An extraordinary final round 66 by Phil Mickelson to clinch the 2013 Open Championship at a sun-drenched Muirfield will live long in the memory of all those who witnessed it.

Great shot-making, ball striking, considerable patience and a quite brilliant putting display combined to produce a round that is already being talked about as one of the top ten major winning final day performances. It capped a superb Championship played on one of the world’s greatest courses in absolutely immaculate condition. Course Manager Colin Irvine and his team presented a classic summer links test, the greens were firm and fast but utterly true, the rough was long but the test was fair.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case these days, there was a hint of controversy. Stronger than forecast winds on day one drew some of the moisture from the putting surfaces meaning that green speed increased as play went on. This led to some criticism of the pin positions but also to some of the players being asked to give their views on the actual condition of the course. Indeed the eventual champion asked to give their views on the actual condition of the course. The watching public can take such comments with a pinch of salt, as the rough was long but the test was fair.

A classic summer links test
GP400 SIMPLY BRILLIANT

The Jacobsen GP400 Diesel ride-on greens mower is full of brilliant ideas. To ensure superior turf conditions, our engineers included free-floating steerable cutting heads with Classic XP™ reels along with a complete Greens Management System including verticutters and groomers. To make the GP400 easy to use and maintain, they added a one-touch joystick for 1½/solver, a swing-out centre reel, and onboard backlapping. Add some brilliance to your steerable cutting heads with Classic XP™ reels along with a complete Greens Management System including verticutters and groomers. To make the GP400 easy to use and maintain, they added a one-touch joystick for 1½/solver, a swing-out centre reel, and onboard backlapping. Add some brilliance to your course with the GP400 ride-on greens mower from Jacobsen.
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The official monthly magazine of British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
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The official monthly magazine of British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
Muirfield signals a year to cheer

A fabulously sunny week at Muirfield marked a year for me as Chairman. The 12 months really have flown by, and now seems the perfect time to take stock of the last year, and look at what the Association has done well on and the things we need to improve.

Becoming Chairman has given me a great chance to get in touch with members I don’t see very often. I have been surprised by a few things.

I think the regional roadshows broke down a few barriers, and the regional conferences were also well attended and very successful. One of the disappointments has been the lack of feedback from members to the roadshows. We knew that members wanted us to go out and see them, which we did, but we haven’t had much response from them.

I think one of the reasons is simple – lack of time. I’m well aware that you are all hugely busy on your courses, particularly after the terrible weather last year, and I know this has also been the case when other events have not been as well attended as in the past. I understand the circumstances completely but my message hasn’t changed from the moment I became chairman – you get out what you put in and I urge you to attend as many sectional and regional events as possible.

The course at Muirfield was second to none, a true links course and the perfect light. It was a fairly young team this year, along with a few more experienced guys, which was shown by the fact that only the winner managed a below par score, exactly how it should be.

Our Support Team have again done outstandingly well and made a really positive impression on everyone they met, really showing the Association in the best possible light.

It was also excellent to see all the board members in attendance performing hands-on roles – from first tee duties to driving minibuses and match raking, Jim and I had some hugely worthwhile and progressive meetings with, among others, the R&A and the Home Unions, and it’s great to see everyone getting together at golf’s showpiece event to support the industry and move it forward. I’d also like to say it’s a shame that I just haven’t had the time to return to Tresside. But I’ve heard many people say that it’s in excellent condition, and it makes me feel proud that I’ve left it in the hugely capable hands of Gary Evans and all the team there. I miss it and promise I’ll be back soon.

I had the chance prior to The Open to attend Turf Science Live at Wentworth – this was a brilliant event featuring superb technical briefings. I know I went away having learnt a lot and I’m sure everyone else did too.

I also had a message from my predecessor Andy Mellon who sends his regards to one and all. As he’s now based in Qatar he’s become more accustomed to the sort of weather we were lucky enough to enjoy at Muirfield. I liked Lee Westwood’s interview where he joked that he didn’t realise the time he spent in Florida would be good for him. What’s more, it has a productive 2.1m (82ins) cutting width and 7mph (11kmph) mowing speed. With its turf-friendly tyres, the superior traction of a Series/Parallel 3-wheel-drive system, and a powerful 25hp (18.5kW) diesel engine, the RM3550-D is just simply a knockout.

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

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John and Sandra performed a vital role throughout at the first tee organising the guys as they prepared to head out on to the course. It was also excellent to see all the board members in attendance performing hands-on roles – from first tee duties to driving minibuses and match raking. Jim and I had some hugely worthwhile and progressive meetings with, among others, the R&A and the Home Unions, and it’s great to see everyone getting together at golf’s showpiece event to support the industry and move it forward.

