WHERE DO YOU READ GI?

Jack Davies, Greenkeeper at Five Lakes Hotel Golf & Country Club in Essex, posted this terrific picture on the BIGGA Message Board, showing him reading February’s GI on a boat! Jack said: “After a spell of prolonged wet weather we now have a sixth lake lying on the fifth course. I thought I could read February’s magazine on the flood while we pumped it out – my boss was a bit sceptical of the plan though! February’s magazine made a great read while I was on the water.”

In what unusual locations have you read GI? Send a picture to Steve@crailbigga.co.uk and we’ll print the best.

BOB’S BLOG

We’re continuing to receive some excellent suggestions for blogs penned by greenkeepers across the land. The featured blog this month is Bob Meddle’s from Crail Golfing Society in Fife, Scotland.

Course Manager Bob has used the blog for three years, and it features regular updates, pictures of Bob and his team working on what is one of the oldest clubs in the country.

Encouragingly, it also features on the main website meaning members and visitors alike are able to discover exactly what the team are up to – and why they’re doing it.

Bob said: “I started it mainly to make our BIGGA section website more relevant and up to date. Barely a day goes by without a member mentioning to me that they’ve been looking at it, and a lot of the complaints we used to get have stopped because people know what’s happening. It helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed on what’s going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

“Visitors to the blog also find it informative because we have particular issues at Crail, such as high tides damaging the course in spring and autumn depending on wind direction. It also helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed on what’s going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

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MARATHON MAN PLANS TO SKIN COMPETITION


Greg would welcome any donations to this extremely worthwhile cause, large or small – to donate and for further information please visit www.justgiving.com/Greg-Skinner1

A frantic and fruitful February

If there was a time when we were playing catch-up with American education, I believe that time has now passed and we’re on an equal footing with them.

I also spoke to the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Tom Flaherty who’s clearly learning a huge amount from his time in the States. He’s there for a little while longer and I know he’ll be appearing in a future edition of Greenkeeper International informing the membership about his experiences.

One thing he said which stuck in my mind was “I wish I could bottle all this up and dish it out to all the young greenkeepers in the UK”.

Another highlight was the BIGGA Reception we held on the Monday evening which was a gathering of our members who had travelled to San Diego, and it was so successful that we’re looking at making it a regular feature.

On my return from America the Board of Management met which gave us a timely opportunity to review BTME 2013 and put plans in place for 2014 and beyond.

Feedback from visitors and exhibitors alike has generally been really positive and momentum is already gathering for January 2014.

Towards the end of February the Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations (FEGGA) held its Annual Conference in the picturesque but snowy city of Zurich. It was fascinating to listen to the challenges faced by the many other Greenkeeper Associations across the continent and realise that they are so similar to those that we face in the UK.

Economic pressure, lack of awareness and appreciation of the profession, legislative/regulatory issues and environmental challenges were the repeated themes, clearly all Associations need to stand together to help the whole profession overcome them.

During the conference Paul Worster, BIGGA’s 2010 Chairman, was elected to the FEGGA Board of Directors, Paul has recently completed a four-year term of office on the BIGGA Board and has excellent credentials and experience to assist FEGGA in their goal to properly represent the profession of greenkeeping at a European level.

Congratulations Paul, you certainly have my support in your new role.

I’m well aware that it’s been far from an ideal start to 2013 weather wise. However, spring is finally just around the corner so let’s hope it improves, there’s no more snow and we get the dry spell we so badly need.

GI NEWSDESK

MARCH 2013
Learning & Development

Sami Strutt, BIGGA Learning & Development Manager, with an update on education issues

Every year I wonder where the first two months of the year go, when my feet finally touch the ground I realise that it’s March already. This year it has been especially busy as Lee Strutt and I got married the day after returning from the Golf Industry Show in San Diego! After almost 20 years in the industry as Sami Collins, I’m now known as Sami Strutt so don’t go ignoring my emails and phone calls thinking “I have no idea who that is!”

