Charterhouse and Kubota, joint sponsors of BIGGA’s premier golf event, the BIGGA National Championship 2012

The BIGGA National Championship 2012, once again, comes to you courtesy of Charterhouse Turf Machinery and Kubota, who have a long history of working together. This amalgamation of Power Source and Implements is enhanced in their joint sponsoring of BIGGA’s premier golf event.

Kubota has been established for more than 30 years in the UK. Their world-class excellence ensures they are at the forefront of innovation and one of the leading manufacturers of tractors, groundcare equipment, utility vehicles and mini-excavators.

The company is constituted into three main product categories of Engines; Construction Equipment; Tractor & Groundcare. Earlier this year the company completed a restructuring of their management team with the creation of a new role for Dave Roberts. Dave left the company in 2010 after 21 years of service and has been enticed back to head up Kubota’s three product sectors as Sales and Marketing General Manager.

In addition he has direct responsibility for the tractor division, which has a Kubota Compact Tractor to perfectly suit every need. The ‘V’ series covers the range 12 to 32HP, with the ‘L’ series and ‘STV’ series covering the range 32 to 41HP. They deliver exceptional power output, a host of performance enhancing features, uninterrupted reliability, durability, and economy. They exhibit consistent performance in all seasons over all applications, both in confined and open areas.

With optimum reliability, proficient fuel economy and outstanding versatility, the Kubota range of ‘F’ series out-front rotary mowers and ‘U’ series ride-on cut and collect Mowers are of particular interest to Greenkeepers. In particular, the G26 mower finds application in mowing high presentation areas like the front of golf club houses and entrances. These areas demand a clean, clip-free finish and for this purpose a ride-on rotary mower with an efficient collection system is the ideal solution. Kubota’s G26 is the ultimate grass cutting machine for this type of work, with its 29.5hp Kubota three-cylinder ETVCS water-cooled diesel engine and 20.5 litre fuel tank. It offers exceptional power and efficiency for demanding mowing operations. The 1.37m (54in) deck offers great productivity for open spaces and larger lawns. The G26 is simplicity itself for any member of staff. Featuring a single pedal operated HST transmission with a top speed of 17kph, it can travel quickly between mowing sites whilst the hydrostatic power steering optimises performance to reduce fatigue during a long day’s operation.

Joint sponsor, Charterhouse Turf Machinery, has also been providing Grounds Professionals with Redexim maintenance machinery for the last 30 years. Probably best known for its iconic Verti-Drain™ aerator, the company’s range is constantly evolving and expanding to not only offer aerators, but also top dressers, overseeders and scarifiers for natural turf.

The company has been developing maintenance equipment for synthetic surfaces during the past few years and has one of the best ranges on the market. Together, they suit the needs of all Greenkeepers from pedestrian units to treat small areas economically, to PTO driven commercial units for larger spaces.

The newest product to come out of the Redexim stable is the Verti-Drain 1517, larger sister to the 1513. It is a high speed Verti-Drain offering increased output to ease busy workloads.

With a working width of 1.76m, it can handle depths of up to 50mm (6’), but weighs in at only 250kg so a small tractor from 28hp is man enough to pull it. It is small enough to find an application on golf courses where it can reduce the need for expensive drainage works and offers uninterrupted year-round play without resorting to temporary greens.

West Country Steel Buildings is an authorised distributor of Capital Steel Buildings, the leading producer of cold rolled steel buildings in the UK and Ireland. Working together means that we are able to provide the very best cost-effective buildings designed specifically to suit your needs.

We offer a fantastic service and clever design solutions. Over the past twenty years we have built up a fantastic reputation of excellence and professionalism with a fine personal touch.

Our expert team have a wealth of experience in both the design and construction processes and this comes with a proven track record.

Mention that you saw us in Greenkeeper International magazine when you contact us.

Call us today on 01633 782 684 or 07980 818 364 to speak to a member of our team.
Open all hours

The BIGGA Open Support Team 2012 worked tirelessly from dusk until dawn at a rain-soaked Royal Lytham & St Annes GC in July. Here are the snapshots and memories from another joyous occasion, writes Steve Castle.
Open all hours

The BIGGA Open Support Team 2012 worked tirelessly from dusk until dawn at a rain-soaked Royal Lytham & St Annes GC in July. Here are the snapshots and memories from another joyous occasion, writes Steve Castle.

