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Monday 25 June saw the first set of interviews, held in Edinburgh, when Jim Paton, BIGGA Education sub Committee Chairman, Pete Mansfield from TORO and myself interviewed the six Scottish entrants. At the end of the day, Mark Cummine, representing Langside College was picked to go forward to the Final. Mark, who is an assistant greenkeeper at Buchanan Castle Golf Club, nr Glasgow, has been in greenkeeping for 11 years and is currently studying for his HNC. Mark’s other claim to fame is as an accordion player in a Scottish Dance Band, which has given him the chance to travel widely both in Scotland and around the World.

Tuesday 26 June saw the Roadshow arrive at the Hilton Hotel, Manchester Airport, where Pete and myself were joined by Andy Campbell MG, Golf and Estates Manager at Garden Park, to judge the Northern Region Entries and the Irish Entries. The excellent entries in the Northern Region saw both John Stuttard, representing Askham Bryan College and Mike Robertson representing Myerscough College selected for the Final. Mike is the Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Porthill Golf Club where he has been for almost five years. John is an assistant greenkeeper at Wylke Ridge Golf Centre nr Leeds, where he has been for almost three years.

Ireland produced four very high quality entries and the judges selected two to progress to the final. John Williams represented Teagasc in Dublin and he works at Ayl Golf Club in Co Kildare. He has been studying for his NVQ Level 3 and has ambitions to study for a Masters Degree with Penn State University. James Murphy works at the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale. Co Cork and is a case of an old head on young shoulders as James is the youngest of the finalists.

Back on the road again saw us travel to St Albans, where Pete and I were joined by Ian Semple to interview the six candidates from the South East where Andrew Pledger was selected for the Final. Andrew took up greenkeeping as a second career after several years in retailing. Andrew said that he wished that he had looking forward to the next stretch of my travels, and to having a rest from
made the decision to swap careers much sooner as he enjoys his job so much.

Thursday saw Pete and I in Cheltenham where we were joined by Richard Barker, Vice Chairman of BIGGA to judge the South West and South Wales Region entries. Mark Wilshire, a South African, working at Llanishen Golf Club was selected from a very high quality group. Mark who represents Pencoed College has only been working in turf care for five years ago.

The Shakopee was where they manufactured various steel components for supporting this research and design of the machines we use on our golf courses. It certainly made me reflect on how much work goes into the research and design of the machines we use on our golf courses. The Shakopee was where they manufactured various steel components which were then to arrive in California where the temperature reached 40 degrees below and the research and design of the machines we use on our golf courses. The Shakopee was where they manufactured various steel components such as the cutting edges and sole plates. My final excursion was to the Tomah Plant in Wisconsin, which is where all the machines are finally assembled, painted and placed in crates ready for consignment. I'll never take one of these machines for granted again!

The final destination of my eight week trip was California. It was bizarre to leave Minneapolis where the temperature reached 40 degrees below and then to arrive in California where the temperature was mid 70's. We were greeted at our hotel by Ken James, from Toro who had arranged for us to visit Oak Valley Golf Club. There we were given a tour of their maintenance facilities and golf course. The Superintendent was available to answer any of our questions in relation to maintenance regimes.

During our time in California Ian Ritchie and I were also able to play a round of golf at the Hidden Valley Golf Club. This course was literally constructed in the middle of a desert. As you can imagine this made quite a dramatic backdrop to the golf course. However, our main purpose of being in California was to visit the Toro Irrigation Division where all irrigation components and sprinklers are designed, manufactured and tested.

The highlight of our last night in California was the salsa dancing, which I have to say, Ian Ritchie was exceptionally good at.

Being home for a couple of months now I can reflect on how much I believe I have gained from being named the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year. The trip fulfilled all of my expectations, but it's been intangible areas that I feel I've benefited most from; such as increased confidence, contacts and a revitalised enthusiasm for my work. This coupled with the knowledge gleaned from working practises in the States will certainly help me with my career in the future.

Among the benefits the prize has offered me, the longest lasting and most valuable will be some of the relationships I struck with my colleagues and classmates. I plan to get over to the USA again as soon as I can, to check the next generation of developments taking place that we can learn from.

I would like to thank my friends and family, the World Classic Rockers, my colleagues and classmates. I plan to get over to the USA again as soon as I can, to check the next generation of developments taking place that we can learn from.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager and everyone else involved at BIGGA headquarters, as well as all the Toro representatives, especially Pete Marshfield. In addition I would like to thank my friends and family, Helensburgh Golf Club, and particularly Chris Bothwell from GOSTA for all their encouragement and support.
This month, Tracey and Susannah, from BIGGA’s Membership Team, welcome over 70 new members to the Association and give some important news about the 2002 Membership cards.

