



Welcome

## IT'S AMAZING HOW TIME FLIES

A few months ago, during a rare moment of office time given over to reflection, I worked out that the September 2003 magazine would be the 100th I'd edited since joining the Association in April '95.

Now here it is, the 100th magazine under my editorship and in a quiet way I take some pride in having achieved my own personal century.

What it also did was make me think back to those days when I began working for BIGGA and the changes that we have seen since then.

My first magazine, June '95, featured Walter Woods who was preparing for his final Open Championship; there was an article from John Hacker, on "How a Green Committee Should be Run", and a piece on "10 Further Pitfalls of Golf Course Maintenance" from Robert Brame, of the USGA Green Section.

News included a report on a special meeting a golf club was holding "to discuss the performance of its greenkeeping staff"

A look at the Section Notes revealed the names of many members who are still working hard on behalf of the Association now. This highlights just how much a debt is due to them and how much we need new blood to come in. The more people involved the less of an imposition on individuals and the more people will enjoy their work on Association business at Section, Region or National level.

Another point which was brought home when looking at the June '95 magazine was that it was predominately black and white and that, together with the fact that Ken Richardson still looked like a relatively young man in his photograph, adds to the feeling that the June '95 magazine is now a little piece of history.

I recall one of my early trips was to Royal Porthcawl where a Support Team was assisting David Ward with the Walker Cup. Tiger Woods was still an amateur then and, unable to keep his ball on the golf course, was beaten in the singles by Gary Wolstenholme. Since then he has become the biggest thing in sport, never mind golf.

Some of the companies which were advertising in '95 are no longer, either because of a change of marketing strategy, merger or ceasing trading altogether. Ransomes and Jacobsen were still arch rivals then, as were Scotts and Levington and Miracle Professional and again, this highlights how what would be considered unthinkable changes at the time become facts of life a short time later.

Among the highlights for me over the 100 magazines have been the eight Harrogate's I've attended each one building on the one before; the Hayter Challenges and Hayter International Cups which were superb events and the opening of BIGGA HOUSE by HRH The Duke of York.

Hopefully over the next 100 issues there will be many more highlights to cover and looking back in eight and a half years time will be equally fun.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

## FUND RAISERS

Dale Robertson, Course Manager at Newmachar Golf Club, and two of his staff completed a 10 kilometre run in Aberdeen and raised £463.50 for the Archie Foundation in aid of a new children's hospital in Aberdeen.

Dale is on the left of the picture with Patrick Wood, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, in the middle and apprentice Ben Brookes on the right.



## SPORTSTURF IRELAND

All roads lead to Dublin on November 12 and 13 when Sportsturf Ireland, the largest turfgrass exhibition in Ireland is staged at the RDS venue close to the city centre. The show has recently been expanded to cover the legendary main hall of the Royal Dublin Society plus the adjacent modern Shelbourne Hall.

Sportsturf Ireland is a two-day trade show run on alternate years and is organised by the GCSAI. It covers every aspect of turf grass management from golf courses, sportsgrounds and racecourses to public parks, cemeteries and amenity areas. The show will attract turfgrass managers, golf course and parks superintendents and visitors from all over Ireland and much further afield.

As this is a unique opportunity to meet those involved in the Irish industry 'under one roof', over 90% of the exhibition space has already been allocated with most major machinery and supply companies taking part. With the show having a two-year cycle a large attendance is expected driven by the curiosity factor to see what's new in the market. It also acts as a social occasion as it is a great opportunity to meet and greet old friends from different parts of the country. Admission to the trade fair is free.

For further details about Sportsturf Ireland, the availability of exhibition space, or for a personal invitation, contact Tracy Coburn, the GCSAI's Marketing Manager, on 028 406 22655, mobile 07803 237247 or email [tracy@gcsai.org](mailto:tracy@gcsai.org)

## MAKE THE MOST OF OLD MACHINERY



Clubs looking to maximise the use of their older machinery might like to take note of the work of Norbert Lischka and his team at Falkenstein Golf Club in Germany, who converted an old Toro 3000 into a leaf blower.

"Because of the number of trees we have here and the fact that it is a very hilly course the team came up with the idea of building a leaf blower on a 15 year old Toro 3000 green machine," explained Norbert.

"We were able to use the old pedals for mowing and lifting. Therefore we bring the blower in the right distance to the surface by

going up and down, when the area is undulated. Now we don't have to walk any more and are much more effective in our use of time.

Norbert estimates that the cost to fit the blower onto the green machine was 2000 Euros (around £1,400).



## ATV SAFETY WEAR

ATV operators should always wear the correct protective equipment and this includes a helmet. In the event of an accident, the most common injury sustained by an ATV user has been found to be a head injury and helmets are therefore a 'must' and not an option!

