



Welcome

GRASS CUTTERS WITH DIPLOMAS

You know how the tone of a day can be set very early on. It's summed up by the saying "Getting out of bed on the wrong side".

Well I got out of bed on the wrong side last week when I woke, as usual, to The Today Programme to hear John Humphries quizzing someone on the Conservative Party's new idea to abolish tuition fees for students. They would do this by getting rid of some of the "Mickey Mouse" courses that are currently available. Well the course Mr Humphries mentioned first was, you've guessed it, Golf Course Management.

I remember visiting this theme a couple of years ago when the then Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, derided the course in a similar manner inspiring another editorial column. Well, it would appear we still have an education process to carry out.

The idea that greenkeepers cut grass and not much else is still prevalent. It seems to be accepted and fashionable to think that the only possible thing that a greenkeeping brain is used for is to predict how many more lines can be mown before the grass bucket has to be emptied. I can't for the life of me think of any other reason why Golf Course Management is picked on so readily as an example of all that is wrong with the British further education system.

I'm sure there is a debate to be had about vocational courses when set against academic courses and how vocational courses are now studied at University and not College. The chances are the University is probably just a College with a name change. For instance the College in Edinburgh where I studied Journalism is now a University and the people coming out at the end of their courses are University graduates and not College graduates. Snobbery?

Such a discussion is worthy of John Humphries' attention on The Today Programme, but the high handed swipe at greenkeepers is just lazy, ill considered and poorly researched.

Of course, we shouldn't be blaming John Humphries, who conducts many interviews during the course of just one programme and has to rely on notes from a researcher.

I am here to tell you that the depth of knowledge required to pass successfully an HND in Golf Course Management is probably greater than that required to pass a similar diploma in Media Studies, or whatever qualification John Humphries' researcher has to his or her name.

Your job is not made any easier by such exposure in the media, and it is high time you were given credit for the job you do. It is not a case of blowing your own trumpet just educating golfers on the range of skills you have at your finger tips and the skills that are required to make your golf courses what they are. Otherwise you will continue to be thought of as grass cutters, albeit some with diplomas.

Unfortunately it's easier said than done.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

ALEX ROBERTSON

The sudden death of Alex Robertson, Head Greenkeeper at Grangemouth Golf Club, came as a great shock to his many friends and colleagues especially in the greenkeeping fraternity.

Alex, who was 50, started his greenkeeping career as an apprentice at Glenbervie Golf Club in 1968 and he was one of the early students who went through the new greenkeeping apprenticeship courses at Woodburn House in Glasgow.

After finishing his apprenticeship and spending another few years learning his trade, Alex, like so many young greenkeepers, moved onto the 9 hole course at Bonnybridge as Head Greenkeeper and then from there to Carmuir Golf Club.

Having a break from greenkeeping, Alex became Groundsman at Brockville Park, home of Falkirk Football Club, for a couple of years before returning to greenkeeping as an Assistant at Grangemouth. He was a proud man when he took up the position of Head Greenkeeper there three years ago. He was popular with the members and the hard work and dedication he put into the course did not go unnoticed as many of them commented on the many improvements he made.

Alex was a great supporter of the greenkeepers' Association for many years and was a well known face under his shock of red hair at both educational and golf events from Section level through to National events including BTME. He served some time as a committee member of the Central Section and was always ready to do what he could to help. His was always one of the first entries in the Support Team for The Open each year and he was

successful on making the team on many occasions.

He was the "Quiet Man", so quiet sometimes you didn't realise he was there, but he was always there if he was needed. At his first Open, on going out as a bunker raker, he obeyed the



instructions to be as discreet as possible so well that we had a call to say there was no raker with his game. But he was there all right, being so discreet the marshals never noticed him.

At another Open an appeal was put out in the tent for someone to go out for a second round. Alex was first to volunteer even though, 30 minutes earlier, he had just finished a five hour round in pouring rain and blowing a gale.

One of the great things about Alex was his indomitable spirit. He was never at a loss especially in getting to BIGGA events. Although he did not have a car if he said he was going he would always be there. Many's the time I gave him a lift home from a committee meeting or golf outing after discovering that to get there he had taken a bus or a train or sometimes even both.

He also showed this same spirit playing golf and was a frequent prize winner as he always kept going.

Alex was a man who never had a bad word to say about anyone and he loved being a greenkeeper. He was always respected by all who knew him and this was evident at the huge turnout at his funeral which included many people from the greenkeeping fraternity.

