Mowing the semi and rough can be an uncomfortable job, but not anymore!

The new Jacobsen MP493 features an ISO-mounted operator’s platform and comfortable suspension seat ensuring days of productive mowing. All round visibility is superb with positive sightlines to each deck and a foldable ROPS keeps the operator safe and allows manoeuvrability in low access areas such as trees and height restricted access points.

Maintenance-free direct drive decks offer width of cut options for the excellent pro-quality cut. The high efficiency, continuous belt drive system provides all weather performance and reduces noise. A 150 mm break-back system on the wing decks helps prevent damage.

The Jacobsen MP493 - comfort and productivity on the golf course.

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Published by the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Ltd
Why I love The Masters

Chairman’s Word

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

Well spring has finally sprung, as April’s GI dropped on my doorstep my thoughts were moving towards the application of plant growth regulators, fairway definition, and the annual dose of the incurable Augusta Syndrome.

I must admit to loving The Masters as a tournament and for the role it’s played in pushing the standards of golf course presentation all over the world. I can almost hear people getting ready to send me hate mail for that last comment, but I stand by it. Back in the 1980s, The Masters had the ultimate wow factor, with amazing attention to detail and super-fast greens, and golfers demanded their own course to be as good. I believe these demands have led to better education being provided, better equipment being produced and ultimately a better life for greenkeepers.

The golf itself was a slight anti-climax with Jordan Spieth cruising to the win. But a few beers and a curry on the Sunday night with my team from Richmond made for an interesting evening with plenty of banter to keep us entertained.

I spotted an ultimately sad story on Facebook this month. A greenkeeping team found an abandoned dog, took it in and tried to help but unfortunately the poor little thing didn’t make it.

For me the real story here is hidden; the fact the team tried to look after the dog was heart-warming and indicative of greenkeepers in general, but the offers from greenkeepers across the UK to donate money for vet fees was a real show of community spirit. 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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As you may have seen on the BIGGA website Carreres Page, Jeremy Hughes is leaving Vale of Llangollen Golf Club, and his position as representative for the Northern Region will be filled by Scott Reeves, Course Manager at Leyland Golf Club, in what should be a seamless transition.

I’m delighted to see we are again sending a team to support Kenny MacKay and his team at Wentworth for the BMW PGA Championship. I am sure the course will be in fantastic condition.

Joining a BIGGA Support Team is a great opportunity to see how tournament courses are presented, how the various teams work together to produce a world-class product and a fantastic opportunity to network with other greenkeepers.

There is another opportunity in this month’s magazine, this time to join the team at Woburn for the British Masters supported by Sky Sports in October. I urge members to apply for these opportunities and not get downhearted if you don’t get selected at the first attempt.

I’ve noticed a debate gathering pace surrounding the use of a specific type of grass or grasses for the production of fine turf surfaces. Part of the discussion has suggested that BIGGA should take a stance on what is the best grass for golf greens. As a members’ Association it is our role to ensure that every member is educated and suitably equipped to produce the best possible surfaces within the confines of their own site, budget and resources.

I believe we should continue to report on, educate and inform all of our members on the best practice available for the massive variety of sites we manage.

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“#takeleswithyou has reached new heights”

President’s Word

Les Howkins MG
Email: chairman@bigga.co.uk

Contact details
Les Howkins MG
Email: chairman@bigga.co.uk

BTME 2016 BOOSTED AS KUBOTA SECURE SPOT IN FIFTH HALL

BTME 2016 has been boosted by the news that top machinery manufacturer Kubota will be exhibiting in the fifth Hall – Hall Q – of the Harrogate International Centre.

Space at the equivalent show two years ago sold out well before the exhibition, leading BIGGA to announce that for the first time in several years, the 2016 show will occupy five Halls.

Now Kubota have booked just under 100 metres of stand space in Hall Q ahead of what is expected to be a packed show in January next year.

John Johnson, Sales Support Manager at Kubota UK, said: “The additional space available in Hall Q gives Kubota much more flexibility in the way it can present groundcare products to this very important market.”

Jill Rodham, BIGGA’s Business Development Manager, said: “We’re delighted that such an important supporter of BTME have reaffirmed their commitment by booking their stand in the new Hall Q. “They have recognised that this represents excellent value for them. BTME 2016 is shaping up to be one of the biggest yet with the extra Hall, meaning even more exhibitors and more reasons to get involved in the show.”

Companies from every corner of the turfcare sector have already rushed to rebook and new exhibitors will also be at BTME 2016, nearly 5,000 visitors flocked to last year’s show from across the UK and worldwide, visiting one hundred exhibitors from across the turfcare industry.

Key decision makers from all manner of sports clubs, authorities and associations struck deals throughout the week.

Space is still available at Europe’s leading showcase for turf professionals and buyers. To book a Stand at BTME 2016 please contact Jill on jil@bigga.co.uk or 01332 833800 option 2. For more on BTME 2016 visit www.btme.org.uk

NORTHERN CONFERENCE

BIGGA Northern Region

This year’s BIGGA Northern Regional Conference took place at Chester Le Street Golf Club and our thanks go to Barry Lee and the team for their kind hospitality.

The theme for the day was Tournament Preparation with speakers of an excellent standard including Steve Chappell from Gleneagles, Adam Newton of STR, Philip Russell from the RMA, Paul Moms of GBB Technology, Ben Taylor of Bernardi & Co and our very own Tracey Maddison from BIGGA.

This event was offered free of charge to BIGGA members thanks to funding from the BIGGA Contribute to Learn Fund and also from the Northern Region Education Patrons which include Bernardi & Co, Campey Turfcare, Prostimation, Mansfield Sand, Headland Amenity Products and Rigby Taylor.

During the day Ian Pemberton and Martin Wood said £25 of raffle tickets, with £162.50 donated to the BIGGA Benevolent Fund and £162.50 to go towards more subsidised education events.

Raffle prizes were kindly donated by Rockliffe Hall, Chester Le Street Golf Club, Wysong Golf Club, Manderfield Sand, Tandt, Rigby Taylor, James Breeze, Steve Chappell, Bernardi & Co and Turfkeeper.

The day was put together by Pete Newton, so thanks to him for his time and commitment and to Simon Oliver who presented a great overview of the North East Section and the committee’s aims and objectives.

Sandra Raper

THIRD FTMI AN “OUTSTANDING SUCCESS”

Nineteen delegates from golf clubs across the UK visited Ramsones-Jacobson’s European headquarters for the third BIGGA Future Turf Managers’ Initiative (FTMI), made possible by Jacobsen.

This three-day educational event is aimed at up and coming greenkeepers who are focused on making the career leap to Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager.

Focusing on personal and professional development, the FTMI uses the expertise of respected course managers, industry training specialists and industry experts to mentor and educate the next generation of industry leaders.

Arriving at hq at the first day, the group was welcomed by Rupert Price, Ramsones-Jacobson’s Sales Director, before being split into groups and touring the manufacturing facilities. This was followed by a light-hearted golf competition on the company’s three-hole golf course, the RJ National, which provided an opportunity for the delegates to interact with each other.

An intensive second day began with renowned Golf Consultant Eddie Bullock, former PGA Captain and now non-executive Director of Golf at Goodwood, delivering a class on what it takes to become an effective leader. Following lunch Lorna Sheldon, a respected personal communication and presentation skills trainer, provided valuable insights into writing a CV, preparing for an interview and the techniques required when in front of an interview panel.

After lunch Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper at the PGA Centenary Course in Gleneagles, gave a presentation on the benefits of volunteering opportunities at major tournaments.

The final day began with a highly informative interactive presentation by gWest’s Course Manager Lee Strutt, which provided an introduction to the golf course maintenance budget, the use of Excel spreadsheets and how to sell the budget to stakeholders.

The final speaker was Crystal Matthews, a member of Jacobson’s HR team, who had flown in from the USA to present to the delegates. Crystal’s highly interactive presentation ‘Crucial Conversations’ provided an opportunity for the team to first identify the need for a crucial conversation and provided the tools they would require to conduct themselves when faced with awkward situations in their new managerial roles.

It was left to Will Carr, Ramsones-Jacobson’s UK & Ireland Golf Slaes Manager, to close the event where he thanked the delegates and the mentors for their time and contribution to what was agreed by all, a hugely successful and worthwhile three days of first-class education.

Fraser Jardine, First Assistant at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, summed up the experience when he said: “It was a fantastic experience and I learned so many new skills that I can apply to the workplace.

Everyone got the chance to share ideas with each other and I met some great new contacts and friends along the way. It was a huge boost to my confidence and I would recommend it to anyone who is preparing to move up in their career ladder.”

Sani Strutt, BIGGA’s Head of Member Development, said: “The FTMI is an incredibly valuable and inspiring learning experience. It would not be possible without the continued support of our industry partners, Jacobson, and our mentors, who all volunteered their time for this initiative.”

“Having witnessed the interaction between the candidates, presenters and mentors, I can safely say that the future of greenkeeping is in safe hands. My thanks go to Jacobsen and all of the mentors, and my congratulations to all the candidates.”
NEW ROLE FOR BIGGA MASTER GREENKEEPER

West Lancashire Golf Club have appointed Stuart Hogg MG as their new Course Manager, replacing the club’s previous long-serving greenkeeper, John Mui, who sadly passed away last September.

Stuart’s greenkeeping career began at West Kirby Golf Club in 1981. Since then he has enjoyed various posts at courses throughout the UK, including Farstone and Rowanmistle Golf Club, Roseto-shire, where he was awarded Master Greenkeeper status by BIGGA.

Speaking about the appointment, West Lancashire Golf Club’s Chairman, Nigel Heyes said: “Stuart joins from St Anne’s Old Links, where he has been Course Manager for ten years. "We are delighted to welcome him to the club and I know his wealth of experience combined with such an illustrious career history will make a positive impact on the course and our members.”

Stuart added: “I am honoured to take up this new role at this championship course.

“arising from a gentleman who was well respected both at the club and within the industry is an honour, and I am looking forward to working with the team to ensure that West Lancashire not only remains on the must play list but increases our standing as one of the best links courses in the world.

 Initially Stuart will be responsible for a team of eight. The investment in course maintenance and greenkeeping staff will enable Stuart to implement a visionary plan over the next three years.

BIGGA MEMBER IS CHAMPION SHOOTER

BIGGA member Ian Chenery is celebrating after scooping a National title in shooting just weeks after being selected to represent Great Britain.

The sharp shooter, who is Course Manager at Woodbury Park Golf & Country Club in Devon, first got the bug when he picked up an air rifle aged 13, and now uses a .308 with handmade ammunition.

He has been competing against the country’s best in long-range shooting in the F Class League, the UK’s premier shooting contest. Now, following two days of intense competition at Bigge Range near Oldham, he has become the National Champion in the 600-yard category (above left).

Ian said: “It was a very hard shoot as the wind was extremely tricky to read.

“I shoot the current British champion by three points to take the win, it’s my first overall win and I’m hoping for many more.

“I’ve also recently received my letter from the Great Britain team committee and team captain in the European Championships held at Bisley Ranges in Surrey.

“We’ve already held two training camps there to prepare.

“The sport takes up a lot of my time and money.

“Every round is tested, tuned and made by myself, all bullets, cases and powder are weighed, trimmed, batched and then put together with extreme attention to detail.

“I shoot every other week now as I have made the GB team, we shoot a league match and then two weeks later we are at Bisley for team training.

“It’s a good job I have an understanding partner!

“It’s a very demanding sport which requires meticulous preparation and huge amounts of concentration.

