JIMMY READ RETIRES

Jimmy Read (above left) has retired from his position of Head Greenkeeper at Hunstanton Golf Club. Jimmy spent 37 successful years at the Championship links, 34 of which were with Head Greenkeeper. Jimmy’s son Peter is currently Acting Head Greenkeeper.

Club Secretary Bob Carrick said: “He has overseen many amateur competitions over the years and is proud to leave the course in superb condition. He has seen great changes in the course as part of the recent development work masterminded by Martin Hawtree and Gordon Irvine. All members and staff wish Jimmy all the best for his retirement and we would like to thank him for his tireless work over the years.”

BIGGA SCOTLAND TRIUMPH (BUT ONLY JUST!)

It didn’t look promising for golf to be played as the weather was quite nasty in the morning but thankfully the annual match against the Scottish section of the GCMA went ahead at Dingwall Park Golf Club on Wednesday 8 May.

Although a strong team from the region was assembled, the GCMA managed to only match our 5 points to our 4 following the completion of the day’s play. However, the region managed to retain the trophy thanks to a walkover result for the final game. The board would like to thank all members of the team for taking part.

On accepting the trophy, chairman Andy O’Hara (shown left with Derek Scott) praised the course manager Drew McKenzie for the excellent presentation of the course on the day particularly considering the weather.

JIMMY READ BLOG

The latest impressive blog set up by a BIGGA member is from the Head Greenkeeper at Royal Jersey Golf Club – Ben Blayney-Smyth. Ben has used some spectacular photography of the links course in tandem with pages of in-depth greenkeeping information, all set out in a clean and attractive format.

Ben said: “As a fairly new Head Greenkeeper it’s allowed the members to get to know me professionally. It’s also been extremely helpful when I’ve changed maintenance practices to inform the members why I’m changing things and the benefits of these changes.

“For the greenkeeping team as a whole it has hopefully allowed the members to get to know the team better. It’s massively improved communication to the members in terms of why certain procedures are necessary, what is involved in carrying out the procedure, timescales and potential inconvenience.

“In my first year we had TPL Thomson Perrett & Lobb golf course architects do an audit of the course. My first winter program involved implementing some of these changes to the course which was fairly major. The blog became very important to a lot of members to keep them up to date with these changes and how they would improve the course long term.

“This winter we also carried out changes to three holes from the TPL proposal and started upgrading our irrigation system which is a massive investment for the club. Again we were able to inform and educate the members on this progress via the blog.

See you there at http://royaljersey.getrefined.com

BY GEORGE! BIGGA LIFE MEMBER’S DOUBLE ACE

Former BIGGA Chairman George Brown recorded two holes-in-one in the space of ten days – and was rewarded with two exclusive Hugo Boss watches.

Seven handicap golfer George, 74, began his winning streak by hitting a four-iron into the cup on the 160 yard 6th at Turnberry’s Kintyre course during a seniors competition.

He followed this up with an ace in a medal competition on the 175 yard 11th at the Ailsa course – and he is now the proud owner of two Hugo Boss Watches because the luxury brand is rewarding club golfers with a special timespiece for every hole-in-one recorded during official competitions.

All official competitions are recorded on the HowDidIDo system, so anyone hitting a hole-in-one between April 15 and October 31 can claim a watch.

George, former Course Manager at Turnberry, has now taken his career total of aces to nine.

UK plant health authorities identified sweet chestnut blight (Cryphonectria fraxinoides) at orchard sites in Warwickshire and East Sussex in late autumn 2011. They waited five months to inform the industry then said virtually nothing until May 2013.

The flashpoint is in Sussex and neighbouring Kent where the vast majority of Britain’s sweet chestnut coppice grows. C. parasitica, like Chalara fraxinoides, is a fast moving, spore-spreading fungal pathogen. A lot of golf courses have some sweet chestnut trees but those around the Sussex and Kent Weald often have large tracts of sweet chestnut coppice woods as important integral components of the course landscape. There is nothing ‘sweet’ about chestnut blight. It is a killer disease just like Chalara ash dieback.

No news could be good news but tucked away in a recent Forestry Commission (FC) statement is: “a trace-forward exercise has identified a small number of infected trees distributed to a further seven locations in England.” Never mind the ‘small’ numbers – one infected tree will produce thousands of spores!

Other utterings suggest FC could be about to confirm the disease is already in the wider environment. Given the ease and speed of the blight spread in North America and Europe this is the most likely scenario. FC say are following their disease outbreak contingency plan and developing a strategy for a longer-term response.

