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Remember remember the rain in November!

Do you remember last November? How much rain did the UK have? Don’t leave it too late to order your waterproof suits from BIGGA. Made by Sun and Rain, the suits are available in navy colour consisting of a jacket with inside back of the collar, matching trousers with details contact Tracey or Susannah in Membership Services Department, BIGGA, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Ayr, York Y061 1UE. Don’t forget to write your full name, date of birth and membership number on the back so we know who you are!

BIGGA Membership Photocard Update

Keep your photocard coming in! Once again, thank you to all those members who have sent us a passport photograph of themselves for processing. Don’t wait for the rush to begin, please help us by getting your photocard in as early as possible to Tracey or Susannah, Membership Services Department, BIGGA, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Ayr, York Y061 1UE. Don’t forget to write your full name, date of birth and membership number on the back so we know who you are!

October'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 waterproofs sportswear. Our congratulations go to November’s winner, Andrew Miller, Stockbrook Golf & CC

BIGGA has almost 300 international members situated throughout the world in as many as 31 different countries. This month we would like to welcome our members from Germany and give some interesting facts about the country

Wilkommen – Focus on Germany

Gareth Anwell, Southern Golf Bad Wilsnack Colin J Alkinson, Gut Rosenthal
Henry Baldwin, GC Born
Kevin J Barley, Golf Acm den Dauendorf
David F Bartley, Golf C Schloes Weitenburg
Paul E Cairns, Golf Klub Braunschweig
Robert A Gorwill, Golf Park Rittergot
Frank Tong, Midland

Gareth Anwell, Southern Golf Bad Wilsnack Colin J Alkinson, Gut Rosenthal
Henry Baldwin, GC Born

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November 2001 Greenkeeper International 13
As the countdown to BTME 2002 continues, the education programme is now coming to the forefront of many minds. Sami Collins gives details of the education opportunities on offer.

Continue to Learn 2002 has been specifically designed to give all delegates maximum flexibility on their education choices, offering one and two day options for both the National Education Conference and Workshop Programme. Advertised under the new name 'Continue to Learn' the programme and booking form is now available.

Highlights of the National Education Conference include the morning session on Monday 21 January which will be presented by Dr James Beard on the subjects of Water and Temperature Stresses and Shade and Wear Stresses. Tuesday 22 January sees the return of Jim Moore from the USGA Green Section. A popular and informative speaker, Jim will be discussing the Design and Reconstruction of Golf Course Features. Other sessions at the conference include subjects such as Specific Turfgrass Management, The Golf Course in Global Warming and the Golf Course and Preparation for Winter Play.

The BTME Seminars commence on Monday 21 January with Keynote Speaker Dr Keith Jones. The Show Dinner on Monday 21 January at The Majestic Hotel, featuring comedy duo Brahm's and Listz, Harrogate Band, will give delegates the opportunity to gain their Emergency First Aid Certificate, while the Environmental Management Workshop looks at the impact of ecological management on the golf course.

The STRI continues to run their popular course ‘Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century’. For 2002 the course will take place on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 January at The Majestic Hotel, with after dinner speaker Dr Keith Jones. The Show Banquet will take place on Thursday 24 January with a welcome return to The Majestic Hotel, featuring comedy duo Brahm's and Listz, Harrogate Band, The Nightjars and a disco from Funtime Music. This is one event you won't want to miss!

For further details on booking your place please contact Sami Collins on 01347 833833.

For the very latest BTME2002 news and event information visit: www.btme.org.uk
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Mr A Purdie, Crail Golfing Society, Fifeness

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The votes have been counted and the results are in! This year’s golf course environment competition has finally come to its end and proved to be the closest contest yet. The scale of environmental issues tackled by golf clubs is astounding; irrigation pond creation, woodland clearance and extensive species auditing are but a few examples of the kind of large scale commitment to environmental issues seen from this year’s applicants. However, the projects unseen by the members and general public were the deciding factors in this year’s competition; golf clubs across the British Isles are showing excellent initiative with regard to environmental improvement with projects ranging from office and clubhouse waste, energy saving to some very progressive composting schemes.

