

Welcome



A Glimpse into the Future

News that the increased number of bugs and pests in our gardens at the moment is being put down to the mild wet summer and the lack of pesticides available to get rid of them, perhaps gives us a glimpse into the future for the fine turf industry.

There is a proposal with the European Parliament that the use of all pesticides be restricted, if not banned, in all areas to which the public have access. The Amenity Forum, Chaired by John Allbutt, has been lobbying MEP's hoping to influence the voting in late October on this issue that if implemented would have a drastic affect on us all.

Now we all know the amount of active ingredient being used on golf courses has reduced significantly in recent years thanks to the developments from within the chemical industry and the responsible approach taken by Course Managers, but a total ban would have a huge impact on fine turf management.

Greenkeepers will always strive to maintain golf courses to the highest standards possible given whatever the circumstances they are presented, but taking away all their chemical tools will have an impact. I would urge you to keep your club updated on the situation and, if possible, write, underlining the club's concerns, to your local MEP, and indeed, Westminster MP.

If a total ban does come in, it must be hoped that golfers, as well as turf managers, take the consequences on board and accept that the superb surfaces at their club will be blighted by disease occasionally and that their Course Manager will be powerless to come up with a quick fix. We don't want a string of disciplinary meetings based on "The state of the course" coming from club members, who are oblivious to the outside world and who believe miracles are what you are paid to produce.

For further information visit www.amenity.org.uk

Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, retired at the end of September after nearly 14 years with the Association. Ken has been a great guy to work alongside – his knowledge and experience stretching far beyond the remit of his own job - and we have certainly benefited from his presence. There are innumerable BIGGA members who have had sensible career-enhancing advice from Ken.

I'm actually typing this very carefully as there is no-one more critical than Ken when it comes to spotting grammatical errors in newspapers and magazines, or, with the spoken word, on television and radio. Those who know him will perhaps be surprised to learn this, but when Ken has a bee in his bonnet he bears an uncanny resemblance to Victor Meldrew. But it is we on the staff, not Ken, who "Don't believe it" that he'll no longer be regaling us with his many tales, usually involving aircraft, in the years to come. We wish him and Sandra a long, happy and enjoyable retirement.

GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY

A Midland Region Golf Management Trophy day, sponsored for the 10th successive year by Scotts UK Professional, was held at Worksop Golf Club.

Teams from 21 golf clubs enjoyed a shotgun start on a very challenging course superbly prepared by Course Manager, Tim Gittins, and his staff, and everyone was made to feel very welcome by all staff and members at Worksop Golf Club.

The winning team was from Gay Hill Golf Club with 78 points, led by Course Manager, Paul Woodham. The home team was 2nd with 76 points on countback from Peterborough Milton Golf Club. Nearest the Pin on the 18th was won by Alan Burrows, from Chilwell Manor Golf Club, and Longest Drive on the 6th was won by Ade Porter, Course Manager at Greetham Valley Golf Club.



The picture shows the Gay Hill team and Nia Frost, Scotts Technical Sales Manager, presenting the trophy to Course Manager Paul Woodham. The Midland Region of BIGGA thanks Scotts once again for their sponsorship.

PRICES SET TO RISE

A combination of factors will inevitably force the price of grass seed to rise say DLF Trifolium Ltd. "In recent years we are seeing fewer grass seed crops grown, says Derek Smith, Amenity Sales Manager for DLF. "No longer is there any subsidy on grass seed production so growers are looking at the most profitable crops to grow i.e. wheat. In addition to this factor is a higher demand for bio-ethanol crops such as oil seed rape and wheat in Europe."

"Already we are experiencing difficulty in contracting for 2008 grass seed production due to these competitive crops," said Derek.

The recent wet harvest in the main production areas of Western Europe has reduced seed yield by 20% for 2007 harvest thus compounding the problem further.

NORRIE WHYTOCK TROPHY

Auchterarder Golf Club was the venue for the annual Team event for the Norrie Whytock Trophy held recently.

Defending the trophy this year was the Central Section who managed to break the strangle hold the North Section had on this Trophy for many years.

Archie Dunn, Head Greenkeeper, was on holiday and left the course in the very capable hands of his Deputy, Alistair Tough, and the remainder of the Auchterarder staff who presented the course in superb condition after the most horrendous weather over the weekend.

