A thirst for innovation

Writing this column from the BMW PGA Championship where, sadly, off course issues are overshadowing the one and only Tour event to take place in England this year, it is fantastic to see the world’s best players playing a beautifully manicured British course and it feels like the 2013 golfing season has finally begun. Congratulations to Kizzy Mackay and her team at Wentworth for getting the West Course into such excellent condition after such a tough twelve months.

As always an excellent team of BIGGA volunteers assembled at the event to provide support to the home team and I know Kizzy and all involved in the event were extremely grateful for their hard work and enthusiasm.

During the event a reception for the winners of the 2012 STRI Environmental Awards took place in the iconic Wentworth clubhouse and it was fascinating to chat to those assembled and hear some of the challenges that have been faced by our members all round the country. There is no doubt that everyone has had to be extremely dedicated and very innovative to get the nation’s golf courses playable over the last few months. The innovative approach that has been adopted by our members all round the country is something that has really struck me during my two years in this role. It was certainly an issue that I was keen to highlight in a recent article in Golf Monthly that discussed the impact of the last year’s weather on the whole golf economy.

This is something I’m keen to celebrate so on that note please see Innovation Corner (page 45), part of the Woolly Park course feature – which aims to celebrate some of the more unusual approaches to greenkeeping. Additionally we really want to use the pages of this magazine and our website to highlight any new and exciting approaches to greenkeeping.

This month we also say a fond farewell to one of BIGGA’s longest serving employees. Jane Jones has been the administrator for the South West & South Wales region for over eight years and has served the membership with great enthusiasm and integrity. Her excellent attention to detail combined with a charming manner have made her a joy to work with, we wish her well in her new ventures in the industry.

This edition features articles on a wide diversity of topics, from combining agriculture with greenkeeping (page 42) to the benefits of lightweight rolling (page 38) via the second and final part of Kevin Munt’s excellent feature on different styles of learning that we all undertake during our training. The majority of learning in our industry is achieved through informal learning (page 34) and we wish all our Members success in their learning journeys.

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BIGGA Chief Executive Officer
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Yardage Books

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 lift/lower, a swing-out centre reel, and onboard backlapping. Add some brilliance to your course with the GP400 ride-on greens mower from Jacobsen.
A thirst for innovation

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There is no doubt that everyone has had to be extremely dedicated and very innovative to get the nation’s golf courses playable over the last few months. The innovative approach that our members bring to problem solving and overcoming weather, technical or agronomic issues is something that has really struck me over the last two years in this role. It was certainly during my two years in this role. It was certainly during my time in this role that I have really Seen our members across the country and share their enthusiasm and integrity. Her excellent approach to detail combined with a charming manner have made her a joy to work with, and in her new role in the communications team at BIGGA she is sure to continue her work in supporting all our members across the country.

I have been very impressed by the way BIGGA has adapted to the changing times and we have certainly seen a lot of exciting changes in the last year or so. For example, we have moved to a digital version of the magazine and this has had a positive impact on our distribution and the number of copies we can now reach. BIGGA has also launched a new website which has been a huge success.

We are currently working on a number of exciting projects for the future, including a new membership package that will offer even more benefits to our members. We are also looking at ways to increase our engagement with our members and ensure that they feel more included and valued.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their support and dedication. We rely on you to help us continue to grow and be successful in the future.

BIGGA has a long history in the UK and our members play a crucial role in the golf industry. It is important to support and develop our members, and that is why we are constantly looking for ways to improve our services and offer even more value.

In conclusion, BIGGA remains committed to supporting our members and ensuring that they have all the tools and resources they need to succeed in the golf industry.

JIM CROXTON, BIGGA CEO
Bernhard delegates...where are they now?

If you were lucky enough to be chosen to join the 2013 BIGGA National Championship at Frilford Heath GC and win £500 worth of vouchers, then you may have been a part of the Bernhard Delegation.

If you're still undecided about applying to join the next BIGGA Championship, read on to find out how much influence the trip had on delegates from the last few years.

If you would like to be part of the 2014 BIGGA Delegation, then you can ask for members to apply in August. Greenkeeper Industry Show in January.

In August Greenkeeper Robert Sandilands, 2011 Delegate.

...Rushmore Golf Club NOW: Golf Course Manager, Worlebury Golf Club THEN: Head Greenkeeper, Jaime Acton, 2012 Delegate.

I really feel the experience gave me that boost to get out of my comfort zone. It truly was the most unforgettable experience I've had in my career. One real highlight were the tours that we were able to take in Orlando that had in my career. It was fascinating to see the differences between them even though they are only ten minutes apart.

