The Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh

Head Greenkeeper

- Manage all aspects of the course and clubhouse surroundings to the highest standards (including preparation, presentation, maintenance and improvements)
- Line manage, motivate and develop training programmes for an experienced team of greenkeepers

The Person
- Qualified, as a minimum to NVQ level 3 or equivalent in sports turf management
--Proven record in leadership and man management skills with experience of maintaining a parkland style course with typical soil conditions to a high standard
- Able to demonstrate a knowledge of basic construction methods to carry out general improvements to a golf course
- A fine eye for attention to detail

Salary and benefits will be by negotiation dependent upon experience and qualifications.

Applications in writing including a full CV to Mr Richard Fletcher, Fletcher Jones Ltd, 12 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2DP. Tel: +44 (0)131 229 7151; E-mail: apply@fletcher-jones.co.uk

Closing Date for applications is Nov. 20th 2009

Vacancy 'Head Green-keeper' at Rosslare Golf Club, Co. Wexford, Ireland.

Rosslare Golf Club is a long established private members golf club, founded in 1905, comprising 2 courses with associated practice range, putting and chipping greens. We are situated in the South East corner of Ireland in the village of Rosslare on a narrow sandy peninsula fringing Wexford harbour.

The ‘Old Course’ is an 18hole Hawtree and Taylor par 72 layout of 6786 yards. The ‘Browne’ course, opened in 1996 is a 12 hole par 46 layout of 3956 yards designed by Christy O’Connor Jr. Both courses are situated on typical ‘links’ land.

The vacancy arises due to the planned retirement in 2010 of our long serving head green-keeper. We are now seeking applications from persons who are interested in the position and can demonstrate strong abilities in all aspects of green-keeping in a ‘links’ environment.

The successful candidate will be capable of organizing, motivating and managing the green-keeping team and must bring a high standard of presentation to the links. Candidate’s will ideally possess all relevant green keeping qualifications, will have a history of success in a similar position and will be able to implement Health and Safety and other relevant legislation.

- Understand and assist in the preparation of an annual budget and manage the agreed budget.
- Motivate, manage and supervise the green-keeping team.
- Implement a plan for the establishment of a sustainable environmentally friendly course.
- Prepare and implement training plans to meet the needs of the existing staff.
- Manage and maintain the course machinery including an automated irrigation system.

The salary for this position is negotiable.

Applications are invited for the position of Head Green-keeper at Rosslare Golf Club, Co. Wexford.

The Hon. Secretary, Rosslare Golf Club, Rosslare, Co Wexford
Tel: +353 53 91 32203
E-mail – manager@rosslaregolf.com
Website – www.rosslaregolf.com
BIGGA Members save money on Education

BIGGA Members are eligible for a 50% saving off the price of the two-day and one-day workshops and 55% saving off the half-day workshops on the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate Week 2010.

Example of how to save money...

A Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper who is a member of BIGGA attends the ‘How to be an Outstanding Manager’ one day workshop on Monday, January 18, and ‘Good Soil Chemistry and Biology’ half day workshop on Wednesday, January 20, saving themselves or their golf club £165. See table below for comparison.

Monday 18th January 2010
How to be an Outstanding Manager
Member Rate Non Member Rate £105 + VAT £210 + VAT

Wednesday 20th January 2010
Good Soil Chemistry and Biology
Member Rate Non Member Rate £50 + VAT £110 + VAT

TOTAL
Member Rate Non Member Rate £155 + VAT £320 + VAT

By being a member of BIGGA this Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper will save a total of £165, which is more than the price of one years membership of BIGGA.

It makes great financial sense, if you are attending the workshops from the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate Week, to be a member of BIGGA.

If you or somebody you know is planning on booking a seminar or workshop on the Continue to Learn Programme and is not a member of BIGGA, then point out the savings they can make.