He will be sadly missed by those who knew him.

Elliott Small

NEW APPOINTMENT AT JOHN DEERE

John Deere Limited has announced the appointment of David Hart as Commercial & Consumer Equipment (C&CE) Division Sales Manager, responsible for managing the company's sales and marketing operations for golf & turf, commercial and homeowner products and dealerships in the UK and Ireland.

David takes over from Pieter Nel, who has returned to his homeland after 18 months in the UK to become Marketing Manager of John Deere's agricultural and C&CE divisions in South Africa.

After graduating from Lincolnshire College of Agriculture & Horticulture, David began his career with a John Deere dealership. He joined John Deere



Limited in 1990, becoming an Area Service Manager and subsequently Area Manager Product Support (AMPS) in south-east England, a Territory Manager in south-west England and then Harvesting Equipment Product Manager.

He was brought up in Norfolk, where his father Ernie Hart was a well known and respected figure in the amenity and grounds care industry for many years. A keen golfer, David took part in the inaugural John Deere Team Championship golf tournament finals at The Belfry last year.

Email press releases and new product updates to: scott@bigga.co.uk

SOUTH WALES SECTION

The winners of the South Wales Section, Rigby Taylor Matchplay Doubles Championship Daryl Bray & Leigh Davies, receive the Rosebowl from company representatives, Dave Carvey (on right of photo) and Roy Barker (left of photo) with Section Chairman Julian Bartlett-Jones (on far left of photo). The winners were presented with their trophy at the Morrision Golf club, where they both work.



NEW SECTOR SPECIALISTS

Greenkeeper education is set to take a major step forward with the establishment by the GTC of a working group of sector specialists who will develop standard learning materials based on best practice and principles for golf course maintenance.

The skills which trainee greenkeepers learn on vocational courses are vital to the long-term success of the industry, but up until now employers have not been able to influence the educational content of such training courses.

The new move, which has the full support of awarding bodies such as City and Guilds, will address one of the long-held concerns of the GTC about the variability of what is taught. The working group aim to develop the learning materials by this autumn for the Sports Turf (Greenkeeping) National Occupational Standards – NVQs and SVQs Levels 2 and 3.

"Standardising education and learning information for our approved training providers is

essential. This move will give employers extra confidence that their greenkeeping staff are learning what they really need to know. There has been an overwhelming level of support for what we are aiming to achieve." said Dr Mike Canaway, Chairman of the GTC Technical Committee.

David Golding, GTC Education Director, added, "This initiative by the GTC will further strengthen the partnership between the industry and its training providers. Since the introduction of vocational qualifications, the awarding body representatives who regulate training providers have had no direct involvement with what is taught to greenkeeping trainees.

"This aspect of greenkeeper education is fundamental to the future standards of golf courses and if students are not taught the correct principles and best practices from day one then golf course conditions will inevitably decline."

DO YOU RECOGNISE THIS MAN?

A couple of years ago this family visited Jim Arthur at this home in Budeleigh Salterton and Jim kindly offered to take this attractive family portrait. Jim is not the most prolific of photographers and the film lay in his camera until recently. In the meantime, unfortunately, he has misplaced the contact details of the greenkeeper and his family.

So, do you recognise the greenkeeper in this picture? If so contact BIGGA HOUSE and we'll pass on the information to Jim who can then forward on the pictures.

Editor's Note: Yes, I took time to study the quality of the Arthur lawn as well!



Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk



STRI COURSES

STRI is holding a regional version of "Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century" – their popular annual training programme held every January, during BIGGA's BTME week in Harrogate – at Temple Golf Club near Maidenhead on June 24-25.



Following the oversubscribed success of the one day event piloted at Temple last year, the programme has been extended to two days and will include a conference dinner with guest speaker and a round of golf to end the second day.

The seminar will help all those who manage and administer golf courses, including Secretaries and Chairman of Green, to maximise the agronomic and financial potential of their golf course.

The content covers a range of topical issues including:- Selection of grasses for the golf course; Choosing rootzones; Avoiding and controlling pests and diseases; Avoiding mistakes in construction; Solutions to modern day problems; Systems of golf course management; Taking an ecological approach.

Speakers from STRI will be joined by Martin Gunn, Course Manager at Temple. Well known for its sympathetic ecological approach to golf course management, Temple's progress is documented in "Confessions of a Chairman of Green" written by Malcolm Peake and published by STRI last year. Martin's session will include an ecological field walk illustrating the work at Temple.

