GREENKEEPERS HELP THE HEROES

Four intrepid greenkeepers recently completed a unique challenge as they walked over 130 miles from coast to coast – while pushing hand mowers!

Gutty Stuart Yarwood, Eddie Ainsworth, Tim Johnson and Gordon Irvine amazed onlookers as they ‘knowled’ three Ranoomes Jacobsons pedestrian machines from Liverpool to Hull over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The idea, the brainchild of Tim, Greenkeeper at Wilsaw Golf Club, has (at the last count) raised almost £2,000 for Help for Heroes and you can still donate at www.bmycharity.com/TimJohnson.

The group, plus two non-greenkeepers, battled steep hills in the Yorkshire Dales, terrible weather and even mechanical problems to complete the challenge in an impressive four days.

They began at Liverpool docks and pushed the mowers – christened ‘Trish 1’, ‘Trish 2’ and ‘Trish 3’ – to Manchester on the first day.

The next day was one of the toughest as they ‘mowed’ three Ransomes Jacobsen pedestrian machines from Manchester to Hull over 130 miles from coast to coast…while pushing minesweepers.

Four intrepid greenkeepers...

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On the next day of the two we had to contend with long, steep hills. Fusilier enough, going up wasn’t a problem because you get the momentum going with the machine – it was going down them that was the worst because you’re pushing a dead weight down a hill.

Towards the end through the Wolds we had some great focal points and when we saw the Humbers Bridge we thought we’d done it. However, it was still 15 miles away which meant five more hours of pain.

He added that the highlight was the camaraderie that developed between the gutty lads – who didn’t all know each other prior to the challenge.

He said: “You get by on Ibuprofen and adrenaline, but at any one time there will be someone who’s struggling so you need to pick them up.

Failure’s not an option, so even though you’re in pain you don’t think about it because you don’t want to affect morale. I had no idea how emotional it was all going to be.

“Ultimately, we were pushing hand mowers. You think it’s tough but we wanted to raise money for people who are pushing mowers.”

The lads would like to thank Tim’s dad Stuart who shadowed them and helped them immensely during the challenge, and also sponsors Symbio, Rigby Taylor, British Seed Houses, Prestige Garden Services, Ranoomes Jacobsons and Banks Amenity. They were also hugely grateful for the support along the way of Lynd, Wilsaw and Avro Golf Clubs plus Chris Shepherd and Tracey Maddison.

Watch this space for the lads’ next bizarre challenge next summer!

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Re-alert for Chalara ash dieback disease

Following the initial alert on Chalara ash dieback in the last issue of Greenkeeper International, the disease has since been found at several different locations around the country.

The initial wide-area environment outbreak in Leicestershire was subsequently identified as Birstall Park and Ride near Leicester, where 654 trees were uprooted and destroyed. Suspect cases at plant nurseries in Surrey and Yorkshire have now been confirmed, while an additional outbreak in the grounds of South Yorkshire College has also been reported.

However, the most serious outbreak of disease to date is in trees planted during 2009 in woodland managed by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) at Knockmount, 2km north of Kinlochwin in Renfrewshire to the west of Glasgow. The 200 hectare site has 700 of mixed broadleaves including 58,000 ash plants that will now be dug up and destroyed.

This is a particularly big blow against any hope of eradicating the disease and could well signal the end of the common ash tree as a British native tree. This is a fast spreading disease and with so many common ash trees in the wider environment the chances of further spread over the next year (2009-2010) is extremely high. There is no reason to suspect that the fungus and disease will behave any differently here to what has already been done in Europe. Up to 90 per cent of Denmark’s common ash trees are infected and almost all are expected to die.

At least five years too late the Forestry Commission has been finalising a rapid pest risk assessment which will enable the necessary immediate evidence to inform immediate action against this disease. This will be followed by a public consultation exercise on the rapid risk assessment. All of this will take time as well as the time elapsing during its presentation in Brussels for consideration by the EU. In the meantime the causative fungus (Chalara fraxinea) remains an unregulated pathogen in the EU and could enter the country through the ports of Belgium, France, Germany and Denmark, where the disease is known to exist. The disease is also known to exist in Portugal, and is currently under consideration in the Far East. The disease is also known to exist in Portugal, and is currently under consideration in the Far East.