BIGGA Membership Benefit of the Month – Section and Networks

The Association’s Sections and networks are active throughout the UK, with 26 Sections hosting events there is something for everybody. Current members of BIGGA can gain access to the Bulletin Boards (in a recent BIGGA Membership Survey 86% of respondents indicated the bulletin boards were either “Very Useful” or “Useful”) where members can gain access to a vast amount of useful, important and vital information for greenkeepers and other sports turf professionals, golf clubs and businesses involved in the fine turf industry. Here you can discuss popular topics such as ‘2mm all summer anyone?’ or ‘What’s the difference between a Course Manager and a Head Greenkeeper?’ and keep updated about Section seminars and events.

The Importance of Networking

With 26 Sections around the UK there is always a ‘friend’ nearby.

Whether you are just starting out as a sports turf professional (greenkeeper or groundsman) or at the pinnacle of your career, networking is likely to play a large part in your success.

Networking is about creating a set of contacts and subsequently building a trust and creating a genuine relationship with the people you meet. It provides the opportunity for you to discover people who may be able to help with queries/problems you encounter during your career as well as the opportunity for you to offer your assistance to others.

For people new to networking, it might seem a daunting prospect. But by investing time in other people you might soon find that your career is reaping the rewards.

Top tips for networking:
• Be yourself
• Be open
• Smile
• Let people talk
• Push yourself
• Know what you want
• Enjoy it

Contact Details

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OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS
(Full Members only)
Personal Accident Helpline 02075 603013
Greenkeepers Legal Assistance 0800 177 7891
Greenkeepers Support Services 0800 174 319
Debt Counselling Helpline 0800 174 319

BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scottish Region
Graham Anderson, East
Mike Boyle, Central
James Dunnett, East
Stuart Harkerm East
Stuart Hochholzer, Central
Alan Jeffrey, Ayrshire
Marc Lawrence, Central
Joseph Lofffman, East
Colin Mason, Central
Lori Mcbride, West
Scott Poole, East
Andrew Swift, North
Liffen Song, Central

Northern Region
Christopher Chapman, Northern
Daniel Draper, Sheffield
Michael Goodhind, North West
Marc Kerr, Cleveland
Jonathan Mellor, North West

Midland Region
Paul Aschroft, Mid Anglia
Alex Blanchard, Mid Anglia
Damion Boyce, Mid Anglia
Sam Brooks, Midlands
Lee Cole, Midland
Nikki Cölin Mortimer, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Keith Grist, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Matthew Hayes, East of England
Matthew Hughes, East Midlands
Gary Knight, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Chris Holley, Mid Anglia
Nicholas O’CRed, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Mark Pettit, Mid Anglia
David Spencer, East Midlands
Graham Vyse, East Midlands
Reece Watson, Mid Anglia
Adam Wilkinson, Midlands
Stuart Wilson, Mid Anglia
Craig Winkless, East Midlands
Andrew Wood, East Midlands

South East Region
Ryan Bezzant, London
Ian Cannell, Essex
Dennis Crompton, East Anglia
Adrian Dylkhum, London
Allister Flint, Essex
Sally Fox, Suffolk
David Herley, Essex
Robert Hill, Sussex
Barry Jennings, London
Liam Mulkerrins, Surrey
Stuart O’Hara, Essex
Anthony Thacker, East Anglia
Andrew Wolff, Kent
Christopher Woodcock, Surrey

South West Region
Michael Crawford

Overseas
Ian Camp, USA

Membership
Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update
Assistant Profile

Each month we take a light hearted look into the life of an assistant greenkeeper...

Rod Feltham of Avoncrop Amenity comes under the spotlight

1. What is your position within the company?
Managing Director

2. How long have you been in the industry?
Over 30 years

3. How did you get into it?
In 1978 I joined a Bristol company as Sales Manager, responsible for growing the business in Amenity Horticulture and in 1990 formed Avoncrop Amenity Products.

4. What other jobs have you done?
I spent my early working years in agriculture/horticulture, selling pesticides and fertilisers and for 8 years was an Area Manager for Pan Britannica Industries (PBI).

