



Welcome

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNIE

With BTME/ClubHouse now a fading memory it is time to welcome in the new golf season and in the world of professional tournament golf it looks like it might be quite a humdinger.

For too long now the question has been "Who is going to step up to the plate and challenge Tiger?" Well it looks as though we may have an answer.

The start Ernie Els has had to the season has made even Tiger stand up and take notice.

As I sit here Ernie has played six tournaments, won five and was second in the other... and in that one he led by one with a hole to play but finished bogey to Lian-Wei Zhang's birdied to lose. No, I hadn't heard of Lian-Wei Zhang either, but he is the only man to have got his nose in front of Ernie so far this year. Not a bad claim to fame.

As Tiger himself said when asked to comment on Ernie's form, "You can hit the ball 400 yards off the tee but you still have to get the ball in the hole and Ernie isn't missing from 12 feet in."

It might have been so different had Ernie contrived to lose last year's Open at Muirfield. With so many opportunities to nail down victory had he not eventually done so the mental scars would have lingered for some time but as it is the positives he must have taken from that have been a real springboard to his current successes.

With The Great One having had an enforced layoff due to a leg injury, the feeling among the golfing press began to take hold that the gap between the two was narrowing and hopefully we could be producing one of those great head-to-head rivalries that makes golf so exciting. Nicklaus and Palmer, Nicklaus and Watson, Faldo and Norman created huge interest but while we have been able to marvel at Tiger's dominance and record making achievements we haven't seen him needing to make birdie down the last to win nearly often enough.

David Duval and Phil Mickelson and to a lesser extent Sergio Garcia have mounted challenges but Duval has lost a bit of form since winning The Open at Royal Lytham; Mickelson can't seem to keep himself in full control coming down the stretch in a Major and is still to win one, while Garcia still has time to develop into a player who can compete regularly.

But in Ernie we have a class player playing at the top of his form, with a run the like of which I can't recall having seen, and if he can sustain it a viable challenge for supremacy will be mounted.

But what did Tiger do in his first tournament back from injury? Need you ask. He won by four shots.

So it looks very much as though it is game on between Tiger and Ernie, and golf can only benefit.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

JAMES (JIMMY) MACDONALD MBE

25TH APRIL 1934 – 21ST JANUARY 2003

It is with great sadness that I must inform fellow greenkeepers of the death of Jimmy MacDonald, who passed away in hospital on 21st January 2003.

Jimmy was one of the most respected and experienced greenkeepers in the country, with many of the great names writing to congratulate him when he was awarded the MBE in 1997.

Jimmy started his illustrious career at Lytham Greendrive Golf Course and then moved to Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club in 1964, where he became Deputy Head Greenkeeper.

In 1970 he moved to Formby Golf Club as Head Greenkeeper, until he was invited back to Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club as Head Greenkeeper in 1973.

During his career at Royal Lytham & St Annes Jimmy had the unique record of being, Deputy Head Greenkeeper for the 1969 British Open won by Tony Jacklin and was proud to have been Head Greenkeeper for four Open Championships:- 1974 won by Gary Player, 1979, & 1989 won by Seve Ballesteros and his last open in 1996, which was won by Tom Lehman. Jimmy was also proud to have had four Seniors Opens, the Ryder Cup and Home International. Amateur Championship, Curtis Cup and the Weetabix Women's Open.

His one regret was that he never had the Walker Cup, which he said on many occasions that this would have completed the set for him.

Upon his retirement Jimmy was proud to have been awarded honorary life membership of Royal Lytham & St Annes.

He was also immensely proud of his home nine hole course at Traigh in the West Highlands, where he assisted in the design, layout and rebuilding work. The 4th hole, a 247 yard par-4, is named after him "Jimmy's Choice".

Jimmy had been a keen golfer playing off 4 in his peak when he won many trophy's including the Ex Servicemen's Trophy.

Jimmy was a great believer in greenkeeper training and helped many students to develop their practical skills with on course training at Royal Lytham. He always had time for people and will be remembered for his help and guidance.

He helped many of his staff (his old boys) to progress and become Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers, including John Bucher, Derek Postlethwaite, Chris Whittle, Geoff Whittle, Mark Broughton, Peter Simpson, Ritchie Bradshaw, and Paul Smith, who became Jimmy's successor at Royal Lytham.