“We shoot the smallest bullseyes in any long range shooting discipline in the world, half a minute of angle, which is five inches at 1000 yards.

“To give you an idea of the accuracy level of my set up, I shot a 300 yard competition at Bisley in January and scored 75/75 with 14/15 v bulls, that’s hitting a target smaller than a golf ball 300 yards away.”

The team’s long-term goal is the World Championships which are scheduled to be held in Canada in 2017.

After that, Ian and the team are hopeful their sport will be included in the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia.

Ian is now on the lookout for possible sponsorship, and is also keen to speak to golf courses closer to Oldham, Bisley and Blair Athol.

He hopes they may be able to help him out with accommodation before training and tournaments. If you can help with any of the above, or want to know more about the sport of shooting, Ian can be contacted at ichenery@woodburypark.co.uk

SUPPORT TEAM NEEDED FOR BRITISH MASTERS

Due to the nature of the work the support team will be involved in, all applicants must have at least an NVQ Level 2 qualification.

Applicants must be able to commit to working for the entire week, beginning on Tuesday 6 October. Successful candidates will be provided with some uniform for the week along with food, beverages and various other benefits.

Please note that there is no accommodation available. Therefore, this opportunity is most suitable for members in the Mid Anglia and RH&B Sections, but applications from other Regions and Sections are welcome. The closing date for applications is Friday 29 May.

If you’re interested in applying, please contact BIGGA’s Midland Regional Administrator Roger Butler on roger@bigga.co.uk or 07525 593359 for more details and an application form.

Successful applicants will be notified by the end of July.

GI NEWSDESK

Have you won a competition? Scooped a sporting trophy? Appeared on a television show? If so we want to hear from you!

Please email your news items and press releases to Steve Castle, BIGGA Communications Executive by the 15th of the month prior to publication.
Renowned golf club consultant Eddie Bullock recently met the whole team at Stirling Golf Club as part of a prize the team won during the Turf Managers’ Conference at BTME 2015. Stirling’s Course Manager James Lindsay entered a draw for Eddie to deliver two sessions at the club, and after winning the draw Eddie recently made the journey to the scenic course in the heart of Scotland.

Eddie’s first seminar was an evening session with committee members, staff and club officials including the club’s captain. This focused on the importance of customer service. The next morning he met with the greenkeeping team for a seminar focusing on similar issues, but tailored to the greenkeepers. Eddie said: “Every single member of the team at Stirling embraced the sessions and it was a great day. I was made to feel very welcome and it was a great success for the whole club, opening up new ideas to be more connected with their members and guests, while thought provoking in terms of improving the communication channels.”

James added: “It was great to share the experience with the team and committee members at the club which everyone enjoyed. “Friday’s session involving the greenkeepers was well received and we have implemented our own list of actions to follow when dealing with members and visitors on a daily basis. The main committee are working towards a mission statement which they hope to announce soon. “Thanks again to Eddie for spending so much time with us at Stirling and we are looking forward to seeing the benefits from his visit.”

Brian Cocker has retired from the position of Head Greenkeeper at Alyth Golf Club in Perthshire after over 36 years of loyal service. BIGGA member Brian began his a career as an apprentice greenkeeper at Edzell Golf Club, he then made the move to Forfar before being appointed Head Greenkeeper at Brechin Golf Club. He joined Alyth back in June 1979. During his time he has seen many changes to the profession in methods and equipment contributing to the changes and maturity of the golf course in this long fulfilling period. Brian is married to Anne and they have two children. He intends spending his retirement golfing, hillwalking, cycling and watching his beloved Brechin City.

Everyone at BIGGA was saddened to hear of the death of Mike Strange, greenkeeper at Goring and Streatley Golf Club, who had worked at the Berkshire club for over 40 years. The Club’s Course Manager Brian Valentine said: “Mike started work at Goring and Streatley back in June 1974 as Assistant Greenkeeper, and was then promoted to Deputy Course Manager. “Mike played golf in many BSSG golf days and also won the BSSG Taylor pairs competition in 2005. He died after suffering a heart attack on 21 March. “He will be sadly missed by all who knew him and all the staff and members of our club.”

Mike Strange

Two Brains Better than One at Alyth

TWO BRIANS BETTER THAN ONE AT ALYTH

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Everyone at Alyth Golf Club will miss him and we wish him a long and healthy retirement. His former colleague Brian Heggie, also a BIGGA member, is now Head Greenkeeper at Alyth.

Everyone at BIGGA wishes both Brains ‘good luck’ and ‘happy retirement’ respectively!

WE WORK HARDER TO GIVE YOUR TEAM AN EDGE

WE WORK HARDER TO GIVE YOUR TEAM AN EDGE

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A STIRLING SUCCESS

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AMANDA INTERVIEWS ...KEITH AITKEN

Amanda Doran’s latest chat is with Keith Aitken, Head Greenkeeper at Brodick Golf club on the Isle of Arran.

Here he tells Amanda about his time at St Andrews and the challenges of island life.

AD: Hi Keith, great to see the Isle of Arran being represented on the board.
KA: Hi Amanda, it’s great to get this special little island involved with a great organisation.

AD: How many golf courses are there on Arran?
KA: There are seven, each with their own unique features.

AD: Where did you begin your greenkeeping career?
KA: I began my career back in 1991 at Elvewood College in Cupar. As part of my training I was fortunate enough to gain experience working on the Old Course, St Andrews. Although I was a keen golfer, this really ignited my passion for greenkeeping.

AD: Talk me through a typical day at Brodick.
KA: After breakfast we check the weather and liaise with the pro to determine outings and tee times. We discuss as a team our tasks for the day. I am lucky enough to have a team that can work independently if needed, we reconvene at midday for lunch and then a similar course of action applies in the afternoon.

AD: Many of us on the Ayrshire coastline say that Arran shelters us from the worst of the weather. Do you agree?
KA: I have to agree, the course is below sea level and we have little protection from the elements.

AD: What challenges does island life present?
KA: Getting equipment fixed, you can’t just go down to your local dealership and get a replacement part. However all the greenkeepers on the island have a great, supportive working relationship.

AD: What are your short-term and long-term agronomic goals?
KA: Short-term we are implementing systems to enable damage limitation in the winter. The long-term goal is to manage the erosion on the coastline part of the golf course and keep the effects of this erosion minimal.

AD: Arran is simply stunning and without a doubt one of my favourite places! Thank you for providing an insight into your interesting career which has seen you work on great courses around the country.

MAKING HIS MARK

Congratulations to Mark Crossley who is the new Course Manager at Prestbury Golf Club in Chesire. Mark began his greenkeeping career at Shipton Golf Club before moving to Nelson Golf Club. He then spent 14 years moving around golfing in Tenerife at Amelita Golf & Country Club, learning about warm season grasses while occasionally capping off underneath the sprinkler!

Mark returned to the UK to work at Stockport Golf Club before securing his first Head Greenkeeper role at Mickleover Golf Club, and in 2010 joined Chesterfield Golf Club as Course Manager.

Now he has taken up the reins at Prestbury, a Harry Colt designed undulating parkland course which has held Regional Qualifying events for The Open, and will be heading up a strong greenkeeping team, replacing Anthony Davies MS. Mark said: “I think it’s important for greenkeepers in my career to work at a range of different venues and in a range of different climates, which is what I’ve been lucky enough to do.

“I’ve also been Chair of the Greens committee at Chesterfield and ended up on the Board. It’s meant more work for me but it means I’ve got to know every aspect of the club and I get a real buzz out of it, which I also think is really important for greenkeepers if you read a club which allows you these opportunities.

“Prestbury is a big challenge but I’m always keen to try new things. They’re looking for fresh ideas and input and hopefully I can provide that.

“Long-term our prime goal is to create surfaces that members are proud to play on, and encourage the native fine grasses back into the greens. Projects are likely to include constructing new tee boxes and potentially new bunkers too.

“I’m looking forward to continuing Anthony’s hard work over the last 26 years and keeping the standards of the course even further.”

Paying tribute to Anthony’s contribution, Simon Bolam, Director of Greens at Prestbury Golf Club added: “Not only has Anthony ensured the course has been maintained to the highest standard, he has overseen many major development projects. We will always be grateful for Anthony’s invaluable contribution and he has undoubtedly assured himself a place in the history of our fine club.”

NEW CONCIERGE SERVICE PARTNER FOR BTME

BIGGA are delighted to announce a new partnership with Mice Concierge who will help you with every aspect of your visit to BTME 2016.

As the exhibition at the Harrogate International Centre in January 2016 approaches, you will notice Mice Concierge will be on hand to assist with everything from hotel bookings to travel.

Managing Director Andrew Bowers said: “As the official concierge team for BTME 2016, we are here to help take care of your booking requirements during your visit to Harrogate.

“Our team of friendly specialists are available to help ensure your visit to Harrogate is as hassle free as possible.

“So if you want to know about the hotels, restaurants, travel options for your trip to the event, please do visit our website or call us and we will be delighted to help.

“We offer a service for individual bookings but we also specialise in helping where clients have more complex requirements including group arrangements, small meetings or private dinners.

“Alongside our sister company, Fresh Reservations, we’ll help you to plan, co-ordinate and implement your plans and aim to help you and your colleagues have a great experience whilst in Harrogate!

“With over 17 years’ experience we’ve helped literally thousands of companies to save money and get the best possible solutions so if you would like us to help you, please do get in touch and we will be delighted to hear from you!”

For more information visit www.miceconcierge.com
Who is heading to Wentworth?

Congratulations to all the BIGGA members who have secured a place on this year’s Support Team for the BMW PGA Championship.

For many years, the Association has provided a team of greenkeepers to join the home greenkeeping team for this prestigious event at Wentworth in May.

The team will take on a range of duties from early morning prep to debris ahead of the 7am start. One team of greenkeepers to join the Team for the BMW PGA Support Team were assistant greenkeepers from the Wrexham Golf Club.

He said: “Obviously you have to be on your toes when you volunteer for an event of this importance, but when the weather is against you I think you’re even more switched on because you could be needed at almost any time of day.”

This was proved when a group of us were out blowing leaves out of the bunkers at 4.30am. “But it was a wonderful experience with terrific greenkeepers from across the country. It was very hard work, but it was just great to be inside the ropes seeing the professionals play all manner of remarkable shots. I raked for both Thomas Bjorn and Shane Lowry during the week who both played some brilliant golf.”

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.
IN-HOUSE TRAINING AT LADYBANK

David Gray is Head Greenkeeper at Ladybank Golf Club, a heartland course in Fife which has held final qualifying for The Open on several occasions. They have started in-house educational workshops – and are gaining CPD credits as a result as well as increasing their knowledge!

David said: “The course at Ladybank is uniquely constructed on a site of natural sand and gravel. We have an abundance of wildlife including deer, woodpeckers and bats amongst many others. It’s a truly beautiful setting and an absolute pleasure to work at this fabulous site.

“Myself and Course Manager Colin Powrie thought it would be highly beneficial to do some in-house training, and asked the team to make some suggestions on an area they would like to see covered.

“We then spent some time putting together detailed presentations on these topics. “Following this we have overheard the introduction of ‘mini workshops’ to educate our team, and to borrow a phrase from BIGGA, ‘continue to learn!’

“These are very well-received, informal and focus on giving the guys an insight into why we do things a certain way, and by explaining this to all the team they are then fully aware of what we are trying to achieve and why.

“We had our first workshop in January which was ‘The setup and performance of cutting units’. This outlined the benefits of maintaining sharp blades, and the potential impact of mowing with blunt blades.

“We also demonstrated the correct setting up of our various blunt blades.

