



Welcome

## DIRECT THAT PASSION CONSTRUCTIVELY

In recent years there has been the explosion of what can only be described as a modern day phenomenon - the internet chat room or bulletin board. They have become an accepted part of everyday life and there can't be an organisation, in any walk of life you care to mention, that doesn't give its members the opportunity to communicate with like minded colleagues. We have had one on the BIGGA website for the last few years and a number of members link up with each other on it to share problems and uncover solutions.

For every website and bulletin board set up by a recognised organisation there are others administered independently, and very good many of them are to.

It does mean that there has never been a greater anonymity to be heard or, to be more accurate, read.

That's great because what could possibly be wrong with frank exchanges of views between like minded people and, as I have already mentioned, sharing problems and finding solutions.

Well, in the main not a great deal... if it is done responsibly. The problem is that some of the people who air their views do so beneath a cloak of anonymity, using pseudonyms or no name at all. I would imagine that it gives them the confidence to air their views in whatever directions they wish. Again, in itself, that's not a problem.

Except, and here comes the rub, much of what can be said by these people is inaccurate. Indeed it would be fair to say that much of what is said is downright wrong, based on patchy information, hearsay, or, more often than not, no accurate facts whatsoever.

Some of this is of little consequence and, occasionally, the "author" is corrected in a follow-up message, but quite often the misinformation can be potentially very damaging, not to say libellous.

As a journalist no-one is more in favour of the power of free speech than me, but I also know that with that power comes a responsibility. In conversation, a little piece of gossip is often good for the soul but as soon as something is written down, whether it be in a book, magazine, newspaper, or website bulletin board, and can be read by others, it takes on added significance.

The people who take the time to post messages on bulletin boards are obviously extremely passionate about their chosen topics and it is obvious that what they are saying means a great deal to them.

However, that time and passion could be more usefully spent becoming better acquainted with their subject so that when they do go on-line what they say has the benefit of being based on accurate information. Then perhaps it might offer up some constructive ideas from which everyone can benefit.

And if that were the case there would be no need to hide behind a pseudonym.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

## EGU COURSE PROGRAMME

The Golf Services Committee of the English Golf Union has once again put together an excellent programme of seminars on Golf Course Management this autumn.

Six Seminars/Workshops have been organised at clubs around the country for Club Secretaries, Managers, Owners and Chair of Green. The programme at each venue will cover Agronomy, Ecology, Course Design, Health & Safety and Greenkeeper Education & Training. Venues have also been selected this year to allow a focus on selected subjects.

15 Oct Sandiway Golf Club, Cheshire, Agronomy & Woodland Management; 17 Oct Drayton Park Golf Club, Staffs, New Green Construction & Management; 22 Oct Gillingham Golf Club, Kent, Agronomy & Course Design; 29 Oct Minchinhampton Golf Club, Gloucs. Agronomy & Course Design; 11 Nov Porters Park Golf Club, Herts Agronomy & Ecology; 12 Nov Broadstone Golf Club, Dorset, Ecology

### GREENKEEPING MASTERCLASS

The National Golf Centre, Woodhall Spa 4 & 5 December

Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers have the opportunity to visit the National Golf Centre for an intensive programme, which will take an in-depth look at certain aspects of Agronomy, Ecology and General Management.

Invitations are being sent to Clubs for the Seminars and Masterclass and full details of the programmes, speakers and an application form will also be available on the Golf Services pages of the EGU website at [www.englishgolfunion.org](http://www.englishgolfunion.org).

