

Welcome



Let's Sing the Praises of the Game

I listened to comedian Dom Jolly on Radio 5 Live a couple of weeks ago. He was talking about his latest book, "Letters to my Golf Club" in which he adopts the personas of a retired military man and his family and writes to genuine golf clubs making some outrageous complaints and requests.

During the interview Dom, who has recently returned to the game, explained that he loved playing golf but not the rest of what goes along with the game – the clubhouse, the membership and the "stupid clothing regulations". He said that he found it completely bizarre that you could find yourself barred for wearing shorts which were an inch too long, yet while out on the course you could go to the side of the tee and relieve yourself and that was regarded as perfectly normal.

When it's put in such stark language it is very difficult not to agree with him, and to non-golfers all it does is reinforce the stereotypical image of the game – stuffy, middleclass, sexist... those who play the game are sad cases who should be pitied not ridiculed.

But golf is a great game. The values of fair play, self governance and the etiquette, unique to golf, instils in people standards which, if they were to be carried into other aspects of daily life, would make living a much more pleasant experience for everyone.

What other sport else would an accusation of cheating see your social standing plummet to below that of the local house burglar? If a footballer steals a few yards for a throw-in or dives full length to win a penalty; or a tennis player berates an umpire; or cricketer sticks his nail under the seam or indulge in a bit of sledging, it's almost seen as part of the game and those who carry it out lauded as being "streetwise" - more so if they represent your team.

On the other hand you can virtually name and shame those golfers through history who have been discovered cheating. I'm not going to, but those who know the game would come up with a very similar list of names to mine. It is that rare and the consequences for being caught so far reaching.

Shouldn't we be shouting about golf's values from the treetops, not being almost apologetic about the fact that we play, or work within, the game?

But first those old anachronistic club rules have to be phased out.

I'm a golfing traditionalist and, if I'm honest, would hate to see chavs take over our clubs but surely if we shed some of the frankly idiotic club rules the game wouldn't suffer and it would make golf more welcoming to the non-player keen to give it a try. It wouldn't mean a drop of "standards" but might open the doors to a whole new generation of golfer.

Dom Jolly might then venture into the clubhouse in his long shorts, buy a round of sandwiches and some tea.

SUN SHINES ON WENTWORTH

This year's final of the Midland Section Greensomes Knockout Pairs competition, at Wentworth, was blessed with sunshine – A far cry from the wash out that was last year. The annual event, run by BIGGA and sponsored by Scotts, was played for the first time on the Edinburgh Course.

Ed Stant, of Penn Golf Club, and Paul Woodham, of Gay Hill Golf Club, won for the fifth consecutive year. Some healthy local rivalry was brought into play, as one of the challengers was Ed's Deputy at Penn Golf Club, Adam Jones, paired with Rhys Thomas, of South Staffordshire Golf Club. However they were no match for the champions, who pulled off a convincing win.

"We had a fantastic day," commented Ed. "What could be better than a day's golf at one of the country's finest courses? The Edinburgh is wooded, so it's quite challenging, and the greens are the fastest I have experienced in a long time. We also received great hospitality from Scotts. And of course I was delighted to be on the winning team again. Thanks to Scotts for a wonderful day."

Mark Rayner, of Scotts, said, "Another great day at Wentworth, a superb course and not a drop of rain. A big thank you to everyone involved and to Chris Kennedy for letting us play on the course during a very busy time"

MINCHINHAMPTON GOLF CLUB

Minchinhampton Golf Club mature student, Matthew Leeson Magry (left), cuts a cake and receives his completed NVQ level 2 workbook from Adam Matthews (Assessor) in the Minchinhampton greenstaff rest room. Course Manager, Paul Worster, commented "This is a real success story for the NVQ system, allowing "Big Matty" (as he is affectionately known) to complete an industry qualification, without the grind of having to attend college regularly, and sit exams. Matty has worked at Minchinhampton since leaving school and has developed into an outstanding Assistant Greenkeeper - Attaining this qualification is the recognition he deserves." Progress was overseen by Andy Lisle and Chris Pickles from Hartpury College Gloucester, and workplace assessments were carried out by Dave Rosselli, Adam, and Paul.



TRACTOR PLANT

New Holland kindly invited a group of journalists to have a snoop around their tractor plant in Jesi, Italy, recently.