“Correct setting up of our various blunt blades.

“Potential impact of mowing with maintaining sharp blades, and the units’. This outlined the benefits of setting up and performance of cutting units. We then spent some time putting together detailed presentations on these topics. Following this we have overheard the introduction of ‘mini workshops’ to educate our team, and to borrow a phrase from BIGGA, ‘continue to learn!’

“These are very well-received, informal and focus on giving the guys an insight into why we do things a certain way, and by explaining this to all the team they are then fully aware of what we are trying to achieve and why.

“We had our first workshop in January which was ‘The setup and performance of cutting units’. This outlined the benefits of maintaining sharp blades, and the potential impact of mowing with blunt blades.

“We also demonstrated the correct setting up of our various units during a practical session at the end.

“At the end I handed out feedback forms to the team to discover what they thought.

“Our second workshop discussed a topic which was very much relevant giving recent criticism from a minority of members – ‘Bunker sand analysis – selecting the correct specifications.’

“This focused on how we choose the correct specification of bunker sand, and explained how our current sand met all areas of recommendations from both STRI and ETL. We also highlighted the importance of particle size and shape, and how this could affect performance.

“We have regular particle size distribution testing done to ensure we receive a consistent product so we looked at past specification sheets and explained the process involved.

“To finish off I laid out a number of sands ranging from medium fine to coarse and included our current topdressing bunker and klin dried sand to show how very different these products were.

“The plan is to run around six of these workshops per season, covering anything from Setting Units to Grass identification.

“Topics will be timed to ensure the learning is then put into practice.

“For example, heading into autumn and winter we will run one based on frost damage, as our frost policy is often scrutinised.

“This will help the guys answer any difficult questions focused around the policy, and ensures that we are all prepared with the same answers or reasoning.

“Feedback has been great so far, as the team seem to enjoy these little bonding sessions, as do!”

“Deb Burnett at BIGGA House has been busy improving and updating the Lending Library – and more and more members are taking advantage as a result.

“The Library, which is kindly sponsored by John Deere, has a range of new titles including “Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High” by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler, which was used during the PTMI 2015.

“This book aims to give you the tools to “prepare for high-stakes situations, transfer an anger, and hurt feelings into powerful dialogue, make it safe to talk about tough topics and be persuasive, not abrasive.”

“Deb has also added responses to many of the available books. To access the Lending Library, visit the Members Area of the BIGGA website, select ‘Lending Library’. If you have any queries please email debh@bigga.co.uk.

“Congratulations to Stuart Ponfield, Head Greenkeeper at Wheathill Golf Club, who has been awarded a Baroness Level 3 Scholarship. Stuart will be studying for his Diploma in Work Based Horticulture at Myerscough College.

“Could you be the next lucky winner? Check out the details below to apply today and to find out more about the BIGGA Lending Library.”

“Whether you are undertaking a work-based diploma or SVQ level 2/3 or an HNC in Golf Course Management? If the answer is yes, you’re eligible to apply for this prestigious Award. You will also need the support of your college tutor.

“Once you have applied you will be invited to Regional Interviews at the end of June. You will be interviewed by representatives from BIGGA, Toro and a local golf course manager.

“The interview lasts thirty minutes and you will be asked a range of questions varying from what you know about the scheme and why you think you should be chosen, to your greenkeeping and machinery knowledge. It’s your chance to shine. We can have over forty applicants for six finalists spots, so dress to impress and do your research!

“For the successful six, the final is held in September at BIGGA House. The final features a group discussion on the first evening followed by a short multiple choice test the next morning. For the rest of the day, the candidates will be given an essay question to work on and will then carry out a ten minute presentation about themselves.

“The opportunities for your personal and career development from being a part of this incredible award are second to none. For more details, and to apply, visit the Members Area of the BIGGA website, click on the education tab, then click on ‘Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award’ on the left hand side.”
20 MAY 2015

CHARACTERHOUSE DEMO DAY

Following the announcement that they were to become exclusive UK distributors of Graden products, Characterhouse Turf Machinery recently invited members of the UK trade press to Hanbury Common Golf Club.

Graden Industries is at the leading edge of quality specialist turf machinery. The company started out as a family business serving just the Australian Turf Industry, but over the years has branched out throughout the world.

Characterhouse Sales Manager Nick Darking said: “We are delighted to have the Graden range on board, but it is of course tinged with sadness following the passing of Keith Kensett. However, we are very pleased that John Fitzpatrick has joined us from Kensett to act as our Graden Product Specialist. I honestly believe the Graden machines are one of many four key pieces of grounds care machinery which have had a profound effect on the industry. The phrase to Graden has become a ‘generic term’, just as ‘Verti-Drain’ has. The phone has become a generic term, just as ‘Verti-Drain’ has. The phone

CLEARWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY

It’s becoming increasingly evident that composting is returning to ‘gothic’ through Europe and many clubs are keen to build on this, not only to enhance their appeal, but to tackle compliance and efficiency of waste disposal.

Sustainability is a watchword at present and it is right that we should all be concerned about harming the environment and depleting natural resources. One area of concern and which is covered by legislation is that of washing golf course machinery. The EU Water Framework Directive, due for implementation this year, is fast becoming the driving factor to advance technology at many golf greenkeepers facilities throughout Europe and beyond. The directive has been unashamedly a law by EU member states and is enforced by government agencies. The Environment Agency in England for example. Severe penalties are at their disposal to ensure compliance and to prevent pollution.

Many golf courses have tackled greenkeeping wash-off issues but a number still need to act. So what are the points to consider?

- Pollution Prevention is the main concern and hydrocarbons (oil, grease, diesel, petrol) found in any turf maintenance machines are not permitted to enter the groundwater. So, washing off to ground is just not permissible.
- Water saving is a major consideration too. It has been calculated that in excess of half a million litres of water can be wasted each year on a typical 18 hole course by wash-off. That is not only very costly to those paying for water but a terrible waste of a diminishing and increasingly valuable natural resource.

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Supporters of organic agriculture have always pioneered the type of science and been the leaders in their field and they have established EDN BIO by identifying those bacteria proven to benefit the soil.

EDN BIO is not compost derived but specifically cultured and this is what sets it apart from any other product currently on the market. Should customers wish to order EmBio is not compost derived but specifically cultured and this is what sets it apart from any other product currently on the market. Should customers wish to order
A balancing act

Steve Castle travelled to The Home of Golf to discover how the greenkeeping team care for a course which golfers worldwide feel ownership of, while also keeping an endless list of interested parties happy ahead of The Open’s return to the Old Course.

The Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews, Gordon Moir, is in his office going through the various unusual and often bizarre email requests he receives daily.

He’s had messages from golfers wanting to land a helicopter on the site to play a round, hundreds of enquiries about playing rounds of golf for charity – and after our meeting he was due to meet an American student keen to use the links for a sponsored walk at midnight.

“We treat each request on its merits, we couldn’t possibly say yes to all of them, but we’re keen to help when we can. 99% of people are very respectful of the site.”

This is typical of a day’s work for Gordon, who offered me the warmest of welcomes on my first visit to the world-famous facility.

It’s tempting to waffle on about the special atmosphere of the place, its unparalleled history and its immense scale with seven courses all vying for attention. Well, all of this is true. But it’s the sheer accessibility of the place that surprised me.

This is no Lord’s, Wembley or Wimbledon where trespassers will be prosecuted. It’s common land, so joggers trot across the path which slices the 18th fairway of the Old Course in two, couples walk hand in hand and dog walkers trudge along, seemingly immune to the charms of the old place.

A group of overexcited tourists scrambled to obtain the classic snapshot of themselves imitating Jack Nicklaus on the Swilcan Bridge. One side was cordoned off to allow the greenkeeping team to repair the turf surrounding it – damaged by the footfall of over 45,000 golfers a year plus the aforementioned day-trippers.

Just two of the greenkeepers attempting to maintain order – and world-class surfaces – at St Andrews are Gordon and his namesake Gordon McKie, Course Manager on the Old Course.

McKie began his career working with Ian Macleod at Tain Golf Club and served his apprenticeship there while attending Elmwood College. He was promoted to Assistant before joining St Andrews as Deputy in 1996, working alongside Moir on the Eden Course. After a spell on the New Course he came over to the Old in 2007.

One of the first things he makes clear is his gratitude that the Old is closed to golfers on a Sunday to allow the public to wander the land – allowing the greenkeeping team to carry out agronomic tasks.
McKie said: "No pun intended, but for us that day is an absolute Godsend - we do the majority of our work on a Sunday.

"We had a group of greenkeepers playing here the other day, and one of the questions was "how do you maintain the level of grass cover with 46,000 rounds annually?""

"Basically, you focus on the areas where all that traffic is. Ok, these things cost money, but we're lucky enough that we have the backing to spend the money to keep the golf course in the condition it is.

"Working on the Old is very challenging, when you think of the annual roundage, but it's very rewarding. You speak to people all the time who have saved up and waited for years to play here, a once in a lifetime round, and speaking to someone like that can make your week.

"Because this is the home of golf, and it's on common land, everybody is a stakeholder, which became very apparent to me a few years ago when we started to make some changes! But it's great people feel like that. It gives you a feeling of pride to present it in as good a condition as you possibly can.

"Ah, those changes. Some prominent golfers, course architects and media commentators were hugely critical of the decision to alter parts of the legendary links - including working on the Road Bunker, the re-siting of several other bunkers on various holes, adding a bunker on the 9th and re-contouring a section of the 11th green. So, what was the greenkeeping view?

McKie recalled: "I found the changes exciting and so did all the greenkeeping team. Obviously there was a lot of pressure when you realise how many people around the world feel a wee bit of ownership towards the Old Course. It's the Holy Grail for many golfers which makes you understand the future when we made the changes, but we were totally confident in them, as were the local golfing community and the local clubs which use the courses as their home club."

One major move was advanced grass management across the site. Not a story to excite the headline writers, but cutting back these sometimes troublesome shrubs was a major focus for the team.

McKie explained: "We're not just a tournament venue. We're open to all abilities of golfer, so they have to be able to get round so they can enjoy it rather than making it tough it's difficult to play. When I took over, it seemed you had to carry a lot of gorse to get from tee to fairway, and some of the gorse had grown so much it had created completely blind tee shots. It needed to be cut back."

Moir added: "Some people think St Andrews is a museum which has never changed, but the courses have changed numerous times. They went through massive changes in Old Tom Morris's lifetime, they went to double greens for example. These latest changes were needed to bring the course into line with how the game is played now, and bring back many of the challenges the great players of the past faced."

"It became increasingly clear to me that the list of stakeholders the greenkeepers have to deal with is almost as long as the roll call of winners of the Claret Jug at The Home of Golf. So how do the team deal with this?"

Gordon added: "We have meetings twice a year with representatives from the local clubs and tell them what agronomic and winter work programmes we're planning. At our most recent meeting they mentioned the condition of a winter mat on one of the holes and the amount of pitchmarks – that's all they brought to the table, so we must be doing most things right!"

"But it's not just the clubs – you've got the local hotels, tour operators, golf pros, Fife Council, the Government and of course The R&A. Sometimes the tour operators are unhappy if their clients are playing off winter tees. They all want to tee off from the same places as the pros, but with the traffic we have that's not possible and you have to explain that to them.

"Around 30% of the bunkers over the winter were GUR, which is probably similar to most courses – yet we had one golfer claim it was 90%! We did have Hell Bunker and the Road Bunker out of play, plus the Swilcan Bridge has been fenced off to renovate the turf around it, although you can still access it from the other side. So because some of the icons are closed, some people perceive that half the course is closed and that's not the case."

