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Talent in abundance as we approach a big year

The talent within the BIGGA membership is ably showcased in this month’s issue of Greenkeeper International. Not only do we feature the winners of this year’s BIGGA Photographic Competition, but also show what you can achieve with hard work, a lot of study, and a scholarship courtesy of Ransomes Jacobsen.

Paul Hope’s stunning picture of a four legged visitor to High Post Golf Club demonstrates everything that is good about golf and greenkeeping – golf and nature operating in perfect harmony. It is a wonderful photograph and one which would grace the portfolio of any professional photographer. It just goes to highlight the skills that are inherent within the BIGGA membership. And in Paul’s case it’s not a one-off because he was runner-up in last year’s Photographic Competition.

He is just one of a number of BIGGA members who take their hobby seriously and use the wonderful opportunities afforded to them thanks to working early mornings in photogenic surroundings. Congratulations to Paul, to runner-up Adam Griewe and third placed Gareth Amwell, and to all the others.

I am sure that you will be impressed by the quality of the 2012 BIGGA Calendar.

Jacobsen, through the Scholarship Scheme received from the R&A, BIGGA and Ransomes Jacobsen, through the Scholarship Scheme which has seen over £1,25,000 in grants given to BIGGA members to pay course fees. That financial support, from within the industry itself, is absolutely tremendous and certainly something you would find in no other. When people ask what they get for their BIGGA membership perhaps the opportunity to have a quick word with James would make it a little clearer. You can read James’ story this month.

It seems quite remarkable that yet another year has whizzed by and that we are about to enter 2012. When London was awarded the Olympics it did seem a long, long way away. But here we are on the threshold of what should be a momentous year for sport in Britain. That said, a look in the mirror should be more than enough to confirm that nearly six and a half years has passed since that Olympic announcement in July, 2005.

Hopefully, the feel good factor generated by a home-Olympics will be infectious and golf, not an Olympic sport for another four years, will benefit from increased participation and clubs will get a much needed boost to their coffers. I hope you all have a relaxing and enjoyable break over the holiday period.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Greenkeeper International
The official monthly magazine of the British and International Greenkeepers Association

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Welcome from the editor

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I am sure that you will be impressed by the quality of the 2012 BIGGA Calendar. James Hutchinson, of Fairhaven Golf Club, caught the education bug a few years ago and what he has achieved since has been quite remarkable.

He has balanced his home and professional life at Fairhaven, with the considerable demands of studying for a Foundation Degree at Myerscough College as well as becoming the Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year for 2010, in the STRI Golf Environment Awards. James is first to admit that he would not have been able to move forward with his education if it had not been for the help he received from the RLA, BIGGA and Ransomes Jacobsen, through the Scholarship Scheme which has seen over £125,000 in grants given to BIGGA members to pay course fees. That financial support, from within the industry itself, is absolutely tremendous and certainly not something you would find in many other places.

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Harrogate Week is always a special occasion for all those who attend, but Harrogate Week 2012 will be particularly so, as it not only celebrates the 25th anniversary of BIGGA itself, but also 100 years since the first surviving recorded minutes of BIGGA’s oldest ancestor – the very first greenkeeping Association. Both events will be recognised during the week with a Celebration Evening to mark BIGGA’s Silver Jubilee and an exhibition in the Halls to commemorate the centenary of greenkeeping Associations.

The rate of change since 1987, never mind 1912, within the industry has been truly remarkable and Harrogate Week symbolises that. The technology on show during Harrogate 2012 would have had NASA astronauts opened jawed with amazement in 1987, and there is no sign of progress slowing. Whatever the task which is required on the golf course, there will be a boffin in an R&D Department somewhere, looking at ways of making your professional life better or easier. The fruits of their labours to date will be there for all to see in one of the four Halls at Harrogate International Centre, while the world renowned Continue to Learn programme ensures that those who take part are in a position to keep on top of all those industry developments.

It is a combination which has proved a very productive cocktail for all concerned over the years and, coupled with the unique Harrogate atmosphere for the Apres Show, it creates a never to be forgotten occasion for all who attend.