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The course at Muirfield was second to none, a true links course and the perfect test for the world’s best golfers – which was the R&A’s intention. It was a fairly young team this year, but their enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment was wonderful to see. Every single one of them did an absolutely outstanding job, and I’m sure everyone else did too.

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The course at Muirfield was second to none, the RM3550-D is just simply a knockout. Weighing in at just 900kgs, our Reelmaster 3550-D is the new fairway champion of the world. It has a productive 2.1m (82ins) cutting width and 7mph (11kmph) mowing speed. With its turf-friendly tyres, the superior traction of a Series/Parallel 3-wheel-drive system, and a powerful 25hp (18.5kW) diesel engine, the RM3550-D is just simply a knockout.

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It was a fairly young team this year, along with a few more experienced guys, but their enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment was wonderful to see. Every single one of them did an absolutely marvellous job.

I’d also like to thank the staff from BIGGA HQ who came up to support the event. Rachael and Tracey did a phenomenal organisational job, and John and Sandra performed a vital role throughout at the first tee organising the guys as they prepared to head out on to the course. It was also excellent to see all the board members in attendance performing hands-on roles – from first tee duties to driving minibuses and match raking. Jim and I had some hugely worthwhile and progressive meetings with, among others, the R&A and the Home Unions, and it’s great to see everyone getting together at golf’s showcase event to support the industry and move it forward.

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Cheers.

Tony

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NEIL SALUTES 25 YEARS

Neil Faulkner, Course Manager at East Herts Golf Club, has masterfully managed the club for 25 years, leading the club through various challenges and growth. The club has experienced significant changes over the years, including the need to widen door frames, buy ramps, and acquire more than 50 wheelchairs and toys for the children using the service. Neil Faulkner's dedication and leadership have been crucial in transforming the club into the current facility.

The standard of the club's finances has been improved, enabling the creation of a donation system and making the club more financially sustainable. Neil Faulkner's efforts have been recognized by the community, including a visit by Gordon Sargent from PGAs of Sweden, who expressed his admiration for the club's transformation.

Neil Faulkner's relationship with the community has been strengthened by his involvement in various charitable activities, such as supporting the local school and providing wheelchairs and toys to children. His commitment to the club and the community has been an inspiration to those around him.

John Hall, Golf Course Manager at Twykesbury Park Hotel & Country Club, is running a half marathon for charity on October 6. His best friend has a son with Cerebral Palsy, and he is running to raise funds for the Whizz Kids charity, which helps children with mobility issues.

John Hall shared that his son's condition has given him a new perspective on life. He has been able to see the challenges that these children face and the importance of supporting them. John Hall's decision to run the Royal Parks Marathon is a testament to his commitment to the cause and the values of the Whizz Kids charity.

Neil Faulkner's journey at East Herts Golf Club has been a testament to his dedication and his passion for the club and the community. His experience and leadership have contributed to the growth and development of the club, making it a shining example of what can be achieved through hard work and commitment.

TORO FINALIST SAM IS RADIO STAR

Sam Kuwana, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Oakland Park Golf Club, appeared on Radio One recently as part of a regular feature called "Here all weekend." Early morning DJ Dev seemed fascinated by Sam's job and the fact he is a finalist for the Toro Student of the Year 2013. But Dev seemed to be under the impression that greenkeeping was a matter of landscaping and occasional hedge trimming, so it was clear to Sam to try and educate him. He has appeared on TV, radio or in newspapers and has interviewed Steve Castle know and spread the word.

John Hall, Golf Course Manager at Twykesbury Park Hotel & Country Club, has been involved in various charitable activities, including supporting the local school and providing wheelchairs and toys to children. His commitment to the community has been recognized by the Whizz Kids charity, which has awarded him as a finalist for the Toro Student of the Year 2013.

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This year’s Scottish National Tournament was hosted by Largs Golf Club on Tuesday 13 June and drew an excellent 62 competitors from all over Scotland who benefitted from glorious sunshine throughout the day. A parkland course, it was originally designed as a 9-hole course before becoming a full 18-hole in 1953. Playing to its full length from medal tees it covers some 6150 yards with a par of 70 and a CBS of 71.

This year, we had our own version of Tom Robinson on the first tee to announce each player. John Steddon has worked with the PGA on a number of their events and kindly agreed to participate adding a touch of class to proceedings. First on at 11.15am was a guest, Gordon Clarke from West Kilbride Golf Club. Subsequent games then took every 9 minutes until the very last game at 2.15pm comprising an East/ West combination of Greig Wilson (Turnberry) and Robbie Murdoch (Dundas Park).

