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Looking forward to 2013

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Never has it been more important for Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to be able to effectively put across facts and figures in a way that is not seen as making excuses, and also to work with their employers to find ways of ensuring there is some revenue generation possible.

It is challenges just like this that has led BIGGA to endorse the Future Turf Managers Initiative that is being funded by Jacobsen (more details on page nine).

This initiative recognises that there is so much more to being a Turf Manager of any kind than agronomic knowledge.

The Initiative is looking to identify those with the desire and fundamental skills to make a career in the field of Turf Management and supplement those skills with high quality management training and mentoring by senior Course Managers who have themselves made the journey from apprentice greenkeeper.

Many of you will have followed, as I did, the recent debates on the BIGGA Bulletin Boards about Soil Microbiology and Compost Tea programmes.

The threads generated over 7,000 views and at times opinions were heated. The crux of the debate was the search for solid, scientific proof that the biological approach does benefit the turf so that a Course Manager has suitable grounds for asking their employer to invest in such a programme.

In this month’s edition we feature a Course Manager in the SW (page 28) who has put his faith in the approach and like many is delighted with the results.

Next month and beyond we intend to continue the theme, we will feature scientific research and follow up information from the proponents of Compost Teas and the nay-sayers where available.

I would like to congratulate Alan Kite (page 16) on his extraordinary feat of 50 years’ service at the same golf club and wish him a relaxing and enjoyable retirement.

May I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Harrogate for BTME 2013.
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The Initiative compliments our own Assistant Greenkeeper Development Programme, which has begun so successfully these last few weeks.

We genuinely believe, as do Jacobsen, that investing now in the future success of our membership is good for the golf industry and for the Association.

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An 8-page look ahead to BTME 2013

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DECEMBER 2012
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During the recent Scottish Board meeting held at Terraces Hotel, Stirling, Andy O’Hara from Leven Links took over Chairmanship from Stuart Taylor. At the same time, Jim Paton was selected as Vice Chairman.

Andy O’Hara said: “I was delighted to hand over to Stuart as Chair, and look forward to serving him and the Board for the rest of the year.”

Stuart Taylor said: “I am delighted to have Andy as Chair and look forward to working with him to continue to grow BIGGA in Scotland.”

O’Hara added: “I am honoured to have been elected as Chair and look forward to serving the Scottish region as chairman. I will look forward to the association advancing in stature and professionalism over the coming years as responsibility seems to be in good safe hands.”

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GRAHAM WOOD

It is with deep regret that we have received the news of Graham Wood’s death. Graham was a long-time member of BIGGA and had served the association in various roles.

The news of his death came as a shock to everyone who knew him. Graham was a dedicated and hardworking individual who always put the needs of the association first.

Graham was a much-loved member of the BIGGA family and will be deeply missed by all those who knew him. He was a true friend and colleague to many in the turf industry.

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Graham Wood, a much-loved member of BIGGA.

“Graham was well respected throughout the turf industry, and will be missed by many.”

During his tenure, Graham was instrumental in driving the association forward and was a key figure in its growth and development.

Graham Wood was a true professional and will be greatly missed by the turf industry. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.”

BIGGA volunteers are once again on hand to help hedge MacKay and his team at The Wentworth Club for the BMW PGA Championship between May 23-26 2013. Assistance will be required for any period of time during the tournament – from all four days to just one day. The last two days will feature bunker raking.

It’s a great chance to see at first hand the preparation for this European Tour flagship event, which will be held on the West Course. All assistance will be greatly appreciated.

For more information please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator at cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk or call Clive on 07841 948410 or 01737 819343.

Golf is a sport of mind, body and soul where we attempt to utilise all our senses to try and outwit the little white ball at our feet. But how many of you are aware of the golfers who manage to excel at the game we love without having all the attributed five senses?

I am referring to deaf golf and the English Deaf Golf team have just competed in the World Championships in Japan. One of the stars of the English team was Kent section regular Michael Roberts, a 29-year-old greenkeeper at Knole Park Golf Club in Sevenoaks, Kent.

Michael (shown right) lost his hearing having contracted meningitis when only eight months old but it never stood in his way of forging a superb ability to play golf.

Having been introduced to the game by his father at the age of eleven, Michael quickly realised his potential and joined his local club to compete in their regular competitions.

In order to raise vital funds to represent his country Michael approached the Course Manager at Knole Park, Gavin Kyle, to see if he could earn a wage by carrying out work on the course. Gavin was only too happy to get Michael out divoting the fairways, and he also worked hard to get his handicap down to 5.5.

A couple of years later Michael became a full-time assistant greenkeeper. He relishes the regular in-house training sessions that Gavin organises for his staff.