5. What do you like about your current job?
The challenge customers create in modern day turf management along with the huge satisfaction of heading up a very successful team.

6. What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?
The management of sports turf has changed during recent years due to many opportunities available for training, greater expectations of the golfer, leading to a more professional approach and greater depth of knowledge with budgetary skills & presentation.

7. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers’ lot?
Having all the necessary equipment to do the job.

8. What do you like about your current job?
The challenge customers create in modern day turf management along with the huge satisfaction of heading up a very successful team.

9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?
West Ham United

10. What do you consider to be your lucky number?
5

Rod has picked Nigel Wyatt of Abotts

Name: Ben Wallis
Age: 20
Club: Rookery Park
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
Nickname: Greenfinger

1. How long have you been greenkeeping?
Three and half years

2. What was it about the career that attracted you?
Opportunity came up at the club at the right time. Part time became fulltime.

3. If you weren’t a greenkeeper what do you think you’d be?
Golf Professional

4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?
Mowing semi rough with the new Toro Sidewinder because you are sitting down and hand mowing greens because it is good exercise and it always looks good.

5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?
Raking bunkers.

6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers’ lot?
Having all the necessary equipment to do the job.

7. Hobbies?
Golf (1 handicap), swimming, gy and carp fishing 25 pounder best so far.

8. Favourite Band?
Nickleback

9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?
West Ham United

10. What is your claim to fame?
Spoke to Open Champion Paul Lawrie in the pro shop at The Belfry.
VERDE SPORTS LTD

Verde Sports Ltd is a family owned company, which was established by the late John Hessey and his wife Nancy in 1988 and is now run by his daughter, Niki.

Since this time Verde have been a leading supplier of artificial surfaces to the golf market, producing golf and fairway mats, winter tees, pathways, adventure golf and putting surfaces.

Verde are based in the manufacturing area of North West England and are a hands on, loyal and friendly team. Celebrating their 21st year in business, Verde believe that long-term relationships with trade distributors, golf clubs and private customers has contributed to their success.

Verde are acknowledged in the industry for their excellent customer service, often offering next day UK deliveries, distributing all over Europe as well as Worldwide.

The short to medium term objective is to produce a wholly British product – with all the consistency of supply and high level of quality that goes alongside having a British manufacturing base.

Recently, the company re-designed its website to produce an even more informative and customer friendly interface. This effectively showcases their range of products and services and allows for instant purchases to be made via its “buy online” facility.

Verde Sports will continue to grow alongside the increasing popularity of artificial grass surfaces and they remain committed to being at the forefront as the industry moves forward.

BUYER’S GUIDE
There are lots of pros and cons to artificial surfaces. In cases like this, it is not possible to produce a surface with the characteristics as good as natural playing surface, with playing surfaces such as a built up area, they can be transformed into a first class surface could not receive lots of treatment.

Some technologies for the maintenance of Greens and Fairways / Bunkers / Complete Courses Plastic Pipe / TurfDry Drainage System For fast and friendly Nationwide Service Contact Melyn Taylor: 01283 551417 07836 259133 / melyn@turfdry.com www.turfdry.com

What is apparent is that no two surfaces are the same, and the surfaces are dependant on the build quality, the budget allocated for year round play, training facilities, and across the country, work is very specialist.

I have also been surprised at the point where we have to be able to access the pitch with the machinery. In cases like this, it is not possible to produce a surface with the characteristics as good as natural playing surface, with playing surfaces such as a built up area, they can be transformed into a first class surface could not receive lots of treatment.