Jimmy always said he had two women in his life, "his wife, Carol, and his golf course Royal Lytham". He always had an anecdote to help make a point and one in particular, when being interviewed about the course it was mentioned that Royal Lytham was not the most picturesque of golf courses, Jimmy's reply was, "No it was not a pretty course but there again it is not the prettiest of ladies who necessarily make the best wives."

Jimmy's love for the course was legendary and he always defended it against its critics, "people say it is surrounded by houses. But you don't have time to look at the houses. You must concentrate on your game and as a test of golf there is no better."

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Jimmy's wife, Carol, daughters, Alison and Claire, son, Andrew, and his beloved grandchildren.

A truly great man. One of the last true traditional links greenkeepers and one that we are all proud to have known.

Geoff Whittle



GOLFPLUS

GolfPlus, have been swamped with enquiries and overwhelmed by the response they received following their launch at January's BTME & ClubHouse Exhibition.

"We are delighted by the levels of enquiries we had at the show," commented Colin Surman, of GolfPlus.

"Particularly as it was the first time we had exhibited. We were also encouraged by how many clubs were planning to expand their buggy fleets for the coming season, and how they are increasingly seeing golf buggies as a source of profits".

GolfPlus's buggy GPS system adds a new dimension to a golfers buggy round, and in the process drives greater demand for buggies promising Golf

Professionals exciting new revenue opportunities from their buggy fleets.

"Being a British designed and manufactured product, we are able to guarantee our customers the very best in service and support," added Colin. "We work closely with regional and national buggy distributors to make sure that we can offer the same or next day part replacements, and in doing so, minimising the impact on the golf operation".

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

THE GREENKEEPING SUPPLY COMPANY (GSC) TO SPONSOR THE BIGGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2003

The Greenkeeping Supply Company (GSC) is to sponsor the 2003 BIGGA National Championship, due to be held at Notts Hollinwell GC and Coxmoor GC on October 6 and 7.

"We are really excited at the prospect of being the sponsors of this event," said Managing Director, Liam Galway.

"It makes a good deal of sense for us to get involved in this way; we are based close to BIGGA HQ, and have established a terrific relationship with thousands of greenkeepers around the country and this is an opportunity to say thanks to our clients in the golf market."

The BIGGA National Championship has been developed over the years from the two previous competitions that were discontinued. Qualifying for the event comes in the form of regional qualifiers or a simple application direct to BIGGA (along with a cheque for £70.00!). Around 100 BIGGA members are likely to tee it up on the two midlands courses and the quality of golf is likely to be exceptionally high.

Ian Semple from Old Fold Manor won the event last

year and off a one handicap.

Such quality and skill should not put the less able golfers off though as Liam was keen to emphasise, "This is a two-day event for greenkeepers from all over the country. They can meet up, play some golf, share a laugh and a few beers with their peers in the industry and enjoy the hospitality that the GSC and BIGGA are happy to offer. Sure the golf is the centrepiece but the social aspect is so much more important."

That point was also reinforced by BIGGA's Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

"We are delighted to welcome The Greenkeeping Supply Company on board as the new sole sponsor of the BIGGA National Championship, the most prestigious golfing event on the BIGGA calendar. It is played on top quality golf courses and attracts some of the finest golfers within the Association's membership."

"I'm sure that The Greenkeeping Supply Company will be first class partners in ensuring that the Championship continues to flourish and that this year's event will be the best yet."

BERNHARD & CO.



Peter Wood, 40, has joined the Bernhard and Company team in a new role as General Manager.

Based in Rugby, during the next few months he will be building on the existing successful business base of grinding specialists Bernhard and exploring

fresh opportunities and challenges.

"I will be heading up business administration," says Peter, "and strengthening the management team."

"This is a wonderful opportunity for me to bring a fresh approach into the industry," said Peter

"I am certainly looking forward to learning more about the vital role of grinding within the turf management field."

Skilled in IT project management, Peter's previous roles include Business Manager for a manufacturing group specialising in fenestration and architectural walkways.

Already living near Rugby, Peter is married with a son, and his hobbies include sailing and table tennis.

IPSWICH GOLF CLUB, (PURDIS HEATH)

Ipswich Golf Club, (Purdis Heath) has signed an exclusive five-year agreement with Bartram Mowers.

The agreement will see the Ipswich based dealers supplying the club with a range of Ransomes Jacobsen equipment over the next five years, together with a raft of other turf maintenance equipment.