BIGGA’s Quarter Century is a reason to celebrate, writes Scott MacCallum
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24 to 26 January 2012 at the Harrogate International Centre
North Yorkshire, UK

The ultimate turf management exhibition in Europe
The South and South West Regional Conference took place at the new venue of the Oaktree Arena and Conference Centre, Highbridge, with 134 in attendance. The theme for the day was “The Spectrum of Sports Turf Management” with presentations from Cale Bigelow, from Purdue University, in the US, Chris Haspell, from Castle Stuart Golf Links, Huw Morgan, from Ashburnham Golf Club, Craig Richardson, from Bristol City Football Club, and Mark Hunt, from Headland Amenity. The programme gave an insight into the different aspects of managing sports turf and sports facilities. These varied from the diverse requirements of a modern football stadium, to presenting a course for the Scottish Open and the problems which have to be dealt with when adverse weather takes it’s toll. Along with these speakers the Region was pleased to welcome Jim Croston the new BIGGA CEO who spent a little time telling delegates about their Association and the future plans.

June Jones
South West and South Wales Regional Administrator

St Andrews Certified for Sustainability

St Andrews Links has become the first Open Championship venue to achieve the GEO Certified™ seal in recognition of its sustainability commitment and achievements.

St Andrews Links Trust, which manages the seven courses at the Old Course and Castle Course, has operated a sustainability programme for many years and this approach was described by Mike Wood, the accredited verifier, as being “close to defining an ideal model for sustainable management.”

In post GEO verification report the assessor praised the Trust’s commitment to social responsibility and community engagement as well as the eco-friendly manner in which the clubhouses, retail outlets and other facilities are operated.

They said that not only was the Trust maintaining a 600 year heritage as the birthplace of the game, it was a “standard bearer for 21st Century good practice in golf management.”

Injured Golfer Verdict

A golf club has been found 30% liable for an accident which resulted in a golfer losing an eye - the judge found that remaining 70% responsibility belonged to the golfer who ignored the shot which caused the injury.

See Jon Allutt feature elsewhere in this issue “Golfer Loses an Eye. Was the Accident?”

Damages have still to be finalised but a figure of around £500,000 had previously been agreed, and Niddry Castle Golf Club, in West Lothian, was left with a large hole in their budget. Judge Lord Brailsford ruled that the club’s liability was for its failure to erect proper warning signs on the course.

He said the golf club should have erected signs alerting such users to potential hazards. 

The court considered that signs would have been an effective and efficient way to draw the attention of golfers and, moreover, that if such signs had they existed, would have been likely to have been heeded, he said.

He accordingly ruled that the club should pay £120,000 of that.

David Simons, the former castle Golf club, agreed, and Niddry Castle Golf club, had previously been awarded around £400,000 of that.

The court said that the 16th tee was a failure to erect proper warning signs on the course.

The 6th green and the area between the 18th tee or in the rough, as well as that between the 7th tee was a failure to erect proper warning signs on the course.

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**‘STORY OF JCB’ EXHIBITION SET TO GENERATE NEW EXPORT BUSINESS**

The doors have been thrown open to a multi-million pound customer attraction at JCB. The permanent exhibition, called ‘The Story of JCB’, has been developed at JCB’s HQ at Rocester charting the company’s links to industry back to the 1820s.

The exhibition covers 2,500m² of floorspace and includes 14 zones which take the visitor on a journey through time, starting in the 1820s, when the Bamford family were blacksmiths in Uttoxeter through to the present day and JCB’s ECO range of fuel-saving machines.

The exhibition is also populated by 10 of the landmark JCB machines through the ages which had to be craned through the roof as the attraction took shape.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is a giant skeletal model of a JCB JS200 tracked excavator built to scale out of 8mm steel rod and created some of whose work is currently on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The finished artwork took five months to complete, used around one kilometre of steel rod and weighs around two tonnes – a tenth of the weight of the actual machine it represents.

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**EUROPEAN GOLF BODIES TO PROMOTE GROW THE GAME OF GOLF WEBSITE**

A group of Golf organisations which include The European Tour, FREGA, PGA’s of Europe, CMAE, EOCGA, GEIO, EGA and EIGCA, have agreed to expand and promote ‘Grow the Game of Golf’ website.

The aim of the website is to encourage and inspire golf clubs and other golf organisations to help develop the game, particularly at grass roots level.

There are various successful ideas on the website you could acquire for the growth of golf at your golf club.

**New machinery at Bothwell Castle**

Bothwell Castle Golf Club recently signed a six year agreement with local Toro suppliers, Hamilton Brothers Ltd. The deal, worth over £300,000, represents a significant investment in plant and machinery to ensure the course at Bothwell Castle continues to be maintained to the highest standards.

Acting Head Greenkeeper Alasdair McDaid said “I am delighted with the new machinery and thank the club for investing in what I consider to be the best greens equipment in the marketplace.”

The 2011 Club Captain, Andrew Braidwood said “It was very important to get the best equipment but also to get the right deal for the club.”