The East Section, led by our Chairman, Stuart Greenwood, scored 99 points but were beaten into second place by the Central Section who successfully defended the Trophy with a total of 104 points. There was fine individual scoring from Michael Love, Grangemouth Golf Club with 41 points and Robbie Murdoch from Dundas Parks Golf with 39 points.

The Central team comprised: Team Captain, Derek Scott, Scoonie GC, 31pts; Michael Love, Grangemouth GC, 41pts; Andy O'Hara, Leven Links GC, 26pts; David Simpson, Crieff GC, 32pts. Best three scores to count – 104. Runners up - East Section: Team Captain, Stuart Greenwood, North Berwick GC, 29pts; Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Parks GC, 31pts; Robbie Murdoch, Dundas Parks GC, 39pts. Best three scores to count – 99.

Chairman Stuart Greenwood thanked Auchterarder GC for the facilities at the club also took the opportunity to thank Bayer and Kenny Liddell - their representative in Scotland for their sponsorship once again. Unfortunately Kenny was unable to be present because of business commitments but left proceedings in the very capable hands of Blair Young.

Next year's event will be held on Thursday, August 20, 2008 at Auchterarder Golf Club.

Peter J.Boyd, Regional Administrator

175 YEARS OF MOWER PRODUCTION

Ransomes Jacobsen celebrated 175 years of mower production with a lavish cruise and dinner on the Thames during Saltex.

Guests, dressed in black tie and posh frocks, boarded a boat at one of two points in Windsor and sailed to Monkey Island and a pavilion owned by Eton School which had been specially decked out for the occasion.



Picture shows Dan Wilkinson addressing the guests.

Among the invited guests were top Ransomes Jacobsen and Textron staff, past and present, including former Managing Director Peter Wilson and sell as dealers from all over the world. Also in attendance was Ransomes Jacobsen American-based President Dan Wilkinson.

Managing Director David Withers gave an entertaining journey though the history of the company and various landmarks and what was going on in the rest of the world at the same time while The Three Waiters vied for the affections of the guests with some wonderful operatic singing.

SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES REGIONAL SEMINAR

The South West and South Wales Region are pleased to announce that this year's annual Seminar will be held once again at Cannington Centre for Land Based Studies on Thursday, November 15.

The theme for this year is "Golf In The Commercial World" The speakers will give an insight into running their department within the commercial world.

Presentations will be made by: Stuart McColm Course Manager – Castle Stuart Golf, Inverness; Jim McKenzie Course Manager – The Celtic Manor Golf Course; Kenny MacKay Course Manager – The Belfry; Colin Webber Owner/Course Manager – Portmore Golf Course; Laurence Pithie Director Of Maintenance – Crown Golf.

The line up of speakers is intended to give perspectives from all levels ranging from the very large organization to the privately owned commercial venture.

Places for the day are limited and booking details and information will be sent to all Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers in the region.

TERRAIN LAUNCH FIFTH UNSUNG HERO AWARDS

Terrain Aeration launched their fifth Unsung Hero Awards in conjunction with Pitchcare and Greenkeeping magazine.

Brian Firmin, Head Groundsman at Halstead Cricket Club, one of Terrain's Unsung Heroes for 2006 was on hand to open nominations for this year's awards, which will see one Groundsman and one Greenkeeper honoured at a special ceremony during Harrogate Week in January.



Left to right - Steve Gingell, Lynda Green (Terrain Aeration) and Brian Firmin

Designed to recognise the scores of individuals who routinely perform over and above the call of duty, the awards are open to all Greenkeepers and Groundsmen nominated by anyone (other than family) connected to the industry. Judged by ex. IOG Chairman, Derek Walder, past BIGGA Chairman, Gordon Child, and STRI Senior Agronomist and Southern Area Manager, Steve Gingell, the winners will receive holiday vouchers and a framed certificate provided by Terrain Aeration and £200.

Nomination forms are available on the Pitchcare website, the Greenkeeping website and direct from Terrain Aeration on Tel :01449 673783 or website: www.terrainaeration.co.uk

VIBRATION & NOISE MANAGEMENT

BIGGA Midlands Section is holding a Vibration and Noise Management Seminar at Gay Hill Golf Club on October 24.

Group workshops/seminars will include: Legislation and working with the HSE – Timothy Ward, HSE (HM Principal Specialist Inspector); The Importance of Risk Assessment and Monitoring Systems – Jon Allbutt; A Manufacturers Viewpoint – Manuel Ruiz, Ransomes Jacobsen; Vibration and Noise Management – Fivesquared Ltd; The Practical implications of noise and vibration assessments and daily management of work programmes and staff welfare – Paul Woodham, Course Manager.