"We are delighted to have signed this exclusive five year agreement with Bartram Mowers. It will mean that all our equipment requirements will be met by them, and apart from exceptional circumstances, all machinery will be from the Ransomes Jacobsen product range," said Club Secretary Neill Ellice.

"As part of the agreement, Bartram's will also be responsible for all the club's training requirements, which will also be supported by Ransomes Jacobsen. This will take place either on site at the club, or on Ransomes Jacobsen premises, which are located just two miles away from the club.

"The quality of the equipment coupled with value for money, were among the main reasons that we turned to Bartram Mowers. The agreement also provides the club with exceptional after sales support along with very

competitive finance terms."

The agreement was signed on the Ransomes Jacobsen stand at the recent BTME exhibition, shortly after Ipswich Golf Club was presented with the BIGGA Environment Award for the second time, which has not happened during the history of the award.



TURFMECH

Turner Groundscare's branch at Stamford Bridge, Tarvin, near Chester, is Turfmech Machinery's dealer of the year for the second year in succession.

The award, which is now in its sixth year, was presented to Turner Groundscare in recognition of its outstanding sales successes during 2002 and the consistently high level of service it has provided to owners and operators of Turfmech machines.

Presenting the award, Turfmech's Northern Area Sales Manager, Clive Carter, said that Turner Groundscare had produced consistently strong results since being appointed a Turfmech dealer three years ago.

"The firm has built a loyal following for Turfmech products among local authorities, contractors, golf clubs, hire firms and private customers throughout Cheshire, Flintshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside," he said.



Royal Inverdivot GC...

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



ALPHA AMENITY

Alpha Amenity has been successful in securing the services of two of Sportsworld's best performing representatives, Terry Adamson, in North Wales, and West Cheshire, and Mike Whitehouse, in the West Midlands. "Sportsworld's existing customers will be reassured to know that they can continue to secure the supply of the popular Humate range of fertilisers from Alpha Amenity who has recently secured supply of these products for distribution in the UK," said Alpha Amenity Managing Director, Clive Heginbotham.

With the sales team now numbering nine, Alpha has made some internal changes to manage the business better. John Marland has been promoted to Business Manager and is responsible for all internal business systems eg Administration, IT, Stock. This will allow Clive Heginbotham more time to focus on sales and marketing activities.

"John is currently taking part in a sponsored climb to the Peak of Kilimanjaro and has raised around £3,000 for the charity SCOPE (for people with cerebral palsy). We look forward to his return and know he will take on his new responsibilities with his usual enthusiasm," said Clive.

LOCH LOMOND GOLF CLUB

Loch Lomond Golf Club has recently signed a three-year exclusive deal with John Deere as its preferred supplier of course maintenance equipment.

Located on the banks of the famous Scottish Loch and set within the ancient 12th Century Clan Colquhoun estate, the 300-acre private members course is managed by Golf Course Superintendent Ken Siems and his staff.

Ken has been at Loch Lomond since it was established nearly 10 years ago, before which he was working in the trade in his home country of Canada. The club has been supplied with course maintenance equipment from local dealer Nairn Brown in Glasgow since its opening, and took delivery of its first John Deere machines when Ken arrived - a 6x4 Gator utility vehicle, a 955 compact tractor and a 220 walk-behind greens mower.

"We have built up a very strong relationship with Nairn Brown over the years and the service and support that they give us has been fundamental in signing this three-year agreement," said Ken.

PGA DESIGN CONSULTING LTD

Golf course and driving range safety is fast becoming a key issue of concern with an increasing number of high value claims from players and course neighbours who are encouraged today to resort to the law for settlement of claims and disputes.

Insurance underwriters now look for proof that Clubs and Owners are diligent and careful in the safe management of the course or range.

After numerous accidents PGA Design Consulting Ltd have published the Design Guide for Golf Driving Ranges and Safety Guidelines for Golf Courses but accidents continue to happen.

It is important for clubs to realise that the committee members, Directors, Golf Professionals and course designers are all targets for the victim's insurers. PGADC has launched a safety audit scheme to help clubs ensure that they stay on the right side of the law.

For further information Tel: 0117 9527599

WORKSHOPS TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC HELP FOR COURSE RENOVATION

At a time when there is growing criticism of the state of sports turf throughout the UK, soil and grounds management specialists, TurfTrax, is hosting a number of regional workshops to provide baseline solutions to solve turf troubles.

