fescue shaped 'peg'.

Changing our thoughts now to the almost daily maintenance operation which has a significant impact on the grass plant is height and frequency of cut (and other defoliation practices such as verticutting and grooming). Grasses are adapted to close mowing (grazing) and if an appropriate frequency and height are followed then the plant responds with an improvement in leaf fineness (texture) and density (number of tillers per unit area). Good mowing practice brings improvement to turf quality.

However, removal of green leaf material reduces the plant's capacity for photosynthesis, and as we have discussed before this is the essential process that allows the plant to manufacture energy-rich compounds used in respiration, growth and repair, and storage for the plant's energy needs in winter.

So having the height of cut too low for the species under management places the grass under stress because, in a nutshell, it has been put onto 'starvation rations', and simply can not manufacture the energy-rich compounds to meet its physiological needs. Under heights that are too low we lose density and texture, and run the risk of scalping i.e. damaging the crown and with it the ability to recover and re-grow.

There is another, possibly more subtle, effect of reducing the above-ground portion of the plant: as we discussed in the second article of this series the plant, in balanced growing conditions, maintains a constant shoot : root ratio. So it follows that if we reduce the size of the above-ground portions then we will automatically reduce the size of

the below-ground portions. In other words, if we cut too low then we reduce the root mass, and reduced root mass means less capacity to grow deep and strong or to absorb water and nutrients.

A colleague of mine always used to say, “follow the bouncing ball” when thinking about implications of our actions – for us in this instance there are clear, unavoidable consequences to over-aggressive low mowing and other defoliation practices.

A third aspect of turf management that I feel deserves attention here is that of aeration. Of course there are many and varied methods of aeration depending on the particular soil issue under management, but there is clearly a common overarching objective of creating improved growing conditions for the grass plant. Soils are composed of solid mineral material (sand, silt and clay) and solid organic matter, with spaces in between.

After heavy rainfall and once gravity has taken away excess water the spaces can be filled with either air or water (field capacity); when the spaces are small the proportion of space filled with water is greater, when they are larger there is a higher percentage of air.

If we look closely at the sandy soils of the links we find that as much as 45–50% of the soil's volume is ‘space’, and at field capacity this is divided evenly between air and water. (This point was not missed by those who developed the USGA Green half a century ago – that recommends the same air / water ratios as we find naturally in links sands).

What I am trying to say here is that the grasses that we prefer in turf require well drained, high-air soils, and our aeration practices aim to create that situation or maintain as high an air content as we can. High air content allows proper root function which is the basis of plant health, so don't stint on aeration and topdressing with good quality sand or compost!

So where does all of that leave us? The number of variables involved in turf management (climate, soil, grasses, finance, membership, golfing visitors, media) makes it an extraordinarily complex profession, yet fundamental and central to its success we find a small, fragile in some ways, robust in others, complex living organism – the grass plant – trying to function as all living organisms try to. It has to feed itself, find sufficient water and nutrients, grow, repair itself, repel predators and reproduce.



Well set cutting units give the correct height and quality of cut essential for plant health, picture courtesy of Bernhard Grinders.

Our expectations of this organism need to be realistic, and we must nurture it if it is to do a job for us. For turf management to remain sustainable in the 21st century it is essential, in my view, to put the consideration and understanding of the grass plant central to our turf management objectives and practices.



Big grass plants have a large root mass – small ones don't



Good mowing practices promote density and texture



Picture 1: A. Stolonifera in a sub-tropical monsoon environment, coupled with limited management skills

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‘The Sons of Golf’ attack Danish turf diseases

Ian Tomlinson, International BIGGA member and Course Manager at Rungsted Golf Club in Denmark, on how greenkeepers based in Scandinavia are teaming up, how they’ve dealt with the tough new Danish Pesticide Laws and the importance of correctly identifying turf disease

‘The Sons of Golf’ are a group of like-minded Course Managers who are all dedicated to promoting the finer grasses on their golf greens.

Formed in 2001, the idea was to work as a group, meeting regularly at each other’s golf courses to discuss best practice and traditional greenkeeping methods. Should one colleague have a problem all it took was one phone call and we could all meet at the said club to help and advise.

The issues are not always grass ones either. On one occasion a colleague was under pressure from his committee over his greens and feared for his job. As a group we arranged a meeting face to face with his committee, so the committee ended up meeting eight Course Managers with over 150 years of experience.

The outcome of this meeting was a much more educated committee

with a greater understanding and sympathy for greenkeeping matters and a colleague who carried on doing an excellent job.

The Danish Pesticide Law for managing golf courses in Denmark has been a hard pill to swallow with serious restrictions on the use of fungicides, herbicides and insecticides.

Trying to manage disease free Poa annua grass greens is this environment is nigh on impossible.

At the start of November the Danish Greenkeepers Association organised its annual three day education conference with speakers coming from across Scandinavia and the UK. Amongst the guest speakers was Dr Kate Entwistle, Turf Grass Pathologist.

Kate frightened the 100 delegates to death for two hours as she explained in great detail all the issues associated with pests and diseases in 2014! As a group we decided that it would be very

beneficial to us to see if Kate would like to visit us.

During the last three years we have met and visited all our eight golf courses in one day in the autumn and again in the spring. The purpose of this “Tour de Fungus” as we call it is to look at our worst two greens disease wise at each club and discuss all the management we have done. This usually covers nutrient inputs, aeration, topdressing, mowing heights and bio stimulants.

We then make a note for each course to see if there are any treatments used at one club that will help the others fight off disease. We all agreed that to have one of the leading plant pathologists in the industry with us during this tour would be extremely beneficial. Thankfully Kate accepted our invitation and so we enjoyed two hugely educational days with her.

Four of the group had professional microscopes. We agreed



to collect diseased turf samples from our greens so at the end of day one we could look under the microscopes and identify Microdochium Patch disease from Take-all Patch. Some of the guys had put the samples in a plastic bag and put them on a radiator and we had some great mycelium and spores to work with.

One thing we learned during Kate’s visit was the importance of correctly identifying a disease. We had one sample which had been attacked by Microdochium nivale originally. We all assumed that the mycelium on this sample would be Microdochium but were wrong.

It turned out that a secondary infection had taken place and the mycelium clearly showed that the turf was now under attack by the fungus that is associated with Dollar Spot. All intriguing stuff and one colleague said that he had learned more in two days than in 40 years of greenkeeping.



MAIN LEFT: Analysing dollar spot damage at Furesø GC
LEFT: Kate looking at the samples
ABOVE: Microdochium attacking vertidrain holes only
INSET ABOVE: Hans Beurling and Per Rasmussen studying mycelium under the microscope
RIGHT: Some of the 2000 wild deer at Copenhagen GC

Amongst the disease we inspected whilst out on the courses were Microdochium Patch, Dollar Spot, Thatch fungus, Take-all, Moss and Algae. We learned how Martin at Copenhagen Golf Club had approximately 5-10% clover on his greens - but as the land belongs to the Queen with 2000 wild deer roaming on it he cannot use any pesticides to treat this problem.

He had been trialling iron sulphate at the back of a green using rates from 20kg up to 80kg of iron per Hectare every few weeks applied in late summer when growth was good. He had managed to remove the clover successfully at the 60kg rate without losing grass density but how the salts will affect the grass roots remains to be seen. But, is the kind of work some of us have to do over here as pesticides are banned. We have one club who have not sprayed fungicides for seven years and two others that have not treated for three years.

We discussed the effects of aeration in autumn and the risk of disease attacks with Kate and there seems to be some correlation that this can happen. We have seen photographic evidence from Norway where snow mould had attacked only around vertidrain holes.

At Furesø GC Thomas had vertidrain in August and you could see in November Microdochium on one green in lines where he had aerated. All of this starts to make you question your management strategy again and the timing of your operations.

As a group I would say that for the first time most of us are not vertidrain our greens in autumn this year but postponing it to early

spring to see if we have less disease attacks. As a group we become a little bit wiser every year but we cannot fight mother nature and we have had a drought again this year for the second year running. How does this affect fungal attacks? How will we fare if we get 50cm of snow tomorrow and it remains for the next three months? Should we have vertidrain after all or not?

Spring will tell us if we have been correct with our management and maybe Kate will be back again next year to share her knowledge with the group. For now we would like to thank her for coming over to Denmark. Our group also shows how beneficial it is to work closely with your colleagues as we do over here.

The Sons of Golf are: Søren Aare, Helsingør GC, Per Christensen, Fredensborg GC, Ian Tomlinson, Rungsted GC, Jacob Aakjaer, Hørsholm GC, Martin Nilson, Copenhagen GC and President of the Danish Greenkeepers Association, Thomas Pihl, Furesø GC, Hans Beurling, Former Furesø GC now informal President, Jan Ebdrup, Hedeland GC, Per Rasmussen, Smorum GC, Bente Mortensen, Independent turf consultant, Antoine Challe, Hedeland GC.