Golf Industry Show

The Golf Industry Show made a welcome return to San Diego in February. BIGGA were represented by Jim Croxton, Tony Smith (Chairman) and myself along with the BIGGA Delegation in association with Bernhard & Co. Although the weather was not what was expected in Southern California, the show delivered a good array of education and exhibitors.

Many familiar faces visited the BIGGA stand, including the able assistance of the ten boys from the delegation we handled enquiries about the services that BIGGA offers as well as selling a couple of memberships in the process.

For the delegation it is a full-on week with almost every minute filled. We did however manage to fit in a couple of birthday celebrations taking place regarding the services of the Golf Industry Show in San Diego last year go, when my feet finally touched the ground I realise that the industry as Sami Collins, Lee Strutt and I got married in Southern California, the show delivered a good array of education and exhibits.

Applications for the inaugural Future Turf Managers Conference are now closed with 45 applicants vying for 20 places. The selection process will have taken place by the time you read this and next month I will report on who’s been successful.

BIGGA Membership

The benefits of membership are

- Higher education scholarship
- Subsidies
- Refund of fees

• Take advantage of education funding through:
  - Refund of fees
  - Subsidies
- Higher education scholarship
- Take advantage of Assistant Development Seminars – ‘So You Want to be a Pro’ – Essential Skills for your Career Development is being delivered by experienced Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers across BIGGAs 26 sections. Look out on the Events Section on the BIGGA website for dates and information.
- Regional for CPD – by planning and reflecting on your learning experiences you can enhance your development and advance your career.
- The benefits of membership are not just there when you are looking to further your career, members also have personal benefits including access to -
  - Legal helpline – access to legal help and advice 24/7. When you have a legal problem it can often be a highly stressful time of your life. It is often difficult to know who you can talk to and the cost of getting the advice that you need can often be expensive. As a benefit of BIGGA Membership members have access to the Legal Assistance insurance package arranged by Gallagher Heath, access to a comprehensive legal helpline that offers advice on a wide range of legal services.
  - The legal helpline is provided by Irwin Mitchell, one of the top 10 UK law firms. The helpline is operated by a team of dedicated advisers, all legally qualified to give you the legal advice that you require. The typical areas of law that the legal helpline can give advice on are:
    - Family law
    - Employment law
    - Property law
    - Consumers
  - Full Members Personal Accident Insurance. This insurance provides cover for accidental bodily injury which occurs during the operative time of cover which results in death, loss of limbs or sight, hearing and speech, permanent disability or temporary disability. There are additional payments for medical expenses, funeral expenses, hospitalisation, bodily injury resulting in a coma, retaining or removing relatives travel expenses.
  - Lifestyle Counselling. Helpline and online information support service is available to all BIGGA Members and their families. This upgraded service for all BIGGA Members and members of their immediate family living at the same address can help with a range of problems from practical everyday matters to sensitive or emotional issues. Specialists will help members deal with personal relationship problems, problems with colleagues in the workplace and other issues affecting their general wellbeing.
  - Counsellors and information specialists are also trained to help members with practical problems like debt.
  - The helpline is complemented by a comprehensive online information and support service, through which members can access information and advice on a range of issues and problems which often impact on everyday life. Topics are diverse and include relationships, childcare issues, consumer issues, stress and health and fitness.

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Northern & Midland
Head Office: 01750 477600
South East
Head Office: 01750 477600
South West & Wales
Head Office: 01750 477600

Other Useful Numbers
(Full Members only)
Personal Accident Helpline
01750 477600
General Accident Helpline
01750 477600
Debt Counselling Helpline
0800 174 319
Financial Counselling
0800 174319
Funeral Expenses
0800 177 7891
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The membership team reflect on current news and affairs affecting you, the BIGGA member.

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Joining the BIGGA Team

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KUBOTA ADD PRECISION TO POWER WITH NEW 100-INCH MOWER DECK

Tractor and groundcare specialists Kubota has introduced a new Lastec 100-inch flex mower deck available exclusively on its high performance and market leading F3680 Out Front Mower.