The events, to be held throughout March, at venues between Cheltenham and York are for all those involved in sportspitch and golf course management and the renovation decision-making chain, from senior club or local authority managers, to greenkeepers.

"We estimate that the UK sports industry from school playfield level to the Premier League loses between £600-800 million every year as a result of poor playability or postponements," said TurfTrax Managing Director, Justin Smith.

"However, most of this could be avoided through simple planning and adopting scientifically sound, remediation and management practices, which in

many cases need not cost a fortune."

"There simply is no reason why sports turf shouldn't be able to cope with extremes of weather. Anyone who is experiencing problems at present needs to re-examine their pitch or course construction, or drainage system."

The workshops will identify what are the top-ten turf-troubles and provide some simple solutions to avoid these recurring.

The workshops, which start at 9.30 and finish with lunch, are at:-

Leicester City Football Club, March 11; Haydock Park Racecourse, March 12; Twickenham RFC, March 17; Wyboston, St Neots; March 19, BIGGA HOUSE, York, March 20, and Cheltenham Racecourse, March 25.

For an invitation, please contact Sarah Mason, on 01234 821750, or e-mail sarah.mason@turftrax.co.uk

THE WISLEY GOLF CLUB

With the installation of eight Huxley Golf high-intensity practice mats, The Wisley Golf Club has reinforced its objective of providing members with the best possible practice facilities.

Planned and managed by club professional, Denis Pugh, the golf practice area at The Wisley comprises a combination of natural turf and Huxley all-weather practice tee surfaces, the latter measuring 75 yards (69 metres) long by 4 yards (3.66 metres) wide. The resulting area of 300 sq yards (250 sq metres) - one-third of it under cover - makes the installation the

largest all-weather golf practice area supplied and installed to date by Huxley Golf in Europe.

"The winter practice area at The Wisley has evolved from temporary hard rubber mats to high quality Huxley Golf surfaces which look, feel and react to a golf shot just like natural turf," commented Denis.

"Laid on a prepared base and then sand-filled, the Huxley all-weather surfaces accept a normal tee peg while also allowing the ball to be played straight off the pile, enabling back-spin to be generated without jarring of the hands or wrists."



THE ASSOCIATION OF GOLF CLUB SECRETARIES (AGCS)

The Association of Golf Club Secretaries will be holding its 2003 Conference at Bosworth Hall, Market Bosworth on April 8 and 9, when around 200 Secretaries and Managers will gather to hear a series of Papers on topics of importance and interest to all in golf administration.

The Conference Keynote speech will be given by Tim Yeo, Shadow Minister of Trade & Industry. He is a keen golfer and will be talking about how he sees the role of the Secretary in golf.

Among the other speakers are The Professional Secretary, AGCS National Secretary Keith Lloyd who will speak about the Association and how he sees it progressing; Iain Fraser, Director of the North Highlands College, Kyle Phillpotts, of the PGA, and Alessandro Forte who will advise on how secretaries should set about building a secure pension.

Other speakers include Dale Clements, of GolfENGLAND; Richard Flint, of the EGU, will introduce the EGU's; Mike Round, Chief Executive of the Golf Foundation; Michael Shaw, Secretary of the National Golf Clubs Advisory Association; Tom McKenzie and Martin Ebert, of Donald Steel & Partners, and Michael Barratt, R&A member and one-time Presenter of BBC's Nationwide, and Tim Taylor, Chairman of the R&A Golf Course Committee, will explain the aims of the new Golf Course Committee and how it can help clubs.

The final event of the 2003 Conference will be the now-traditional Panel of Experts, who will answer questions from delegates. The Home Unions, the R&A, the LGU, the PGA will all be represented.

For further information contact:

association@sovereignconference.co.uk

HAYTER AWARDS

At the annual dealer dinner held during BTME at Harrogate this year, Hayter recognised the outstanding work done by their dealers throughout 2002.

Awarded the prestigious "Top Professional Dealer Award" were Jon and Ben Morgan of Keith Morgan Mowers, from Usk in South Wales.

Outstanding Dealer of the Year Award went to Mitchell Industries. Ian Collingwood from Mitchell Industries also received a special mention because of his meticulous attention to detail and hard work in preparing for and carrying out product demonstrations. The Special Achievement Award went to Trevor Howard and Mick Livingston, of Gibson's Garden Machinery, for their success in sales of spare parts.