Bunker club



Stuart Imeson, Head Greenkeeper at Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Club, recently held a North East Section event for other greenkeepers in the area to learn about revetting bunkers. So how did this event go?

Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Club was founded in 1900 and has unusually remained a proprietary club. The course underwent a redesign by James Braid in 1920 and subsequent changes in layout have remained sympathetic to the James Braid design.

The current proprietor, Dr Peter Gilbert, negotiated an extended 80 year lease from The National Trust and readily accepted the challenge of the conservation covenants to protect and preserve the outstanding flora and fauna around the golf course.

Stuart Imeson took over the reins at the tender age of 18 and now at the ripe old age of 23 works alongside his James Thorpe, also 23, and Dan Wilkin aged 18.

Stuart joined the BIGGA North East Section committee in 2014 and has championed the idea to enthuse young greenkeepers in the area to gather together to network and learn from each other. Stuart quickly identified that for a young greenkeeper to attend a Section event for the first time was tough, explaining that facing groups of strangers could be a challenge for the average young greenkeeper.

The first of his initiatives was delivered recently with help and encouragement from Simon Olver and Jack Hetherington, both fellow committee members, and the full support of Peter Gilbert.

The idea was to allow young assistants in the area to join the team at Dunstanburgh to learn all about riveting bunkers and to design and build a new bunker in keeping with the superb course.

So, Jack Hetherington (Pon-teland Golf Club), Adam Mavin (Bedlington Golf Club), Ben Potter and Scott Robson (Whitley Bay Golf Club) and Jack Friar (Percy Wood Golf & Country Retreat) took advantage of this opportunity.

All of them praised the idea and enjoyed the experience immensely with Stuart's own team also enjoying networking with greenkeepers from other courses within the area, leaving them feeling more inclined to attend a BIGGA Section event.

Jack Hetherington kept a diary of the week which he discussed the work completed, the reasoning behind the changes to the course and dodging the 'weather bomb' which hit the area...

"When Stuart said he was holding a bunker renovation week I

jumped at the chance to join him and I'm so pleased I did.

"The aim of the week was for Stuart to explain and show the process involved in installing new bunkers and renovating existing ones, for example the design, placement, communicating to members and committee and finally installation of the bunker. In return we provided free labour to help him and his team!

Day One

"Arriving on the first day I was greeted with a bacon sandwich and introduced to the rest of the crew. We headed out onto the course to have a look at some of the bunkers that had recently been renovated with riveted walls.

"We then visited the 9th (Stroke Index 1) hole where Stuart explained how the SI didn't match the way the hole played. Due to this a fairway bunker would be installed and the green side bunkers renovated to toughen the hole up.

"We discussed various architects' styles, yardage from the tee boxes, size, shape, depth and shaping around the bunker. We then tackled the first bunker at the 9th green that needed a riveted face installed.

We also reduced the size of the bunker with the view of installing a second bunker to the right hand side of the green.

"By the end of the first day we had lifted an area to create a new ladies winter tee box and used the turf to build our first riveted wall on our new smaller bunker. We altered some of the shaping around the green, so that in the future the green could be extended out behind the bunker to allow trickier pin locations.

"One thing I noticed straight away was how open Stuart was to suggestions from his team and even his new crew.

"During the day we discussed that maybe a second bunker added as a cluster of two and joined together with shaping would be better than the original idea of a standalone bunker and more to rear of the green. Stuart agreed to present that idea to the committee the following day."

Day Two

"We started on the right side of the 9th green where we reshaped the mounding at the front of the bunker so that a ball would be more likely to end up in the trap. We also moved the bunker more into the fairway making the approach to the green tighter.

"With the hole playing a slight dog-leg to the left and uphill we decided that the bunker would look impressive if we made the left side of the bunker deeper, and this wouldn't actually make the shot out of the bunker towards the green harder.

"After lunch some committee members joined us out on the 9th and we presented our ideas for installing the two new bunkers to the hole, these were well received. By the end of the day we had constructed the new riveted wall on the left hand side bunker and created the new shaping on the right hand side bunker to tie in the new second bunker."

Day Three

"We began by starting the process of finishing the bunkers around the green on the 9th. We had an unexpected visit from The National Trust before the 'weather bomb' hit and conditions were too severe to continue."

Day Four

"We were ready to start the final bunker on Thursday morning. To keep in line with the members, The National Trust and the SI, location selection would be vital. It had to fit



in with the lie of the land, challenge the tee shot but not be too penal.

"Once we decided on the positioning we began digging out the bunker and because it was being established into a mound in the landscape very little shaping would be needed to keep the natural look.

"With the spoil created we were able to construct the new ladies winter tee box from where we had been lifting the turf to build the riveting. During this process we were able to get some good feedback from the members and it was mostly agreed that it improved the hole.

"We then managed to finish all the bunkers and the tee box by laying turf that was ordered earlier in the week. We topped off a fantastic week's work by playing the back nine starting with the newly modified hole."

Dunstanburgh on YouTube

Jack also produced an excellent video of the week which you can see by typing in the link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owfTbB3zaSs> or by typing 'Dunstanburgh Castle bunker' into YouTube.

Barenbrug Wildflower mixes offer benefits at Mortonhall

How attractive, sustainable and easy to manage wildflower meadows can add so much to a golf course



David Fraser is Head Greenkeeper at Mortonhall Golf Club, a beautiful tree-lined course offering immaculate greens and a large expanse of natural landscape. Founded in 1892, Mortonhall is the oldest course in the City of Edinburgh and regarded as one of Scotland's premier clubs.

David recently implemented a wildflower programme to improve the appearance of the course's 'out of play' areas. He said: "These areas had become very untidy due to old gorse, elder and damaged sycamore and the tendency for autumn leaves to collect there, encouraging weeds and nettles.

"We'd heard wildflower meadows are a popular low maintenance

solution, so we turned to Dave Greenshields, Barenbrug Research and Development Manager, to help with seed selection and sowing methods."

British Wildflowers

After a programme of preparation 12 months earlier, sowing began in May using a range of Barenbrug's native British wildflower mixes.

David continued: "Both BARFLORA Meadow and BARCOLOUR offer a perfect balance of biennial and perennial seed mixes, developed from many years of field trial experience. Following Dave's establishment programme, within six weeks, the quality of mixes was evident. We saw fantastic results with a 100% germination rate.

"We selected three south facing sites of 700m.sq, 500m.sq and 200m.sq and took a slightly different approach at each. In some cases, steep slopes and decades of accumulating plant debris meant removing six inches of plant material first, much of it by hand!"

But by June, David's hard work had paid off and flowers were in full bloom. Flowering continued right through to October, with different species and colours coming through at different times, offering an ever-changing rainbow of colour - highly praised by the clubs membership.

Biodiversity

As well as improving the look of the course, David's objective was

to promote its ecology and create areas of natural biodiversity and habitat creation. He said: "The insect life encouraged by the flowering was evident from the start, but by August it was unbelievable! All sites were literally alive with bees and other insects.

"Having extra hands-on guidance from Tom Brannan at Greentech Sportsturf, our Barenbrug seed supplier has also been invaluable, giving us the confidence to go ahead with this major programme. There were a few sceptics to convince!"

David added: "Wildflower meadows can look perfectly natural on a golf course, but consideration should be given to the mix of species and ratio between grass and flowers.

"Think about whether you want a very natural look or whether you want lots of colour, and how each will sit alongside other areas of your course. If in doubt, speak to Dave Greenshields. He took the time to visit the club and advise on the best way forward."

The wildflower programme has been a huge success, and the sceptics have now seen the benefits of wild-flower meadows first hand. Barenbrug's wildflower mixes not only create a highly attractive and sustainable landscape, they use only British wildflowers, providing the best habitat for local flora and fauna. They also help clubs to fulfil their environmental policies while offering an easy to maintain solution for greenkeepers.



Get even with wetting agents

David Goldstone at Amenity Sales explains how a new technology called Evensperse will help greenkeepers conserve water, optimise turfgrass colour and improve the overall health of golf courses



Soil surfactants, or wetting agents, are unique molecules that can safely and responsibly modify the way water moves and is distributed within the turfgrass rootzone.

Surfactants offer considerable promise for conserving water and energy resources, optimising turfgrass colour and quality and improving the overall health, appearance and functionality of the golf course.

We are often asked, where will technology take us in the future? It is apparent that as turf practitioners we need to further diversify the soil water management toolbox for the greenkeepers. Also we, as salespeople, must become much better at communicating the science behind these materials in simpler, more engaging ways. Not doing so will result in new technologies such as Evensperse being overlooked due to poor communication on our part, thus not getting the correct take home message right to you, the end user.