The F3680 is the most powerful out front mower in the Kubota range. With a 36hp engine and Auto-Assist 4WD as standard, it is designed to offer maximum manoeuvrability and versatility whilst being able to tackle the most demanding commercial mowing operations. The F3680 also includes a host of features to increase operator comfort and reduce fatigue, such as hydrostatic power steering, adjustable seat and conveniently positioned operator levers.

Dave Roberts, Kubota’s General Manager, commented: “The introduction of this new mower deck is part of Kubota’s ongoing commitment to add value to the product and the service we provide our customers to ensure they can complete their work efficiently and effectively.”

“The patented Lastec design integrates five 21-inch mower pans, uniquely pinned together and belt driven, giving a 100-inch wide cut with the precision of a 21-inch walk-behind mower. For turf professionals, this means a larger area can be cut in a shorter space of time, saving them valuable time and money.”

The 100-inch mower deck, called the 100 EFK, is only available on Kubota’s F3680 as this model has the ideal horsepower requirements for a 100-inch cut width. The solution has been designed so that all the deck pans articulate independently. It degrees up and down to follow the ground contour with walk-mower precision which reduces the potential for scalping. Other features include hydraulic fold up outer pans to minimize width for transport and an adjustable deck height ranging from 1 inch to 4 ¾ inches with ½ inch increments with no tooling requirement. Adjustable internal baffling also allows for standard rear discharge or mulch to optimise performance in a variety of positions.

For further information or to find your local dealer: www.kubota.co.uk
Tel: 01844 268 000

The Kubota range of groundcare machinery delivers outstanding performance, simple operation and legendary reliability. From powerful and versatile tractors to high performance mowers, find out why Kubota is the practical choice for professionals.

Contact your local dealer to book a test drive today.

The Lynx Control System from Toro Golf Irrigation helps course managers do just that.

Versatility at work

The new Lynx™ Control System from Toro Golf Irrigation helps course managers do just that.

Your golf course often demands quick thinking and well-timed action to maintain optimal playability, while best managing resources. Now there’s a faster, easier way for course managers to get on their course management tasks. Designed for the work with the Toro Golf Decoder Controller (GDC), the new Lynx Control System software was developed to give turf managers intuitive control over what happens on a course by making all essential irrigation information readily available in one place.

Lynx is the latest enhancement to Toro’s complete portfolio of irrigation solutions. Switch to Lynx, and begin to run things your way.

Call 01480 226848 or visit toro.com/lynx

Toro Irrigation Products are distributed by Lely (UK) Limited, 1 Station Road, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1QH.

WIEDEMANN UK’S PLATINUM CHARITY TERRA SPIKE KEEPS OMBERSEY GC OPEN

What a difference a year makes when you’ve taken delivery of a Wiedenmann Terra Spike GS8 HD.

Ombersley Golf Club purchased Wiedenmann UK’s charity platinum-painted deep aerator last January, and coincidentally was also celebrating 20 years of operation. In truth, the Kidderminster club would have purchased the Terra Spike a year previously but too many weather-defied course closures meant they had to delay their investment.

Exactly a year on, Ombersley happily reports that they’ve had no closures what so ever and that drainage on the course has never been better despite the last 12 months being almost the wettest on record.

Andrew Halfpenny, Course Manager, said: “We’ve set up a programme to aerate eight days a month on tees, greens and aprons. We’ve pretty much stuck to that in the spring, autumn and winter but got a little bit caught up with other tasks during the summer. From October onwards, when the days became shorter, we really started to reap the benefits of sustained frequent aeration. The transformation was evident to everybody.

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We’ve remained open when others around have had to shut their investment.

British Sugar Topsoil – who recently exhibited at BTME for the first time and have already agreed to return next year – have launched a free booklet outlining how topsoil can be used on golf courses. It’s freely available as a download from British Sugar TOPSOIL’s web site www.bstopsoil.co.uk or by calling 01480 226848.
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BRITISH SUGAR TOPSOIL GUIDE LAUNCHED

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THE ALL-ELECTRIC
eFLEX. OUR QUIETEST GREENSMOWER EVER.