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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPORTS TURF ENTHUSIASTIS

Young people interested in careers in golf grounds and sports turf management are being invited to take up once-in-a-lifetime internships in the United States, and be paid too! IEPUK Ltd, in partnership with an American sponsor, Worldwide International Student Exchange (WISE), has launched a national recruitment campaign offering 300 internships at a range of PGA-level golf courses on the East Coast starting from Florida in the south and as far north as New York.

Successful applicants need to be 18-30 years old and will fly out to the US next spring to spend up to 10 months learning everything they wish to do so.

The internships at a range of PGA-level golf courses will help applicants gain work experience in the sector. Responsibilities will include managing grounds, cleaning and maintaining golf course equipment and preparation for tournaments. Accommodation is included plus a monthly stipend of $1100 will be paid. A full, clean driver’s license is essential and the use of a shared vehicle comes as part of the package.

Programme and J1 visa criteria need to be met and fees are applicable. Successful applicants will need to pay for their own flights. IEPUK offers full support throughout the application and interview process and during the placement.

To find out more call Emily Baines on 01572 823934, email Emily@iepuk.com or visit www.iepuk.com

I was particularly taken by the knowledge, passion and enthusiasm of all the finalists

Pre-registration is now open at www.btme.org.uk; sign up now to avoid the queues. Personally, I can’t wait for my first BTME as chair-man and I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

On the course, we had a little bit of a dry period in early September which I hope you also enjoyed. We were able to cut the whole course twice a week until the rain came again in late September, and myself and all the team at Teeside have been working extremely hard to return it to the pristine condition it should be in.

It really has been a dreadful few months weather-wise – the only positive is that the ponds and lakes are full to the brim!

One of the main issues I’ve been concentrating on in the first weeks of my chairmanship is communications. I want people to shout about BIGGA and the myriad benefits we offer our members. We need to encourage the Sections and Regions to talk to us and tell us what’s going on. We’ve made the first steps on this mission but there is still more to be done in promoting the association.

I’m going to be visiting as many Sections as is practically possible over the next few months. But, if you’ve got any issues whatsoever, don’t hesitate to call me on 07988 838956 or email tony.smith48@ntlworld.com
Seminar Pre-booking for BIGGA Members

Due to the popularity of the Seminar programme in January 2012, some BIGGA members were left disappointed when they were unable to secure some of the seminars. To help prevent this happening in the future, we are introducing a seminar pre-booking system, available for BIGGA members only. The pre-booking system will run as follows:

- 70 seminar vouchers will be available for each of the Continue to Learn Seminars, held in the Queen’s Suite on Tuesday 23 January.
- These events will be advertised as ‘You Want to be Promoted – Essential Skills for your Career Development’ and will initially be free of charge and are open to Assistant and First Assistant members of BIGGA.
- The first event will be the Northern Region’s, to be held at Lymm GC on Wednesday 24 October starting at 4pm. For further details and news of other forthcoming events around the country, check the events page of the BIGGA website for details.

BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

Supported by Ramsden Jacobsen, the fee for the ESG scholarship has been awarded to:

Phillip Worth - Foundation Degree in Sportsturf (online)

BIGGA Membership

The membership team reflect on current news and affairs affecting you, the BIGGA member.

Continue to Learn at BTME 2013

The Seminar Pre-booking for BTME 2013 education programme has been launched with this issue of Greenkeeper International and it features the full line-up of education events.

Continue to Learn at BTME 2013 is rolling out in a happy note! It means 100 days until Christmas – but coming down and it’s less than a ticket there is no guarantee of a seat. The remaining seats will be available to all visitors on a first come, first serve basis.

You will be able to request semi-

naut vouchers by completing the application form in the Continue to Learn brochure, by logging into the members area of the website and booking via the Events page or by contacting the L&D Department.

We hope that you will be cour-

teous when pre-booking by only selecting the seminars that you have particular interest in seeing.

