

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

- Greens Mowers – The Devil is in the Detail
- BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Awards
- Course Feature – Cleethorpes & Immingham GC's
- The Chosen Ones – BIGGA Delegation

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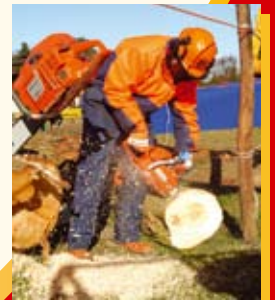
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Association

Greenkeeper

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10 members of the BIGGA Delegation will be travelling to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in Orlando, thanks to Bernhard & Co. Melissa Toombs reveals the chosen ones



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By Mike Beardall



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Welcome



The Future is Bright

Here we are in 2008. Can you believe it? It doesn't seem so long ago that the Millennium seemed a few years off and now we're nearly through the first decade of the current century.

So what does the New Year have in store for us? Well, for a start it's a Leap Year so we'll have to work an extra day for no extra cash! That's the downside, the upside of a Leap Year, for sports' lovers, is that it's an Olympic year and we've got the Beijing Games in the summer to look forward to. I'm sure they will be spectacular, but with China having been preparing athletes for these Olympics for years behind closed doors, and craving success we may find a lot of events being won by sportsmen and women who are currently unknown to the western world. That won't detract from the performances, but it might just make them slightly less interesting for the average television viewer in the UK.

Just after the Olympics, another of the world's top sporting events, the Ryder Cup, will take place at the Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Kentucky, and I think we can expect a more closely fought contest than the last couple of meetings when Europe has romped away. A far cry from the old days before GB&I brought in the might of Continental Europe when it was a cake walk for the US every time. With The Open being held at Royal Birkdale golf is sure to have a high profile this year.

I once heard the late athletics' commentator, Ron Pickering, speak at a golf dinner and he said that he always considered athletics to be the greatest sport in the world, but that golf was the greatest game. Quite a nice way of looking at it and it does mean we're in for quite a sporting year.

Back at BIGGA, preparations for Harrogate Week are all but complete and you can be sure that any time spent in Harrogate will be time very well spent indeed. The education programme is second to none and the opportunities to network, strike deals and socialise are quite simply unmatched.

It will be my 13th Harrogate and I've looked forward to each one more than the one before and I'm proud to be involved in the development of an event that any Association in any industry would be delighted to produce.

If I might finish on the merger talks with the IOG. I firmly believe that the aim of forming a new super organisation out of BIGGA and the IOG was something well worth investigating. Indeed, not carrying out the work, as I've said before, could have been seen as a dereliction of duty on the part of both Boards of Management. The fact that agreement could not be reached does not make the exercise any less valuable.

Both organisations will now move forward independently and you can be sure that the future of BIGGA will be bright and exciting in 2008 and beyond.

IRRIGATION WORKSHOP

Over 30 Midland Section members attended a pretty intensive and wide ranging Irrigation Workshop at The Belfry in late October. The weather could not have been better and the sun shone down which seems quite ironic when discussing the subject of irrigation during 2007. One might wonder what on earth greenkeepers were doing looking at sprinklers or evaluation irrigation requirements when we have just had one of the wettest summers on record. The truth is that irrigation systems still need to be maintained so it is ready when you need it. So any chance to broaden understanding and get practical advice from industry experts was lapped up during this heavily oversubscribed course.

Btliia Secretary, Martyn Jones assembled a superb array of lecturers and the delegates were split into small groups for a 'round robin' of workshops of which the five subjects were: Tony Ware (Tonick Watering Ltd) Electrical faultfinding and repairs; Nigel Wyatt (MJ Abbott Ltd) Pipework malfunction and repairs; Adrian Handbury (Evenproducts Ltd) Sprinkler and solenoid valve maintenance and repairs; Jeff Mountford (Grundfos Ltd) Pumps and pump house maintenance; Martyn Jones (BTLIA) Determining irrigation requirements.

The workshops were designed to cover a range of advice and skills which certainly wetted the appetite of the delegates for further education. The co-ordinator for the event, Paul Woodham said "following some excellent feedback, we recognise that we were only just scratching the surface of irrigation training. We hope to set-up some further courses which will look at some of the finer detail involved with irrigation. The facilities and warm welcome from Kenny McKay and his team at The Belfry have been second to none and the Midland Section have once again benefited from subsidised training offered by BIGGA".

The event was attended by Sami Collins, from BIGGA HQ, in her debut at a section training event. Not only did Sami administer the event but she was also responsible for some great photographs, all 122 of them so there should be no shortage for the calendar next year!

Paul Woodham, Midland Section



COLLEGE SET TO TEE OFF

NVQ level 2 and 3 sports turf students have been busy constructing a three grass surface golf green on campus at Writtle College. The project was co-ordinated by course lecturer, Nigel Beckford, who designed the project to enable students to gain valuable experience in organising and managing a large construction project. The exercise has also proved invaluable to the facilitation of the course, offering students a unique sports turf project to work on.