Thirty minutes after Ernie Els remarkably captured the most coveted prize in golf, a large matching red polo-shirted group attracted bemused glances as they posed for photographs on the 18th fairway close to the spot where Adam Scott’s dreams finally crumbled.

The BIGGA Open Support Team 2012 amazed by a challenging week knew they had played an important part in the success of the event whilst many lasting friendships had been cemented.

As The 141st Open ended, the exhausted but happy group reflected on their vital role in preparing the bunkers each morning: a mammoth task as the famous old links boasts over 200 traps, match raking, divoting and attending to the practice areas. As the week progressed and the weather finally improved they were able to enjoy the sight of the sun rising across the course during one of their regular 5am starts, something they will treasure for the rest of their days.

The home greenkeeping team led superbly by Paul Smith consisted of his own regular crew of twelve, a further twenty or so local volunteers, four John Deere staff and six more provided by the R&A from other Open Championship venues. FULLY EMBrACED THE BIGGA TEAM, INCLUDING GREENKEEPERS FROM ACROSS THE UK AND AS FAR AFIELD AS Australia AND America.

The advance BIGGA team assembled on the Monday to begin bunker preparation from Tuesday onwards. The remainder were all present and correct in time for the traditional Wednesday afternoon start and their first sight of the glorious links during the R&A Briefing by Grant Maio, Director of Rules.

The course was already damp on the second day. The advance BIGGA team had been cemented.

Whilst many lasting friendships were forged during one of their regular five a.m. starts, something they will treasure for the rest of their days.

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The course was already damp after a horrendous summer, which has left greenkeepers cursing the absolute limit after hours of torrential rain throughout Thursday night and into Friday morning. Head Greenkeeper Paul Smith described watching the rain clatter down as “probably the worst feeling of my life” – but the tireless work of his extended team and the BIGGA boys and girls ensured that miraculously, play began on time on the second day.

The walkways between holes were at times reminiscent of a particularly damp Glastonbury, and the incredibly high water table meant that some of the bunkers retained standing water despite everyone’s best efforts, illustrating quite how much rain had fallen. But there was not a murmur of complaint from the players, showing what a professional job had been done.

They then trod the same meticulously prepared fairways as Tiger Woods, Tom Watson and Rory McIlroy, springing into action when a hook or slice found the sand. In McIlroy, springing into action when a hook or slice found the sand. In

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A BIG thanks to the BIGGA brigade

The Open Championship was a true example of team work across the board. I saw nothing but positive energy from the ofﬁcial support staff at all times in the morning when faced with dealing with very wet bunker conditions. The BIGGA support team did a sterling job of preparing the course and maintaining it to ensure that it was in the condition required.

The course that the spectators and competitors were met with on the Friday morning was not the same course that the Home and BIGGA team faced. Several intensive bands of rain fell early Friday morning, which had not been forecast. It felt as if the weather gods had conspired against us.

Our spirits had truly been dampened and although feeling numb, the whole team rallied with pumps, pipes, generators and squeegees to clear the course and the tented village of standing water.

Despite the weather, the course stood up extremely well, and stayed true to its true condition and true nature throughout.

My thanks go to all those volunteers who assisted the Club and Club in preparing the course under difﬁcult conditions. A job well done by all the team!

Paul Smith, Head Greenkeeper, Royal Lytham & St Annes GC

To the team

Thank you for everything that you did to assist at Royal Lytham & St Annes.

It was not an easy week, and it was reassuring to know that we had the back-up of the BIGGA team, and great that I could make an emergency call at 4am and get an immediate response!

The team did a great job in the morning in very difﬁcult circumstances with, Firstly, wet bunkers and then wettish bunker conditions drying over.

I hope that things will be less complicated at Muirfield next year.

Grant Moir, R&A

BIGGA Open Support Team 2012


Front Row: Andrew Unwin, Kevan Glass, Paul Young, Miles Todd, Mark Fry, Bryn Blair, Miles Wood, Richard Duffy, Tracey Maddison, Sandra Raper, Philip Graham.
A BIG thanks to the BIGGA brigade

The Open Championship was a true example of team work across the board. It was nothing but praise for the effort and support of all who played their part in the running when faced with dealing with variety of bunker conditions. The BIGGA support team did a sterling job of preparing the bunkers each morning, which was a difficult task under the circumstances.

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Our spirits had truly been dampened and although feeling numb, the whole team rallied with pumps, pipes, generators and squeegees to clear the course and the tented village of standing water.

Despite the weather, the course stood up extremely well, and stayed true to its traditional layout at Hoylake.