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2012

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2012 Final took place at BIGGA House on 16 and 17 September. Following a very close contest, the title this year went to Thomas Flavelle from Lingdale Golf Club representing Myerscough College.

Thomas is the 24th Student Greenkeeper to be awarded the title. He is now looking forward to his experiences in the USA at the Winter Turf School held at the University of Massachusetts and visits to both the Toro Headquar-

ters and the Golf Industry Show in San Diego.

The runners-up were: Chris-

opher Watson from Peter Matthew Golf Club representing Elmswood College and Peter Thompson from Sunningdale Golf Club representa-

ting Oaklands College. Both will be attending Continue to Learn at BTME 2013 in Harrogate in January.

My congratulations go to all of the finalists. It was a close contest and a challenge for the judges to select the winner and runners-up.

Assistants Development Seminar

Last month we ran a successful training event at BIGGA House, for the Course Managers who will be presenting the pilot Assistant Development seminars.

These events will be advertised as: ‘Do You Want to be Promoted – Essential Skills for Your Career Development’ and will initially be free of charge and are open to Assistant and First Assistant members of BIGGA.

The funding provided...
Continue to Learn at BTME 2013

The Continue to Learn at BTME 2013 education programme has been launched with this issue of Greenkeeper International and it features the full line-up of education events.

With four days of workshops, seminars, the new ‘Focus On’ sessions and the ‘Turf Managers’ Conference’, there is something for everyone visiting BTME. The education programme will commence on Sunday 20 January and will run until Wednesday 23 January.

A full list of education events is available on www.bigga.org.uk (with an online booking facility) and on www.hagratte.org.uk.

Seminar Pre-booking for BIGGA Members

Due to the popularity of the Seminar programme in January 2012, some BIGGA members were left disappointed when they were unable to see some of the seminars. To help prevent this happening in the future, we are introducing a seminar pre-booking system, available for BIGGA members only. The pre-booking system will run as follows:

70 seminar vouchers will be available for each of the Continue to Learn Seminars, held in the Queen’s Suite on Tuesday 21 January and Wednesday 22 January. BIGGA members can request a seminar voucher for any of the Seminars listed. The seminar voucher must be exchanged for a seminar ticket in the Queen’s Suite at Harrogate International Centre least one hour prior to the start time of the pre- booked seminar. If the voucher is not exchanged for a ticket there is no guarantee of a seat. The remaining seats will be available to all visitors on a first come, first serve basis.

You will be able to request seminar vouchers by completing the application form in the Continue to Learn brochure, by logging into the members area of the website and booking via the Events page or by contacting the L&D Department.

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BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

Supported by Rainmakers Jacobson and the Green Speed Foundation, the BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships have been awarded to:

Philip Worth – Foundation Degree in Sports turf (online)

BTME 2013 REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN – AVOID THE QUEUE!

BTME (The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition) is back for its 24th year at the Harrogate International Centre on 22-24 January 2013. You can now apply for your free entry to BTME 2013 by visiting the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk click on the BTME banner at the top of the page and select REGISTER NOW!

BTME 2013 is shaping up to be another must-attend event, with many exhibitors having already booked their spaces in advance. The countdown starts here with the opening of registration.

Widely regarded as Europe’s leading showcase for turf and groundcare professionals and buyers, BTME offers a fantastic opportunity to browse, buy and seek advice from over a hundred of the top manufacturers and service providers across the world, so don’t miss out!

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Calling all members in the Northern, South East and South West Regions, a Regional Conference will be held in your region during November. Details are:

Northern Region - November 7th, Phoenix Golf Club, Rothenham, ideally accessible on the A631 from both Rotherham and Sheffield and within 1 mile of M1 Junctions 33 and 34.