What does Evensperse do and how does it work?

At BTME 2015 we launched a differentiated soil surfactant formulation called Evensperse. This is both a corrective and curative product that emulsifies and disperses the oily residues and debris that cause soil water repellency in turfgrass without stripping.

It does not contain powerful or harmful solvents unlike other chemistries within the marketplace. The innovative wetting agent formula ensures the most uniform delivery of water, nutrients and active ingredients into the turfgrass root system. Evensperse is electrolyte tolerant and can be effectively tank mixed with a variety of fertilisers, iron,

seaweeds and pesticides. As always, good housekeeping must be considered and therefore a small jar test should be trialed prior to use.

Evensperse is the first commercial soil surfactant to feature proprietary Variable Charge Technology. Unlike conventional soil surfactants that are limited by fixed anionic (negative charge) or nonionic (neutral charge) functional groups, Evensperse can alter its ionic state and molecular architecture to more comprehensively perform at the soil-water interface. Evensperse delivers the outstanding turfgrass colour, quality, performance and consistency green staff expect from their soil water management programme. It is a highly versatile and responsive product engineered to maintain peak performance across a wide range of soil conditions.

What makes Evensperse different?

Versatility is the key. For the longest time, turfgrass soils have typically been managed as if they were uniform. They are actually highly variable with soil texture, degree of water repellency, water holding capacity, nutrient content, biological activity etc frequently changing across the course. As these soil properties change, so does the very surface we are trying to wet.

Expanding our surfactant toolbox beyond existing chemistries —ethoxylated and alkoxylated alcohols, sulphasuccinates, polysorbates, alkyl polyglycosides and triblock copolymers of ethylene oxide and propylene oxide, etc will be essential to effectively hydrate these ever-changing soil surfaces. Evensperse has moved away from the 'old' technologies, it's the

Evensperse

Evensperse is the next generation in soil surfactant chemistry. Evensperse emulsifies and disperses the oily residues and debris that cause soil water repellency in turfgrass. It then changes the polarity of this water-insoluble organic matter so that beneficial microbes can more easily digest it within the soil profile. The innovative wetting agent formula ensures the most uniform delivery of water, nutrients and active ingredients into the turfgrass root system.

It's the first commercial soil surfactant to feature proprietary Variable Charge Technology or "V-Charge." Unlike conventional soil surfactants that are limited by fixed anionic (negative charge) or nonionic (neutral charge) functional groups, Evensperse can alter its ionic state and molecular architecture to more comprehensively adsorb and micellize at the soil-water interface. It is a highly versatile and responsive product engineered to maintain peak performance across a wide range of environmental conditions.

It delivers the outstanding turfgrass colour, quality, performance and consistency greenkeeper's expect from their soil water management programme.

Application Rates & Frequency:

Apply Evensperse at 20 litres per hectare in 600 litres of water every 30 days. Evensperse can be tank mixed with most fertilisers and pesticides. Check compatibility and efficacy on a small test plot prior to full application.

future. Remember it can alter its ionic state, thus being a chameleon to your soil type.

How do I know Evensperse is working?

Greenkeepers that apply Evensperse can expect more consistency and uniformity on their courses. We playfully call it "getting even." Improvements in water movement and distribution will occur quickly, often immediately following the first application. Improvements in turfgrass colour and quality will follow.

We're planning a series of roadshows in late March highlighting the science and art of hydrating the root zone throughout the UK. These will not be sales seminars. Instead, they will have a technical focus to explain what differences can be gained by understanding the relationship between water quality, soil variations and surfactants.

These seminars will be conducted by Paul Bially who will share personal insights from his career formulating these products in the lab and field. He will also discuss Evensperse and its unique functionality as both a corrective and residual treatment beyond triblock copolymers and other out of date technologies.

If you wish to learn more about Evensperse prior to the seminars, call Amenity Sales on 0844 4170430 or email d.goldstone@amenitysales.com where you will be put in touch with either one of our area salespeople or your local distributor.

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A mission to Moscow



International BIGGA member Derek Grendowicz has had an interesting career journey via Scotland, the USA and Denmark, and has spent the last two years in charge of the grow-in of Russia's newest golf course. Sallie Taylor spoke to him to find out more



Proposed clubhouse view - 5th green

Derek is a Scot who grew up a stone's throw from Gleneagles. In 2012 he moved to Moscow to work as Project Manager in charge of the grow-in period of construction of Russia's newest golf course, the Jack Nicklaus Signature course of Raevo Bogachevo.

The course, which lies 50km from Moscow in the Russian countryside, has been under construction for three years and Derek described it as a privilege to be involved.

Tell me about your career journey from Perthshire to Moscow?

"During school, once I'd buried all thoughts of becoming a

professional footballer, I worked at Gleneagles during the summer holidays and then took a full time job on the Golf Courses after leaving school, giving me the opportunity to attend Elmwood College to study greenkeeping.

"After six happy years I was offered an education programme in the USA for 18 months and took the opportunity to experience greenkeeping American style through the Ohio State International Intern Programme.

"This supposedly short visit turned into eight years! I worked at Augusta National and New York's West Chester Country Club, as well as completing a two-year degree programme at The Pennsylvania State University.

"This allowed me to experience a more scientific side of golf course maintenance to complement the excellent practical knowledge from Scotland to produce a quality golf course.

"As well as working during the annual PGA Tour event at West Chester, I was lucky enough to volunteer at many courses that held major tour events, such as Valhalla, TPC Sawgrass, Winged Foot, Atlantic Athletic Club and Pebble Beach. I learnt so much from many Golf Course Superintendents proving that there are many ways to attempt perfection.

"In 2007 I travelled to Denmark to work at the 36 hole, Lubker Golf Course in Nimtofte. Denmark is



7 green gravel layer

just beautiful. They have a very high standard of living, great healthcare, very family orientated and it's a great place to live and work. There are only 160 golf courses in the whole country, so it is still a growing market.

"After five years in Scandinavia, I was offered the irresistible job of Project Manager / Grow-in Superintendent at the latest Jack Nicklaus Signature course in Russia. It was an easy decision to make.

"It's a huge project featuring an 18 hole golf course, practice and driving range, a teaching academy and clubhouse. There are plans to build a complete village on the site with 250 residential properties, a hotel and beach and country club.

"The project, owned by the Mikhailov family – whose interests are in beef and poultry farming – has been on paper for around six years. Construction began in 2011 when they began to clear the 570 acre site. The course layout including native grass plantings covers 185 acres of this. It was previously mostly farmland and forestry.

"The course is due to be finished at the end of 2015 with an official opening date of 2016. I'm really loving the experience here, being in at the very start, watching the place grow around me, putting everything in place. You can't get better than this, and then of course, it will be a pleasure to look after it.

"It has been fascinating to see the designs on paper come to life. Jack and the architects visit from time to time. They may make the odd change here or there. Everything is flexible. None of the holes are finished yet but the grass is planted, the construction team and the shapers are here every day."

Is the climate harsh, and is the landscape difficult to manage?

"This part of the Russian countryside looks much like the UK. The towns and villages are obviously different but the shape of the land and the tree species are very similar.

"The golf season here runs from 1 May to the end of October. Traditionally the climate is more extreme, but the last couple of years have been unusual with very little snow in the winter, and dry, hot summers. Temperatures were in the 40s during 2010, causing major forest fires. Usually they are around the 20s and 30s at the height of summer. A big problem for greenkeepers are the thunderstorms that can be catastrophic during seeding."

Is Raevo Bogachevo the only course in construction this year?

"There are a couple of courses east of Moscow and in St Petersburg that are being built right now and earlier this year Skolkovo Golf Club has opened. It's another Nicklaus signature.

"The number of golf courses in Russia is very low for the size of the country, so there are plenty of opportunities to attract people to golf.

"There is a large economy in Russia with a lot of diversity so the market is large enough."

Were grinders always on your early shopping list?

"Yes, I wanted to get them in early with the first machinery, as they are an integral part of the maintenance of any golf course and even more important during new constructions.

"We have been doing lots of sanding of the greens and tees so I wanted to get them set up right away to protect the young grass and encourage strong growth. This is every bit as important as cutting the grass.

"I've used Bernhard grinders at other places I've worked and since being in the Superintendent position this is the first time I have bought them myself. Bernhard is the preferred grinder unit for this area of the world as they supply a great back-up service. Everyone is a phone call or email away, and with the long warranty the quality of build speaks for itself."

How are you managing with the language?

"My wife and I are picking up Russian as we go along. I pick up the basic phrases pretty quick and my assistant speaks good English, so between us, we manage perfectly well. It's amazing how useful sign language is too."

