**BIGGA Seminars at SALTEX 2012**

**Wednesday 5 September 2012**

at The Grandstand, Royal Windsor Race Course

BIGGA is delighted to have once again, been invited by the IOG to present a series of seminars at SALTEX 2012. This year we will be bringing you some of the greatest hits from the extremely successful **Continue to Learn at BTME 2012**.

10.15 am – 11.15 am

**Managing Winter Kill**  
David Cole, Golf Course/Estate Manager, Loch Lomond Golf Club

In the winter of 2009/10 the greens at Loch Lomond suffered from devastating winter kill. This session will give an insight to the damage that occurred and the precautions that were taken in 2010/11 to prevent similar problems.

11.30 am – 12.30 pm

**From Grazing to Scottish Open Status in Five Years**  
Chris Haspell, Course Manager, Castle Stuart Golf Club

In this session Chris will discuss his experiences of building a links golf course and it’s grow in. He will also describe the journey towards the Scottish Open 2011, the event, the rain and the recovery.

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

**Organic Matter – Friend or Foe**  
Paul Lowe, Technical Sales Manager, Symbio

Measuring organic matter levels is becoming very popular, almost an industry standard procedure. This information can be invaluable to green keepers and grounds men. However, how do we decipher between thatch and organic matter and why it is important to do so. This seminar will discuss the various differences between problematic thatch and beneficial organic matter, the problems with working to a figure, the difference between drainage and percolation rates and how you can turn the thatch to your advantage.

**BIGGA CPD Credits**

0.5 CPD credits are available for each seminar.  
A CPD register will be available at the end of each seminar.

Matt Le Brun is head greenkeeper at the RJ National, a three-hole, GEO certified course on the outskirts of Ipswich. Kevin Marks visited him recently to see how he maintains the course for his employers, Ransomes Jacobsen, a BIGGA Gold Key Sponsor

Matt is the head greenkeeper (and the only greenkeeper) looking after the three-hole golf course at the European headquarters of the international turf maintenance equipment manufacturer, Ransomes Jacobsen. Seasoned greenkeepers may think a three-hole course would literally be a walk in the park - but in just 18 months, Matt has made this job into a vocation. He dreamed of becoming a professional golfer and recorded his first hole in one aged just 11 - but eventually realised he was not quite up to professional standard.

So, he joined Milton Park Golf Club in 2005 as an apprentice professional, and began taking a real interest in the ‘other’ side of the business. “I became more involved and more interested in what was going on around the course,” he said, “so in 2007 I got a job at my home club of Ely. I subsequently achieved NVQ level 2 and obtained my spraying certificates, as well as gaining excellent experience of general greenkeeping duties.

“After a spell at Heijman’s Contractors in the Netherlands I saw this job advertised on BIGGA’s website, and after a rigorous interview process I began my two-year contract in January 2011. “Being a GEO certified golf course puts us in such illustrious company as courses at St Andrews, Celtic Manor, and the Montgomerie in Turkey.”

The RJ National was the brainchild of David Withers, the managing director at Ransomes Jacobsen, now president at Jacobsen in the USA, who wanted to build a small golf course close to the company’s manufacturing facility. He reasoned that if he could produce a course that had different grass species on each of the holes...
and fairways, then it would be ideal for testing the company’s mowers and demonstrating their capabilities to customers and prospects. He also wanted to use the course as an educational and training opportunity for young, aspiring greenkeepers and that’s exactly how it’s turned out.

He persuaded golf architect Howard Swan to design the course and with input from the STRI, who return every six months to evaluate the course, there was a determined effort to construct the course in accordance with the highest environmental principles. The ground was broken in June 2007, seedling commenced in the autumn and it was officially opened in October 2008.

“I inherited a young golf course following a very harsh winter with snow mould damage on the greens,” Matt says. “But I’m not left completely alone to manage the course as I’m mentored by Norman Fenwick, course manager at Ipswich Golf Club.

“His advice has been invaluable. He’s from Wearside with a very direct manner, but he knows the art of greenkeeping inside out. I can honestly say that I would have made more mistakes if it wasn’t for him.”

Matt has relished his unique chance to try out up-to-the-minute equipment on the course.

