



Welcome

## THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Over the last decade we have all learned of HRH The Duke of York's love of golf and while you can't equate it with the impact Tiger Woods has made on the popularity of the game, he has certainly raised its profile in some areas of society.

He was also good enough to come to Aldwark and officially open BIGGA HOUSE five years ago this month. My how time flies.

Well, last month the profile of the game was given a further boost when the Duke drove in as Captain of the R&A for the next 12 months.

R&A Secretary, Peter Dawson, said it was the best drive he'd ever seen down the famous 1st on the Old Course and within moments those very words were being beamed across the wires and turned into quotes in newspapers, magazines and websites, together with pictures of the Duke's well balanced follow through. If anything could highlight the impact the new R&A Captain will have over the next year that was it.

With playing numbers not increasing at the expected rate and golf clubs involved in battles to secure prospective members, a lifting of the profile of the game is just what the doctor ordered. Photographs of the Duke playing golf will no doubt appear in the likes of Hello and OK magazines again and it might give those people who had contemplated giving the game a go, but done nothing about it, a nudge into visiting their local club or driving range.

Let's face it, for those of us who make our living from the game, however directly or indirectly, any leg up golf gets is a bonus. Our sector of the industry is not huge and any more money that can be brought through the doors is most welcome.

A new member means your club has a cheque to bank, which in turn means when you come to need a new piece of machinery the money will be there to spend. When you do, the company from which you have bought will have more money and they might feel inclined to give their profile an injection by taking out an advert with Greenkeeper International, or becoming a Golden or Silver Key supporter of our Education and Development Fund or increasing their stand space at Harrogate.

When that happens we have more resources to improve the benefits we offer BIGGA members and provide additional education and training courses and resources, which means you're better placed to do a better job back at your golf clubs. If your courses are looking tip top you are better placed to attract more new members. Many more members and the club will be in a position to add to its greenkeeping staff and then BIGGA will have more potential members which gives the Association more clout when we come to talking to the industry, or even companies from outwith the industry.

I suppose, stealing from The Lion King, it's the Circle of Life!

Scott MacCallum, Editor

## TORO MATCH-UP

The benefits of the Toro Student of the Year Award have long been known to those people who have been lucky enough to have become involved at any stage of the competition but for the 2001 winner, Andrew Pledger, they have been greater than most.

Andrew won his Award in the final year that the competition was run alongside the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping, and his fellow victor was Huw Morgan MG, Course Manager at Wildernesse Golf Club in Kent. It was the first time that the two men had met and their friendship grew over the following months and in particular during the time when both were in the States - Andrew as part of his

Scholarship Award at the University of Massachusetts and Huw during his winner's trip to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando.

During this time Huw had been looking at his own staffing issues and felt that Andrew was just the sort of person he'd love to have as his Deputy. So on the taxi journey back to Orlando International Airport he offered the job to Andrew, who, at the time was number three at The Hertfordshire Golf Club.

"He was a bit taken aback to be asked but two or three weeks later he accepted and started as joint Deputy Course Manager with Grant Elliott, the following January," explained Huw.

"It has been a great move, Grant is excellent at construction work and Andrew, who has customer care experience from his time as a Sainsbury Manager is great at talking to members in the clubhouse, while his attention to detail out on the

golf course is superb," explained Huw.

"I can't thank Toro enough. Not only did we get a great deal out of winning the competitions but they acted as matchmaker too. We would never have met if it hadn't been for Toro."



Andrew seated with Huw standing

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year prize of an intensive seven week turf management course in Massachusetts, visits to the GCSAA Conference and Show and Toro Headquarters was a huge boost to Andrew.

"It really brought me on to another level and opened my eyes to what could be achieved. When I came back I really wanted to use the information that I'd learned," he said.

"I'd had corporate experience at The Hertfordshire but I really wanted experience at a members' club and what better club than the Wildernesse for that and working with such a dedicated, open minded Course Manager as Huw has been great.

"If it hadn't been for the Toro Awards we wouldn't have met and I wouldn't have had this opportunity," he said.

## WELL DONE NEIL!

What do Paul Lawrie and Neil Woolfrey, Course Manager at Great Lever & Farnworth GC, have in common?

Well, they are both Carnoustie Champions. Paul, as we all remember, won an amazing Open Championship over the famous old links in 1999 and earned himself a place on Greenkeeper International's front cover as a result. Neil has just won the Carnoustie Amateur Championship, or as it is better known The Craw's Nest Tassie.

The event attracts players from all over the world and this year had a field of 365.

Neil, a 2 handicapper at Brightmet GC, in Bolton, had to survive two rounds of qualifying. One over the Championship course and another over the Burnside course, before going into the 64 man knockout stage, all played over what is widely regarded as the toughest course in golf.



"During the matchplay stages I beat two past champions from the Carnoustie Club and in the final beat a player off +2 handicap, by two holes.

Ironically he was also from Bolton and I was the first ever winner to come from the North West.

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