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The competition doesn’t want you to see the Jacobsen ECLIPSE® 322 riding greens mower. They can’t match its ZERO leak points. They can’t provide individual reel control to vary cut patterns. They can’t offer programmable frequency-of-clip from an LED screen. And they can’t get anywhere near the true hybrid fuel savings or legendary quality-of-cut. When it comes to the ECLIPSE®, the competition can’t offer true hybrid fuel savings or control. They can’t provide a mower. They can’t match its individual reel do except hope you don’t see it. I guess we just ruined that for them, too.

The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited. ISSN: 0961–6977

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Reflecting on a successful BTME 2013

When five inches of snow fell on the Sunday night of BTME week I have to admit I was concerned that it would have a significant impact on the few days to come. Clearly though I had underestimated just how committed to attending and enjoying the annual opportunity to learn, network and interact with the trade so many of you are. I would like to thank all those that made the trip to Harrogate and made it such a success, in fact some of the exhibitors called it ‘the best for years.’

I would also like to thank the 121 exhibitors who were equally determined to ensure they were present to show off their ranges of products and services to such a committed audience. Good planning and innovation were required to make sure all stands were fully built, equipped and manned by the Tuesday morning but happily when BIGGA Chairman Tony Smith conducted the traditional ribbon-cutting at 9am all exhibitors were present and correct and there was a healthy throng of visitors already queuing to enter the Harrogate International Centre.

There were naturally a few hard luck stories, with some of our international visitors thwarted by flight cancellations but generally speaking those that wanted to attend the Continue to Learn programme and the Exhibition itself were able to do so and found all that is good about this great industry gathered for their benefit.

The education programme once again achieved the difficult task of improving on previous editions with the Turf Managers Conference (see page 22) on the wintry Monday a definite highlight, striking an excellent balance between high-level turf technicalities and important management topics. It was also heartening to see so many of the Focus On and Fringe seminars packed out.

BTME affords the Association the opportunity to fulfil constitutional obligations, such as holding the AGM, but also provides a great platform to recognise significant member achievements such as the awarding of hard-earned Master Greenkeeper Certificates and CFO Diplomas to the deserved elections to Life Membership for Chris Kennedy and John Philip.

Once again thanks to everyone who came to Harrogate and made BTME 2013 such a success.

In last month’s magazine I discussed the problem of companies who choose not to exhibit but still try and take advantage of the huge gathering of potential customers.

I’m pleased to say that I spoke with many visitors who had taken heed of those words and had reinforced our stance when approached. There is no easy solution to this but I’m confident progress has been made. One or two individuals were asked to leave the Halls for breaching the rules on inappropriate trading and generally our exhibitors gave positive feedback on our actions. The turf industry is complicated, with the supply chain sometimes having many stages in it, some exhibitors do not sell direct to their customers so it is appropriate that their distributors are on hand to provide the link to the end user, but there is a natural distinction between those distributors and the companies who attempt to hijack the Show.

Meanwhile the challenging job of managing golf courses through the winter months continues.

This month’s edition is packed with articles on a variety of relevant topics including two examples of BIGGA members who have made substantial improvements to their facilities meaning better conditions for play and therefore happier golfers. Andre Erdah at East Berkshire Golf Club (page 44) applied real innovation to find a cost effective solution to tree encroachment whilst East Berkshire’s Matthew Nutter (page 34) successfully tackled the common challenge of bunker inconsistency with a co-ordinated programme of redesign and renovation.

Enjoy the read.

Jim Croxton, Chief Executive
The competition doesn’t want you to see the Jacobsen ECLIPSE® 322 riding greens mower. They can’t match its ZERO leak points. They can’t provide individual reel control to vary cut patterns. They can’t offer true hybrid fuel savings or legendary quality-of-cut. When it comes to the ECLIPSE® 322, the competition can’t do anything except hope you don’t see it. I guess we just ruined that for them, too.

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**WELCOME FROM BIGGA**

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**Jim Croston,**
Chief Executive
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Turf Managers’ Conference

A look at our superb education

BTME 2013: The Review

Sydney 20 to Thursday 24 January 2013

The BIGGA Continue to Learn

Education Programme

Sydney 20 to Thursday 24 January 2013

The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition

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Dreaded Dandelions Now in Demand

Dandelions with their long deep tap roots are one of the most tenacious weeds of sports turf. Dandelion’s low profile means the growing points Vultur under the mower’s blades making herbicide sprays essential. However, every ‘dandelion has its day with a close relative of English dandelion now a strong candidate to become a source of European grown natural rubber for tyres.

