Golf courses provide an essential haven for some of the UK’s most endangered insect species, and potentially hold the key to restoring populations of essential pollinating insects.

A new study, to provide a scientific approach to pollinator conservation efforts on golf courses, has revealed some fascinating finds - including the extremely rare bumblebee, Bombus ruderatus, on Operation Pollinator habitat at Rutland County Golf Club in Leicestershire.

The extensive study, by leading independent entomologist and ecologist, Mike Edwards, on some of the golf courses involved in the Syngenta Operation Pollinator initiative across the UK, has catalogued the diversity of insect species present, and the habitat potential to increase both the numbers and range of insect species.

Commenting on the study’s results, Mr Edwards highlighted that whilst some individual golf clubs already have areas of outstanding interest for wildlife, there remains a large number where the potential to make a real contribution had yet to be realised.

“Many of the older clubs have areas that reflect the sort of countryside management that used to exist before modern agricultural production became established. All too often, however, these areas have sadly been unmanaged and of limited ecological value,” he said.

“Providing expertise and support in restoring such flowers rich grasslands with the Syngenta Operation Pollinator initiative can make a major contribution to the conservation of our flora and fauna.”

The discovery of Bombus ruderatus on Rutland County Golf Club was an especially exciting discovery, since the species was considered on the verge of extinction just a few years ago, with no records of the bumblebee in the area since 1994. However, Mr Edwards recalled that, when Operation Pollinator habitat had been created on farmland over the past decade, B ruderatus was again rediscovered from the point of extinction, and is successfully on the way back to recovering its former distribution.

Rutland County Golf Club Head Greenkeeper Jamie Goddard believes the colour and wildlife in the club’s new Operation Pollinator wildflower areas will enhance the whole experience of playing the course for golfers, as well as providing a valuable habitat for local pollinating insects.

“The fact that we already have the incredible find of the rare Bombus ruderatus on the course highlights the ecological value of golf courses. Now we can actively manage areas to make them even more attractive for bumblebees and other pollinators, alongside a great course for players, makes it even more exciting.”

One of the key aspects of successfully restoring or establishing wildflowers in areas of golf course rough is the removal of competitive coarse grasses that dominate thick, dense rough, according to Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson. Autumn applications of the selective herbicide, Rescue, offer an ideal opportunity to clean up and thin out invasive grass species such as ryegrass.

Rescue should be applied whilst the coarse grasses are actively growing, to aid uptake of the systemic herbicide. Dr Watson added: “Extensive research and user trials have shown high levels of kill can be achieved with well-timed autumn applications.”

“The added advantage of autumn application is that the plants are naturally senescing, which limits the visual impact of treatments.”

Rescue is approved for use at the rate of 1.0 l/ha in the autumn, with optimum results achieved using the Syngenta XC Pollar Nozzle to minimise the effect of undulations or variable vegetation height and to achieve all round coverage of the leaf, applying in a water volume of 250-300 l/ha.

Brian Hughes has been promoted to Head Greenkeeper at Whickham Golf Club in County Durham – and he’s made a real impact recently by using compost teas.

Brian has been at the parkland course for over 225 years, and has witnessed difficult times, particularly over the last few years.

However he now enjoys the full backing of the club and is proud that their greens are continuing to improve thanks to his use of compost teas.

Brian said: “Just like many other clubs we had a hard time of it recently and unfortunately the club had to make difficult financial decisions which involved some redundancies. But we’ve come through the other side and we’ve a stronger unit now.

“I started using compost teas two years ago and it’s been brilliant, the greens are in great condition. They just feel healthier - we’ve got away from the sterile soils of the past. It’s great to feel that you’re doing something right from a greenkeeping point of view, we don’t use any chemical fungicides at all on our greens now. It’s saved us loads of money on fungicides.

“I feel the club is ahead of the game compared to others, areas of long rough have been extremely well managed thanks to the accuracy of the system. The rough is smooth and even, the fairways are still the best we have had in years.”

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Membership News
The latest news from BIGGA

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As well as various seminars we also have a range of workshops during the day.