“One of the great things about this job is the opportunity to use some of the latest and most innovative equipment in the industry. We have a huge demonstration fleet, so I get to use a whole range of machinery from pedestrian mowers to large tractors.

“We have a close working relationship with Wiedenmann and they have been a great help with my aeration programme. After aeration I then top-dressed with pure sand.

“In the first six months I was working long hours to bring the course round, I was scarifying and overseeding and I changed the fertiliser programme reducing the granular and introducing a liquid input.

“Because of the large number of customer visits and product testing I didn’t want to leave granular fertiliser on the course and have it re-distributed by the footfall of visitors, so I changed to liquid applications.

“As part of my job I’ve been able to test the enhancements to the Jacobsen Eclipse 322 hybrid and all-electric riding green mowers. I’ve evaluated all the GreenTek range – vibrating roller, scarifiers and de-thatchers and I tested the new three-wheel drive system, long before it went to market.

“One of the real highlights so far was a product video, filmed here. It involved a remote controlled helicopter filming from various angles.

“I had to drive across the course with the helicopter fast approaching and swooping over my head as I drove by. It was being controlled by a guy some 30 metres away and was quite scary!

“I’d like to think that under my short tenure, the course has become more established and has certainly got a lot more definition.

“Without a doubt, it’s the best place I’ve ever worked; the people are so professional, everyone is willing to help and give their time and there is so much knowledge here.

“From the engineering team, who keep coming up with new and innovative equipment, to the guys who actually build the mowers in the factory, the trainers who have collectively hundreds of years experience and knowledge, and the sales and marketing people who make sure that we keep putting the professional face of the business to the marketplace.”

“It’s very clear that despite only managing a three-hole course, Matt has thrown himself into what is a hugely varied and full-on role. So, if you’re a young and aspiring greenkeeper, still on a college course with the aim of forging a career and you see an advertisement for this post, don’t hesitate; send in your application!”

The types of grass seed at RJ National

- **Tee 1**: Bar 10
  - 40% Chopin strong creeping red fescue
  - 30% Barlexas 2 tall fescue
  - 25% Perinnial Rye grass
  - 15% Viktorka slender creeping red fescue

- **Tee 2**: Bar Platinum
  - 40% Barlexas 2 tall fescue
  - 25% Perinnial Rye grass
  - 15% Viktorka slender creeping red fescue
  - 15% Barpearl slender creeping red fescue

- **Tee 3**: Bar fescue
  - 40% Barpearl slender creeping red fescue
  - 25% Perinnial Rye grass
  - 25% Viktorka slender creeping red fescue
  - 10% Orkney bent grass
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Tee 2: Bar Platinum
30% Barlexas dwarf perennial ryegrass
25% Barmix dwarf creeping red fescue
15% Barlennium dwarf perennial ryegrass
15% Barseed smooth stalked meadow grass

Tee 3: Bar 8
30% Barcrown slender creeping red fescue
25% Barmix dwarf creeping red fescue
15% Barmix smooth stalked meadow grass

Fairways: Bar 5
30% Barking brown top bent
25% Barlennium dwarf perennial ryegrass
10% Bartender smooth stalked meadow grass
10% Barmix smooth stalked meadow grass

Test area/Football pitch: Bar 8
30% Barcrown slender creeping red fescue
10% Bartender smooth stalked meadow grass
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Greens drainage
...a case study

Like many courses formed over a century ago, Robin Hood Golf Club is not blessed with natural free draining soil. Originally designed by Harry Colt and opened in 1893, the club is located just five miles from Birmingham city centre. Although surrounded by housing and a primary school, this parkland style course comprises of around 6,500 yards. Unfortunately, the greens have never been maintained to a high standard and, as a result, have accumulated a greater level of thatch, which led to a worsening surface for over a day, with prolonged rain leading to complete loss of turf.

Planning and Approval

Soon after commencing work as Course Manager, Andy made a presentation to the club, highlighting the problems and recommending a plan of action to address the issue with the greens once and for all.

In Detail

In the summer of 2009, approximately 2000 linear metres of 300mm pipe were installed on soakaway and drop zones. Soil materials were seeded in early autumn. A Clegg hammer reading of 48 was one of the worst ever recorded on the course.

