When I arrived at GC Schmallenberg, two hours from Dusseldorf and not too far from the German-Dutch border, the scene which greeted me was not something you’d expect to see at a typical British members’ club.

Just outside the Club Shop the sister of Christiane Rott, the Club Manager, was leading a couple of the lady members in an exercise class. As the music rang out the three were joined by Norbert Halin, the Chairman of Greens, for some lunges and stretches.

As I say, not something you’d often see at a British club but it is indicative of the less stuffy approach there is to golf in Germany, and in particular GC Schmallenberg.

There is a warm and relaxed approach, which is something Head Greenkeeper, Denis Tweddell, has appreciated since he joined the club at the beginning of March last year.

“Everyone made me incredibly welcome. One of the guys, Charly Hennemann, who is our tree and plant specialist, even decorated our flat for us – he knew him, while he came with us his jeep and trailer when we bought furniture so we could get it home,” said Denis, who made the move to Germany after seven years as Assistant Head Greenkeeper, on the Ailsa Course at Turnberry, having reached a high with the 2009 Open Championship.

“People have done so much to help us settle in. The members have been welcoming and I’ve met up with some other expats.

“Gareth Brenner, Course Manager at GC Hummelbache, has helped me on numerous occasions to settle into my new job and new country, while my friend and ex-workmate at Turnberry, Russell Adams, travels up regularly to visit us here in the mountains.”

Denis Tweddell

There is a warm and relaxed approach there is to golf in Germany, and in particular GC Schmallenberg.

There was almost an understanding amongst the members and the rest of the staff that this was acceptable and it was soon replaced by much improved greens.

The course is on two distinct rines. The front nine was opened in 1989 and is tree-lined and quite tight while the newer nine, opened in 95 is more open and expansive.

“The back nine has finer grasses and the greens are not quite so fast, but tend to fare a bit better, but the older greens were probably not built as well as the new ones and can be quite soft,” said Denis, who had studied German in the 90s, but has seen his ability to speak the language improve significantly over the last 12 months.

“There are not too many English speakers in this area so speaking the language was vital and has helped me integrate much more quickly,” said Denis, who revealed that watching the German version of Come Dine with Me had done much to improve the family’s skills and offer up tips to German behaviour.

Along with the team, Denis has already set about improving the surfaces with some micro-tining and slitting.

“We are planning to use the Graden tractor-mounted scarifier twice this season on the older greens in conjunction with trying the compost teas on all our greens.

“We have increased the frequency and type of aeration and have found the scarred areas an important tool for keeping the surfaces open. We also alternate the scarred rolls with the verti cut units but aim to roll them once a week during the season.”

The biggest project the team has tackled in the time Denis has been at Schmallenberg has been to lengthen the course by adding a new tee to each of the 18 holes.

“When I first arrived, Ted Coffren, our Californian pro, said that the club wanted to lengthen the course with a view to attracting an EDP Tour event and making the course more attractive to the better players in the area,” said Denis, who has already demonstrated his playing prowess by winning several medals at the club and seen his handicap drop to 5.

“The club also benefited from the arrival of Joachim Walter and Richard Feige, the extremely proactive Club President and Vice President who took up their roles just before Denis arrive and whose input has already been invaluable.”

EDP is the German National Tour and one which current World Number 1, Martin Kaymer, won as recently as 2006.

“We walked round the course with the committee, Ted and Norbert, and it was daunting because it soon became apparent that they wanted new tees everywhere and they wanted them done before the end of the season with a view to opening them this April,” said Denis, who never forgets how lucky he was to work with such knowledgeable Course Managers, Head men and greenkeepers at Turnberry and Bonnyno GC where he started his greenkeeping career.

But the club pulled together to make the project a success.

“Norbert knew a guy who had an excavator and he did much of the earth work and heavy moving for us, while we got some hard core from a local farmer, who was a friend of one of our members. On top of that we got topsoil from one of our members who had a construction company and he even delivered it to where we were digging out on the course.