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Advertising rates:
1/4 page - £570
1/2 page - £790
Full page - £1500

Visit www.bigga.org.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

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Unlock the potential of greenkeepers

Become a key sponsor

The funding provided by Golden and Silver Key supporters means that BIGGA can continue to produce training and career aids including DVDs, CD ROMs, field-guides, as well as refunds for training fees, subsidised learning and development courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

To find out more, contact BIGGA HOUSE on 01347 833800

“ I really wanted to develop my education but had to fund my own training, so I contacted BIGGA to ask for financial support. A refund of my course fees has enabled me to complete my chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting, felling of small trees and my PA6 spraying certificates. I really do appreciate what BIGGA, with the support of the Golden and Silver Key Companies, has done for my career. ”

Murray Mannall, Greenkeeper

“ The support for this fund has enabled BIGGA to enhance the value of being a member, and it has previously given many greenkeepers the opportunity to further develop their careers. As an association we owe our Golden and Silver Key sponsors a huge vote of thanks. ”

John Pemberton, Chief Executive

Current members of the Fund are:

Gold Key Individual Members: Andy Campbell (MG CGCS); Sam Langrick; Christopher Lomas (MG); Iain A Macleod; Frank Newberry; W J Rogers; Tom Smith; Lee Strutt (MG)

Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Iain Barr; Hamish Campbell; Steve Dixon; Paul Jenkins; Robert Maibusch (MG); Richard McGlynn; Stephen Pope; Jason Sama; Steven Tierney; Neil Whitaker; Graham Wylie
On September 25, 2009, the High Court considered the issue raised jointly by Age Concern and Help The Aged, that it was contrary to age discrimination legislation for employers to be able to retire a member of staff when they reached 65 years of age, regardless of their actual capability in the role.

It was held by the High Court that the current compulsory retirement at 65 was lawful, at this point in time. It was justified in terms of it being consistent with European Directives on social policy, noting that retirement at 65 was a “proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”.

However, the ruling went on to acknowledged the apparent inconsistency that was highlighted by the charities and noted that compulsory retirement at 65 will be reviewed and it is likely that the normal age of retirement will increase in 2010 to 68 years of age.

The charities had sought the removal of any compulsory retirement age.

At least six months before an employee’s 65th birthday, the employer is required to write to them giving notice of retirement. At that point, the employee can write to the employer requesting to work beyond the age of 65. The employer will then arrange a meeting to discuss the request and a decision will be made. The employee has a right to appeal where their request has been declined.

Government delays Agency Workers

The government has delayed the introduction of the Agency Workers Directive (AWD) until October, 2011, as part of efforts to cut the cost of business regulation.

The AWD gives temporary staff the same employment rights as permanent staff after 12 weeks’ work, including pay. There had been speculation that the directive could have been implemented as early as next spring, but the legislation has now been delayed until October 2011.

The announcement today by the Business Department is part of moves to cut the costs of regulation to business by £6.5bn by 2015.

Mike Emmott, employee relations adviser at the CIPD, said: “We’re pleased that the Government has pushed back the implementation of the Agency Workers Directive to the last possible date – we’ve consistently called for such a delay.

“Implementing the directive in the early stages of a recovery could have been particularly damaging, as firms will be willing to take on temporary workers at an earlier stage than they are willing to commit to permanent appointments. Early implementation could therefore have delayed the recovery and prolonged unemployment.”

Lord Mandelson also revealed a delay to the implementation of the right to request training in small firms.

David Frost, Director-General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: “With these announcements, the government is sending out a positive message to business.

Additional employment legislation would be a real barrier to job creation at a time when unemployment could approach three million.”

Redundancy Pay Rises

As announced in the recent budget, the Government has increased the statutory limit on a week’s redundancy pay from £350 to £380 effective from October 1, 2009.

The move is designed to cushion the impact on employees made redundant Normally the increase is effective from February 1 each year.

The Government has further made it clear that there will be no further increase in February 2010 and the £380 limit will remain until February 1, 2011.

The limit will also apply to other payments such as the basic award for unfair dismissal.
End of term report. What’s bothering The R&A as we go into winter? And what’s on the horizon, looking into next year?

On the playing surfaces, the big worry is still the mania for speed. Not just in the UK – we find this wherever we go in the world. Low handicap golfers are the main culprits – but turf is not managed solely for their benefit and neither is it indestructible!

