Chairman’s Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

A huge effort

I’ve just had one of the most enjoyable months of my career in Golf Course Management.

I attended the Scottish National Tournament, held at The Duke’s Course in St Andrews. The attendance, camaraderie and competitive spirit were all in abundance. Paul Teviotdale emerged as worthy winner, and there was a lesson for us all as George Brown took first place in the 1st Class category. Course Manager, Derek Robson, and the team had the course in great condition, the investment in drainage has paid huge dividends. Thanks to General Manager, David Scott, and the team for great hospitality.

Back at Elmwood, the team continues to work hard on trying to finish all the snagging, now that our major reconstruction work is finished. It’s hard to get those extra tasks done when you return to normal team size. Six hard working French students had joined us for three weeks to gain some experience and provided some much appreciated help. We also held an Open Day with the industry to listen to their views on Education across our three main areas of Golf Course Management, Golf Management and Professional Golf Coaching/Performance. This will ensure we develop our provision to match the requirements of students.

We held our June Board meeting, the first with our new Chief Executive, and it was very progressive and forward looking. Watch this space.

I then booked a week and a half away from work, for a whirlwind experience. It started with a visit to Celtic Manor 2010, for a Corporate day with Bernhards, a key BIGGA supporter, where Jim Mackenzie MBE, showed us around and explained what had taken place during the Ryder Cup. The recovery of the course is as much an achievement as completing play during the event.

Next I was off to Inverness to the Barclays Scottish Open at Castle Stuart. Courtesy of Toro on Thursday and Ransomes Jacobsen on Friday, I had the opportunity to meet many members and also see this great new course. Chris Haspell, Course Manager, and Stuart McColm, General Manager, ran a very smooth operation, and despite horrific weather conditions overnight on Friday, they managed with the assistance of their teams and volunteers to get things back on track for the Sunday finish. I would highly recommend a visit.

A quick visit home to make sure it was still there at the weekend and then down to Royal St Georges for The Open.

En route I visited two clubs, Carden Park and The London Club, as well as the Lastec company, in Maidstone. We arrived at the University of Kent, where the Support Team was staying and prepared for the Association of Golf Writers’ Dinner. Among the golfers who attended were Colin Montgomerie, who presented a special award to Ernie Els, three recent Major Champions in Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen and Graeme McDowell and far too many more to mention. There were also all the major movers and shakers in the game of golf. I went in the company of Graham Royden, the Royal St George’s Head Greenkeeper, and it was great to see him so in control on the eve of such a major Championship.

Throughout the week Jim Croxton and I met with many golf bodies and with Trade companies who were attending. It was reassuring to hear of their support for the direction we are taking. It is a superb opportunity to catch up with everyone in the golf industry and we had many productive meetings.

We attended the annual PGA reception, where it was a privilege to see their PGA Master Professional Awards presented, and to meet John Jacobs, one of the most famous golf coaches of all time. We also attended Golf Monthly’s 100th anniversary celebrations at nearby Prince’s Golf Club where again it was a privilege to enjoy an evening with so many influential people in the golf industry.

I was proud to witness the huge effort made by the Royal St George’s staff. The diligence of our Support Team in assisting them, as well as the excellent organisation of our own BIGGA staff, helped to ensure that everything went smoothly, despite another challenging rainfall event.

I’ve been extremely proud to have witnessed the huge effort made by the Royal St George’s staff in presenting such a wonderful course in superb condition. The diligence of our Support Team in assisting them during the week and the excellent organisation of our own BIGGA staff helped to ensure that everything went smoothly, despite another challenging rainfall event.

I must congratulate the R&A on once again organising such a fantastic event. To see Darren Clarke emerge as winner was very special. Many thanks to Jim McArthur, Chairman of the R&A Championship Committee, for recognising the efforts and expressing his thanks to the Greenkeeping Team, led by Graham Royden and also to the volunteers during the closing ceremony. Almost every major event this year has been struck by significant challenges from the weather, and it has been noticeable that the work done by volunteers has been crucial in dealing with this to ensure their success. I’m proud to be part of something which helps make that happen.

Next month, I’m focusing my attention on my own course. The support I get from the team there has been essential in enabling me to work on behalf of BIGGA. I’m confident our new CEO Jim Croxton has settled in well, and will continue to move things forward.
Trying to say the same thing in different ways is a sure sign that writers have been round the block a few times. When applied to golf, it is another way of proving that nothing is new but all the rhetoric on sustainability and environmental best practises are a clear echo of what Jim Arthur preached all his life - and, in many quarters, was damned with faint praise for so doing.