“The work also coincided with a hot drought spell last June so we could use the time we would have spent cutting fairways and a lot more.“

All in all it added significantly to the overall maximum length of the course and created some monster holes. The par 5 603, for example, is uphill and into the prevailing wind is now over 600 yards from the tips, while there are several other holes over 500 yards long, testing

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Denis Tweddell
even the most consistent and long drivers. 

As a result the course has been rated the 10th most challenging in Germany and the toughest in its local region.

Although Denis has spent nine years at one of the top golf venues in the world he has picked up one or two tips since moving to Germany, not least the dew clearing in the morning.

"Here we have a buggy with a rope about 20 metres dragged behind and the buggy does a couple of circuits around the green and the rope removes the dew in record time."

"The driver just jumps out and removes the pin and the whole course can be done in an hour. I can't see a downside to it at all," explained Denis.

Ever progressive, the club, which also boasts an excellent covered driving range, also had plans at an advanced stage to create an additional nine holes on an excellent piece of land close to the newer nine holes.

An architect has produced drawings and there is an agreement in place with the farmer who owns the land to purchase it when the members approve the project.

Despite now having the weapons in terms of length to test the best, the club does not ignore golfers at the other end of the spectrum and has been extremely pro-active in its attempts to attract more people to the game of golf.

"Over 60% of our members are over 50. That is too high, while 23% are between 31 and 50," explained Christiane, who last year set about addressing the problem.

She introduced a series of competitions for beginners, mostly young adults, on the club’s six hole par-3 course lasting over the summer months with free use of clubs and rudimentary lessons.

"We charged 99 euro per team of three and once they had spent some time learning the basics we had a series of competitions – Scramble, Best Drive, Alternate Drive, Individual – held between May and September.

"We gave them free use of the equipment and they could play on the course any time they liked over the period."

"We had barbecues at the prize presentations and everyone had great fun. From the people who played last year we got 10 new members and 10 more are seriously considering joining," she said.

As for dress code, Christiane is keen that nothing is put in the way to prevent new people from taking up the game.

"I have no problem with wearing jeans on the golf course – sorry – and when people ask me what to wear, I say jeans, a polo or a tshirt is ok with me at any time. I love jeans and wear them most days," she revealed.

"Strict dress rules don’t make the game accessible."

Christiane is delighted with the club’s new Head Greenkeeper. "He has created a great team spirit and has brought fun to the job," she said.

While missing life at Turnberry and all his old colleagues, Denis and his new wife, Dawn, and 10-year-old, Logan, have not regretted their move to Germany for one minute and is grateful for all the support he has received.

"We really like the lifestyle. Over here family and hobbies are just as important as jobs and things are a little more relaxed."

It may be relaxed, but you can be sure that Denis will continue to give 100% to ensure that Golfclub Schmallenberg develops along the successful path it has already started.

The Jacobsen Eclipse 322

the only 100% hydraulic-free greens mower available ... anywhere!

Other ‘hybrids’ still use hydraulic motors for propulsion, so when we say no hydraulics, we mean it. Traction, reel drive and lift/lower operations are all electrically driven using either a small petrol or diesel engine running a 48 volt generator. And now there’s an all-electric version using a battery pack. It’s stealth quiet and ideal for greens close to housing or hotel rooms.

For greener operation on your greens, less maintenance and lower operating costs, it has to be the Jacobsen Eclipse 322.

By the way, did we mention ... no hydraulics.
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Code: GKI/05/11/E322
Driving Environmental Performance
A fistful of five
Injurious Weeds

Weeds are simply green plants growing in the wrong place at the wrong time. Thus dandelion is a serious weed of places at the wrong time. Thus plants growing in the wrong habitat are conspicuous by their absence.

