

## Making the most of a bad situation

While the attention is quite rightly focussed on the nightmarish time the farming community is enduring right now, as well as the knock on effects the Foot and Mouth outbreak is having on tourism, many golf courses are also suffering a second kick in the teeth in the space of a few months.

Rainfall which broke longstanding records and closed some golf clubs for weeks and, in some cases, months at a time has fortunately abated only to be replaced by a phenomenon which is closing golf clubs for an altogether different reason.

Many calls were received at BIGGA HOUSE from members seeking advice on dealing with the outbreak and they were referred to their local MAFF office. Obviously different degrees of risk existed depending on the location and nature of the golf course and while some would no doubt have been recommended to close - including BIGGA Chairman, Clive Osgood's own club, Walton Heath, which closed for a week - others were not within a hundred miles of an outbreak and could continue very much as normal.

No doubt some clubs have received the doubly whammy of closure for flooding and closure for Foot and Mouth and for them the implications, while not as immediate as those for the poor farmers, are depressing.

No golf equals no golfers and no golfers, equals no revenue. While this is particularly devastating for pay and play and proprietary-owned facilities it also has implications for members' clubs, as no-one has reason to be at the club and clubhouse and pro shop need custom to keep them ticking over.

And if you think about it, if you are closed for a week that's 2% of the available money-making time in the year, a fortnight is 4%. If a club is budgeting for break even or a small profit that can be swallowed up immediately and golf club purchasing decisions may have to be reconsidered.

You don't have to be Einstein's long lost nephew to work out that the new fairway machine you've been promised this season might not materialise.

It is at times like these when you have to earn your stripes and look for ways of making the best of an unfortunate situation.

It would be hard not to agree with the treasurer when he says sacrifices have to be made, but couldn't other options be examined? Leasing, for example, or moving money from one budget to another. While drainage work must continue perhaps the three new tees you'd decided to build next autumn could wait for another year and the money saved used instead to finance a new hand mower. Whatever you consider most important.

It's all about priorities. How best can your reduced budgets be used to maximise your effectiveness over the tough short and middle term?

It's a question you should be asking because when the frustrated golfers return to the courses determined to make up for lost time they are going to be looking for tip top conditions.

An ability to make the most of a bad situations will be a valuable weapon in your armoury.

**Scott MacCallum**  
Editor

## Kubota restructures sales operations

Kubota (UK) Ltd has brought together its three sales operations into one division working beneath a single banner - Kubota Sales. Covering the three formerly separate sales divisions of Tractors, Industrial and Construction Machinery, and Engines, the move is designed to improve customer support.

Responsibility for the new combined sales operation lies with Kubota UK's Deputy Managing Director, Rene Orban, who becomes Sales Director in charge of all Kubota product sales.

Operating from Kubota UK's headquarters at Thame, Oxfordshire, the combined sales operation will have an annual turnover in excess of £50 million. Among the products contributing to this figure are compact tractors, tracked mini excavators and small diesel engines.



Above: Rene Orban, Deputy Managing Director of Kubota UK outside the Kubota UK headquarters at Thame, Oxfordshire

Sales, parts and service support for the Kubota product ranges brought together within the single sales division will continue to

be handled by a specialist distribution network of almost 90 Kubota-appointed and trained dealers throughout the UK.

## HSE software launch

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in collaboration with Royal & Sun Alliance has published Essentials of health and safety Routemap, an easy-to-use computer software package designed to help small businesses improve their health and safety awareness.

Director-General of the HSE Timothy Walker said. "The Essentials Routemap will assist firms to avoid accidents and ill health at work by helping them identify and control the risks their workers face."

"Having a health and safety

management system which is relevant to the risks or hazards involved helps ensure compliance with health and safety law, and more importantly helps reduce accidents and ill-health. Health and safety failures cost Britain up to £18 billion each year. The cost of work-related accidents and ill-health to employers is £140 to £300 for each worker employed," he said.

The Essentials Routemap is available at HSE Books, HMSO and at high street book stores and retailers at £95 + VAT.

### New work-based NVQ Level 2 from Cannington College

Cannington College, Somerset, are currently developing a Work Based programme of study that will allow greenkeepers to gain an NVQ Level 2 qualification in Greenkeeping & Sportsurf Maintenance.

The work-based programme allows greenkeepers to be assessed in the workplace with minimal college attendance being required. The qualification is based upon the Greenkeeping Training Committee's 'Black Book'.