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Open Support 2012 Team 2012

To the team

Thank you for everything that you did to assist at Royal Lytham & St Annes.

It was not an easy week, and it was reassuring to know that we had the back-up of the BIGGA team, and great that I could make an emergency call at 4am and get an immediate response!

The team did a great job in the many rain-affected conditions and dealt with the situation professionally.

I hope that things will be less complicated at Muirfield next year.

Grant Moir, R&A

BIGGA Open Support Team 2012


Second Row: Jason Brooks, Graham Blum, Geoffrey Beausach, Matthew Hutchinson, Ben Scrivener, Robert Hill, Andrew Stingley, Robber, Bruce Hicks, Tom Woods, Tony Smith, Chris Sealey, (Kneeling Down) - Billy Merritt, John Wells MG, Steve Mason, Douglas McIntosh, Mark Brooks, Robert Sandfleisch, Brian Hunter, Scott Thompson, Richard Jenkins, Steve Cordero, Scott Sullivan, John Geddes, Jim Crearton

Front Row: Andrew Usis, Kevin Glass, Paul Young, Miles Todd, Mark Fry, Bever Blair, Miles Wood, Richard Duffy, Tracey Middlinen, Sanda Rager, Philip Graham
Steve Mason, from Stocks Golf Club, knew he was in for a busy opening morning when his three players all found separate bunkers with their opening tee shots on the notorious par three first – and he went on to rake 17 in total, the highest of the day.

He said: “You have to be on your toes, and I knew it would be a long day from the first three shots. But that’s what we’ve three there, and it was an honour not only to walk alongside the players but also to work on The Open course.”

Some enjoyed unexpected surprises, like Miles Todd from Rhuddlan Golf Club. He was expecting a quiet final day when he joined Andres Romero and Chad Campbell’s early morning pairing – so imagine his amazement when footballer Carlos Tevez suddenly appeared as caddie for his compatriot.

Miles said: “I thought it looked like him and I went up and had a little chat with him. He was a really nice bloke and loves his golf.

“From very few spectators at the start, word quickly got round and it had become a circus by the back nine. People were calling out to him and there were photographers running around everywhere, members swarming after every hole.

“I’m not sure Chad Campbell was too happy about it. Tevez kept standing behind him as he played and at one point Romero had to stop Tevez from slamming a club into the bag as Campbell was taking a shot!”

Paul Griffiths of Seaford Golf Club added: “It’s been an amazing experience. It’s my first Open and it’s been out of this world. People would pay thousands to experience this.

“It’s really hard work and everyone finishes the week absolutely shattered. But I enjoyed it so much. I might tell the lads at the club it was rubbish then I’ll get to go next year too!”

John Kernaghan from Chipping Sodbury Golf Club was given the honour of accompanying odds-on favourite Adam Scott up and down the fairways on the final day, and raked the final bunker of the tournament on the 18th where the luckless Aussie allowed the Claret Jug to slip from his grasp.

The tournament ended with Paul Smith personally thanking the team for their terrific efforts, a sentiment that was echoed by Chief Executive Jim Croxton.

See you at Muirfield 2013!”
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See you at Muirfield 2013!
The annual Toro Student of the Year Award, now in its 24th year, offers student greenkeepers the opportunity to expand their experience by meeting and competing with the best.

One lucky winner of this annual award will soon be heading to the USA on an all-expenses-paid study trip of a lifetime, thanks to BIGGA’s Gold Key Sponsor, Toro.

Acknowledged as the highlight of the student greenkeeper’s year, the winner will receive an eight-week trip to the United States, starting next January, that includes a six-week study course at the University of Massachusetts and trips to visit the GCSAA’s Golf Industry Show in San Diego and Toro’s Californian base.

Two runners-up will receive an expenses-paid trip to the Continue to Learn Education programme at BTME 2013 in Harrogate, next January.

The judges interviewed 29 students greenkeepers during a series of local interviews and had the tough job of selecting only six candidates to progress to the National Finals being held at BIGGA House on Sunday 16th and Monday 17th September.

One of the final six pictured, here, the incredible opportunity to follow in Matthew Perks’ footsteps to become the 24th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.

The final five finalists will arrive at Adwick Manor on Sunday 16th September and will join the judges and BIGGA staff for an informal dinner. Monday 17th September sees the finalists being provided with a written task to complete during the day and attending a formal interview in front of a panel of four judges who represent both Toro and BIGGA.