Contact Sandra Raper Tel: 07866 369696

Midland Region, November 6th Forest Hill Golf Club, Leicester (with may access from Markfield Lane, Forest Hill Golf Club & Country Club is less than 3 miles from the A50, 5 miles from M1 ,JD22 south bound and only 4 miles from M1 J12a north bound. For Sat Nav purposes only please use Le0 9PH). Contact Sandra Raper Tel: 07866 369696

South East Region, November 14th, The Oakey Group, Oakley Club, (From London & the South East – From the M25 exit at junction 28 onto the A12 Follow to north of Ipswich and then take the A1094 Local signposting will take you into Thorpeness. Post code for SAT NAV: IP16 4N)

Contact Jane Jones Tel: 01454 270855 or Mobile: 07848 948110

For more information contact the Regional Administrators. The Regional Conferences are a great opportunity of meeting other greenkeepers, exchanging information and learning something in the process, many people, mostly volunteers have gone to a lot of time and trouble to make sure these Regional Conferences happen, please, if you can support them.

Section AGM’s

It’s getting to that time of year again when Section AGM’s and Section Education and Golf Events are happening. It is keeping up to date with all the dates of the Section Events and then log in to the BIGGA website (www.bigga.org.uk) or see them listed on the Diary of Events page
Campey Marks 35th Vredo Anniversary with Tribute in Holland

Dutch agricultural, golf fairway and grassland machinery manufacturer Vredo Dodewaard BV marked a double celebration last week; 35 years of manufacturing Vredo Overseers and 25 years of producing slurry equipment.

The anniversary was celebrated with two open days at their HQ in Dodewaard, Holland. The opening day was attended by importers and dealers, followed by a demonstration day for end users and suppliers on the second.

Director Hans de Vree and his team welcomed guests from across the globe. This included a party from UK and European Distributors for Vredo Overseers Campey Turf Care Systems.

Managing Director Richard Campey presented Director of Vredo Hans de Vree and Vredo Export Sales Manager Pieter-Truinus Hoogland with a wonderful gift of a mirror etched with a photograph of a Vredo Overseeder in action at St. Andrews Golf Club in recognition of their achievements.

“We are delighted to be here to celebrate Vredo’s 35th anniversary”, said Richard. “This is a tribute to the enormous dedication and hard work, which has ensured that the Vredo brand is renowned throughout the groundcare industry for innovation, quality and performance. We are proud to be associated with Vredo and look forward to many more years of collaboration.”

Vredo had already started producing the now famous Vredo Overseers in the 1970s. That initial well-designed technology of two sharp discs which cut a V-shaped slit in the ground and precisely places grass seed into it is still a winner today.

The high quality products have enabled Vredo to develop into a professional organisation that thinks purely in terms of quality and performance. They combine modern technology with recognised best practice techniques to meet the exacting demands of the professional groundsman and greenkeeper.

FORCES JOINED

Sheriff Amenity, the specialist amenity division of Agrovista UK Ltd, the leading agronomy specialist, crop protection and product distributor, was delighted to announce an exclusive arrangement which has been agreed with leading sports turf maintenance company Sports Turf Services Ltd.

Mark Parry, head of amenity for Sheriff Amenity, said: “We are delighted that STS have entered into this exclusive arrangement. STS will now supply all contracting services to the golf market in Scotland through Sheriff Amenity.”

Peter Campbell, Managing Director of STS said: “We’re very excited about the future, working with a company of Agrovista’s stature and with such an experienced sales team calling on Golf Courses the length and breadth of Scotland.”

Blinder Bunker Liner Links with Rigby Taylor

Blinder Bunker Liner, the unique system designed to improve the lifespan of bunkers and reduce maintenance costs, to is to be sold by the industry’s largest sales force.

Launched in 2010 Blinder Bunker Liner has already installed bunkers on many golf courses throughout the country, but the new agreement will ensure that the benefits of the system will be highlighted to many more clubs.

“We expect many more sales enquiries to be generated through this exciting new agreement,” said Murray Long, Director of Blinder Bunker Liner.

Speaking on behalf of Rigby Taylor, Managing Director Andrew Robinson, said: “This is a fantastic opportunity for Rigby Taylor and adds a unique system to our product range. Product development has been at the forefront of our company philosophy and we are pleased to be working with Blinder Bunker Liner to offer this solution to bunker maintenance issues.”

John Deere Financial has announced two new finance programmes for UK golf club customers this autumn.

These include a ‘buy now, pay later’ scheme designed to help the cash flow of clubs who may need immediate delivery of new machinery, but who want to wait until next year to pay when their annual membership subscriptions are due.

