

## WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

**Our course here at Tyrrells Wood has recovered very well from all the hollow tining heavy dressings and renovation works that took place and kept us so busy during the past month or so. I would've thought we would be enjoying a slow down in growth that would release us from the intensity of cutting - Not a bit of it. As the trees start to change to their autumn splendour and blaze of colour, we are as busy cutting grass as we were a few months ago. But it's not all bad, the course looks great and we still enjoy some very good playing surfaces.**

Something happened a few weeks ago that surprised me! We were stopped from abstracting water from our borehole as the flow rate in the local river had fallen below the required flow rate. Not unheard of you might think, however, bearing in mind we have had a record-breaking year in terms of rainfall the last thing I expected to receive was a stop notice from the Environment Agency.

I might add that even with the driest year on record last year we were able to abstract fully all year, so it just goes to show things can and do change even when you least expect them to. Of course we were not abstracting any water at the time because of the heavy amounts of rainfall we experienced, so thank God they did it this year when we didn't need the water rather than last.

Anyway enough of this dribble. I have had a packed month of doing nice things as your Chairman. My first venture was to BIGGA HQ and a chance to meet with the future. By that I of course mean 'our' future, yes, it was that time of year when we have the pleasure of meeting all the finalists in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year. You can't help but feel inspired by meeting with students within your chosen profession. They are unspoiled, fresh, dynamic in their thinking, willingly open and share their dreams for not only their future but also that of Greenkeeping. I was very impressed with each and every contestant involved in this year's competition so they all have my heartfelt congratulations on getting to the finals. Regardless of the fact there can only be one winner, they are all winners in getting to the finals and, based on what I saw, they all have an assured future within Greenkeeping. So it's my pleasure to congratulate, firstly, both runners up - Lewis Birch and Simon Lambert.



Well done to you both on your achievement and to the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year winner for 2007, Avon Bridges. Well done young man. Congratulations on winning this important competition during my year as Chairman. I hope you enjoy your time in the USA and that you return home to your family and work the richer for the experience. None of this would be possible without the continued support of the sponsor, Toro, so they also have my thanks for their input in the development of these young students and with the next year being the 20th anniversary, well done to everyone involved and long may it continue.

October, and it was the turn of the west coast to host our National Championship so, packing everything an experienced traveller needs, namely everything except sun cream it would seem, off I set.

I arrived in Glasgow late afternoon and driving to the hotel we passed places I remembered from being a child, it was a real treat for me to be on the west coast again. Being born in Kilmarnock it was like going home for me quite a treat really. Anyway I digress as usual. We were here for 36 holes of golf on two splendid venues namely Dundonald Links and Kilmarnock Barassie. So with the venues chosen the competitors started to arrive we had a full field with no spaces untaken. With some exceptional hospitality we had a great first day with a wee bit of rain to begin with, then the sun split the trees as usual and yours truly got a burnt head on the Dundonald course. That night we had an

exceptional dinner at Kilmarnock Barassie and were duly entertained by the Club Captain Mr Bob Pollock quiet a golfer and no mean speaker too boot. The next day's play was looming and the heavens opened during the night - It could have been touch and go whether we would play at Barassie. But in true Greenkeeping fashion the boys were out early and mopped up the course for play on time and again the sun split the trees.

So after two days of play we came to the winners - Elliott Small (retirement must have its compensations) 36 hole gross 168 net 152 well-done young man and David Simpson, Crieff Golf Club, (with his dad George as caddie) 36 hole gross 150 net 152 being the overall winner. The region prize went to Scotland so congratulations to all the winners.

Thanks that should be mentioned - To both golf clubs we thank you for two superb golf courses and for your exceptional hospitality, to Ken Siems for his warm welcome at Dundonald and Donald Wilson, Secretary at Barassie, to all the club staff that made us all feel so welcome. To Frank Clarkson and Brian Finlayson, respective Course Managers, and their dedicated Greenkeeping teams, well done you rose to the challenge and gave us two well-presented first class golf courses. To our wonderful sponsor, Kubota, who in the shape of Dave Roberts and Tom Dunlop, did a marvellous job. To Stuart Greenwood, an exceptional Scottish Chairman, and wonderful host. Without doubt our RA, Peter Boyd, did a fantastic job arranging everything and controlled us all in due process along the way and was for me the perfect host. So how did you play you might ask? Well, I can only boast that I played with some nice people and had the pleasure of seeing first hand what kind of golf it takes to win our national Championship. And one of my playing partners, Brian. He begged a mention. So there it is, young man.

Until next month, enjoy yourselves and remember when going home that's another time to sparkle. Your family need that from you don't you think?

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