GP400
SIMPLY BRILLIANT

Swing Out Centre Unit
TrueSet Cutting Units
Green Management System
Free-floating Cutting Head
Onboard Backlapping
Free-floating Cutting Head
One-Touch Joystick Control
Onboard Backlapping

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www.ransomesjacobson.com

WELCOME FROM BIGGA

Firstly I’d like to thank all those BIGGA members who took the time to respond to the Greenkeeper International reader survey recently. This magazine is an important activity for the Association on many levels but its primary purpose is to be a true benefit of BIGGA membership.

It was heartening to read a great deal of positive feedback in the survey but of more importance were the many excellent suggestions for ways to improve the quality and relevance of the magazine’s content. All these suggestions are being taken on board and some changes will start to filter into the publication from next month onwards.

April signifies the traditional start to the golfing season as the familiar verdant hues of Augusta National are beamed into our living rooms. This brings increased golfer interest alongside sometimes wildly ambitious course presentation expectations (see The Back Nine article on page 66). With winter still hanging over large parts of the UK at this time of year; they get golfers excited about playing the game after such a long winter. The challenge is to ensure they are managed even more carefully than normal.

It is encouraging to see just how many greenkeepers are now being proactive on this front through the use of blogs, Facebook and Twitter as well as old fashioned methods such as newsletters and member gatherings. The industry needs events like The Masters at this time of year; they get golfers excited about playing the game after such a long winter. The challenge is to ensure they are managed in a very natural way.

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The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited
On the road with BIGGA

My hectic schedule has shown no signs of letting up over the last few weeks. I returned from the FEGGa Conference in Zurich and immediately headed straight to the Scottish Region board meeting.

Not only was this very well attended but it was also very constructive. This was followed up by one of the Regional Roadshows which Jim Croxtin, Tracey Maddison and I have been involved in these last few weeks.

The roadshows are titled ‘Working together for the future success of BIGGA’ and the aim is to engage at a local level with Section and Region Committees to ensure that the Association’s plans and ambitions are more widely known and supported.

We believe it’s vital that we all work together to increase the profile and appreciation of the profession of greenskeeping.

The Scottish Roadshow was a very constructive exercise – as it also was in the Northern and South West and South Wales Regions – as it provided all parties with food for thought along with a clear understanding of how we can move forward.

It was then time for the Scottish Regional Conference in Dunfermline – and what a Conference it was. The programme was superb with some exceptional speakers and most importantly, over two hundred delegates in attendance.

Representatives from some of the finest golf courses in the world passed on their expertise, knowledge and opinions and I know feedback on their presentations was excellent, and this is no surprise now I’ve had the pleasure of enjoying them in full flow. I’d like to wish Grant Froglcy at The Buxted Hotel & Golf Course, Chris Haspell at Castle Stuart Links and last but not least John Bambury at Trump International Links the best of luck in their quest to continue to improve these fabulous courses.

The fourth roadshow was held in the Midlands Region with the final roadshow in the South East. In particular, the Midlands roadshow was an interesting day where it seemed my passion for the Association, and in particular my attempts to encourage members to play a part in its success, may have come across a little strongly. I make no apology for this and the chance to discuss it openly was very productive. I am passionate about the part members play in helping us promote BIGGA, after all, this is the key reason behind the roadshows. We need to shout about the role that BIGGA plays and the value of being a member.

Some members know some of these benefits very well as they’re currently celebrating being selected to work on the Support Teams for the BMW PGA Championship in May or The Open Championship in July.

Their work really is vital – to find out more about this and how the teams were selected turn to page 32. Many congratulations to those who have been selected and to those who haven’t, don’t be too disappointed – come back and try again next year.

Additionally, twenty other mainly young members have won a fantastic opportunity to be part of the Future Turf Managers Initiative made possible by Jacobsen. I am very much looking forward to meeting them all in Ipswich this month and witnessing the fantastic educational and mentoring opportunities on offer.

I was delighted to finally see some dry spring weather at the start of last month although sadly winter soon returned and much of the country has been badly affected by snow and strong winds. I know of one club in the South East who abandoned a tournament because the balls were being blown off the tees! Hopefully the weather will relent so we can get out and do some cutting on the courses, which is something we’re hoping to focus on at Teenside.

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Contact details
Tony Smith
tony.smith@readhead-network.com

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Scottish Regional Conference in Dundeemuir

Chairman’s Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

Cuts Greens Beautifully

The remarkable TriFlex riding greensmower is packed with ground-breaking technology to give your greens a flawless finish.