A Press cutting from 1975, for instance, reminds us that “no sooner had cheers greeted the news that Turnberry would hold the 1977 Open championship for the first time than rumours spread that the magnificent Ailsa course was in poor condition”.

Jim Arthur, the R&A’s agronomist, was called in to brew his magic potion which “consists basically of a return to nature - a reduction of inorganic feeding, regular aeration and a tight hold on watering”. He recommended “no water” because he knew Clubs would apply a little which was what he wanted but greenkeeping can never be a matter of formula. Greenkeepers (a much nicer title than Course Manager) are custodians of their course and everything must be left to their judgment in taking day to day, week to week decisions.

Adjusting to the weather is probably the prime requirement in order that the best playing surfaces can be prepared. Green speed will be uppermost in their thoughts but, even then, opinions vary as to what that should be.

From what I have observed over the years, condition will be good if the non-stop battle against thatch and compaction can be won. They represent the common enemy whatever the soil, the grass or the climate. This makes regular aeration the exercise most believe to be the common denominator in terms of universal policy but most greenkeepers are guided by principles that provide a framework for policies to be effective.

As we saw at the Scottish Open and in last year’s Ryder Cup, contingency plans are essential but nothing raised spirits more than the recent GTC Workshop at Portmore Golf Park, in Barnstaple, the last to be funded by the R&A - and more is the pity. It was hosted by Colin and Josh Webber, the father and son who abandoned dairy farming in favour of the sort of golf operation of which the game needs more. Josh, in fact, is the greatest possible recommendation for greenkeeper training, having studied at Myerscough before establishing himself as the most enthusiastic convert to a maintenance programme at Portmore that includes the development of a home-made compost that helps implement a budget designed to give maximum value for money.

Much time was also given at Portmore to environmental matters but acknowledgement of the way in which golf courses have preserved our heathland and protected our coastline are further examples that the subject serves more as a reminder than a novel issue.

In 1987, Sir David Attenborough maintained “Golf courses have always, and will always, provide splendid wildlife habitats for whatever reason they are conserved”. Nobody would argue with the authority of that source but things don’t just happen.

That is why good communication is important in informing members of what is taking place and why. It is members who need to be convinced so full marks to West Sussex GC for producing pictorial evidence of their sterling efforts during the English Women’s Championship in May, which conveyed the pride that lay behind the teamwork that achieved such commendable results.

When they were also able to add news that Abbie Holland had completed Level 2 at Plumpton College and been named Student of the Year, there was every cause for celebration that the influence of the GTC is strong. Jim Arthur, one of the pioneers, will doubtless have enjoyed a heavenly whisky in celebration although how much water he added - if any - is another matter.

Donna Steel, GTC’s Chairman, gives readers his thoughts on why he believes “Sustainability” is nothing new...
A very weary, but elated, Rachael has returned from the Open Championship. Another splendid job done by the BIGGA Open Support Team at Royal St Georges. Congratulations to Graham Royden and his team and all of the volunteers. Darren Clarke must be one of the most popular winners in recent years, his acceptance speech and delight certainly brought a tear to my eye.

Congratulations must also go to Chris Haspell, his team and the volunteers who worked tirelessly at the Scottish Open at Castle Stuart, coping with the terrible weather conditions and a landslide to boot!

SALTEX 2011

BIGGA will once again be exhibiting at SALTEX on September 6, 7 and 8 on Stand E33.

We are delighted, to have been invited by the IOG, to present a seminar programme at SALTEX 2011.

Focussing on research, technique and experience, these seminars will give turf professionals the opportunity to gain an insight into the art of golf greenkeeping.

Taking place on Wednesday, September 7 in the Grandstand at Windsor Race Course, the seminars are Free and available on a first come, first serve basis. One BIGGA CPD credit is available for each of the sessions.

11.15 am – 12.15 pm
Putting Green Potpourri: Managing Water, Firmness and Growth, Cale Bigelow, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Agronomy, Purdue University

Cale has undertaken research on localised dry spot and hydrophobic soil conditions on closely cut cool season grasses that are grown on sand-based rootzones. With this research in mind Cale will discuss the outcomes as well as looking at plant growth regulators and their effects on water use.

12.30 pm – 1.15 pm
Bunker Reconstruction at The Richmond, Les Howkins MG, Course Manager, The Richmond Golf Club

Following the reconstruction of 25 bunkers at The Richmond Golf Club, Course Manager, Les Howkins will give an overview of the work carried out, the processes involved and the methods used.

