WILL THE MOWER WITH THE MOST POWER IN ITS CLASS... PLEASE RAISE YOUR ARM

NEW AR722T™

Nothing is more powerful than the all-new seven-gang AR722T™ contour rotary mower from Jacobsen. With a massive 48.6 kW (65.2 horsepower) Kubota® turbo-charged diesel engine, the AR722T powers its ultra-productive 3.15 metre (124-inch) width-of-cut without slowing down.

The AR722T glides over ground contours and climbs hills with ease – thanks to the exclusive SureTrac™ four-wheel drive traction and weight transfer control. See for yourself why the powerful and productive Jacobsen AR722T contour mower is at the head of its class – call your local Jacobsen dealer today.

The 2014 European Tour season finally reached these shores last month when the BMW PGA Championship took place at Wentworth. Rory McIlroy claimed a notable victory, amazingly his first professional win on European soil, coming out on top of a stellar leaderboard on a fascinating final day.

The greenkeeping team led by Kenny Mackay and Graham Matheson worked wonders and were ably supported by the BIGGA Support Team who, for the first time, match raked on all four days as well as assisting the on site crew in preparing the course and dealing with the inclement weather. I heard many tales of 15 hour days but tellingly they were told with pride and good humour.

We are grateful to all the volunteer greenkeepers who gave up their time to support the tournament, it is a credit to this industry to see so many qualified and experienced greenkeepers willingly volunteering their services in this way. It was a great team effort all round and played a huge part in ensuring that the paying and watching public were able to witness such an enthralling tournament.

On the subject of teamwork I am delighted that Everris have committed to sponsor the BIGGA Golf Management Trophy in 2014, details of which are on page 8.

This event provides a fantastic opportunity for Course Managers or Head Greenkeepers to spend time with senior decision makers from their club as a team in a competitive environment. Five qualifying events lead to a final at the excellent Frield Heath Golf Club and I look forward to seeing which club will be crowned the 2014 Golf Management Trophy winners.

Overcoming the wet at Wentworth

Whilst it would be far too glib to state that simply taking part in a golf tournament leads to a perfect team ethos within a club, it is clear that golf clubs that do have a team approach to management are better equipped to make effective decisions and produce a consistent, excellent product for their customers.

In an ideal world all golfers would be a part of the extended course management team, caring for the course, replacing divots and repairing all their pitchmarks.

Sadly this isn’t always the case and pitchmarks in particular cause a major issue for greenkeepers and golfers alike. We at BIGGA will be getting behind the second National Repair Your Pitchmark Day in August of this year, which began as a Twitter campaign in 2013 and gathered surprisingly strong momentum.

Enclosed within this edition is a poster for club noticeboards demonstrating the correct pitchmark repair method that we hope will bring further attention to this campaign and encourage golfers to do their bit for the course.

As always this magazine also contains numerous articles about BIGGA members, by BIGGA members and for BIGGA members. Enjoy the read.

Jim Croxton, Chief Executive
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The 2014 European Tour season finally reached these shores last month when the BMW PGA Championship took place at Wentworth. Rory McIlroy claimed a notable victory, amazingly his first professional win on European soil, coming out on top of a stellar leaderboard on a fascinating final day. The event was plagued with heavy rain and storms, leading to suspensions of play and delayed starts.

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A Stirling success

Stirling Golf Club has initiated a ten-year development programme. Course Manager James Lindsay is working closely with Swan Golf Designs to achieve a better golf course. Howard Swan outlines the plans, the reasons behind them and explains why a close and harmonious relationship between greenkeeper and architect is so important.

Howard Swan

HOW TO REPAIR A PITCHMARK

1. Take your ball mark repair tool and insert the prongs into the turf at the edge of the depression. Do NOT insert the prongs into the depression itself, but at the rim of the depression.
2. Then push the edge of the ball mark toward the centre, using your ball mark repair tool in a gentle twisting motion.
3. This is where golfers who try to repair ball marks usually mess up. Many golfers believe the way to fix a ball mark is to insert the tool at an angle, so the prongs are beneath the center of the crater, and then to use the tool as a lever to push the bottom of the ball mark back up even with the surface.
4. Do not do this! Pushing the bottom of the depression upward only tears the roots, and kills the grass.

Keep 14 August in mind and follow @greenkeeperdave @golfclubnbeds @clearswing on Twitter for details.
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Keep 14 August in mind and follow @greenkeeperdave @golfclubnbeds @clearswing on Twitter for details.
May was a momentous month for me and everybody at Chippenham – the culmination of seven years of blood, sweat and tears as our course redevelopment was completed.

As I’ve mentioned in previous columns, we’ve built four brand new holes and modified another three to improve the course layout and extend it by 600 yards. The initial plans were drawn up in 2007 and I feel like the project has taken up several years of my life!