The second scheme runs from September 2012 to the end of April 2013, with customers making 1 + 1 annual payments at zero percent interest for new golf and turf equipment orders placed with a dealer between now and January 2013.

“Finance is more important than ever for golf courses in the current economic climate,” says John Deere Limited’s turf division sales manager, Joedy Roberts.

Eligible equipment for both programmes includes John Deere walk behind and ride-on cylinder and rotary mowers, compact and utility tractors, turf aerators and spotters, and the full Gator utility vehicle range.

AUTUMN FINANCE DEALS

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What’s your number?

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

Name: Steven Dyne
Company: Invicta Groundcare Equipment Limited
Position: Director/ Salesman

How long have you been in the industry? 17 years

How did you get into it? I did an Agricultural Engineering Apprenticeship and had two or three positions maintaining agricultural and horticultural machinery and this lead me to Golf Club

What other jobs have you done? I’ve been a Greenkeeper and Golf Course Mechanic

What do you like about your current job? My job takes me all over the UK visiting many new areas and meeting many interesting people and there is never a dull moment. It is very satisfying to find the right equipment for customers’ requirements.

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry? I’ve seen Greenkeepers and machinery improve and become more specialised producing higher standards.

What do you like to do in your spare time? I enjoy foreign holidays, visiting historical sites, walking and cycling. I also enjoy cooking, Indian being a current favourite.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time? Continuing to give a personal input to customers requirements but on a wider scale.

Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry? I have been lucky enough to make many friends contacts and customers around the UK and internationally all too numerous to mention.

What do you consider to be your lucky number? As I was born on 7.7.77 at Sevenoaks it has to be 7 continues with this month’s lucky number...

Steven has picked Brian Tolebutt of Tolebutts Associates

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Our regular and random profile of an industry figure continues with this month’s lucky number...
Campey Marks 35th Vredo Anniversary with Tribute in Holland

Dutch agricultural, golf fairway and grassland machinery manufacturer Vredo Dodewaard BV marked a double celebration last week; 35 years of manufacturing Vredo Overseeders and 25 years of producing slurry equipment.

The anniversary was celebrated with two open days at their HQ in Dodewaard, Holland. The opening day was attended by importers and dealers, followed by a demonstration day for end users and suppliers on the second.

Director Hans de Vree and his team welcomed guests from across the globe. This included a party from UK and European Distributors for Vredo Overseeders Campey Turf Care Systems.

Managing Director Richard Campey presented Director of Vredo Hans de Vree and Vredo Export Sales Manager Pieter-Truida Hoogland with a wonderful gift of a mirror etched with a photograph of a Vredo Overseeder in action at St. Andrews Golf Club in recognition of their achievements.

“We are delighted to be here to celebrate Vredo’s 35th anniversary”, said Richard. This is a tribute to the enormous dedication and hard work, which has ensured that the Vredo brand is renowned throughout the grasscare industry for innovation, quality and performance. We are proud to be associated with Vredo and look forward to many more years of collaboration.”

Vredo had already started producing the now famous Vredo Overseeders in the 1970s. That initial well-designed technology of two sharp discs which cut a V-shaped slit in the ground and precisely places grass seed into it is still a winner today.

“The high quality products have enabled Vredo to develop into a professional organisation that thinks purely in terms of quality and performance. They combine modern technology with recognised best practice techniques to meet the exacting demands of the professional groundsman and greenkeeper,” said John Deere Amenity, the specialist amenity division of Agrovista UK Ltd, the leading agronomy specialist, crop protection and product distributor and product distributor and product distributor and product distributor.

Anniversary with tribute in Holland

FORCES JOINED

John Deere Financial has announced two new finance programmes for UK golf club customers this autumn. These include a ‘buy now, pay later’ scheme designed to help cash flow of clubs who may need immediate delivery of new machinery, but who want to wait until next year to pay when their annual membership subscriptions are due.

The second scheme runs from September 2012 to the end of April 2013, with customers making 1 + 1 annual payments at zero percent interest for new golf and turf equipment orders placed with a dealer between now and January 2013.

