

Conference date set for FEGGA members

The Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations has announced a major Europe-wide greenkeeping conference to be held in Spain from November 21-23 this year.

The twin themes of the conference will be education and the environment. Each of the 17 member Associations of FEGGA will be invited to send two delegates to present two papers, one outlining the education provision for greenkeepers in their country and the other covering environmental considerations in relation to the greenkeeping profession.

The European Greenkeeping Conference will be held in association with Toro, the company having become a major supporter of FEGGA. General Sales Man-

ager for Toro, Bob Buckingham, welcomed the announcement of the conference. "FEGGA's progress since its inaugural meeting in Amsterdam in March 1996 has been rapid," he said.

FEGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver, views the forthcoming conference as a significant landmark in FEGGA's development.

The 17 countries currently in membership are represented by the Greenkeeping Associations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

FEGGA currently represents some 10,000 members of constituent Associations. The Chair-

man of FEGGA represents the Association on the Management Committee of the EGA's ecology unit. Whether on ecological or other issues, FEGGA recognises the need for the greenkeeping profession to speak with one voice and brings the European greenkeeping associations together for this purpose.

There can be no doubt that the advent of FEGGA will bring many benefits to greenkeepers throughout Europe in the years ahead and the coming together of associations through FEGGA can only enhance the profile and standing of both the profession and its practitioners.

The conference will be reported through the pages of *Greenkeeper International*.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Members of the Scottish Region were saddened to hear of the passing of Ian Forbes, former Chairman of Stewart & Co. Ian was a great supporter of greenkeepers all his life and especially of great help to the various greenkeeper associations over many years. Many of the older members of the region will remember him as a man of great knowledge of the turf trade who was always happy to talk to and advise greenkeepers at any time. With his passing an era of the older generation of trade has gone but not forgotten. The Region were represented at the memorial service and pass on their condolences to his wife Betty, his daughter Morag and son Graeme.

■ Rhône-Poulenc has produced an informative guide to integrated bracken management.

This booklet could prove invaluable for Amenity Managers involved with heathland golf courses or upland amenity areas.

The guide gives details on the biology of the bracken plant, management options and how to optimise the use of the bracken herbicide.

A free copy of the brochure or further technical advice can be obtained by calling Rhône Poulenc Amenity on 01277 301115.

■ Anyone seeking assistance in reclaiming tax for BIGGA subscriptions should contact Janet Adamson or John Pemberton at Headquarters - telephone 01347 838581 - and a form will be issued which should be completed and sent to the local tax office.

■ Roger Bennett, Principal of Askham Bryan College, York has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of York for his research into the 'Amenity and Environmental Impact of Golf Courses in England and Wales.' The research and subsequent thesis examined all the issues relating to planning, conservation, course design and management. The findings should be of interest to those organisations involved in golf education at all levels.



Setback for speedy greenkeeper

The so-called "Nutty Novice", Terry Colvill, (see April issue page 5) has suffered a setback following an outstanding start to his motorcycle racing career.

Deputy Course Manager at Mill Hill in North London, Terry, pictured at Mallory Park, chalked up a series of fine results in the early part of the season including two victories and a second at Mallory Park

and a third placed finish at Cadwell Park in the Supersport Series.

However, his engine blew up at Snetterton due to overheating resulting in the need for a new cylinder head, valves, pistons, con rods, barrels, radiator, gaskets and oil cooler.

Although sponsored by Grass Roots and several other companies Terry is a "privateer" - he

doesn't enjoy the support of a factory so he had to foot the bill for all the work, around £1,500, himself.

The hitch caused him to miss the Snetterton race and also, to his great disappointment, another at Brands Hatch the following week.

It is hoped that by the time you are reading this he will be back in the saddle again.

Europeans triumph in twitchers' Ryder Cup

The keen eyes and ears of 12 European birdwatchers have struck an early and morale boosting blow for the continent's Ryder Cup hopes, by soundly beating the American challenge in the first ever "Birdwatching Ryder Cup".