The five native species classed as ‘Injurious Weeds’ are common ragwort (Senecio jacobaea), two species of thistle, Cirsium arvense (creeping thistle) and Cirsium vulgare (spor thistle) and two species of broad-leaved dock (Rumex obtusifolius) and curled dock (Rumex crispus). They are proscribed as injurious weeds due to an overwhelming competitive effect on other useful plants in the same environment, including grass plants in professional and amenity turf as well as agricultural grassland. The effect of some weed species, including ragwort, bracken and giant hogweed, may extend beyond these parameters to harm livestock, pets and people, while Japanese knotweed can damage civil infrastructure including concrete and tarmac pavements and roads.

All are invasive in nature if not by definition. They have characteristics and features which are common to most if not all. These include deep-seated sturdy tap roots which allow good survival rates during adverse conditions, including sub-zero winter temperatures and summer droughts. And versatile vegetative reproductive systems making attempts to physically remove them not only futile but counterproductive, because any remaining root and stem fragments generate new plants. All are prolific seed producers. Not everything about these five weeds is bad. As native plants they are important food sources for wildlife including insects, other invertebrates and birds.

Dedicated application and control

Once established and allowed to grow and spread during late spring and early summer these weeds become difficult if not impossible to shift, easily and safely, using standard ‘over the top’ herbicide spraying techniques. Providing these weeds are carefully targeted early in the year, while still at ground level and in a sluggish vegetative state, all can be easily, quickly and safely dispatched by spot applications of total herbicide using hand-held applicators.

These include weed-wipers with rope-wicks dispensing herbicide by direct contact with the leaves and no surface contact between herbicide and the leaf surface, and trigger operated spray applicators placed close to the weed to deliver small exact volumes and doses of herbicide onto the leaf rosettes. Advantages of hand-held applicators include targeted spot application with minimal risk of contamination from spray-run off or spray drift. They are light-weight and easy to carry and easy to use.

Ragwort and spear thistle in particular are two of the earliest growth starters in spring. Following an unusually early period of low temperature-induced dormancy from late November and through December 2010 ragwort responded rapidly to the much milder conditions in January and February 2011. Having survived one of the coldest Decembers on record through December 2010 ragwort emerged essentially unscathed, ragwort and spear thistle were already moving towards growth in February, especially in southern counties. It is quite common to find some or all of these five injurious weeds growing together in the same ground at the same time and in clumped distributions which makes the use of hand-held applicators that more appropriate and easier. Rabbits will generally avoid these weeds, grazing around the leaf rosettes of ragwort and creeping thistle to make them much easier to recognise for spot application in spring.

But once these weeds have grown up through the sward to heights of one metre or more they can only be safely controlled using vehicle drawn ‘weed-wiping’ applicators which apply herbicide by direct contact with the leaves and no accompanying drift.

These applicators deliver the chemical by direct surface to surface contact between herbicide moistened pads and the weed foliage, exploiting significant height differences between these now tall full grown weeds and the grass and other useful plants at soil level.

There is no danger of damage to the grass below from drips or droplet drift which can occur during...
A fistful of five
Injurious Weeds

Dr Terry Mabbett offers some information and advice on dealing with the famous five

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Believe it or not only five plants, and all native species, are prescribed as ‘Injurious Weeds’ under ‘The Weeds Act of 1939 (United Kingdom), while even more notorious weeds are conspicuous by their absence.

The five native species classed as ‘Injurious Weeds’ are common ragwort (Senecio jacobaeus), two species of thistle, Cirsium arvense (creeping thistle) and Cirsium vulgare (spear thistle) and two species of broadleaved dock (Rumex obtusifolius) and curled dock (Rumex crispus). They are proscribed as injurious weeds due to an overwhelming competitive effect on other useful plant species in agricultural and amenity situations through inherently rapid growth rates and prolific rates of reproduction.