ATV manufacturers have worked closely with the HSE on the whole area of safety on quad bikes. As a result these machines are exempted from the requirement to fit a ROPS frame and seat belt because research has demonstrated that these

vehicles are safer without them. However, good operator training is essential. This will include awareness of correct tyre pressure, speed control, body active weight distribution and correct personal protective equipment.

In a work situation an employer must provide, and the operator must wear a helmet. Failure to do so can lead to formal action by the HSE.

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

## GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE PLEA

Given the potential for serious disease damage in situations where fungicides are banned, reference the story from Sweden and the Netherlands in last month's issue, the R&A would like to hear from anyone who has managed this problem without recourse to fungicides over the last 3 years.

Please contact Steve Isaac, Secretary to the Golf Course Committee at The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9JD or e-mail: [steveisaac@randagc.org](mailto:steveisaac@randagc.org)



## STRONG BACKING

Work by the GTC to develop standard learning materials based on best practice and principles for golf course maintenance has been strongly backed by the industry's training providers.

Meeting at the GTC headquarters at Aldwark Manor Hotel and Country Club last week, over 50 delegates, representing most of the 28 accredited training providers in the UK and Ireland, were unanimous in supporting the move. They looked forward to receiving the new standard learning materials for the Sports Turf (Greenkeeping) National Occupational Standards – NVQs and SVQs Levels 2 and 3.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, City and Guilds and the Learning and Skills Council have also voiced their support for the GTC initiative, which is intended to ensure employers have greater confidence that their greenkeeping staff are learning what they really need to know.

As part of the changes, the GTC is raising awareness of A1, the new assessor qualification, and will be offering its network of training provider centres the opportunity to achieve the new award. In turn, this will raise awareness of how Course Managers or Head Greenkeepers can act as assessors in the workplace.

"Standardised training materials written by experts in the subject add extra credibility to the very good range of courses being run up and down

the country. Students and their employers will both know exactly what knowledge level is required for the NVQs Levels 2 and 3," said Keith Harrison, Lecturer in turf agronomy at Merrist Wood College in Surrey, who attended the meeting.

"Taking steps to ensure that students get better assessment of how well they are doing in the workplace from their own supervisor is also very welcome. How students put the knowledge they have gained into practice, and how well they fit into the working environment, can only really be tested on the ground by the people who know them best," he added.

David Golding, GTC Education Director, explained "The skills which trainee greenkeepers learn are vital to the long-term success of the industry. We are constantly looking at ways of strengthening the partnership between the industry and its training providers, as we know that ultimately the success of individual businesses depends on the skills of their staff. We are delighted the training providers share our view that everyone will benefit from this new initiative.

"Employers are equally enthusiastic because the consistent standard of the new learning materials will ensure that they have the opportunity to become more involved in deciding how their own staff can benefit from the training on offer, and where and in what form it should be provided."

The picture on page 27 of the August issue covering The Open Championship shows Ben Scrivener on the extreme right, not Alan Magee as we stated in the caption. Apologies to both Ben and Alan.

The picture on page 17 on the August issue shows a famous view on the Hotchkin Course not the Bracken as was stated in the caption.

## A GEM OF A DAY

The Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich was played over Belleisle Golf Course on Sunday, July 13. The 13th may be an unlucky number for some but not for the day of Harry's Quaich. The sun was shining, the golfers (142 of them) turned out to enjoy the day. All Harry's family were there. It was, if possible, for golfers, a perfect day.

It took the usual format, Stableford Foursomes and a shotgun start and the job of the event is that it is very much a family affair with ages ranging from 14 to 76.

After the match and before the presentation there was, as usual, a free drink, and many other little extras that Harry's family could think up.

This year 10 greenkeepers took part in the competition and I am more than pleased to tell you that Derek Wilson, Head Greenkeeper of Irvine Bogside, was one of the four winners. There is now a greenkeeper's name on the Quaich, which I am sure would have pleased Harry no end.

Harry's immediate family, the three girls, two brothers and his wife, Jessie, presented the prizes while the Secretary, "Brownie" (as the locals call him), read out the winners.

The course was in very good condition and one could see the extra effort that the Head Greenkeeper and his staff had put in for this special day. It is always a pleasure to be present at this day to the memory of Harry Diamond.

The family send their grateful thanks to all who assisted in bringing the tournament to a happy and successful end for this year and, as we say in Scotland, "Haste ye back next year".

Cecil George

## Royal Inverdivot GC...

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



## MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE

From this month, Myerscough College will be the first college in the UK to offer an exciting new on-line Foundation Degree in Sportsturf.

The distance study options involve interactive internet-based teaching and learning materials making qualifications in Sportsturf accessible to all with internet access, regardless of location or nationality. This more flexible method of study will also be a major breakthrough in overcoming the participation barriers currently experienced by those employed full-time in the Sportsturf industry, allowing them to gain a higher education qualification while they work.