The competition took place over the full 24 hours on 12 selected golf courses in Europe, and 12 in the USA. It was a light-hearted way to demonstrate that golf courses can be valuable places for wildlife. On the day the European team recorded a total of 217 species, while the Americans managed 237 species. However, on the basis of the naturally richer North American bird fauna, the team captains had agreed a handicap of eight American species equivalent to five European species. This means the European total rises to an effective 347 species, easily shading the American effort.

Fittingly, in the context of the Ryder Cup, the star European site was in Spain - Club de Golf Ulzama, in the Pyrenean foothills near Pamplona. Here, ornithologist Antonio Rodriguez Arbeloa recorded a staggering 101 species, including 15 different birds of prey; such as golden eagle, Egyptian vulture and Montaguets harrier.

Also in Spain, at Valderrama,

the score was a more modest 48 species but this did include one of Europe's rarest birds, the white-rumped swift and a large number of migrating honey buzzards passing over from the Straits of Gibraltar as well as the only records on the day of red-rumped swallow and orphea warbler.

Among other highlights were arctic skua and bluethroat at Sarvik Golf Club in Finland; while in Hungary there was a spotted crane at Hensce National, and barred warbler and Syrian woodpecker at the appropriately named Birdland Golf Course. Despite atrocious weather conditions the team from the bird observatory at Falsterbo, Sweden, chipped in with a very creditable 94 species, including velvet scoter, marsh harrier and avocet. Most unexpected of all was the sighting of an African purple glossy starling at San Lorenzo, in Portugal, which also contributed little bittern, spoonbill and purple gallinule.

Altogether 18 species of bird of prey, plus five species of owl, 22 waders, seven woodpeckers and 22 warblers were recorded among the 12 European sites. Out of the overall total, 152 species (70%) turned up on more than one golf course. At the commoner end of the scale the four most widespread European birds, found on all 12 sites, were swallow, blackbird, greenfinch and goldfinch. A further seven species were found on 11 sites: mallard, house martin, white wagtail, robin, blue tit, great tit and chaffinch. The average score per site was 64 species in Europe and 65.5 in the USA. This shows that we are not dealing with one-off, stray records, but that golf courses consistently attract an impressive range of wild birds - as well as other wildlife.

The birdwatchers have set the tone. Now it is up to Europe's top golfers to emulate their achievement and secure the real Ryder Cup in September.



Vintage tournament gives students taste for the real thing

The third annual Vintage Open Golf Tournament at the Reaseheath College golf course in Cheshire was again the responsibility of the third year students, studying for their Higher National Diploma in Golf Course Management.

The competition provided the students with an opportunity to work as a team and exercise all of the skills required to make such an event a success.

This included golf course preparation and presentation, attracting both local and national sponsorship, media coverage, catering and customer care, all of which were achieved within the tight budget set. This, in turn, satisfies

the HND requirement for event planning while providing local golfers, over the age of 70, with a competitive and highly enjoyable day's golf.

Sixty one golfers took part in this hard fought and ultimately close Stableford competition, and judging by the comments, all enjoyed themselves immensely. In fact, general opinion would suggest that this year's event was the best so far. The overall tournament winner was Mr J. Sheffield, of Crewe, with a score of 45 points. He received the Vintage Open Trophy and won a round of golf for four at Nefyn Golf Club in North Wales and a putter donated by Ping.

Jim Wensley and Dave Stevens

Ocmis buys Midland

Ocmis Irrigation (UK) Ltd has acquired Midland Irrigation Ltd.

Ocmis say it will continue to develop the service and installation offered by Midland Irrigation and have retained Steve Brennan as Service Support Engineer in the area. The business will trade under the Ocmis name and will continue to supply the Rainbird range of products.

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



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Yet another benefit of BIGGA membership



Victorious teams look forward to Ganton

The Regional Finals are currently well under way and four of the teams will have been decided by the time this reaches you.