This new qualification offered by Cannington reflects the college's attitude of providing quality assured education & training for both people and businesses.

## Interest shown in interest-free scheme

Over £2 million worth of new golf course equipment has been financed by John Deere Credit this winter, following an interest free credit scheme launched for the first time last year.

The scheme has proved very successful, with 107 deals signed with 30 dealers across the country. The most popular machines

chosen by golf courses have been John Deere's new greens and fairway mowers, and 4000 Series compact tractors, with list prices ranging from around £10,000 to £30,000.

"John Deere Credit's interest free scheme has obviously helped a number of our golf club customers with their equipment

purchases this winter," said Graham Williams, John Deere's Commercial and Consumer Equipment Division Manager.

These sales have contributed to a 40% increase in our golf and turf business over the last quarter, compared with last year, and we will certainly be planning to repeat the scheme next winter."

## Huxley Golf expands business

Huxley Golf, who specialise in the supply and installation of all-weather surfaces for golf, and whose customers include many of the world's top golfers and golf courses, are expanding their business in response to increasing demand from customers.

The Hampshire-based firm, owned by Paul and Barry Huxley, has developed a comprehensive range of all-weather surfaces which includes putting greens, golf greens and target greens, golf course tees, practice tees, path-

ways, lawn and standing areas, cartways and driving range landing zones.

Huxley Golf's customer list includes Ian Woosnam and Darren Clarke, who are among several golfers who practise at home on Huxley Golf all-weather greens.

"Our business with golf courses has grown fast, but we could cope. Courses typically try one Huxley Golf all-weather tee and then come back for more. Several clubs now have 18 tees, while

pathways are now becoming popular. Last year we introduced our new all-weather putting greens and we only just coped with the demand. Because of this, we appointed five new Huxley Golf Specialist Area Distributors and Installers, in addition to our Scottish operation.

These new Distributors are now doing well and we are looking to appoint several more in key parts of the United Kingdom and also overseas," said Paul Huxley.



# Get the most out of your Association

Having stood down at the end of my term of office on the National Board of BIGGA in January, I have had time to reflect on the progress made by the Association since its inception in 1987.

The saying "from little acorns big oak trees grow" certainly is the case as far as BIGGA is concerned. In 14 short years we have achieved so much. We now have our own purpose built headquarters, with its education unit, marketing department, magazine and advertising with a design base, a membership department to look after all members needs, plus a finance department to run the whole show. The regions have their own paid Administrators to keep members in touch with what's going on. It has all moved so fast, it is hard to take in, and we still have members dissatisfied - Why?

I wonder how many members have not yet attended our week in January for the National Education Conference and Exhibition. If not, you don't know what you are missing. There is so much to do, see and learn. Then of course there is our AGM where all members should make the effort to attend, even the critics. Harrogate is a lovely town and certainly the place to be for the BTME week. The camaraderie is unbelievable. Everywhere you go, whether it's in the halls, hotels, or around town in restaurants you see groups of greenkeepers young and old talking and passing on ideas, experiences and knowledge. A great week run by BIGGA for you!

If you add to that the Environment Competition, Toro Student of the Year and Excellence in Greenkeeping Competitions, with Management Courses held at BIGGA HOUSE, regional education courses etc, BIGGA members and staff should be proud of what has been achieved.

I would also like to mention our Section Secretaries and committees, Regional Administrators and their Boards. They all work very hard on your behalf. So why then are there so many moaners? Members who say, "what do I get out of it?" They never seem to ask themselves "what do I put into it?" If you don't help yourselves it is difficult for others to help you.

There is not a greenkeeper in the whole of the UK who has not benefited from BIGGA. Greenkeepers enjoy a far higher status now than ever before. Greenkeeper salaries and conditions



Above: Past Chairman, Gordon Child

have improved, so has your standing with clubs and in the golf world. This has not just happened because you have been sat on your backsides. This has come about with hard work and drive from your Association. Your membership package is first class, but again - do you use what's on offer? How many of you use the legal helpline for every day happenings at work or home, insurance discounts, education courses, library and of course your magazine. I bet most of you just take out your membership card, sign it and bin the rest, and then moan about what's in it for me.

Let's take one case in point. Do you read your magazine? If you do, do you then criticise its contents? There's nothing wrong in criticising just so long as it's constructive. How many of you put pen to paper? The magazine is all about information and if you have something to say why not write about it. I am sure the Editor will put it together for you if you feel you need his help. Don't just sit there and grumble about it, do something! Of course some people will criticise anything, often without knowing enough about the subject. Those people are very hard to please, and some will never be happy, no matter what.

