



Welcome

PRESERVE THIS PIECE OF GOLFING HERITAGE

A call came into the office a few weeks ago from a guy wishing to drum up support for a campaign with which he was involved. It's not an uncommon occurrence but on this occasion Ian Colville, of Musselburgh, was pushing at an open door.

Old Musselburgh Links is regarded by many as being the oldest golf course in the world, but it is currently fighting for its very survival. The reason? The course is in the centre of Musselburgh Racecourse and a planning application has been lodged for the extension of the track and the installation of a new all-weather track and floodlights.

The plans call for the historic 1st green - which records show having been in place as early as 1832 and has been used for Open Championships - to be destroyed and replaced with a replica while the integrity of the entire golf course would be severely compromised. Indeed under the proposed plans with 60 new race meetings added to the current 25 access to the golf course would also be extremely limited. It would, in effect, ruin one of the most significant venues in world golf.

Now it may be that calculations have been made displaying that there is far more revenue to be made from racing than golf but I'm sure I'm not alone in despairing.

If the oldest golf course in the world were in any other country it would be revered. Indeed it would be treated as a living museum and a town would get as much as it possibly could out of what it was lucky enough to have within its boundaries. Any council worth its salt would hang its hat on the fact that the pioneers of a game which is now played all over the world had started to swing a club on their patch.

I visited Old Musselburgh Links and wrote a feature on it for the magazine in the mid 90s and I was surprised then, that not more was made of the history of the course, but I was pleased at the passion and commitment of the people then involved in the maintenance of the course and the preservation of it however little interest the council, even then paid to it.

More information on the campaign to save the course can be found on www.hool.org.uk and letters of objection should be sent to the Director of the Environment, East Lothian Council, John Muir House, Haddington, EH41 3HA.

Talking of golfing "antiques" I'd also like to pay tribute to BIGGA Past Chairman, Gordon Child, who complete with two new hips and a rejuvenated ticker, beat his age for the very first time recently. Gordon shot a 73 around Churston bettering the target by one. Gordon has always been a fine player but it's a rare feat for anyone to beat their age under any circumstances so for him to do so is even more noteworthy. It's not a record Tiger will match for a while anyway!

Scott MacCallum, Editor

HITTING THE MARK

Billingham Golf Club was the winner of the annual Blazon 'See Your Way to a Better Spray' promotion and, as has been custom over the past 13 years, the winner attended a BIGGA presentation ceremony at Saltex.

From a high number of entries across mainland UK, Billingham's name was the first to be drawn and the club will receive a 300 litre tractor mounted Gambetti Barre amenity sprayer.

The prize was presented to Bob Lawton, the

club's Course Manager, by BIGGA Chairman Kerran Daly together with John Pemberton. In attendance also was Richard Aitken Jnr, representing Aitken's Sportsturf who distribute Blazon, Bill Oliver, from Gambetti UK, and Richard Fry, from GreenLink International.

In addition to receiving the sprayer on his club's behalf, Bob Lawton was presented with a top of the range Toshiba laptop computer and carry-case for his personal use.



NEW FACILITIES

Kees Bleeker, CEO Royal Barenbrug Group, has officially opened the new production and warehousing facilities at Barenbrug UK's headquarters in Bury St Edmunds

Barenbrug's UK business has seen sustained growth in recent years, and to cope with the increased business and improve customer services substantial capital investment into new specialised storage facilities for certified seed, new packing lines and customer service facilities have been made.

The requirements were to house 2,500 tonnes of cleaned and certified seed, to have five dedicated packaging lines, install a full under cover unloading canopy to house 30ft articulated trailers, new meeting and training rooms and production staff wash and rest rooms.

"In our discussions with the UK company it had become very clear that if they were to meet their objectives this extension was essential. The company has already claimed an important position in the UK market and our aim is to make Barenbrug the undisputed number 1 in the UK grass seed industry," said Kees Bleeker at the opening.



L-R: Kees Bleeker, CEO Royal Barenbrug Group, Rob de Vries, Director Royal Barenbrug Group, and Paul Johnson, Barenbrug UK Managing Director

GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW MOVES AGAIN

After determining that Houston, Texas, would be unable to deliver previously agreed upon services, GCSAA and NGCOA have moved the Golf Industry Show and their respective education conferences to Atlanta in February 2006.