We kick things off with the Midland Regional Conference at Forest Hill Golf Club on Wednesday 6 November. This includes seminars from Lee Stuart MG, Course Manager at G West International Resort, on how to build a budget, and a presentation from Henry Becket, Technical Sales Manager for Everris, on soil moisture management. The day costs £15 for BIGGA members and £25 for non-members.

Hot on the heels of the Midland Conference is the Northern Regional Conference on Thursday 7 November at The Phoenix Sports and Social Club. Among the highlights is Ian MacPherson, Renewable Energy Product Manager for Rain Bird UK looking at renewable energy, and Stuart Yarwood MG and Paul Lovering’s seminar on soil biology with practical greening up. The cost is just £10 for members and £20 for non-members.

The South East Regional Conference on Tuesday 19 November at Hadlow College. Speakers include David Jerrard above left) and Arc Macdonald on past and present greening up strategies and techniques, and John Ross MG from Compliant Grounds on accident causation. The South East conference will also see the continuing education programme at BTME 2014.

CONTACT TO LEARN AT BTME 2014

We’ve also signed up some new experts for 2014. Shona Garner – Director of Shona Garner Coaching Services – will be presenting ‘How to Be an Outstanding Manager Part Five’. Two Master Greenkeepers – Les Howkins from The Richmond and Lee Strutt from Ochil Developments – West, will be looking at ‘Mathematics for Modern Greening’.

Other highlights include Michael Altrup, Principal at Coach the Mind, showing you how to prepare and write effective reports, and a presentation on enhancing personal effectiveness from Wendy Shortman – Wellness Consultant at Life Matters.

The Turf Managers’ Conference will again be a cornerstone of the entire week with a superb line-up of experts from across the world, delivering fascinating, educational presentations. We’ve attracted the likes of Dr Karl Dziewanek, Professor of Turfgrass Science at Ohio State University, Karl Morris – Managing Director of the Mind Factor – and Mark Hunt, Technical Director at Headland Amenity.

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TRIO AWARDED RAMSOMES-JACOBSEN SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to three BIGGA members based in the UK and America who have been awarded BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships supported by Ramsomes-Jacobson worth £1,000. Jason O’Hare, who works at Gatton Manor Hotel Golf & Country Club, will attend Merist Wood College to study NVQ Level 7 in Sportsturf.

David Thompson, First Assistant Greenkeeper at Henham Golf Club, will go to Myresco College to study a Foundation Degree in FIDSC Sportsturf. The final award goes to Robbie Bond, currently a greenskeeper at Augusta National Golf Club. He will now undertake an Associates Degree at Penn State.

The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

Contact Details

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Tracey Maddison@bigga.co.uk

L&D News

Follow BIGGA on Twitter (option 1 for Membership)

Greenkeepers Legal

Tel: 020 762 8952
Email: greenkeeperslegal@bigga.co.uk

Lifestyle Counselling Helpline

Tel: 0800 177 7891
Email: carefirst@arclegal.co.uk

Consultant at Life Matters.

Read more about the RGU seminar on modern greenkeeping at BTME 2014 in this month’s Greenkeeper Today. Book your place at www.lifematters.org.uk/rgu-seminar.

Current Gold Key Members

North East & Yorkshire

Mobile: 07776 242120
Email: Tracey Harvey

South West & Wales

Mobile: 07747 650115
Email: Tracey Harvey

South East

Mobile: 07776 242120
Email: Tracey Harvey

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The latest news from BIGGA

Following the Greenkeeper International survey, we’ve revamped the Membership pages – and we want you to get involved.

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The South West and South Wales Regional Conferences takes place on Thursday 21 November at The Daltree Arena in Highbridge. Highlights include Steve Chappell’s seminar on preparing for the 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, Jason Brooks (above) volunteering at The Phoenix Sports Club, seminars on soil biology with Conflict, and Seminars on Social Club. Among the other speakers are: Ian MacPherson – present seminars.

Seminars and Workshops

Scott & Northern Ireland

Mentor: Martin Bogie

Northern & Midland

Mentor: Mark Wragg

South East

Mentor: Dougie Robertson

South West & Wales

Mentor: Chris Lomas

John Ross MG from Compliant and Political Agreement will go to Myerscough College to present seminars on Accident Caution. The seminars will again be a cornerstone of the Conference.