In these situations, you find out how good your team really are. The expectations both from myself and of course the members were extremely high. It’s a huge responsibility and the key was to ensure that these new holes were up to the same high standard as the rest of the course when they opened.

Achieving this took a great deal of forward planning, a lot of communication with our committee, strong and effective team management and a coordinated and professional team effort. I’m delighted to say that it all came together perfectly and the team were up to the task.

On the weekend of 17/18 May we held a Members’ event with 200 members playing the new course layout on Saturday, and even more members and guests playing on the Sunday.

The feedback on the new holes was fantastic, everyone I spoke to was very positive.

The fabulous weather was a real bonus. It was perfect for the whole weekend, really bright sunshine with a cooling breeze. It’s no exaggeration to say if we had held it the weekend before it would have been a disaster as that weekend was incredibly windy with heavy showers resulting in branches, twigs and blossoms everywhere. It was a huge relief that conditions played their part in such a successful weekend.

I’m very proud to see everybody’s hard work come to fruition. We worked several 12 hour days and I did 14 on the Friday. On Saturday, after a 5am start, I played in the competition with the members. I know that many of you have been just as busy at this extremely busy time for turf managers.

“We all know it’s a tough job, but I’m sure you get the same feeling of satisfaction in a good job well done”
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We all know it's a tough job, but I'm sure you get the same feeling of satisfaction in a good job well done. When you see hundreds of golfers walking round the course in bright sunshine, having a laugh and enjoying the course, playing the holes you've spent years putting together and seeing the green stripes your team have mowed on the fairways looking lush, it truly does make it all worthwhile.

Away from Chippenham I headed over to Bowood for the Everris Turf Reward event. This is a great initiative for greenkeepers, groundsmen and their employers and I would like to thank Everris for their support.

I'm pleased to see the events touring a wide range of clubs across Great Britain and Ireland from Dublin to Wentworth to Loch Lomond.

This month I also presented a 'So You Want To Be Promoted' seminar at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club with John Keenaghan, which was a great success, and as this goes to press I will have visited the aforementioned Wentworth for the BMW PGA Championship.

As I'm sure you all know we have a larger BIGGA Support Team than usual offering a wider range of assistance to Kenny Mackay and all his team, and I'm very much looking forward to meeting them. I know they will gain so much from the experience.
Bernhard’s team of trainers have visited Scotland as part of a series of workshops in conjunction with BIGGA. The workshops presented to greenkeepers, club managers and mechanics are designed to inform and advise – and offered the opportunity for delegates to pick up CPD Credits.

The workshops, held at Royal Aberdeen, Turnhouse and Dundonald Golf Courses and Elwood College covered a range of subjects including the setting of cutting units, real maintenance, gridding and the benefits of correctly setting cutting units.

Wille Nieldt, himself a former greenkeeper at St Andrews Links and now Bernhard’s man in Scotland, said: “We have been very pleased with the feedback that we’ve had from these seminars. It is vitally important for busy greenkeeping staff to be able to set units quickly and efficiently. There is always something new to learn and judging by the comments we received afterwards, even the oldest dog can learn new tricks!”

“Good players notice the quality of the surface not just in terms of how it plays, but how the place looks. An exceptional shine on the course shows up the definition in the greens. As there’s no dead tissue, the green retains its colour and plays faster and more evenly.”

Ben Taylor, Bernhard Training Manager, began the seminars. He commented: “I introduced the delegates to the company and product, including the technicalities of angles, attitudes and details of cutting units. After a short presentation we went into the workshop where we ran through all features and benefits and demonstrated exactly what makes this machinery unique across the world. We then demonstrated how to sharpen quickly and efficiently.”

David Grey, First Assistant at Ladybank Golf Club, and former Bernhard Delegate, said: “This was a fantastic in-depth presentation which detailed the importance of maintaining sound sharp units and the many consequences of failing to do so. It was very interesting learning the various angles and how vital these are to achieve the perfect finish.”

Stuart Green, BIGGA’s Learning & Development Executive – Technical, added: “CPD is a vital tool in a turf professional’s career toolkit.

“It’s essential that greenkeepers update their skills, keep abreast of changes in legislation and maintain an awareness of current industry trends to benefit themselves and their employers. “BIGGA offers its members the opportunity to record their CPD through an online system and reward them for their efforts.”

BIGGA GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY LAUNCHED

BIGGA member Dave Macauley has celebrated a 40-year stint as Head Greenkeeper at Childwall Golf Club.

Dave began his greenkeeping career at 15, assistant greenkeeper at Royal Birkdale before joining Childwall – a par 4,000 yard course close in the Hoyton area of Liverpool – which was established in 1912.

He leads a five-strong greenkeeping team with a seasonal member joining in the summer.