1.30 pm – 2.30 pm
The Ryder Cup Experience, Jim McKenzie, Director of Golf Course and Estates Management, Celtic Manor Resort

Jim will look back over the events that made the 2010 Ryder Cup such a memorable experience for all those involved with the greenkeeping support team, and at how the 2010 course has been repaired following the damage that occurred during the event.

I look forward to seeing you at SALTEX.

Contact Details
Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, with an update on education issues

AUGUST 2011
New Improved InjectorDos for easier dispatch of Japanese Knotweed

‘Death by lethal injection’ awaits weeds with the new improved InjectorDos from Micron Sprayers, a pesticide applicator specifically designed for the direct introduction of herbicide into hollow-stem weeds of which Japanese Knotweed (JKW) remains the most widespread and damaging.

The latest version of InjectorDos features a new volume dispenser and trigger for easier operation.

The reduced amount of pressure required to operate the trigger makes the new InjectorDos less tiring to use for repetitive applications.

The streamlined unit design allows better access to the base of JKW stems in the cramped and difficult to work situations invariably presented by dense JKW growth.

The InjectorDos applicator features a sharp robust needle which penetrates tough full grown JKW stems with a minimal force required.

Equipped with an exit hole for the herbicide two-thirds of the way from the tip and 10mm from its circular brass base, the needle passes right through the mature stem until stopped by the base making contact with the outside of the JKW stem.

InjectorDos design also includes a ‘dial-in’ facility, which allows operators to dispense a pre-determined metered volume of herbicide formulation between 0.1ml and 2ml per shot.

The latest InjectorDos version is packed with operator friendly features, which include a compact one-litre backpack, a comfortable shoulder strap and a funnel.

The volume dispenser and trigger, two needles and a plastic needle protection cap fit safely and securely into a neat and securely fastened black carrying case.

JKW stems can be injected with herbicide at any time but late summer is the ideal time to carry out the operation.

Tel: 01885 482 397 or email ausra.landey@micron.co.uk

Updated Shelton Sand Hopper

The two tonne capacity Shelton Sand Placement Hopper for topping-up land drainage trenches has been revamped.

Numerous detailed changes enable sand and sand loam composts to be laid over the trenches at forward speeds of 5-6mph. The hydraulically driven agitator is driven from the tractor’s spool valves and the floating skirt contains the sand and at the same time, reduces bruising to the grass sward. The large rear roller consolidates the laid material giving a neat appearance overall.

With much dry weather many drainage trenches have sunk and this is an ideal tool for speedy topping-up.

In the new Shelton livery it sells for £3995.00 plus VAT ex-works.

Tel: 01507578288

New from Groundsman

The TMC2 and TMC4, two and four wheel drive range of Turf Multi Cutters have been launched by Groundsman for 2011. They offer performance, reliability and, with the lowest operator hand arm vibration (HAV) levels on the market.

The Groundsman’s website contains the full product and accessories range plus technical information and short video clips of the machines working.

Contact Billy Warke owner and designer of the Groundsman range
Tel: 028 2766 7049 or email: bwarke@groundsmanindustries.com
After a very busy winter, the ten brand new New Holland Groundcare T3000 tractors that arrived at South Lanarkshire Council in November, will now be out and about carrying out their summer duties in the county’s parks and on the golf courses.

The ten tractors, supplied by the Groundcare division at Bryson Tractors, in Lanark, spent the winter clearing snow from pavements and gritting surfaces to keep the ice away.

Bryson Tractors has been working with South Lanarkshire Council for eight years – in fact ever since the company became a New Holland dealership.

In the past they’d supplied the council with their big, agricultural New Holland machines. But two years ago, Bryson Tractors began dealing in smaller New Holland Groundcare machines.

Bryson Tractors Managing Director, Nancy Bryson, says this contract works really well: “We took on the Groundcare side of the business to run alongside the Agriculture side. We were already supplying South Lanarkshire Council with big machines so when they needed to replace their fleet of smaller ones, we could help.

“The Groundcare side of the business has its own sales team and its own mechanics – so it is separate, but fits in really well with the Agriculture side of things. In fact lots of our customers involved in landscaping use large and small machines, so we are able to supply the lot.

“When South Lanarkshire Council originally came to us about the T3000s, it was the summer.

“We talked to them about what we could do and they told us they needed ten tractors with snowploughs on the front and gritters on the back.

“Once we’d discussed all the specifications, the order was put through in September.