The T4030, available in the UK from April 2008

Situated in the agricultural heart of the Marche region, production has grown at the Jesi tractor plant for more than 20 years since it started manufacture in 1986. Now, the 19 hectare site employs nearly 1000 staff dedicated to producing 16 ranges of crawler and all-purpose utility tractors. Jesi has created a proud history that has seen the production of more than 500,000 tractors – With the 500,000th, a TL90A, leaving the assembly line this year.

33,000 tractors are produced each year and more than 85% of Jesi's production is exported and can be found in 86 markets around the world. 150 tractors are built each day and shipped out by rail.



Melissa Toombs goes for a test drive

The tractor plant comprises of four key operational areas: driveline assembly and testing, cab assembly, painting system and final assembly, and testing. Every day two tractors are randomly selected at the end of the production and checked from the customer's viewpoint.

This month sees the UK launch of the T4040 and T4050, part of the new T4000 series, with tier 3 emission engines, which will replace the current TND/S-A models. Two further models from the T4000 series, the T4020 and T4030, will be available in the UK from April 2008.

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL SEMINAR

This year's South East Regional Seminar at Hadlow College, hosted by the Kent Section, was once again well attended and delegates enjoyed an interesting and informative day listening to the day's presentations.

The theme for this year's Seminar was 'The Changing Climate' as in the Environment, Weather, Our Association, Finance and Equipment, etc.

Following a welcome by the Principal of Hadlow College, Paul Hannon, the Chairman of the South East Region, Ian Willett introduced the speakers for the morning session - Starting with John Pemberton and Billy McMillan updating us on BIGGA matters, changes in personnel at HQ and possible future developments.

Steve Isaac from The R&A gave a most interesting and thought provoking presentation on issues relating to Sustainable Golf and in the time permitted, touched on possible and perceived changes modern equipment has made on the Game of Golf.

Jason Lock then described his transition from Cricket Groundsman to Golf Greenkeeper and how he dramatically improved playing conditions at his Golf Club, instigated by a lean regime as a result of budgetary constraints. This, in turn contributing to the emergence of Fescue and Bent Grasses on his Greens.

After lunch John Noyce informed us of the extreme lengths that suppliers go to, due to legislation and present requirements, when introducing a new product.

Laurence Pithie related some of his experiences in producing high standards by efficient and effective methods at some of the many Golf Clubs he works with during the course of his work.

A Forum and General Discussion followed with all the Speakers receiving some interesting questions from the floor. Time being the restraint that stopped some interesting debate, especially on the subject of Greenkeeper Training, from going on into the night.

In conclusion Kevin Morris, the Chairman of The Kent Section, thanked everyone for their participation and to Hadlow College for looking after us so well on the day.

Next year's Seminar is to be hosted by The London Section so look out for information and please apply for places early.

Clive Osgood
South East Regional Administrator

KEEP OFF THE GRASS!

The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded The British Engineering Heritage Organisation a grant of over £37,000 earlier this year, to record the sounds of rare and vintage British lawnmowers.

The grant will allow BEHO to record the sounds and photograph the machines as well as conduct some oral history interviews and create a diverse and interesting historical archive resource for all.

BEHO welcomes anyone who has any interesting artefacts and stories connected with any rare and vintage British lawnmowers.

Further information is available from: www.beho.co.uk or you can contact BEHO at: info@beho.co.uk

NEW MAN AT EGU HELM

John Petrie has been appointed Chief Executive of the EGU to succeed Paul Baxter on his retirement in February 2008. John will take up his new role at the beginning of January and will work alongside Paul to ensure a smooth handover.

Until May of this year John was General Secretary of the British Greyhound Racing Board where he developed and introduced a five-year strategic plan for the industry, which obtained support from all stakeholders. He is currently Executive Director at the Aegis Trust, which is a charity focused on the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Aged 48 and born in Bradford, John served for 18 years in the army from 1985 to 2003, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was awarded the MBE for leading a strategic planning and policy unit for international policing operations in the Balkans and the Queens Commendation for Bravery for action in East Timor. In 2000 he was given responsibility as Project Officer to organise The Queen Mother's 100th Birthday celebrations

An all-round sports fan, John has competed at national level in swimming and modern pentathlon and played representative cricket and rugby. He took up golf at the Northcliffe Golf Club in Bradford, his lowest handicap being 14.

Speaking about his appointment, John said: "I am absolutely delighted to be joining the EGU. Golf is a fantastic game and I am excited to be getting involved in the administration of the sport."