Picture perfect membership cards

Get prepared. It’s coming your way! The new plastic Membership Photocard is what you’ve all been waiting for! As from 1st January 2002, BIGGA’s Membership Department will be issuing plastic credit card size Membership Photocards (at no extra cost to the member). This will not only provide you with an extra form of ID but it will continue to promote the professional image that the Association has achieved.

The Challenge...

to obtain 6,400 passport size photographs, that is one photograph for each Greenkeeper Member, to enable the Membership Services Department to scan each photograph onto each member’s file, which can then be reproduced onto your new card!

The Challengers...

Tracey and Susannah from the Membership Services Department have accepted the challenge, but they need your help. To start preparing for the launch of the new card, they need a photograph of each of you! If you have a passport size photograph please send it to Tracey or Susannah, Membership Services Department, BIGGA, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, Yark YO61 1UE; don’t forget to write your full name, date of birth and membership number on the back. Alternatively, if you have mastered the art of digital cameras why not send us a photo by email to tracey@bigga.co.uk or susannah@bigga.co.uk.

Watch out for more information on the new Membership Photocard next month.

New BIGGA merchandise now in stock

Polo Shirts

BIGGA can now offer BIGGA logo classic polo shirts. Made by Cutter & Buck and available in sunflower and navy for only £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. Sizes Medium, Large, XL or XXL available.

Jumper

Add to your range by purchasing a BIGGA logo jumper, made by Peter Scott and available in three styles:

1. Round neck, available in navy and charcoal, sizes from 40" to 46", £34.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.
2. V-neck long sleeve, available in navy only, sizes from 40" to 46", larger sizes available on request, £34.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.
3. V-neck no sleeves, available in navy only, sizes from 40" to 46", larger sizes available on request, £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

Waterproof Suits

Due to popular demand BIGGA have re-stocked this suit. Available in navy consisting of a jacket with matching trousers with a detachable waistband. Sizes from M to XXL, £59.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

Baseball Caps

BIGGA have re-stocked this popular Slazenger baseball cap. Khaki with navy peak, one size fits all with adjustable strap. £12.95 inc VAT, post and packing.

BIGGA Members Lapel Badge

BIGGA have introduced a new “Members” enamel lapel badge. Available to all members at the special rate of £2.20 inc VAT, post and packing.

The new BIGGA logo merchandise can be seen at the BIGGA stand at the Saltex Show on 4/5/6th September. For further information contact Tracey or Susannah in Membership Services. Watch this space!

July’s Monthly Membership Draw Winner

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA sportswatch. Our congratulations go to July’s winner, Charles McKay of Aberdeen Petroleum Club.

Scottish Region

John C P Mather, N West
Jason John Mitchell, Northern
Kenneth Geoffrey Mendal, N East
Simon Oliver, N East
Keith Gray, N West
Ivan Sleekforton, N West
Christopher Sproyn, N West

Midland Region

Matthew John Anton, Midland
Colin Michael Bissell, Midland
Carl Bred, Midland
Christopher Brown, E Midland
Thomas Brown, Midland
James Causer, Midland
Luke Spencer Davis, Midland
James Evans, Midland
Jonathan Peter Farrell, Mid Anglia
Luke D Foley, Mid Anglia
Neil Hawkes, Midland
Matthew Johnstons, Mid Anglia
Andrew McKenzie, MId Anglia
Adam Christopher Moss, Midland
Matthew Newton, Blooming
Joe Sheward, Midland
James Lee Ward, Midland

5 East Region

Martin John Atkinson, Kent
Kimberly1 Kelly2, Kent
Ian James Cote, East Anglia
Tony Edmonds, Essex
Martin Pearson, Surrey
Matthew Philip Rich, Surrey
Tony Starman, Surrey
James Peter Skinner, Kent
Stuart James Wells, Surrey
Richard Mark Young, E Anglia

5 West & 5 Wales Region

Robert Leslie Cole, 5 Wales
Ben Dilling, 5 Case
Sean Peter Price, Devon & Cornwall

International Members

Paul Darrin Morden, Austria
Kevin John Barsley, Germany
Brian Phillips, Norway
James J Houl, CCGP

Associate Members

Stewart Clayton, Sheffield
Richard Newman, E Anglia
Gavin P Judge, Surrey

Student Members

John Gregory Smith, Armthorpe
Peter Jones, Rep of Ireland
Nicholas Holmes, Northern
Joceline North, E Anglia

Equal or better recognition and profile within the industry

For what would you most like to be remembered?