The plan included installing temporary greens, which was completed by the greens staff using the southern area of the site as the alternative. The final cost of phase one was around £25,000.

A temporary greens layout was completed in advance and an AFT machine was purchased for the project. The overall work cost approximately £60,000, of which £40,000 was spent on installing temporary greens. The amount paid for the greens was £4,200 per green. A further £14,000 was spent on installing the permanent greens drainage lines.

Golfers were able to play two greens at the same time and the course was maintained in the same way. The year was divided into three stages of the work, with each stage being divided into two parts. The second part of the plan was to install absorbent concrete. Following various quotations, 180 absorbent concrete pipes were installed by Andy and his team.

A Clegg hammer reading of 48 was one of the worst ever recorded on the course. The greens drainage work was completed in just two years.

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Challenges

With greens drainage in particular being the weakest aspect of this course, a report was commissioned in 2001, during the reconstruction of 18 greens. The club rejected this and for the next eight years, the greens gradually accumulated a greater level of thatch, which led to a worsening drainage situation. By 2009, the club was faced with the dilemma of having a shorter playing season, a decline in membership numbers. It was in desperate need of a solution to a problem that was not going to disappear.

Andy Wood, Course Manager at the Robin Hood Golf Club in Birmingham, chats to Laurence Pithie of Turf Master One about the results of his drainage work on the greens, most of which was completed in 2009/2010.

Greens drainage ...a case study

Like many courses formed over a century ago, Robin Hood Golf Club is not blessed with natural free draining soil. Originally designed by Harry Colt and opened in 1893, the club is located just five miles from Birmingham city centre. Although situated by housing and a primary school, this parkland style course of around 6,500 yards is largely tree lined yet does not feel enclosed. The club is a regular host venue for the Open Championship.

Enter Andy Wood, a young Course Manager with the ambition to take the course forward and a growing reputation from the links of Andy Cole of the STRI who was urging the club to address this concerning situation. The 35-year-old had previously spent six years as a Deputy Head Greenkeeper at The Belfry before managing and improving the Cosby course in Leicestershire for a further seven years.

Andy said: “Soon after arriving and taking various turf and soil samples, it was apparent that drastic action was required. The greens contained a high level of over 60mm, a serious black layer problem, heavy reliance on fungicide applications and a severe drainage problem due to waterlogging of between 20 and 30 days each year.

A Clegg hammer reading of 48 was one of the worst ever recorded by the STRI. Previous efforts to improve drainage and reduce the level of thatch, included the use of the Garden Sand Injector and limited sand banding. Even after just four years of use, sand would remain on the surface for a couple of weeks with prolonged rain leading to complete loss of turf.”

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After the inevitable questions and taking various turf and soil samples, it was decided that drastic action was required. The greens contained a high level of over 60mm of thatch, a serious black layer problem, heavy reliance on fungicide applications and a severe drainage problem due to waterlogging of between 20 and 30 days each year.

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Drainage

Following various quotations, Delta and Sons were appointed to carry out the work. With various ancillary work completed by the contractors, the total cost of the project was around £140,000.

Details are as follows.

“With temporary greens being installed, the main drain lines, sand banding was completed by the contractors, the main line system and into the drainage pipes previously installed. Connecting drains were added to link the greens draining into the main line pipes. The contractors’ sand banks, consisting of large boulders of approximately 20 tons each, were moved to protect the greens during the drainage.”

Andy Wood was given full club approval for the greens staff carrying out the drainage work. Overall the work was completed by the greens staff using a Sand Injector which was purchased for in-house project purposes. In total eight miles of Turf Master One was purchased for this project.

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Sand banding and subsequent top dressings was additional to this.

**Surface reinstatement & ongoing surface improvement**

“Much of the first winter was spent on reinstatement work whereby drainage lines were constantly being raised, levelled or adjusted to ensure a smooth finish. Coring, deep tining and sanding of the areas between the drain lines were completed along with other work which included rolling and brushing in order to bring the greens back into play as soon as possible. By April 2010, this was achieved after a period of between six and seven months of work and recovery”. During 2010, the greens and collars were sand dressed on average every two weeks, applying around 15 tons per application. This amounted to almost 400 tons of sand being applied, followed by around 350 tons in 2011. At around £30 per ton, the cost in top dressing alone was £12,000 and £10,500 respectively for the two years. This year the amount is likely to fall to around 300 tons, reducing further to around 200 tons in 2013.