Shona Garrett MG, Director of Shona Garrett Coaching Services, will present ‘The ‘Outstanding Manager Part Five’. Two Master Greenkeepers, Les Howkins from The Richmond and Lee Strutt from Owel Development, will be looking at ‘Mathematics for Modern Greenkeeping’.

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This month’s Greenkeeper International features a booklet giving you all the details of the Continue to Learn education programme at BTME 2014. Our two day workshops will take place on Sunday 19 and Monday 20 January. We’ve got Golf Course Architect Howard Swan talking about renovating your golf course. Frank Newbery’s advice on moving into management and Paul Miller on fungicides, acids and fertilizers.

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GI

INDUSTRY UPDATE

The latest turf industry news from around the globe

COUNTRYWIDE T&A TEAM INVESTS IN EXPERIENCE

Countrywide is delighted to announce the addition of Roger Clark to its Turf & Amenity team.

Roger will be supporting customers throughout Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

"Roger has held key roles at some of the UK’s top golf clubs and brings industry experience,” says top golf clubs and brings roles at some of the UK’s Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Amenity team.

Amenity team.

Countrywide is delighted to announce the addition to its Turf & Countrywide has now been appointed sole European distributor.

The new warehouse facility will be up and running from the end of October 2013 and the current sales support operation for the north of England and Scotland to a new sales office within Horwich.

As regards the company's other regional maintenance and office facilities, the Newbridge branch near Edinburgh has recently entered into a joint venture with their local authority branch in Surrey provides excellent stocking and supply arrangements throughout southern England and south Wales.

"His knowledge over 21 years, spans the entire turf and amenity sector, combining both technical sales and practical knowledge and skills. I have no doubt that he will become a key member of our growing team of dedicated turf professionals and will be valued by customers and colleagues alike."

BASIS and FACTS qualified, Roger can advise on the use of pesticides and fertilisers and is keen to put his in-depth experience to the use of Countrywide customers – course managers, greenkeepers and groundstaff whose problems and pressures he fully appreciates.

"The demands today are tremendous,” says Roger, “Golf courses, football grounds, sports study now operate 365 days a year so the challenge to create healthy turf that lasts all year round. My advantage is that I understand customers’ needs and enjoy working closely with them - and within any constraints they have - to advise on the best products to improve and maintain their surfaces.

"Whether it’s grass seed, top dressings, fertilisers, or our substantial portfolio of pesticides and herbicides, it is much easier to recommend certain products when you have likely used them yourself!”

Joining Countrywide seemed like a natural career progression for Roger: "I kept coming up against Countrywide as a competitor so, in the end, if you can't beat ’em, join ’em! Another big advantage for me was my experience of using ’Bustane’, the organic, slow release fertilisers of which Countrywide has now been appointed sole European distributors.

"This new role will give me the opportunity to use all the knowledge and experience I have gained over my 21 years in the industry to deliver first class results for greenkeepers, course managers and groundstaff as part of the very vibrant, proactive Countrywide team."

GROWING PLACES

Following a challenging trading year for the amenity market in general, industry leader Rigid Taylor is delighted to announce a sales growth of almost 6% for the year ending July 2013. A number of company initiatives were at the heart of this growth including a record supply arrangement of total herbicides to Network Rail, new product developments including the Microlote macro granular fertilizer range and a dynamic, company rebranding programme.

Planning for the future with great optimism, a strategy that has been implemented in preparation for planned additional growth this year and beyond with a move to larger warehousing premises in Stallingborough, North Lincolnshire. This move, at a stroke, provides increased capacity of some 15% over the existing site at Horwich and, offers the flexibility for further expansion.

The 100-inch mower deck, called the 100 EFK, is exclusively available on Kubota’s F3680 as this model has the ideal homower requirements for a 100-inch cut width.

The solution has been designed so all the deck pans articulate independently 15 degrees up and down to follow the ground contour with walk-mower precision, which reduces the possibilities of scalping.