Max Kaye, Chairman of the EGU Board commented, "We are delighted that John is joining us. He brings a wealth of organisational and planning experience, is clearly skilled in diplomacy and benefits from having worked within a national sports governing body. We are sure he will bring leadership and vision to the EGU's future development and growth."

APOLOGIES

GI would like to apologise to Gordon Irvine MG for printing his email address incorrectly in last month's course feature – A Hebridean Task – The email address you should contact him on is: omegagi@hotmail.com

VIBRATION AND NOISE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Course Managers, Greenkeepers, Club Officials and industry representatives joined forces at the recent Noise and Vibration Seminar which was staged at Gay Hill Golf Club. Delegates were treated to a vast array of expert views on a subject which is becoming increasingly recognised as a major factor if managers are to compile risk assessments which meet their organisations policy requirements.

The day started off focusing on the legislative side. Tim Ward, HM Principal Specialist Inspector (Noise & Vibration), educated on the HSE minimum requirements placed upon organisations. Jon Allbutt, Principle Consultant - Jon Allbutt Associates, spoke of the importance of risk assessments and monitoring systems and to complete the picture, Brian Goodwin, Partner - BLM Law gave an enlightening presentation showing the gap between HSE and insurance requirements.



The views from two major manufacturers were presented by Manuel Ruiz – Product Manager for Ransomes Jacobsen and Mark Osbourne, Sales Director – Countax. Their responsibilities according to EU legislation were discussed and it was clearly evident that both manufacturers put an enormous amount of resources into noise and vibration reduction. Bert Barker, Fivesquared Noise and Vibration Management Services, presented on independent testing procedures and how to use data.

While the delegates struggled to digest far too much food thanks to lunch sponsors Ransomes Jacobsen, machines were being prepared for an afternoon demonstration on vibration testing. A Jacobsen AR3 was used to demonstrate WBV testing and although there were some teething problems with the readings in the first 10 - 15 seconds of the test, Fivesquared confirmed that after this initial period it was very, very low indeed. The hand and arm tests on items of Echo equipment also dispelled some theory

of doubling manufacturers data for determining exposure limits.

The day was rounded off with a presentation from Paul Woodham, Course Manager at Gay Hill Golf Club. Paul has been working on practical guidance for use by the manager if the industry is to meet the middle ground of HSE and insurance requirements. Gay Hill GC have used Fivesquared Ltd to assess their inventory of major WBV and HAVS equipment. A detailed risk assessment with sensible control measures enables Paul to manage and monitor employee exposure. Speaking after the event Paul said "This is still work in progress and Jon Allbutt and I are determined to work with BIGGA to provide the best range of options available for the golf manager. It would be a shame to let all of this knowledge and data get lost or not be available to others. Is it reasonably practicable for every organisation to independently assess their fleet? No, but individuals may be guided down this route depending on their insurance requirements and situation. My advice at this stage is to not get bogged down in guessing risk assessment needs. Consult if you need to, you will not be thanked for saving a penny or two if a claim is made against your employer. There is lots of information already available but we hope to use what we have learnt today to provide further practical guidance at BTME."

NEW APPOINTMENT

Robin Bell has been appointed as Joint Deputy Secretary of the International Golf Federation by Peter Dawson, Chief Executive of The R&A.

Robin, who has been a member of The R&A's Championship Department since 1998, replaces Grant Moir, who is leaving to concentrate on his expanding role at The R&A, served as Joint Deputy Secretary since 2000.

Before joining The R&A, Robin, 31, studied Law at the University of Dundee. Now an Assistant Director, his work extends across all of The R&A's championships and The Open in particular. During his tenure at The R&A, he has developed a wealth of experience in staging large-scale international events. As Joint Deputy Secretary, he will work closely with his USGA counterpart, Stephanie Parel, as the staff representatives who coordinate the staging of the World Amateur Team Championships. and will report to the IGF joint secretaries, Peter Dawson (R&A) and David Fay (USGA).



JERSEY GREENKEEPERS

Nick Lush, a Sports Turf Lecturer from Myerscough College, contacted GI recently to inform us that tutoring greenkeepers in Jersey is going from strength to strength.

Tom Day, Jack Critchley and Oliver Pennington were the first greenkeepers in Jersey to have gained NVQ Amenity Horticulture Sports Turf Level 2 through the apprenticeship scheme.

“I fly over every six to eight weeks delivering work-based assessment. The lads appreciate the effort I make and flexibility it gives them and in turn adopt a very professional attitude to their studies, completing their work on time,” said an enthusiastic Nick.