How often do you come home to Scotland, and do you manage to get a break from work?

"I am away for a few weeks a year at conferences and shows, as well as vacations. Working every day from sun up to sun down during the season, any break is good. We don't get much chance during the season to travel home, except for this year when I was lucky enough to return to Gleneagles for the Ryder Cup to work as a volunteer. It was good to be back on familiar home ground for the week and be involved in such a great tournament.

"We like to travel and explore as much of the world as we can during the off-season, as well as doing some snowboarding in the Alps. I try to get to the gym most evenings and of course, I like to follow the football from back home."

A final comment on life at Raevo Bogachevo?

"Every day I see something new, face another challenge so it's a very exciting job to have and I love the involvement, and of course, I am very excited to see the course up and running."

For more about Bernhard Grinders please visit www.bernhard.co.uk

Section Notes

Please email your notes to steve.castle@bigga.co.uk by the 10th of the month

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

Around the green

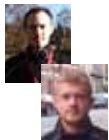


Northern

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



NORTH EAST
Glen Baxter
glen.baxter@rigbytaylor.com
Find us on Facebook
Bigga North East
@NEBIGGA



NORTH WEST
Tom Wood & Tim Johnson
tomwoodtmw@gmail.com
j87@hotmail.com
Find us on Facebook
BIGGANorthWest Section
@BIGGANorthWest



CLEVELAND
Anthony McGeough
amcgeough@aol.com
Find us on Facebook
BIGGA Cleveland



NORTHERN
Chris Goodall
christopher.goodall11@hotmail.com
Find us on Facebook
BIGGA Northern Section



SHEFFIELD
Ian Whitehead
admin@hillsboroughgolfclub.co.uk
Find us on Facebook
BIGGA Sheffield Section
@SheffieldBigga



NORTH WALES
Pete Maybury
petemayb66@aol.com
Find us on Facebook
North Wales B.I.G.G.A.
@BiggaNorthWales

Events Coming Up

CLEVELAND

Golf days: Blackwell Golf Club are holding the Spring tournament on Wednesday 29 April. The Autumn tournament which will be held at Wynyard Golf Club. Both courses are superb and it would be great to see a few new faces.

Booking forms for the Northern Region Seminar day at Chester le street Golf Club on the 11th March are now available and can be downloaded from the BIGGA Facebook page.

Ron Butler from Wilton Golf Club will be celebrating 50 years at the same golf club! He started in 1965 and I am reliably informed that he has enjoyed at least 49 years of that. I'm aware that currently Ron isn't a BIGGA member but has been in the past I just thought that his achievement was well worthy of a mention.

NORTHERN

The first event of 2015 is an educational day at Chester Le Street Golf Club on Wednesday 11 March.

The first golf day is at Selby Golf Club on Monday 27 April. Soup and sandwiches will be served at 12 noon followed by 18 holes of golf. The day will conclude with a meal and presentation at a cost of £15.

Campey will be holding machinery demonstration days at Fulford Golf Club on 17 March and Forest Pines Golf Club on 19 March. For more details contact Julia Campey on tel 01260 224568 or email julia.campey@campeyturfcare.com

NORTH WEST

Correction: Regarding the Campey Turf Care pro-am at Hart Common Golf Club on Tuesday 21 April, please contact Julia Campey at julia.campey@campeyturfcare.com, not at the address printed last month. You can also email ian.campbell@campeyturfcare.com

NORTH WALES

The spring tournament and course walk takes place at Henlle Park GC on 29 April, please remember to get your booking form and payment in the beginning of April.

NORTH EAST

The Northern Regional Conference at Chester Le Street on 11th March 2015 is already looking like a sell-out so thank you for the support, it would be great to keep this event in the North East.

You will all be eager to get out on a course and swing the clubs around so please try and support your Section Spring outing at Sharpley Springs Golf Club on 22 April, book by contacting David Thompson by email crocket80@hotmail.com or Tel: 07977 701301.

The Northern Region Championship for the Whitelaw Bowl is to be held at Penrith Golf Club on 15 September where the overall winner will win entry to the National Championship to be held at Fulford Golf Club on 12-13 October 2015.

SHEFFIELD

Golf days for 2015: Spring TBC. Abbeydale GC - Tuesday 21 July. Tankersley Hall GC - Thursday 10 September. The Waterfront - 9 or 10 December

News

NORTHERN

The new committee now consists of: Dennis Cockburn, John Watts, Andrew Slingsby, John Waite, Nigel Coultish, Chris Goodall, Kevin Moore and Rob Gee.

Prior to the AGM a Texas scramble 9 hole event was held, the winners were:

- 1 – Chris Goodall, Gary Fearon, Andy Slingsby and Dan Reece
- 2 – Arron Schnackle, John Watts (also won best jumper) and Gary Potter
- 3 – Nigel Coultish, Tom Coultish and Richard Pull

£92 was donated to the Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund. A massive thank you is extended to Rawdon Golf Club for holding the event, for a well presented golf course, and a fantastic lunch!

NORTH WEST

Congratulations to Stuart Hogg on becoming the Course Manager at West Lancs Golf Club. We would also like to welcome Vincent Jensen - Deputy Course Manager at The Mere Golf and Country Club, Stuart Lyon - The Mere Golf and Country Club, and Gary Mowen - The Mere Golf and Country Club.

NORTH WALES

We held a seminar at Coleg Cambria on 18 February, an overview of the day will be in this column next month and no doubt be posted by Simon on our section Facebook page. The coach that ran to BTME was well attended with 24 people who went that otherwise may have not had the chance.

Our best wishes go to Rob Hulse of Vale of Llangollen GC, who is now well on the road to recovery after a heart related health scare in January.

NORTH EAST

We've had some chainsaw courses going on at Tyneside GC where the guys are very welcome back to the membership, and a course is planned at Wynyard GC. Jack Hetherington narrowly missed on competing in the final of the kickboxing after a hard fought semi-final that went to a majority decision. Jack was compensated a little to find that he had been selected for the FTMI so well done all round Jack. Also, Barry Walker has been selected to represent the World at the Las Vegas ten Pin Bowling Championships in August - congratulations on the selection and good luck Barry.

We wish Ian Millar well after his move from South Moor Golf Club to Birtley Golf Club and hope all goes well for him in his new role.

On a very sad note, our sincere condolences go to the family and friends of our former BIGGA Chairman, George Marshall. Thanks to all the members who attended George's funeral. It really was a great representation for both the North East and Cleveland Sections for one of our founder members.

SHEFFIELD

The Sheffield AGM was held at The Grange on 18 February where we had 19 members in attendance with a few apologies. We have elected three new committee members along with support committed from several others.

Thanks to Sponsors

CLEVELAND

Thanks to Lloyds Ltd for sponsoring the spring tournament, and to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the autumn tournament.

NORTHERN

Thanks to Bob Wild Machinery for sponsoring the AGM.

NORTH WEST

Thanks to all of the section sponsors for the continued support that they provide.

NORTH WALES

Thank you to Symbio in the form of Paul Lowe for partially sponsoring the BTME coach.

NORTH EAST

Thanks to Greenlay (Grass Machinery) Ltd for sponsoring the Spring outing at Sharpley Springs.

Welcome New Northern Members

Brendan Brown, Affiliate, Northern Lubricants Ltd, Anthony Callan, First Assistant, Prudhoe GC, John Hampton, Greenkeeper, Wakefield GC, Kevin Bryant, Greenkeeper, Llandudno GC (Maesdu), Adrian Sloanes, Groundsman, North Yorkshire County Council, Moelwyn Thomas, Head Greenkeeper, Baron Hill GC Ltd, Damian Wormald, Head Greenkeeper, Wakefield GC, Daniel Hiney, Assistant Greenkeeper, Gathurst GC, David Strong, Assistant Greenkeeper, Penrith GC, Guy Lawson, Assistant Greenkeeper, Penrith GC, Craig Stringer, Assistant Greenkeeper, Prudhoe GC, Michael Davies, Assistant Greenkeeper, Gathurst GC, Trevor Palmer, Assistant Greenkeeper, Prudhoe GC.

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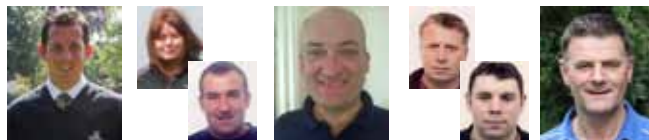
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CENTRAL
Craig Boath
cboath@
carnoustiegolflinks.
co.uk
Find us on facebook.
Bigga Central
Section

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND
Amanda Dorans & Ian Smith
amanda.dorans@
lochlomond.com
/iansmithgm@
hotmail.co.uk
Find us on facebook.
Bigga South West
Scotland

EAST
Hamish Campbell
greenkeeper@
alancampbell.
demon.co.uk
Find us on facebook.
Bigga Scottish
East
@BIGGA_ES

NORTH
Paul Sharp & Neil Sadler
paulsharp@
hotmail.com /
gkneil@sky.com

WEST
Stuart Taylor
stuart.taylor@
glasgowgolfclub.
com

Events Coming Up

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND

Spring Golf Outing – 14 April at Dundonald Links. Preceded by a short education programme – Grinding Workshop, Soil Moisture and Sustainable Bunker Renovation. Please register your interest for the golf day with Derek Wilson. We look forward to seeing everyone on what I hope is a bright and sunny day.