"We try and publicise this sort of thing as best we can through our website and other methods, but sometimes the message just doesn't get through. We can understand the disappointment some people feel but they have to remember that it's essential winter work."

July sees the 144th Open Championship roll into this stunning part of the Fife coast, so what's the current mood among the teams? McKie, whose handicap is ten, said: "The Old Course is the jewel in the crown, and golfers expect conditions to be the same as what they've seen for The Open. But remember..."
we have the R&A Medals, the St Rule Trophy, the Links Trophy, the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship and many other competitions. For all of those, the course gets pretty much the same level of detail applied as for The Open. So for The Open, we do the same things we do all year round, we’re just lucky enough to have a bigger team.

“Across the site the greens are around 80% fescue with a percentage of bent grass. We do have various patches of poa, ryegrass and Yorkshire fog. The greens on the Old vary – the central areas which get less traffic have better quality grasses."

“We aim for a green speed of 9.5 to 10. 10.5 is the maximum, but the weather is important, you have to think of the wind strength and direction.”

Regarding green speed, Moir – a four handicap - explained: “You get a few complaints, particularly in the summer. On a calm day, when the greens are 9.5, some golfers they say they’re too slow. But if they play the next day with five times more wind, which happens regularly, they will still be 9.5 but putting will be much more difficult – so you can’t have them too fast.”

He laughed at the memory and said: “My advice to the BIGGA Open Support Team is enjoy yourself, take in what’s going on and make contacts. I still recognise and chat to people now I met for the first time on the team, you see them at BTME and conferences."

“Remember sitting in the BIGGA marque at one Open and around me were Walter Woods, George Brown and Jack McMillan to name just three. I listened to everything they were saying and learnt so much. Most of all, enjoy the experience because you don’t often get an opportunity like it.”

Both Gordons have worked on the BIGGA Open Support Team on several occasions, and McKie still recalls raking bunkers for Jean van der Velde during his final round meltdown at Carnoustie in 1999.

He laughed at the memory and said: “My advice to the BIGGA Open Support Team is enjoy yourself, take in what’s going on and make contacts. I still recognise and chat to people now I met for the first time on the team, you see them at BTME and conferences."

“The pair have been heavily involved in BIGGA for many years. McKie believes his work on various Section Committees helped him secure his first position at St Andrews. He was Chairman of the Scottish Central Section in 2011 and 2012. “I felt like I was making a difference, it’s quite rewarding. The key for me was helping to provide more educational opportunities, particularly for young greenkeepers. It’s great to see opportunities such as the Bernhard Delegation and the John Deere TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Programme. My Deputy, Simon Connah, was a Bernhard Delegate this year and he’s got so much from it – it opens so many doors and this is the message we need to get across.

"On a personal level, it certainly helped me secure the job here on the Eden because I already knew Gordon from various BIGGA events."

Moir became Head Greenkeeper at Fraserburgh Golf Club aged just 20, and is passionate about ensuring there is support available for younger turf managers.

“At 20 I often relied on Head Greenkeepers in the area to help me out. When I went on golf outings, I always made sure I was playing with other Head Greenkeepers so I could ask questions. I also learnt a lot from the magazine and reps who came in. I then made the move to the Eden Course from Fraserburgh in 1991.”

For more than 100 years the Kyoeisha Co. of Japan has been making first-class, high quality, user friendly machinery for its customers. Since late 2007 customers in the U.K. have been sharing in that experience, finding out just how low the whole life service costs of Baroness mowers can be!

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Jim Arthur - A decade on

On May 14 2005, Jim Arthur, one of the most influential and controversial names in greenkeeping passed away.

Here, independent agronomist Robert Laycock looks at the impact made by Jim and gives his own personal view on his methods and beliefs.

I write this having just returned from an advisory visit at a links golf course. The sea was choppy and the wind whistled across the fescue and bent greens turf. I often think of Jim Arthur, but particularly when I am at places like this.

Jim would have enjoyed it and it is a prime example of the kind of management style that he advocated. But it is not only seaside links where this kind of management is appropriate. There are also suburban greens with a high content of fescue and bent, managed in the same way.

Jim Arthur died ten years ago this month. He single-handedly changed the course of golf course agronomy in the UK, which in my view was heading in the wrong direction in the hands of some unscrupulous fertiliser salesmen and a complacent agronomy establishment which had taken its eye off the ball.

His ‘back to basics’ approach to agronomy became very popular at that time and he claimed to have advised more than 500 golf clubs. He formulated what is now known as sustainable golf in the face of tremendous opposition.

Jim’s aim was to match the competition of the turf on the greens to that of the nearby fairways, where fescue and bent are so often dominant, fighting against the position of the turf on the greens being changed as a result. He recognised this and stood up for what he believed in. Fortunately the R&A listened and he became Consultant Agronomist to the Championship Committee.

As anyone who was around in those days is aware, Jim was a controversial figure. Recently, when I mentioned Jim’s name to a Course Manager at a very well known course, he responded by saying: “The days of Jim Arthur are long gone, and this means that now we can progress” - as if Jim had been an encumbrance!

This was at a course where clearly Jim’s approach may have worked in some places it did not work everywhere and in some cases it would have been better to let things stay as they were. Jim is best known now for the book ‘Practical Greenkeeping’, commissioned by the R&A and still available in the BIGGA Lending Library, but he was also a prolific writer of articles.

Looking through my archive of his pieces I see a consistent approach by him to the problems he saw on the golf course. He fought tirelessly for traditional greenkeeping techniques.

Although on a personal level Jim was friendly and supportive, he had an abrasive streak when he thought he was right. When I started working for myself as an independent agronomist over 20 years ago, I crossed swords with him on several occasions in print, though whenever we spoke he was always very polite. He inscribed my copy of Practical Greenkeeping “From one agronomist to another” and I was very pleased when he wrote that he had seen an article of mine that he liked.

Jim supported the role of the greenkeeper and fought for them to be respected by the golfing community. He was a good speaker and gave much of his spare time to the greens industry. He launched his book ‘Practical Greenkeeping’ which became one of the most widely read books in the industry.

On his methods and beliefs, but the basic understanding of how turf and soil interact remains the same.

If you are going to follow the path of austerity that Jim advocated, you can’t just turn off the water and fertiliser, you need to follow a middle way and have a supportive agronomist to advise you.

You also need to have the golf club, in particular the membership, on your side. While his approach may have worked in some places it did not work everywhere and in some cases it would have been better to let things stay as they were.

Jim is best known now for the book ‘Practical Greenkeeping’, commissioned by the R&A and still available in the BIGGA Lending Library, but he was also a prolific writer of articles.

Looking through his numerous articles, the same themes crop up. As well as the fight against Poa annua, some of his bugbears were ‘trugs in a jug’, the fight against American influence on the traditional game of golf and the overuse of irrigation systems.

Another example was his distrust of soil analyses. As someone who had studied agricultural botany at university, he was more than capable of understanding and interpreting soil analysis results, yet he claimed to be able to assess the potassium requirement of turf almost by instinct.

It may be difficult to justify this in these days of benchmarking and gadgets, but it worked. He made his assessment of the condition of golf greens on the basis of a sound scientific academic background and years of experience. Just as a birdwatcher can look at a bird and know exactly what species it is without looking at a textbook, so it was with Jim when inspecting golf turf.

Someone who sees thousands of golf greens a year gets to understand which ones are the healthy ones and how what has happened to them during their previous management affects their well being.

Jim Arthur’s dismissal of analysis techniques was controversial but in many respects remains true, not least because of the variation in results following different sampling techniques and analysis methods.

He knew the drawbacks and limitations of soil analyses and the way that they could be used as sales aids by some fertiliser salesman. I disagreed with Jim about the usefulness of soil analyses but I agree with him that only using fertiliser companies’ soil analysis results to choose a fertiliser regime is unwise.

He believed that unscrupulous salesman can create problems by selling inappropriate fertilisers and then selling something else to cure the problems caused by selling inappropriate fertilisers and then selling something else to cure them. Independent advice is vital – I’m with Jim on that!
Get in the picture

Win an iPad in our annual competition – and appear in our desktop calendar

Snap-happy BIGGA members again have the opportunity to win an iPad in the 2015 Photographic Competition.

Why not show off your course and present us a stunning photo? Digital camera images are preferred, but mobile phone entries are also accepted. Digital images will be displayed as 16:9 ratio. If you are using a mobile phone, please ensure it’s taken on the highest resolution setting possible.

Digital images will be displayed at 16:9 ratio. If you are using a mobile phone, please ensure it’s taken on the highest resolution setting possible.

Members will again have the opportunity to pick the winners. A panel at BIGGA House will reduce the entries to a final shortlist of 24, then members will pick the overall winner.

The 12 pictures with the most votes will be included in the desktop calendar, and the entry with the most votes in total will scoop an iPad plus a framed version of their photo which will be presented to them at BTME 2016.

To enter, please send your photos to comps@bigga.co.uk with ‘BIGGA Photo Comp 2015’ in the subject field. Please include your name, the club you work at and your membership number plus a caption for the photo with details of where and when you took it.

The closing date for entries is Friday 17 July 2015.

Advice from a past winner

Joe Dormer, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at West Sussex Golf club, won the Competition in 2013 and advised:

“I was not always practical to carry an SLR camera with you at work, and I think most will agree that a good photo is often about being in the right place at the right time. Personally I like taking photos of the golf course with my phone to share on Facebook and for record keeping.

A particular couple of photos taken of the 14th seemed to be quite popular on social media, and being my favourite area of the course I decided this would be the spot for my photo for the calendar.

I usually arrived at the 14th mid morning when the sun was up, so it was a case coming into work with an SLR (kindly lent to me by a friend) on a day off and getting the shot I wanted.

So my advice would be to think hard about when and where your photo will be taken, use a good camera, and go out of your way to get the shot if need be!”
In this day and age when we are being constantly bombarded by different images from all around us – Twitter feeds, Facebook and the like; are we actually making the best use of the technology in our jobs? One of the biggest disappointments greenkeepers seem to have is not having images of “what it was like when the course opened” – and it’s not uncommon for members to say “well, it never used to be like that”. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to prove, or disprove it?!

A personal regret of mine is that I have just three pictures of my first golf club course – taken at the tender age of 19 (no boots, ear-defenders, safety glasses or anything else but that’s by-the-by). It was very refreshing to bump into Euan Grant at BTME and learn that in his new role as Course Manager at JCB the first thing he did was to buy a drone to photograph the land. The case for a new bunker or perhaps moving an old one; taking down some trees and revealing a view; developing a tee and so on.

I would encourage everyone with a decent camera, or failing that just a phone, to spend a little time going around the course – taken at the tender age of 19 (no boots, ear-defenders, safety glasses or anything else but that’s by-the-by). It was very refreshing to bump into Euan Grant at BTME and learn that in his new role as Course Manager at JCB the first thing he did was to buy a drone to photograph the land. The case for a new bunker or perhaps moving an old one; taking down some trees and revealing a view; developing a tee and so on.

I would encourage everyone with a decent camera, or failing that just a phone, to spend a little time going around the course and get images of each and every hole, tee, bunkers, trees, surroundings, greens and features. Get these on file and in order so you can quickly find a view on any given hole of just about everything, and then repeat the performance every so often – maybe five years.

That way the club relatively quickly builds a library of good information allowing it to monitor change and development. You might even ask your membership if they have any pictures and reveal them to the finished product. This will enable him to present the benefits of the improvements even to the most critical of inquisitors. A really powerful use of photography.

