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 XFP™ 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.
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Jaey said: “It’s picture postcard stuff – just what you would expect.”

Now we’ve every confidence we’ll be summoned for afternoon tea – and I half expected to cross the set of ‘Downton Abbey’ – and I half expected to accidentally stumble across the set of ‘Downton Abbey’

The official monthly magazine of British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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OCTOBER 2013
Chairman’s Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

Students shine in Toro final

Warmest congratulations to Luke Turner on winning the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2013. I'm fortunate enough to have been Chairman during two of these competitions, and I can’t stress enough my pride in seeing enthusiastic, knowledgeable and personable young greenkeepers making their way in the industry. I’d also like to extend my congratulations to all of the eight finalists.

Just reaching the last stage is a superb achievement which will rarely stand out on their CVs and set them up perfectly for success in the future.

Also, I know from speaking to them that they relished the opportunity not only to network and exchange greenkeeping advice and opinions with the other finalists, who work at a range of courses the length and breadth of the UK, but also to visit BIGGA House.

For most of them it was their first visit and I’m delighted to say I heard several comments mentioning how welcoming our staff were and the generally positive atmosphere, which contributed to everyone socialising together in the evening.

This sort of camaraderie, shared knowledge and genuine friendship is unheard of in some industries and we should count ourselves lucky to be involved in it.

I would like to publicly thank Toro for their superb continued support of the competition, and also Sania, Rachael and Stuart from HQ who have put so much time and effort into the successful organisation of it.

I’m now hugely looking forward to the BIGGA National Tournament at Pridds Heath Golf Club.

We’ve increased the publicity around this event, dropped the entry price and increased the prize fund thanks to the generous sponsorship from Charterhouse and Kubota and I’m pleased to say this has led to a rise in the number of entrants.

I look forward to meeting Sid Arossmith MG, his team and all of the members who are looking forward to testing their wits against this fine course.

Hopefully I will avoid becoming marooned in any bunkers as I did during last year’s event at Irvine Bogside!

That couple of days during last year’s National Championship in Scotland stood out for me last year and one major reason was the weather.

It felt as if summer finally arrived for a couple of days in Ayrshire in October. Thankfully, this year we’ve had something approaching a good, dry summer.

Last year featured a depressing number of cancellations of golf days and other events organised by BIGGA members.

I know many of you go well out of your way to arrange these events, and I’m delighted to hear that this summer so many of them have been great successes played in glorious weather.

Please support these events if you possibly can – keep an eye on the new-look Around the Green plus Section Facebook pages etc for details.

My focus hasn’t changed during my tenure as Chairman – keep moving BIGGA towards becoming a must-join Association.

I’ve mentioned the benefits of joining so many times during my tenure as Chairman I must be starting to sound like a broken record but I make no apology for that – this was our focus when I took over and it remains our focus now.

Tony

Contact details

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

“This camaraderie, shared knowledge and genuine friendship is unheard of in some industries”
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Good aeration is vital to the health and presentation of your turf.

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KEITH KENSETT

Everyone at BIGGA was shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Keith Kensett of R&K Kensett in September.

One of his many good friends in the industry is Peter Bradburn, an expert in the start up of golf course businesses in the UK and Mediterranean for the past 20 years.

He said: “It is unequivocally that in a small industry such as the turf and golf sector we are all going to lose acquaintances and colleagues over the passing of the years. But the unexpected news about Keith will create a void in many people’s lives.

“It was first introduced to Keith over 15 years ago, in another country on another grow-in but it was struck by his dedication and tenacity in getting the message across, his way was the right way of doing renovation maintenance and that was it."

In the intervening years, I have listened to, discussed with and learnt from him on a whole range of subjects to do with growing good grass. It was not unusual to receive a call from him late in the evening as he returned from a job and would want to bounce an idea off you. That was the kind of guy he was and you just loved him for it: uninquorious, inovative and resourceful."

“Knowing Keith, you inevitably get to know his family and the extent of the class that is R&K Kensett. My heartfelt sympathies and condolences go out to Jane and the boys during this difficult time and the team at the family business.

“It is a very pretty course, we’ve recently had a few new members join too so I want to help reach its full potential.”

Most people are now aware of the story so far surrounding the first UK finding of Cryphoniectria parasitica (blight) in November 2011 at a farm in Warwickshire on sweet chestnut trees (Castanea sativa) planted in 2007 and sourced from a nursery in France. However, tacked away in one of the numerous reports regularly produced by the UK plant health authorities (this one by Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA)*) is an account which reveals a considerably more complex and higher risk situation.

