ON A ROLL IN SWITZERLAND

By using the technique of Koroing, Course
Manager Richie McGlynn of Blumisberg Golf
Club, Switzerland, has kept the course fully open during extensive
turf renovation projects.

Koro member Richie joined the club in 2011. He
found that the fairways in particular had severe problems relating to compaction,
excessive thatch and a dominant powdaw, resulting in issues such as dry patch, dieback
and chafer grub infestation. So he began the
first stage of an ambitious ten-year project to
renovate all the fairways without closing
any holes. Various renovation practices
were considered to achieve this, culminating in the
decision to strip the entire course and revetted
with a new grass mixture.

Richie looked to other sports for
inspiration. Knowing how professional groundsman in other sports achieved rapid
renovation of fairways, he wanted to know if
the same method could be applied to golf
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WE’VE GOT YOU COVERED

This month we’re highlighting another membership benefit available to all full BIGGA members – Personal Accident Insurance Cover.

We’ve teamed up with Gallagher Heath to offer you cover worldwide, 24 hours a day. The Insurance provides cover for accidental bodily injury which occurs during the 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, retraining and relatives’ expenses. Another level of cover is temporary total disability.

As before, this section will highlight the many benefits BIGGA membership gives you, but will feature you, the members.

“We would still encourage all members to take out individual health insurance as this cover is designed to work alongside any existing cover you may have taken out. But it really is an important member benefit that we want to make all members aware of.”

To make a claim, please call Gallagher Heath (formerly Heath Lambert) on 020 7204 8952 quoting the policy number – 0010625173 – and your BIGGA membership number.

For more information, and to download a policy summary PDF of the Full Members Personal Accident Insurance, click on the ‘Members Services’ tab in the Members Area and visit the Personal Accident Insurance.

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

Personal Accident Helpline 0807 2046962
Greenkeepers Legal Assistance 0845 177 9991
Lifestyle Counselling Helpline 0844 173 1065
www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst

As before, this section will highlight the many benefits BIGGA membership gives you, but will feature you, the members.

We want to hear your stories and experiences – so whether you’ve found a new job through BIGGA, got help through our Legal Helpline or Lifestyle Counselling, worked at a high-profile tournament or even won a golf competition we want to hear from you!
A brand new Turf Rewards programme for golf, sports and amenity turf managers in the UK and Ireland launched this month.

Benefitting the turf manager, their team, their turf, and the organisation they work for, the programme offers the opportunity to gain learning opportunities for members of staff to attend Continue to Learn at HTME, and essential agronomic and workplace tools.

Participants will be the first to receive the latest offers and research data, and have the opportunity to attend exclusive events.

Purchases of qualifying Everris and Syngenta products earn points which can be redeemed against a range of rewards.

Register now to attend one of nine Turf Rewards and Parry-Meter launch events.

4 BIGGA CPD credits are available for each event. A CPD code will be issued on the day. The dates and locations are:

Wednesday 30 April – Castle Golf Club, Rathfarnham, Dublin
Thursday 1 May – Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort, Co. Limerick, Ireland
Tuesday 6 May – Blackwell Golf Club, Worcestershire
Wednesday 7 May – Bowood Golf Club, Wiltshire
Thursday 8 May – The Wentworth Club, Surrey
Tuesday 13 May – The Mere Golf Resort & Spa, Cheshire
Wednesday 14 May – Sandmoor Golf Club, Leeds
Thursday 15 May – The Carrick, Loch Lomond, Dunbartonshire
Tuesday 20 May – Clandeboye Golf Club, Newtownards, N.Ireland

Combining education, new techniques and practical demonstrations, the events run 10am-2:30pm. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

Places are limited. Register at www.turfrewards.com or contact your Events Technical Area Sales Manager.
By Royal appointment

The 143rd Open Championship at Royal Liverpool Golf Club will be Craig Gilholm’s second as Links Manager. He told Steve Castle about how he almost left greenkeeping at one point in his career, his 16 years at Muirfield and his thoughts ahead of July’s showpiece event, plus his battle with a spot of troublesome moss...
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Craig Gilholm has the tidest office I’ve ever seen. It’s a converted spare bedroom in his bungalow nestled alongside the maintenance facility at Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake, a seaside town on the Wirral.

In a couple of months’ time, the Open Championship and the circus that surrounds it arrive at the course, which was designed by Harry Colt.

He has a tough act to follow. Last July The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers put on a superb show for the worldwide TV audience complete with stunning weather. But it turns out that Craig is extremely familiar with Muirfield as he spent most of his career at the legendary East Lothian links.

Prior to that, as a golf-obsessed youngster he became a member at Harburn Golf Club in West Lothian before he was a teenager. At 16, he dreamed of becoming a professional golfer but being a few shots shy of the standard required, he accepted a greenkeeping apprenticeship at Harburn combined with studying at Oatridge Agricultural College. He was keen to rejoin his mother’s side of the family back in East Lothian, where he spent most of his career at the iconic East Lothian links.