**Unfinished business**

Work on the 18th green had been deferred since other landscaping work to the bunkers and surrounds were required. Before work started in September 2011, the club purchased an AFT Trencher which would allow the staff to complete all the necessary work in house. Another member of staff was also employed since other project work was planned which included the reconstruction of the 18th green and the inclusion of a small timber edged lake. The 18th green was drained in exactly the same way, the work was completed on time and the green brought back into play earlier this year.

The total cost of the project was around £2,250 inclusive of a connecting drain to the main line. The remaining 18th green not requiring drainage had previously been rebuilt several years earlier to a modern sand based construction. Nearly two years on from the initial work, the difference in playability and greens performance is remarkable. The greens have drained very well with no standing water remaining after heavy rainfall. Following extensive aerifying, top dressing, brushing, grooming and rolling, the greens are firm, smooth and consistent. Stimpmeter readings on the day of this visit averaged ten and this pace has been maintained throughout the summer.

**The club now has a small but healthy waiting list**

Fungicide applications have been reduced to three per year, two being applied as a preventative. In financial terms, there has been a halt in membership loss and the club now has a small but healthy waiting list. Green fee income has improved, although it has stalled somewhat due to the exceptionally wet summer.

One interesting aspect is that a small band of members give some voluntary time on the course for work such as pond clearance, divoting fairways, tree trimming and so on. Pride in their course has been re-established and there is strong desire to make Robin Hood Golf Club one of the best courses in the region.

**Conclusion**

The challenge of finding a workable solution to draining soil based greens will be one that is familiar to many within the industry. Andy Wood accepted this challenge and with the support and investment from the golf club and a great greenkeeping team alongside him, they were able to deliver on time and within budget, while also raising the performance of the greens to a standard not witnessed previously. His enthusiasm and commitment from start to finish, from planning and presentation to implementation and communication has been an outstanding success. Andy hopes that by sharing his experience it will help other clubs faced with a similar challenge.

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**Notes:**

- Sand banding and top dressings were additional to initial work.
- Coring, deep tining, and sanding were completed along with other work.
- Rolling and brushing brought greens back into play.
- Top dressing was applied every two weeks, averaging around 15 tons per application.
- Costs for top dressing in 2010 were £12,000, and in 2011, £10,500.
- AFT Trencher was purchased to complete drainage work in-house.
- Other project work included reconstruction of the 18th green and inclusion of a timber-edged lake.
- Greens have drained very well, with no standing water.
- Stimpmeter readings averaged ten.
- Membership loss halted, with a small but healthy waiting list.
- Green fee income improved, but stalls due to wet summer.
- Voluntary work by members includes pond clearance, divoting, and tree trimming.
- Greens performance improved significantly.
- Andy Wood’s enthusiasm and commitment were outstanding.

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**Images:**

- Greens drained via Wizz wheel trencher.
- Sand slitting and drainage completed before turf is replaced.
- Newly installed drain lines at 2m centres.
- Green profile on 17th.
- Putting on 18th green 10 months after drainage.
Sand banding and subsequent top dressings was additional to this.

**Surface reinstatement & ongoing surface improvement**

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Recent data taken by the STRI supports the transformation in performance and a substantial reduction in Organic Matter content as seen in the green profile photograph. Nutrient input has been lowered from around 130kgs Nitrogen in 2008 to 105kgs in 2011 and less is expected this year, probably ending with applying around 95kgs of Nitrogen per Ha and a lesser amount of Potassium.

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Andy hopes that by sharing his experience it will help other clubs faced with a similar challenge.

“The club now has a small but healthy waiting list”
Last year, Eddie Mills had a severe outbreak of Microdochium (Fusarium) Patch on his Penn A4 & G6 creeping bentgrass greens, which quickly took hold and proved difficult to eradicate.