All are invasive in nature if not by definition. They have characteristics and features which are common to most if not all. These include deep-seated sturdy tap roots which allow good survival rates during adverse conditions, including sub-zero winter temperatures and summer droughts. And versatile vegetative reproductive systems making attempts to physically remove them not only futile but counterproductive, because any remaining root and stem fragments generate new plants. All are prolific seed producers. Not everything about these five weeds is bad. As native plants they are important food sources for wildlife including insects, other invertebrates and birds.

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Once established and allowed to grow and spread during late spring and early summer these weeds become difficult if not impossible to shift, easily and safely, using standard ‘over the top’ herbicide spraying techniques. Providing these weeds are carefully targeted early in the year, while still at ground level and in a sluggish vegetative state, all can be easily, quickly and safely dispatched by spot applications of total herbicide using hand-held applicators.

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Ragwort and spear thistle in particular are two of the earliest growth starters in spring. Following an unusually early period of low temperature-induced dormancy from late November and through December 2010 ragwort responded rapidly to the much milder conditions in January and February 2011. Having survived one of the coldest Decembers on record with dormancy from late November and into January and February, especially in southern counties. It is quite common to find some or all of these five injurious weeds growing together in the same grass sward at the same time and in clumped distributions which makes the use of hand-held applicators that more appropriate and easier. Rabbits will generally avoid these weeds, grazing around the leaf rosettes of ragwort and creeping thistle to make them much easier to recognise for spot application in spring.

But once these weeds have grown up through the sward to heights of one metre or more they can only be safely controlled using vehicle drawn ‘weed-wiping’ applicators which apply herbicide by direct contact with the leaves and no accompanying drift.

These applicators deliver the chemical by direct surface to surface contact between herbicide moistened pads and the weed foliage, exploiting significant height differences between these now tall full grown weeds and the grass and other useful plants at soil level.

There is no danger of damage to the grass below from drips or droplet drift which can occur during
Creeping thistle and spear thistle are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick ‘getaway’ in spring.

Spines of the creeping thistle are individually less fearsome, but the capacity of this thistle, which has been called the United Kingdom’s ‘worst weed’, to form huge clumps of bristly plants in a matter of weeks more than compensates. Creeping thistle and spear thistle are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick ‘getaway’ in spring. Early spring is the ideal time to hit thistles while they are small and vulnerable, but easy to identify in turf, amenity grassland and on bare ground in their vegetative leaf rosette stage. Wildlife trusts acknowledge the weed status of creeping thistle and spear thistle. However, both are food sources and breeding sites for many non-pest insects, including butterflies and moths, and a major food source for birds like the goldfinch which feeds on the seeds. A discerning landowner can leave some plants in tall stems. The fast spread of ragwort is down to its prolific seed production with 150,000 seeds per plant per season and a germination rate approaching 70 per cent. What’s more, these seeds can lay dormant for up to 20 years. A group of pyrrolidine alkaloids (principally jacobine) in the plant tissue are responsible for ragwort’s toxic effects. These once pyrrolidine alkaloids are absorbed by the gastro-intestinal tract to strike at the very beginnings of metabolism, destroying liver enzymes to cause liver cirrhosis and death. Horses and other equines are especially susceptible to ragwort poisoning. Attempts to cut down flowering ragwort may temporarily hide the problem but make matters worse in the long run. These normally biennial plants simply spring from a perennial rootstock rather than dying after seed set at the end of the second year which occurs in the normal life cycle of a biennial plant. Common ragwort will survive the severest winter thanks to its food-rich tap root resuming growth in spring and flowering during the summer. New seeds are readily formed on cut down ragwort stems when mature to enable them to germinate and take root under the seed bank in the soil. There are essentially two chances to control ragwort effectively with herbicide. Firstly during early spring by treating the leaf rosettes with herbicide dispensed by hand-held operators and subsequently during late summer by using a vehicle drawn weed wiper.

For all its toxic properties there are 30 species of insects and other invertebrates that are totally dependent on ragwort for food. These include solitary bees and wasps, hoverflies, conopid flies which parasitise solitary bees, wasps and butterflies and about 40 noctic moths. Ragwort flowers are major sources of nectar for bees (Pyronia tithonus) and small copper (Lycaena phlaeas) butterflies, and the plant is in sole food plant for the cinnabar moth (Tyria jacobaeae).