First infected trees in the UK were indeed found in November 2011 at the unnamed Warwickshire farm, but on trees planted in different time frames and on different sites, having arrived at the farm along different distribution chains.

Eighty of the infected trees were planted in 2007, having been sourced from the French nursery, but an additional ten infected trees on a different site were planted later. These were purchased from a nursery in Devon which had sourced its stock from the same French nursery.

By the time the UK plant health authorities started to investigate, the nursery in Devon had sold all of its sweet chestnut stock. A Forestry Commission (FC) and Environment Research Agency (FERA) report shows how some 90 consignments of potentially infected trees were dispatched to sites across the UK.

The report says subsequent trace back through the records of both the French nursery and the UK supplier, by the Plant Health and Seed Inspectorate (PHSI) and the FC, led to the identification (as of April 2013) of nine further UK sites with infected trees.

PC focused on distribution of consignments of more than 10 trees leading to 30+ infected trees being found on an East Sussex farm and two infected trees at a private residence in Herefordshire. By May 2013 PHSI had additionally traced infected trees to seven private residences and one additional nursery mostly in southeast England.

The risk of sweet chestnut blight establishing in the UK does not end there. FERA says the vast majority of trees supplied by the French nursery into the UK were sold mail order by several different distributors, and that customer lists for deliveries made prior to 2011 are difficult to obtain.

No wonder the government has rushed to ban imports of sweet chestnut from known blight infected areas in Europe. If all goes pear shaped then the government will no doubt claim it took appropriate and timely action. However, with potentially infected trees at apparently still unknown locations in the UK it could already be too late.

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CHRIS IS NEW HEAD AT PRESTWICH

Chris Harding is the new Head Greenkeeper at Prestwich Golf Club in Greater Manchester. Previously a Deputy at Dunham Forest Golf & Country Club in nearby Eccles, Chris has joined the 18-hole parkland course with the intention of making his mark in his first Head Greenkeeper role.

He said: “It’s a challenge and it’s one I’m really looking forward to. My first focus is to improve the greens because they have suffered with thatch here.

“It’s a very pretty course, we’ve recently had a few new members join too so I want to help reach its full potential.”

Chris currently has just one colleague on the greenkeeping staff although they are currently interviewing for a third member of staff. He said: “It is unavoidable that in a small industry such as the turf and golf sector we are all going to lose acquaintances and colleagues over the passing of the years.

The unexpected news about Keith will create a void in many people’s lives.

“I was first introduced to Keith over 15 years ago, in another country on another grow-in but I was struck by his dedication and tenacity in getting the message across, his way was the right way of doing renovation maintenance and that was that!

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“Knowing Keith, you inevitably got to know the family and the extended clan that is R&K Kensett.

“My heartfelt sympathies and condolences go out to Jane and the boys during this time and the team at the family business.

“Rest in peace old fella.”

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One of his many good friends in the industry is Peter Bradburn, an expert in the start up of golf course businesses in the UK and Mediterranean for the past 20 years. He said: “It’s an overused epithet at this time, but it is an overused epidemic.

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“I was first introduced to Keith over 15 years ago when he introduced me to Ted Kempton and the rest in peace old fella.”

GREAT AYTON WINS MCMILLAN TROPHY

Congratulations to Craig Ayton, greenkeeper at Foxhills Club & Resort, who won the Factory Section McMillan Trophy held at Sunningdale.

Craig scored 40 points to win the competition, which was held on the New Course. He was in being presented with the Trophy by Jack and Rita McMillan.

BIGGA SEMINARS A HIT AT SUNNY SALTEX

It was standing room only during our education programme at this year’s SALTEX.

We ran a whole day of free education presentations during the Wednesday of the show at a sweltering Windsor Racecourse – with CPD credits available for those attending.

Again we attracted experts from across the industry. Andy Wood, Course Manager at Robin Hood Golf Club, presented on greens drainage and was followed by Stuart Warwood’s seminar on managing and constructing bunkers on limited budgets. Stuart is Course Manager at Lynn Golf Club.

The day’s final seminar was from Dr Simon Watson – Syngenta Turf and Landscape Technical Manager – on winter disease on golf greens. Dr Watson is pictured above.

SWEET CHESTNUT BLIGHT UNCENSORED

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Dr Terry Mabbett
All too often, however, these areas have sadly been unmanaged and of limited ecological value,” he said. “Providing expertise and support in restoring such flower-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 Country 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 on the course for golfers, as well as providing a valuable habitat for valuable pollinating insects.

“Providing a full GPS map of the golf course and estate. The main key benefits that the software gives us is a really positive future.”

“Brian has been at the parkland course for over 25 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’re a stronger unit now.’’

Brian 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.