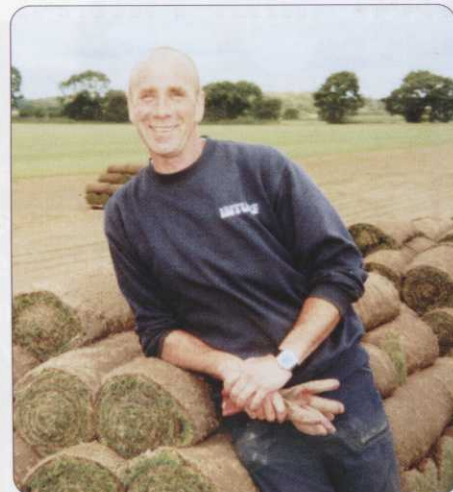
## INTURF

Inturf, the specialist growers of cultivated turf, have promoted Simon King to the position of Regional Coordinator for Lincolnshire, East Anglia and Cambridgeshire. He previously worked at Inturf's nursery in York, and his appointment reflects the ongoing strong growth in the company's business.

Simon has worked at Inturf for several years, interspersed by a spell working on a turf farm in the USA. He headed back east to the UK and Inturf three years ago, and hasn't looked back since.

In his new role, Simon will be visiting Inturf's customers on a regular basis, and so it was perhaps appropriate that he spent most of his first week in the job at Saltex.

Inturf have also promoted Ian Collett to the position of Sales Manager.



## JOHN DEERE SUPPORTS BIGGA

Following the outstanding success of the inaugural John Deere Team Championship in Great Britain and Ireland during 2002, John Deere and BIGGA have announced that the National Education Conference and workshop programmes to be held during the 2003 BTME and CLUBHOUSE Exhibitions will be officially supported by the John Deere Team Championship.

"BIGGA is very pleased to receive this support at our major national event. Both the Conference and Workshops are long established and eagerly anticipated each year by our members. Support from the John Deere Team Championship will enable the Association to continue to deliver excellent speakers and experts on the respective programmes," said BIGGA Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

## NORFOLK TURF MACHINERY

Norfolk Turf Machinery have been awarded the franchise for Toro Commercial Products in Norfolk.

Larry Pearman, the Toro Area Sales Manager, said, 'We chose NTM because they are the up and coming turf machinery specialists in Norfolk with a strong sales record under Richard Fulford. They have come a long way in the past three years and can provide excellent sales and after sales service through their three Depots at Attleborough, North Walsham and Sculthorpe near Fakenham. We are looking forward to having a good partnership with NTM.'

NFM Managing Director Steve Kittle said 'We feel very honoured to be entrusted with such a major international franchise as Toro. This range of machinery complements our existing portfolio which includes Kubota, Etesia, Scag, Charterhouse and Dennis.'

Email press releases and new product updates to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)

## WALL WALKERS

Sponsorship from Kubota UK has played a valuable part in helping two intrepid lady walkers raise more than £6,000 for The Children's Society.

The walk, which covered 62 miles of the Great Wall of China, was undertaken by Della Ormston and Sophie Wharton, Creative Director and office manager at Sage and Sequoia, the Buckinghamshire marketing agency used by Kubota.

Della and Sophie walked for five consecutive days as part of a team comprising 40 other sponsored walkers from the UK plus six Chinese and four British guides.

Della said that she and Sophie had chosen to walk the Great Wall because it presented an unusual challenge and helped support an excellent charity working in a particularly difficult area.

"The whole experience was fantastic and thanks are due to everyone who sponsored the walk, especially Kubota, whose donation was a huge help, taking us well past our original target of £5,000."



## OTTERBINE CHOOSE LELY

Lely UK, distributor for Toro Commercial and Irrigation products, has been appointed as the exclusive distributor for Otterbine water aeration systems, fountains and other associated products. The appointment is with immediate effect and covers the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Otterbine-Barebo, from Emmaus, Pennsylvania, USA, is the worldwide leader in lake and pond water quality management systems, with 300 distributors and 90 service centres around the globe.

"Otterbine products complement our irrigation business very well, and there is also a strong cross-over in some cases with our Toro commercial products' markets," said Graeme Francis, Toro Irrigation Products'

Sales Manager, at Lely UK's St Neots, Cambs., headquarters.

"Water is being used more and more in landscape design, and this brings with it a requirement for maintaining and managing water quality. We see a huge UK potential market."