The management style is similar but the terrain is completely different. I now understand why previous delegates and the group of Course Managers described it as a very tough but life-changing week.

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Support at Wentworth, and a sad farewell

I have now officially retired, leaving my position at Teesside Golf Club after 32 terrific years. It seems ironic that I’ve left after the wettest year anyone could remember, when we had a sewage pipe burst twice and were forced to close on so many occasions.

Now I’ve left the sun is shining – maybe it was me! It was a very cold spring – although it was a little drier – but fingers crossed the recent warmer weather will mean you lucky members are all out there preparing your courses with pride as I know you love to do. I say lucky because I am already missing preparing the course at Teesside. I wish you all a good summer that will help you continue to produce the superb standard of courses which are admired throughout the world by other turf professionals.

At the end of May I was fortunate enough to attend the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth for two days, more for business than pleasure. It was the first to be held with Kenny Mackay overseeing course preparation.

I have to congratulate Kenny and his team on the fabulous presentation of the course. As ever, conditions were not ideal with largely dank and overcast conditions during the week, but Kenny and his team dealt with all the challenges superbly.

I’d also like to congratulate the members of the BIGGA Support Team who gave up their own time and made their own travel arrangements to back up the efforts made by the Wentworth team. Well done – your superb contribution did not go unnoticed.

The Wentworth tournament is the only time the European Tour International Schedule will visit England this year but it is a huge event on the golfing calendar and provided us with the chance to catch up with many industry bodies and individuals during the week.

These challenging economic and climatic times make working together even more essential if we are to ensure the industry survives.

2013 has been hectic year so far for BIGGA and for me in my travels around the Regions and Sections, so a slightly quieter month has come as a welcome change. I was pleased to have the opportunity to attend a Midlands Region board meeting meaning I have now had the chance to spend time with all five Regional Boards during my first ten months as Chairman.

I am grateful to all the members who give so much of their precious time to help the Association function in Oxfordshire. This fabulous 54 hole facility is maintained superbly by Sid Arrowsmith MG. Through generous sponsorship from both Kubota and Charterhouse we have been able to significantly increase the prize fund on offer particularly for the overall scratch competition, whilst we have also reduced the entry fee. I want to see a packed field contesting for the various prizes on offer so hope to see you there in October.

I am grateful to all the Section and Regional officers and board members who give so much of their precious time to help the Association function and remain focused on the needs of the membership.

A sad event last month was the semi-retirement of our South West & South Wales regional administrator Jane Jones, she has served the Association with great commitment and will be missed by many as she takes half a step back in her career. I am delighted that she intends to stay in touch with the golf and greenkeeping industry and hope that our paths continue to cross. I’m sure all of you, particularly the members of her Region, will join me in wishing her well.

We have recently launched the 2013 BIGGA National Championship, which this year will be held on the Red course at the first-class Frilford Heath Golf Club in

Contact details
Tony Smith / 07988 838956 / tony.smith48@ntlworld.com

I am grateful to all the members who give so much of their precious time to help the Association function

STRI Environmental Awards winners on the 17th at Wentworth

If you have recently graduated from a Turf Management or related course at a recognized UK tertiary or Further Education institution, you could be eligible for one of our placements. A placement will vary from 6-18 months and involves practical experience in a high profile golf course. For more details visit pga.org.uk/internships or contact us on 0883 344244 for more information or email Emily@lepuk.com

A NUMBER OF PAID INTERNSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE WITH ONE OF OUR US SPONSORS
AT A RANGE OF PGA LEVEL COURSES ON THE EAST COAST, FROM FLORIDA IN THE SOUTH TO NEW YORK IN THE NORTH!
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HISTORIC CHANGE AT BRORA

A Head Greenkeeper’s desire to modernise a historic course has led to a significant and historic change of yardage at Brora Golf Club.

James MacBeath, Head Greenkeeper at the club – which is situated some 50 miles north of Inverness – recognised that the back nine was more difficult than the front nine so recommended it be extended by 50 yards, to ensure it became a par five.

James said: “I play off quite a low handicap and found that in the prevailing wind, the back nine and front nine were not balanced. Also, there are not many par 6s around these days. We get many American visitors who are looking for a par 70, so really felt it was time to modernise.

“I brought my idea to our greens committee and it all went from there. Essentially there were some objections at first, particularly as there have been very few changes since the course was laid out in 1924, but when it eventually went to a vote the members were in favour.”