CENTRAL

18 March at Elmwood Training Room - Paul Miller talking about Sand, Sand and Mare Sand.

Spring Outing this year is at Monifieth Golf Links on 28 April, entry forms should be sent out, if you have not received one contact gordon.moir@standrews.com

If you have not entered the 2015 Pairs Competition, you just have enough time to enter. Entries to be in by 15 March.

WEST

The spring outing is confirmed for 24 April at Clober Golf Club, thanks to Clint Maxwell for accommodating us. David Fleming retired last year after a long service with the club. I look forward to playing this hilly course with a lot of par 3 holes which are tight and interesting.

The Autumn outing is arranged for September at East Renfrewshire GC – date TBC.

EAST

Stuart Duff and Gullane Golf Club have kindly agreed to host a course walk on 12 May for members. This will be an exciting opportunity to see the preparation work for the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open in July. It will be interesting to see how the composite course will be configured. Full details next month.

By the time most of you read this the Scottish Regional Conference will have taken place, so the next event on the horizon is our Spring outing to Longniddry Golf Club, on April 16 . Keep your eyes on your inboxes and letter boxes for the entry form. Hopefully we will have had a good March and early April so we are up to date with course work and have a big turnout!

News

NORTH

The North Section Committee have added two new recruits over the winter period. Welcome George Mitchell from Newmachar GC, who has taken over the 200 Club, the section's largest fundraising tool. Members should expect their tickets to be sent out very soon. Could everyone please send payment to George ASAP.

Neil Sadler has also joined the committee and we will be responsible for all the communications within the section, including the magazine and social media. Our aim is to make sure we have some information for section news every month.

Neil and George have replaced Dale Robertson and Hugh McLatchie, who have contributed more than 30 years between them to the section committee. On behalf of the committee and all members, we thank them for their time and commitment.

Harrogate has now been and gone for another year. The show was another huge success with the usual stories surfacing! Our Patrons Award winner from the north section, Richard Johnstone, said:

"I just wanted to say I really enjoyed the experience of attending BTME 2015 and found it extremely beneficial. It was an outstanding week of education, networking and reviewing products available within the industry. The education part was very important to me, the workshops I attended were excellent and there was a good mix available for all levels within the profession.

"The show itself seemed busy with a great atmosphere and there was a wide range of products, allowing me to see the advancements in machinery and agronomic technology on display. I also got the chance to meet several greenkeepers I may never have met if I did not attend the event. I will be returning to Nairn Dunbar Golf Club knowing that the members and my employers will benefit from this experience."

One or two of us are heading for Texas for the Golf Industry Show. I'm sure we will have some stories for the next section news. Hopefully all the winter projects will now be completed and our courses will be back in shape for the new season.

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND

To say the weather in recent weeks has been challenging would be an understatement. Since the beginning of the year the South West has had everything from snow to torrential rain and gale force winds, sometimes in the same day; however work schedules carry on, golfers are still playing and spring is just around the corner!

I'd like to take this opportunity say Happy Birthday to Keith Aiken and Robert Stewart who are both celebrating landmark birthdays – Keith is the big 40 (don't worry Keith, forty is the new thirty or so I'm told!) and Robert is celebrating half of a century – hope it wasn't too painful!?

Last, but not least, thank you to Derek and the Bogside team for hosting and organising our first committee meeting of 2015.

CENTRAL

At Strathmore Golf Centre, James Hutchinson, Environmental Officer, St Andrews Links Trust gave us a talk on environmental tips. We also had John Young, BIGGA's Scottish Regional Administrator, who spoke to us about the benefits of BIGGA membership. We had a great turn out with 45 people including 11 non-members, one of which (Lewis Adamson) won a year's free membership to BIGGA courtesy of the Central Section. Thank you to the staff at Strathmore Golf Centre for hosting us.

Hope everyone that attended the Scottish Conference had a great day, some really good speakers.

Chris Barnard has taken over as Course Manager at Scotsraig Golf Club, with his Deputy James Bledge (former Kingsbarns), taking over from Chris at Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club.

Welcome Home to Jonathan Wood who returns to St Andrews Links Trust from Trevoise Golf Club. Jonathan takes on the Course Manager role at The Castle Course after Allan Patterson left to Trump Turnberry. Brian Heggie (Eyemouth Golf Club) takes over as Head Greenkeeper from Brian Cocker ,who is retiring, at Alyth Golf Club. Best wishes to all.

We send out most of our seminar/event flyers by email but we don't have many up to date email addresses, could you get in touch so we can update our system please.

WEST

May I take this opportunity to wish a speedy recovery to Gareth Rodgers of Souters who is presently in hospital.

Last month I mentioned the difficulty golf clubs were facing at present with losing members and budget restraints curtailing projects, this appears to be increasing significantly as people are finding other ways of filling their time rather than 4 ½ hours round a golf course. I mentioned how we as greenkeepers need to play our part, and by that I mean altering the way we carry out tasks to be less disruptive, altering shifts to prevent interference with play and keeping tight controls on budget issues by seeking the best prices.

A lot of different articles are available at present to help clubs change their operations and membership structures, which will go a long way to assisting, but the best way is to talk to committees to find out how things can go forward and how you can be part of that process. Please feel free to comment on how you and your club are looking to the future.

Finally, if anybody has some information they wish to share or you are interested in the football then please contact me on 07790 823914, or stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com

EAST

Please note Grant Frogley and Grant Moran are not members of the committee as was claimed in last month's notes.

It was sad to hear of another course closure in the East of Scotland section area, we hope everyone affected at Castle Park find suitable positions.

East Section now has a twitter account @BIGGA_ES add us and keep in touch. Again a reminder that if your contact details have changed please feedback ASAP.

Welcome New Scottish Members

Jordan Cameron, Greenkeeper, Newmachar Golf Club, Innes Reynolds, Greenkeeper, Newmachar Golf Club, John Myles, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, The Gleneagles Hotel & Golf Courses, John Kenny, Student, SRUC (Elmwood), Christopher Lamb, Assistant Greenkeeper, Newmachar Golf Club.

Welcome New International Members

Michel Van Uffelen, Golf Club AHA DE MAN (Belgium), Soeren Aare Toemming, Helsingør Golf Club (Denmark), Andrew Kelly, Golfclub Munchen Eichenried (Germany), Jos Theunisseu, Affiliate, Melspring International BV (Netherlands), Jonathan Eccles, Head Greenkeeper, Grini Golf Klubb (Norway), Hakan Stalbro, Affiliate, Swedish Golf Federation, Jaco Aakjaer, Hoersholm Golf Club (Sweden), Ahmet Cagil, Antalya Golf Club (Turkey), Alwin Zametzer, Aphrodite Hills Resort (Cyprus).

Welcome New Republic of Ireland Members

Paul Coleman, Greenkeeper, Dromoland Castle Golf Club. Richard Campion, Adrian Clark, David Coyle, Andy Cummins, John Cunningham, Andrew Duncan, Dean Gillane, Cian Hodgers, Jake Lee, Liam Murphy, Shane Murphy, Billy O'Keeffe, Colm O'Leary, Michael O'Neill, James Payne, Lorcan Ryan, Nioclas O'Conduin, Robert Mealia, Shaun Donnelly, Adrian Hourihan – all Students at Colaiste Stiofain Naofa.

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Midland

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BB&O - The Stick
bboscribe@gmail.com or Matt Nutter
bboscretary@gmail.com
That is us facebook.
BB&O Greenkeepers
@bbogreenkeepers



MID ANGLIA
Darren Mugford
d.mugford@rigbytaylor.com
That is us facebook.
Bigga Mid Anglia



MIDLAND
Dave Collins
greendave2004@hotmail.co.uk
That is us facebook.
Bigga Midland Section
@BIGGA Midlands



EAST OF ENGLAND
Steve Beverly
steveimingham@aol.com
That is us facebook.
EastofEnglandbigga



EAST MIDLAND
Matt Gilks
gilksmatt@farol.co.uk
That is us facebook.
East Midlands BIGGA
@biggaeastmids

Events Coming Up

MID ANGLIA

Our first golf event of the year will be held at Brickendon Grange GC on Thursday June 4 from 1pm so look out for more information on our Facebook page and expect entry forms coming your way soon. This is the qualifier for the National so hope to see a great turn out to support this popular event.