Remux in the dock

Broad-leaved dock and curled dock are conundrums, being classed as ‘Injurious Weeds’ on the one hand but reached for instinctively with the other as a leaf poultice to soothe nettle stings and rashes. Though lacking the spines and prickles of thistles or the poisonous chemicals found in ragwort, docks still have a ‘toxic’ effect on grassland. Their overwhelming competitive advantage from fast growth rates and overarching shading by huge broad leaves quickly dominates all other herbaceous plants (grasses and broadleaves). Left to their own devices docks will develop into huge clumps drastically reducing the area of serviceable amenity grassland and productive pasture. Docks spread quickly on patches of bare ground and within thin swaths especially in shaded areas and on nutrient enriched sites. Docks allowed to flower will generate a high seed load remaining dormant for decades. Horses and other Equines are especially susceptible to dock poisoning. Application timing for docks in relation to the advent of spring can be critical. During the exceptionally late spring of 2010 advice was put out to delay the treatment of docks with herbicide for up to 4 weeks. Cold damaged and stressed dock plants, indicated by reddening of the foliage, do not show optimum uptake and translocation of herbicide.

To the ideal target for hand-held weed wipers to give the best and most easily achieved coverage of herbicide across the broad flat leaves.
Creeping thistle and spear thistle are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick “getaway” in spring.

**Thistles with no ‘tears’**

Creeping thistle and spear thistle are strong competitive weeds establishing and sprouting quickly to smother grasses. Both possess leaf spines and the thistle thistle are especially sharp and unpleasant.

All grassland is at risk and once established this pair of thistles is notoriously difficult to shift. Non-agricultural environments, especially sensitive grassland is one of most important areas affected by these species of thistle.

The copious quantities of seed produced by creeping thistle are largely non-viable but this thistle more than compensates with a highly efficient system of vegetative propagation. Creeping underground stems (rhizomes) spread quickly to form huge clumps of bristly plants in a matter of weeks. Once established this pair of thistles can lay dormant for up to 20 years.

A group of pyrrolizidine alkaloids (pedemodana alkaloids) in the plant tissue are responsible for ragwort and docks spreading. These plants are prone to pyrrolizidine alkaloids are absorbed by the gastro-intestinal tract to strike at the very ‘heart’ of animal metabolism, destroying liver enzymes to cause liver cirrhosis and death. Horses and other equines are especially susceptible to ragwort poisoning.

Attempts to cut down flowering ragwort may temporarily hide the problem but make matters worse in the long run. These normally biennial plants simply switch to a perennial life style rather than dying after seed set at the end of the second year which occurs in the normal life cycle of a biennial plant. Common ragwort will survive and spread from seed if it is disturbed. docks, still mature and ripen thus adding to the seed bank in the soil.

There are essentially two chances to control ragwort. Firstly during early spring by treating the leaf rosettes with herbicide or chemical control with herbicide. Secondly during late summer, autumn and on bare ground in their vegetative stage. docks are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick ‘getaway’ in spring.

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**Stinging nettles**

Nettles are not the sort of weeds that greenkeepers and grounds- men want to see in sports turf and amenity grassland. From small seedlings in late winter they will grow at a phenomenal rate and by May are good sized seedlings ready to disturb. Spear thistle in particular, as its common name suggests, has leaves ending in long, hard and fencious spines that impart painful jolts to any sports person making contact.

It was almost certainly spear thistle which thwarted a night-time attack by the Danes at the Battle of Largs in Scotland when cries of pain from the attackers awoke the slumbering Scots.