Infected material planted in Warwickshire and East Sussex was sourced from the same nursery in France but FC continues to pressurise.

Sweet chestnut imports from EU countries are subject to plant passporting and since January 2013 are scrutinised by plant health inspectors.

However, FC admits a latent infection phase can still allow diseased plant stock to slip through.

If so, why have EU imports not been subject to a sufficiently long period of plant quarantine (observed isolation) before planting in UK soil, or better still banned just like all Castanoa imports from non-EU countries?

Even risking the importation of sweet chestnut infected with such a fast spreading and aggressive disease is mind boggling.

DEFRA has finally called for a ban on sweet chestnut imports from infected countries.

Environment Secretary Owen Paterson announced the intention at the government supported “Stop the Spreader” garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. A six-week consultation is underway with expectation of a ban before the autumn planting season, although EU regulations could still thwart these plans.

On past performance I can’t help thinking this sudden flurry of interest and activity in sweet chestnut blight is a softening up exercise and a prelude to the government announcing a ban is here to stay.

Dr Terry Mabbutt
BIGGA Support at the BMW PGA Championship

This month we focus on the superb work of the BIGGA Support Team who assisted Kenny Mackay and his team during the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth.

Due to print deadlines we were unable to fully cover their efforts last month so here are details from a testing week which featured a rose between two of the sport’s leading lights, erratic weather and a young Italian winner celebrating a high-profile tournament or even a new job through BIGGA, got help through our Legal Helpline or Lifestyle Counselling, worked at a high-profile tournament or even won a golf competition we want to hear from you!

As before, this section will highlight the many benefits BIGGA membership gives you, but will feature you, the members. We want to hear your stories and experiences — so whether you’ve found a new job through BIGGA, got help through our Legal Helpline or Lifestyle Counselling, worked at a high-profile tournament or even won a golf competition we want to hear from you!
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The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

A NEW DAWN FOR BIGGA CPD

As of 1 July 2013, the BIGGA CPD Programme is changing. Using feedback from members, the programme has been revamped to allow greater flexibility, more ways to get credits and enhanced recognition.

The new structure will be a three-year rolling programme rather than an annual programme, allowing members the flexibility to fit their professional development into their lives.

The value of a credit has risen to one per hour of education plus the type of activity that can be claimed for has been expanded.

CPD is a fantastic way to help keep yourself motivated towards your career goals and ensures that you are a valuable asset to your current and any future employer.

Sami Brutt, BIGGA’s Learning and Development Manager connected: “We’re excited about the new developments to the CPD programme. Member feedback has been important in helping us to shape the new programme and we feel that the enhancements to the CPD programme once the new programme has been launched is something we are all excited about.

For more details on the new programme and how to apply, please visit the website that can be found via links on BIGGA’s website and on our Twitter account @BIGGA learntochieve

We will be informing everybody about the changes we have made to a Frequently Asked Questions section on the website that can be found at http://www.bigga.org.uk/education/continuing-professional-development/cpd-frequently-asked-questions/.

Taking Stock

Hadlow College have appointed Anthony Stockwell as a full-time Greenkeeping Assessor to work alongside their team, which include some of the most experienced individuals within the industry.

Anthony gained his BSc (Hons) in Greenkeeping and worked for both The New Zealand and London Golf Clubs. He’s currently working with a Premier League football club and studying with Penn State University towards his Masters in Turfgrass Management.

Hadlow can offer Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships as well as stand-alone Diplomas at Levels 2 & 3, all are delivered as much as possible in the workplace.

Level 4 is being set up, which they will be able to offer in the not too distant future.

Experienced assessors at Hadlow visit learners in the workplace every few weeks.

The assessors guide the learners through their qualifications, delivering upskilling knowledge and assessing practical skills.

Apprentices do need to attend college, although this is kept to a minimum, and there are qualification requirements that have to be adhered to.

The Government has identified how important Apprenticeships are and as such are offering employers grants of £2500 per new Apprentice employed, if you have not employed an Apprentice in the last 12 months you may apply. Anthony can be contacted at a.stockwell@hadlow.ac.uk or 07791 087069.

Andy’s Reason to Celebrate

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Sami Brutt, BIGGA’s Learning and Development Manager commented: “We’re excited about the new developments to the CPD programme. Member feedback has been important in helping us to shape the new programme and we felt that the enhancements that have been made will make CPD more attractive and attainable for our members. We’re now concentrating on making the process of registering CPD credits less cumbersome – watch this space!