The trade companies in general sup-

port the Association a great deal and we very much appreciate their help. Often they set a fine example to members up and down the country so don't slap them in the face by not attending their supported events, whether it be at national, regional or section level. I know you can't attend them all but it would be nice if you could turn up to a few, and not leave it to the same stalwarts all the time. Many greenkeepers and trade members have spent

a lifetime trying to improve the greenkeepers' lot, and still do, but now with BIGGA at the forefront we are at last seeing things happen. I have been in greenkeeping for 55 years and believe me the changes have been dramatic. We have come a long way over those years and it's great to see.

Nothing gives me more pleasure than to visit and see many young greenkeepers running golf courses in such a professional way. It makes me feel proud to be still part of this fine profession. I cannot understand members who are always being and talking negative, running down the very people and organisation that are there to help them to a better life and career. So I ask you all, just stop and think where you would be without BIGGA, try to think positive and help where you can.

I know there is still a long way to go, but we need your input if we are to keep on improving. It's your Association and if we are talking about value for money then all I can say is, "it's no use paying the bus fare if you don't get on in the first place".

On a personal note, I have always felt honoured to be allowed to serve BIGGA members as Administrator, Board member and most of all, your Chairman over the years. I got tremendous enjoyment from being part of something special, and for that I thank you all. Now that I have stood down, I do not intend to walk away as greenkeeping has been my life, so I will still be at as many events as I can, but certainly BTME.

There is no truer saying than, "he only helps those who help themselves."

Gordon Child, Past Chairman

## Foot and Mouth: Latest advice

As the Foot and Mouth Outbreak spreads throughout the country more and more golf clubs are being forced to take action, including temporary closure to reduce the chances of the virus spreading.

Many members have contacted BIGGA HOUSE for advice on what action they should be taking and they have been referred to the MAFF Hotline 0845 0504141 for England and Wales and 0845 9335577 for Scotland. The lines are open from 8am to 11pm seven days a week.

It is this course of action which is also being recommended by the three UK mainland-based Golf Unions.

Additional information can be obtained from the MAFF website, which can be reached by a hyperlink from BIGGA's website, at the end of the Foot and Mouth Outbreak statement.

However the situation is still volatile, and advice often conflicting. A MAFF fact sheet outlining restrictions and precautions on outdoor activities in infected areas was withdrawn in light of further guidance issued on March 16.

With the level of risk dependent on location and topography of the golf club many Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers have taken the common sense attitude of "being seen to be being responsible" with disinfected straw or mats at the entrance to clubs, trolley bans and signs requesting that golfers wash their spikes after every round.

A fuller report on the impact the FMD outbreak has had on golf will be included in May's magazine.

Get the latest FMD news and links at [www.bigga.org.uk/footandmouth.html](http://www.bigga.org.uk/footandmouth.html)

## Plans for BIGGA's future get underway with survey

A selected number of members will shortly be receiving the survey, explained in last month's issue of Greenkeeper International. If you do have one drop through your letter box please take time to fill it in as comprehensively as you can as the information gleaned from it will help to shape the future of your Association.

If you don't receive a survey but would like to take part you can obtain one by contacting Mike Williamson, at; MW Associates PO Box 6677, Edinburgh, EH14 3YB Tel/Fax: 0131 476 6677 email: mw.assoc@virgin.net

## New President elected for CGSA

Jay Leach has been elected as President of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association for 2001. Jay is Superintendent of the Cottonwood Golf and Country Club in Dewinton, Alberta.

At the same time Vince Gillis, the National Executive Director of the CGSA, since '89 has been awarded a contract extension by the Board of Directors.

## Royal Inverdivot GC...

[www.tonyhusband.co.uk](http://www.tonyhusband.co.uk)





## Rachael joins BIGGA staff



Callers to BIGGA HOUSE may well already have spoken to the Association's new Receptionist/Administrator Rachael Foster who started work shortly after BTME.

Rachael recently moved to the York area after 16 years on the island of Jersey where she had worked as a Unit Trust Fund Administrator for two banks, Kleinwort Benson and Standard Bank. The move to North Yorkshire came with the appointment of her partner, Michael, to the post of Head of Spanish at a York school.