For more information visit: www.biggamidlandsection.com

IRRIGATION WORKSHOP

BIGGA Midlands Section are holding an Irrigation Workshop at The Belfry on Tuesday, October 30.

Group workshops will include: Electrical faultfinding and repairs – Tony Ware (Tonick Watering Ltd); Pipework malfunction and repairs – Nigel Wyatt (MJ Abbott Ltd); Sprinkler and solenoid valve maintenance and repairs – Adrian Handbury (Evenproducts Ltd); Pumps and pump house maintenance – Jeff Mountford (Grundfos Ltd); Determining irrigation requirements – Martyn Jones (BTLIA).

For more information visit: www.biggamidlandsection.com

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL SEMINAR

Final arrangements are now being made for the South East Regional Seminar to be held at Hadlow College, Kent, on Tuesday October 30.

The theme for this year's Seminar will be "The Changing Climate" and will cover the Environment, Weather, our Association, Finance, Equipment etc. Speakers will include John Pemberton, BIGGA; Ian Lacey, IOG and Steve Isaacs, R&A; Jason Lock, Better Golf Centre; Laurence Pithie MG, Crown Golf and a Groundsman from a leading County Cricket Club.

Cost of the day will be £15 including coffee/tea on arrival and a hot lunch. For more information please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator Tel: 01737 819343.

HARROGATE WEEK 2008

A three-night bed and breakfast package at the Cairn Hotel arriving on Monday, January 21 and departing on Thursday, January 24, 2008 is available for those members wishing to attend the exhibition and seminars. The rate for a single room is £222 and for a twin room (sharing) £133.50 per person.

For further information and booking of these events contact Jane Jones, BIGGA Regional Administrator on Tel: 01454 270850 or mobile: 07841948110.

BIGGA South West and South Wales region would like to thank the following patrons for their support of the region and these events: Gold Patrons -Ransomes Jacobsen Limited and Irritech Limited; Silver Patrons -The Scotts Company, Countrywide Turf and Amenity, Vitax Limited, Avoncrop Amenity Products, W. T. and R.J. Jones and Tower Chemicals.



PESTICIDE RESTRICTION

An urgent plea is being made to the horticulture industry to lobby MEPs against plans to severely restrict pesticide use.

NFU Horticulture and Potatoes, the IoG, BIGGA and the Amenity Forum are calling on professionals from all sectors in horticulture to join forces and urge MEPs not to vote in favour of the plans.

In question is the European Parliament's Thematic Strategic for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides and amendments that have been made to it this summer by the Parliament's Environment Committee.

Final votes on first the amendments and then the strategy itself are being held in Brussels next month.

The groups want to lobby MEPs now before they can vote in favour of proposals – which could threaten the sustainability of the industry.

NFU horticulture adviser Dr Chris Hartfield said: "If your local MEP happens to be on the Environment Committee, or if you have access to one that is, then talk to them and ask how they are planning to vote."

Chairman of the Amenity Forum John Allbutt added: "We need to actively lobby our MEPs now to get across to them the powerful message of the likely negative impact of these laws. They must hear the argument loud and clear."

IoG head of professional services Ian Lacy said: "The industry needs to close ranks."

The Environment Committee has not only heralded the Thematic Strategy – drawn up by the European Commission to tighten up laws on pesticides - but also called for even tougher rules.

Proposals to "prohibit or restrict" pesticide use in public places like parks and sports grounds have been amended to completely prohibit their use in these areas.

Proposals to ban aerial spraying when possible have also been amended to include further restrictions – such as the need for operators to notify the time of spraying and inform all residents and bystanders of their use.

Amenity Forum and BALI representative Neil Huck said: "If such proposals become law, companies' pest control costs could soar by up to 50 per cent as people seek to find alternative ways of controlling pests."

But the UK groups believe many of the proposals are impertinent to Britain - which they say has an exemplary code of conduct and track record on pesticide use.

"Pesticide usage in the UK is strictly controlled and subject to some of the most stringent safety measures within Europe. Many of the proposed measures, such as operator training, sprayer testing and residential buffer zones, have been already been adopted voluntarily by the UK industry" concluded Chris Hartfield.