To prevent disease, Eddie also took advantage of Everris’s Maxximum Protection packages, the first of which combines Banner Maxx broad-spectrum fungicide tank mixed with Greenmaster Liquid for proven results. New research undertaken at STRI and supported by R&D at Everris and Syngenta research facilities has demonstrated that, where there is a risk of Anthracnose attack, a rapid response with fast uptake fertilizer and fungicide inputs can effectively minimise damage from infection. The trials highlighted the synergistic effects of fast-acting Greenmaster Liquid fertilizer and rapid uptake of Banner Maxx. When used together, the results produced excellent control of disease and improvements in turf health and quality.

This autumn, Eddie will follow up with an application of Heritage Maxx systemic strobilurin fungicide and SierraformGT with slow-release nitrogen and potassium plus Silica and trace elements. Data averaged over a 17 month trial period showed that disease reduction was increased by 46% when combined with a SierraformGT programme compared to a fungicide-only treatment.

“Our iTurf programme has helped us set a new standard for our greens this summer, despite us experiencing some of the most challenging weather conditions in the club’s history.”

Eddie Mills, Course Manager, Edgbaston Golf Club

To discover what an iTurf programme can do for your golf course, contact your Everris Technical Area Sales Manager or visit www.everris.co.uk.

For more information about the Maxximum Protection packages, visit everris.co.uk and click on ‘special offers’. Offers end 28th September 2012.

Improved fungicide efficacy vs M.maiolae

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<th>Conventional fertilizer + Fungicide</th>
<th>Slow release fertilizer + Fungicide</th>
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<td>Improved control (%) vs Fungicide only treatment</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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Data averaged over 17 month trial period
Working with his Everris Technical Area Sales Manager, Emma Kilby, they devised an iTurf integrated turf management programme that focused on improving the overall health of the turf and preventing disease. The programme combines SierraformGT® slow-release fertilizer, Greenmaster® Pro-Lite granular fertilizers, Greenmaster® Liquid fertilizers including Blade® biostimulant and Effekt® Iron Fe, and Primo Maxx® plant growth regulator to provide optimum nutrition that meets the grass plant’s requirement, encourages strong, healthy rooting, and helps maintain a healthy rootzone.

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When did you last try a different make of brushcutter? Brushcutters targeting professional users may have grown over the years, but for some brand loyalty sees a reluctance to consider anything other than just one make. Unless you try a range of alternatives, however, you may miss out on the tool that is best suited to your needs.

As with any item of equipment, brushcutter designs have evolved. You may not notice this when you take a casual look at what is on offer but compare similar models made a few years apart and the chances are the newer machine will be more pleasant to operate.

This will typically be down to lower vibration and noise levels, two key improvements that can really help reduce fatigue. Power to weight ratios have steadily improved too, some nominal 25cc units seeming to pack a punch well above what you could have experienced perhaps just a few years back. But do not expect a dramatic improvement over more recent designs; much changed when power units were brought into line with legislative demands made in the 2000s.

Detail developments have of course continued. On loop handle trimmers, not only has the shape of the loop altered on some machines but so too has the material from which they are covered; soft finish grips are increasingly common to help improve comfort. Similarly, anti-vibration systems have evolved.

Fire up a new ‘pro quality’ brushcutter with cow horn bike handles and then revert to an older machine from the same maker. Notice anything different? Offset handles, with a greater degree of adjustment, are more common. So too is a longer line of mounting points for a harness, enabling more operators to select a balance point to suit how they want to work the machine.

That said, key developments relate to noise and vibration. What is often not considered is that the level of vibration produced will be influenced by the task being carried out. Large brushcutters, with the right blade type, can be used as a clearing saw to tackle heavy growth to include small saplings. This type of work will produce different levels of vibration than when the same tool is used to clear bracken or brambles.

Similarly, a light trimmer used to cope with long grass around trees, benches and marker posts will behave differently when dealing with docks and thistles. It is for these reasons that it is important to try out different makes and models in the key environment in which they will be operated.

Most professional users tend to target top spec models with a full harness and wide bike handles. This type of tool can be used all-day and everyday. But is it the right tool to fit with a nylon line cutting head for trimming ‘soft’ vegetation around obstacles?

A light loop handle trimmer may be the better choice for this type of work.

Choosing a brushcutter is not easy – there is not only the choice of engine type and power to consider but price, make and local support too. Although you can play it safe by sticking to a big name, there are alternatives that may well fit your specific needs better.