



Welcome

DON'T LET YOUR CLUB BECOME GREEN WITH ENVY

There are times when you really wonder if banging your head against a wall is a pastime worth continuing.

I say that after listening to a national sports radio channel when a former European Tour pro turned pundit, announced to the listening nation that he'd never seen Wentworth in better condition. "I've never seen it greener" were the exact words chosen by Talk Sport's Robert Lee.

Now, I'm a huge fan of Wentworth. I was based there for a time in the early 90s and it was a real privilege to drive across the 18th fairway on the way to the office every morning. I've seen the superb work of Chris Kennedy and his team first hand and peaking a course twice a year is a skill for which Chris has no equal. So I would use many measures to praise Wentworth, but I certainly wouldn't use the "greenness scale".

Of course, you could argue that Robert's crime is minor and the fact that golf is even being reported on a predominately football station is a plus, but for greenkeepers attempting to do the job to the best of their abilities it is yet another blow.

The fact is that too many golfers equate "greenness" with quality. With the splendour of Augusta laid before the television watching nation every April I suppose it is an understandable conclusion for the club member to reach, but long term sustainability is something which doesn't enter the equation of members dazzled by the azaleas.

Unfortunately, through a quirk of members' club constitutions, those members have the power to influence agronomic decisions at their own clubs and pressure to become "greener" is becoming increasingly intense. Highly trained greenkeepers are often risking employment stability if they attempt to steer down the path of traditional British greenkeeping.

There are two examples in this month's magazine. The new Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year lost his job a year ago after attempting to adopt sound agronomic practices at a club which lost patience, made him redundant and headed off on their own search for "greenness". Fortunately he is now at another club. At Temple Golf Club Martin Gunn and Malcolm Peake are strong upholders of traditional greenkeeping but even they have come under pressure. They've also seen many quality greenkeepers lost to the industry and courses fall by the wayside.

"If courses don't follow best management practices we could be in danger of losing the character of all our priceless national heritage courses - heathland, links and downland and this would change forever the way we play traditional British golf," says Malcolm, in the article.

The "We Know Better" brigade is a strong lobby in many, if not all, British golf clubs and their case is helped when someone announces on air that a course has never looked better because it is so green.

The sad unpalatable truth is that golfers, and some supposed golfing experts, don't know what is best for golf courses.

The long term consequences should be of concern to everyone.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

AN AMAZING MAN

Eric Barber was not the type of person to yearn for his pipe and slippers when he retired from greenkeeping eight years ago.

Eric, who was Course Manager at Teign Valley Golf Club, in Exeter, has just become World Champion in the gruelling sport of Duathlon which involved him running 10 kilometres, cycling 150 kilometres and rounding off with another 30 kilometre run, all on a mountainous course in Switzerland.

"It was the toughest event I've ever done," said the newly crowned 67 year-old 65-69 age category winner.

To put it in perspective the winning time of nine hours, 29 minutes and 19.9 second included Eric running 25 miles in three hours 41 minutes, virtually a marathon with a 94 mile cycle race sandwiched in between.

The race didn't go completely to plan and at one point Eric, whose strength lies in the running elements, was 15 minutes behind a youthful 65 year-old Italian with the prospect of falling further behind on the bike.

"But I clawed my way back into it and was 11 minutes behind at the start of the final run and caught him after 10 kilometres of the race," said Eric, who also won the 60-64 category in 2000.

Along with the better known Triathlon - which also incorporates swimming - Duathlon is a growing sport and the fittest man Eric knows is the five time world Champion, Benny Vansteelant, of Belgium, who is virtually unbeatable at the shorter Duathlon distance, but who was pipped for the gold this year in the open category

Fitter, and with more stamina, than ever, Eric hopes to defend his title in Denmark next year and



also has some other mind boggling objectives before then.

"I want to run the 93 mile West Highland Way; complete a stage in the Tour de France and run the Jungfrau Marathon in Switzerland which starts at 2000 feet above sea level and rises to 7,000 above sea level," said Eric, who added that it would be ideal training for the defence of his title.

Eric has to fund his own trips and would be extremely grateful if anyone decided to sponsor one of Britain's toughest and most dedicated pensioners.

Eric's exploits were featured in the Devon paper The Herald Express.

Anyone who wishes to assist should contact Scott MacCallum at BIGGA HOUSE.

TOP MAN

With the Rugby World Cup going strong in Australia it is nice to see some recognition for BIGGA's own rugby internationalist.