We are looking at giving more publicity to “advisory” speed limits, so that greenkeepers can advise their committees accordingly. Speeds of 8-8.5 feet are more than acceptable for the average golfer, who pays the bills! And if a sward is composed of the right species, speeds can be increased to 10.5 feet for short periods by rolling and top-dressing. Anything much beyond that slows play and proves stressful for most golfers – and the turf.

Finances will continue to be a big worry for clubs, as the cumulative effects of economic downturn kick in. Revenues are best maximised by a course which is playable all the year round. Costs will have to be contained and treasurers will look across the board for savings.

However, wherever savings are planned, make sure your committee is under no illusion about the consequences! Levels of presentation will have to be lower if manpower or machinery budgets come under pressure. In the longer term, of course we would argue that many clubs could save substantially on their fertiliser/water/pesticide budgets by switching away from Poa annua - but, again, committees need to understand the consequences and I’ll touch on that again at the end.

Another trip to Denmark this year continues to focus our minds on the pesticide issue. Over there, about a third of their courses are pesticide-free because they’re on public land. The other two-thirds – about 120 courses – have to deliver a 75% reduction by 2011 or face further legislation from the Danish Government. You can see the thinking; if one third of courses can manage without, why can’t the rest?

Governments are not bothered about the niceties of course presentation – in today’s political climate, non-golfers call the tune. And they have decided they don’t like pesticides. No wonder Danish greenkeepers are turning over to rescue/bent swards so rapidly! And so successfully!

However, the new major theme in Brussels is biodiversity, or rather preventing loss of habitat and biodiversity. Golf has a wonderful story to tell on this one – but we’re only just starting to tell it. For example, we’ve just published a joint book with the RSPB “Birds and golf courses: a guide to habitat management”, written by Keith Duff and Nigel Symes.

The number of breeding bird species on a course, a major indicator of habitat diversity, can be significant and golf also provides a home for really threatened species such as the skylark.

Perhaps the major difficulty in promoting the positive side of golf is our lack of objective data, which can then support the story. Whether you’re dealing with pesticide legislators in Brussels or debating biodiversity with sceptical environmental NGOs, it helps if you can deal in hard facts! That’s part of the logic behind our data collection/benchmarking system, which we are continuing to develop.

There’s a lot happening behind the scenes on this one: the first version is very comprehensive, and had to be in order to ensure its scalability/adaptability across the world. However, as time goes on we are developing systems which are specific for a country, eg. New Zealand and Denmark, as well as evolving an entry-level system which will enable clubs to collect a small number of “key performance indicators”. Most of the list of relevant indicators is coming from a consultation exercise with working greenkeepers.

Data collection, however, extends beyond the need to support golf’s claims for biodiversity or reduced pesticide usage. Reliable data is a key aid to improving management practices, as well as supporting course managers in their dealings with committees. And it is that last point which is perhaps our major concern going into 2010.

Wherever we go in the world, we are faced with a common problem: how to make sure that greenkeepers are allowed to manage their courses, without unhelpful interference from golfers. Managing the crop while the consumers trample all over it is a highly specialised business and one way or the other we have to get that across to golfers!

Access to solid and reliable data is a major part of “protection” for greenkeepers, but other support systems also need to be better developed.

The traditional one has been the agronomists’ annual visit – and we still believe that agronomists play a crucial role in diagnosing problems and monitoring the long-term health of courses.

However, the Danish experience has also shown quite clearly the success of local networks of course managers in building mutual support when times get tough on a course, which, from time to time, they invariably do. Especially when switching away from Poa annua. We’d like to see more of those networks and we also think there’s a role for senior course managers to act as mentors when such networks are absent.

So, end of term? As my old headmaster seemed to say to me every time, “could do better”.

Plenty for The R&A to go at as we look into next year – and for those who face the challenges, plenty of reasons for optimism!

Managing the crop while the consumers trample all over it is a highly specialised business

On the Soapbox

A new vehicle for people within the industry to express their viewpoint

Nick Park

The views expressed within On The Soapbox are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International