At Minchinhampton, we do have a significant number of images taken by both me and my predecessor Laurence Pfitzner MG, and these really do show change over time. This can be very important when making the case for a new bunker or perhaps moving an old one; taking down some trees and revealing a view; developing a tee and so on.

I immediately accepted and he responded with several fantastic images taken from a few hundred feet clearly showing stunning shots of the architecture of our Common. One of the best examples of tracking change over time I’ve seen was actually at The Berkshire where images showing the (now) tree-lined golf courses being actually formed on open heath with views from miles around are displayed in the clubhouse.

Another great use of this type of information is the restoration job at Parkstone in Dorset where the course was completely hidden away in dense woodland, but now has stunning views across Poole harbour and the like.

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So, with the 2015 BIGGA photographic competition in the offing with some superb prizes and the chance to get a photo of your course in the Calendar and on the website, there’s never been a better time to get snapping!
A Cornish treasure

In the first of a two-part article, Laurence Pithie MG travelled to North Cornwall to find out how Trevose Golf Club met the challenge of agronomics v playability

For many UK golf clubs, August can be a ‘quieter’ month for competitions and visitor play so it is often the preferred time for carrying out major renovation work. Soil temperatures, daylight and weather conditions are favourable for a rapid recovery, and weather conditions are most likely to be calm with little or no wind. So, in which month were the major renovation works carried out at Trevose Golf Club in North Cornwall?

Let’s travel back in time. Trevose Golf Club is one of the most renowned golf clubs in the world of golf, and is situated on the north coast of Cornwall, England. The club was founded in 1885 and is considered one of the oldest and most prestigious golf clubs in the United Kingdom.

In 1925, the club opened for play in 1925 and although the original Harry Colt design measured less than 5,800 yards, it quickly established itself among the best of what Cornwall had to offer. In 1955, the course was purchased by the Gammon family who have retained ownership ever since.

Interestingly, since its conception, there have only been four Course Managers employed over a span of 90 years. The championship course has undergone numerous changes, now measures over 7,000 yards and is complemented by two short courses.

Members and visitors also enjoy the benefit of a covered driving range, two tennis courts and a surf school. The idea of golf in the morning and surfing in the afternoon is a rather interesting concept! For the golfing fraternity and thanks to a mild climate, the course remains popular throughout the year. At no time is it regarded as being quiet and therein lies the challenge of producing excellent playing surfaces while play is continuous throughout.

Course Overview

The course is comprised of varying depths of blown dune sand over shillet, which is a mix of clay and slate. Natural course grasses are fescues and bent grass although Poa is dominant on the greens, while marram and cockfoot are present in the more outlying areas.

Drainage is good although there is a high water table and as such there are a number of ditches, old land drains and more recent piped laterals to move excess water from low lying areas. The course is comprised of varying depths of blown sand and shillet, which is a mix of clay and slate. Natural course grasses are fescues and bent grass although Poa is dominant on the greens, while marram and cockfoot are present in the more outlying areas.

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Challenges Ahead

When Jon Wood was appointed Course Manager in 2011, his key objective was to embark on the transition of greens dominated by Poa and Rye to that of Fescue. Jon gained his HND while working at Doonbeg, Portmarnock Links and St Andrews before taking up the helm at Trevose.

Jon said: “Being a proprietary owned club, I am directly answerable to the Board of Directors to which Nick Gammon is the MD and also a category one golfer. Fortunately Nick and I had similar views and objectives; these being to improve the playing quality of the greens, remove invasive weed grass from the roughs and to make general course improvements over a period of time.”

For this to be achieved, both mechanisation and manpower had to be sufficient to meet these challenges as well as the support of the Board. We now have a good fleet of equipment, most of which is Toro, while I have the support of eleven staff plus two part-time. With a full time staff in summer, it is essential that course set-up is completed ahead of play and this level of resource makes it possible. Part of my brief was to give members and guests a unique links experience and by this I mean providing high quality playing surfaces that are firm, smooth, fast and consistent.

Water is sourced from an internal stream and two springs allowing an annual extraction of up to 7000m3 (15 million gallons), although this amount would seldom be used even for 36 holes.

With competitions from mid-March to late-November, the attraction of playing on firm turf throughout the year presents its own challenges as to when it is suitable to carry out key cultural practices.
**Initial Work Detail**

“For these objectives to be achieved, it was necessary to document where we were in terms of green performance and roughs content, the working practices required, timing of such work and the effect on play.

“While soil temperatures rarely fall below 6°C, recovery from divot damage and general wear can be slow, while wind is a constant factor. Taking all factors into consideration and working closely with STRI, it was agreed that January and February would be the main months for greens renovation.

“ Soil analysis revealed that incompatible layers of sand and peat had been added to the natural sand rootzone, leading to root break and too much moisture being retained in the upper profile.

“For Fescues to replace Poa and Rye as the dominant greens species, the growing environment had to change and that was the initial objective.

“ A soil exchange programme was implemented so all greens were cored at 40mm centres and then top dressed, starting with around 75 tons of Rufford 1742 which is used at both Saunton and Perranporth. Further solid tining was implemented throughout the year and a further 125 tons added in smaller amounts.

“Revolution wetting agent was applied monthly from February, while fertiliser applications via granular and foliar were kept to a minimum.

“ After less than two years, OM content is almost at our target level of between 3% and 4%. Soil moisture content has fallen by 10% but still has some way to go before reaching the desired target levels for Fescue.

**Progress Continues**

“ It soon became time to deal with the invasive rye. After initial trials on three greens, Rescue was applied to all 18 greens in August 2012 with a follow-up application later in the year.

“ Two further applications have been applied since to remove all remaining rye.

“ The latter being more of a spot treatment exercise.

“ Various methods of overseeding with a straight Fescue mix have been implemented to determine what works best and for us it has been slit seeding with the Vredo.

“ This is completed twice a year in May and September, with turf ironing to follow in order to restore putting surface quality.

“ Although the greens remain predominantly Poa, a start has been made to changing the botanical composition of the sward, now that we are nearing our various target levels in all departments.”

While the main emphasis has been on the greens, Jon has also had great success in thinning out the rough which contained a high level of invasive cocksfoot.

Jon continued: “We used Laser which is an approved herbicide for use in grasslands to remove unwanted weed vegetation.

“ Along with cutting and collecting clippings, areas of rough are now more playable, with less time spent on lost ball searches.

“ Tee enlargement, bunker renovations and marram grass planting have also been completed and this will continue.”

**Summary**

The success in restoring Trevose to a natural ‘running’ links is largely down to having a clear vision of what is required. Jon has demonstrated that with good planning and organisation along with the support of the owners, a dedicated staff and a good level of equipment, much can be achieved.

Allocating January as the main month for greens renovation has worked well in this part of the UK with its mild winter climate. Yes, recovery takes that bit longer but by Spring the playing surfaces are back to their best.

Membership feedback has been very positive and a full calendar of events for 2015 is testimony to the progress been made.

Next month Laurence heads to Bude to find out how they manage a similar situation further north up the Cornish coast

**A Move ‘Home’**

Since this article has been published, Jon has returned to
TrevoSe GC

St Andrews to take up the reins as Course Manager on the Castle Course.

Jon (right) said: “I joined TrevoSe three-and-a-half years ago. It was my first Course Manager’s position and a good challenge for me professionally. It was an opportunity to make my mark at a course which had a lot of potential.

“I had been lucky enough previously to work at clubs with large resources, so at TrevoSe where the budget is not quite as significant I had to adapt and learn new skills with a smaller team and less machinery.

“It’s been great for my career, plus because it’s a family owned proprietary club there is no committee, which has been a bit of a bonus!

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my time at TrevoSe and it’s been a pleasure to work with such a dedicated, committed and passionate team.

“For me, I feel returning to St Andrews is like going home. I already know quite a few of the team from my previous role there, and I can’t wait to get started. Obviously it’s a unique site, the Castle Course has been a magnificent addition and it’s a dream move for me.”

Neil Ivamy has now been promoted to Course Manager at TrevoSe with Kevin Paterson moving into the role of Deputy.

Neil said: “I’m very proud to have been appointed Course Manager, as a local lad growing up TrevoSe always had a special feeling about it.

“I’m very grateful to have worked with Jon. He’s always made time to reinvest his knowledge into the team and this is something I will be looking to do with my team in the future.

“He was also very influential in putting my case forward to senior management in getting my new role and for this I am extremely grateful.

“BIGGA has also played a key role in progressing my career.

“Reaching the national final of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award in 2012 gave me key interview experience, and this helped me tremendously when I interviewed for the position of Deputy Head Greenkeeper here later that year.

“Other initiatives such as the BIGGA Open Support Team have enabled me to gain tournament experience and network with other greenkeepers across the country which was hugely beneficial to my career too.”

BIGGA wishes Jon, Neil and Kevin all the best in their new roles.

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Paul Huxley, Director at Huxley Golf, discusses the potential uses for artificial turf in modern greenkeeping – from practice ranges to pathways

Twenty years ago, few greenkeepers would contemplate allowing artificial turf anywhere near their golf course – and they were right. Although many courses had high wear areas, where natural grass struggled to provide an acceptable playing surface, the grass struggled to provide an high wear areas, where natural grass doesn’t grow very well, or short holes with small tees which struggle to cope with high traffic. There are now hundreds of Huxley Golf all-weather tees at traditional member clubs as well as several Major Championship venues, throughout the UK and overseas, allowing greenkeepers to rest the natural grass tees to ensure they are in prime condition when required.

These days, more and more golfers want to practice. We’ve seen a rapid rise in demand for all-weather practice tee areas, as natural grass simply cannot cope with the many thousands of balls hit from a club’s practice tee. At St Andrews Links, they have three very large all-weather practice tees which, for several years, have enabled many thousands of golfers to enjoy the high standards expected at The Home of Golf.

Similar all-weather practice tee facilities have proved a great success at Glenelgues, Royal Troon, Royal Lytham & St Annes, the Els Club in Dubai and The Hong Kong Golf Club as well as at numerous traditional members’ clubs.

Short game practice areas, featuring all-weather golf greens and tees, are also becoming popular at proprietary golf courses, teaching academies and ranges. Brokenhurst Manor Golf Club in Hampshire recently chose to celebrate their Centenary by investing in a Huxley all-weather short game practice area to help improve members’ golf. Top quality all-weather golf greens will receive a shot realism and a realistic distance, without leaving a pitchmark, so they are ideal for practice greens or key small golf courses where maintenance is minimal. Normandy is not only artificial grass for golf, correctly installed and maintained, can cope with high wear areas on your course which are difficult to maintain, or if you want to improve or extend playing facilities without additional maintenance, you should certainly consider all-weather turf for golf. But – take advice from a reputable supplier and installer who can guide you through the selection process, and who can offer good references and details of satisfied users who you can contact.

Remember that the correct base construction and installation are as important as the quality of the turf itself and don’t waste time looking at uninstalled samples which tell you nothing! By all means ask for advice from us here at Huxley Golf. We are the official supplier to the PGA, the Scottish and Welsh Golf Unions and to the English National Golf Centre at Woodhall Spa. Chosen with care, all-weather turf for golf can be a real friend or foe to today’s greenkeeper.
Head Greenkeeper and BIGGA member Stuart Richens said: "Although we are experimenting with bunker liners, to include one created using rubber crumb, the bulk of the bunkers on this course have not been built to a specific specification. The main reason for trying linings is to see if they can help reduce our maintenance costs. With 80 to look after, including the one on our practice green, we need to keep on top of our bunker care."