Other features include hydraulic operated fold up outsides pans to maximise width for transport and an adjustable deck height ranging from 1-inch to 4 ¾ inches with ⅛ inch increments with no tooling requirement.

Adjustable internal baffling also allows for standard rear discharge or multi-chute to optimise performance in a variety of positions.

Following the success of the launch of Kubota’s F3680, the tractor and groundscore specialist has introduced a Lastec 100-inch flex mower deck for use with the unit, to provide superior groundcare performance.

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Adrian Langmead, Business Development Manager at Kubota, commented: “The introduction of the mower deck is part of Kubota’s ongoing commitment to add value to every product along with 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 users valuable time and money.”

The most powerful out front mower in the Kubota range, the F3680 features an efficient 36hp engine diesel engine and Auto-Assist 4WD as standard. It has been designed to offer maximum manoeuvrability and versatility over undulating surfaces, whilst being able to tackle the most demanding operations on the golf course.

The unit also feature Kubota’s unique deck suspension and weight transfer system ensuring the mower blades are kept in perfect alignment with the ground at all times, resulting in an even cut no matter what the surface.

For busy golf courses, Kubota understand it’s imperative that maintenance can be conducted on site with ease to ensure greenkeeping teams can run smoothly. That’s why the F3680 has been designed with a tilt up hood, easy to clean integrated radiator screen and dual element air filter meaning maintenance couldn’t be simpler.

The F3680 also includes a host of features to increase operator comfort and reduce fatigue, such as hydrostatic power steering, deluxe adjustable seat, conveniently positioned operator levers and a single HST pedal resulting in longer, more productive periods of operation.

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Among a range of new product launches from Etesia this autumn are two high quality professional rotary mowers, two domestic pedestrian lawn mowers and a new revolutionary electric wheelbarrow.

The PR250M 66cm and LRC30M 53cm models join the Dizcounter range. Both machines are available with mulching features ensuring that users can use one machine for a multitude of different tasks – cut and collect, cut and drop or mulch.

The PR250M in a single speed machine equipped with a 6HP Kawasaki KAF-181 engine and comes complete with a long range fuel tank making it ideal for mobile grass cutting teams who require a machine to last all day without re-fuelling, whilst the LRC30M model is equipped with a 4HP Kawasaki KAF-181S engine and has three speeds – 2.7, 5.5 and 1.5 km/h.

Completing the new product launch is the new revolutionary 100% electric wheelbarrow which is available with a range of attachments that can tackle a wide variety of jobs.
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“Whether it’s grass seed, top dressings, fertilisers, or our substantial portfolio of pesticides and herbicides, it is much easier to recommend certain products when you have likely used them yourself.”

Joining Countrywide seemed like a natural career progression for Roger: “I kept coming up against Countrywide as a competitor so, in the end, if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em! Another big advantage for me was my experience of using ‘Rustane’, the organic, slow release fertilisers of which Countrywide has now been appointed sole European distributors.

“This new role will give me the opportunity to use all the knowledge and experience I have gained over my 21 years in the industry to deliver first class results for greenkeepers, course managers and groundstaff as part of the very vibrant, proactive Countrywide team.”

GROWING PLACES

Following a challenging trading year for the amenity market in general, industry leader Rigby Taylor is delighted to announce a sales growth of almost 6% for the year ending July 2013.

A number of company initiatives were at the heart of this growth including an inward supply arrangement of total herbicides to Network Rail, new product developments including the Microblade mc25 granular fertilizer spreader and a dynamic, company rebranding programme.

Planning for the future with great optimism, a strategy has been implemented in preparation for planned additional growth this year and beyond with a move to larger warehousing premises in Stallingborough, North Lincolnshire. This move, at a stroke, provides increased capacity of some 15% over the existing site at Horwich and, offers the flexibility for further expansion.

The new warehouse facility will be up and running from the end of October 2013 and the current sales support operation for the north of England and Scotland will relocate to new sales office within Horwich.

As regards the company’s other regions, as well as existing warehouse and office facilities, the Newbridge branch near Edinburgh has recently entered into a joint venture with a local trade counter in Glasgow serving the west of Scotland and the recently launched branch in Scunthorpe provides excellent stocking and supply arrangements throughout southern England and south Wales.