Call to discuss your requirements: 01883 344244

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



JOURNEY THROUGH THE LINKS

This mighty volume – over 400 pages – is a genuine table topper and includes virtually every links course in the UK and Ireland.

David Worley is an Australian financier whose love of links golf grew deeper in '96 when his Scots-born wife bought him a tee time at Carnoustie for his 50th birthday present. Over the last 10 years this book has been a labour of love - enjoyed a role that makes him the envy of many of us – playing golf, photographing the courses and writing about his experience. He and his wife undertook a number of fact-finding missions to complete the work – including a 97 course in 90-day marathon trip in 2006!

Five times Open Champion, Peter Thomson, perhaps the finest ever exponent of links golf provides the forward and who could be better to describe the delights of golf in its purest form? Among the gems he reveals is that Brora Golf Club on Scotland's Sutherland coast is, "a better piece of links ground I have yet to find... and is kept playable by five men and a hundred sheep and cows."

David has visited and played the majority of the 155 courses included and he gives a short description of the course and his perception of it. This ranges from short notes of around 100

words or so to long essays, and full descriptions of some of the better known, or his favourite courses. He took photographs wherever he went and some of these are quite stunning – although having to pack picture taking into the tightly-scheduled trips he sometimes has had to include pictures taken on days which were not ideally suited for the purpose.

David's own photography has been supplemented by other contributions included some superb images from, friend of BIGGA, Alan Birch, whose pictures of Royal Birkdale and Royal Lytham & St Annes are particularly notable. Other guest photographers include St Annes Old Links Course Manager Stuart Hogg MG.

David, an 11 handicapper, is a real enthusiast and this comes across in the book. If you work at a links courses there is every chance David visited and you can read his comments and enjoy the photographs. If you golf you will also be able to share your views with those in the book. Chances are that you won't always agree!

Journey Through The Links is available from Aurum Press and costs £30

www.aurumpress.co.uk

GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY

A Golf Management Trophy day, sponsored in Northern Region for the 4th year by Scotts UK Professional, was held at Wetherby Golf Club.

Although we had a relatively small field this year, those that played enjoyed a fine but windy day on the new layout, which had been superbly prepared by the Course Manager, David Hannam, and his staff. The hospitality afforded by all staff at Wetherby Golf Club was excellent, and a very enjoyable day was had by all.

The format, of four man teams comprising of a greenkeeper member of BIGGA and three golf club officials playing a Stableford with the best two scores on each hole to count, continues to be popular.

The winning team was from Childwall Golf Club with 85 points led by Course Manager, Dave

McAvoy. Close runner up was Wath Golf Club, also with 85 points, losing on a countback. Renishaw Park Golf Club claimed 3rd place with 83 points. Nearest the pin on the 8th was won by Robert Biggin from Renishaw Park Golf Club, and longest drive on the 16th was by Mark Nelson, Course Manager at Renishaw Park Golf Club.



The picture shows the winning team with the Captain of Wetherby Golf Club, Tony Page. The Northern Region of BIGGA thanks Scotts once again for their sponsorship.

BIGGA NEW RECRUIT

Sandra Raper has joined the team at BIGGA HOUSE as Secretary/Administrative Assistant.

Before accepting her new position with BIGGA, Sandra worked in Commercial Construction for 20 years as PA to the Joint Managing Director.



Sandra, who has lived in Alne for 21 years, spends much of her spare time watching her husband and two sons play cricket, but also enjoys reading, listening to music and going to concerts. Her two main loves in life are driving her sporty red MG convertible (with the top down of course!) and footballer, Alan Shearer.

"I am absolutely thrilled to have joined the team at BIGGA HOUSE," said the new recruit.

MACHINING FACILITY

A six-figure investment in a state-of-the-art machining facility at Dennis' headquarters in Derby will speed production and enable the progressive company to make many more components in-house. This follows the introduction of a total lean manufacturing programme.

The sophisticated installation includes three new computer-controlled Haas CNC lathes and milling machines, which will enable components to be produced with great precision and with a very fast turn around, so customers' orders can be processed very quickly. Made in the US, Haas are a very innovative US company renowned for high quality value for money equipment.

This exciting new development will also expand the Derby-based company's workforce. A dedicated Production Manager, Pat Craven has been appointed to oversee the new facility, and other recruits will follow.

NEW COURSE TAKING SHAPE

Leading golf Construction Company 360 Golf has started work on the world's first purpose-built 'PowerPlay Golf' course, which will be a main feature of the new £16m Playgolf East Kilbride centre in Scotland.