Full programme details can be viewed on the STRI website <http://www.stri.co.uk/training>. Bookings with payment to be sent to Tim Nichols at STRI, St Ives Estate, Bingley, BD16 1AU.

TGA TURF SHOW

The biennial TGA Turf Show will be hosted this year by Inturf at their Wilberfoss site near York on June 25 and 26.

The TGA Turf Show will feature wide-ranging static exhibits from a wide array of companies as well as working demonstrations, equipment parades and educational workshops.

"We hope to improve upon the huge successes of our previous shows." said TGA Chairman, Chris Carr.

"Anyone with an interest in the Turf industry is very welcome. Our aim is to provide a relaxed yet informative environment for visitors to view, sample and discuss the very best that our industry has to offer." Exhibitor information and visitor registration cards are now available on request from the TGA, 22 Chapel Street, Bildeston. Suffolk, IP7 7EP.

Tel/Fax: (01449) 741638

ONLY 8 MONTHS TO GO...

TUESDAY
20 JAN

WEDNESDAY
21 JAN

THURSDAY
22 JAN

MJ Abbott Ltd	David Jenkins Turfcare Equipment Ltd
Advanta Seeds UK	John Deere Limited
Aebi & Co. AG	Johnsons Sport & Amenity Grass Seed
AFT Trenchers	Kubota (UK) Ltd Lasteck UK
Air-Eze Ltd	Lewis Equipment Ltd
Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd	Lindum Seeded Turf Ltd
Allen Power Equipment Ltd	Links Leisure
Alllett Mowers	Lloyds & Co Letchworth Ltd
Allied Turf - Tech	Logic Irrigation
Amenity Technology	Major Equipment Ltd
Angus Horticulture Ltd	RC Marble & Sons Ltd
Arden Lea Irrigation Ltd	Massey Ferguson (AGCO)
Askham Bryan College	Maxwell Hart Group
Association of Golf Club Secretaries	Maxxis International UK
Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd	McCormick Tractors International Ltd
GW Axup & Co Ltd	Merrist Wood College
Barcham Trees	MJT Contracts Ltd
Barenbrug UK Ltd	Mox UK Ltd
Barreffield Golf Ltd	Myerscough College
Bathgate Leisure	New Holland
Bayer Environmental Science	North Staffs Irrigation
Berkshire College of Agriculture	Nu-Gro Corporation
Bernhard & Co Ltd	Ocmis (UK) Ltd
Bioseed Probiotics Ltd	Pentagon Amenity Marketing Ltd
Blec Landscaping Equipment Co. Ltd	Power Seeds UK
BMS (Better Methods Europe Ltd)	Proturf Ltd
Boughton Loam Ltd	PSD Agronomy
Bowcom Limited	Rain Bird Europe
Boyd Golf	Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd
British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association	Rigby Taylor Ltd
British Seed Houses Ltd	Rufford Soil Technology
Campsey Turfcare Systems	Ruston's Engineering Co Ltd
Cebeco Seeds	Same Deutz-Fahr UK Ltd
Charterhouse Turf Machinery	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd
Club Car - Ingersoll-Rand	Sheltons Sportsturf Drainage Solutions
Cooper Clarke Group Ltd	Sheppy Humber Palmers
Course Care	Silesia Grill Systems
DENNIS	Simon Tullett Machinery Co Ltd
Eagle Promotions Ltd	Sisis Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd
East Riding Amenity	Speedcut Contractors
Ecosolve Limited	STRI
Elmwood College	Supaturf Products Ltd
English Golf Union	Swan Golf Designs Ltd
European Turf Technology Ltd	Swan Plant Services Ltd
Fairway Credit	Symbio
Farm & Garden Machinery	Tacit
Farmura Ltd	Talbot Farm Landscapes
Fleet (Line Markers) Ltd	Tenax UK Limited
Floratine Products	Tildenet Ltd
FMW & Distinct	D W Tomlin
Gambetti Barre UK Ltd	Tonic Watering Ltd
Garfitts International Ltd	Toro Commercial and Irrigation Products
GCSAA	Toro Products
Gem Professional	Tower Chemicals Ltd
Golf Management Europe	Trelleborg Wheel Systems Ltd
The Golf Sign Company	True Surface Rollers
John Greasley Ltd	Turf Masters
The Greenkeepers Training Committee	Turfcare Group
Greenlink International Ltd	Turfmech Machinery Ltd
Groundsman Industries Ltd	Tym Tractors
Hardi Limited	Verde Sports Ltd
Hayter Ltd	Vitax Ltd
Haztek International	Warwickshire College
Headland Amenity	Waste2Water Europe Ltd
Humate International Inc	WBB Minerals
Hunter Grinders Ltd	White Horse Contractors Ltd
Huxley Golf	Ken White Signs
ING Lease	Wiedenmann UK Ltd
The Institute of Groundsmanship	Wolf Proline
Inturf	Yamaha Motor UK Ltd
Irrigation Control Ltd	