Only recently Rigby Taylor returned to SALTEX after a five year absence to launch a number of new products and maintaining its position as the UK’s foremost turf professionals, this means a big advantage for me was my experience of using ‘Rustane’, the organic, slow release fertilisers of which Countrywide has now been appointed sole European distributors.

“His knowledge over 21 years, spans the entire turf and amenity sector, combining both technical sales and professional knowledge and skills. I have no doubt that he will become a key member of our growing team of dedicated turf professionals and will be valued by customers and colleagues alike.”

Following the success of the launch of Kubota’s F3680, the tractor and groundcare specialist has introduced a Lastec 100-inch flex mower deck for use with the unit, to provide superior groundcare performance.

The 100-inch mower deck, called the 100 EFF, is exclusively available on Kubota’s F3680 as this model has the ideal homogenizer requirements for a 100-inch cut width.

The solution has been designed so all the deck pans articulate independently 15 degrees up and down to follow the ground contour with walk-behind precision, which reduces the possibilities of scalping.

Other features include hydraulic operated fold out up outer pans to minimise width for transport and an adjustable deck height ranging from 1-inch to 4 ½ 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.

Adrian Langmead, Business Development Manager at Kubota, commented: "The introduction of the mower deck is part of Kubota’s ongoing commitment to add value to every product along with 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 users valuable time and money."

The most powerful out front mower in the Kubota range, the F3680 features an efficient 36hp engine, diesel engine and Auto-Assist 4WD as standard. It has been designed to offer maximum manoeuvrability and versatility over undulating surfaces, whilst being able to tackle the most demanding operations on the golf course.

The unit also feature Kubota’s unique deck suspension and weight transfer system ensuring the mower blades are kept in perfect alignment with the ground at all times, resulting in an even cut no matter what the surface.

For busy golf courses, Kubota understand it’s imperative that maintenance can be conducted on site with ease to ensure greenkeeping teams can run smoothly. That’s why the F3680 has been designed with a tilt up hood, easy to clean integrated radiator screen and dual element air filter meaning maintenance couldn’t be simpler.

The F3680 also includes a host of features to increase operator comfort and reduce fatigue, such as hydrostatic power steering, deluxe adjustable seat, conveniently positioned operator levers and a single HST pedal resulting in longer, more productive periods of operation.

Among a range of new product launches from Etesia this autumn are two high quality professional rotary mowers, two domestic pedestrian lawn mowers and a new revolutionary electric wheelbarrow.

The PACTM 46cm and LRCCT 53cm models join the Dianc range. Both machines are available with mulching inserts ensuring that users can use one machine for a multitude of different tasks – cut and collect, cut and drop or mulch.

The PACTM model is a single speed machine equipped with a 2.4 hp Kawasaki F518S engine and comes complete with a long range fuel tank making it ideal for mobile grass cutting teams that require a machine to last all day without re-fuelling, whilst the LRCCT model is equipped with a 4.8 hp Kawasaki F518S engine and has three speeds – 2.7, 3.5 and 4.1 km/h.

Completing the new product launches is the new revolutionary 100% electric wheel barrow.

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After completing his A Levels he studied Politics at University, and after moving down to Eastbourne he applied to and was accepted by the Met. However, just a month into his training Luke and the other students were told the money to run their apprenticeships had run out. Luke recalled: “They got rid of every single one of us. It was a real shock; I had my career plan mapped out for some time, then it was suddenly taken away from me. I had to start all over again.

“In a way it was quite exciting, but I just wasn’t sure which direction my career was heading which was unsettling. I knew a couple of guys who worked for the local council, and they told me they needed some seasonal workers at Devonshire Park Lawn Tennis Club. I play tennis as well as several other sports so I thought, why not? I ended up spending a couple of enjoyable and interesting years there, then I heard there was a greenkeeper’s job going at a local golf club – Willingdon.

“I applied and had an interview with the club’s Course Manager Peter Negus. I was honest and admitted greening up hadn’t been my original career choice, but I was very keen to learn. He replied that if I put the hours in he would help as much as he could and he’s been true to his word – he’s been an inspiration.