Although the events were to be held in New Orleans, the Associations were forced to look for a new site after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast. Officials then announced that Houston would be the new site, but it turned out the convention centre would not be available as had been communicated.

The show and conferences are now set for Atlanta, which was one of the cities examined for

the original relocation. Atlanta last hosted the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in 2003. The dates for the 2006 conferences and show will remain the same as were originally planned. The GCSAA Education Conference is February 6-11, the NGCOA Solutions Summit 7-10 and the Golf Industry Show 9-11.

"Our experience in Atlanta in 2003 was beyond expectations. The convention centre and hotels will be convenient locations for education, networking and exposition activities. Unlike Houston, there are no other events that will conflict with our ability to conduct the conferences and trade show," said GCSAA CEO Steve Mona.

RANSOMES HELP SCHOOL



It might appear to be a simple gesture but the enthusiasm and effusiveness of the thanks from the school in Ghana that received a donated rotary mower to maintain their sports field, was humbling indeed. It all began when Rupert Price, Commercial Manager at Ransomes Jacobsen was approached by Oakfield Primary School in Rugby, Warwickshire.

Ronnie Carvell, a teacher at the school, asked if the company could donate a mower as part of the School's Link programme, established to assist

schools in Ghana with support in the form of teaching and the procurement of much needed equipment. A couple of phone calls later and Rupert 'found' a Ransomes Bobcat walk-behind rotary mower that appeared to fit the bill perfectly. Oakfield gratefully accepted the machine and it was shipped to Ghana, to coincide with the arrival of Ronnie, who was running a summer school in Pampawie.

"The mower was presented to the Chief amid much banging of drums, dancing and there were wild celebrations because this wonderful machine had come to their village. The men of the village were especially interested, all wanting to touch it. We finally got it going and it did a superb job of cutting the playing field and the children were leaping around and all the men had a go. It was mayhem," said Ronnie.

MURRAY SHOWS VERSATILITY

Sunningdale have officially announced the appointment of Murray Long as Courses and Estate Manager, who started his new job on September 1.

Murray, 35, has been Course Manager of Coombe Hill Golf Club since 1994, joining the club from Berkhamsted Golf Club. He was educated to NVQ Level 3 in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management and subsequently attended the University of Massachusetts Turf Grass School.

Murray is a former Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and his bunker renovation programme at Coombe Hill was awarded Course Renovation of the Year by Golf World magazine.

Murray has already shown his versatility at the club by delivering his third child. The ambulance that was meant to come to collect his wife, Penny, never turned up and the midwife was stuck in traffic, leaving Murray to step up to the plate and oversee the safe birth of Charlie.

FRANCIS JOINS HYDROSCAPE



Graeme Francis has joined Ringwood based Hydroscape and will be involved in general management and sales operations. Hydroscape specialise in the importation, distribution and installation of a range of water related

products for the golf and sports turf market.

Mi-T-M biological wash down water treatment systems, Aqua Control lake aerators and fountains and Sweetwater sulphur dioxide generators form the core of the company's product range. Other activities include systems for removing iron from borehole water and Strike Guard lightning warning systems.

Graeme has worked within distribution and contracting of golf, sports and landscape irrigation for over 20 years, much of which has been at senior management levels. He will work to develop and consolidate Hydroscape's business throughout the UK and European markets.

PRAISE INDEED

Recent improvements at St Enodoc Golf Club, in Cornwall, received glowing praise recently from the best amateur golfers in England. The English Men's County Finals 2005 were held in late September at the classic links course, which was remodelled by Weller McEvoy in the spring of 2005.

"The course is a great test for a good golfer, and over the five days every player I spoke to thought the golf course was fantastic. It looks so natural, like it's meant to be there, and to be honest none of us noticed the changes so they were obviously very sympathetic to the layout. It's the best links course I've played for a long time, and in superb condition," said Iain MacKenzie, the Captain of the winning Yorkshire team.