“The tractors were delivered on a Friday in November and it started snowing on the Saturday morning! I’d like to say it was planned, but it was just sheer luck!”

The Advanced Turf Technology (ATT) TM System ‘Ultragroomer’ can provide excellent results on high density fine turf grasses such as creeping bents, explains ATT’s John Coleman.

Traditionally, verticutting has been the solution to remove organic debris, but John suggests that the 10mm spacing of a verticut reel is more suited for older, less dense grasses and that developments to specialist golf green cultivars have outpaced traditional maintenance machine technology.

The situation is exacerbated by lower heights of cut which can further increase density.

Verticutting, John points out, is best suited to removing the build up of organic matter rather than preventing it, and the sward can soon get tight and puffy, leading to thatch development. It is during this ‘puffy’ phase that the green surface ‘footprints’. Cutting at low heights of cut when greens are in this state will also result in scalping, further stressing the plant.

“The sward is also subjected to considerable stress by aggressive verticutting, which can weaken it.

Treatment with the Ultragroomer every week to 10 days minimises the phased management effect, using thin tipped blades at 5mm spacings. “More blade surface area is in contact with the turf, and it is working at a shallower depth, so stress on the plant is reduced,” John explains. There are other benefits too – it can be difficult to get sand dressings into the tight sward of bent, but the Ultragroomer makes ‘space’ for the sand.

Greenkeepers can also use the Ultragroomer to control grain, either on sloping greens or where shade encourages the grasses to grow in the direction of the light.

He warns that the Ultragroomer must be well maintained to give the best possible results. “If the blades have rounded tips they risk bruising the plant, leading to disease ingress, so they do need replacing every couple of seasons.”

John adds that the Ultragroomer is a key part of a complete regime of good surface management.

“Keep on top of nutrition and growth regulators, plus regular use of the Ultragroomer for the best possible results on bents,” he says.
**25th Anniversary**

Campey’s 25th Anniversary Open Day, at their Macclesfield Headquarters, last month was a superb opportunity for the industry to get together and congratulate Richard Campey and his team on the success of a great British company.

“A very very big thank you to everyone for supporting our Open Day,” said Richard.

“We have been overwhelmed with the turnout with guests from around the world attending, and interest shown from all sides of our industry.”

Over 300 people visited over the two days with representation from a whole host of sports and educational establishments. Groundsmen and greenkeepers from golf, football, rugby and bowling clubs, private facilities, colleges, universities and local authorities came along to congratulate Campey Turf Care Systems on their achievements over the past 25 years and to view a full range of sports turf maintenance machinery.

Despite the vagaries of the British weather the sun shone, most of the time, on demonstrations of a variety of established and new machinery from brands including Vredo, Dakota, Koro by Imants, Raycam and Omary. These continued throughout the day with only a short break during the seminars and talks given by the STRI, IOG and Premier Pitches Managing Director, Carl Pass.

Support for the occasion came from football clubs including Manchester City, Port Vale, Stockport County, plus the DW Stadium; golf clubs including Bolton Old Links, Chester, Clitheroe, Dunham Forest, Garstang, Kirklees Council, Knotty Hill, Stockport, Trentham Park and Wilmslow, as well as Burnley Council and Tameside Council. There were also representatives from UK and European suppliers and distributors, consultants and Greenkeeping Federations as well as visitors from USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The generosity of those taking part in the auctions raised over £5000 which will be donated to Cancer Research UK.

**Quality Assured Training Providers**

The GTC has announced that two of the world’s leading machinery manufacturers have become GTC Quality Assured Training Providers.

Cutting Edge, a division of Ransomes Jacobsen, and TORO, are both companies committed to ensuring quality training courses are available to the sports turf sector.

From machine maintenance to operator training and health and safety awareness workshops, the range of courses will underpin the formal greenkeeping qualifications available through GTC Quality Assured Centres.

David Golding, GTC’s Education Director, believes that their support is a sign of total commitment to supporting the industry:

“As the game of golf develops through many countries, there will be a clear training requirement to support the greenkeeping teams skills development and there will be clear opportunities to share the education and training best practices in the future.” he said.

The GTC will be promoting a range of training courses for this autumn with both companies involved and these will be in the form of one-day workshops around the country.
What’s your number?

Our regular and random profile of an industry figure continues with this month’s lucky number...

Paul Moreton of BSH is this month’s chosen one...

Name: Paul Moreton

Company: British Seed Houses

Position: Sales Rep
North West England and Midlands

How long have you been in the industry?
10 years (6 previously in New Zealand)

How did you get into it?
In New Zealand I worked for an Agricultural Company that had an ever growing Amenity division and I just found myself spending more time on golf courses and sports grounds which is more fun than faecal counts!