With natural rubber tapped from rubber trees (Hevea brasiliensis) on huge plantations in West Africa and South East Asia now in short supply, international consortia are considering alternative sources, including the milky glutinous sap found in the roots of a Russian dandelion (Taraxacum kok-saghyz). First prototype tyres made from European sourced rubber were rolled out in July 2012 by Apollo Vredstein’s Indian Dutch Company.

T. kok-saghyz is a 12-inch tall yellow-flowered dandelion native to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. It will grow in a range of soils and climatic conditions but prefers the cool conditions in its native homeland and areas of northern Europe with a similar climate.

In addition to its tolerance of cool climates T. kok-saghyz can be farmed as a short term annual crop according to need. The tropical rubber tree requires at least 10 years of growth before being tapped for latex. Furthermore the dandelion’s roots are rich in inulin, a polysaccharide of fructose sugar units. Inulin, a poly saccharide of fructose sugar units. Inulin is peculiar to the dandelions and other members of the plant family Asteraceae (Compositae) such as the Dahlia, and is under investigation for use as biofuel.

However, every ‘dandelion has its day’ with a close relative, the native Japanese dandelion (Taraxacum japonicum) called ‘Kansai tampopo’. The more vigorous English dandelion is overwhelming its Japanese ‘vain’ and the hybrid plants are sterile. However, perhaps Japan is being paid back for giving us ‘Japanese Knotweed’ currently spreading across the UK environment including golf courses.

Come spring when the greenkeepers deliver the first dose of herbicide to dandelions across the green they should spare a thought for the Taraxacum genus in general, which could soon be supplying the rubber to make the tyres on their wheeled sprayers.

Dr Terry Mabbett

LACHLAN SCOOPS JIMMY NEILSON TROPHY

The Scottish East Section’s annual Jimmy Neilson trophy was contested over Gifford Golf Club in December – the fourth year this excellent competition has taken place, this time in a Stableford format. The winner was Lachlan Irvine, greenkeeper at The Renaissance Club, (pictured above left), who was presented with his trophy by Jimmy himself (right).

Thanks to Jimmy for presenting the now famous trophy and well done to Lachlan who scored an impressive 19 points for the 18 holes played.

BIGGA BOARD MEMBER AWARDED CLUB CAPTAINcy

Jez Hughes, Head Greenkeeper / Course Manager at Vale of Langollen Golf Club, has completed an unusual task after being awarded the Captaincy. Three handicap Jez, who is also a BIGGA Board Member for the Northern Region, has been at the Vale for many years. His tireless work has ensured that the Championship venue has become one of the best regarded in the area. His father was also a member at the club for many years.

It now means Jez is Head Greenkeeper / Course Manager, Club Captain and BIGGA Board Member at the same time.

Jez marked the occasion with a drive at the first hole, followed by an event in the clubhouse. He said: “It’s a massive honour, and it’s made even more special by the fact that I’m a working Head Greenkeeper. It’s terrific to be recognised in this way and I’m very proud.”

SOUTH EAST GOLF & DINNER

Don’t forget that Walton Heath Golf Club is hosting this event on Friday 8 March. As well as golf at this fine heathland course, a superb dinner will be laid on for all attendees.

“Tales are going fast so to book your place please contact South East Regional Administrator Clive Ogden at cliveogden@yahoo.co.uk or call him on 01737 819343 or 07841 948410.”

Everyone’s BIGGA congratulations, Jez on his appointment.
bigga board member awarded club captaining

Jez Hughes, Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager at Vale of Langiilien Golf Club, has completed an unusual hat trick after being awarded the Captaining.

Three handicap Jez, who is also a BIGGA Board Member for the Northern Region, has been at the North Wales course for 25 years. His tireless work has ensured that the Championship venue has become one of the best regarded in the area. His father was also a member at the club for many years.

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“I hit my drive around 200 yards. It ended up in the rough on the left but I’m blaming the cold weather!”

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Lachlan Scoops Jimmy Neilson Trophy

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Thanks to Jimmy for presenting the now famous trophy and well done to Lachlan who scored an impressive 19 points for the 9 holes played.

South East Golf & Dinner

Don’t forget that Walton Heath Golf Club is hosting this event on Friday 8 March. As well as golf at this finer heathland course, a superb dinner will be laid on for all attenders.