He said: “We don’t have major events here but we’ve held many county matches down the years and we’re proud of our work here.

“We’ve reconstructed 16 of the 18 greens with work on the remaining two coming up, and all the work is always done in-house.”

40 YEARS FOR DAVE AT CHILDWALL
For more details please contact Regional Administrators Sandra Harper 07866 360066 (Scotland) bigga.co.uk, or Tracey Harvey on 07849 948110 (Ire) tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk

AERIAL BLITZ AGAINST OPM RETURNS

Aerial application of insecticide over West Berkshire in May 2013 against oak processionary moth (OPM), and reported first by Greenkeeper International in April 2011, will be repeated in May 2014 said the Forestry Commission in a surprise announcement.

Given the mower created by last year’s aerial spraying of the biological insecticide Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki (BG) and Brown’s copse near Pangbourne, this year’s blinks on nearby Sulham Woods, also a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), appears strange to say the least, and especially since no OPM nests were found in Berkshire in 2013. The action is apparently based on the capture of five male adult moths in late summer 2013 during a routine pest monitoring exercise using pheromone traps.

PC says this does not necessarily mean a viable breeding population of OPM is still present in the Pangbourne area but that there remain eradication of the pest a ‘priority’ as to why another round of aerial spraying, when last year’s operation clearly failed to do the trick’. In 2013 PC admitted they were unsure as to whether there were actually any pest insects in the treated woodland and despite the operation ‘eliminated the pest. It was very interesting learning the various angles and how vital these are to achieve the perfect finish.’

Stuart Green, BIGGA’s Learning & Development Executive – Technical, added, “CPD is a vital tool in a turf professional’s career toolkit. It’s essential that greenkeepers update their skills, keep abreast of changes in legislation and maintain an awareness of current industry trends to benefit themselves and their employers. “BIGGA’ offers its members the opportunity to record their CPD through an online system and reward them for their efforts.”

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BIGGA member Dave Masoney has celebrated a 40-year stint as Head Greenkeeper at Childwall Golf Club.

Dave began his greenkeeping career at 15, assistant eighteen to Head Bernhard Birkdale before joining Childwall – a parkland course close in the Hoyton area of Liverpool – which was established in 1912.

He leads a five-strong greenkeeping team with a seasonal member joining in the summer.

He said: “We don’t have major events here but we’ve held many county matches down the years and we’re proud of our work here.”
I'm three quarters of a mile beneath the ground, six miles out under the North Sea, and a busy miner, stubble only because of dim torchlight and his orange uniform, is tucking into a lunch of Dairylea Dunkers. Just another average Tuesday afternoon for the intrepid turf journalist.

The mine is run by Cleveland Potash Ltd – a wholly owned subsidiary of Israel Chemicals Ltd – and I'm on site to discover more about the beginning of the fertiliser production process.

Potash is the common name for potassium chloride, and Boulby Potash mine produces over half of the UK's annual supply – from a staggering 2.4 million tonnes of rock salt annually, which is the crucial substance which de-ices UK roads.

This features an oxygen self-rescuer which converts CO to CO2 if smoke inhalation occurs. Clinging to the belts we wear in case of fire.

We file into a small, dark lift which then plunges at surprising speed beneath the earth. We then walk through piles of silvery dust before we reach a Ford Transit which will shuttle us 45 minutes to the face where the mining is taking place.

This vehicle rumbles through the darkness. One of my colleagues compares the landscape to a Terminator film. It does almost seem post-apocalyptic. The roof is low and it's stuffy and warm - around 12°C - as the Transit rattles along a path of compacted dust in the gloom.

I'm astonished at how far we have to travel. There seem to be no obvious points of reference, with only the odd safety lamp post and mechanical station to be seen. It's hard to imagine that this is someone's daily commute.

At the face we meet several miners, who are happy to chat about their work. Some of the workforce began as coal miners before joining Boulby, and all have several years of experience as a necessity to allow them to work at the face and operate the huge, complex and potentially highly dangerous machinery.

As well as potash, Boulby produces between 0.5 - 0.8 million tonnes of rock salt annually, which is the crucial substance which de-ices UK roads. The end result of all this labour and expense goes into ProTurf - a high impact fertiliser with a combination of controlled release and conventional release of nitrogen designed for use on all outfield turf areas.

The polyhalite ensures all macro nutrients are delivered in one application, and rates are flexible due to the small granule size.

It’s been a fascinating experience as I'd never before considered the sheer scale of the technical and human operation required to produce this substance which then goes into fertiliser.

From this weird, arid environment comes the building blocks for the fine turf we see on fairways, tees, surrounds, approaches and lawns.

All things considered though I’m happier to view the North Yorkshire coastline from a more traditional vantage point above ground.