He went on to thank Hamilton Brothers Ltd for their assistance in securing this agreement.

The Club’s General Manager, Jim Callaghan CCM said that “It is vitally important that the Club continues to invest in its equipment and facilities for the benefit of all its members and their guests. This agreement demonstrates that the Committee and the Club is focused on providing the best possible playing surfaces on its golf course for years to come.”

**Kingsbarns is Golf Course of the Year**

Kingsbarns Golf Links has been voted the Golf Course of the Year at the Golf Tourism Scotland Gold Standard Awards held at the Kingsbarns Golf Links has been voted the Golf Course of the Year for the fourth time, ahead of some of the leading courses in Scotland including Balcomie Links (Crail), the Carnoustie Championship Course, Castle Stuart Golf Links, Graham’s No 2, Macfairhans Dunes, the New Course, St Andrews, North Berwick West Links, Pittenwee, the Old Course St Andrews, the Torrance Course (Fairmont St Andrews), the Alba Course at Turnberry and Western Gailes.

The GTS Gold Standard Awards are the only Scottish golf industry honours to be nominated by, and voted for by the industry itself. GTS members cast their votes online in the various categories.

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As Course Manager, Mark Crossley, said: “We needed a machine that would get around those hard-to-reach areas, and it does just that and more.”

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Deanwood Park GC win Rigby Taylor Pairs Competition

Jim McKenzie Receives MBE

Celtic Manor’s Jim McKenzie looks resplendent in a tartan suit when he visited Buckingham Palace to be presented with his MBE by HRH The Prince of Wales. “It was fitting that it was Prince Charles who made the presentation as I’d met him during the Ryder Cup itself,” said Jim.

He was awarded the honour following last year’s Ryder Cup when he led his team of Celtic Manor staff and volunteer greenkeepers in overcoming the horrendous weather conditions which came close to causing the historic match to be postponed.

Working every available hour the match – one of the most exciting in the Ryder Cup’s history – was concluded on a precedent setting fourth day, with Calvin Montgomerie’s Europe team clinching a narrow victory.

A big thank you must go to Ian Morrison and his team for making everyone feel very welcome at short notice.

Rigby GC took an early lead with a 40 footer on the 1st, but the Deanwood Park team got their heads down and put in a performance worthy of past champions.

BIGGA SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES REGION SPONSOR PLACES TO HARROGATE WEEK 2012

This year’s final of the Rigby Taylor Pairs Competition was contested between Bushing GC and Deanwood Park GC. The teams were blessed with fantastic sunny autumn weather on the day at The Berkshire, which made the course even more pleasurable to play.

It was a very close fought battle and they were all square going to the last but with the threat of extra holes looming David Lyons (left) and John Bowness from Deanwood Park GC (right) won the hole, making them the 2011 Rigby Taylor winners.

Gareth Actesson, Rigby Taylor Area Sales Manager, commented: “A big thank you to everyone who has been involved in this event.”

Chairman’s Word

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

An interesting and challenging year

Many thanks also to the BRIGA members and trade members who delivered presentations at the recent round of Regional seminars and at IOG Scotsturf.

They were all well attended and feedback was excellent from the delegates.

To keep up with all that is going on check the “Events” page on the website.

The judging for the Bernhard and Company sponsored BRIGA Delegation to the GIS show in Las Vegas took place.

Congratulations to the worthy winners and commiserations to the many fine applicants who didn’t make it.

The quality of candidate is tremendous and shows how professional many of our members are in developing their careers.

The L&D department is continuing the review of the CPD scheme, Accreditation programmes and the Master Greenkeeper Award. The aim is to identify the needs of BIGGA.

Many thanks also to the R&A, ESSMA and R&A Golf
Resort of the Year, and Fife was awarded European Golf Destination of the Year.

All fantastic achievements which should help in raising the profile of golf as an important part of our UK economy, and in influencing the tourism sector.

With that in mind, Jim Croston and I were invited to attend the All-Party Parliamentary Gardening and Horticulture Group at the House of Commons, Westminster, by Brian H Donohue MP, at the behest of David Gwyer (Horticulture Trade Association).

Although the focus was on that sector, it gave us an opportunity to build some further networks and see how such events can be used to raise the profile of our industry and try to exert some influence on developing policies which could impact on our industry.

Time will tell, but if you don’t try you will never know!

“We all get very passionate about our golf courses, and this tremendous industry we work in, but its important that we keep it in perspective and realise that our family and friends play the most important part in our lives and we need to get the work/life balance right”

Enjoy the festive season,

Andrew Mellon

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