Golf courses, airports, hotels, commercial developments and business parks are all good examples of the types of location that are increasingly using water in their landscapes to beautify their settings.

There are three core Otterbine product lines that sell in the UK marketplace – industrial aerators, aerating fountains and pure fountains.

## PLAN IT OUT

The GTC is helping golf club employers to command an even tighter grip on health and safety matters relating to their greenstaff.

A colour wallchart is being sent to all golf clubs in the UK and Ireland – and it even comes complete with marker pen and coloured dots, courtesy of the GTC.

The chart, developed in consultation with health and safety consultants Jon Allbutt Associates, will be used to record greenkeepers' competence in using a wide range of equipment. It will be an at-a-glance guide to who is qualified to use which pieces of machinery, such as mowers and tractors.

The wallchart was officially launched on the GTC's stand at Saltex.

Accurate recording of staff training and competencies cannot be overstated. This chart will be a vital tool for course managers and because it is so easy to use, we think it will prove extremely popular," said GTC Education Director, David Golding.

Jon Allbutt added, "This wallchart is essential for managers to track greenkeepers' skills. It is also good for the greenkeepers themselves because they will know their limitations and can aim to be competent in more areas."

## LAND DRAINAGE CONTRACTORS

Following last year's successful event at BIGGA HOUSE, the next Land Drainage Contractors Association Seminar on Sportsturf Drainage and Turfcare will be held at Aldwark Manor on November 7, with a similar event being held at The Oxfordshire Golf Club on November 14.

The seminars will review the latest techniques and current developments in drainage construction, establishment and aftercare for sportsturf surfaces and will also be applicable to other types of leisure and amenity areas.

For further information contact Bruce Brockway  
Tel: 01327 263264.

## EUROPEAN SOLHEIM CUP

European Solheim Cup Captain Dale Reid, commenting on the slow play during last month's match: "I've always said. If I wanted to spend six hours on a golf course I'd have become a greenkeeper."

## DOUG BELL TRIBUTE

I first met Doug Bell at West Lancashire Golf Club, where he was the Secretary. When Doug became the Administrator for the Greenkeepers Association for the Northern Region, he took the role on in a quiet and unassuming manner and everyone who came into contact with him held him in the highest regard. They say that when you meet people they have some influence in your life and leave lasting impressions, Doug was one of these people. A lot of greenkeepers owe him a debt of gratitude to him for his help when required on grievance and disciplinary issues at their golf club. The Association will sadly miss him; I for one enjoyed his sense of humour and his very quick wit. In this day and age with the demands on all industries, people like Doug had time for everyone.

I feel that most of the people that knew Doug are richer for knowing him. I for one was privileged to work with Doug for a number of years and class myself as one of the lucky ones.

Ian Holoran

## Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year [www.tonyhusband.co.uk](http://www.tonyhusband.co.uk)



## A NEW HOME FOR RIGBY TAYLOR

Rigby Taylor has relocated to new premises at Horwich in Bolton.

The move allows the company to combine all of its Bolton based operations on one site as the new head office premises, which includes 40,000 square feet of warehousing space. It will replace its existing sites at Garside Street, Bolton and Locomotion Estate, Horwich.

"Our first criterion in looking for new premises was to find something suitable in Bolton as we were very keen to remain in the town. We have been at Garside Street for nearly a hundred years but we have long ago outgrown the site and have been operating from two sites in the town for several years," said Chairman, Bernard Hedley.

"Our new premises will enable us to continue the expansion of our business and to make further improvements to the levels of service we give to our customers."

Rigby Taylor also has distribution depots in Guildford and Newbridge Midlothian. The new Bolton address is:- Rigby Taylor House, Crown Lane, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 5HP. Tel: 01204 677777. Fax 01204 677715  
[www.rigbytaylor.com](http://www.rigbytaylor.com)



## SISIS

Kevin Leese has joined Sisis as Territory Manager for NW England.