Takes are going fast so to book your place please contact South East Regional Administrator Clee Osgood at clee osgood@yahoo.co.uk or call him on 01737 819343 or 07841 948410.

MG Scoops GCsAA Award

In recognition of their commitment to environmental stewardship, Golf Park Nuolen in Wangen, Switzerland, and its golf course superintendent, Steven Tierney, MG, an international superintendent member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCsAA) have been named the overall winners of the 2012 GCsAA/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards (ELGa).

Steven, an International BIGGA member, is superintendent at Golfpark Nuolen. He masterminded a water-farming project that featured seven miles of drains to divert run off into irrigation ponds. The facility no longer needs water from nearby Lake Zurich, and it has saved the course $20,000 a year in electricity. The new maintenance facility, due to open in 2015, will be almost completely self-efficient from solar panels and deep-drilled piles to utilize artificial heat. The local wildlife benefits from a tunnel built underneath the main road leading to the golf course. Constructed by Tierney and his crew, the tunnel allows amphibians to safely take advantage of the area’s natural streams.

“This year’s winners are to be commended for their commitment to environmental stewardship on the golf course,” GCsAA President Randy G. Quenn, CGCS, said. “It is evidenced by our overall winner that the idea that golf courses can be compatible with the environment, and in many cases, enhance it, is seen around the world.”

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Dandelions with their long deep tap roots are one of the most tenacious weeds of sports turf. Dandelion’s low profile means the growing points Vuck under the mower’s blades making herbicide sprays essential.

However, every ‘dandelion has its day’ with a close relative of English dandelion now in short supply. The tropical rubber tree requires at least 10 years of growth before being tapped for latex. Furthermore the dandelion’s roots are rich in inulin, a polysaccharide of fructose sugar units. Inulin is peculiar to the dandelions (including English dandelion) and other members of the plant family Asteraceae (Compositae) such as the Dahlia, and is under investigation for use as biofuel.

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Inulin is the answer. English dandelion has drawn its teeth in different directions. Japanese scientists complain how English dandelion, having got into Japan, is spreading like fury and hybridising with another close relative, the native Japanese dandelion Taraxacum japonicum called ‘Kansai tanpopo’. The more vigorous English dandelion is overwhelming its Japanese ‘vain’ and the hybrid plants are deadly. However, perhaps Japan is being paid back for giving us ‘Japanese Knotweed’ currently spreading across the UK environment including golf courses.

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Dr Terry Mabbett
FROM PARIS WITH LOVE...

In the last issue of GI Tony Martin offered advice for greenkeepers thinking of working in Europe. Well last summer Ben Kelby left his role as Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Gatton Manor Golf Club to move to Golf de Joyenval – one of the top courses in France. This was despite not being able to speak any French...here’s his story.

I studied the BSc (Hons) Turfgrass Science at Myerscough College and worked at various clubs including Royal Melbourne until I applied for the role of Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at this course, which is west of Paris. It was the biggest decision of my life, but the lure of an exclusive Championship 18-hole complex, the challenge, and the opportunity to learn and develop under Steve Okula (who holds both the GCIA and MG certiﬁcates) proved too much. So, after long discussions with friends inside and outside the industry and most importantly my partner Francesca, I decided to accept the offer and start learning French.

Golf de-Joyenval was designed by R.T. Jones Sr., and opened in 1992. The greens on both courses are sand-based and situated on heavy clay banks, car insurance and pet passports added costs and stress. I need to learning French via audio CDs for a number of weeks prior to the move, but in no way did this prepare me!

This was a complete shock to the system for the initial weeks, with the language barrier and the differences in greenkeeping culture being the most diﬃcult. Unfortunately there is little or no career progression or educational paths to follow within France for the trainee greenkeeper and apprenticeships are extremely rare. Most disappointing however, is the attitude towards the position of a greenkeeper, for most it is seen as a last resort.

The UK extremely privileged to have such a supportive body in BIGGA alongside the various education establishments who oﬀer turf related educational pathways. Nevertheless, after a few months, I was able to understand and most importantly, be understood. A year on, although far from ﬂuent, I am much more conﬁdent with the language, allowing me to manage the 20-strong team.

The hardest issue was leaving friends and family and most importantly for the ﬁrst three months, Francesca. It was a lonely time, but luckily I was able to immerse myself into the new role alongside the online degree which I am currently studying.

The initial problems aside, the relocation has been fantastic and one that I would recommend to all. On top of everything, it’s been a superb opportunity to network and make new friendships.