“In fact, I think he liked that I had a clean slate. He immediately enrolled me on a Level Two at Plumpton College, and I’m now starting the second year of my Level Three Diploma in Golf Course Supervision and Sports Turf Management.”

So, as a new comer to greenkeeping what struck him immediately? “My first impression was the importance of time management. Devonshire Park is a closed venue for most of the year, so you cut the courts at roughly the pace you want. But at the golf club you start cutting at 6.30am and people are teeing off at 7.30am – the pace of work to keep ahead of golfers was a shock to the system. It was also difficult at first to keep up with the other greenkeepers’ speed of work, until you get the hang of it a few months in.

Willingdon is an Alister Mackenzie downland course, stretching over 110 acres and built on a natural bowl two miles from the coast. It has a chalk base ensuring excellent drainage. The area also boasts the title of the sunniest place on the mainland UK – so how has Luke made his mark?

“I’m aware of being respectful of the traditions of the industry, but equally I’m happy to question a lot of things. If someone says ‘it’s always been done this way’ I may question it and reply ‘wouldn’t this way be better?’

“Luke added: “One of Luke’s successful initiatives is introducing a club Twitter feed – @willingdongolf. “The greens chairman wanted a Facebook page but I argued that was the wrong medium – I wanted something immediate and easy to use, and I used a couple of Twitter feeds from prestigious clubs to support my argument. During the winter months I can simply type – ‘loads of rain overnight but we’re open, grab your waterproofs and come for a round of golf.’ So if other courses in the area are closed and golfers are looking for somewhere to play, they look at our website and see we’re open from our Twitter feed – they don’t even need to call us. It’s great for educating the members and communicating with them too.

“I’m in the perfect team to help me further my career. I’m trying to absorb knowledge from Peter when it comes to downland course management as he’s been at Willingdon for a number of years. He’s very hands-on, he has to be because there are only four of us. Matt Webb worked for M.J Abbott doing golf course construction and also went through the Ohio State programme,
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Back to the final. As well as an in depth interview the candidates were asked to report on the compaction and thatch layer on three specific teeing grounds. They also had to come up with a programme of work required to improve them. So how had he emerged as the winner from some genuinely tough competition?

"I rated several aspects of the condition of the tees on a scale of 1 to 5 on colour, vigour, root growth, moisture, damage and so on. But I also looked at other aesthetic touches. I suggested adding a raised sleeper flower bed or some decorative bark or gravel – it doesn’t cost much but it makes a big difference on the impression golfers get as they walk to the tee. Simple measures achievable within realistic budgets, and similar to work we did on our course last winter. We aim for uniformity – set a good standard on the first tee and carry that on for 18 holes."

He admits he was ecstatic but also shocked to have won, and had one immediate concern. "The logistics started going through my head – was my boss being honest when he said he wouldn’t mind me having two months off to go to America?"

"I can’t wait to go, I’ve never been to the States. The education programme is bound to massively shape my career and I can bring so much knowledge back. Even if some of it doesn’t necessarily apply to our little downland course, I’m sure I’ll be able to use the knowledge gained to my advantage for the rest of my career. Maybe I’ll also be able to play a game of American Football, I play rugby and I think it would be fun to see how much damage I could cause with the helmet and all the padding!"

He’s clearly a busy man with work, cycling, surfing, rugby and the gym leaving little spare time, although he’s determined to improve his 28 handicap after recently taking up the game. He admits he currently merely tries to thrash the ball as far as he can, leading to a string of lost balls on the club’s tough 6th hole. But what’s his career ambition?

"I want to be a Course Manager. I’d love to work on a links course because I more or less grew up on a beach. I love surfing – so maybe a course in Devon or Cornwall. But in the next few years I’d love to work abroad, learn another language, and immerse myself in a different culture."

The Met’s loss is clearly greenkeeping’s gain.

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What’s it like to be in charge of the golf course on the Marquess of Landsdowne’s Estate on Grade One Listed parkland designed by Capability Brown? It’s all in a day’s work for Jaey Goodchild as Steve Castle discovered.