ABBHEY HILL GOLF CENTRE WINS FIRST JOHN DEERE QUALIFIER

A four man team from Abbey Hill Golf Centre in Milton Keynes is heading to The De Vere Belfry, having won the first British regional qualifier in the 2003 John Deere Team Championship golf tournament, played at Magnolia Park Golf Club.

The team - consisting of Club Captain, Jerry Collis; Club Manager, Jonathan Gale; Head Greenkeeper, Steven Cherry, and Club Professional, Craig Stephenson - beat off the challenge of 16 other teams in the competition, which was organised by John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare of Bledlow, Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

The winners finished on a score of 60, just one shot clear of the field. The competition is based on a modified scramble, with the professional playing his own ball throughout the 18 holes, and the other three players forming the scramble.

Abbey Hill, joined by a representative of Turner Groundscare, now goes through to the Great Britain national final at The Belfry on July 25, to play for a place in the world final at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA in November.

"We took part in the tournament last year but didn't make it to the next round," said Steven.

JOHN DEERE Team Championship

"So we are all very pleased, if not a little surprised, to now be going to The Belfry, and who knows, maybe Scottsdale, Arizona. I have played at The Belfry before, but we'll still be putting as much practice in as possible between now and the next round."

The John Deere Team Championship is now in its 17th year, and last year teams from Great Britain and Ireland were invited to participate for the first time. A total of 27 dealers took part in the qualifying tournaments, with 450 teams and 1,800 players participating. The national winners, Brokenhurst Golf Club from the New Forest and Milltown Golf Club from Dublin, travelled to North America to compete against teams from the USA, Canada, Germany, Australia and Sweden.

John Deere Limited is continuing its support of greenkeeping Associations by making a donation of £25 for every British and Irish team entered, to assist the educational activities of BIGGA and GCSAI.



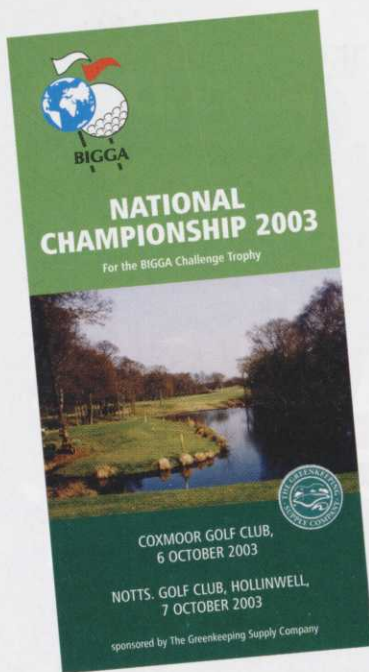
SUCCESSFUL ROADSHOW

Ransomes Jacobsen recently concluded the Turfco Roadshow, a lightning quick tour of specific golf clubs in the UK, to demonstrate the top dressing abilities of some of the equipment in the Turfco range.

Scott Kinhead, Turfco Vice President, flew in from the USA to accompany Matt Gough and Rupert Price of Ransomes Jacobsen on the tour, which included the new Queenwood Golf and Country Club, The Oxfordshire, Brocket Hall, The Belfry and several more golf clubs and schools across the UK.

The visits resulted in seven orders for equipment and several requests for further demonstrations.





BIGGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2003

COXMOOR GOLF CLUB, 6 OCTOBER 2003
NOTTS. GOLF CLUB, HOLLINWELL, 7 OCTOBER 2003

If you have not yet received your copy of the BIGGA National Championship brochure and Entry Form, sponsored by The Greenkeeping Supply Company please call Sarah Sowerby at BIGGA HOUSE on: 01347 833800

A FULL PROGRAMME

"Learn at the Conference - use at the Club" was the one-liner put out by the Association of Golf Club Secretaries before their ninth Conference - and it turned out to be far more. It was a refresher course for Secretaries on the latest developments, and, for the sake of his/her club, every Secretary needs such up-dating.