2005 proved to be a sad year at Royal Liverpool as the hugely respected then Head Greenkeeper Derek Green died. He was such a part of the fabric of the links that his funeral cortège completed a circuit of the course before he was laid to rest.

Then came the job of finding Derek’s successor.

He recalled: “I saw the job advertised, and after coming here for the interview I knew it was the right role and I was prepared to relocate my young family for. I started in June 2005.

“It’s amazing how your brain comes back to life when you get your first Course Manager position – you realise that the education you had 20 years ago is still in there somewhere! When you’re Deputy you know that ultimately, everything comes down to the head guy and maybe you get set in your ways.

But when you’re the head guy, you walk round the course buzzing with all manner of ideas. You ask questions and challenge things.”

Craig admitted that he had to keep most of his more ambitious plans in check initially, knowing The Open was just over a year away.

“During my first six weeks here there was no rain whatsoever, and I began to understand some of the challenges, particularly as the irrigation system was too old and needed replacing.

“The main issue that Derek had been tackling was the area from the tee to the start of the fairway. It was worn out. So he came up with the excellent strategy of putting paths in to reduce the wear and tear.

“The thing I didn’t like about the paths was their ash composition. They tended to throw up dust and this was exacerbated in 2006 because it was so dry.

“So I decided to take things in a different direction, probably because of the time I spent at Muirfield where all paths are grass. I wanted a more natural look with meadowgrass, ryegrass and fescue paths, properly irrigated, with traffic flowing round.

“I knew I would have egg on my face if it didn’t work. But it has worked and aesthetically it’s fantastic. Of course, we wouldn’t be where we are now with the paths if it hadn’t been for the hard work Derek and the team had put in before I arrived.

“It was really proud to see how fabulous the course looked on TV when we held the British Women’s Open in 2012. It was very wet that summer as everyone knows, but...
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He recalled: “I saw the job advertised and after coming here for the interview I knew it was the sort of role I was prepared to relocate my young family for. I started in June 2005.

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Craig discussed expectations for
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ago) have concentrated on the
course since leaving school 28 years
led by Craig and his Deputy Paul
member so I’ve constantly got a feel
for how the course is progressing.

“Irresistibly, a management role
comes with some paperwork but
I try and keep that to a minimum.
I like working and being on the
course, watching the guys at work
and keeping them on their toes, I’m
very much a working greenkeeper.

five years ago I said that by the
time the 2014 Open came around,
I would almost have my vision in
place and we are nearly there. A
couple of wet summers followed by
a couple of dry summers can scup-
per your plans, as anybody knows,
but I’m reasonably happy. I don’t
think any greenkeeper is ever 100%
happy!”

What advice would he give an
aspiring young greenkeeper?

“Respect your boss, and all the
guys you work with – be a team
player. There are too many people in
tall walks of life who don’t work hard
enough. When I take someone on
here, I’m not looking for a superint.
I’m looking for a decent, respectful
greenkeeper who wants to learn.”

With that, after a hugely enjoy-
able and engrossing chat, Craig
heads back on to the links. Here’s
to a successful tournament, and a
well-deserved ovation for Craig and
his team during the presentations
on 20 July.

the condition was still spot on. I
knew that if it could match that con-
tion for The Open I would be made
up, and that remains my aim.”

Recently, the ten-strong team
led by Craig and his Deputy Paul
Gardner (who has been with the
club since leaving school 28 years
ago) have concentrated on the
paths, lengthened a few Champion-
ship tees slightly, and altered the
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At last year’s Championships,
Craig discussed expectations for
the 2014 Open with agronomist
Stuart Ormondroyd.

Craig explained: “Some of the
readings on the Clegg at Muirfield
were 130. I’d been getting 110. I
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Recently, the ten-strong team led by Craig and his Deputy Paul Gardner (who has been with the club since leaving school 28 years ago) have concentrated on the paths, lengthened a few Championship tees slightly, and altered the definition and size of some of the bunkers.

At last year’s Championships, Craig discussed expectations for the 2014 Open with agronomist Stuart Ormondroyd.

Craig explained: “Some of the readings on the Clegg at Muirfield were 130. I’ve been getting 115. I asked him what our target should be. “He said we should be aiming for 115-125, moisture levels of 10-12%, and green speeds of ten to 12. It drives you mad! I use the same routine, but I’ve scarified, verticulated, I’m not quite cracked it yet. I’ve thrown field but while they’re on top of it I’ve seen the moss on the greens, but I know it’s there because there’s a very slight difference in the softness in different areas of the green.

“There’s no thatch, just moss. That’s why we’ve changed to a more sandy topdressing sand, pre-moistened, which gives us a great middle, the way I would like to play four holes like that! I put myself in the shoes of a visiting golfer or member so I’ve constantly got a feel for how the course is progressing.