Another date for your diary is our Summer Pairs Competition at Welwyn Garden City GC on Thursday 23 July.

EAST MIDLAND

We are going to run the pairs competition again. The closing date for entries is 27 March, £10 per pair is the cost and the final venue will be announced shortly. It's a straight knockout comp, betterball match play. All fees payable to the East Midlands section through Asa English please.

MIDLAND

Spring Tournament – Gaudet Luce GC. Wednesday 20 May. Start: 12:30 - Cost £25. Closing Date: 6th May. Prize Sponsor - Banks Amenity. 18 Hole Stableford. Please contact Rhys Thomas to book
Autumn Tournament - Kidderminster GC. Wednesday 9 September. Start: 12:30. Cost £25. Closing Date: 26th August. Prize Sponsor - Working Turf. Make Your Own Team Of 4 Players - 18 Hole Stableford.
Winter Tournament - Blackwell Golf Club. Wednesday 9 December. Start: 10:00 - Cost £27. Closing Date: 21 November. Prize Sponsor - Campey Turfcare. Pairs For Partners To Be Drawn On The Day.
www.biggamidlandsection.co.uk

News

MID ANGLIA

We would like to wish Jim Cassidy, former Course Manager of Ashridge GC, all the best in his new sales role for Rigby Taylor Ltd covering the Midlands area.

EAST MIDLAND

Greetings, as I write to you I am currently supporting a greenkeeping show in Iceland, you may ask “Why?!” But there are 64 courses here, admittedly they're all currently covered in snow but they are very beautiful. Their hospitality is fantastic and I recommend a visit, wrap up warm mind!

We now have Facebook and Twitter accounts, @biggaeastmids and East Midlands BIGGA on Facebook.

This is an important one now so here goes - we are on the hunt for past trophies won in the East Midlands BIGGA golf days, and are calling on all you lovely people to return them to us so we can collate what we have to start up the trophy cabinet again. If you have one please get in touch with Nigel Colley at Rothley Park, he seems to like polishing the trophies!

I hope you are all on the up and heading into the spring on the front foot. Remember anything you have however for these pages, big or small, be sure to send it over gilksmatt@farol.co.uk

MIDLAND

We start this month with some sad news, many of you will have known Mike Firman. He unfortunately passed away on 12 February. Mike had been at Olton for 30 years and only retired in 2010, he was an absolute gentleman of greenkeeping and he will be sadly missed. Condolences from everyone at BIGGA go our to mikes family, RIP Mike. Congratulations to course manager at Edgbaston Golf Club Eddie Mills who became a dad to a lovely daughter Ava congratulations Eddie and Lou. Little Ava donned an Aston Villa kit minutes after birth - not sure if that's allowed Eddie!

Congratulations to Chris Breen who has moved from Hatchford Brook to take up a post on the dark side (joking) at Reading Football Club. Good luck with the straight lines Chris - also Kevin Myers has joined first call as a Regional Sales Manager.

Rigby Taylor would also like to announce the appointment of Jim Cassidy to the ranks as a rep for the Staffordshire and West Midlands area, he can be contacted on 07778 665506.

Here's hoping local Farols rep Matt Gilks has warmed up after supporting dealers in Iceland for their annual greenkeeper show in Reykjavik - it's a tough life.

Thanks to Sponsors

MID ANGLIA

The Mid Anglia Section would like to thank the wonderful Sponsors for 2015 and we are very grateful for your continued support with funds for our section:

Rigby Taylor Ltd, Banks Amenity, ALS, Tuckwells Machinery, Avoncrop Amenity, Headland Amenity, Amtech Amenity, Farmura, Everiss and Countrywide.

MIDLAND

A big thanks to our calendar sponsors for March – Farols. To contact Farols call Matt Gilks on 07943 192588. Also a massive thanks to everyone who attended and sponsored the Midland Regional Conference at Stonebridge - it was well attended and very well run by Roger Butler and the team.

EAST MIDLAND

Thanks to Headland for sponsoring the Pairs Competition.

Welcome New Midland Members

David Goodjohn, Affiliate, Green Infrastructure, Lee Bryan, Affiliate, Amtech Amenity, Scott Peterson, Deputy Course Manager, The Shire London Golf Club, Simon Parmenter, Greenkeeper, Sunningdale Golf Club, Niall Macdonald, Greenkeeper, Sunningdale Golf Club, Jamie Wright, Greenkeeper, Sunningdale Golf Club, Ollie Maskell, Greenkeeper, Sunningdale Golf Club, Jac Barnes, Greenkeeper, Buckingham Golf Club, Joe Graves, Student, Oaklands College.

South East

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



SURREY
Mark Day
mark@daylinks.co.uk
That is us facebook.
Surrey BIGGA
@surreybigga



KENT
Rob Holland
premiergolf2012@hotmail.co.uk



SUSSEX
Joe Dormer
josephmichael.dormer@gmail.com
That is us facebook.
BIGGA Sussex Section



EAST ANGLIA
Mick Lathrope
m.lathrope@ntlworld.com
That is us facebook.
BIGGA East Anglia
@BIGGA EastAnglia



ESSEX
Arnold Phipps-Jones
essexbigga@talktalk.net
That is us facebook.
Essex Bigga
@essexbigga



LONDON
John Wells
j.wells1@sky.com
That is us facebook.
Bigga London
@Bigga London

Events Coming Up

LONDON

Wednesday March 18 there will be a demo of both the dry jet sand injection system and the installation of the new drainage rope at Muswell Hill GC at 10.30.

This will be conducted by Billy McMillan and Matt Plested.

SUSSEX

Spring Competition & National Championships Qualifier, 1 May, Lewes Golf Club

Sussex Section Away Day, 10 June, Littlestone Golf Club (Annual events, sectional, regional and national are posted on the BIGGA Sussex Section Facebook page)

Now is an excellent time to start thinking about the Spring Competition & National Championships Qualifier at Lewes which is sure to be a fantastic day in a beautiful downland setting.

If you are planning on playing in this event and have a long way to travel please drop me a line personally or on the Facebook page because there may be some car sharing opportunities!

Unfortunately I won't be able to play in the Spring Competition as I will be flying out to Florida to take part in the John Deere TPC Sawgrass Volunteer programme, I'm very excited and I'll be sure to keep you all posted on what I'm sure is going to be an epic experience!

News

LONDON

Hope you are all getting your winter jobs complete as spring is not far away.

Thanks to Stuart Sanders of SJS for a very interesting talk on Irrigation systems at which 30 of you attended.

A great seminar at Oaklands college on 17 February was given by four high calibre speakers and was attended by over 100 delegates so a big thank you to Stella Rixon, Steve Chappell, John Ross and Lawrence Pithie, and to Andy Wight and all who helped organise the day.

Congratulations to our Chairman Matt Plested on passing his NVQ 4 at Oaklands College one year ahead of schedule.

SUSSEX

Hello Sussex Section! My name is Joe and I am your new Communications Executive. I urge you all to visit and 'like' the Facebook page for our section (BIGGA Sussex Section), which will be a platform for information and discussion on upcoming golfing and educational events and will give us all an opportunity to network as a section. We are also on Twitter so follow us @BiggaSussex.

I recently caught up with James Briggs, First Assistant at East Sussex National Golf Club, and the main focus of our conversation was BTME.

James went with other greenkeepers from his team and “found it hugely beneficial to make the trip up to Harrogate to attend the ever growing list of seminars and view some of the new products on the market...it was great to catch up with friends and meet some new faces, looking forward to BTME 2016, which I am sure will prove to be bigger and better”.

Personally I've never enjoyed BTME as much as I did this year and it does seem to get bigger and better every time, thanks to the BIGGA team for making it a continued success. It would be great to see lots of Sussex section faces at BTME 2016 and it has been suggested that we could arrange some group transport for the section to save everyone a bit of cash!

I'm really hoping to increase the amount of section news we have in this column each month and I will contact you for updates, but I would love it if you contacted me first with news however big or small!

Congratulations to Alan Pierce MG on his new role as Southern Regional Commercial Manager with Godfreys Golf and Turf which starts in April, I'm sure most of the Sussex guys can expect a visit in the near future!

Thanks to Sponsors

SUSSEX

The Sussex Section is indebted to the continued support and sponsorship of the trade and would like to thank the following: Avoncrop Amenity, Collier Turfcare, Countrywide, Ernest Doe, Everris, Godfreys, Grass Roots, Headland Amenity, Indigrow, JSM Limited, Lister Wilders, Mitchells Groundscare, Rigby Taylor, Sheriff Amenity, Symbio, Tacit.