For those players they can look forward to the challenge of Ganton, one of the finest courses in the country and if they perform well there they have the chance of winning a place on the Rest of the World team to tackle the Americas team in Atlanta next year. The teams which were confirmed at the time of going to press were:

Scotland

Cat 1. 1. D. Leith, St Andrews, 73-1=72; 2. S. Taylor, Killermont, 74-1=73; 3. D. Wilson, Irvine Bogside, 81-8=73; 4. C. McKay, Elmwood, 79-6=73. Cat 2. 1. A. Wilson, Kirkhill, 86-14=72; 2. J. Johnston, Turnberry, 86-13=73; 3. A. Torrance,

HAYTER CHALLENGE

King James, 86-11=75; 4. C. Cumming, Fortrose, 87-12=75. Cat 3. G. Shearer, Balmore, 91-22=69; 2. S. Carmichael, Fins GC, 92-22=70; 3. D. Nelson, Brunston Castle, 91-21=70; 4. A. Robertson, Grangemouth, 91-20=71.

South West and South Wales

Cat 1 - 1. R. Daly (D & C) 65; 2. L. Millar (S. Coast) 69; 3. D. Bray (D & C) 74; Res. C. Bland 74. Cat 2 - 1. A. Knight (S.West) 71; 2. P. Wentworth (S. Coast) 73; 3. M. Porriah (D & C) 73; Res. A. Cosh (S. Wales) 73. Cat 3 - 1. A. James (D & C) 68; 2. J. Cooper (S. West) 76; 3. A. Rideout (S. Coast) 77; Res. J. Braithwaite (S. West) 77.



The Scotland team



The South West and South Wales team

Famous name is still at helm of BIGCA

The British Institute of Golf Course Architects has confirmed Martin Hawtree, the third generation of the famous family, as President for a further year, with Simon Gidman continuing as Vice President.

At its recent Annual General Meeting at Wentworth, the Insti-

tute announced the details of its professional Diploma Course at Merrist Wood College, now in its inaugural year, as the world's first course of its kind in golf course design.

Six Associates have now been invited to join the membership of BIGCA after qualifying recently,

they are Jonathan Gaunt, Thomas Himmel from Germany, Steven McFarlane, working with Hawtree; Tom Mackenzie, a colleague of Donald Steel, and Paddy Merrigan from Ireland.

Nigel Henbury, assistant to Howard Swan joins as an Associate.

Martin Hawtree, President of the Institute, added "I am pleased to see our organisation advancing and expanding so positively and that our members continue to impress the market, old and new, with sound professional work."

The Institute now boasts almost 50 members, half of whom are based on the Continent.

STRI to sponsor scorers

STRI is sponsoring a team of 20 boys from Giggleswick School in North Yorkshire, responsible for operating the Hole by Hole Scoreboard at this year's Open at Royal Troon.

STRI advise on the sports grounds at Giggleswick School and on the preparation of all the Open Championship venues, in their role as official agronomists to the R&A Championship Committee.

Giggleswick School has been operating the Hole by Hole Scoreboard for the past 12 years. The score team is selected on a voluntary basis each year.

Gull adds a further hazard on the 18th

The 18th hole is reckoned to be one of easier par fours on the links at Borth & Ynyslas. Recently a new natural hazard has appeared in the form of a Herring Gull that has built her nest just off the fairway just right in line with the pin. A small area of semi-rough separating the 1st and 18th fairways attracted the expectant gull in the last week of May. Having build a nest largely composed of old divots, she settled in and by the end of the month had laid four eggs.

The greens staff at Borth are well aware of the importance of good conservation practice as

the northern end of the course, which borders the Dyfed Estuary Nature Reserve, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The bird seemed unaware of this and has chosen a very exposed site in full view of the clubhouse and professional's shop.

The first reaction was to put a fence round the nest but as this unsettled the bird it was quickly dismantled. To everyone's relief she showed no adverse reaction to having a white line painted round the nest site and settled down happily with a GUR notice. This is taken to stand for "Gull Under Residence".