A fully qualified hairdresser and aerobics instructor Rachael (34) currently takes step, aerobic and Taijibo classes at Easingwold Community Centre while she is also interested in cooking and reading.

## Architect expansion

Architects Gaunt and Marnoch Ltd have continued their expansion with a new office development in Huntly, Aberdeenshire, opened to give national coverage.

The office manager in Huntly is Allan Knight who will act as a first point of contact, passing on more detailed inquiries to Steve Marnoch and Jonathan Gaunt.

Gaunt and Marnoch currently have around 40 projects on-going in the UK, Ireland and continental Europe.

## Hardi 3 Star approval not shrouded in secrecy

The Hardi Defender range of shrouded amenity sprayer booms have been awarded LERAP 3 Star approval. As the only shrouded boom currently on the market to have such approval, it essentially means that only a Defender boomed sprayer is legally allowed to spray within one metre of a watercourse.

"Defender is the first shrouded boom to gain the full 3 Star LERAP rating and the importance and consequences of this award should not be under-estimated, especially for those who need to spray close to water," said Nick Tremlett, Managing Director of Hardi Ltd.

"Regardless of whether or not a sprayer has a shrouded boom, unless the boom has this 3 Star rating it generally cannot be used to spray within six metres of a water course."

Under LERAP (Local Environment Risk Assessment for Pesticides), where the drift from pesticides could affect water quality or harm plants, water or aquatic life, such pesticides can only be used near water if a Buffer Zone, generally six metres, is left



unsprayed. The only exception to this is where the spraying equipment is proven to reduce drift, it will be given a 1, 2 or 3 Star rating. The higher the rating, the more the buffer zone can be reduced, coming down to one

metre for 3 Star rated equipment.

The Defender boom has been awarded 3 Star approval when used at pressures of between 1 bar and 10 bar, which covers most spraying requirements.

## New year sees new staff for STRI



Three new members of staff joined STRI for the New Year.

Dr Ruth Mann replaces Kate Entwistle as Turf Pathologist. Ruth arrived at Bingley from the Northern Ireland Plant Testing Station, to take up her position in charge of our Biology Laboratory. Her area of work covers turfgrass disease identification, and evaluation of turf management practices on disease development. Her team members, Kathryn Hickson and Clare Kelt, are responsible for pesticide efficacy and selectivity evaluation.

Richard Windows has joined Steve Isaac in Scotland to look after the south of Scotland under Steve's guidance. Richard is working from his regional base in Glasgow, taking up a

new position of Turfgrass Agronomist for South Scotland covering golf courses, bowling greens, cricket grounds and sports pitches including Murrayfield.

Emma Beggs returns to STRI to take up a new position as Regional Agronomist in the North West.

Emma's career at STRI began in 1993 working as a Research Officer in the Department of Soils and Sports Surface Science, then later as a Turfgrass Agronomist in the North East, before relocating to the Wirral. Emma is a keen golfer and a member of Royal Liverpool Golf Club.

## Sports Surface Technology MSc to start at Cranfield

Cranfield University in Bedfordshire has introduced an MSc in Sports Surface Technology to start in October 2001.

The first of its kind in Europe the programme will equip students with the scientific principles and management expertise to design, construct and maintain natural sports surfaces.

Students will also carry out an industrial-based research project with sports clubs and organisations in the UK.

The statement from the University states that the course has been designed for graduates who have good numeracy skills but no previous knowledge of soil science, turf grass agronomy or business management is necessary.

## Innovative puncture prevention solution from Seal-a-Wheel

Ever since the advent of pneumatic tyres, the benefits have often been overshadowed by the implications of punctures.

Damage to greens, downtime, high call out and repair charges can now be virtually prevented by the use of a newly formulated Puncture Preventative Tyre Sealant called Seal-a-Wheel.

Awarded the International European award for quality in Paris, the water-soluble sealant takes minutes to install and will not damage tyres, rims or grass. Once installed it will provide ongoing protection

against continuously occurring punctures, for the life of the tyre.

When a foreign object penetrates a tyre while it is in motion, air inside the tyre rushes to escape.

Interlocking fibres along with grouting agents are immediately forced into the hole sealing it with a permanent flexible gator.

Seal-a-Wheel is available in 1 litre bottles and 25 litre drums. A calibrated, high performance applicator pump is also available - no need to fully deflate the tyre.

For further information telephone: T.S. Supplies Ltd 0114 2440834