Married to Sheila for 19 years, Kevin has worked in the trade turfcare for 26 years so has a lot of experience for Sisis customers to draw on.



## A PLEA FOR HELP TO GTC

An independent training council has asked for help from the GTC in finding new assessors.

The National Proficiency Tests Council, an awarding body overseeing competence tests for people working in land-based industries, has a newly revised suite of horticultural certificates of competence. It has turned to the GTC because of its expertise in assessor training.

NPTC Senior Technical Officer Steve Hewitt said, "Organisations such as the GTC play a pivotal role in bringing these qualifications to the attention of trainers and also employers with potential candidates working for them."

GTC Education Director David Golding added: "The GTC is proud to be asked for help in providing the NPTC with names of assessors. The role of the assessor is vital in training."

The NPTC certificates of competence cover areas such as pesticide use, tractor driving and machine maintenance. For greenkeepers, these certificates are awarded as part of a trainee's pursuit of National or Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Sportsturf.

## SWAN PLANT SERVICES

Swan Plant Services has just bought 10 new Roberine 900 cylinder mowers from John Deere, making a total of 50 triple mowers ordered from Deere since the beginning of the year.

Eight of the machines were recently collected from the John Deere Limited headquarters at Langar, Nottingham by Swan's own new Ford Iveco transporter, which can carry six mowers on the main body and two on an additional trailer.

Swan has regularly doubled its annual turnover since entering the amenity equipment hire market in 1993. The introduction of Best Value has seen an increasing number of local authorities developing partnership packages with Swan for periods of three to five years.

In 2001 the company established four such long term contract hire arrangements with local authority customers; this year 10 more have been agreed, the latest with councils in East Lothian, Hounslow, Trafford and Thameside. The hire fleet has now expanded to offer over 5800 machines, including John Deere's latest cylinder and rotary mowers, compact tractors and Gator utility vehicles.

The new Roberines have been supplied by Swan's local John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare of Tarvin, Chester.



## POMME ON TOUR

**Martin Gunn, Course Manager at Temple Golf Club represented BIGGA at the recent Australian Conference**

Unusually for me (and much more like Duncan McGilvray!), I was sitting in the office when the phone rang one wet winter afternoon.

"Martin it's Neil Thomas how are you?"

"Yeah, very well thanks. (thinks this is unusual) What can I do for you?" "Martin, I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse"

At this point I prepare myself for some mind numbingly menial task that the association is struggling to get anyone else to do!

"Oh yes," I said, (trying to sound as interested as possible).

"How do you fancy representing the Association at the it Australian Turfgrass Conference, in Brisbane next June... Martin are you there?"

Well as you can imagine, I was dumbfounded and spent the next few minutes bouncing off the walls of my office. When I finally calmed down, I think I agreed to go before even finding out what I had to do when I got there. Anyway, agree I did (of course after seeking employer endorsement) and on rationalising decided that the prospect for vocational development was one which couldn't be refused.

I've been told that I then spent the next few weeks annoying fellow workmates, local greenkeepers, relatives and friends by repeating: "Oh... did; tell you that I'm off to Brisbane next June?" Personally, I find that hard to believe. Anyhow, time marched ever on and before I knew it I had completed my preparations, had notification of travel and hotel arrangements, liased with fellow "keepers" from "Oz", arrived and was ready to begin.

For those of you who have visited the Brisbane Convention Centre I'm sure you would agree that it is a pretty impressive building. Similar in stature to Birmingham's NEC, its outstanding architecture and wall-to-wall power point suites set an expectation of excellence. The accompanying programme gave general information on all lectures and workshops, splitting delegates into two main groups, greenkeepers and groundsman. Even with 600 expectant "turfies" it was easy to find your way round and locate which workshop you wanted to attend.