“Finance is more important than ever for golf courses in the current economic climate,” says John Deere Limited’s turf division sales manager Joedy Ethoem.

Eligible equipment for both programmes includes John Deere walk behind and ride-on cylinder and rotary mowers, compact and utility tractors, turf aerators and sprayers, and the full Gator utility vehicle range.

AUTUMN FINANCE DEALS

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NEW PRODUCTS
The latest products on the market reviewed

JACOBSEN AR250 ROTARY MOWER PROVES ITS WORTH

A Jacobsen AR250 five unit rotary mower has been installed on the 18 hole golf course at Mount Mowbray Hotel and Country Club at Stanton on the Isle of Man. With over 3,500 hours on the clock, the AR250 is used to maintain the semi-rough and surrounds at the 6,295 yard, par 71 course.

Gary Condit is the head greenskeeper and manages a team of tea-time staff, two seasonal staff and a gardener. He has been a member of Jacobsen’s requirement for the past 11 years and has worked in Ireland, China and UK. He has a Foundation degree in Turfgrass Science from Myerscough College. Commenting on the AR250 he said: “We have a huge area of maintained grass, including the grounds of the hotel, so it’s vitally important that we get maximum productivity and reliability from our mowing equipment. And, that’s exactly what we get from the AR250. It’s reliable, quick to set up and the quality of the finish is superb, even when handling large volumes of grass in wet conditions.

“Our 11th hole is adjacent to the hotel, so it’s important that the presentation is always at its best. “The rear rollers on the AR250 have a pleasing striped finish, providing a maintained view from the guests’ bedrooms and hotel restaurant.”

NEXT GEN GOLF CARTS

Next-generation golf cart technology has reached Ryder Cup venue The Celtic Manor Resort, with the news that it is the latest golf club to ‘tag’ its cart fleet with DSG TAG’s GPS tracking devices.

The tags, fitted last month to 20 petrol-driven Club Car carts on The Twenty Ten Course, are designed to help improve pace of play, and to improve the quality of the Twenty Ten experience for customers. Each cart has also been fitted with a DSG TAG ‘TOUCH’ screen along with the GPS tag.

“Golfers on The Twenty Ten Course can now upgrade their cart to a DSG TAG model,” says Golf Operations Manager Matt Barnby. “Buggies are restricted to the cart paths at Celtic Manor, but our new ‘TOUCH’ screens give golfers an exact yardage while sitting in their cart – removing the need to take two or three clubs onto the fairway.”

DSG TAG has also created geo-zones which control where the Twenty Ten carts can and cannot be driven, including a geo-fence around the entire Celtic Manor Resort estate to ensure that golf buggies are not driven off the property. Golfers are first alerted by a buzzer and on-screen messages, and the cart is automatically immobilised if the warnings are ignored.

Celtic Manor Resort operates a fleet of 140 Club Cars in total.

Wessex ProLine RMX roller mowers have been setting new standards in roller mower design for many years. Now the new triple deck mowers offer the ultimate in wide area mowing, with the significant advantages of cost-efficiency without compromising cut finish quality.

All the features and benefits of the widely used Wessex ProLine RMX range have been incorporated into one triple deck machine, to reduce mowing time and increase output and profitability. Requiring no electro-hydraulics, and with no electric clutches, these professional roller mowers will leave a finish equal to a cylinder mower on fine turf, at a fraction of the cost. The patented transmission system allows wings to be engaged and disengaged whilst in work, without a clutch mechanism. They offer versatility too.

With independent wing control they are operational with one wing lifted and the folding wings can cut gradients from -30° to +30° with the middle deck remaining on the ground.

All the decks have independent flap and the patented linkage system allows the rear deck to follow the direction of travel, to minimise tyre and roller scuffing. Turf tyres are also used for minimum ground compaction and independent suspension is incorporated for smooth road travel.

Each deck on the triple mower has full width rollers at the front and rear that restrict airflow, creating a suction beneath the deck chamber in which the cut grass is sucked up by the blades, leaving a superb quality cut at high speeds.