INTURF SELL WALES OUTLET

Turfgrass Services International, which trades as Inturf, has sold its business in Wales for an undisclosed sum. Alex and Stephen Edwards, joint Managing Directors of Inturf, will retain substantial shareholdings in the new company, Turfgrass Enterprises Limited trading as Inturf Wales, and remain as non-executive directors.

"The sale is excellent news for customers in Wales and for the business as a whole. We retain the sales of Turf and Topsoil in Wales in the knowledge that the new management team led by Gareth Rees are very keen to grow the business by developing relationships with existing customers and forging new ones," said Alex Edwards.

PAGE HITS HEIGHTS



Troon golf enthusiast Ross Page has reached the highest levels in greenkeeping thanks to Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) approved training centres.

Ross started his greenkeeping career as a trainee at the municipal courses in Troon in 1995. During this time, he took part in the South Ayrshire Council Skillseeker programme and after three years, gained his National Certificate in Greenkeeping. This led him to a position at The Wentworth Club, where he learnt to apply his skills in order to prepare courses for world class tournaments. These included the Volvo PGA, World Matchplay Championship and the Edinburgh Senior Masters, under the expert tutelage of Course Manager Chris Kennedy.

Ross enrolled at the GTC approved training centre at Elmwood, Scotland, to study the HNC and HND in Golf Course Management. This usually takes two years to complete, but Ross decided to challenge himself again and completed both courses within a year. He is only the second person to achieve this feat.

"This was an important decision for me as I needed to further my education but also wanted to get back into the industry quickly. The main reason to complete it so quickly was to ensure a placement in the MSc Sports Surface Technology course at Cranfield University," he said.

OATES AT TERRAIN



Steve Oates has joined Terrain Aeration Services as Right Hand Man to the Managing Director. Responsible for overseeing site visits, operating the Airforce deep, compressed air de-compaction machines, liaising with customers and organising transport and machinery maintenance, Steve will be directly involved in all aspects of the company.

With over 15 years forestry experience behind him, he also brings tree surgery and horticultural skills to the post, as well as familiarity with a vast selection of machinery.

"I'm looking forward to moving around the country and meeting people already involved in horticulture. It is a completely new side for me, working on football pitches and golf courses," commented Steve.

THREE ON THE TROT

The Scotts Company did themselves proud again this year when they treated the finalists of the Midland Section Greensomes Knockout to an unforgettable day out at Wentworth.

The finalists played the famous West Course on September 29. Ed Stant and Paul Woodham held on to the trophy for a third consecutive year after a coming out on top at the 19th hole.

"We had an unforgettable day and our thanks go to Mark Rayner and Scotts for the terrific day out, and to Chris Kennedy and Wentworth for allowing us to play on such a wonderful Golf Course. It was in immaculate condition as always," said Ed Stant, who is also the Midland Section Chairman.



L-R, E. Stant, P. Woodham, M. Rayner, Scotts, M. Gash and J. Ganley

ALL ABOUT THE TURF



L-R, John Brindley, Hazel and Paul Frith

Lindum has appointed All Turf Ltd. as their new distributor in Cheshire. Based in Knutsford, and covering a 30 mile radius, the company will have sole rights to the Yorkshire growers' complete turf range, providing an efficient delivery, laying and

after sales service to landscapers, golf clubs and private clients. Directors, Paul and Hazel Frith and John Brindley, are looking forward to expanding the golf course and landscape side of the business having built a sound reputation within the local domestic market.

"We used to supply all our own turf until we needed a large amount in a hurry and Lindum were recommended. The quality was first rate and as demand from customers grew we became more and more interested in working with them," said Hazel.

"Their approach to the job is right, and they have a sound understanding of the business. This is also a great opportunity to open up the market for RTE, the new shade and drought tolerant turf containing rhizomatous tall fescue," stated Lindum's MD Stephen Fell.

INDUSTRY BACKS CHAMPS



Three well-know companies, Tarmac Topsport, Nickerson Seeds and Inturf have helped Mike Seward, MD of Wigginton based Seward Turf Maintenance, ride into fifth place in the final round of the European Enduro (motorcycle) Championships in Germany, awarding him the trophy for fourth place overall.