Spines of the creeping thistle are individually less fearsome, but the capacity of this thistle, which has been called the Unleaved thistle’s worst weed, to form huge clumps of bristly plants in a matter of weeks more than compensates. Creeping thistle and spear thistle are robust perennials with underground food storage organs (rhizomes and tap roots, respectively) for successful overwintering with a quick ‘getaway’ in spring.

Early spring is the ideal time to hit thistles while they are young, relatively small and vulnerable, but easy to identify in turf, amenity grassland and on bare ground in their vegetative leaf rosette stage.

Wildlife trusts acknowledge the weed status of creeping thistle and spear thistle. However, both are food sources and breeding sites for many non-pest insects, including butterflies and moths, and a major food source for birds like the goldfinch which feeds on the seed heads of flowering creeping thistles (Cirsium species) are food plants for animals including ladybird (Coccinella septempunctata) and painted lady (Vanessa cardui) butterflies while ragwort (Senecio jacobaea) bears flowers - small copper (Lycaena phlaeas), bullfinch. Rumex species are food plants for the small copper butterfly (Lycaena phlaeas) and painted lady (Vanessa cardui) butterflies while ragwort (Senecio jacobaea) is the only effective and sustainable option. Conventional spraying with the total systemic herbicides required to kill these robust and stubborn perennial weeds may cause target chemical weed management.

**Broadleaved docks and curled docks**

Broadleaved dock and curled dock are comundrums, being classed as ‘injurious Weeds’ on the one hand but reached for instictively with the other as a leaf poultice to soothe nettle stings and rashes. Though lacking the spines and prickles of thistles or the poisonous chemicals found in ragwort, docks still have a ‘toxic’ effect on grassland. Their overwhelming competitive advantage from fast growth rates and overarching shading by huge broad leaves quickly dominates all adjacent grass plants and valued wild flowers in amenity swards. docks spread quickly on patches of bare ground and within thin swaths especially in shaded areas and on nutrient enriched sites. docks all allowed to flower will generate a high seed load remaining dormant for decades.

Horses and other equines are especially susceptible to rackwort poisoning.

Wildlife trusts acknowledge the weed status of broad-leaved dock and curled dock but also their role as native plantings providing food sources and breeding sites for non-pest insects. Dock seed is relished by moths and butterflies and especially the bumblebee. Rumex species are food plants for the small copper butterfly (Lycaena phlaeas) and painted lady (Vanessa cardui) butterflies while ragwort (Senecio jacobaea) is the only effective and sustainable option. Conventional spraying with the total systemic herbicides required to kill these robust and stubborn perennial weeds may cause target chemical weed management.

**Chemical control with herbicide**

Chemical control with herbicide is the only effective and sustainable option. Conventional spraying with the total systemic herbicides required to kill these robust and stubborn perennial weeds may cause target chemical weed management. Contamination occurs through spray droplet drift and spray liquid run off which may damage and kill adjacent grass plants and valued wild flowers in amenity swards. docks, still mature and ripen thus adding to the seed bank in the soil.

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For all its toxic properties there are 30 species of insects and other invertebrates that are dependent on ragwort for food. These include solitary bees and wasps, hoverflies, conopid flies which parasitise solitary bees and wasps, butterflies and about 40 noctic moths. Ragwort flowers are major sources of nectar for butterflies (Parnassius tintinnabulum) and small copper (Lycaena phlaeas) butterflies, and the plant is a little food plant for the cinnabar moth (Tyria jacobaeae).

**Rumex in the dock**

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The series aimed at celebrating the great work done by dealerships up and down the country.

To nominate a GI Dealer of the Month contact Scott Maccallum with your reasons why the dealer of your choice should be featured...

Email scott@bigga.co.uk

Franchises
- Toro
- Hayter
- Kioti
- Yanmar
- GreenTek
- Campey
- Hardi
- among others.

Location:
JSM Ltd
Sheffield Park, Mid-Guildess.

Employees and size of premises:
- 20 employees
- 1.5-acre site
- 10,000 sq ft of covered storage, workshop and offices.

Number of service vans: Five.