## THE HARD WAY!

Steve Welch, Course Manager of Taunton Vale Golf Club, Somerset, has recently taken five days to walk around an average length of any 18 hole course. He had little sleep, endured a temperature range of -10 to +35 degrees and was psychologically shattered. Confused? Let me explain.

Steve, on agreeing to help raise funds for the Golf Club's charity day, agreed to find the most difficult way of getting around the golf course as possible. When he realised that his course's length was so similar to the height of the world's highest stand alone mountain he knew what was to be done. Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro just had to be climbed!

However, Steve, 46, is well known to be scared of heights! Not deterred, he set about the arduous training of carrying a 20kg ruck sack on plenty of weekend walks.

Steve contacted the Expedition Co. and quickly realised that the expertise on offer from this local company was what he needed to help him reach the summit.

So earlier this year, Steve set out for an adventure of a lifetime. A day spent climbing through lush tropical rainforest, followed by a day



of upper-highland type of scenery brought little in the way of problems.

However, on reaching the second campsite altitude sickness hit in a big way, with symptoms like the worst hangover possible. Two more days of steady climbing brought the team to their final camp.

"I have always sought to do crazy things, finishing 28th in the world 'Trail Running' Championships over 80 miles or jumping out of a plane for charity but nothing could have ever

prepared me for the scariest four hours I could have ever imagined" said Steve.

Steve's dislike of heights, coupled with climbing in total darkness, made his sense of fear work overtime.

"My heart rate went off the scale and I'm still not sure how I reached the top" said Steve.

The £600 raised by his efforts will certainly be welcomed by the local hospital, but Steve now reckons that selling raffle tickets is for him from now on!

## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A RELIABLE AGRONOMIST?

Robert Laycock, the current keeper of the Register of Independent Professional Turfgrass Agronomists (RIPTA), answers some questions about RIPTA.

### What is RIPTA?

RIPTA is a register of 16 individuals who advise on turf surfaces of various types and who meet strict criteria for inclusion. These cover independence from commercial interests, scientific qualifications to at least first degree level, experience of providing independent advice on turf for a period of at least four years and adequate professional indemnity insurance cover. Individuals must gain most of their income from advisory work on turfgrass surfaces and abide by a written code of ethics.

Some of those on the Register may be employees of larger organisations, but they appear on the register in their own right.

The Register was launched in 2002 and meets annually, but members communicate in between by email and telephone. There are no staff or offices; a member of the register takes a voluntary turn as keeper or administrator to look after the register from year to year. Jeff Perris, Director of Advisory & Consultancy Services of the STRI was the first "Keeper" of the Register.

### How did RIPTA come about?

Several independent agronomists became aware of an increasing number of advisors working for greenkeeping supply companies who were masquerading as independent when it was patently

clear that they were aiming at increasing the sales of products sold by them or their parent companies. They decided to establish the Register to help potential clients choose suitable advisors.

The formation of the register has received the support of the main bodies involved in sports turf, including the R & A, Golf Unions, Football Association and Jockey Club, who had also become concerned at the growing commercialisation of some suppliers of turfgrass agronomy services.

### Why is RIPTA useful to golf clubs?

If a golf club is trying to identify a suitable agronomist, RIPTA provides a list of available individuals in the British Isles. The choice within the list is then up to the client and may depend on location, a particular specialism or simply whether the client gets on with the agronomist. However, whoever is selected there is a guarantee that they meet certain standards.

### How does an agronomist join the register?

One aim of the register is to increase the number of suitably qualified agronomists on the register and applications for membership are welcomed. Any UK agronomist interested in joining the register may discuss this with the current Keeper of the Register or apply directly, following the guidelines on the website.

To find out more about RIPTA and view a list of its members, or to get further information and background to its formation, visit the web site at [www.ripta.co.uk](http://www.ripta.co.uk). Some members have links to their web sites from the RIPTA site.

## NEW TORO TRAINER



Toro turf machinery distributor Lely UK has appointed Ian Sumpter as its new Toro Training Manager.

His appointment is part of a programme of wider initiatives being introduced by Toro aimed at establishing itself as the turf

machinery industry's No. 1 in customer care.

As such Ian will play an important role in ensuring that Toro dealer service engineers, and those at its customers on golf courses, sports grounds and other locations, are fully trained and proficient in all aspects of servicing Toro machines.

He will work closely with Lely's technical advisors to develop and deliver a programme of operator and service training throughout the UK, which will also include end-user personnel who operate equipment, and Lely's own staff at its St Neots, headquarters.

"This is a very exciting opportunity for me," said Ian.

"Toro has a reputation for delivering a superb standard of after sales service and training and I am looking forward to being part of that process."

He brings with him 13 years' experience of a wide range of related industries, including greenkeeping and sports and amenity turf management.