At these events a ‘bunker’ is brought in and some of his colleagues are now quite proficient at communicating in this fashion to ensure he does not miss out.

It’s fair to say that Michael’s recent trip to Japan wasn’t one of his most successful events.

He told me that the Two Country Club in Japan was one of the toughest courses he had ever played. This was probably compounded by the fact that five members of the English team shared one room in their cottage accommodation in order to keep costs down.

Michael is now firmly focused on raising his game again for the 2014 championships with qualifying next year at the Players Club in Bristol.

As mentioned above all funds have to be raised individually and Michael has planned to complete the “Three Peaks Challenge” to raise much needed sponsorship and he would be very appreciative if his greenkeeping colleagues around the country would visit his ‘just giving’ page to help him and your country’s cause.

For more details please visit www.justgiving.com/englishdeafgolf

Rob Holland

MICHAEL STARS AT DEAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

One of November’s undoubted highlights was the quartet of BIGGA Regional Conferences held across England. All four were extremely successful and well-attended, with a range of highly interesting and engaging speakers speaking to hundreds of members in Leicester, Edinburgh, Thetford and Bristol. Luminaries from across the turf industry gave presentations in a forerunner to the educational output on offer at BTME. Feedback from the conferences has been excellent.

Many thanks to everyone who attended, the speakers and of course the Regional Administrators and staff from BIGGA HQ who organised and supported these events. All who attended and signed the CPD register also received two CPD points – yet another benefit.

Don’t forget we’ve still got the Scottish regional conference to look forward to on Tuesday 5 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. For more information please contact Regional Administrator John Young at johnyoung@bigga.co.uk or on 07776 242120.

Visit www.btme.org.uk and click the Register Now icon

CONFERENCE SUCCESS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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Andy added: “I am honoured to be given the opportunity to represent the Scottish region as chairman. “I follow a long list of my respected peers and feel privileged to be in the company of such greenkeepers.”

“I shall enjoy carrying out the various duties involved and strive to further the associations aims as outlined in our mission statement.”

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**NEW COURSE MANAGER AT HOCKLEY**

Glenn Kirby has been appointed as Golf Course Manager at Hockley GC. Glenn leaves his position as Assistant Courses Manager at The London Club where he spent nine years managing the Nicklaus designed Heritage course. He brings with him nearly 20 years turf management experience gained from some of the top golf courses in England, Europe and America. Glenn said: “Hockley is a fantastic piece of flint architecture on a great downland site. “This coupled with the management and membership’s professional and progressive attitude seemed too good an opportunity to miss, I believe we can do something very special here.”

Marc Dryden, General Manager at Hockley, added: “We are very pleased to have someone of Glenn’s calibre join our team. “I know he will make considerable contributions helping the club work towards its goal of being one of the very best members’ clubs in Hampshire and help place us amongst the very best downland courses in the South of England.”

**FREE MONEY FOR GREENKEEPERS!**

A thrifty bunch of Cornish greenkeepers have claimed money back from the taxman after discovering a loophole online – and you can too.

Graeme Gallimore, Head Greenkeeper at Launceston Golf Club, was browsing Money Saving Expert when he found a page focusing on free uniform tax rebates.

Anyone wearing a work uniform who has to wash, repair and replace it themselves is entitled to a tax rebate.

Graeme and his colleagues filled in a form and received £60 each – well worth applying for.

For full details visit www.moneysavingexpert.com/ reclaim/uniform-tax-rebate.

**HELP AND ADVICE AVAILABLE TO BIGGA MEMBERS**

In conjunction with BIGGA, York Wealth Management, Financial advisers, now operates a free e mail financial helpline. Simply e mail admin@yorkfm.co.uk with your financial question. We can help you with any issues to do with money. Be sure to enter in the e mail header FREE BIGGA MEMBER FINANCIAL HELP.

**HELPLINE**

The stress and debt helpline has been revamped and is now the 'Lifestyle Counselling Helpline & Online Support Service'.

There is a new telephone number – 0844 770 1036 – and a new online service. All members and BIGGA staff can access this at www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst - both username and password are BIGGA.

It also features in the Members area of the BIGGA website under 'Member Services'.

**BTME is back**

for its 24th year at the HIC, 22-24 January 2013

Visit www.btme.org.uk and click the Register Now icon

**BIGGA ENENDORS JACOBSEN FUTURE TURF MANAGERS INITIATIVE**

Some of the most experienced and high profile course managers in the golf industry have signed up to BIGGA and Jacobsen’s new scheme to train and mentor the greenkeeping stars of the future.