Brief history of company:
The company was founded in 1985 as a Toro dealership to serve professional grounds machinery users. Our association with the Toro brand has remained unbroken since.

Initially covering the Sussex area, the business has grown over the years to now being active in Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Hants, Berkshire and South London. From an initial staff of just four in 1985 the business has grown over the years, but has remained focused on the professional grounds care markets.

Key services offered:
- Sales, parts, servicing and hire for professional grounds maintenance equipment.
- Specialist services offered:
  - Full complement of training and education services.
  - NISTS-approved test station.
  - Toro irrigation parts agent.
  - Good price contract servicing, extended warranty schemes and financial planning.

How has the dealership changed over the years?
Early on, the business had a very limited range of products to offer its customer base. But now, with manufacturer introductions and a broader range of agencies, we have become a one-stop shop for anyone’s grounds care needs.

As the business has grown we have also been able to do much more with relatively modest staff numbers due to the advancement in business and communication systems.

What would you like to see changed?
We would like to see the advancement in IT and communication systems to continue the progress we’ve made in providing a seamless flow of data and support between customer, dealer and manufacturer as possible. Advancements in fleet management software, such as Toro’s ‘myTurf’, should particularly help us to achieve this.

Do you support customers who have in-house service facilities (i.e. OEM parts supply)?
Yes, we support with OEM parts, parts training, integrated look-up systems, technical training and technical data.

Major customers:
Our wide customer base includes:
- Wentworth Club
- All England Lawn Tennis Club
- Home of the RFU
- Fulham Football Club
- The Oval
- Guards Polo Club
- Charterhouse School
- Gatwick Airport
- Royal Ascot
- Kent Landscape Services.

To nominate a GI Dealer of the Month contact Scott MacCallum with your reasons why the dealer of your choice should be featured...

Email scott@bigga.co.uk

BIGGA Regional Conferences
All forthcoming conferences are as follows...

REGION | DATE | LOCATION | CONTACT
---|---|---|---
South East | 16 November 2011 | Stock Brook Manor Golf Club, Essex | Clive Osgood, RA, 01737 819543
South West & South East | 17 November 2011 | Oaktree Arena, Highbridge, Somerset | Jane Jones, RA, 01454 270850
Scotland | 6 March 2012 | Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline | Peter Boyd, RA, 0141 616 3440

PICTURED OUTSIDE THEIR PREMIUMS ARE, FROM LEFT, JSM’S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEVE VOIGTS, MANAGING DIRECTOR DAVID COLE, PARTS MANAGER PETER BIDDLECOMBE AND SERVICE MANAGER JOHN DAVIES.
DEALER OF THE MONTH

JSM LTD

The series aimed at celebrating the great work done by dealerships up and down the country

Location:
Sheffield Park, Mid-sussex.

Employees and size of premises:
20 employees, 1.5-acre site with 10,000 sq ft of covered storage, workshop and offices.

Number of service vans: Five.

Brief history of company:
The company was founded in 1985 as a Toro dealership to serve professional grounds machinery users. Our association with the Toro brand has remained unbroken since.

Initially covering the Sussex area, the business has grown over the years to now being active in Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Herts, Berkshire and South London. From an initial staff of just four in 1985 the business has grown over the years, but has remained focused on the professional grounds care markets.

Key services offered:
Sales, parts, servicing and hire for professional grounds maintenance equipment.

Specialist services offered:
Full compliment of training and education services, NSTS-approved test station, Toro irrigation parts agent, fixed-price-contract servicing, extended warranty schemes and financial planning.

How has the dealership changed over the years?
Early on, the business had a very limited range of products to offer its customer base.
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Do you support customers who have in-house service facilities (i.e. OEM parts supply)?
Yes, we support with ODM parts, parts training, integrated look-up systems, technical training and technical data.