Leading a six man team and competing in a strong international field which included five times world champion Gianmarco Rossi, who won the title, Seward was lying seventh until the final day when he managed to pull up three places.

Four weeks later, the same sponsors supported Seward in his bid for the international title. Heading a three-man team he took part in the International Six Day Enduro (ISDE) Championships in the Slovak Republic, and although he had to withdraw following a technical breakdown, his team mate, Jim Wright from Ripon, took his first bronze medal.

CHARITY BEGINS AT CLUB

The green staff at Stoneleigh Deer Park Golf Club recently raised over £1000 for the NSPCC by competing in the 2005 Wellesbourne & District Lions Club annual charity raft race, which was held on the River Avon.

The race took place on Sunday September 25, with over 50 rafts setting off on the gruelling seven and half mile course. This included tackling two weirs and battling through hail and thunder storms. The Stoneleigh Steamer entered the six man survivor class and finished 30th out of the whole field, with a time of 4 hours 12mins.

"We have raised over £1000 in sponsorship, which includes donations from the members at Stoneleigh Deer Park Golf Club, Browns Groundcare Ltd Daventry, The Scotts Company and the friends and family of the raft crew," said Richard Biggs, Head Greenkeeper at Stoneleigh.



Front to back: Richard Biggs, Head Greenkeeper, Chris Mallett, Rob Weaver, Paul Trafford; Back seats, John Lewis and Chris Dougill

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

On a mild day, in ideal fishing conditions, the BIGGA Midland Section members gathered for their third Annual Angling Match. Within minutes of the start rods were being bent into action by hungry carp. By the finish all but two rods had very decent fish to weigh.

The winning bag was caught by A. Shore and prizes were also awarded to runners up and to E. Perry for Largest Fish and Best Specimen to S. Yates - a 21b Perch. Steve also took some very fine Crucian Carp, which were of equal merit.

After the weigh in the members assembled in the summerhouse for the presentations in the charming garden of our host, which on being open to the public for a weekend earlier this summer yielded over £1,000 for charity. Hearty thanks are due to our sponsor, N. Tyler of Alpha Amenity, and gracious host, Roger Perks, the Proprietor of Rubery Building Supplies Ltd. Also thanks go to Sean McDade's father, Kerry, for securing the venue and pre baiting the pegs the evening prior and preparing the very enjoyable refreshments.

This event was certainly a fitting end to a fine summer for the Section and will provide warm memories during the short, cold and wet winter days ahead to all who took part.



Sean McDade, left with winner A. Shore

CELEBRATING 21

Burgess Hill based Tracmaster Ltd, manufacturer and distributor of the Camon 'Built-for-Hire' range and the BCS ranges of Power Scythes, Two-Wheel Tractors and Professional Mowers has celebrated their 21st Birthday this year.

Established in 1984 by Stephen Pitt and Alan Robinson, Tracmaster started business as a distributor of mowers and small pedestrian-operated tractors. Now, 21 years on, their manufacturing output has increased to include

more and more machines that are designed and built 'in-house'.

"We're thrilled to be celebrating 21 years. After some particularly difficult times for manufacturers in the UK, we have managed to increase our product range and extend our customer base dramatically. We owe a great deal of our success to the magnificent staff we are fortunate to employ and we look forward to the future with relish," said Stephen Pitt, Managing Director.



IOG APPOINTS

The Institute of Groundsmanship has appointed Geoff Webb as it's new Chief Executive, effective from November 7. Geoff replaces Patrick Gosset, who announced his retirement from the position in June.

Geoff, 43, is a former Head of Grass Roots, then Director of Facility & Stadia Development at the Football Foundation, and before that Head of Major Projects at the Lawn Tennis Association. At the

Football Foundation Geoff was responsible for developing the grass roots facilities and football stadia grant aid programme, managing an annual budget of £52 million.