The Jacobsen Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI) will target the next generation of greenkeepers who demonstrate the ability and drive to become leaders of their profession in the future.

A maximum of 20 students will be selected for FTMI in any one year to attend a three-day residential course in the early part of the year and then be mentored throughout by a high profile course manager.

BIGGA’s Assistants Development Programme (ADP) has been rolled out across its five UK regions giving delegates in each region an insight into the key skills they require to move up the greenkeeping career ladder.

The ADP programme includes the ‘So You Want to be Promoted’ seminars where staff have already begun featuring presentations by the likes of Murray Long of Sunningdale Golf Club, Stuart Yarrow of Lynn Golf Club and Rob Hogarth of Remedy Oak Golf Club on subjects ranging from people skills to communication to interview skills and CV preparation.

The annual residential course will include hotel accommodation, all meals, half-day workshops presented by the various mentors and Ransomes Jacobsen staff, off-site visits and a round of golf on the RJ National par three course.

A lunch and presentation of certificates on the third day will close the programme.

It will also highlight some of the other fantastic opportunities open to BIGGA members such as volunteering at The Open Championship, The Scottish Open and the BMW PGA Championship.

Open to BIGGA members who are first assistants and deputy head greenkeepers, candidates can be nominated for this superb opportunity by their general managers, course managers, head greenkeepers and staff at BIGGA HQ.

Candidates will be selected by a panel from BIGGA and Jacobsen, and they will be looking for greenkeepers who show initiative, are actively involved in education and have the potential to emulate their mentors and go on to enjoy successful and fulfilling careers.

**HUNT AND HARVEY SCOOPE SURREY BOWL**

After a close fought battle Jason Hunt of Addington Palace GC - a former BIGGA National Champion - and Mark Harvey of Epson GC managed to beat last year’s winner Ian Morrison of the Berkshire GC and Scott McMurray of Wentworth GC in the final of the Surrey Bowl.

A huge thank you to the sponsors Winchester Garden Machinery Ltd, and many thanks to Dave Wyborn and his team at Foxhills Club and Resort for a beautifully prepared course.

**JOHN PHILP’S RETIREMENT MARKED**

Prior to the Scottish Central Section’s AGM there was a presentation to John Philp of Carnoustie to mark his retirement and for thank him for his marvelous efforts in raising the profile of greenkeeping.

John – who was awarded an MHR for his services to the industry – had the 11th hole of the legendary course named in his honour upon his retirement, and at the AGM he was presented with a picture of the 13th hole from the 1999 Open.

Shown above, past chairman Derek Bulson presents the picture to John Philp.

**BIGGA AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of BIGGA will once again be held during BTME on Wednesday 23 January at 5.15pm in the Queen’s Suite at the Harrogate International Centre.

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Chairman’s Word
National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

So – You Want to be Promoted?

November is conference month and I had the great pleasure of attending the Midlands and Northern regional conferences in Leicester and Rotherham respectively.

They were exceptionally well attended and the content was informative, interesting and entertaining. It’s not just the educational aspect of these events that make them so valuable – I always look forward to meeting members old and new. I also attended the BIGGA Midland Team Challenge at Burton on Trent Golf Club.

Gavin Robinson did an excellent job in arranging the sponsors, as did Sandra Raper with the running of the event.

It’s really important that members across the Sections and Regions support these type of events – I’m well aware that everyone is extremely busy but without your support they will simply be unable to continue.

They also couldn’t continue without sponsors – thank you to Toro for providing superb prizes for the winners and also Bearing Transmission and Pneumatics, Inturf, Complete Weed Control and North Staffs Irrigation.

The other main event for me this month was the South Wales Section dinner which was a great night with a considerable number of members in attendance, and an impressive amount of money raised for charity.

Well done to all concerned. We’ve also seen the ‘So You Want to be Promoted’ training and education opportunities which are available now so make the most of them.

At my own Golf Club at Tresside, it’s the autumn leaves which have caused all the nightmares this month and I’m sure it’s been a similar story for many of you.

There have been twice as many leaves as last year and we’ve had the additional problem of localised wet spots which we’ve needed to drain.

We’ve also had too much rain again throughout autumn. It really feels like we’ve only had about three days of good weather this year - the promised Indian Summer never materialised did it?

BTME is now firmly at the forefront of everyone’s minds and for anyone still unsure about the logistical details, this issue has all the information you could ever prepared for what I’m sure will be another hugely successful event. BTME offers so many educational opportunities - and places for the seminars and workshops are going fast so book now!

All that remains is for me to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Roll on 2013. Season’s Greetings

Tony.

Contact details
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tony.smith48@ntlworld.com
07988 838956