New direction for Anthony

Anthony Black, previously Project Manager at Golf Euro-Disney and Course Manager at The Warwickshire, has set up a new company. "Groundstrokes" offers a practical hands-on service involving construction, alterations, and general maintenance.

Contact Anthony on 01676 532826.

THE FACTS: NOT THE HYPE

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Course Superintendent
Glen Gorse G.C.

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When 600 heads are better than just one

A total of 180 British greenkeepers made up a total of 600 greenkeepers who took part in John Deere's first ever European Feedback event, held over two weeks in June at Bruchsal GC in Germany.

Following five successful events in the USA, this was the first opportunity for European greenkeepers, from Scandinavia to Spain, to give their opinions on the company's latest golf and turf products, and to see the European Parts Distribution Centre at

Bruchsal, one of 22 worldwide parts depots.

A total of 34 machines, from a prototype 26in walk-behind tees and greens mower to a new 70hp tractor equipped with a gang mower, were scrutinised, driven and commented on by the greenkeepers.

Graham Williams, commercial and consumer equipment division manager for John Deere Limited in the UK & Ireland, who brought the British greenkeepers to Feedback '97, said: "The participation of greenkeepers and turf professionals on a worldwide basis is vital to take the company forward and enable us to produce the right machines for all our customers.

"We depend on these meetings, on pre-production demonstrations and on thousands of test hours on golf courses around the world, to frame our product development and improvement programmes. There is no substitute for this kind of information, and we never introduce a product without it."



Graham Williams, of John Deere



David Walden, left, of Nene Valley GC and Rob Boyce of Newmarket Links GC

For example, the John Deere 1200A bunker and field rake was simply a concept machine only two years ago. Introduced to the market in 1995, it is now widely accepted as an invaluable tool because of design suggestions originally made by American golf course superintendents at a previous Feedback event.

The European meeting was hosted by Chuck Greif, Manager of Market Development for Golf & Turf Products Worldwide. He said: "This year we're getting the views of around 1,300 green-

keepers worldwide through Feedback – that represents nearly five percent of the world's golf courses. It's the little things seen through all those different pairs of eyes that will benefit our company immensely.

"We have found over the last five years that greenkeepers and superintendents all have the same concerns, and face the same challenges. These include environmental responsibility, noise reduction, safety, parts and service support and serviceability.

"The basic design of any

INTRODUCING THE NEW GREENSMASTER 3200-D.





Colin Wilson, of Linlithgow GC, has celebrated 25 years at the club. He was presented with an inscribed barometer from the club during Linlithgow's Open Day. Pictured, back, from left: Iain Harrison, Vice Captain; David Roy, Course Manager; Lee Fraser, Alex Fleming and Derek Smith, Professional. Kneeling are Ian Campbell, Club Captain and Colin Wilson.

machine works worldwide. What we do with the Feedback meetings is say, here we are, tell us how you use our machines, and what you want them to do in the future. As a result we can fine tune the equipment so it does the right job.

"The greenkeeper is an artist, and he's an individual. He has to be able to set up the golf course to meet his needs and the needs of the members, and how he does

that differs from one man to the next.

"That means we'll be going back to the factory with a pretty healthy list of comments – but that's exactly why we're here."

David Walden, Nene Valley, Peterborough, and '95 Premier Greenkeeper of the Year said, "If we come and do this, we can get the machines right from the start – it's an excellent idea."

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Profile

Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club. Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star...

Name: **Wyndham Potter**
Club: **East Devon GC**
Position: **First Assistant**
Age: **63**



1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?
28 years.

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
None.

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?
Cutting greens.

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?
Divotting.

5. What job other than greenkeeping might you ended up doing?
I was a gardener for 14 years before becoming a greenkeeper.

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?
Ken Loxton, who was my

Head Greenkeeper for 18 years.

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
Pay more.

8. What are your hobbies?
Gardening, fishing and golf.

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?
Golfing days out and the magazine.

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?
Enjoying my retirement.

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