Good greenkeeper, good Board member and all round a good egg!

For what would you least like to be remembered?

Letting a Past Captain of Litybrook tell a joke at a BIGGA event!

Why did you take on a more involved role in the running of the Association?

Having benefited from BIGGA I wanted to re-invest some time and commitment to the Association and help it move forward in the coming years.

Name one thing which would improve the Association?

I would like to see every British greenkeeper join the Association and for a higher percentage of international greenkeepers to become members.

What is your claim to fame (Name, not acceptable)?

Supporting Gloucester RFC when they win the Premiership and the Heineken Cup (it will happen)

Describe BIGGA in 15 words.

An Association run for members, by members for the benefit of members
BIGGA launches the Golf Club Show

BIGGA has launched The Golf Club Show offering golf club owners, managers and secretaries all they could possibly need to ensure their clubhouses are as well equipped inside as their golf courses are outside.

The Golf Club Show will run in the Harrogate International Centre from January 22-24, 2002, alongside, and complemented by, the existing and tremendously successful BTME (BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition) which has been established there since 1989. The unique “double header” will offer visitors the opportunity of taking in both Shows during a must-visit week for everyone connected with the running of golf clubs and courses.

A dedicated educational seminar programme will be run in conjunction with the show and will feature a Key Note Speech by 400 metre Olympic Silver Medalist, Roger Black, and a much anticipated session with the world renowned agronomist, Dr James Beard.

"Many Golf Club Secretaries, Chairmen of Green and other senior club personnel already attend BTME with their greenkeeping staff and for some time we have been considering the possibility of offering a complete golf club experience for these, and the many more visitors who will be attracted to Harrogate by the advent of the new Show. Now is the time to make it happen,” said BIGGA Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

"While BTME will continue as an exhibition with the whole range of products and services for the golf course, The Golf Club Show, which will have its own Hall within the Exhibition Centre, will offer all the additional equipment, furnishing and service needs for a golf club,” explained Neil.

Bookings are currently being taken from companies wishing to exhibit in The Golf Club Show.

For further information contact Neil Thomas or BIGGA Press Officer, Scott MacCallum Tel: 01347 833800

The finest turf from tee to green

Medallion turf for golf tees is typically sown as Aberelf (Perennial Ryegrass) 25%, Bargreen (Chewings Fescue) 20%, Barcrown (Slender Creeping Red Fescue) 35%, Limousine (Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass) 20%.

All the cultivars we use are highly ranked in independent testing by the STRI (see “Turfgrass Seed 2001” published by STRI).

If rapid establishment, high wear tolerance and slow regrowth after mowing are important to you – specify Rolawn Medallion for your tees.

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Preparations for BTME2002 are cruising along, but you'll have to step up a gear to catch our keynote speaker...

### Keynote Speaker announced for BTME2002

Roger Black M.B.E. will be the Keynote Speaker next January at BTME 2002. For 14 years Roger represented Great Britain at the highest level in the world of athletics, both as an individual-400 metres runner and as a member of 4 x 400 metres relay team. He won 15 major Championships medals including European, Commonwealth and World Championship Gold medals. His greatest achievement was winning the Olympic 400 metres Silver medal in 1996 and he is particularly admired for his triumphs over adversity, successfully overcoming several serious injuries and setbacks throughout his career.

By combining his close understanding of motivation and self-development with his personal experiences both on and off the track, Roger now inspires, motivates and entertains audiences throughout the country. Once again, the Keynote Speaker session looks set to start the BTME off on a high note and we look forward with anticipation to welcoming Roger Black.

### BTME 2002 Keynote Speaker:

Dr James Beard, PhD will be making two presentations as part of the Learning Week at BTME to be held in Harrogate in January 2002. The Keynote Speaker session will be making a presentation on Preparation of Greenkeeper International, which is the News and Events section and the BTME section of our website.

### Speaker Update:

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### Preparations for BTME2002:

For the very latest BTME2002 news and event information visit: www.bigga.org.uk

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**Confirmed Exhibitors**

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**Making a Sprint to Harrogate**

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This survey, produced for the Berkshire College Greenkeeping Liaison Committee by Ray Clark, Course Manager of Harleyford Golf Club and Martin Gunn, Course Manager of Temple Golf Club and the BB&O Section, underlines the need for better communication and education of golfers ...

Aeration survey digs deep

It was planned that the foundation of this review would make use of Head Greenkeepers/ Course Managers considerable local knowledge and experience; acknowledge their recommendations and identify whether or not their proposals were being utilised fully by their employers. If not, the survey was designed to seek their opinions as to why their suggestions were being overlooked.