“The apprenticeship scheme has gone from strength to strength, I started with just a couple of apprentices but now another assessor has had to join me as the course has been so successful - We’ve even started a fast tracker course for the over 25s, which their employers pay for.”

Tom Day, a Greenkeeper at Royal Jersey GC, completed his two-year NVQ Amenity Horticulture Sports Turf Level 2 course recently.

“I wanted to do the course to improve upon my skills in the workplace. It’s also nice to be able to obtain a qualification that improves my work prospects. Royal Jersey GC funded the course and in turn, the club benefits from having better skilled, qualified greenkeepers,” said Tom.

“Nick came to see us every six weeks, in the meantime we had different work books to work from demonstrating a range of skills. We had to get witness testimonies to prove we had completed the work.”



Nick Lush, Tom Day, and Royal Jersey Course Manager, Dave Crawford

Tom commented that both Royal Jersey GC and Nick Lush were very supportive during his studies and kept pushing him to achieve.

“The course was really worthwhile, I learnt a lot. I would recommend the course to fellow Jersey greenkeepers. I’m hoping to continue my studies and enrol on Level 3 in the future.”



Call to discuss your requirements: 01883 344244

Email: info@eagle.uk.com Website: www.eagle.uk.com



HAMBURG WORLD AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS

Inspired by watching the Elite Women race the day before, Miranda Harris, Marketing Manager for DLF Trifolium, slipped into the cold brown waters of the Binnentalster Lake in Hamburg recently to begin the Olympic Distance World Championships. Racing against 75 women from all over the world in her age group was far more daunting than anything Miranda had ever attempted in the UK and once the hooter had signalled the start of the race, she realised she was competing against some ferocious athletes.



After completing a mile long swim, then the transition to bike and finally a 10km run, Miranda's age group top position was 4th.

"I found it a really tough race and the build up really unnerved me with over 2000 competitors racing in different Age Groups," said Miranda. "Although I didn't quite make my target of 3 hours, I'm proud to have been part of the Great Britain team and its now back to the drawing board to see where I can improve for 2008." Miranda has already qualified for Vancouver World Age Group Championships.

REVISED GUIDE TO MANAGING HEALTH AND SAFETY ON GOLF COURSES

Since 1994 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the GTC, have been working in partnership to produce resources for managing health and safety on golf courses. In November they will launch a new guide, which will combine all resources into one simple document – Health and Safety in Golf Course Management and Maintenance.



The GTC approached and commissioned Health and Safety advisors, Jon Allbutt and John Davis, to review the original dated booklet and received input and feedback from the HSE, GTC representatives, employers and greenkeepers from within the GTC committees, as well as local authority Environmental Health Officers, who are responsible for the inspection and enforcement of most golf courses.

The new guide is packed with information and guidance on all aspects of golf course management including:

Education and training – Ensuring all current and new employees have the correct qualifications and they are aware of the health and safety procedures in the workplace;

The all important matter of risk assessments – Advice on how to manage risks effectively on the golf course and making sure they are all recorded in a risk assessment file for future staff training;

Occupational health – Guidance on how to deal with accidents and injuries. Making sure they don't occur again;

Priority on the course – Explaining the rules of a golf course to ensure safe play and work;

Working alone – Advice when working alone, whether it's outside normal hours, such as late duties in the evenings or working at weekends or in a remote part of the golf course, and how to identify typical control measures;

Investigating accidents and incidents – Guidance on how to investigate accidents in more detail in order to see if there is anything that can be done to reduce the risks of it happening again;

Managing events – Making sure that all health and safety requirements are in place before all events;

Emergency planning – Ensuring all Health & Safety guidelines have been put in place and that all employees are aware of the procedures and their responsibilities;

Employing volunteers – Guidance on what risk assessments must be put in place when employing volunteers, children or young people;

The safe use of work equipment – Guidance on how to safely use work equipment, which means any machinery, appliance, apparatus, tool or installation used at work, how to deal with any injuries caused by machinery and how to maintain them;

The use of pesticides – Explaining the correct conditions of use and storage of pesticides and what qualifications are required to handle them.

Included in the guide are web links to other sites where more information can be downloaded on specific subjects. Where appropriate there are also references to publications and guides by HSE and other organisations.