Following final deliberations by the judges the 2012 winner and two runners-up will be selected. The announcement of the winner and runners-up will take place at 5pm. Following a photo shoot, the day concludes with an evening of celebrations, including a meal at an Italian restaurant and a game of tenpin bowling.

To be eligible for this award in the future, you should be a greenkeeping student studying for a qualification, up to Level Three. Entrants are minimised by their course tutor, with their entry sanctioned by their college or training provider.

Our thanks go to all those who entered the 2012 Award and who continue to make this Award a flagship event of the greening-keeping calendar.

Toro Student of the Year 2012

The national final

The finalists for the annual Toro Student of the Year competition, held at BIGGA House, have now been chosen. Those lucky enough to make the cut are revealed by our new L&D resident, Stuart Green...

Name: Stuart Imeson
Age: 20
Golf Club: Dunstanburgh Golf Club
Position: Head Greenkeeper
College: Newcastle College

Stuart joined Dunstanburgh Golf Club when he left school, after undertaking his work experience he felt this was the career he wanted to follow. After completing his Level 2, the Head Greenkeeper left and Stuart took the opportunity to occupy about the vacant position. The offer took a risk and Stuart has now been in the role for two years and is relishing the challenge.

Stuart is currently studying for his Level 3 and wants to continue on to the Level 4 at Newcastle College. Stuart has a hand-up of 20 and enjoys football.

Name: Thomas Flavell
Age: 23
Golf Club: Lingdale Golf Club
Position: Greenkeeper
College: Myerscough College

Thomas began greenkeeping at Lingdale Golf Club in 2007, as an apprentice, following in his father’s footsteps. He is currently undertaking his Level 2 and is wanting to progress onto the Foundation Degree.

He is also very much interested in golf course architecture. Tom is a talented golfer, with a handicap of 2. He won the scratch competition at The Leicestershire Golf Club and has represented his county.

The golf club uses Thomas’s golf knowledge to provide a golfer’s opinion on the roll of the greens, as part of the weekly course rating.

Name: Christopher Watson
Age: 18
Golf Club: Peterculter Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Elmwod College

Chris got his passion for greenkeeping after spending his work experience at the golf club. He went back after leaving school, in 2010, to work during the summer, before taking on as a full-time apprentice later that year. Whilst at Elmwod, Chris received the BIGGA Scottish Level 2 Award.

Chris has recently taken up golf and is slowly improving. His other passions are Scouts and sailing, where in 2011 he was on the lead boat of the Tall Ships, which left Greenock.

Name: Peter Thompson
Age: 25
Golf Club: Sunningdale Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Oaklands College

Peter has been in greenkeeping for five years and is currently working towards his Level 3 Diploma. Peter started greenkeeping at Old Fold Manor in 2007, and later went further developing his skills at Sunningdale, under Course Manager, Murray Long.

Out of work, Peter holds a season ticket for Manchester United and is a very keen cook. He did not follow his current career path he would have trained as a chef.

Name: Aaron Launchbury
Age: 27
Golf Club: North Foreland Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Hadlow College

Aaron came to greenkeeping later in life after a career in the print industry and as a pasing up and down. Aaron joined North Foreland Golf Club as an apprentice and hasn’t looked back, completing his Level 2 in twelve months.

Aaron has been working closely with his Course Manager, Dan McGrath RE, on the Operation Pollinator project. He created Dan to research design ideas for alternative habitats for pollinating insects.

Name: Neil Irvany
Age: 28
Golf Club: Trevoze Golf & Country Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Duchy College

Neil started greenkeeping at 16, at the Merlin Golf Club, where he completed his Level 2. He is currently working towards his Level 3 at the Duchy College.

Neil took some time out to indulge his other passion of cricket by playing club cricket in Western Australia. He returned to the UK and spent some time working as a landscaper before joining the team at Trevoze Golf & Country Club.

Neil is the club professional at Redruth Cricket Club and has represented Cornwall at Minor Counties level. He also plays golf and has a handicap of 10.
The national final

The finalists for the annual Toro Student of the Year competition, held at BIGGA House, have now been chosen. Those lucky enough to make the cut are revealed by our new L&D resident, Stuart Green:

Name: Stuart Imeson
Age: 20
Golf Club: Dunstanburgh Golf Club
Position: Head Greenkeeper
College: Newcastle College

Stuart joined Dunstanburgh Golf Club as a 16 year old, after undertaking his work experience he felt this was the career he wanted to follow. After completing his Level 2, the Head Greenkeeper left and Stuart took the opportunity to improve his work and reception skills. He then took a risk and Stuart has now been in the role for two years and is reaping the rewards.