There are double taper roller bearings in all rollers and they also stripe the grass for a premium finish. The RMX triple mowers are available in 5.6m and 6.8m working widths and, as with all the RMX roller mowers, servicing and maintenance is easy, substantially reducing costs compared to an equivalent width cylinder mower. They will be available for delivery in spring 2013.

ROYAL CROMER GC FIRST TO INSTALL NEW TORO LYNX AND GDC

Royal Cromer Golf Club in Norfolk has become the first course in the UK to fully upgrade to a state-of-the-art Lynx and GDC Toro Irrigation system.

This windswept links course on the North Norfolk coastline struggled to maintain coverage and keep playing surfaces up to par as its previous 35-year-old irrigation system reached the end of its useful life.

Numerous man hours were also being wasted at Royal Cromer as the greenskeeping team hand-watered and nursed the ailing system, while water was lost through leaks and inefficient application.

DSG TAG has also created a brand new Toro Irrigation system, featuring Lynx control system software coupled with Toro’s proven Golf Decoder Controller (GDC) hardware, has brought the 18-hole course bang up to date. In fact, it’s become the first club in the UK to upgrade to an all-new Lynx system and thus enjoy its impressive benefits.

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
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No doubting Thomas

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2012 is Thomas Flavelle, greenkeeper at Lingdale Golf Club in Leicestershire. Steve Castle spoke to him hours after the 23-year-old scooped the award...

Thomas Flavelle tucks into a well-deserved fried breakfast as he attempts to find the words to describe winning the coveted prize. Thomas, and the other six Student of the Year finalists, endured 24 gruelling hours during which they were interviewed by experts, completed an in-depth course report to a tight deadline and faced an agonising wait to see if they had emerged victorious.

"Wow, it was unbelievable, I was shocked. I was aware there were five other lads who were more than capable of winning the award, so it could have gone to anybody. It's nice to come out on top, but they were all so good — they wouldn't have got this far if they weren't — and I know they'll go on and do great things in their careers." Thomas joins an illustrious group of winners who have gone on to work on some of the UK's finest courses.

His attitude and outlook belies his 23 years, and it's immediately clear how seriously he takes both greenkeeping and the sport of golf — he has a handicap of two.

His father Dave is a hugely experienced greenkeeper, and while he's proud to follow in his footsteps he's pleased to be making a name for himself away from his family connections.

"It does help that my dad is a greenkeeper, and it also means that people come up and talk to me instinctively because they know him, but I've never actually worked with him and I'm making my own way in the industry."}

Message from Thomas

"I'd like to thank both my Level Two and Level Three tutors — Kev McAdams and Jonathan Knowles at Myerscough, who have helped me so much. Lingdale Golf Club have given me time and the support I've needed to enter this competition, as well as now having to allow me two months off to go to America! They've also helped me immensely right from the start of my career as an 18 year old.

"I'd also like to thank TORO and BIGGA, and I have to mention Lingdale's Head Greenkeeper Andy McCreral, he's pretty much taught me everything I know since I joined five-and-a-half years ago. He's helped with my college work, preparing for this competition and has always been there for me. He's very realistic and knows what we have to do to make the absolute most of the budget we have at the club. I wouldn't be the greenkeeper I am now without him."

"I always wanted to work outdoors, and I've spent most of my life on golf courses either working or playing."

He studied A-levels but admits he was distracted because he was so intent on becoming a greenkeeper, and after completing his exams he clinched a trainee position at Lingdale. He then took his Level Two qualification and is close to completing Level Three at Myerscough College.

"After I've completed Level Three I'm going to probably look at doing a foundation degree and also consider other options to progress my career."

So why did he enter the competition?

"I used to look at the faces of the winners on the front of the magazine and think 'I'll never, ever be good enough for that.'"

"But, in the last 18 months, I feel I've really progressed as a greenkeeper, and it also means that people come up and talk to me instinctively because they know him, but I've never actually worked with him and I'm making my own way in the industry."

FACTFILE

Name: Thomas Flavelle
Born: Leicester, 2 October 1988
Marital Status: Engaged to Kathryn
Handicap: 2
Hobbies: Golf, shooting, fishing
Favourite Sports Team: Leicester City