The 100-acre site – a joint venture between property developers Kilmartin and golf operators Playgolf (Holdings) Plc – will be home to a 9-hole Peter McEvoy-designed course featuring replicas of famous British Open links golf holes.

360 Golf has started earthworks at the Kingsgate West location, stripping topsoil and preparing for a major 'cut and fill' operation which will begin to create the course's contours.

Mel Thomas, of 360 Golf, said today: "Playgolf East Kilbride is a groundbreaking development in every respect and we are delighted to be part of this innovative project."

Billed as golf's answer to Twenty20 cricket, the new format is a simple, shortened, yet highly competitive and strategic version of the game. Played over 9 holes, each green houses two flags, one white in a relatively 'easy' position and one black skull 'n' crossbones or 'PowerPlay' flag in a much trickier position on the putting surface.

COMPANIES COMBINE

A secure and vibrant future underpinned by sustained product development and sales growth are promised for Allett Mowers following the purchase by Turfmech Machinery Ltd, of the company's assets, trademarks and main product range.

The move brings one of Britain's best-known makes of professional walk-behind cylinder mower and turf-care equipment into the Turfmech stable to be based at Turfmech's product development and manufacturing centre in Hixon, Staffordshire. The business will continue to trade as Allett Mowers with all products carrying the respected Allett name.

Turfmech's Managing Director, Austin Jarrett, pointed out that the Allett product line forms a perfect fit with the Turfmech range.

TRAINING INITIATIVES CAN BENEFIT GOLF CLUBS

Training budgets can be the early casualties in golf clubs' drive to reduce costs for more efficient running.

Andrew Wight, from Oaklands College, explains how clubs can get much staff training free. "The government has set up a number of training initiatives for employers over the last few years and many of these are open for use by greenkeepers and their employers," he said. The schemes and their benefits are: 16 to 18 Training: Employees in this age group are entitled to free training by law and therefore are well suited to an NVQ Level 2 route as run by their local GTC approved provider. Train to Gain: This is an initiative set up by the Government for England. Its intention is to place training back into the hands of the employers. The scheme is set up to give workers who do not hold a full Level 2 qualification the chance to train for one.

The training is free of charge to the employer and can consist of two routes: option one gives the employer the option of 20 hours of training from the provider as well as assessment; option two gives the employer assessment visits only.

"The advantage of Train to Gain is that it is free of charge for people over 19 and there is no requirement to attend college, for example," said Andrew. "This makes the scheme suitable for greenkeepers who have been doing the job for a while and have all the skills and knowledge required but do not have a formal qualification.

"The greenkeeper can start on an NVQ 2 and have their skills recognised with assessments being carried out in the workplace. The system is made even easier if there is a qualified assessor at the club," he said.

The GTC has a recognised network of qualified assessors within the industry and for those golf clubs looking at training their staff, but who have not got a qualified assessor at the workplace, please contact Fiona at the GTC for further information on the assessor programme Tel: 01347 838640 or email: fiona@the-gtc.co.uk.

Train to Gain is designed to allow workers to gain their first Level 2 qualification, therefore anybody with a Level 2 qualification - including

five GCSEs at grade C or above - does not qualify for this funding. There is no upper age limit but employees must be 19 or over and it is possible for workers who meet the criteria for Train to Gain to jump straight to a Level 3 qualification and be a "level 3 jumper."

Apprenticeship schemes – standard and advanced - are the Government's preferred route for training, especially for young people, and are developed and reviewed by our Sector Skills Council, Lantra.

"Hopefully, you will now have identified some areas of training that are available for your staff," said Andrew. "The next step is to contact your local GTC approved provider for help and advice."



David Golding, GTC's Education Director, said: "As part of the GTC's work we are aware of local and regional variations in terms of funding support for employers to access through our Approved Training Provider network and it is often difficult for us to keep up with the Government's funding agencies' priorities.

"The GTC can direct employers to their local Approved Training Provider but, with some providers securing national contracts, it is important that you check with the GTC just where the various training initiatives are operating and how contact can be made," he added.

For further research on Train to Gain and apprenticeships visit:

- www.traintogain.gov.uk
- www.lantra.co.uk/modernapprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-England.asp
- www.lantra.co.uk/modernapprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-Wales.asp
- www.lantra.co.uk/modernapprenticeships/ModernApprenticeships-Scotland.asp