The day after England's match against South Africa The Sunday Times highlighted the team which played South Africa in 1972 which included Regional Administrator, Peter Larter. Peter won 24 caps for England and also represented the British Lions. A lock forward, he scored a long distance

penalty against New Zealand and a try against South African in 1969 which sealed an 11-8 win.

Peter is pictured as number five between Mike Burton, now a well known sporting ticket agent and Frank Cotton, now Managing Director of Cotton Traders. Directly below Peter is Andy Ripley, who became a star in the BBC's Superstars which has been relaunched recently.



ELMWOOD COLLEGE AND THE DUNHILL CUP

During the recent Dunhill Links Championships, Elmwood greenkeeping students were involved as part of the team preparing the Kings Barns Golf Links. The volunteers came from the full range of full time courses, as in NC, HNC and HND.

Throughout the week they provided support ranging from mowing greens, tees and fairways, to raking bunkers, beginning at 6am, and after play repairing the course from the days wear and tear.

"The full time staff at Kings Barns maintain the highest standards of greenkeeping week in week out, and it is a superb learning experience for our students to witness these standards at first hand.

Every single one of them thoroughly enjoyed working on such an inspiring golf course," said Ian Butcher, Course Tutor at Elmwood.

Stuart McCole, Course Manager of Kings Barns Golf Links, said, "This is something that helps both parties, and the support Elmwood students provide through a very important week for us is invaluable."

Bjarni Hannesson, currently studying for his HND in Golf Course Management, said, "It was an exciting week, and it has broadened my horizons with regard to working on the very top golf courses."



UNSUNG HEROES



There's still time to give one of your colleagues the chance of a week's holiday in the south of France.

As a practising UK greenkeeper or groundsman you can nominate your chosen unsung hero, putting him or her forward for Terrain Aeration's special award which offers the hire of a house in Languedoc, plus flights to Montpellier or £150 towards car travel.

Situated in the small village of Neffies, surrounded by vineyards and 40 minutes from the Mediterranean, the house sleeps up to six and is fully equipped with washing machine, fridge freezer etc.

Designed to recognise the hard work and professionalism which often goes unsung in our industry, the nominations will be judged by Gordon Child, BIGGA; Derek Walder, IOG, and Tim Lodge, STRI, and the winners, one greenkeeper and one groundsman, will be announced at BTME & ClubHouse 2004.

The judges will not necessarily be looking for turf care skills (there are awards for these already), but individuals whose dedication either to their jobs or their colleagues has improved the quality of working life at their particular work place.

You know these unsung heroes so call Linda Green now on Tel: 01449 673783.

COUNTRYWIDE ROLE FOR MARTIN

Countrywide has appointed Martin Townsend as Turf and Amenity Sales Manager.

Martin Townsend joined the company several months ago from Scotts UK, with a wealth of knowledge in the industry stemmed from his early days in the 1970's as an apprentice cricketer and groundsman at Lords Cricket Ground. From 1976 until 1989 Martin held posts of Head Groundsman and Head Greenkeeper.

He then moved into the Amenity Distribution side of the industry, a natural transition for a man who is always up for a challenge, during this and subsequent roles. Following 10 successful years as a Technical Sales Manager working predominately in the south west of the country Martin joined Scotts UK Professional four years ago as Senior Sales Manager for the South West, South Wales and the Channel Isles.

Martin's remit is to build a sales and distribution Turf & Amenity business that will run along side and compliment the portfolio of Countrywide's products and services available throughout the midlands, southern England and Wales.

NEW APPOINTMENT



Claire Kilmurray has joined Vitax as Technical Representative for East and Central England, covering the area from East Anglia to the Cotswolds.

As a Technical Sales Rep. and Local Authority Manager with Rigby Taylor, before taking a similar post with Sherriff Amenity, Claire has accumulated over 23 years experience in the industry.

"I've just had a year away from the business and found that I missed it, I'm looking forward to meeting old contacts, re-establishing links with the private turf and golf sector and generally getting out and about again," she said.

Clive Williams, Sales and Amenity Manager for Vitax said that the company needed someone with Claire's experience to develop the demand for the company's new products in this geographical area.

"We've a good customer base in Claire's new territory and she has the expertise to handle it professionally," he commented.

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OFF TARGET!

John Shaw, Head Greenkeeper at Styrrup Hall Golf and Country Club, in Doncaster, bit off more than he could chew when he bet his staff that he could rake every bunker by hand in two hours. He trailed in an hour after his target time - still not a bad effort, but his staff, who put together this photograph, got their own back!