"The guide refers to other resources already available to employers and managers but also enhances existing documents required for effectively maintaining golf courses, such as the GTC Training Manuals; the revised GTC Training Wall chart; BIGGA/GCMA's Safety Management System and many other publications. It is directly relevant to the management of health and safety in all types of golf course businesses and sets the standard expected by the industry and the enforcers, the HSE, and local government Environmental Health Officers," said Jon Allbutt, Health and Safety advisor.

The new guide will be published on the GTC website: www.the-gtc.co.uk

HARROGATE WEEK 2008

The Scottish Region once again offers their members a subsidised package deal for Harrogate Week 2008.

The Package includes: Entry to Continue to Learn Seminars (six in total), three nights Bed & Breakfast in en-suite twin rooms on 22nd, 23rd and 24th January, 2008 in the Holiday Inn (formerly Moat House Hotel). Package cost: £236, accommodation package only: £164. To obtain booking forms contact the Regional Administrator, Peter J.Boyd on: 0141 616 3440/ 07776 242120 or email: pj.boyd@btinternet.com

INTER SECTION GOLF TOURNAMENT



The inaugural Midland Region Inter Section Golf Tournament, sponsored by Whitemoss Eco Ltd, was held at Burton on Trent GC on Thursday, November 1. Four of the Sections in the Midland Region competed for the Whitemoss Trophy on a fine autumn day on a course superbly prepared by Course Manager, Gavin Robson and his staff.

The format was a three man team from each Section playing aggregate handicap medal, all three team members to count. The Midland Section, represented by Mike Hughes, Ed Stant and Gary Cunningham, won the trophy with a net 223, 2nd East Midland on 233, 3rd East Midland on 240 and 4th Mid Anglia on 261. Our thanks are extended to Burton on Trent GC where everyone was made to feel very welcome by staff and members at the Golf Club, and to Andy Law of Whitemoss Eco Ltd for his sponsorship.

SEWARD RACES TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

Two years after selling his turf maintenance company, Mike Seward and his Enduro motorcycling team, MPS Racing have had their most successful season yet, supported by the industry.



Backed by White Horse Contractors and Inturf, the five riders have between them won two European Championships, (coming first in their class), taken first, second and third places (in respective classes) and first team in the British National Championships and finished 11th and 13th in the World Junior Championship.

Mike Seward, who now ranks fourth in Britain in the veterans class, says every rider in the team finished in the top five. "We've travelled over 20,000 miles, visited 18 different countries and used approximately 150 Michelin tyres," he commented. "None of this would have been possible without the loyalty of all our sponsors and support crew."

Anyone who would like to offer sponsorship for 2008 should contact Mike on Tel: 0780 1256767 email mick.mpsracing@btinternet.com or visit: www.mpsracing-enduro.co.uk

HARD WORK RECOGNISED

George Jones, a First Assistant from Heworth Golf Club, York, completed an NVQ Level 2 in Sportsturf earlier this year, at Askham Bryan College.

Recently the College had an award ceremony, and George (50) was awarded 'Best Work-based Student on the Course' in the shape of a glass trophy, and a small cheque.

LAST CHANCE TO NOMINATE

Don't forget to nominate your Unsung Hero and give the greenkeeper or groundsman of your choice the chance to be recognised.

Nomination forms are available direct from Terrain Aeration. Call Lynda Green on Tel: 01449 673783 or email: terrainaeration@aol.com. The closing date for entries is December 19.

BIGGA VS COMBINED SERVICES GOLF MATCH

The 4th annual scratch golf challenge match between BIGGA and the Combined Services, which was held this year at Dartmouth Golf & Country Club on October 3, produced another close match.



After the morning fourballs, the Combined Services led by three matches to two, but in the afternoon foursomes BIGGA came back strongly to win by four matches to the Combined Services one, thus winning the overall match by six matches to four. The golf throughout the day was of a very high standard indeed, with some close matches throughout the day.

Our thanks go to Dartmouth Golf & Country Club for hosting the match, and also to Course Manager Terry Farkins and his staff for the superbly presented course.

The BIGGA team was as follows: Paul Garland (Captain) and Richard Carter from Lansdown GC; Adam Bridgewater from Yelverton GC; Paul Newcombe from East Devon GC; Mark Evans from Royal North Devon GC; Mark Davies from Canford Magna GC; Robert Mabb and Dougie Owers from Weymouth GC; Jason Brooks from Torquay GC and Justin Manester from Teignmouth GC.

Congratulations to the Team and the thank you all for representing BIGGA so well.

P J Larter Match Secretary