What other jobs have you done?
Mainly Agricultural Sales, Farm hand, Produce Sales.

What do you like about your current job?
Talking technically with Turf professionals and having someone appreciate your expertise

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?
The biggest change for me was seeing how more adaptable and efficient UK greenkeepers/groundsman are when it comes to weather, legislation hassles and expectations compared to NZ, Australia and US counterparts.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
I play cricket at a decent level, golf, biking, I have played rugby since I was a lad but have retired due to the weather in the UK! I try to get to the beach whenever I can.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?
Still doing what I’m doing now hopefully, probably still in the UK.

Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?
Being on the road we get to know our clients better than our own staff members! So I have got to know a lot of real decent blokes over the last five years. I think back to a few Greenkeepers who really helped me understand the UK culture when I first started.

What do you consider to be your lucky number?
34, has been for years and is my current age!

Pick a number 7
Paul has picked Bruce Jamieson, Consultant Agronomist

Drainage Solution

“Bunker maintenance is an expensive and time consuming part of any course budget. I visit around 20 courses a week,” said Jeremy Parkman, of M J Abbott Ltd,

“Many clubs are now considering the option of filling in or grassing over some of their high maintenance or poorly placed bunkers but with some imagination these can be retained and made more effective.

“Bunker Plug can be installed into bunkers to ensure free draining and that they spend less time out of play,” said Jeremy.

“Bunker Plug is probably the most cost effective solution to the poorly draining bunkers on the market today,” he added

A few of the benefits are that it:
• Can be fitted in approx an hour (by course staff).
• Significantly reduces contamination.
• Eliminates the need for pumping.
• Requires minimal maintenance.
• Provides a flushing point for bunker drainage. Also allowing for outfall verification.
• Eliminates surface pumping onto fairways / rough, benefiting both players and spectators and removes the possibility of mower damage from pumps debris.
• Significantly reduces sand migration if two or more are installed in large / long bunkers.

“With budgets on so many courses having to be stretched further and further, anything that can help save time and money, yet also appeal to those that count, has to be a good thing,” said Jeremy

“Golfers like it because the playability of the course in adverse conditions is hugely improved, Management like it because of its cost effectiveness and minimal disruption to play when being installed, and the peace of mind it provides and Greenkeepers like it because it’s quick and easy to install and it relieves them from the mundane task of pumping bunkers.”

Designed to be fitted on the surface when you need it to be, for maximum efficiency, but hidden away sub surface, when you don’t and with the ability to change from surface to subsurface or vice versa taking less than a couple of minutes giving great control over flooding even in the worst rain events.

For further information visit www.bunkerplug.com and www.mjabbott.co.uk

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A week to remember

This year’s Open was a huge success, in no small part, due to the great work of the home greenkeeping team and the BIGGA Open Support Team.
The 2011 Open Championship will go down as one of the most memorable of recent times, as it produced a hugely popular winner.

Darren Clarke, son of green-keeper, Godfrey Clarke, must have looked at his younger Northern Irish compatriots, Graeme McDowell and Rory McIlroy, who’d won the US Open Championship in successive years, and thought, “That could have been me.”

He’d been one of the world’s top golfers for many years but slipped down the rankings in recent times and many experts were writing him off.

However, now he, G Mac and Rory will be forever linked as a threesome and will enjoy legendary status in a country which loves its golf.

The other heroes of the week were the green staff, led by Graham Royden, who had his Head Greenkeeper position confirmed as permanent a couple of weeks before the Championship.

Graham was calm and in control throughout, comfortable in the knowledge that his own team, and the BIGGA Open Support Team, could handle everything that could be thrown at them. While the weather was not perfect, with high winds and torrential rain on occasions, play was never interrupted and the condition of the course was universally praised.

Indeed, Charl Schwartzel, the Masters Champion, told Graham that his were the best greens he’d played on all year. Think about that for a moment.

Graham had such confidence in the work of the Support Team that by the weekend he was employing two members of it to double cut the 17th and 18th greens, while they had also prepared the putting and chipping greens for the entire week.

The team also prepared all 104 bunkers at the start of each day, as well as on dummy runs conducted on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Overall in Championship play the team raked 1016 bunkers which were found.

The team has now raked 17,958 bunkers since statistics began being recorded in 1995 (see below).

Congratulations to Graham Royden and his team and the entire BIGGA Open Support Team. It was a job well done.