Designed and built from the ground up, the TriFlex range provides unsurpassed consistency and quality of cut. Innovative features, such as Toro’s unique Flex double-A-arm suspension system, Dual Precision Adjustment (DPA) cutting units and redesigned balloon-style tyres, all combine to produce an outstanding greensmower with the lightest of footprints. What’s more, the TriFlex Hybrid 3420 model is the first Toro to feature an all-electric cylinder drive system, for an even greener mower.

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The successful applicants for the inaugural Jacobsen Future Turf Managers’ Initiative have been announced by BIGGA.

Twenty greenkeepers from across the UK are now preparing for success in their future careers. These include in-depth courses on communications, budgeting, organisational politics, CV writing and interview techniques plus breakout sessions looking at other key subjects. BIGGA and Jacobsen faced a tough decision selecting 20 names from all the candidates who completed an application form designed to find out more about them and their aspirations. They are now preparing to head to Jacobsen’s Ipswich headquarters for two days in April for the sessions which complement BIGGA’s Assistants Development Programme that Jacobsen kindly agrees to sponsor.

One of the successful candidates was James Budge (shown inset), Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Kent. He said: “I was delighted when I found out I’d got a place. I always try and further my education as much as possible, whether that be at BTME or at other BIGGA events, and these sessions cover exactly the sort of area I’m looking to increase my knowledge in. “I’ve got a plan to hopefully make the next step in my career in two or three years, and modules such as budgeting and CV writing will really help me so I’m looking forward to it.”

Lorna Sheldon (below right) and David Bancroft-Turner – who gave hugely successful presentations at the Turf Managers’ Conference at BTME – will be again passing on their extensive knowledge of professional communication techniques and dealing with golf club politics respectively.

Delegates will also be given budget guidance by Lee Strutt MG - Course Executive at G8est – plus advice on further educational opportunities with BIGGA. BIGGA’s Learning & Development Executive (Technical) Stuart Green added: “There has been an excellent response to the initiative, with 45 applications received. This makes the process of selection all the more difficult as we felt that all the applicants would have benefited. However, this is not the end of the journey for the successful applicants but the beginning of the next phase in their future turf manager careers.”

Many thanks to all who applied, and look out for coverage of the event in next month’s Greenkeeper International. For the full list of successful candidates please turn to page 14.

FUTURE TURF MANAGERS - DELEGATES ANNOUNCED

Neil Baker has been appointed the new Course Manager at Little Aston Golf Club in Staffordshire. He’s been Course Manager at Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey for the last seven years and takes up his new post after working to bring Tandridge back to its original Harry Colt design roots. He said: “My new position fulfills a career goal, and my main aim now is to help the club further enhance its very special golfing environment.”

With its history and private setting Neil was the clear choice. A spokesman for the Club said: “We were very impressed with the professionalism of all the Course Managers we interviewed, however Neil was the clear choice. “We are sure he will lead the greenkeeping team so that we continue to have an outstanding golf course enjoyed by members and visitors alike.”

BIGGA’s Scottish Regional Administrator John Young reports from a packed Scottish Regional Conference

Was it good planning or good luck? Neither, it was the quality of the speakers that drew a fantastic 210 delegates to the Scottish Conference on 5 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

Iain MacLeod, Conference Chair, welcomed delegates by promising an excellent array of speakers and providing details of the format for the day. He then introduced the first speaker, Ronnie Malcolm, who presented ‘The Role of the Modern Head Greenkeeper’, concentrating on the methods of management available to course managers and head greenkeepers to cope with current work pressures.

Grant Frogley from The Roxburgh Hotel and Golf Club then told his story ‘Taking the Next Step’, the journey he has taken over the last 12 months from being in a Deputy’s position to that of Course Manager.

Our final speaker of the morning was Chris Haspell, Head Greenkeeper at Castle Stuart Golf Links. The audience were enthralled as they listened to the kinaesthetic problems experienced during the 2011 Scottish Open and the fantastic effort of the greenkeepers to get the course available for play on the final day – then to hear of the great success that was 2012.

After lunch Andy O’Hara, Scottish Regional Chairman, stated his ambition of improving education opportunities for all and to make BIGGA a must join association. He then presented the Harry Diamond Award to the Scottish Student of the Year, Chris Watson. The afternoon session provided technical presentations for the audience. Firstly Bill Lawlor from the Xact Group hosted a Q&A session on the importance of Health and Safety for greenkeepers.