As for singing for my supper. I had to present one paper on golf course ecology "British style" and to take part in two one hour open forums. The first of these forums was on golf course preparation and the other on construction. What I didn't realise was that these forums were interactive sessions and as part of a distinguished panel of scientists and greenkeepers, I would take part in answering questions from the floor, for the entire session! As you can imagine, this proved both enlightening and challenging. After all, there is little you can prepare if you don't know what you're going to be asked. However, I believe this was one of the most important sessions of the entire conference and with the clever and accomplished chairmanship of John Neylan (AGCSA tech dept) this session more than met its objectives of providing a "World of Ideas".

Of course what the Aussies do very well (apart from winning the Ashes) is socialise. After arriving at 01:30hrs and with jet lag still trying to get the better of me, I spent my first day in Brisbane acclimatising and getting my bearings. Towards the end of the day I wandered over to the Convention Centre and literally bumped into Euan Laird, Chief Executive Officer for the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association. Euan made me very welcome and pointed me in the direction of his team who were already in place and busy preparing for the show. He also very kindly asked me if I would like to take part in the AGCSA National Golfing Tournament, which was due to leave the hotel at 06:00hrs next morning. I humbly declined, as



Martin Gunn

at that point my body clock had not quite realigned itself. However, I did manage to make the welcome cocktail patty (Hawaiian style) that evening. With hindsight, an invaluable experience as I managed to meet many of the ACCSA staff and delegates. The ice was quickly broken with stories of great cricketing and rugby prowess all of which, quite rightly, were bias. On reflection this had been an excellent start to my trip, I was settled in and reassured that 'these guys were no different from us'.

Next day and still slightly bleary eyed it was time to start the conference proper.

Looking through the conference programme gave you an idea of the calibre of

information to be disseminated over the next few days. The list of speakers included: Dr Joe Vargas, Michigan State University; Dr Richard Gibbs, New Zealand Sports Turf Institute; Dr Earl Elsner, Georgia Seed Development Commission; Dr David Huff, Penn State University, and Professor Peter Martin, University of Sydney, to name but a few.

Further augmenting this heavy weight list of speakers were representatives of the AGCSA including: John Neylan, AGCSA Tech. Dept; Mark Couchman, President AGCSA; David Warwick, Avondale GC; John Well, Royal Sydney CC; Jim Porter, Royal Melbourne GC, and several others of Australia's leading golf course superintendents.

Papers presented at the conference included, new and emerging turf diseases; new hybrid couch grasses; pests; negotiating skills; maximising performance; quotes and tenders; data and information collection; irrigation; seed evaluation; root zone composition and topdressing; and black layer development. There were also several representatives from industry, speaking on issues such as sustainability, quality and performance standards, all in all a thoroughly diverse and very interesting agenda.

So what did I learn? Obviously there was an enormous amount of information to assimilate throughout the conference, but what struck me most was how alike our industries are, even if they are on opposing sides of the globe. Of course the issues are different, such as temperatures, pests, diseases and disorders. However, the core problems faced by Superintendents are very similar, namely realistic expectations, committee interference and political uncertainty. This was adequately demonstrated in a conversation with Martin "Blacky" Black, one of the leading lights of their Association. He told me that during one high profile nationally televised tournament that he was running, a golfer commented that the greens had been over watered. I can't actually print Martin's rather typical Aussie reply, but I will tell you that all this happened during temperatures reaching 42 degrees C!

In conclusion, taking part in the Brisbane conference was an experience that I would recommend anyone. I found it invaluable and will benefit from what I learned for many years to come. Personally, I would like to see the two Associations working even more closely together and perhaps developing initiatives such as exchange programmes. This could benefit particularly younger greenkeepers who, after all, are the future of this industry.

Towards the end of the convention there was the usual flurry of socialising and farewells. An excellent post conference banquet wrapped up proceedings during which I was especially privileged to witness Dr Joe Vargas as Elvis. Time for a reality check and to head home!

Finally, I can't finish without thanking both BIGGA and AGCSA for their time and effort in helping me achieve this ambition. For the cynics among us, it just shows how far we have come as an Association and I hope aptly demonstrates the professional capabilities and passion that the majority of greenkeepers world over, have for their chosen vocation.