What Secretaries think about running golf is obviously of importance and interest far beyond the club office, for among the 200 delegates were representatives of the R&A, the English, Welsh and Irish Home Unions, of BIGGA, the PGA, and the Golf Foundation. There was a splash of international visitors, too, with club managers from Portugal and Sweden.

The Conference was opened by Tim Yeo MP, Shadow Minister for Trade & Industry. A keen golfer and columnist in the golfing press, his theme being the Secretary's increasingly demanding role - appropriate remarks for the ensuing Papers.

The pressing need for clubs to operate commercially was laid out in Papers on Leadership and Management, on Marketing and Service to members and visitors, and the importance of "disaster planning" and adequate insurance cover.

The nationwide call for more golfers and club members, particularly juniors, came under scrutiny, with a snapshot of the work by the Golf Foundation, and this was followed by a warning explanation of procedures required today by the Child Protection legislation. Year by year, the laws impinge more directly on running a golf club, and the difficulties of conforming to the Disability Discrimination Act and the new Employment Law (due 2004) had the audience shaking their heads.

The challenge of playing golf was not forgotten, a course architect from Donald Steel's company told how they are modifying long-established courses to withstand the attack of the latest golf equipment, while a description of the new Centralised Handicap Database introduced by the Golfing Union of Ireland proved very impressive to an audience of secretaries. The English Golf Union's centralised scheme is at present 'on hold' for technical reasons, and so the Irish experience caught the imagination and received enthusiastic support.

Besides the presentation of papers, there was an Exhibition covering matters of particular importance to the Secretary at work.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Weeds are everywhere. They have always been with us, and no doubt will continue to cause problems for a long time to come.

A fact pointed out with satisfaction by Roger Turner, Managing Director and founder of Complete Weed Control, which this year celebrates 30 years in business.

Providing specialist weed control services to a wide variety of amenity, local authority, industrial, aquatic and forestry areas, Complete Weed Control has grown from an initial seven franchisees in 1982, to a nationwide network of 44 successful

businesses regularly supplying and applying specialised weed control techniques.

"Companies that have used our services range from Butlins, Shell Oil and British Waterways to local golf courses, small industrial estates and local authorities," said Roger.

"It's the ubiquitous nature of weeds that makes our potential marketplace absolutely huge, and their persistence in even the most unlikely environments that means ours is a regular, growing business."

EARTHWORM SUGGESTION

A novel approach suggested by Bayer Environmental Science has enhanced the effectiveness of its earthworm cast suppressant in areas of high pH levels in the water.

A number of clubs in Southern Ireland were being treated with Bayer's Mildothane Turf Liquid with the average results expected for the product.

However, not satisfied that anything less than three months should be achievable, Bayer, in conjunction with local distributor Spraychem, investigated a number of factors including the weather record and soil conditions before testing for pH levels in the water.

Finding that these indicated greater fluctuations than usual, an adjuvant, the whetting agent X Change, was added to the Mildothane solution.

"The results were extremely good," commented Colm Murphy, Course Supervisor at Malahide Golf Club in County Dublin.

"The mix had the effect of neutralising high pH content. By adding X Change, treatment with Mildothane Turf Liquid gives us around a three month suppression of worm casts," according to John Hall, Marketing Manager at Bayer Environmental Science, this is the first time that X Change has been utilised in this particular area of turf treatment.

NEW AEA CHAIRMAN

Keith Christian, Managing Director of Claymore Grass Machinery, has been elected President of the AEA after having served as Chairman of the Outdoor Power Equipment Council of the AEA for the last two years.



Keith is 47 years old and has been with the Claymore company since its start up in 1985, being appointed Managing Director in 1993. Prior to helping to establish Claymore he had started in the gardening machinery industry with H Burlinghams Garden Machinery near Tewkesbury selling to golf clubs and councils and he then moved to Spear and Jackson to sell the Stiga line to garden machinery dealers.

In taking on this role Keith has declared that his aim is to encourage new blood into the industry, recalling the opportunity and training he was given in his early days with Burlinghams.

Keith is married with three children and is known for his love of rugby, being Chairman of the Bredon Rugby Club and captaining their second XV.