Over the winter James and his team worked to build the new tee on the James Braid designed course, and also extended the fairways to allow for the extra yardage.

To mark the occasion the club has designed a two-year and five-year change of yardage at Brora Golf Club.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RETURNS

This year’s BIGGA National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota will be held at the superb Frilford Heath Golf Club on October 7-8, with a fantastic first prize of £500 worth of vouchers.

The two-day event will be held on the Red course, a classic heathland test. This was designed by five-times Open Champion JH Taylor, and hosts European Tour final qualifying the week before our visit. It’s an authentic challenge at 6,912 yards, with fast and true greens and fairways that demand accurate drives. The stretch between holes five and nine is particularly notable, featuring a memorable par three hitting over a pond.

We’ve also cut the entry fee to just £60 which includes a round of golf on each day, plus lunch on both days and dinner on the Monday evening. Please note there is no handicap and I found that in the prevailing wind, the back nine and front nine were not balanced.

Billy McMillan Associates Limited can be contacted on 07774 632747 or by email at contact@billymcmillanassociates.co.uk.

BILLY MCMILLAN LAUNCHES COURSE CONSULTANCY

Former BIGGA National Chairman Billy McMillan has formed an independent golf course management consultancy, with services ranging from project management, staff training and development, and course greenkeeping support.

With over 38 years’ experience in the golf industry, he is offering help and support to any club that has ambitions to fully realise its potential in a competitive market.

Having spent many years at the forefront of greenkeeping and having also run golf clubs as a General Manager, Billy aims to bring a balance to the aspirations of Course Managers and clubs, helping to make a difference out on the golf course.

“Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes, constructive feedback, and delivering practical solutions to overcome issues can make a huge difference. “I hope to help clubs achieve a quality product tailored to most levels of available budget.”

Having worked at many fine clubs, Billy has an extensive knowledge of many different course types, from clay-based to sandy heathland and everything in between, each coming with its own and sometimes very demanding issues.

He can evaluate current golf course condition and work alongside the club’s greenkeeping team to help with planning for future success.

Billy is keen to take a hands-on approach and never shies away from getting involved at the grass roots to help others develop their personal skills.

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COURSE WORK STARTS AT CHERKLEY COURT

A historic site near Leatherhead has been given the go-ahead for an exclusive golf course. Plans for a golf course, luxury hotel and spa were held up by campaigners who are objecting to the development. But after a hearing at the High Court last week a judge permitted the removal of topsoil and other works to begin.

The par 71, 7000 yard course has been designed by David McLay Kidd, creator of Quorewood, The Castle course at St. Andrews and Machrhuhanich Dunes.

100-HOLE CHARITY CHALLENGE

BIGGA member Craig Campbell is joining forces with four pals this month to attempt the incredible charity challenge of playing 100 holes in a single day.

Former Celtic Manor greenkeeper Craig will head to Ridgeway Golf Club in Caerphilly on 21st June with club members Chris Thomas, Mike Mayer and Alex Mathews, and have worked out they have around 16 hours of daylight to succeed – all in aid of Cancer Research Wales.

Craig is now a groundsman at Caerphilly-magnificent Millennium Stadium, but golf is very much in his blood.

He worked at several clubs including South Winchester and Stratford Darks before moving on to Celtic Manor. He has retained his BIGGA membership as he explains: *Everyone can benefit from what other turf guys are doing. The Millennium Stadium provides a unique working environment, which means we are always looking for ways to improve and take on board ideas from all areas of turf management."

*Regarding the challenge, if we can go round in 908 minutes and play in four handicaps for the whole day this would equate to a shot every 34 seconds!*

*We’re looking forward to raising significant funds for Cancer Research Wales."

Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/RidgewayGolf2013-100HoleChallenge
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Having spent many years at the forefront of greenkeeping and having also run golf clubs as a General Manager, Billy aims to bring a balance to the aspirations of Course Managers and clubs, helping to make a difference out on the golf course.

“I’m bringing something different to the table”, Billy explains. “Looking at the club from both the golf course and clubs, helping to make a difference out on balance to the aspirations of Course Managers and work alongside the club’s greenkeeping staff training and development, and locum greenkeeping support.

McMillan has formed an independent golf course consultancy, Billy McMillan Launches Course Consultancy

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Over the winter James and his team worked to rebuild the new tee on the James Braid designed course, and also extended the fairways to allow for the extra yardage.