The standard of golfer taking part was very high with more than half their field being single handicappers. Indeed it proved to be our lowest handicap that turned in the performance of the day to win the Championship trophy. Gordon Sargent from Cathkin Braes Golf Club produced a magnificent gross score of 66 that included an eagle, 4 fours and only 2 bogies. Gordon managed to get to the turn in only 29 blows narrowly missing out on a short putt for the 28.

To be totally overshadowed by Gordon, Iain MacDonald on his home course recorded a great score of 68 gross and less his 2 handicap won our Friendship Trophy with a nett 66. In addition to winning the trophies, Gordon and Iain will have their entries to the BIGGA National Tournament at Pir Hall paid for them and will receive expenses towards travel and accommodation.

There was one common theme shared by all competitors on the day, their unequivocal praise of the golf course condition. Our whole-hearted congratulations are reserved for Iain Barr, Course Manager and his team for producing an excellent facility for the competition. Even the tricky position of the 18th flag, thanks to George Morrison for that one, didn’t diminish the players’ admiration of the course.

Throughout our day we were treated to a very warm welcome by Keith Howie (Professional) and the other members of the team. Andy O’Hara, Scottish Chairman, was on hand at the end of the day to thank the captain, Brian Fulton, the committee, Keith and everyone else for the tremendous hospitality that was received and presented a Quaich to the club as a thank you for the courtesy of the course and clubhouse. Keith thanked Andy and reaffirmed the club’s delight at hosting this event and for the hard work of all greenkeeping staff required at golf courses throughout the country.

Congratulations to all who took part and we hope to see everyone at next year’s championship at Heidere Golf Club on Thursday 12 June.

John Young
GI NEWSDESK

Neil Salutes 25 Years

Neil Faulkner, Course Manager at East Herts Golf Club, has marked 25 years at the parkland course and says he’s loved every minute. Neil joined the club straight from school and served a four-year apprenticeship. He continued to work at the course - and his career - before becoming Course Manager ten years ago. He said: “I used to watch The Masters when I was a kid and marvelled how fantastic the golf courses looked. I thought ‘someone’s got to look after that, what a great job’ and that’s how it all started.

“I’ve lived every minute. The best thing about the job is there is a different challenge every day. Of course it’s very, very hard work and there’s so much to get involved with, for example today I’ve been painting fence posts. But when you get great feedback from golfers it makes it all worthwhile - we recently had a members match versus a local club and the visitors said the course looked superb, which was so satisfying to hear.

“But my main priority is to keep the people who pay their annual fees happy.”

He added that members had recently asked him where the club’s finances had been directed, so Neil and his team made a point of putting all their machinery on show during a competition.

He said: “They generally only see one guy on a mower so they were amazed we had so much kit when they walked past, and began to understand where their membership fees were spent.

“It’s all part of communicating with them, because if they don’t like the club they will leave simple as that.”

John’s Charity Whizz

John Hall, Golf Course Manager at Tewkesbury Park Hotel & Country Club, is running a half marathon for charity on October 6.

John’s best friend has a son with Cerebral Palsy and is restricted to a wheelchair, and has been helped out by “Whizz Kids” - a charity who help kids who have mobility issues.

John said: “Seeing the cost of my friend’s son’s chair is a different challenge every day. At 1.15pm comprising an East/ West combination of Gregor Wilson (Turnberry) and Robbie Murdoch (Dunbar Park). The standard of golfer taking part was very high with more than half the field being single handicappers. Indeed it proved to be one of the lowest handicaps that turned in the performance of the day to win the Championship trophy. Gordon Sangster from Cathkin Braes Golf Club produced a magnificent gross score of 66 that included an eagle, 4 birdies and only 2 bogies. Gordon managed to get to the turn in only 29 blows narrowly missing out on a short putt for the 28.

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Congratulations to all who took part and we hope to see everyone at next year’s championship at Renfrew Golf Club on Thursday 12 June.

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Early morning DJ Dev seemed fascinated by Sam’s job and the fact he is a finalist in the Toro Star of the Year 2012.

But Dev seemed to be under the impression that greenkeeping was a matter of landscaping and occasional hedge trimming... so it was over to Sam to try and educate him!

He’s appeared on TV, radio or in newspapers like Steve Castle know and spread the word.

ROUTE 66 WINS SCOTTISH NATIONAL

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First on at 11.15am was a guest, Gordon Clarke from West Kilbride Golf Club. Subsequent games then took every 9 minutes until the very last game at 2.15pm comprising an East/ West combination of Gregor Wilson (Turnberry) and Robbie Murdoch (Dunbar Park).