Of all the applications received by BIGGA only a few from each UK region could be visited for further consideration, so the tricky decision of who would play no further part in the contest was passed on to the ecology team at the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI). Scoring was difficult and it seemed as though all the clubs should win the competition for their own special initiatives, however financial and time constraints forced a decision to be made and a selection of clubs from each region were duly chosen. The next stage was to visit the golf clubs in question.

Bradley Park Golf Club
Of the three northern clubs visited, Bradley Park Golf Club near Huddersfield is the smallest; a municipal course with less than two hundred members and only six green staff. Bradley Park is a shining example to other small clubs. A dedicated Head Greenkeeper, Mr David Brierley, has performed wonders in his nine years at the club; his enthusiasm has manifested itself onto the course in the shape of 25,000 indigenous trees planted within the last few years and as a comprehensive species list of every plant and animal seen on site. Through relaxed rough cutting regimes and the introduction, and management, of wildlife ponds on the course Mr Brierley has ensured that a variety of flora and fauna call Bradley Park ‘home’.

Wilmslow Golf Club
Wilmslow Golf Club is a private members club in Mobberley, near Wilmslow, and was the second of the northern clubs to be visited. The Head Greenkeeper at Wilmslow is Mr Stephen Oultram who is devoted to creating a natural looking and ecologically sound golf course. A visitor to this course can’t help but be impressed by its situation in the surrounding countryside, Wilmslow reflects the adjacent areas to such a degree that, on a walk around the course, one could be forgiven for forgetting that you were at a golf club at all. Areas of rough containing a host of colourful grasses and wildflowers bank the fairways, and the greens and tees are surrounded by thriving woodlands; all this on a course with a playability factor second to none! Mr Oultram’s enthusiasm is backed up by an ever-increasing knowledge of environmental issues and excellent turfgrass management skills.

Kenwick Park Golf Club
The third, and final club, to be visited in the north did not make judging the region any easier, being of an equally high standard to the other two. Kenwick Park Golf Club in Louth, is a private club that has only been open for nine years and yet has already established itself as one of the most progressive environmental golf clubs in the country; being one of the first two English clubs to gain ‘Going For Green’ accreditation. Having set up an environmental panel in 1999 things are really moving forward at Kenwick Park. The panel (chaired by Mr Ian Shephard) raise their own funds for ecology projects through barbeques, quiz nights and other initiatives and deal with all the environmental problems at the club. Habitat creation has been the major project for the panel at Kenwick Park in the last two years, with the introduction of a woodland glade, skylark nesting areas, an island on a large pond for nesting water birds and an irrigation/wildlife pond planned for the near future; Kenwick Park is an oasis in an agricultural desert for birds, animals and flowers.
Parkstone Golf Club

Golf clubs in the south west of England maintained the high standard set by their northern counterparts. Parkstone Golf Club, in Poole, now has its own website dedicated to environmental issues (www.parkstonegolfclubgreens.fsnet.co.uk), hence their commitment to environmental issues is obvious even before a visit was made. Large scale tree clearances and heather/gorse heathland regeneration projects take up the majority of the greensstaff's time and effort; projects that are showing excellent results. The club are also well aware of the rarities in butterflies, reptiles and flowers present on their course and are especially proud of their colonies of bog asphodel, sundew and sand lizards; all of which are monitored annually.

Broadstone Golf Club

The other golf club visited in the south west was Broadstone Golf Club, a couple of miles up the road from Parkstone in Poole. The staff there have an infectious enthusiasm for the environmental issues within the club and have captured the interest of the members remarkably well via organised nightjar and bat walks, posters, videos of wildlife found on the course and a notice board on which members can record wildlife sightings when playing golf (an idea that has worked surprisingly well!). A host of environmental topics have been addressed at Broadstone including progressive clubhouse management i.e. energy saving light bulbs and recycling, excellent waste oil and chemical reprocessing, and an organic matter composting scheme that is working well. An idea that should be applauded is the re-use of bunker sand as a habitat for reptiles and insects; when a bunker is replaced the old sand is placed into a 'pit' out of play and acts as a perfect home for sand lizards and adders. The list of extra habitats created on the course is long and impressive, but perhaps the most impressive aspect of the club is the continuing influx of new projects that are being planned and undertaken successfully.