I feel extremely fortunate to experience and embrace changes that have occurred and do not regret for a moment taking the leap and choosing to relocate abroad.

I’d particularly like to thank Dave Edmundson at The Island Club, Jon White at Morfontaine and of course Steve Okula who has been a fantastic support from the beginning, and of course my incredibly supportive girlfriend.

It is rare to work within an industry that, if you allow it, can take you around the world. Make the most of it.

BIGGA SCOTTISH CONFERENCE ATTRACTION TOP SPEAKERS

The BIGGA Scottish Conference on Tuesday 5 May promises an even wider range of speakers from across the turf industry

To be held at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline, registration opens at 8.45am and the ﬁrst speaker at 9.30am will be Ronnie Malcolm, Management Consultant with Malcolm International, who will be presenting on ‘The Role of the Modern Greenkeeper’. This will include feedback from a UK survey of Course Managers.

Grant Fugley, Course Manager at The Roxburghe, follows by exploring how he moved from his role as Deputy at G West to his ﬁrst Course Manager job and will look at the challenges he’s already faced.

Next up will be Chris Haspell, Links Superintendent at Castle Stuart, with a fascinating presentation on the unprecedented challenges that hit the course in 2010. He’ll also let the audience in on future plans at the site.

The afternoon will see Bill Lawlor from the Xact Group lead an interactive Q&A session on and Mike Johnson, Operations & Safety for Greencareers’ using examples which have been documented in the media. Dr Christian Speck from the RITR, a regular contributor to Greenkeeper International - will then look at the facts, reasons and possible corrective measures surrounding Worm Control plus other topical subjects.

A highly interesting day will be rounded oﬀ by John Bambury, Course Superintendent at Trump International Links at Balmedie in Aberdeenshire. John will look at the technical challenges experienced in getting this exciting new development up and running.

All in all, a day not to be missed. Places cost just £35 which includes lunch, and refreshments throughout. If you need any further information please contact BIGGA’s Local Administrator for Scotland John Young on 01383 777924/29 or johnyoung@bigga.co.uk

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

Our latest full time greenkeeper blog comes from Josh Leatner at Longside Golf Club – an 18 hole parkland course in Aberdeen. Writing the blog less than three years ago, and was able to display images of the terrible flooding which recently aﬀected the course. He says the blog has helped communicate with members from his club – and other clubs.

Head Greenkeeper, Josh said: “The course is built on a ﬂood plain with river running right through the middle but we managed to reopen just 5 days later.

‘We had sand washed out of bunkers, paths washed away and debris on the course. Loads of water came into the shed but everything was already up off the ground in case there was a ﬂood.’

‘I take photographs and post updates on my iPhone, so I can post on the blog while out on the course if necessary.’

“The members tell me that they ﬁnd my blog interesting as they like to know what’s going on, ask questions or ﬁnd out when I’m doing things. As well as the blog, I also use Twitter, which is also pretty helpful. I have a good number of followers including members from other clubs who have commented that they wish their greenkeepers would do similar work to what we’ve achieved here. In this day and age we need to be into social media and it’s growing so quickly that we need to adapt. On a more personal note, I feel that a blog is great CV and most greenkeepers would beneﬁt from keeping one.”

Check out Josh’s blog for yourself at http://headgreenkeeperlongsidegolfclub.blogspot.co.uk/ - and remember to contact steve.castle@bigga.co.uk if you have a blog, or know of a greenkeepers’ blog that has proved invaluable to you.

IT’S A WRAP

BIGGA have been speaking to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) about the level of interest and debate among members about the use of compost on golf courses. As it happens, WRAP has been sending information to a range of land managers about the use of compost & anaerobic digestate (biostimulator). As part of this, they are keen to get the opinions of golf greenkeepers, so we have joined forces to set up a short online survey to capture your opinions and experiences.

We would really appreciate you spending 5 minutes completing this survey. Please visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ WRAPBIGGA or to complete a quick and simple questionnaire.

Once we’ve got your responses we will publish a article covering your middlre and some data from WRAP’s technical team. WRAP will use the information to help them understand what needs to be done to provide information and support to the whole range of potential users of recycled organic material for land management.