The Greensmaster eFlex from Toro, our first lithium-ion battery-powered electric greensmower. This revolutionary power source is far superior to lead-acid batteries, being cleaner and far more efficient. What’s more, the eFlex battery is designed to last five years, cutting as many as nine typical greens on a single charge. And with minimum downtime and low maintenance costs, the eFlex will even save you money in the long run.

Of course, its superior cutting technology delivers the finest putting surface and playing experience you would expect from Toro, but added to this, the mower is clean, environmentally friendly and, crucially, incredibly quiet. All this, and more, make the eFlex the perfect choice for golf clubs looking for a green solution, especially those with hotels and guest accommodation.

Call 01480 226800 or visit toro.com

MOOR HALL GC ROLLS OUT THE RED IRON

Moor Hall Golf Club in the West Midlands has become one of the first in the UK to put Toro’s new GreensPro 1200 greens roller through its paces.

Course manager and BBOGA member Wayne Ganning (shown inset above) included the machine in his replacement Toro fleet package after the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) recommended greens ironing to help improve the smoothness and trueness of the Sutton Coldfield course’s greens.

As he explains: “We didn’t get a great deal of use out of the iron last summer because of all the rain, but when we did use it the results confirmed that smoothness and trueness improved. Also, surface performance achieved near-tournament levels with significant increase in green speed, which makes us more productive,” he adds.

A machine Wayne did get plenty of use out of during the washout summer was the SandPro 3100 bunker raker. “I’ve particularly noticed that the 4500-D rotary mower has a much quicker grounds speed, which makes us more productive,” he adds.

MacGregor Forest & Groundcare have recently been appointed as the authorised dealer for the Redexim Charterhouse professional Golf and Turf Management machinery range, in the North West Scotland area.

As a well-established business with regional branches in Elgin, Portree and Stornoway, MacGregor Forest & Groundcare have recently been appointed as the authorised dealer for the Redexim Charterhouse professional Golf and Turf Management machinery range, in the North West Scotland area.

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Commenting on the agreement with MacGregor Forest & Groundcare Depot Manager Callum Sim said, “the decision to work with Redexim Charterhouse was customer driven as we had noticed an increase in demand from our clients for Aeration, Overseeding, Top Dressing and both natural and synthetic turf maintenance equipment.

Our subsequent market research confirmed the quality and established reputation of the Redexim Charterhouse product range and we have also found the dealer support and back-up to be excellent.”

BBS PRODUCES NEW COMBINED CATALOGUE

British Seed Houses has produced a new product catalogue which combines its Grade 1 amenity grass seed and fertilisers in one booklet.

The new look catalogue details the comprehensive range of products available from the UK’s largest privately-owned grass seed company and has been well received by customers.

Amenity sales manager Richard Brown said: “We look to improve the catalogue year on year to ensure it is a well-laid out, informative guide. It was a natural progression for us to combine the seed and fertiliser catalogues together, rather than having separate ones, as it was felt more appropriate for our customers.

“Products are closely interlinked and our technical sales representatives advise on both seed and fertilisers. They have specialist knowledge and experience to help professionals in the golf, sports and landscaping sectors to find the correct grass seeds and fertilisers to benefit and improve their facilities.”

The representatives operate throughout the UK and are also FACTS qualified (Fertiliser Advisers Certification Training scheme). The British Seed Houses product catalogue is available to download at www.bsheadenity.com

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GREENSMOWER EVER.
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As he explains: “We didn’t get a great deal of use out of the iron last summer because of all the rain, but when we did use it the results confirm that smoothness and trueness improved. Also, surface performance achieved near tournament levels with less than half the washout typical of our greens.”

Wayne’s other new mowers include a Groundsmaster 3500-D and 4500-D, and a Reelmaster 6700-D. “I’ve particularly noticed that the 4500-D rotary mower has a much quicker grounds speed, which makes more productive,” he adds.

A machine Wayne did get plenty of use out of during the washout summer was the SandPro 3040 bunker raker. “We bought a front plough as an optional extra and it pushed all the sand up despite the rain and really helped us to get the bunkers back into play more quickly after a downpour.”