Beaconsfield Golf Club

The visits to the south east clubs continued in a similarly impressive way. The ecological sub-committee, headed by Bill Patterson, at Beaconsfield Golf Club have achieved a great deal over the last few years. Formal plantings of larch, pine and lelandii trees are being removed and replaced with indigenous tree species such as; ash, oak, holly, hazel and hornbeam and this is leading to a much more natural feel about the course with an increase in wildlife. The creation of extra rough areas around the fairways and relaxed mowing regimes in wooded sites are leading to the regeneration of heather, gorse and grass species on the course, which in turn is encouraging many butterflies and bird species. It is encouraging to see that members at the club are taking an interest in the extra wildlife by noting any interesting sightings in a recording book, kept in the clubhouse. Environmental newsletters, display tables and a well known ecological committee also help the members to appreciate the movements forward and the importance of the ecological issues.

Berkhampstead Golf Club

At the course at Berkhamstead Golf Club is situated on common land, the greensstaff there have a particularly difficult job when it comes to some environmental issues. Therefore Gerald Bruce, course manager, and his team are dedicated to educating the local public about environmental management and that tree removal is sometimes necessary! Many heather management techniques have been tried in order to reinstate some of the lost heathland, and a bracken management plan is in place to stop bracken dom-
Thorpeness Golf Club

The course at Thorpeness fits wonderfully into the surrounding countryside, and is a pleasure to walk around. Mr Ian Willett, course manager, has an enthusiastic membership and club backing him when it comes to environmental issues, thus the course is a haven for local wildlife. Thorpeness is lucky to neighbour RSPB managed fenlands which adds extra birdlife to the course with such species as; bittern, osprey and even a white-tailed eagle recorded on the course! English Nature rewarded Mr Willett’s enthusiasm with the designation of the course as an SSSI site, due to the diverse habitats within the course, and now the club work closely with English Nature to manage the course as ecologically soundly as possible.

Ipswich Golf Club

The dedication toward environmental issues of Ipswich Golf Club is unquestionable and is reflected by the employment of two full-time conservation officers. Their hard work is backed by the club and appreciated by the members, and the results can be seen throughout the course by the incredible amount of habitat creation and varied flora and fauna. The diversity of habitat types within the course would impress even the most sceptical golfers, and a tour of the course with Mr Neil Sherman, conservation officer, and his staff is an eye opening experience even for an experienced ecologist. Two ‘nature trails’ have been created on the course, with associated information leaflets, for the members and public to walk and enjoy, and local schools are invited onto the course to walk the trails and learn about ecological issues. Ipswich should be an example to other clubs of the things that can be achieved with the dedication of a club and its members.

Luffenham Heath Golf Club

Much has been done in the way of habitat creation and conservation at The Luffenham Heath Golf Club, especially for the many species of butterflies found there, not least the black hairstreak butterfly – a rarity in the UK. Mr Fogg, Head Greenkeeper, has been with the club for thirty years now and has gained the total trust of the members, hence extra rough area creation and woodland clearances are allowed to go ahead without complaint from the members (usually!). There is a small amount of heather beginning to regenerate near the third and fourth hole, something which the club are proud of and are doing their utmost to encourage more of, via careful management and making the members aware of its value.

The Luffenham Heath course has recently (1998) been awarded SSSI status due to its acid grasslands, heathland and its colony of black hairstreak butterflies, therefore the greenstaff work closely with English Nature to upkeep the areas of special interest on the course. The planting of 400m of native hedgerow along the north of the course is an excellent project and will create homes and movement corridors for many songbirds, especially when taking into account the intensive agriculture in the surrounding areas.
Above: Cardigan Golf Club. Emphasis at Cardigan is being given to restoration of grasslands, gorse management, composting and minimalisation of fertilisers and water.