Stuart is currently studying for his Level 3 and wants to continue on to the Level 4 at Newcastle College. Stuart has a handicap of 20 and enjoys football.

Name: Christopher Watson
Age: 18
Golf Club: Peterculter Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Elwood College

Chris got his passion for greenkeeping after spending his work experience at the golf club. He went back for his leaving school, in 2010, to work during the summer, before being taken on as a full-time apprentice later that year. Whilst at Elwood, Chris was awarded the BIGGA Scottish Level 2 Award.

Chris has recently taken up golf and is slowly improving. His other passions are Scouting and sailing, where in 2011 he was on the lead boat of the Tall Ships, which left Greenock.

Name: Aaron Launchbury
Age: 27
Golf Club: North Foreland Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Hadlow College

Aaron came to greenkeeping later in life after a career in the print industry and as a passion and side-line. Aaron joined North Foreland Golf Club as an apprentice and hasn’t looked back, completing his Level 2 in twelve months.

Aaron has been working closely with his Course Manager, Dan McGrath MG, on the Operation Pollinator project. He has also researched big ideas for alternative habitats for pollinating insects.

Name: Thomas Flavelle
Age: 23
Golf Club: Lingdale Golf Club
Position: Greenkeeper
College: Myerscough College

Thomas began greenkeeping at Lingdale Golf Club in 2007, as an apprentice, following in his father’s footsteps. He is currently undertaking his Level 3 and is wanting to progress onto the Foundation Degree.

He is also very much interested in golf course architecture. Tom is a talented golfer, with a handicap of 2. He won the scratch competition at The Leicestershire Golf Club and has represented his county.

The golf club uses Thomas’s golf knowledge to provide a golfer’s opinion on the roll of the greens, as part of the weekly course rating.

Name: Peter Thompson
Age: 25
Golf Club: Sunnydale Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Oaklands College

Peter has been in greenkeeping for five years and is currently working towards his Level 2 Diploma. Peter started greenkeeping at Old Fold Manor in 2007, as an apprentice, to further develop his skills at Sunnydale, under Course Manager, Murray Long.

Outside of work, Peter holds a season ticket for Manchester United and is a very keen cook. Had he not followed his current career path, he would have trained as a chef.

Name: Neil Irvany
Age: 28
Golf Club: Trevose Golf & Country Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Duchy College

Neil started greenkeeping at 16, at the Merlin Golf Club, where he completed his Level 2. He is currently working towards his Level 3 at the Duchy College.

Neil took some time out to indulge his other passion of cricket by playing club cricket in Western Australia. He returned to the UK and spent some time working as a landscape before joining the team at Trevose Golf & Country Club.

Neil is the club professional at Redruth Cricket Club and has represented Cornwall at Minor Counties level. He also plays golf and has a handicap of 10.
What is thatch?

This month, GI offers a beginner’s guide to thatch, for those relatively new to greenkeeping. Thatch is all a question of balance, writes Dr Terry Mabbett. A more advanced look at thatch, is featured on pages 44-45.

Thatch is the layer of intermingled and entwined dead and dying grass stems, leaves and roots which accumulates naturally in between the actively growing turf grass plants and the soil beneath. Thatch is a perfectly natural, normal and important part of a sports turf sward but like all things in life and nature it’s all a question of balance.

An appropriately thin layer of thatch creates a safe cushiony surface for sports or playgrounds, while protecting both turf and soil from traffic that can damage grass stems and leaves and compact the soil. Moreover it can insulate turf from rapid changes in soil temperature and moisture to protect against extremes and deliver more uniform growth. However, once thatch exceeds the optimum in depth and density all sorts of downsides will come into play and cause serious long term problems.

Effect of thatch on turf quality and resilience

Thatch has a marked effect on the quality of sports turf. A too thick thatch layer restricts air movement in the sward, and ability of water, nutrients and other applied materials to reach the grass root zone. Now unable to access oxygen and water and nutrients turf grass plants will readily root in the thatch itself to obtain these essential things for growth. Turf grass with roots restricted to the thatch layer becomes very susceptible and prone to drought stress and once it has dried out becomes very difficult to re-wet.

Even when the thatch stays moist other equally serious problems may arise. This dead layer of turf grass (and weed) material, is a natural reservoir for usually dormant fungi but when provided with the right conditions of temperature and humidity will ‘step up to the plate’ and become aggressive disease causing pathogens.