25 YEARS GREENKEEPING



Anthony Davies MG, Course Manager at Prestbury Golf Club has been recognised at his club for achieving 25 years in the greenkeeping profession.

Anthony, who was the first ever Greenkeeper of the Year, has been one of the most prominent Course Managers in the country for a number of years and he will surely go close to clocking up another 25 years before he hangs up his spurs.

NEW MAN AT LASTEC

Keith Elliment has been appointed European Sales Manager for Lastec UK heading the company's UK and European dealer network.



Keith introduced the Lastec Articulator range of rotary mowers into Britain in 1990 as sole UK distributor, before becoming Southern Regional Sales Manager for Lastec UK. He brings over 15 years experience to the post and is looking forward to capitalising on the burgeoning European market.

"Golf in Europe is growing at a rate of 40 to 50 new courses per year, as opposed to about 10 new courses here," he says. "We're at the stage now where we can take full advantage of the exciting opportunities available."

John Millen, formerly Operations Manager for Lastec UK will remain with the company for the foreseeable future in an advisory capacity, providing insight and direction into future European sales.

NEW RECRUIT



Rigby Taylor has appointed Peter Bridgewater as Business Development Manager for their Mascot line marking products, with particular emphasis on expanding and developing the new Duramark range launched recently by the company.

Peter has a broad range of experience in the amenity market including having worked for Supaturf Products where he gained considerable expertise in line marking products and joins Rigby Taylor from the Turftrax Group where he was Area Sales Manager.

KIM MACFIE JOINS LELY

Toro's, professional turf equipment and irrigation products' distributor Lely UK, has appointed one of the leading figures in the machinery industry to head up its new Toro Consumer Products Division.

Kim Macfie, formerly Sales and Marketing Director for Hayter is to take charge of the Toro consumer business from January 1. This follows Lely's recent appointment by The Toro Company to distribute its garden and lawn products in the UK from this September.

Lely is already the exclusive distributor in the UK for Toro professional turf maintenance machinery and irrigation products. Now with consumer it handles the complete set of all three Toro product lines.

"When Toro asked Lely to distribute its consumer products, there were two elements that had to be present before I could agree. I had to have continuity from the previous organisation's core staff – but I also had to find someone of sufficient experience and stature to lead the new division through the early years of transition.," said Lely UK Managing Director, Graham Dale.

"So I'm delighted that Kim Macfie has agreed to take the lead role from January 1st."

Graham said that he was also glad to say that the experience and enthusiasm of two key members of the previous regime had been retained in the shape of area sales manager Clive Shepherd and after sales manager Dave Jackman. The appointment of another area sales manager had been made and details would be announced soon.

"The scene is now set for us to move forward with confidence and enthusiasm and I am relishing the prospects," he added.

After almost 20 years at Hayter, one of the principle suppliers of top-end consumer lawn and



garden products, Kim Macfie brings to Lely a wealth of experience and knowledge of the industry. He like Graham Dale is also a past president of the AEA.

Kim, who lives at Bishop's Stortford, becomes General Manager Consumer Products.

"I'm delighted to be joining Lely at this exciting time. Toro and Wheel Horse are great brand names with a great pedigree and a superb product range and we intend to ensure they have a bright future.

"A wide-ranging review is being undertaken to support the formation of the new division to the fullest extent and to invest in the strength of the brand. One of our top priorities is to give Toro consumer dealers a much higher level of support and ensure we've got the correct coverage in every part of the country."

THE NORRIE WHYTOCK TROPHY



The Norrie Whytock Trophy was once again held at Auchterarder GC.

Every Section was represented and this event has now become a regular fixture in the BIGGA golfing year in the Scottish Region. The event consists of teams of four from each Section within the Scottish Region taking part on a Stableford basis with the best three scores counting. At the beginning of the tournament the weather was very favourable but during the latter part of the day the tail-enders experienced horrendous showers, however this did not detract from the quality of the scoring.

Once all the scores had been returned the North Section returned to winning ways and emerged as winners with an aggregate of 97 points. The winning team comprised of Stewart McBain, Ken Anderson, Patrick Wood and Steve Sullivan. Central Section finished in second spot with a total of 93 points.

Once again our thanks to David Drummond and Bayer for supporting and hosting this event and once again providing the prizes. All, who took part, would like to pass on their appreciation to David and Bayer for a most enjoyable day and are eagerly looking forward to next year's event. To Archie Dunn and his greenkeeping staff our thanks for preparing the course and to the club and committee of Auchterarder Golf Club for the use of the clubhouse and facilities.

Peter J. Boyd
Regional Administrator
Scottish Region

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