

Welcome



Better to Get on with the Job

The Open Championship at Royal Birkdale was a triumph, not only for Pdraig Harrington, who, remarkably, became the first European successfully to defend an Open since James Braid, but for Course Manager, Chris Whittle, and his team who were universally praised for the condition of the course.

Sure it was green, but such were the weather conditions in the run up to the Championship, it couldn't have been any other colour, while the battering it took, particularly on the first two days, tested its drainage qualities to the max. The torrential rain and gale force winds were not ideal for anyone – players, caddies, spectators and greenkeepers – but everyone put in that little bit extra and got the job done.

The BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team was involved in bunker preparation in the mornings and divoting in the evenings, as well as raking bunkers through the day, and such were the conditions they faced, particularly in the mornings, it was wet suits and waders they needed rather than waterproofs. However, the team did a remarkable job and ensured that the bunkers were in perfect shape for the players unfortunate enough to find them.

I know that the R&A appreciate the work that the BIGGA Support Team does at The Open and I also know that our team welcome the opportunity to be involved in the greatest golf Championship of them all.

To all, but a few security guards and cleaners, the early and late work carried out by the Team is unseen and as a result is perhaps unrecognised by some. They are happy with the results and it doesn't quite occur to them how they are achieved. This is very much the lot of the greenkeeper, whether he be at a Major golf event or day to day at his own club.

It will ever be thus. It's the Formula 1 driver who gets all the accolades while his pit crew spend hour upon hour in the garage eeking another fraction of the second out of the engine; the actors get the Oscars, the Baftas and the multi million pay cheques while the men and women who write the words they speak can walk down any street in the world without being recognised - and they are on a fraction of the salary. Let's face it, a film's Director is less well known than its leading man or lady.

But those people in the know do recognised the talents of "back room boys" and know that it isn't some magical waft of a wand that makes everything come together.

In golf, the authorities know that Championships need the expertise provided by experienced turf managers, while it is the golf clubs, who leave their greenkeeping teams to get on with the job which generally benefit from better conditioned courses.

It's probably better to be allowed to get on with the job quietly and efficiently than to get plenty of pats on the back but suffer interference and hassle.

I know what I'd rather have.

Scott MacCallum
Editor



STATESIDE SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS

Ohio State University, in the USA, has become home to Daniel Weston an ex-Writtle College student. After completing his NVQ level 2 in Sports Turf ahead of the majority in his group, Daniel progressed onto his NVQ Level 3 at the College. Daniel has dyslexia and found Level 3 a challenge, refusing to give up and with support from the College he fought against it remarkably and successfully completed the course in 2005. Proving himself still further Daniel went on to secure himself the post as Head Greenkeeper at Epping Golf Club. Daniel, from Epping in Essex, quickly found the desire for his next challenge choosing this time to enrol onto the Ohio state university programme – he has now been there for a year working as an intern at The Pinehurst resort in North Carolina.

The Ohio State Programme brings 19-28 year old greenkeepers from 32 countries around the world. The trainees gain practical training and an opportunity to attend Ohio State for three months of classes related to the turf grass industry.



(L to R) Tom Smart, another intern, Steve Wilson, golf superintendent at Pinehurst and Daniel Weston.

SPONSORING YOUNG GARDENERS

In the knowledge that children are our future, lawnmower manufacturer Etesia UK Ltd has taken the initiative to help an inspired former Local Authority groundsman in his bid to set up school gardening clubs for children in West Yorkshire.

As part of their sponsorship deal, Etesia delivered two pedestrian mowers to the Haworth Primary School where former Bradford Council Landscapes' employee, Steve Thorpe volunteered to set up his first gardening club for the youngsters in 2002.

This first club rose out of problems with vandalism in Haworth, which gave local-man Steve the idea that if he taught children how to garden at a young age they would grow up to respect their environment.

Now, seven years on, the proof of his success is evident in colourful floral displays dotted around the town, outside the fire and railway stations and doctors' surgery – all planted up twice a year by children from Haworth Primary School's Gardening Club. At the school, healthy lunches are on the menu as the children prepare, cook and eat the vegetables which they have grown. They also take fresh produce to the nearby old peoples' home – an enjoyable visit which benefits both old and young alike.