A reminder for those who are not receiving emails regarding section events, please let me know your email address so we can add you to the mailing list, don't stay in the dark!

Welcome New South East Members

Kevin Myers, Affiliate, Firstcall Corporation Ltd, Mark Bennett, Greenkeeper, Royal Ascot Golf Club, Andy Reynolds, Assistant Greenkeeper, West Chiltoning Golf Club.

Around your green

Based on feedback from the recent GI survey, we've refreshed and improved this section of the magazine. Please send your news and photos in to your section correspondent or Steve Castle (steve.castle@bigga.co.uk) by the 10th of each month

South West & South Wales

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



SOUTH WEST –
Jaey Goodchild
j.goodchild@bowood.org

facebook
Bigga South West
@BiggaSouthwest



SOUTH COAST –
Tony Gadd
greenkeeper@boscg.co.uk

facebook
Bigga South Coast
@BIGGASouthcoast



DEVON & CORNWALL
Cameron McMorris
cjmcmorin@gmail.com

facebook
Bigga Devon and Cornwall



SOUTH WALES
Andrew Hatcher
andrewhatcher1@msn.com

facebook
Bigga South Wales

Events Coming Up

SOUTH WALES

Our section's first match of 2015 will be played at Wenvoe Castle Golf Club located in the heart of the picturesque vale of Glamorgan on Wednesday 25 March. The first tee is booked for 12 noon, cost for golf £15 including a 3 course meal. Great fixtures for this year's golf please support as many as you can.

SOUTH COAST

The first Turf Club course visit is planned for 12 March at the Berkshire GC. This is limited to 30 so will be on a first come basis, it is free but you will need to find your own way there.

Details of the Spring Competition tbc.

Match v Secretaries is planned for June at Burley GC, more details will follow but if you want to play let me know on tonygadd9@gmail.com

SOUTH WEST

Please keep an eye out for the South West fixtures list to be posted shortly. In the meantime here is a summary of the year's events:

18 March - Turf Club at Thornbury Golf Centre

16 June - Rigby Taylor Team Challenge at The Players Club

22 July - Golf Management Trophy at Minchinhampton Golf Club

10 September - Summer Tournament and National Qualifier at Bristol & Clifton Golf Club

18 November - Regional Conference at Somerset County Cricket Club

15 December - Christmas Tournament at Marlborough Golf Club

Section education continues to be strong. IT training for Powerpoint and Excel will be available in the Bristol area in March at a cost of £130, fantastic value for two days intensive training.

Finally, the South West Section Countrywide Knockout Competition 2015 is now open for entry form teams of

two, last year's competition was a great success and we look forward to staging the event once again. All entries to Joe Curtis, greens@gloucestergolf.com.

All of our Section events are open to members of other sections, please feel free to contact us and attend as everyone is welcome. Please make registration enquiries to Lucy Selleck via southwestsectionbigga@outlook.com

News

SOUTH WALES

A reasonable amount of greenkeepers from our section attended another successful BTME, an opportunity for all to catch up with many topics discussed. Stuart Ross, Richard Hatcher, Emyr Nicols and Mark Wilshire enjoyed the exhibitors and Continue to Learn. I enjoyed Tuesday evening's Welcome Celebration with many awards given, including Emyr collecting the Greenkeeping performance of the year award on behalf of Ian Kinley and his team at Royal Porthcawl. I'm sure we all learnt something new.

DEVON & CORNWALL

Congratulations to George Pitts Mg who recently got the job as Head Greenkeeper at Sunningdale's New Course. George - thank you for all your time and effort you put into the section, you will be missed.

Well done to Jon Wood of Trevose Golf Club for winning the BIGGA Photographic competition and good luck as he will be working at St Andrews. Also well done to Mike Ellis who will be going to America in May as one of the John Deere TPC Sawgrass delegates.

Congratulations go to Keith Kellow who has been at Falmouth Golf Club for 40 years which is a very impressive achievement. Well done also to Mike Bush MG who was previously Course Manager at St Mellion International Resort, he's now Group Course Manager at Crown Golf. Mike will be looking after 38 golf courses at 25 separate facilities.

Results from Bude & North Cornwall GC: 1 Gordon Tamblin, 2 Gavin Moore, 3 Martin Coe. Nearest the pin - Pete Newman. Longest drive - Pat Hobbs

Christy Worthington led over 30 people around the course while almost 20 golfers enjoyed playing in the calm Cornish weather (for a change). Jon Wood also gave a very impressive talk about what he has been doing to get rid of rye grass in his greens.

SOUTH WEST

Can I remind everyone that prompt payment of seminar and training fees is required, this essential for keeping the section finances in order and to save us on admin fees.

Thanks to Sponsors

SOUTH COAST

Thanks to all our sponsors that have joined the Patronage scheme so far, the list is looking good. Anyone else that would like to sponsor the Section please make contact with the committee.

DEVON & CORNWALL

Thank you to Barenbrug and Farmura for sponsoring the event at Bude & North Cornwall.

SOUTH WEST

Many thanks to our South West Section 2015 Patrons: H Curtis & Sons, Greensman, Irritech, Headland Amenity, Countrywide, Farmura, Ecosolve and T H White for their continued and valuable support of South West Section events and training.

Welcome New South West & South Wales Members

Luke Snetzler, Assistant Greenkeeper, Portmore Golf Park, George Williams, Assistant Greenkeeper, Portmore Golf Park, Aidan Smith, Assistant Greenkeeper, Basingstoke Golf Club.



Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, Education Director, focuses on how the devolved powers in Government are testing industries attempting to develop National Occupational Standards

The Government is looking to reform how apprenticeships are funded with the principle that purchasing power for investing in apprenticeship training should lie with the employer, giving them direct control of funding and choice for education and training support from providers. This reform is ongoing and the GTC is looking to influence how any funding support will be allocated to the 1,900 golf club employers in England.

The Trailblazer project is currently only in England but the devolved Governments in the UK are clearly watching how the reform is evolving.

Over the years, golf club employers have received substantial Government funding support for training their greenkeepers.

This funding has been managed by colleges and private training providers.

The GTC has helped coordinate a partnership approach to the delivery of apprenticeships and all work-based qualifications. This is continuing with the Trailblazer project.

Employers will be required to put a cash contribution towards the cost of training, but there will be incentives for recruiting a 16-18 year old and for employers with less than 50 employees.

With the support of GTC Quality Assured Centres and a GTC-Awarding Body agreement, the delivery of apprenticeships is continually improving.

A new Golf Greenkeeper Standard has been approved and a new programme of education, training and assessments has been submitted to Government for approval.

One of the big challenges has been to develop a new final set of graded assessments.

These new assessments will examine the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprentice/learner.

Work with the Awarding Body



to develop the final assessments will commence shortly, as will the selection and training of independent assessors who will be from the sector.

Quality Assurance from the point of registration of the apprentice/learner will involve the GTC and the Awarding Body.

Another huge step in the right direction to improve the consistency and quality of the whole programme of learning and assessments, I hope you agree?

If everything goes to plan the first apprentices/learners to commence on the new Golf Greenkeeper Standard will be enrolled from 1 September this year.

To view the new Golf Greenkeeper Standard and Assessment Plan visit the GTC website.

Work to develop new Standards for First Assistant, Deputies, Head Greenkeepers and Golf Course Managers is ongoing.

Funding is always an issue especially for employers.

It is important you contact the GTC Quality Assured Centres for the latest information.

Since its formation in 1987, BIGGA has always had education as its number one priority.



The GTC is funded by:



Contact Details

David F. Golding
GTC Education Director
and Standards Director,
Greenkeeper Training

01347 838640
david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC
Aldwark Manor
Near Aine
York
YO61 1UF

www.the-gtc.co.uk
www.greenkeepertraining.com



You can follow the GTC on
Twitter @TheOfficialGTC

There have been so many education and training initiatives, often supported by the generosity of companies, and as members it is always worth contacting the Association to see what funding support is available.

The R&A Bursary Scheme has been established for several years and includes funding support to assist students looking to study for Higher Education qualifications.

Applications can be made to The R&A by emailing Wendy Cole at WendyCole@rand.org

The GTC, through the British Golf Unions, England Golf, Scottish Golf Union and Golf Union of Wales and BIGGA will continue to be represented in all apprenticeship and qualification review meetings.

The GTC is also looking to strengthen its position with all the devolved Governments to ensure the National Occupational Standards for the greenkeeping and golf course management sector are consistent.

I hope this update shows how much the profession has grown from the past (just look at the attached picture from the thirties!) when greenkeeping as a recognised profession was just a dream.