This was followed by Dr Christian Spring from the Xact Group hosted a presentation on the run up to the Scottish Regional conference on Earthworm Control and Developments in Turfgrass Pesticides.

Next up was John Bambury, Links Superintendent at Trump International Golf Links in Aberdeenshire. It was a very detailed presentation on the creation of the championship course and his team.

John also provided insight into the workings of the Trump Organisation and how he expects BIGGA to be part of this organisation. One highlight was when John explained the requirement to trim 35 acres of rough each fortnight – which drew an audible gasp from the audience.

Andy O’Hara closed proceedings by thanking our speakers and indeed the delegates for making the day extremely successful.

A special thanks was extended to Peter Boyd, former RA for Scotland for interrupting his retirement to provide support throughout the day.

Eilpeth Coutts from Greens Progress said: “I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and I felt that all presentations flowed together very nicely”.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust, added: “I haven’t been to all the conferences over the past five years but I thought this was one of the best I’ve attended.

“There was a great variety of seminars and presentations - something for everyone”.

Looking forward to 2014, an exceptional line-up is already being put together for the conference on Tuesday 4 March with Steve Chappell of Glenoaks looked to provide us with the run up to the 2014 Ryder Cup. Look forward to seeing you there.

NEIL BAKER APPOINTED COURSE MANAGER AT LITTLE ASTON

FULL HOUSE AT BIGGA SCOTTISH CONFERENCE

NEWSDESK

The latest news from around the globe

APRIL 2013 APRIL 2013
FUTURE TURF MANAGERS - DELEGATES ANNOUNCED

The successful applicants for the inaugural Jacobsen Future Turf Managers’ Initiative have been announced by BIGGA.

Twenty greenkeepers from across the UK are now looking forward to an intensive two days of seminars and workshops covering a range of subjects designed to equip them for success in their future careers. These include in-depth courses on communications, budgeting, organisational politics, CV writing and interview techniques plus breakout sessions looking at other key subjects.

BIGGA and Jacobsen faced a tough decision selecting 20 names from all the applicants and deciding on the process of selection all the more difficult as we felt that all the applicants would have benefited. However, this is just the end of the journey for the successful applicants but the beginning of the next phase in their future turf manager careers.

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He has been Course Manager at Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey for the last seven years and takes up his new post after working to bring Tandridge back to its original Harry Colt design roots.

He said: “My new position fulfils a career goal, and my main aim now is to help the club further enhance a very special golfing environment.

With his history and private life I couldn’t turn down the chance to join this esteemed venue.”

A spokesperson for the Club said: “We were very impressed with the professionalism of all the Course Managers we interviewed, however Neil was the clear choice.

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This was followed by Dr Christian Spring from the SBTI presenting an excellent seminar on ‘Earthworm Safety for greenkeepers.’

Our final speaker for the day was John Banks, Links Superintendent at Trump International Golf Links in Aberdeenshire. It was a very detailed presentation on the creation of the championship course and his team’s interpretation.

John also provided insight into the workings of the Trump Empire and how he employs the staff to be part of this organisation. One highlight was when John explained the requirement to trim 35 acres of rough each fortnight - which drew an audible gasp from the audience.

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“There was a great variety of seminars and presentations - something for everyone”. Looking forward to 2014, an exceptional line-up is already being put together for the conference on Tuesday 4 March with Steve ChapPELL of Glenelges book to provide expert learning for the run up to the 2014 Ryder Cup. Look forward to seeing you there.
South East Golf Day

Play unfortunately had to be abandoned due to incessant rain on the Old Course at Walton Heath – but the terrible weather did not dampen spirits at the South East Golf Day.

Despite the great efforts and hard work by Alan Broch an and his team to prepare the Old Course, heavy overnight rain followed by more rain during the day forced members and guests of the course. They took refuge from the elements and enjoyed the refreshments kindly provided by Johnny Beck and James Watson of Sheriffrn Amenity at the 11th hole.

Competitors were able to enjoy the warm hospitality of the Clubhouse before over a hundred sat down to an early meal in the handsome Dining Room. Chairman Tom Smith introduced BIGGA CEO Jim Wignall for a speech on the course for, as always, making us so welcome on the day before proposing the toast to Walton Heath Golf Club and their guests. This was followed by Captain Michael Vaines who welcomed everyone to the club. This was then followed by Assistant Links Superintendent John Paramor, Chief Referee of the European Tour then entertained us with some fascinating and humorous stories experienced during his duties around the world.