If you have any queries about the survey you can contact Tricia Scott, in WRAP’s Research & Evaluation team, on 01295 817887. For further information about WRAP’s work, please visit: www.wrap.org.uk/category/sector/ landscape-and-regeneration
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To be lying. Problems with banks, car insurance and pet passports added costs and stress. I took to learning French via audio CDs for a number of weeks prior to the move, but in no way did this prepare me! This was a complete shock to the system for the initial weeks, with the language barrier and the difficulties in communicating being the most difficult. Unfortunately, there is little or no career progression or educational path to follow within France for the trained greenkeeper and apprenticeships are extremely rare. Most disappointing however, is the attitude towards the position of a greenkeeper, for most it is seen as a last progression or educational path. To the system for the initial weeks, with the language barrier and the difficulties in communicating being the most difficult. Unfortunately, there is little or no career progression or educational path to follow within France for the trained greenkeeper and apprenticeships are extremely rare. Most disappointing however, is the attitude towards the position of a greenkeeper, for most it is seen as a last resort.

The UK is extremely short of it. Nevertheless, after a few months, I was able to understand and most importantly, be understood. A year on, although far from fluent, I am much more confident with the language, allowing me to manage the 20-strong team. By far the biggest issue was leaving friends and family and most importantly for the first three months, Franceca. It was a lonely time, but luckily I was able to immerse myself into the new role alongside the online degree which I am currently studying. The initial problems aside, the relocation has been fantastic and one that I would recommend to all. On top of everything, it’s been a superb opportunity to network and make new friendships.

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IT’S A WRAP

BIGGA have been speaking to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) about the level of interest and debate among members about the use of compost on golf courses. As it happens, WRAP has been seeking information on a range of land managers about the use of compost & anaerobic digestate (biostimulant). As part of this, they are keen to get the opinions of golf greenkeepers, so we have joined forces to set up a short online survey to capture your opinions and experiences. We would really appreciate you spending five minutes completing this survey. Please visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WRAPBIGGAurway to complete a quick and simple questionnaire.

Once we’ve got your responses we will publish a chart of results and subject some data from WRAP’s technical team. WRAP will use the information to help them understand what needs to be done to provide information and support to the whole range of potential users of recycled organic material for land management.
A memorable week at BTME 2013

I’m putting these notes together as BTME 2013 comes to a close, and it’s no exaggeration to say it’s been an incredible week on so many levels.

Ahead of this week, it has to be said things looked a little gloomy with 2012 being such a poor year for weather and also economically. My heart sank when I saw the snow fall on Sunday before the show, but the sun truly shone for the rest of the week and people started to flock in. Cutting the ribbon to open the exhibition was a great honour and I can honestly say one of the highlights of my life. I’ve bumped into a few people who I haven’t seen since I became chairman and their kind wishes for success in the role were very much appreciated.

The exhibition itself has been exceptional. There’s been a good buzz throughout all the halls, a great atmosphere, and I’ve spoken to many exhibitors who have done really good business this week.

It has to be the best BTME ever from an education point of view. Taking the ‘Turf Managers’ Conference to a larger venue with better conference facilities was a great success and the quality of the presentations was unbelievable. I can’t believe any Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper wouldn’t benefit from attending. I also thoroughly enjoyed the Ryder Cup seminars with Curtis Tyrrell, Steve Chappell and Jim MacKenzie MBE, and the fact that so many questions were asked afterwards was a good sign.

I made a point of spending an afternoon visiting all the individual workshops in the Queen’s Suite, I wanted to thank the lecturers for their exceptional presentations, and also all the delegates for making the most of these vital educational opportunities. They were coming out saying how much they had learnt and would be returning next year. Hearing them say that really was another big highlight of the show for me.

I know that some of the seminars were standing room only at certain times which is hugely encouraging and shows that members are taking advantage of our educational offers.

I also found our Press Briefing midway through the show in the Media Centre to be very valuable. I was very pleased to see so many of the turf industry press in attendance asking honest questions, and receiving honest responses. I’d like to thank all the team at HQ and the Regional Administrators who have done a fantastic job in preparing for this show and working so hard during it. The James Bond Night which they organised was a great success – everyone I spoke to thoroughly enjoyed it.

I feel this week has proved once and for all that BTME IS THE show to visit, the feeling everywhere is positive. Now our focus shifts to next year’s show which promises to be even bigger and better. Before that however, we need to continue to drive for membership.

The association is strong but we need to continue to engage with younger greenkeepers and those that are new to the profession ensuring they know the value that BIGGA membership brings.

I want members who came to BTME to spread the word about how good the show was and how much there was on offer. I know next year’s show will be fantastic, and I can’t wait for it already.

Cheers
Tony