For more details on the new programme and how you may be affected by the changes we have created a Frequently Asked Questions section on the website that can be found at http://www.bigga.org.uk/education/continuing-professional-development/cpd-frequently-asked-questions/.

We will be informing everybody how they will be transferred onto the new programme once the 2013/14 CPD scheme has been closed down. However, if you have any questions that are not on the website please call HQ.”

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With topics ranging from budgeting and finance to CV writing and interview techniques over the three days, this is a wonderful opportunity that any aspiring turf manager should consider applying for.

The quality of the training and feedback from the delegates proved just how valuable they felt the programme was.

Keep an eye on L&D News for further details.

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NEW INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

The European Tour has taken a further significant step forward in the promotion of sustainability in golf, sport and events through European Tour Green Drive.

This is a new initiative to support and showcase environmental and community action across the organisation’s operations, venues and tournaments.

With a reach across over 45 countries, the Green Drive initiative has the potential to make a real impact both on the ground around the world, and as an example and inspiration.

Speaking at Wentworth during the BMW PGA Championship, European Tour Chief Executive George O’Grady expressed his commitment to the initiative. He said:

“The European Tour has long recognised the importance of environmental stewardship, resource efficiency and positive community engagement for golf.”

“We’re very proud of the staging of The Ryder Cup and our significant investment in GEO (Golf Environment Organisation) since 2006. Developing Green Drive across The European Tour is an important step further.

“We look forward to working with our many venue, staging, media, government and commercial partners to make a genuine contribution, and adopt a leadership position in sustainable sport.”

The first Partners to come forward as leaders in their support of Green Drive are Rolex and Lyoness, with Toro as a Sponsor.

European Tour Group Marketing Director Scott Kelly added: “We’re very grateful for this early support – which matches the ET’s own continuing investment in sustainability, and which enables us and GEO to ensure the quality and credibility of the initiative. The European Tour provides a platform for governments and companies to showcase their own policies, corporate responsibility and technologies in the unique arena of professional golf.”

The European Tour Green Drive has a strong long-term ambition based on continual improvement and is built on a credible foundation of policy, guidelines, programming and industry ecolabel from initiative partner GEO.

Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive of GEO, added: “This exciting initiative will help a diverse range of people and companies linked to The European Tour to get even more involved in credible sustainability action. There is an opportunity for every venue and tournament, and we’re ready to support as they get involved and help the initiative grow.”

ONE SPRAY, COMPLETE CONTROL

Cold and wet weather during the early spring slowed the growth of grass and without the competition weeds have become established. However, with moisture in the soil and warmer temperatures, excellent control can now be achieved with the use of Greencor.

Greencor achieves effective translocation into the roots ensuring a more thorough kill of the root occurs and a greater level of seed control. The product provides excellent results against a wide range of weeds, including daisies and both white and yellow suckling clovers but really comes into its own in swards containing tougher, more difficult to control species.

Following application, the active ingredients of Greencor rapidly penetrate the plant through the leaf surface and move deep into the root system. Once absorbed, they cannot be washed off and are readily translocated around the whole of the weed, including the roots.

This unique formulation increases herbicide activity, resulting in a more thorough kill with lower amounts of active ingredient.
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OPENED FOR PLAY IN 1896, Maidenhead Golf Club has obviously evolved over the intervening years, but it is still based around its original construction.

This means the greens have not been constructed to modern standards but are essentially constructed on natural clay over gravel base. Over the years, the clay has formed a moisture-retaining bowl that needs careful management to prevent greens becoming waterlogged.

A loan of a Redenzin Verti-Drain, from Charterhouse Turf Machinety, that worked down to a greater depth than nine inches, has had a marked impact upon improving the speed at which water drains from the greens.

Course Manager, Barry Gardner, above, said: “We have already seen an improvement in how the greens drain since using the new Verti-Drain, but we can only use the machine at its full depth when our members allow. We are an extremely busy course, so will need to time deep aeration accordingly.”

“It’s not that the Verti-Drain causes a difficult to remedy heave after an aeration pass at maximum depth,” Barry is keen to point out, “it’s just that more aggressive aeration will cause some disruption to the surface and the green will take time to settle.”

A new Wiedenmann Terra Spike CX08 HD was the stand out choice when the team at Kedleston Park Golf Club, Derby, needed a new aerator. After a visit to BTME in Harrogate and a very thorough on site demonstration, the deal was struck.