Our intention was to contact and question at least 50% of the Head Greenkeepers/ Course Managers within the Berks, Bucks and Oxon (BB&O) region. 105 affiliated golf clubs were identified, with 62 clubs actually targeted for the survey. It was agreed by the survey team that although the number of clubs taking part would not provide conclusive proof, 65% represented a large enough number (and therefore the evidence) to provide a good indication of what was happening within the industry.

The survey was to be carried out somewhat covertly, under the pretext of Berkshire Colleges-Industrial Liaison Committee and was therefore not able to use such direct questioning as perhaps would be required.

Aim
The main aim of the survey was to gain insight as to what is considered the correct amount of aeration (for individual golf courses) as perceived by Head Greenkeepers/ Course Managers.

Along with this, the survey was designed to highlight which areas of conflict (if any) were most often encountered and how that conflict impacted on aeration objectives and scheduling.

Implementation
It was felt that the most effective way to achieve the high level of responses required, would be to conduct a telephone survey. A wide variety of clubs (from PGA tournament venues to local authority) were surveyed during the first two weeks of February. From the 62 clubs targeted a success rate of 100% was achieved. Please refer to the graphs for our findings.

Discussion
There appears to be a very accurate match of information gained from Questions 1 and 2. The link between those facilities playing on pure sand greens and the percentage of corporate clubs surveyed is too obvious to ignore. Likewise, the links between soil greens and private clubs and...
Aeration: Just scratching the surface?

Given the information so far, it would be fair to suggest that Questions 3 and 4 would clearly identify the frequency of aeration required for the different types of growing mediums associated with the above facilities especially as these questions use the Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers local knowledge of ground conditions and their collective experiences.

Surprisingly there appeared to be no direct correlation between the frequency of aeration operations and the specific soil type. It could be argued therefore, that greenkeepers are either unsure of their aeration frequencies relating to soil type, or that there is a lack of an expected industry standard.

In Question 3 the vast majority surveyed (62%) felt that their greens should be aerated every two or four weeks. It is also interesting to note that 22% felt their greens should receive some sort of aeration on a weekly basis. Only 6% felt that the period between aeration operations should be greater than four-week intervals. Of those it is worth pointing out that one individual suggested that their greens only needed aeration two to three times per year, while another suggested that his golf greens should receive 60 aeration operations in any twelve month period.

In Question 4 we observed a noticeable swing between that of the ideal aeration frequencies and those that are actually being achieved. The immediate comparison is between greenkeepers who would like to aerate every week (22%) and those who actually aerate every week (4%). The majority of those surveyed (58%) felt that they should aerate at least every two weeks, of which only 22% achieved this.

What is also clear is that 94% felt that they should aerate their greens between one and four times a month. Of that percentage only 22% reached their objectives.

By far the largest difference came in the category of 'Other' from 6% to a staggering 30%. Of those, the worst case recorded was one person who had not aerated within the last three seasons!

Question 5 revealed that over 50% of those surveyed failed to meet their aeration objectives due to golfer pressure. When 'management pressure' and 'lack of resources' are added to this, the figure becomes an overwhelming 76%. Of the remaining 24% the majority (implied) that their failure to meet objectives was due to a combination of the aforementioned factors. However, several did state that they received no pressure from either golfers or from their management team.
The main observation from Question 6 is that the majority of aeration undertaken is of the least disruptive type (slit tinning). When linked to the issue of ‘golfer pressure’ discussed in Question 5, a worrying pattern begins to emerge.

Despite the fact that 88% of those surveyed in Question 7 are communicating with their club members, it appears that these communications are clearly not helping greenkeepers achieve their aeration objectives. This raises many questions, particularly those of communication methods, the timing of communications, the authority of those communications and how they are supported.

Although the initial results in Question 8 seem promising, it is worth bearing in mind that the majority of those who answered yes, were in fact talking about receiving support from either BIGGA, their agronomists, machinery manufacturers or STRI.

The 30% who answered in a negative way suggested a number of areas where improvements could be made. These included:

- Better education of the golfer
- Better education of golf club secretaries
- Better greenkeeper education
- More help from the R&A and Home Unions
- Improved liaison with the golf professional organisations
- More exposure in golfing journals

There can be little doubt regarding the information gained in Question 9. Clearly there is an opportunity to build on this survey and perhaps in future, questions should be more direct and challenging.

Conclusion

From the survey we can see that the main issue to be addressed is ‘why are we underachieving on our aeration objectives?’