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It’s bonnie by the Clyde

How have Gordon Kerr and his team brought PGA EuroPro Tour events to a course which only opened less than three years ago? And what are the technical challenges associated with such a young course? Steve Castle travelled to Scotland to find out.

The “opportunity of a lifetime” is what Course Manager Gordon Kerr calls Mar Hall. For those who have had the privilege to have set foot on the new £4 million layout situated on the banks of the River Clyde beneath the striking silhouette of the Kilpatrick Hills, it’s easy to see why.

In 2007 Gordon was approached to oversee the creation of an 18-hole golf course within the grounds of the five-star Mar Hall Resort. With a provisional opening date of 2010 in mind, the challenge was on—and he accepted.

Gordon, who lives just four miles from the course and is an avid golfer himself, recalls: “It was a dream to be involved in constructing a course from scratch.” Gordon and his five-strong team, who moved to Mar Hall from nearby Gledswood House Hotel and Golf Club, immediately went to work on the plans devised by renowned architect Dave Thomas and his son, Paul, who he says he relished working closely with.

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However, though Mar Hall represented a timely opportunity,
construction coincided with the onset of the economic recession. With funds limited, the Course Manager had to rely on ingenuity, local knowledge and, more than anything, the adaptability and effort of his team to deliver on the owner’s chief objective - a course that would allow golf all year round. Unperturbed, ground was broken and Gordon turned to tried and tested local contractors and asked colleagues to take on the roles of dumper truck-drivers and excavators. Together they moved an amassed 160,000 cubic meters of sub soil – mostly stony shingle – and were ready to start building proper.

“We do get a fair bit of rain, but 80 per cent of the course is built on the riverbank’s shingle ground. It was a good starting point as far as drainage is concerned.

“We’re not permitted to drain water straight into the Clyde so we created an irrigation reservoir and four wetlands as catchments areas. The sub-soil redistributed by the Mar Hall team on their convoy of dumper trucks and then moulded by skilled shapers into greens, surrounds and bunker complexes. Ironically, it was those sand traps that would prove to be Gordon’s next ‘hazard’.

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The original plan was to turf all the bunker faces and install pipe and gravel for drainage. He intended to embark on the painstaking and costly job until, at the last minute, he was introduced to two techniques he’d never seen before - hydroseeding and Aquadyne. They proved to be shrewd alternatives.

“Aquadyne is a sustainable drainage product that removes water as efficiently as pipe and gravel,” he explains. “It was a bit sceptical at first but I spoke to a couple of greenkeepers who reassured me it was the best long-term option.”

The Aquadyne was soon inserted and connected to the existing fairway drainage during winter without damage to the shaping of the bunkers or what would be the fairways or green surrounds. This meant that all 54 bunkers could be shaped. They were then hydroseeded in just two days, saving a massive amount of manpower, machinery and materials.

“These techniques saved us both money and time without compromising the condition of the bunkers. Can you imagine how time-consuming and expensive turfing would have been in comparison? It also meant we completed all of the required work in just two days.”

However, the he says that ultimately it took the hard graft of his team to realise the full benefits of the switch to Aquadyne.

“The winter our guys would dig trenches by hand and connect the Aquadyne to the fairway drainage we’d already put in. It means that you now hardly ever see a bunker with water in it. Both those techniques saved us a lot of money, as did using our own guys on occasions we could have used outside contractors.”

With the drainage installed, Gordon turned to a contractor he knew he could trust to carry out the final shaping, Greentech of Stirling. Their experts delivered the finishing touches using vital root-zone prior to seeding. That left the Mar Hall greens staff with another steep learning curve - seeding the greens. He admits the seeding process was the most stressful stage of the whole construction.

“I’d never seeded greens before, and when I spoke to other greenkeepers they told me all sorts of horror stories about the seed blowing away or root-zone being washed out.”

“The greens are fescue bent, and we’ve got dwarf ryegrass on the tees and fairways to make them hard-wearing”