The South East Region of BIGGA is a mainstay of the following companies for their very generous sponsorship and help with this event: Armored Fescue, Amenity Products, Blade Amenity, BSM Golf, CMW, Ernest Doe Power, Everris, Golf Mats UK, Grass Roots/Dryject UK, RM, Taylor, Sheriffrn Amenity and Speedcut Contractors Ltd. Chie Aagard.

Blogging With Royal Approval

This month’s featured blog is from Royal Cuirque Ports Golf Club in Kent, which will host the 2013 Amateur Championship and is one of four venues selected for the Open Qualifying from 2014 to 2018. The blog was started by Assistant Links superintendent, James Bridge shortly after joining the Club last October. It is crammed with information and high quality pictures documenting the greenskeeper’s team work including rough management, tee platform renovation, bunker recutting and all manner of winter work taking place on the course.

The Club has already seen several clear benefits from writing the blog. James says: “Take the overseeding for example, we spent a good sum of money hiring an experienced line to do a specific task. Many golfers were asking what we were doing and why we were doing it. They were able to see the blog and get the information they required. Weeks later we were able to point out a picture of the results and we are confident that a good part of the membership now understand why we do what we do.”

Links Superintendent Chris Barnard added: “I think the blog was a great idea from James, it’s a very useful tool for keeping members informed about current projects on the course. It helps to answer many questions before they arise! I have found we get more time out on the course to get through this year’s very busy winter programme.”

“Our members are interested in the work we do and are proud of the course. We wanted to document and share with everyone exactly what we’ve been doing throughout the winter ahead of what will be a very busy season. James posted a link on the BIGGA bulletin board to see if anyone else was blogging. There were loads of positive replies and it seems a few courses have started blogs as a result. The Cradley Hu and Carncouste blogs are particularly interesting as well as a few others. Some other blogs have inspired us to post by adding extra like video footage. Perhaps our blog inspires other courses to start!”

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Reports from South East England suggest unscrupulous operators masquerading as professional airbnbs or air researchers are undermining local business, filling perfectly safe and healthy common ash trees. They are preying on already considerable fears generated by the national media storm over chalara ash dieback at the end of last year.

The national media storm appears to have abated for now, but some landowners with ash trees on their properties clearly do not require much persuasion to err on the side of caution as they see it.

Current information from DEFFA says no-one will be forced to destroy ash trees unless they are young trees which are part of a recently planted site identity with chalara ash dieback disease. In these situations the Forestry Commission or another branch of the UK plant health authority will issue a Plant Health Notice. This effectively means that all mature ash trees could (for the moment) be spared. However, this does not take into account any developing issues with public safety which could (for example, trees low over driveways) are clearly responsible for.

Such a threat to perfectly healthy fully grown ash trees from ‘cowboy’ operators shows the urgent need for FC and PERA to introduce the microinjection of systemic fungicide as a means of ash tree protection, so at least landowners have the option of protecting trees rather than pre-emptively felling them.

Finding a solution should not prove too difficult. North Americans have to deal with a potentially lethal disease of oak trees called oak wilt caused by a close relative of Chalara fraxinea (chalara ash dieback). Oak wilt is caused by a fungus called Chalara quercina. Oak trees in North America have been successfully protected (and in some cases cured) of oak wilt by injection of the systemic fungicide propiconazole, a member of the azole (sub group triazole) fungicides, and by mode of action described as a recently-planted site identity with chalara ash dieback disease. In these situations the Forestry Commission or another branch of the UK plant health authority will issue a Plant Health Notice. This effectively means that all mature ash trees could (for the moment) be spared. However, this does not take into account any developing issues with public safety which could (for example, trees low over driveways) are clearly responsible for.


Chie Aagard.

Dr Terry Mabbett

ROGUE TRADERS CASH IN ON CHALARA CONFUSION

BTME To Be Even BIGGER For 2014

Following the success of last year’s show BIGGA are gearing up for a huge BTME 2014, as it returns to a four hall exhibition with the world’s major machinery manufacturers preparing to head to Harrogate.

The Harrogate International Centre is sure to be bustling next January with the likes of John Deere, Toro and Ransomes, Jacobsen, joining Kubota, RECO and New Holland at BTME 2014.

Many of last year’s happy exhibitors are also returning with many increasing their stand space. After a very generous bookings over 85% of stands are already reserved with eager returning with many increasing their stand space.

BTME 2014 will also boast a terrific range machinery, to name just a few of the following companies for their very generous sponsorship and support – keep an eye out for the confirmed

BIGGA is most grateful to the following companies for their very generous sponsorship and support – keep an eye out for the confirmed programme.

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