BUYERS' GUIDE

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or email **james@bigga.co.uk**

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Recruitment

Ringway Golf Club, Altrincham Course Manager

Ringway Golf Club was established in 1909 and the 18 hole course was designed by the celebrated golf course architect Harry Colt. It is situated on the south side of Manchester within a beautiful mature parkland setting and is a private members club providing year round golf. The Club regularly hosts both County & Regional Championships, the most recent event being the 2014 Northern Qualifying round for the Brabazon Trophy. The vacancy for this position has arisen due to retirement and we are keen to recruit a Course Manager who has excellent technical ability, proven management skills and an enthusiasm and dedication to support the Club's commitment to continuous improvement.

The successful candidate will:

Have a minimum of 3 years management experience in a similar role.
Have a minimum of NVQ 3 but NVQ 4 or additional relevant sports turf qualifications such as a degree would be advantageous.
Work closely with the Club Manager and Course Committee to present an outstanding golfing facility year round for members and visitors.
Be a first-rate communicator and leader to successfully manage and develop the existing team of greenkeepers.
Have a traditional approach to greenkeeping based on sound agronomic principles. Promote and maintain compliance with all relevant Health & Safety legislation. Hold correct certification to complete work as required, for example pesticide spraying.
Be responsible for all machinery including routine maintenance.
Have a good level of knowledge in respect of automatic irrigation systems.
Have responsibility for managing budgets and working within financial controls.

If you wish to apply, please request an Application Form from:

Ms Fiona Cornelius, Club Secretary, Ringway Golf Club, Hale Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8SW
or email: fiona@ringwaygolfclub.co.uk
Telephone: 0161-980-2630 Option 3 for the Office.

Closing date for applications: 21st March 2015

All applications will be treated in strict confidence.
For additional information about the Club please visit www.ringwaygolfclub.co.uk

Seasonal Greenkeeper April to October (full time)

West Middlesex Golf Club, Greenford Road, Southall, Middlesex. UB1 3EE

The Club is looking for an enthusiastic, capable seasonal greenkeeper to join the existing team. The position involves maintaining/improving the parkland golf course. This would suit an individual wishing to gain experience to further their career.

The ideal candidate will be extremely flexible and will have, but not essential:

- 2 years greenkeeping or sports turf experience
- NVQ2 or similar

Please apply by email to admin@westmiddgc.co.uk with your CV and covering letter

Assistant Greenkeeper

We are currently seeking to recruit a highly motivated and enthusiastic Assistant Greenkeeper to join our experienced team. He/she will be involved in the daily presentation of the course, project work and all other aspects of turf maintenance involved in the day to day running of this unique golf course.

Applicants will need to possess the following qualifications, experience and skills:

- 2 years minimum green keeping experience.
 - NVQ/SVQ level 2 or working towards completion.
 - PA1, PA2A and PA 6 spraying certificates or equivalent.
 - The ability to work individually and as part of a team whilst maintaining a respectful attitude to your working environment.
 - A "can do" attitude and excellent attention to detail.
 - Full driving license.
- Salary will be negotiable dependent on experience.
Benefits include:
• Uniform provided
• Lunch while on duty

To apply or for more information please email a covering letter and CV to Gavin Kyle: knolegk@hotmail.com or send to Knole Park Golf Club, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0HJ.



Golf & Grass Machinery Service Manager

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The Service Manager must have good front of house experience as a Service Advisor / Workshop Supervisor within the groundcare industry or automotive/ commercial vehicle industry.

Required skills:

- Experience within the groundcare industry or similar within the automotive/ commercial vehicle industry.
- Experience within Dealer Service Department
- Experience managing and developing staff
- Strong communication skills and ability to work under pressure

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Please apply in writing including CV to:

Denise Kemp HR Manager on 07980 301557
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Farol Ltd, Rycote Lane Farm, Milton Common, Thame, Oxfordshire, OX9 2NZ

Walton Heath Golf Club

Assistant Greenkeeper

We are currently seeking to recruit a highly motivated and enthusiastic Assistant Greenkeeper to join our experienced team. He/she will be involved in the daily presentation of the heath, project work and all other aspects of turf maintenance involved in the day to day running of these championship courses.

Applicants will need to possess the following qualifications, experience and skills:

- 2 years minimum green keeping experience.
- NVQ/SVQ level 2 minimum, NVQ/SVQ Level 3 preferred.
- PA1, PA2A and PA 6 spraying certificates or equivalent.
- The ability to work individually or as part of a team.
- A "can do" attitude and excellent attention to detail.
- Full driving license.

Salary will be negotiable dependent on experience.

Benefits include

- Uniform provided
- Hot lunch while on duty

Seasonal Greenkeepers

To help ensure our golf courses are maintained to the highest level we are also currently recruiting for Seasonal Greenkeepers who will assist in presenting the courses to a very high standard. Successful candidates will have a passion for attention to detail, ideally qualified to NVQ 1 OR 2 (although not essential), you will have a passion to learn and to exceed expectations. The positions are based on a 40-hour week and flexibility will be essential.

Extensive training will be gained on various tasks as well as on machinery, seasonal staff can expect regular job rotation and therefore provide good experience in many areas, including tournament experience and construction work

To apply for any of the above positions or find out more information please email a covering letter and CV to: astrachan@waltonheath.com



Assistant Greenkeeper (in training)

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An exciting opportunity has arisen to be part of the greenkeeping team at The South Buckinghamshire and Academy courses.

As the successful candidate you should possess the following:

- Previous green keeping experience.
- NVQ level 2 in sports turf maintenance or equivalent.
- PA1 and PA6 spraying qualifications is desirable but not essential.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Sound understanding of health and safety.
- Hold a valid full driving licence.
- The ability to work as part of a team.

The successful candidate will need to complete a CRB application.

If you would like to discuss the position informally, please contact:
Paul Frost on 01753 643041

Closing date: Monday 30 March 2015.

Interview date: Thursday 9 April 2015.

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The South Buckinghamshire Academy, Stoke Road, Stoke Poges, SL2 4LN

The Vineyard Group



We are looking for a Deputy Green Keeper to join our team at Donnington Valley Golf Club on a full time basis. You will work 40 hours per week, this will be varied over the seasons and over-time may be required to complete your duties. Salary is £20,000-£24,000 per annum dependant on experience.

The main responsibility of this role is to strengthen the green keeper team across two golf clubs. You will also support the Course Manager with monitoring absences across the team and delegating duties to help assist the day to day running of the golf course.

Essential Qualifications

- NVQ Level 2/3 Sports Turf Management
- Minimum 3 years experience
- Desirable Qualifications
- Chainsaw License
- PA2, 2+6 Spraying Qualification

You must be dedicated, hard working, polite and a customer focused individual who possesses excellent communication skills with strong spoken English skills.

Direct application URL: <https://thevineyardgroup.peoplehr.net/Pages/JobBoard/Opening.aspx?v=a6ad4b53-949f-4357-b1ec-5b6124071d7>

Glendale Golf is recruiting a Deputy Head Greenkeeper for one of its flagship venue Tilgate Forest Golf Centre. Following an extensive investment programme, this is an exciting opportunity to take responsibility for the Greenkeeping team.

Reporting to the Head Greenkeeper, this is an important role as the Deputy Head Greenkeeper will oversee the team that is responsible for the maintenance and presentation of one of the busiest golf venues in the south of England in the Head Greenkeepers absence.

For a copy of the job description or further information, please dan.lucking@glendalegolf.co.uk
Please apply with a letter of application and CV to:
recruitment@glendale-services.co.uk
Closing Date: 6/03/15



@BIGGALtd

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Our favourite tweets this month...

@sandra4bigganor
Great turnout at Stonebridge G C for the BIGGA Midland Region Conference @BIGGALtd

@kevodale76
Just had two awesome days with @TheToroCompany seeing the magic come together. Thanks to everyone.

@ConnahSimon
Excellent first day @GIS 2015 All ready to go for day 2. @BIGGALtd @BernhardGrinder

@CentenaryHGK
Great work from the team over the last week to lay 9000m2 of @countyturf That's broken the back of the range renovation project @BIGGALtd

@HadlowGroupABC
For all those who attended last weeks seminars make sure you claim your @BIGGALtd CPD credits <http://www.bigga.org.uk>

@Sammy3334
Think I am finally all packed and ready! @BernhardGrinder @BIGGALtd @GIS_2015 #texas

@daire_paddy
Head Greenkeeper position achieved back in the Emerald Isle! #links #bigchallenge #TksScotland #HardWorkPaysOff @greenkeepingire @BIGGALtd



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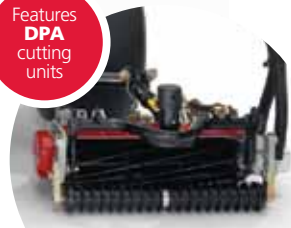
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