The latest news from around the globe
**INNOVATION CORNER!**

We’re still hunting for the unusual innovations greengrocers have on their courses – and Stuart Varwood, Course Manager at Lynmouth Golf Club, has several! He said: “When out deep sitting weekly during the winter we found the slitter removes the dew off the greens but left a little strip one inch wide in between the rear rollers. One of our lads, Robert Cooper, fitted a piece of plywood attached to traffic cone with a length of hose bolted on. We can drop the tail board on the workman and fit this in seconds. Then when we have a few excited our drainage trenches, and installed the pipe, we can back fill the trench, by straddling the trench with the workman, with large or small gravel in a fraction of the time by hand and without spilling a drop. Saves on shovels and backs.

“Thirdly, we found that some drains were capping over with grass clippings, wear and tear over time, and we needed to unclog these. We tried with half moons and installed the pipe, we can back fill the trench, by straddling the trench with the workman, with large or small gravel in a fraction of the time by hand and without spilling a drop, spines on shovels and backs.

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**JIMMY LEAVES NORTH EAST SECTION**

Jimmy Richardson has left the North East section after many years of service. He said: “Having served as section Secretary and dog sbodgy have decided to retire from all section duties and would like to take this opportunity to thank past Committee members for their support over the years.”

**Special mention to my other two helpers Steve Pope and Russ Black. Steve has also decided to retire but Russ is staying on as Section Chairman.”**

“Now we have a young energetic Committee taking over headed by Simon Olver of Percy Wood GC I would ask all members to give him a bit of support as he’s working very hard on pushing the Section forward. Other members are Glen Baxter, Michael Gunn, David Wilkinson and James Parker.

“New competitions are as well as lectures and seminars for the Autumn and Winter so please support the North East Section as much as you can.”

**CHALARA ASH LATES**

Dr Terry Mabbett updates us with the recent news about Chalara ash dieback

**CHALARA ASH Dieback**

Chalara dieback has been firing warning shots at the UK government’s management plans but the two latest salvos were right on target. The first shot from Wales hit one of the three main planks of Defra’s Chalara Management Plan below the water line, while the salvo from Devon was a top deck direct hit.

First main plank of Defra’s Chalara Management Plan (March 2013) is the creation of a disease free zone of counties around the western edge of England comprising Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire and up through the West Midlands.

Underpinning the programme is assistance to forest and woodland owners of recently planted ash confirmed with Chalara. They will be given grants to dig up and destroy the ash trees and plant with alternative species.

General idea is slow the westward spread of the disease from current hotbeds in East Anglia and Kent/ East Sussex.

Even if this generosity had been extended to the amenity and landscape sectors including golf courses (Greenskeeper International May 2013), and used to cover all recently planted ash (healthy as an infected, success was unlikely considering this pathogen is disseminated by airborne spores and the sheer ubiquity and frequency of its common ash host.

Recent events are proving this thinking to be right. In May 2013 Chalara ash dieback was found in the wider Welsh environment at Ferrybridge (south of Caernarfon town) in Caernarfonshire. This leaves the door wide open for spores to be picked up and carried eastwards into western England by strong south westerly prevailing winds.

But that is all ‘red herring’ thinking since Chalara was actually identified in the west of England wider environment in July 2013 in woodland between Exeter and Tiverton in Devon.

Forestry Commission (FC) did not reveal the exact location, although BBC Devon said the outbreak was at Byway Farm near Tiverton. According to the BBC, FC said the disease must have been on these trees when they were planted in 1996/1997.

This is highly unlikely. After 16-17 years the disease would have already spread far and wide. In 1996/1997 Chalara ash dieback disease was still confined to Poland and Lithuania, and unlikely to have arrived that early in the UK on imported planting material. In those 16-17 years it has moved westwards from Poland to reach Puas de Calais in France.

**BLOGGING AT TRENTHAM PARK**

This month’s featured blog is from Leigh Brumell, Head Greenkeeper at Trentham Park Golf Club.

He started the blog using ‘blogger’ in January and has already had over 7,000 views – plus it’s improving the communication between Leigh, his team and the members. He said: “After improving the club’s website the year before I wanted a clearer concise way of communicating to the membership.

“I also wanted to give them a say, and means of asking questions, and for me to answer them honestly and truthfully.

“I often get members stopping me on the course telling me how much they enjoyed reading it, and comment on how easy it is to understand. I think they appreciate the honesty.”

“The thing that has worked out best is the ability for members to comment on the blog posts. So if they don’t understand anything they can always say.”

“I think an important thing is not to ignore the complaints that come through. If the greens are bad, then explain why!

“I use ‘blogger’ which is free and enables you to post pictures and videos to it completely free. It’s connected to your Google account so everything blends in well, and is easy to use.”

“What advice would you give greenkeepers thinking of setting up a blog?”

“Take your time deciding on what you want. Try to get it integrated into the club’s website, so its easier for your members to find.”

See for yourself at http://trenthamparkgolfclub.blogspot.co.uk