To mark the occasion the club and Clynelish Distillery, the sponsor of the 11th hole, invited course record holder Jim Miller to hit the first drive from the new tee.
Aerial spraying against OPM first forecast in April GI got underway in early May. Within hours it was headline news in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. Micron Sprayers confirmed aerial application would be carried out by a Robinson Helicopter equipped with Micronair ATU 7000 atomisers.

The target is the 10-hectare Herridges and Broom Copse near Pangbourne (West Berkshire) to be sprayed twice with Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki, Stewart Sisake at Forestry Commission (FC) said “We know there could be OPM in the woodland environment because we found a nest last year.”

Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive of the charity ‘Butterfly Conservation’ said: “Blanket aerial spraying of a designated wildlife site sets a very bad precedent and is an extremely crude control mechanism – the approach is akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. We believe a far better method would be to conduct a detailed survey of the conspicuous nests and remove them individually as they have done in other areas.”

The charity is concerned for rare butterflies in this woodland including the Grizzled Skipper (Ochlodes ochraceus) and white admiral (Limenitis camilla), as well as the purple emperor (Apatura iris) known to be on sites nearby.

Early May featured strong winds and falling temperatures slowing oak re-vegetation even more. Calm conditions for accurate deposition of droplets are required. And 40-60 per cent leaf expansion, to ensure sufficiently good leaf coverage and a lethal dose of BT insecticide through larval ingestion.

Wind turbulence and insufficient tree canopy cover increase chances of droplets landing on non-target plants. Daylight and honey suckle both common woodland and hedgerow plants are the food plants of newer washed frass fly and white admiral, respectively. Pangbourne appears a strange choice of place to begin aerial bombardment with insecticide. After three years of ground spraying only three nests were found last year. One surprised observer told Greenkeeper International: “IfC wanted maximum impact against OPM they could have closed down Richmond Park for a day to treat the area’s high OPM index.”

This would clearly assist significantly. OPM has been successfully controlled on Richmond Golf Course for a day to treat the area’s high OPM index.

Secondly this is the only time and the canopy characteristics of going to work, irrespective of how important for several reasons. BT kills each action through larvae feeding by late April.

Synchronisation of aerial application was also a bonus. If a contact insecticide is used spray operators would additionally have successfully passed through the L3 (third instar) stage they have correspondingly higher doses of insecticide required to achieve permanent feeding on foliage in the area, as well as wind speed and wind direction on the day.

Biological perspectives are in urban and suburban areas. To apply the biological insecticide Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki (BT). Aerial spraying the liquid formulation used, meant area, as well as wind speed and wind direction on the day.

Spray timing is crucially important and main scaffold branches and time during the day on the trunk. If a contact insecticide is used it is more beneficial to apply the insecticide. After three years OPM has been successfully controlled on Richmond Golf Course for a day and main scaffold branches and time during the day.

A small nest typically located at the tops of trees where BT deposits are dependent on temperature. An early spring with higher than normal temperatures can optimally see earlier synchronised oak re-foliation and hatching of the L1 (first instar) larvae from plaques on branches. They are in urban and suburban areas. If a contact insecticide is used spray operators would additionally have successfully passed through the L3 (third instar) stage they have correspondingly higher doses of insecticide required to achieve permanent feeding on foliage in the area, as well as wind speed and wind direction on the day.

Jane Jones, who left her position as Regional Administrator for the South West & Wales on 31 May, was presented with a series of gifts by everyone at BIGGA House to thank her for eight and a half years of sterling service. She is intending to remain involved in golf and greenkeeping industry. Everyone wishes her well and hopefully she will continue to attend events with the industry and keep in touch with many of the members, particularly in her Region.

Jane Jones

TORO/LEY LATCH

B&Q triumphed 4-1 over Kent in the annual Toro/Lely Match, which took place at Upminster Park, home of West Ham United.

Kent Section secretary and part-time goalkeeper (f) Rob Holland reports: “It was truly a game of two halves. B&Q scored four quick fire goals between the 12th and 20th minutes despite the heroic actions of the cat-like keeper. “We scored a penalty in the second half and relentlessly pressed to narrow the scoreline. Unfortunately it ran out. Well done to Ben Adams, Russ Bain and Adam White who were superb in Kent’s rearguard. “Many thanks to B&Q for a great game played in a very friendly spirit. Thanks especially to Larry Pearson and Tony Pederson who were always very much appreciated. Thanks too to West Ham and particularly Head Groundsman Shane O`Brian for the quality of the pitch. Finally thanks to Kevin Morris for arranging everything from organising the players, transport, adlib heckling, post match speeches and evening beverages back of Redlibbits. Thanks for the great company and another amazing day out.”