According to those surveyed, aeration is an essential operation necessary if quality sports turf is to be provided. However, it would appear that the frequency of aeration operations and the type of aeration required for each soil category is a mystery to those even with intimate knowledge of their specific environments. Obviously this does not provide a good foundation for greenkeepers to argue a positive case regarding aeration timing and scheduling. This comes as quite a shock, particularly as greenkeeper training and education has clearly moved in the right direction over the last few years. Perhaps another more nebulous issue now dominates this subject. Could it be that job security and continuity are now so important to greenkeepers that they do not actively follow what they know to be correct or what they know their employers will resent?

Possibly, the blame for underachieving should be targeted at those who are responsible for developing industry standards. After all, if the majority of greenkeepers were intrinsically motivated, it would follow that they would try hard to implement correct procedures. If clear research exists to confirm type and frequency of aeration relating to soil type and season, greenkeepers seem unaware of its validity. Further research and development may therefore be needed so that everyone associated with the industry has a higher understanding of this topic.

The most concerning issue drawn from the survey appears to be the pressure administered by the golfer. It is painfully obvious that aeration affects the putting surface, but the survey indicates that the balance between getting oxygen into the soil and producing an even putting surface has been entirely lost to the golfer. Shorttermism has taken centre stage. Tactical and strategic objectives for green aeration are the casualties of this naive situation. A concerted effort must be made if things are to change. With golfers paying more for their round, pressure to produce ideal conditions undoubtedly increases. If we are to right this situation, the question of industry leadership once again comes to the fore. Without it, it would seem that circumstances could only deteriorate.

A plea to others

It would be of great benefit to know if the information revealed by the survey in the BB&O Section is reflected elsewhere in the country. Please take time to answer the eight questions and mail, email or fax your answers to Scott MacCallum at BIGGA HOUSE or simply pass on anecdotal evidence you’ve experienced personally to the magazine. The more widespread the problems identified in the survey are seen to be the greater the attention which can be given to them.
Master Greenkeepers don't grow on trees. With just 31 qualified individuals worldwide - despite the fact that it is now 13 years since BIGGA devised the scheme - it is logical to assume that successful candidates possess more than the experience, education and practical greenkeeping and management skills demanded by the award.

Phillip Helmn, one of this year's new Masters is a case in point. He has come up with one of those simple ideas which is so obvious you wonder why nobody thought of it before. As Course Manager at Overstone Park in Northamptonshire he is often approached by trade representatives, extolling the virtues of the latest products their companies have to offer.

"I wasn't happy about putting anything new on my greens without testing it first," he says. "I know the companies conduct their own rigorous trials, but no two golf courses are the same, and the chances of soil conditions at the testing grounds exactly matching those here, were slim."

Encouraged by David Barraclough, Group Managing Director at Overstone, who has backed Phillip throughout his Master Greenkeeper studies, Phillip decided that what he needed was his own trial green, built as closely as possible to match the 18 on the course. Vitax put their support where their representative's mouth was, giving practical help and technical advice, which has resulted in the construction of a new testing area. At 16 by 10 metres, it is situated directly in front of Phillip's office window.

"Although the rootzone has not been constructed strictly to a USGA specification, in all other aspects, conditions, including fully automatic irrigation, are identical to those on my greens. The area is subject to the same maintenance regime, and is effectively our 19th green.

One aspect in which the trial green differs is the amount of poa resident within the sward. Having decided to build his own testing green to assess new products, Phillip quickly realized that he now had an opportunity to safely investigate methods of combating poa annua.

"In the fight against poa invasion there is no real substitute for good, traditional greenkeeping techniques, but outside pressures can reduce the effectiveness of an Integrated Disease Management Plan, and I was keen to experiment."

For this reason, the trial plot was deliberately sown with a large percentage of poa. "We can even put parquat on it if we want to. The whole area has been sectioned into grids, and we are keeping detailed records of every application administered," he says.

The first step was to establish the percentage of poa in each grid by using a point quadrant frame which is simply a piece of softwood 60 cm long with two rows of 10 pins five centimetres apart. Where the pins landed the grass species was recorded, and although results varied, on average poa coverage was found to be 60%.

"One area has been left untreated as a control and other grids subjected to treatments ranging from high to low doses of Glyphosate total weed killer. We have also applied excessive rates of chemical and biological fungicides to some areas, to see if this has a detrimental effect on the poa. Already some interesting things have started to happen," said Phillip.

Although he will offer the results of research carried out at Overstone to fellow greenkeeping professionals, given the space, time and resources, the only way to assess the effects of applied products with total accuracy may be to try them on your own soil.