Kilmacolm Golf Club
A long drive ‘up the road’ to Scotland was well worth while, as the golf clubs north of the border were, again, of an excellent standard. Over twenty interested club members, local councillors, residents and representatives of local nature groups turned out at Kilmacolm Golf Club for the judging of this year’s competition. The interest displayed by these people is a credit to Mr Ronnie Bunting, Head Greenkeeper, and his club; he has successfully transformed the course into a haven for wildlife and gained the trust and respect of the club and its membership by many successful projects and constant liaisons with the members. The area is managed primarily as a golf course and has excellent putting surfaces and fairway definition, however it is also managed as though it were a nature reserve hence every decision is assessed for its impact on the environment and taken very seriously. Kilmacolm is only a twenty minute drive away from the hustle and bustle of Glasgow centre, although visitors to the course feel as though they are miles from anywhere!

ST Andrews Links Trust
All five of the courses at ST Andrews Links Trust were entered into this year’s BIGGA Golf Course Environment Competition, showing an extra keenness toward environmental issues. Of the five courses; the Eden Course is the most progressive in terms of habitat creation, with good gorse management techniques establishing several areas of great use for songbirds, invertebrates and reptiles. The most impressive aspect of ST Andrews environmental policy is the attitude toward risk assessment and the recording of chemical and water usage. No expense has been spared in the setting up of a computerised irrigation system, the machine washdown areas are also a credit to the club; these ensure safe cleaning and disposal of all water and oil wastes.

Cardigan Golf Club
The last region to be judged was Wales giving rise to a very progressive entry from Cardigan Golf Club. This club is devoted to allowing natural regeneration of gorse and grassland areas upon it, by following a newly created environmental management plan. The creation of three irrigation lakes is also commendable and worthwhile project and will provide excellent habitats for a variety of wetland flora and fauna. Environmental training of staff, good communication with members and a sound waste management plan, including a high-quality composting scheme that is beginning to show commendable results establish this club as an example to clubs throughout the UK.

Finally ...
Choosing the winners from these outstanding clubs was not an easy task! However, inherent in every competition are winners and losers therefore, with quantitative scoring and much discussion, the very best of the clubs were selected to receive the prestige of winning the regional and national finalist awards. I hope that this article goes some way to show how much golf can do for the environment and that the real winners in this competition are the golf industry and the environment.

The following clubs were selected to receive awards:

Northern winners
Wilmslow Golf Club

South east winners
Ipswich Golf Club

Welsh winners
Cardigan Golf Club

Scottish winners
Kilmacolm Golf Club

Overall winners
Broadstone Golf Club

November 2001 Greenkeeper International 19
Understanding how grass is damaged during the mowing process is critical when trying to create an improved playing surface, consider costs and examine the quality of cut. Maureen Keepin reports...

Increasingly golf takes place 365 days of the year and mowing is an essential practice used by greenkeepers to ensure greens, tees and fairways are well maintained for their members, benefit and enjoyment.

Improvements to quality of cut are continually being sought - to achieve these aims it is vital mower blades are kept really sharp as well as correct height adjustments maintained. These help to ensure a perfectly uniform height of cut.

Global warming predictions have far reaching implications for grass management. A lengthened growing season will mean mowing needs to be carried out even more frequently. The importance of having sharp cutting units will take on even greater significance.

Maintaining an optimum cutting performance means ensuring the mower cuts to perfection day in and day out.

For courses considering environmental issues these points are highly significant. Fertilisers, top dressing, aeration, drainage, machinery are all part of the golf club’s armoury - but mowing is critical. Mowing is generally the last thing done before the judges come out to inspect the course condition, before the course goes public - and in the case of major tournaments this is highly public.

Mowing at a Major Event

With the news that the Celtic Manor Resort in Wales will be hosting the 2010 Ryder Cup, Jim McKenzie, Director of Golf, explained what he is trying to achieve on his championship course.

"Players prefer consistency from green to green and for play to be quick and true," said Jim.

"We need a very clean cut as it helps stop disease getting into the grass. Normally we cut at around 5mm but we cut at 2.5mm for the Wales Open event in August, four times a day.

"Greens are Providence creeping bent and the fairways and tees predominantly rye grass and the roughs predominantly fescue.

Celtic Manor's workshop was set up in 1993 and they find having their own grinding facility saves a tremendous amount of time and money.

"Our greens units are ground every time they are bladed which is usually every three weeks," explained Cal Callaby, Head Mechanic.