When he joined Burford in 1986, Stuart says all the bunkers had to be routinely raked by hand, a tedious job that could easily take one man a day to complete. Nowadays with the course being so heavily used the bunkers would take even longer to hand rake. A conventional ‘blade and peg’ type ride-on bunker rake arrived in the 1990s, this type of mechanised tool having looked after the bunkers until February this year.

"Early last year, Toro dropped off the 2040 rake for us to try," added Stuart. "To be honest it was then a new model and I did not expect much from the machine. Three rake elements combine to give just over a two-metre wide width, the ‘teeth’ being made from a flexible rubber. I thought it would be too wide and did not think the ‘groomers’ would do much of a job, particularly in a bunker with hard-packed sand."

To further add to Stuart’s initial misgivings, the Sand Pro 2040Z has a ‘tricycle’ zero-turn chassis. Working out how to steer a machine without a conventional wheel took some getting used to. But the machine was left with the club for long enough for Stuart to really give it a try and this saw his early misgivings replaced with a desire to buy the machine.
With our steel-bladed rake there was always the possibility that the operator could bring up stone, particularly in a bunker that was nearing the need for a top-up with sand.

"I was also worried when raking the lined bunkers, the metal pegs of our previous machine having the potential to do a lot of damage if a liner got caught. The rubber rake fingers of the 2040Z are really gentle. They do not bring up any stone and, if a tooth hits the lining, it will ride up and over."

So does gentle behaviour in turn mean there is no risk of cracking a bunker wall? Well you would think so, but Stuart suggests this certainly is not the case. One pass is typically enough to fluff up the most challenging of sand surfaces, producing a consistent and well-groomed finish.

"We only started using the new rake in February this year, but during that time it has raised all the bunkers at least two times a week, this increasing to three times as spring sees more play around the course."

Key rake operators are Michael Barnes and Richard Hitchman, both of whom have grown to like the Sand Pro 2040Z. Michael, however, is the more experienced user, having used the same model of rake at his previous club, Tadmarton Heath.

"I came to Burford at the same time as the new rake," said Michael. "As I had used a 2040Z before, it was not that hard to use it here first. It is a good tool that does a decent job. Traction and agility mean it is easy to get into all the bunkers here and it has a nippy 12mph travel speed. This enables us to rake all the bunkers on the course in around four hours."

A 12.2hp twin-cylinder petrol engine powers the Sand Pro 2040Z. Stuart says he would initially have preferred a diesel engine but says the quiet and smooth running of the Kawasaki power unit is something all the team appreciate.

With regard to fuel use, 17 litres of unleaded in a full tank is sufficient to do all the bunkers twice, operating costs remaining well within acceptable levels.

"The Toro is priced competitively," added Stuart. "We looked at other rakes to replace our old machine, but the 2040Z was around half the price of some of them. But even if it were more expensive I reckon it would still be the right tool for us."

"The zero turn means it is really agile, a feature that lifts the arm on the inside of a tight turn rounding off the pass to leave a good neat finish."

"We have not had any negative feedback from the members which is equivalent to praise. It does a cracking good job."

With a working width of 2.13m, the Sand Pro 2040Z is ideal for the tight turns on the course and allows only an engine start and turn of the key to change direction.

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"We have not had any negative feedback from the members which is equivalent to praise. It does a cracking good job."
Dr Terry Mabbett revisits chalara ash dieback and gives his view on the UK outlook for the threatened ash tree – and whether moves to combat it have proved successful as summer approaches.

**Greenkeeper International** was first to alert the industry to an impending epidemic of chalara ash dieback in September 2012. Since then the causal fungus (*Chalara fraxinea*), which infects the leaves and then proceeds to invade the woody tissue and kill native *Fraxinus excelsior* (common ash) trees has performed according to expectation.

Chalara was introduced on thousands of infected ash seedlings imported without checks or quarantine from EU countries and planted at hundreds of different sites all over the UK. As such, the result was entirely predictable.

The pathogen spreads via airborne spores at distances of 20–30km per season and sufficient to establish the 621 wider environmental infections already identified, originating from these infected ash tree plantings of which 407 have been documented so far.

Given the disease affects a native woodland and wayside tree of secondary timber importance, the reaction by UK government is unprecedented.

Investment in research here and across Europe is huge and only dwarfed by a failure to identify a proactive method of control. The UK outlook seems bleak due to misinterpretations around fungal pathology and disease epidemiology.

**Resistance or tolerance**

Identification of ash trees with genetic resistance for use in a tree-breeding programme appears to offer the best route to long-term economic and sustainable chalara control. However, basic misunderstandings prevail about genetic resistance and its distinction from tree tolerance to disease.

Genetic resistance prevents pathogen infection and its growth on the plant (in this case ash leaflets), while disease tolerance describes plants showing reduced disease symptoms and tree damage despite the presence of equivalent levels of active pathogen.

Forestry Commission England planted 150,000 ash trees for genetic resistance screening only to realise that in this particular host/pathogen relationship no such thing has yet been found and may not exist naturally.

Differing reactions by ash trees to chalara reported across Europe appear to be a consequence of differing levels of disease tolerance.

Ash trees are infected by *Chalara fraxinea* during the summer and early autumn months. Ascospores borne in fruiting bodies (apothecia) on infected ash leaf stalks that have overwintered intact on the ground are liberated and become airborne.

They land on growing ash leaves fairly close to ground level and germinate on the foliar surface to produce a germ tube.

There follows a microscopic infection structure called an appressorium which utilises localised high pressure to ‘crack’ the cuticle and to penetrate the single layer of epidermal cells. The pathogen then colonises the leaf tissue by moving down the leaf stalk (rachis and petiole) to enter the stem and invade the woody tissue, eventually killing the tree or substantially contributing to its death.

Genetic resistance prevents foliar infection through pre-formed...
structures such as thick leaf cuticles (mechanical resistance). Or an inducible chemical defence mechanism whereby a chemical released by the pathogen elicits an equivalent chemical response in the surrounding cells and tissue to curtail and destroy the infection.

Such chemical mechanisms, under the control of so-called ‘R’ genes and highly specific for host and pathogen, are well established as the crux of genetic resistance in plants to disease.

Plant pathologists call this reaction a ‘hypersensitive host response’. Genetic resistance means, in essence, no disease. Differences in reactions of ash trees to progress of infection, disease expression and tree damage are due to differences in the tolerance of trees to disease and specific genetic resistance.

Tolerance may be under some genetic control but is clearly con- founded by size and age of the tree and the conditions under which the tree is growing.

Older and larger trees are less quickly overcome than younger trees by the ‘梧木’ effect of a bigger biomass. Similarly ash trees benefitting from good growth conditions – soil structure, soil fertility, soil moisture availability, light levels and lack of competition from other plants – are better able to grow away from disease.

Ash trees currently claimed as resistant are still susceptible to foliar by Chalara fraxinea but show levels of disease expression and damage lower than normal and due to tree tolerance to disease. Tolerance is of limited use in inherently long-lived ash trees which may now die in 20 years instead of ten. The Forestry Commission is currently equivocating by claiming that the tree resistance and tolerance are interchangeable. They may be to the layman but not for the professional plant pathologist.

At the end of the day genetic modification, as used to develop American chestnut trees resistant to chestnut blight caused by the fungus Cryphonectria parasitica (Greenkeeper International March 2013) it may prove to be the only effective and sustainable way of reducing disease expression in common ash to chalara ash dieback. However, there is a lot more to chemical control than just the efficacy of a fungicide. Other factors include application logistics, economics, environmental loading and the risk of fungicide resistance development, and especially if these impact on continued use of same active ingredients in other sectors such as managed turf.

Any attempt to control disease on wild trees like common ash which is ubiquitous, widespread and frequent is likely to run into problems on all these counts.

Despite this and largely in response to public outrage about chalara being allowed to enter the UK and the clamour for something to be done, UK plant health authorities (in this case the Food Environment Research Agency or FERA) embarked on fungicide testing. The UK government’s Chalara Management Plan (March 2013) included laboratory screening of 17 fungicides, followed up by field testing of those showing highest levels of protectant activity (prevention of infection by spores).

The central aim was identification of protectant fungicide action but they used a laboratory screening test that records unrealistically low levels of protectant activity. Growing the fungus in agar broth supplemented with fungicide, and

Dr Terry Mabbett

Dr Terry Mabbett is a plant pathologist with forty years’ international experience in plant pathology and plant protection. His current role for the Environment Agency is to control invasive species, plant health, pests and weeds.
measuring the inhibition of mycelial growth, simulates what happens when fungal hyphae attempt to grow and move through ash plant tissue containing suppressive trans-laminar or truly systemic fungicide that was sprayed onto the leaves and has subsequently moved into the host plant tissue. Such tests favour systemic suppressive fungicides and are weighted against purely protectant contact fungicides which remain on the leaf surface as a sparingly soluble deposit to inhibit spore germination and/or stop the infection process. They are therefore inappropriate if the overall aim is to identify contact protectant fungicides for field efficacy testing.

The agar broth test used predictably downgraded the performance of the classic contact and multi-site action protectant fungicides like mancozeb and copper oxychloride (fixed copper fungicides) and therefore their status in subsequent field testing. Indeed they effectively downgraded the whole commercial range of copper containing fungicides including cuprous oxide. Cuprous oxide contains 89 per cent of the fungicidally active copper ion (Cu²⁺) and is the most potent of the fixed copper fungicides on a gram for gram basis. Copper-containing fungicides and especially cuprous oxide would have almost certainly provided the most cost effective control option for this woodland tree disease. Chlorthalonil which is well known to greenskeepers as a purely contact protectant fungicide with multi-site action was not amongst the 17 fungicides tested. These classic contact protectant multi-site action fungicides present little or no risk of fungicide resistance development and would almost certainly have offered the only economically feasible options for foliar fungicide spraying of ash trees.

Greenskeepers will probably not recognise these fungicides by commercial product name because they are used in agriculture and horticulture. However, they will recognise some of the active ingredients such as tebuconazole, trifloxystrobin and pyraclostrobin as highly effective, systemically acting (trans-laminar or truly systemic) disease-suppressive fungicides used to control a wide range of turf pathogens including Microdochium nivalae (Fusarium patch).

These active ingredients selected out by laboratory and field testing belong to chemical groups (e.g. tebuconazole, QoI [Quinone Outside-Inhibitor] and SDHI [Succinate Dehydrogenase Inhibitor]) known to present a medium/high risk of resistance development. Risks are aggravated if the fungicides are not used precisely according to manufacturer’s instructions and within strict regulatory limitations. Even though this was an experimental trial, these systemic site-specific action fungicides were sprayed on ash seedlings in the field at a mind-boggling frequency of seven times over a 14-week period.

In commercial agriculture and horticulture, where these systemically acting site-specific action fungicide products are currently applied, use is restricted to no more than several applications per season and usually with no consecutive applications of the same or a chemically related fungicide. Such restrictions are stipulated by the regulatory authorities to minimise risks of fungicide resistance development and to maintain environmental integrity. If the government run trials continue along these lines nothing in the way of a commercial fungicide which combines the efficacy and economy required to control this disease on ash trees by foliar spraying will be identified. Tree-injection techniques using an appropriate, truly systemic disease-suppressive fungicide to control chalara ash dieback in individually valuable ash trees, within amenity and landscape situations (including golf courses), may prove to be the only practical and economic option for control of chalara ash dieback disease in common ash.
Markus Suojoki is Head Greenkeeper at Pickala in Finland, the country’s biggest golf course and recently spent a month at The Carrick in Scotland furthering his greenkeeping education. He also visited BTME for the first time… and has decided to become a BIGGA member! Here’s his story

Pickala Golf is based on the Southern tip of Finland, close to the capital Helsinki. It’s a 54 hole facility. Because of our hard winter we need to close our courses for almost four months. I decided that this year, I would use my holidays to learn more about this industry.