“The pure fine sand was deemed more appropriate to achieve the firmness required for the Championship. We’ve applied five dressings so far this year.

“Basically, my attitude here is that Rene wasn’t built in a day. I want to turn the green from a bent mowed grass to a fescue bent for a more traditional surface, but that’s not going to happen overnight. Yorkshire Fog and moss are asking for a stake in the low traffic areas of the greens but we’re fighting hard against them, they won’t give up!”

This leads to an animated discussion about the current bane of Craig’s life - silver moss, which despite the team’s best efforts has caused issues as discussed.

“IT could be there because of our low nitrogen input, because we’re not quite sandy, because the greens are large...in the summer you can’t see the moss on the greens, but I know it’s there because there’s a very slight difference in the softness in different areas of the green.

“IT’s very much a working greenkeeper. I try and keep that to a minimum. It’s not going to happen overnight. I’m not looking for a superstar. There are too many people in the guys you work with – be a team player. There are too many people in all walks of life who don’t work hard enough. When I take someone on here, I’m not looking for a supervisor. I’m looking for a decent, respectful greenkeeper who wants to learn.”

With that, after a fragrantly enjoyable and engrossing chat, Craig heads back to the links. Here’s to a successful tournament, and a well-deserved ovation for Craig and his team during the presentations on 20 July.

As well as the BIGGA Open Support Team, who are excitedly preparing to head to Hoylake, around 15 other greenkeepers from across the UK and the world will assist Craig and his team. They are sourced from local courses, the other Open venues, courses from Canada and Sweden as well as four R&A scholars.
How to write a report

Michael Astrop, Principal at ‘Coach the Mind’, presented a workshop at BTME 2014 on Preparing and Writing Effective Reports, which is becoming increasingly important for turf managers. Here Michael tells the story of a fictional Head Greenkeeper ‘Eric’ and how he can write a comprehensive, persuasive and accurate report.

Eric, Head Greenkeeper at Dagmire Court Golf Club, walked towards the clubhouse with a furrowed brow and slumped shoulders. He had been at the club since he left school at 15 and he completed his City and Guilds in greenkeeping at the local agricultural college.

Today he looked as though he had the troubles of the world on his shoulders. As he approached the clubhouse, one of the younger members came out and said, “What’s up Eric?” He replied: “The new club manager needs everything in writing, but writing is not really my forte. The last four holes need refurbishment, so the manager wants me to write a feasibility report to present to the next committee meeting. In the past I would go to the meeting and give a verbal rundown of what we wanted to do, with some broad costings, and the committee trusted me to get it done. I’ve never let them down and never gone over agreed budgets but now it’s all reports and proposals, I really just don’t know where to start.”

The member replied: “I deliver seminars on this subject Eric, so I can guide you through the process. Why don’t we go into your office and I’ll give you some pointers?”

The Systematic Approach to Preparation

Follow these key steps in the right order to ensure a professional report is produced:

1. Know your reader - pitch it at the right level
2. Structure the argument – prepare an outline of what will be covered
3. Organise topics or points into related groups
4. Use plain English and correct grammar - keep it clear and concise
5. Present the report professionally – headings, styles and consistency
6. Proofread and edit
7. As you write, keep focused on the overall objective and think of the reader.
8. This will guide you on just how much information to include (and what to leave out).

• Establish the objectives - the scope and purpose of your document
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• As you write, keep focused on the overall objective and think of the reader.

Know your Audience and Understand your Reader

Your document should be pitched according to the reader. There is no point using long, complex words if the reader will not understand. Equally, if you make your writing too simple, you may alienate your reader and you may be seen as patronising.

Ask yourself a few questions to establish who the reader is.

• What do they know already about the subject?
• What do they need to know?
• Will they understand technical terms?
• What do I want them to do?
• What worries or reassures them?
• What do they need to know?
• What do they know already about the subject?
• What do I want them to do?
• What do they need to know?
• What do they know already about the subject?
• What do I want them to do?
• What do they need to know?

Organising the Arguments

The classic report structure has four vital stages (the 4 P’s):

1. Problem/Current Situation
2. Past position
3. Possibilities – pros and cons
4. Proposal

The Key Sections

The structure and layout of reports will obviously vary according to the organisation and the order yet. Under each topic list key words, examples, arguments and facts. Review each topic in your outline for relevance to your reader.

Structuring the Report

Reports are normally presented something like this:

1. Title Page
2. Foreword and or Preface
3. Table of Contents
4. Executive Summary Page
(sometimes called an Abstract)
5. An Introduction
6. The Main Body, including headings and sub-headings
7. Past position
8. Problem/Current Situation
9. Possibilities – pros and cons
10. Proposal
11. Conclusions and Recommendations
12. Appendices

Reports will obviously vary according to the organisation and the order yet. Under each topic list key words, examples, arguments and facts. Review each topic in your outline for relevance to your reader.