Major customers:
Our wide customer base/type includes: Wentworth Club; All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon; home of the RFU, Twickenham Stadium; Fulham Football Club; The Oval; Guards Polo Club; Charterhouse School in Surrey; Gatwick Airport; Royal Ascot Racecourse; and Kent Landscape Services.

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Franchises
• Toro, Hayter, Kioti, Yanmar, GreenTec, Campey and Hardi among others

BIGGA Regional Conferences
All forthcoming conferences are as follows...

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South East | 16 November 2011 | Stock Brook Manor Golf Club, Essex | Clive Osgood, RA, 01737 819343
South West & South East | 17 November 2011 | Oaktree Arena, Highbridge, Somerset | Jane Jones, RA, 01454 270850
Scotland | 6 March 2012 | Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline | Peter Boyd, RA, 0141 616 3440

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Energy crops are plants grown to provide fuel for heating and electricity generation and are able to deliver high yields from relatively small areas. These crops could fit into the footprint of an existing golf course, providing a sustainable, low carbon and low cost energy source and diversifying the habitat available for wildlife.

Much of the cost of establishing energy crops could be offset through grant funding under the Energy Crops Scheme and the recently launched Renewable Heating Incentive could turn energy crops into cash crops for golf clubs.

The Energy Crops Scheme

The Energy Crops Scheme is a Government funded scheme, available through Natural England, which provides funding for establishing energy crops. The funding literature and website is mainly aimed at farm owners but Natural England does provide funding to other land users and have provided funding to golf clubs under the scheme. The Energy Crops Scheme is open to new applicants until 2013.

Grant funding covers the cost of establishing either miscanthus or short rotation coppice (SRC), either 50% funding for 'actual' costs i.e. the cost of materials and contractors and/or 'on-farm' costs, i.e. use of a golf club’s own labour and machinery. Funding can cover ground preparation, fencing, purchase of planting stock, planting, weed control and first year cutback of trees.

A few points to bear in mind:
• The grant is available in England only and land must be registered with the Rural Land Registry in order to receive funding (land not currently registered can be registered).
• The overall area of land available for planting must be over three hectares and individual planting blocks must be at least 0.5 hectare in size. Planting can be phased over three years.
• There must be a buffer zone of unplanted land alongside public rights of way, residential housing and utilities infrastructure. These areas of open ground may also be included within the grant funding.
• Applications are subject to an environmental assessment, including a site visit, and golf clubs would need to sign a five-year agreement with Natural England.

The Renewable Heat Incentive

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is a new payment scheme announced by the Government in March 2011. Under the RHI, golf clubs could earn an income of up to 7.6 pence for every kWh of heat produced by renewable methods, including the burning of sustainably sourced wood fuel and miscanthus.

This income is index linked (i.e. will increase with inflation) and is guaranteed for 20 years. The money payable through the RHI should help to offset the establishment costs of growing energy crops in the first few years of the scheme and making buying wood fuel competitive with fossil fuels in terms of cost.

Biomass under the RHI:
• The RHI is available in England, Scotland and Wales.
• Ofgem will administer the RHI scheme and will deal with applications, accreditation of installations, incentive payments and monitoring compliance.
• Payments vary depending on the size of biomass boilers and are tiered so that the first units of energy generated each year will receive higher payments than subsequent units.
• Boilers and installers must be certified under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS).
• Any business which installed a biomass boiler after July 15, 2009 will be eligible for the RHI. Boilers installed before this date will not be eligible.

Short rotation coppice

The crop

Short rotation coppice (SRC) is an established traditional method of harvesting biomass energy over short timescales. All broadleaf native tree species will coppice well but willow and poplar have the highest biomass yields.

Willow, poplar, ash, silver birch, and sweet chestnut species are all eligible for grant funding under the Energy Crops Scheme.

Trees in SRC are densely planted at around 15,000 cuttings per hectare and are planted using specialist machinery that cuts the tree rods, inserts them into the soil and firms the soil in one pass. Rods are planted in spring and trees can reach four metres in height in the first year of growth.