I was looking at volunteering at courses all over the world. I thought about heading to a warm climate, but decided to head instead to quite a wet Scotland as I thought I would learn the most there!

A big reason for that decision was that Jim Brown is Course Manager at The Carrick. I knew Jim because of my six-week internship at Oulton Hall Golf Club in 2009, and I was keen to learn from him again.

I arrived in Scotland on 11 January. The plan was to participate in as many tasks as I could, and maybe learn skills that could help me become a better Head Greenkeeper.

I flew to Edinburgh and Jim came to pick me up, he had already made good plans for my time in Scotland which was very helpful.

When I first saw Cameron House Hotel on the site I realised that it was a very impressive hotel. Jim had very kindly arranged free accommodation for me at the Hotel, so thank you to Jim and Cameron House again for that. It was big thing for me!

When I left Finland there was 30-40cm of snow on my greens and the night temperature was -20°C.

Although Scotland was not quite as cold as that, there was plenty of snow and the course was closed during the majority of my visit because of this. But that did not stop me from asking millions of questions about greenkeeping.

During my entire time at The Carrick, I had very good conversations with Jim Brown and Head Greenkeeper Paul McClearn about greenkeeping and how to be a good manager.

We spoke a lot about how they manage their course and also about some specific subjects like fertility, bacterial inoculations, aeration, top dressing, staff scheduling, health and safety and preparing the course for tournaments.

The biggest difference between Finland and Scotland is the coldness of winter but also the amount of rainfall in a year.

They have 1800mm in an average year, we had 400mm in our season. When I came to Scotland I wanted to learn more about how to use my irrigation system more effectively, but when I heard that amount of rainfall here in Scotland I realised that an irrigation system is maybe not the most important factor for good greenkeeping in Scotland.

It was a very educational month for me and I need to thank Jim, Paul and the whole greenkeeping team at the Carrick.

I also had a chance to visit BTME for the first time ever. I spent two days there, saw a couple good seminars and of course I met a lot of new people. I also spoke to some old friends from my previous visits here in UK and it was nice to see them again. A special thank you to Tito Arana about those good ideas and thoughts you gave me after the exhibition. BTME was a very good experience and I will definitely come back to Harrogate again!

During my last days in Scotland I visited Loch Lomond Golf Club, which is next to The Carrick, to hear a little bit about what they do there. It was interesting to see that kind of golf course and how they manage it.

In my last week I went to London and completed my NVQ Level 3. I have a feeling that I will come back to UK many more times still, maybe for educational purposes or maybe with work… you never know.

I hope that everyone at The Carrick and greenkeepers all over the UK have a good 2015. After my trip I sent off my form to become an International BIGGA member, so in future I can read what is happening at your clubs!

Markus Suojoki
markus.suojoki@gmail.com
News

NORTH

Dave Inglis has left Haarhead GC and moved to Peterculter GC and Cameron Hutt has left Portlethen GC to join Oldmeldrum GC. We apologise if we’ve missed any news, but we do need members to send us your information so we can add it to our news section. Please send any correspondence to either email address.

Last season all Scottish sections organised a course walk around Donald Trump’s International Links at Menie Estate. Many members attended these walks and they were very well received. We played on 4th April and the golf course was tremendous.

The greens were superb and the turf quality considering the time of year was outstanding. Congratulations to Stewart Wishart and his team for complementing the golf courses reputation. If anyone gets the opportunity to play the course, it is well worth it, oh and thanks again Mark!

WEST

Let’s hope the start of the season continues to be good to us as I can see some of the few greens affected by disease back in November starting to fill in nicely. As nobody has contacted me about anything I will just ask the question on wetters to see if people actually read my piece. Which wetters are the best for you and why do you use them, I use a variety of different products, which are not cheap and I feel the results are justified.

I would be interested to hear people’s opinions, as there are so many different products on the market. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested. My email is stuart@aurora-golfservices.com, my mobile is 07709 823914, or the linealine is 0141 425 5554.

CENTRAL

Paul Miller held a talk on Sand, Silt and More Silt at Elmwood Training rooms and it was another good turnout with 34 people attending. A small group made a trip to Lemonstate Quarry, this trip was quickly made up as you didn’t hear about it make sure to pass on your email address to us.

There might be another trip lined up to visit this space.

EAST

Next event for us is the course walk at Gullane on May 12. Loggieddy’s hosting of the sections Spring meeting will be done and dusted by the time you all read this.

Congratulations to winners, there is always next time to the rest of the field.

The Scottish Boys Championship at Dunbar is being played in glorious weather as I type this, I hope the weather has been suitting you all, it’s just over week since we had snow!

SOuth WEST oh SCOTLAND

Autumn Golf Outing is on 3 September at Brodick Golf Club, Arran and the AGM is on 29th October at Irvine Golf Club.

Events Coming Up

NORTH

Chief of education Ali Matheson has organised a seminar for all Scottish North members to attend.

The seminar will cover two topics, including Rye Grass for Golf, which covers modern ryegrass cultivars and their uses. Neil Sadler and his team are looking forward to welcoming all Scottish North members to attend.

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EAST

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The Spring Meeting was held at Monifieth Golf Links, and do get in touch with Ian and I with your news.

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Welcome New Members

Welcome New Scotland Members

David Phillips, Alliance, Boss Wednes, Greenkeeper, Cruden Bay GC, Scott Corrigon, Greenkeeper, Royal Troon GC, Marc Mann, Greenkeeper, Leven Links GC, Ian Scott, Greenkeeper, Downfield GC, Joshua Gilholm, Greenkeeper, Muirfield GC, Alan Mclean, Greenkeeper, Cruden Bay GC, Kenneth Lawson, Greenkeeper, Cruden Bay GC, Euan McLaren, Greenkeeper, Dunfermline & Galloway GC, Michael Hughes, Greenkeeper, The Galloway Hotel & GC, David Munro, Head Greenkeeper, Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC, Billy Hoggins, Head Greenkeeper, Carnoustie GC, Kevin McGrath, Head Greenkeeper, Elgin, Paul Stil, Head Greenkeeper, Colvord GC, Grahame Grant – Arranston, Student, SRUC (Elmwood), Michael Hughes, Glenegies.

Welcome New Northern Ireland Member

Gary McDowell, Greenkeeper, Royal Portrush GC.

Welcome New International Members

Shamoon Ghaugham, MEERENI Golf Park (Switzerland), James Connelly, Affiliate, Planet Turf (USA), Zach Baiser, The Broadmoor (USA), Brian Stelcher, Highlands Country Club (USA).

Welcome New Northern Members

Brian Clark, Course Manager, Clee House GC, Richard Whitaker, Greenkeeper, Lytham Green Drive GC, Paul White, Greenkeeper, Ramsdie Hall GC, John Edge, Greenkeeper, Ormskirk GC, Matthew Fordyce, Greenkeeper, Mariners GC, James Buddley, Greenkeeper, Warrington GC, Simon Debbage, Assistant Greenkeeper, Whitley Bay GC, Simon North, Assistant Greenkeeper, Birkton GC.

Welcome New Midlands Members


Welcome New South East Members


Welcome New South West and South Wales Members

Neil Eadie, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Woodbury Park Golf Course, Head Greenkeeper, Chippenden GC, Christopher Dater, Greenkeeper, Woodenbury Golf and Country Club, Scott Joiner, Greenkeeper, Langland Bay GC, Charlotte Price, Greenkeeper, Oakbank GC, Jonathan Maxus, Greenkeeper, Royal Porthcawl GC, Nathan Jones, Greenkeeper, Royal Porthcawl GC, Scott Williams, Greenkeeper, Royal Porthcawl GC, David Blystone, Greenkeeper, Royal Porthcawl GC, Connor Hopkins, Greenkeeper, Ermore Park GC, Ashley West, Assistant Greenkeeper, Shirehampton Park GC.
NORTH WALES

In a busy spring “transfer window”, James Hampson moved from Llanymynech GC to Chester GC; Harry Barbour has moved from Henlle Park GC to Llanymynech GC; Paul Lowe has moved from Symbio to Farmura and Joe Hughes has gone to use his talents with Symbio. We wish them all the best of luck with their new jobs.

CLEVELAND

As always April is a very quiet month and news is a bit thin on the ground, I’m sure the reason for this is we’ve all caught up with the sudden flush of growth (maybe not a flush for you lucky lads) re-shaping of fairways and of course the need to finally put to bed any outstanding winter projects.

Over on the Cleveland section Facebook there are lots of pictures of golf courses in the area looking tip top, ready for another season.

I have a little news - I’ve signed up for my first marathon on 13 June. As I don’t do things in half measures it happens to be the Swaledale marathon which is guaranteed to be lacking in any flat easy stages! It will be worth it and I’ll be able to cross it off my bucket list.

If you have anything that you are proud of, or have achieved something and you want it mentioning let me know and I’ll do my best to put it in. It can be contacted on either 07974 458648 or amgeogh@hotmail.com

Events Coming Up

NORTH WEST

2015 fixtures
Summer 11 hole competition and a tour with Q&A session - The Mere, Monday 6 July Cricket match North West v North Wales section - Ashley Cricket Club, Wednesday 8 July 5pm Whitelaw bowl - Penrith G, Thursday 10 September Knockout Trophy Final - Hällside GC - Thursday 17 September North West section seminar - Myerscough College, Wednesday 28 October

NORTH WELSH

The spring tournament and course walk took place at Henlle Park GC on 29 April, this was an individual stableford qualifier for the summer tournament and course walk and come along, everyone is made welcome.

Thanks to Sponsors

NORTH WEST

Wayne Reid from Newcastle College has asked if any of our members are looking to employ an apprentice, or would like any of your existing staff qualified to Level 2, 3 or 4 in Work-based Horticulture. Government AGE grants of £1500 are also available to employers if they employ a 16-24 year old apprentice.

Please contact Wayne Reid from Newcastle College on 07725150834 or Wayne.reid@intraining.co.uk to discuss further.

The Section would like to welcome the new Head Greenkeeper at Ashwick GC Stuart Tait to our section. Stuart comes with a wealth of experience having worked at Renaissance and Guilane No1, I’m sure we will all make him very welcome.

NORTH WALES

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the Green...
South West Section Countrywide Knockout for two balls start shortly, please contact Joe Curtis for entry and details (joe.curtaia83@tiscali.co.uk). All of our Section events are open to members of other sections, please feel free to contact us and attend as everyone is welcome.

News

SOUTH COAST

Many thanks to Tony Gadd for stepping in and writing the column for the South Coast for the last couple of months while new committee members settle in.

If any members of your Greenkeeping team are not receiving Section e-mails then please could you contact biggasouthcoast@hotmail.com.

SOUTH WALES

Wenvoe Castle GC recently held their Spring competition. I must say the course was in great condition and all who participated on the day shared my view, thanks guys for such an excellent turnout. Well done to Mark Whiteley and his team for producing a first class course.

First place with a very impressive 40 points Jon Knight from Llanishen GC, second Ian Kinley, third Lawrence Walter from Wenvoe GC, Rhys Nurdile longest drive, P Holmstrom with best trade, the Club Captain Ken Howells & Dale Sullivan also won prizes.