Head greenkeeper David Leatherland, who has held his post for over 35 years, said: “For lots of reasons the CX08 HD just suited us – its slim car type of course – our greens are built on sand with everywhere else clay-based; and the fit with our tractor. It was simply the right one.”

“Since its arrival at the end of May, its main focus so far has been to pencil tine all greens which we plan to do on a monthly basis.”

James Robson, Area Sales Manager at Wiedenmann dealer, Renton’s Chatsworth, said: “Kedleston Park is both an exceptionally well-tended and busy course so the versatile (CX08 HD 80) 8m wide combines high coverage with precision and really will do what they require.”
Fril your boots!

The BIGGA National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota is heading to Frilford Heath Golf Club. Steve Castle discovered why players can expect a treat in rural Oxfordshire.

PROFILE

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Hobbies: Gardening, walking, watching sport
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An increased prize fund… the chance to play on a course which hosts European Tour qualifying a week previously… picturesque heathland surrounded by rare flora, fauna and wildlife… what further incentives do you need to enter the 2013 BIGGA National Championship?

Most of the impressive 700-acre, 54-hole complex is a Site of Special Scientific Interest – so while you’re hitting over the pond and dodging the greenside bunkers on the par three 9th, or attacking the long par five 10th, you may catch sight of a red kite, woodpecker or some of the rare orchids.

Phillip Heath was first awarded European Tour qualifying three years ago – a real feather in the club’s cap. The qualifying – and the BIGGA National – take place on the Red Course with the Green and Blue courses remaining open throughout. Course Manager Sid Arrowsmith was quick to insist that nothing radically changes during that week although he acknowledged it is a big test for the team.

“So many think it’s daunting to host these events, but we run at a high standard all the time so for a European Tour event it’s not as if we have to lift it up by, say, 25% – we’re always at tournament standard so it just requires a bit of fine tuning.

“This may mean double cutting on a morning with a double or single iron but nothing too major. The height of cut remains the same at around 2.5mm.

“October is a challenging time of year to host prestigious events, because of course the light is limited in the morning and in the evening.

“There are 240 players starting the qualifying at 7.45am, yet sun rise is at around 6.45am so we’ve only got an hour to work on the course, so we try and do as much work as possible the evening before.

“To help direct most of our available resources to the Red Course.

“It’s all about the team ethic. I’ve got some wonderful guys here who have never worked anywhere else but it’s just been a little more than I would ideally like.

“We’ve also started using a Clegg Hammer as well as the stamper and moisture meter to check the smoothness, trueness and firmness.

“The Clegg Hammer measures impacts on the surface which gives you a firmness reading. We got some readings of 120 which was too hard so we aim for 100 – really firm, fast greens.

“Last year at the European Tour qualifying the greens were running at 11 and we were asked to slow them down – it made my day! So we missed the second cut out and we took the turf iron out to take them down to 10.5.”

“The team follow identical aerating programmes on each course. They micro hollow tine twice a year – usually in March and then in July or August, and aerate deep with the aid of a machine they’ve recently purchased called GP Air. This is basically a sparrow which has compressed air pumped into it.

“It’s then plunged into the turf and shatters the soil underneath, allowing quick and easy drainage.

“Sid explained that over time, the silt particles in the greens magate and settle at various depths, so this standardisation of practice is so important. And the light is on the horizon for the qualifying at 7.45am, yet sun rise is at around 6.45am so we’ve only got an hour to work on the course, so we try and do as much work as possible the evening before.

“arrowsmith was quick to insist that nothing radically changes during that week although he acknowl- edged it is a big test for the team.

“some may think it’s daunting to host these events, but we run at a high standard all the time so for a European Tour event it’s not as if we have to lift it up by, say, 25% - we’re always at tournament

yards. there’s a lot of risk and reward golf – if you want to take the big stick out and try and get the distance there are birdie opportuni- ties.

“But, if it doesn’t quite come off you will be heavily penalised. It’s a varied challenge from hole to hole.”

Sid explained the changes they’ve made in a bid to regain the Red Course’s place in the Top 100 Courses in the UK list. They have built new tees, put in some new bunkers and replaced old sand with new in others, as well as putting drainage sumps in some of the sand traps.

He added: “The greens are a blend of Agrostis grasses and poa annua – and the vast majority are natural heathland greens. We’ve tried to produce better performing greens by reducing organic mate- rial – thatch – then diluting it with pure sand so the greens become firmer, faster and improved. The thatch coverage has never been bad but it’s just been a little more than I would ideally like.

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