The photo shows from the left facing the camera Jon Morgan, Ben Morgan and Chris Faulkner, who presented the award, from Lister Wilder, who were Top Dealer last year.



ERIC HEPWORTH

The telephone number of renowned golf course photographer Eric Hepworth was incorrect in the BTME & ClubHouse Show Guide where he was exhibiting. Apologies to Eric, whose work in the shape of this superb photograph of Ballybunion Old, you can see here.

Anyone wishing to contact Eric, who is available to photograph golf courses please call: 01302 322674.

A complete list of courses that he has on file is now available on his website: www.hepworthgolfphotography.com



'This used to be the long par 5'

Daily Mail

The recent Government announcement on the increased number of houses required to meet the needs of a growing population might well have implications for greenkeeping if this Mac cartoon in the Daily Mail is to be believed.

NEW CHAIRMAN...



Chris Carr, Sales and Marketing Manager of Q Lawns, has taken over as Chairman of the TGA.

Elected officially at the TGA's annual general meeting held in Padstow, Cornwall, in late January, Chris will serve as Chairman for the next two years. The

Association's new vice-chairman, also ratified at the AGM, is Stephen Edwards, Joint Managing Director of Inturf.

Speaking following his appointment, Chris Carr commented that he would be doing his utmost to maintain the excellent forward momentum achieved by David Waring during his two and half years at the helm of the Association.

"David did a superb job in raising the profile and standing of the TGA throughout the entire turf industry," pointed out Chris.

ROBERT BECOMES NEW KEEPER

Independent agronomist Robert Laycock became the new "Keeper of the Register" at the second meeting of members of the Register of Independent Professional Turfgrass Agronomists (RIPTA) in January. He will act as contact person for RIPTA during 2003.

RIPTA's website, www.ripta.co.uk, was launched during 2002 and contains information about the Register and its aims. Links to the websites of members and also to those of some of the associations who support the Register can also be viewed.

Since its inception, the Register has been administered by Jeff Perris, Director of Advisory & Consultancy Services at the Sports Turf Research Institute. Members present at the meeting thanked Jeff for the excellent work he had done in getting the Register off the ground.

The Register of Independent Professional Turfgrass Agronomists currently comprises seventeen agronomists who fulfil specified criteria of independence, experience and academic excellence. They advise sports turf clients of all types in the UK and abroad. Agronomists who fulfil the requirements for membership are encouraged to apply to be added to the list.

The launch of RIPTA in January 2002 was enthusiastically welcomed by the main sporting bodies in the UK and Ireland, including the R&A, Football League, England & Wales Cricket Board, Jockey Club, English Golf Union and The Golfing Union of Ireland.

The seventeen agronomists on the register are: Alistair Beggs; Emma Beggs; Andy Cole; Eddie Connaughton; John Hacker; Mike Harbridge; Steve Isaac; Gordon Jaaback; Robert Laycock; Tim Lodge; Ian McClements; Stuart Ormondroyd; Jeff Perris; George Shiels; David Stansfield; Neil Squires and Peter Winter

For further information contact:

Robert Laycock. Tel: 01759 318680

Email: robert.laycock@btinternet.com

WOLF PROLINE

BTME proved to be the ideal launch pad for WOLF Proline - the professional turf division of WOLF Garden. Headed up by new recruit Clive Pearson, the Proline team enjoyed a hectic show, with much interest being shown in the new range of professional lawn fertilisers.

The experienced team, which comprises of WOLPs Managing Director Richard Smith; Sales Manager, Clive Pearson, who joined WOLF from GEM in December with over 20 years experience in the industry; Turf Technician Emma Passman, who joins with a HND in Agriculture and a Degree in Land Management, and Mamie Lake (who also joined in December, as Proline Administrator) were delighted with the feedback to the new range.

Sales Manager, Clive Pearson said "We came to the show knowing that we had an excellent product to offer and this, backed up by strong corporate branding, an experienced team, and excellent in-house support would aid us in our attempt to find suitable distributors for the range. The show has proved most successful and the new team will be kept busy following up leads over the next month or so".

A competition to win a WOLF ride on lawnmower - the Cart generated much interest on the stand, with the winner of the competition Andy Campbell MG, of Carden Park being drawn on the Thursday afternoon.