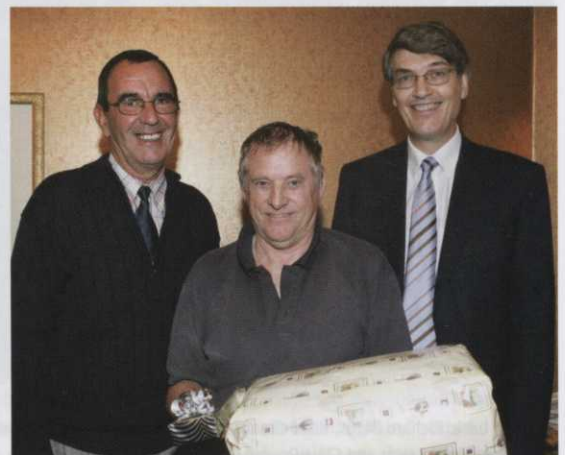
"During my tenure at the Football Foundation I utilised every opportunity to make the governing bodies and Government aware of this vital component of the sports industry," stated Geoff.

THE END FOR JOHNNO

Victor Whitbread, affectionately known as Johnno by his fellow team members, has retired after more than 18 years' service as part of the green staff at Wyboston Lakes golf course. During his career he has seen many improvements to both the course and golfing facilities, and Wyboston is now rated as one of the top venues in the country.

Wyboston's Leisure Services Manager Dave Little, said: "Johnno has been an extremely loyal and popular member of our team, always cheerful and ready to lend a hand. He was particularly adept at manoeuvring the unwieldy self-propelled rough cutting machine and took pride in maintaining a high standard of both the driving range and fields within the Wyboston complex."

At his retirement presentation Group Managing Director, Nigel Hollis, presented Victor with gifts on behalf of the company and he also received several gifts from his fellow green staff team members.



WHITE EDGE OUT THE REST

Devizes-based T H White has been awarded £10,000 after being crowned the South West's best large sized employer for practical learning. T H White was awarded the honour after winning the regional heats of the Edge Employer Award; a joint Jamie Oliver and Simon Woodroffe backed initiative to recognise the best employers in England offering practical learning opportunities to 14-25 year olds.

T H White will now go head to head with eight other large sized organisations for the chance to be recognised as the country's best practical learning employer and receive a staggering £200,000 investment.

"We are delighted to have won an Edge Employer Award. Gaining hands-on experience under the guidance of qualified staff helps school leavers understand the relevance of academic study and makes their work more interesting, resulting in them becoming self-motivating and valuable members of the community," said David Scott, Managing Director at T H White.

DIPLOMA TOUR

Sisis Equipment was delighted to welcome a party of National Diploma students from Myerscough College, to their factory at Macclesfield in September. The photo shows students with their tutor, Tommy Givnan, far left, and Sisis Sales Manager Keith Vertigan, far right.



REDEVELOPMENT AT ST ANDREWS

Constructed in 1995, The Dukes Course, St Andrews, is currently undergoing a massive multi-million pound redevelopment programme with works being carried out by contractor MJ Abbott.

Extensive irrigation works include a complete upgrade of the irrigation system - changing from a Watermation system with pvc pipe to a Rain Bird computer-controlled system with polyethylene pipe work.

Water is fed from a borehole and an internal reservoir, fed by the borehole, can also be tapped into. Greens, tees and fairways are to be covered - which will eventually involve MJ Abbott in the fitting of more than 1,000 sprinklers - and a weather station is also to be installed along with a new pump station.

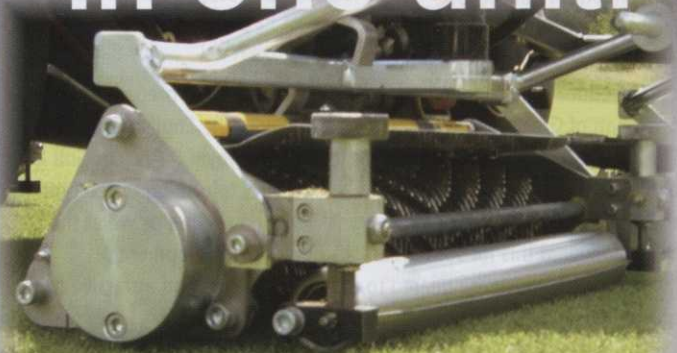
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