Please check out our Facebook and Twitter pages for information on events, golf days (BIGGA) south Wales. Great to see projects on these platforms sharing before and after pictures, yes these accounts are like marmite you either hate or love them, please give them a try.

SOUTH WEST

Our first Section Turf club was held on 18 March and was a real success with a great turn out from across the section. The afternoon was hosted by Stuart Bowman and his team at Thornbury Golf Centre.

Both Stuart and Adam Matthews gave presentations detailing their recent experiences in bunker renovation projects before our group spent time on the course to view Stuart’s successful results.

We are currently planning future events so keep your eyes peeled for details.

Section media pages are as follows: South West Facebook: Bigga Southwest, South West Twitter: @BiggaSouthwest, please follow us for updates!

Please remember to settle accounts for training and event attendance promptly to assist us in maintaining a successful section. Any questions please get in touch with any of the committee members.

Thanks to Sponsors

The South Coast Section would like to thank our 2015 patrons who have offered their support in the first year of our patronage scheme.

This year’s patrons are: Agronomic Services Ltd, Banks Amenity Products Ltd, Countrywide Farmers Plc, Countrywide Farm Management Ltd, Indigrow Ltd, MJ Abbott Ltd, New Forest Farm Machinery Ltd, Rigby Taylor Ltd, SKI Industries Ltd, Sheriff Amenity, SuperGrass UK Ltd and TALC.

SOUTH WEST

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

With their support we would not have the opportunity to provide the level of training and sector events that we do.

Events Coming Up

SOUTH COAST

Golf Club

Cricket Club

Minchinhampton Golf Club

Club

Correct address. You haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you haven’t please contact Lucy and provide her with your fixture card for South West Section events for the year, if you have...
During the lead up to the General Election all the main parties pledged their support to the Apprenticeship programme. This is good news for the GTC because when, 18 months ago, the Government put out a call for applicants for Trailblazing a new approach, we saw an opportunity to put out a call for applicants for months ago, the Government for the GTC because when, 18 programme. This is good news I think this is a positive step in development and, as an employer, I welcomed. Perhaps, in the past, we accepted too readily these courses which have been on offer by the Colleges [all very well meant, I would say] but this gave employers a chance to have a positive input into content in the future. After all, we are all looking to produce staff of the highest quality possible.

So, back in the early part of 2014, the GTC gained Trailblazer status and embarked on an intense review of the Apprenticeship programmes for Greenkeepers. A focus group consisting of Golf Club Employers, College providers, Golf Course managers, BIGGA and England Golf representatives put together a new GOLF GREENKEEPER STANDARD and a well-constructed education, training and assessment programme based around the GTC Training Manual, which itself has been updated.

There are two other aspects to this process, which will only apply in England. The first is a radical change to the way in which students will be assessed and the second is the way the whole of the Apprenticeship Scheme is to be funded by Government.

The overhaul of the Assessment process is a significant development and, as an employer, I think this is a positive step in the right direction. It is important that we can make a definitive judgement as to the ability of the student at the end of his Apprenticeship period and this will now be the case. A series of end point Assessments will be carried out by Independent Assessors and the results will be graded. Students will be able to attain a Pass, Merit or Distinction and we see this as a big improvement on the current Pass or Full Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Government has committed to fund a large chunk of the cost on the basis of 2 for 1 i.e. two thirds funded by Government to one third by the employer. However, in addition, there are other significant incentives which the employer can get access to which will offset costs even more. If a student starts young enough i.e. aged 16-18 and most of them are, a further £1800 will be paid to the employer. An additional £900 will be allowed for a business with less than 50 employees and this, of course, will apply to most Golf Clubs. Then finally, a further £900 can be claimed on successful completion of the learning programme.

The GTC is currently working with its Quality Assured Training Providers to prepare the new Golf Greenkeeper Apprenticeship programme for introduction from September 2015. Training Providers will offer help to employers on both designing a suitable education and training programme to suit both their and the apprenticeships needs and to also agree a cost for their support. The GTC apprenticeship programme has the full support of BIGGA and England Golf.

So, for someone embarking on a new apprenticeship at basic level some big improvements will be introduced, starting with the Training Manual and working through to the end point Assessments. But, equally importantly this new Framework will carry on right the way through the learning process to advanced qualifications equivalent to Degree Standard or better. Those with the ability and the desire can continue along the pathway as far as they wish and there will be a qualification to match their achievement and their potential. Those that do this can rightly say that they will be true professionals in a real and highly respected profession. It is a genuine alternative to University education which we all know is a very costly exercise. It is expected therefore that work based training, in a wide variety of careers and professions will become more widely adopted thus reducing the cost of education for students and, indeed parents.

For further updates and information please visit www.bigga.org.uk by clicking on Education.
BUYERS’ GUIDE

To advertise contact James on 01347 833 832 or email james@bigga.co.uk

TURFDRY
Specialist sports turf construction and drainage firm

Turfdry is a specialist sports turf construction and drainage firm operating throughout the UK. Established over 20 years, with an impeccable track record and hundreds of satisfied clients, Turfdry is perfectly positioned to deliver even the most complicated projects in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Turfdry offers a wide range of drainage options, including its unique Turfdry Drainage System using Hydroway Sportsdrain, which combines maximum drainage efficiency with minimum disruption. This system has been used successfully for over 20 years, and an independent telephone survey conducted by STRO in 2003 reported 100% of clients contacted found it to be effective.

Over the last 10 years, Turfdry has expanded into sports turf construction, rapidly establishing an excellent reputation.

Using 360-degree excavators and CAT D5 and D6 bulldozers fitted with GPS and laser control systems linked to computer design software, they deliver optimal accuracy and efficiency in transforming projects from designs into facilities.

Upcoming projects include further drainage and construction work at The Roeham Club in Essex, where the Turfdry Drainage System was installed on all 18 holes of the championship standard South Course in 2014. Similarly, the greens drainage installed by Turfdry last year at Ealfield Golf Club has proven so successful – what was previously described as the most waterlogged green on the course is now seen as one of the best – that a further 6 greens are set for drainage works this year.

Whatever your sports turf drainage and construction needs, Turfdry is ready to transform your dreams into reality.

To advertise contact James on 01347 833 832 or email james@bigga.co.uk
Recruitment

HORTICULTURAL MACHINERY SALES TRAINEE/DEMONSTRATOR

Rickerby Limited is one of the largest Horticultural and Agricultural dealerships in the UK with eight outlets across the North of England and Scotland.

WE ARE CURRENTLY RECRUITING FOR OUR HORTICULTURAL DIVISION

The successful candidate may well have a background in the golf and turf industry or experience of operating, repairing or knowledge of Horticultural machinery. He or she will enjoy dealing with people, be of tidy appearance, be willing to work as part of a busy team and have a clean driving licence.

Closing Date for Applications: 18th May, 2015

Clare Livingston, Administration & HR Manager, Sunningdale Golf Club

Please apply in writing or email with full CV and covering letter to:

Sunningdale Golf Club wishes to recruit an Assistant Greenkeeper. Working out of Hexham your duties will include: supporting the established sales team in demonstration, delivery and preparation of machines as well as calling on customers to make them aware of our product portfolio.

Assistant Greenkeeper

Sunningdale Golf Club wishes to recruit an Assistant Greenkeeper. Working as part of a team, under the guidance of the Course Manager, Portlethen Golf Club.

To apply please forward your CV and covering letter to:

SUNNINGDALE PARK GOLF CLUB

GI HORTICULTURAL MACHINERY SALES TRAINEE/DEMONSTRATOR

Unipq are Scandinavia’s largest Golf Company with over 26,000 active members.

The role:

The successful candidate should have the following attributes:

Senior Greenkeeper

Hessock Golf Club is seeking a Deputy Head Greenkeeper who wants to take the next step in his career to improve his management skills by becoming a Head Greenkeeper.

The Club has ambitious plans to invest in developing the golf course over the next 2-4 years and is therefore seeking a highly motivated individual with the skills and potential to contribute to the high quality provision of the Club.

We are looking to recruit an experienced Assistant Greenkeeper to work within an experienced team, under the guidance of the Course Manager.

The successful candidate should have the following attributes:

Deputy Greenkeeper

Working out of Sherriff Amenity, Cambridge House, Nottingham Road, Stapleford, Notts NG9 2AB

Tel: 0115 9309202
Fax: 0115 9308361

We are looking to appoint a Qualified Assistant Greenkeeper to work within an experienced team, under the guidance of the Head Greenkeeper.

Salary dependent upon qualifications and experience.

To apply please email your CV and covering letter to steve.dougan@boringtonpark.com

Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Basingstoke Golf Club

We are looking to recruit a highly motivated individual to join our enthusiastic team and assist the Head Greenkeeper with the day to day running of our two Golf Courses.

The successful candidate should have the following attributes:

Salary dependent upon qualifications and experience.

To apply please email your CV and covering letter to steve.dougan@boringtonpark.com

Hedgehose Golf Club

Senior Greenkeeper

Windmill Village Hotel Golf & Leisure, Coventry are seeking a Senior Greenkeeper to join them:

Requirements:

Senior Greenkeeper

Woodcote Park Golf Club

Qualifed Assistant Greenkeeper (full-time)

Woodcote Park is an established private members' golf club in Surrey with an excellent reputation.

The successful candidate will be responsible for:

Job Title: Assistant Greenkeeper

Salary: Full training will be given.

Closing date Friday 24th May 2013

Deputy Greenkeeper

Boringdon Park Golf Club

We are looking to recruit an experienced Assistant Greenkeeper.

The successful candidate should have the following attributes:

To apply please email your CV and covering letter to steve.dougan@boringtonpark.com

Marlborough Golf Club

We are looking to appoint a Greenkeeper to work within an experienced team, under the guidance of the Head Greenkeeper.

Salary: dependent on qualifications and experience. The position includes a generous pension scheme, BIGGA membership and work clothing.

To apply please email your CV and covering letter to gareth.sanderson@marlboroughgolfclub.co.uk

Goring and Streatley Golf Club

Deputy Greenkeeper

We are looking to appoint an Assistant Greenkeeper to work within an experienced team, under the guidance of the Head Greenkeeper.

The ideal candidate will have the following attributes:

Salary: dependent on qualifications and experience. The position includes a generous pension scheme, BIGGA membership and work clothing.

To apply please email your CV and covering letter to gareth.sanderson@marlboroughgolfclub.co.uk

We are looking to appoint a Greenkeeper to work within an experienced team, under the guidance of the Head Greenkeeper.

The ideal candidate will have the following attributes:

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Our favourite tweets this month...

@SamSweetzer
@BIGGALtd Great photo of the 2nd green at West Hill GC. Taken by @147SHarvey Greenkeeper RobMorristhume

@RobSandilands
Another great weekend for golf @GOSgolf_club. Greenkeeping is great on mornings like this! @BIGGALtd

@paul_armour
Home and starting to take shape. @heathorntonGolf @TheOpen @BIGGALtd

@downie82
Martin Brown won employee of the quarter @AldwickburyGolf @workPayOff @AntzXVI

@AntzXVI
@BIGGALtd pass the information to your members. Knowledge.

@CHGC_Greens
@BIGGALtd Safety home from Everest! Big thanks to @UKclimbers for the support of my charity @BFFoundation @takeleswithyou

@sandra4bigganor
BIGGA North West Seminar at Myerscough will be on 28th October 2015, look out for further details and book early @BIGGALtd @BIGGANorthWest

@Tracey_Maddison
Getting ready for a trip to meet @BIGGALtd Northern Ireland Greenkeepers tomorrow with John Young. Looking forward to Education.

@golfvolunteers
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