The students are currently employed on golf courses and sports grounds in and around the Essex County. NVQ Level 3 student, Greg Knight (a finalist at this year's Toro Student of the Year competition), has been involved in the project since the planning and preparation stages in March 2007. Greg commented "The skills gained from my course have been invaluable, I would like to now use the experience gained to progress into a new role as deputy green keeper at the golf course where I work."



The project team

"What I have enjoyed most about the project is seeing the golf green all coming together after all the preparations and hard work put into it."

The golf green project has been funded by the CoVE (Centre of Vocational Excellence) initiative at the College in collaboration with local industry suppliers. 'Baileys of Norfolk' sponsored the sand, 'British Sugar' the topsoil and 'Barenbrug' sponsored the grass seed and Toro fitted an irrigation system. The sponsorship and involvement from local suppliers has been both encouraging and promising for the College, who intend to use the new golf green facility for future students to compare and contrast the effects of respective maintenance regimes and environment on the selected grass species.

NATIONAL GREENKEEPERS' AWARD

Q-Plus, an organisation founded by the National Association of Greenkeepers of Spain, has awarded La Manga Club the first certificate in Spain for the quality of its three, 18-hole championship courses.

There are 514 golf courses in Spain and La Manga Club is the first golf club in the country to receive this award.



It was presented by Murcia's Regional Minister for Tourism, José Pablo Ruiz Abellán, and it analyses the infrastructure of the golf courses' environment, certifying that La Manga Club adheres to stringent quality and environmental standards, as well as general good practices.

Chris Davies, Director of Golf at La Manga Club, said "We are honoured to have been presented with this award which recognises the year-round hard work and professionalism of our Course Superintendent, Cosme Bergareche, and his greenkeeping team."

"We have maintained extremely high standards for many years now and that's why our courses, and this resort in general, are renowned the world over. We constantly endeavour to provide our golfers with the best conditions possible".

INCREASED FUNDING SECURES FUTURE

Shropshire Horticultural Society has significantly increased the Percy Thrower Trust Fund to secure the long-term future of The Young Horticulturist of the Year Competition.

The Institute of Horticulture are also delighted to launch the new logo for the competition. Derived from the Institute of Horticulture's own three leaf symbol, the logo will help promote the competition in colleges, workplaces and the press.

'The competition is the IoH's best way of encouraging young people to pursue careers in horticulture' said Susan Nicholas, national organiser of the competition since 2001. 'It deserves its own identity. We want to catch the eye of everyone who's under 30 and involved in any sector of our industry.'

'The competition tests a wide range of horticultural knowledge, but Rocky Coles, our youngest winner, was just 19 when he won in 2002. He had the trip of a lifetime to study nursery stock production in New Zealand, thanks to the Percy Thrower Travel Bursary. At the other end of the age scale, Mel Clench made it just in time at 29.'

The Bursary is worth £2,000 for the winner and funds a study tour to wherever they would like to go. Jimmy O'Connor, who won the 2007 competition at Glasnevin Botanical Gardens in Dublin earlier this year, is planning to study the flora of Greenland, before global warming alters it forever!

AMERICANS TO ATTEND HARROGATE WEEK

Bernhard and Company will be sending 10 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Class A members to BIGGA's Harrogate Week 2008.

Members who were interested had to go to the Bernhard and Company website and fill-out an application form. The response was tremendous and with applicants being of such a high standard, it was a very tough decision for the company.



The GCSAA members who will be traveling to Harrogate week in 2008 are: Sean Sullivan, CGCS at The Briarwood in Billings, Montana; Rafael Barajas, CGCS at Hacienda Golf Club in La Habra, California; Russell Vandehey, CGCS at the Oregon Golf Club in West Linn, Oregon; Michael Stachowicz, superintendent at Dedham Country and Polo Club in Dedham, Massachusetts; Stephen Cohoon, CGCS at Heritage Hunt Golf and Country Club in Gainesville, Virginia; Tim Paulson, superintendent at Spanish Hills Country Club in Camarillo, California; Glen Misiaszek, CGCS at Cohasset Golf Club in Cohasset, Massachusetts; Eric Foerster, CGCS at The Ironbridge Golf Club in Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Christopher Gray Sr., superintendent at Marvel Golf Club in Benton, Kentucky; Clay Putnam, CGCS, director of operations at Serviscape LLC in Michigan City, Indiana.

Similar to the trip Bernhard and Company sponsor for BIGGA members to travel to the Golf Industry Show in the US, GCSAA members will attend the BTME's conference and exhibition, participate in education seminars, network with greenkeepers, and visit several golf courses during their visit to the UK.

HIGHLY REGARDED PROFESSIONAL APPOINTED

Steve Evans, Course Manager at Yelverton Golf Club is to join the Duchy College in the position of full time Greenkeeper Tutor and Assessor. Steve has been green keeping for over 28 years and has served on the BIGGA Section and Regional Committees in South Wales, and in Devon and Cornwall throughout this period. He has been Chairman of both organisations.



Left to right: Brian Summers, Steve Evans, Bill Pile, Terry Farkins & James Collings

Steve says, "I am looking forward to my new role within the industry, where I can pass on some of my experience to the students in the workplace."

Steve replaces Bill Pile, a life member of BIGGA and someone who, along with Ron Skinner, Programme Manager and Chris Shepherd, Training Agency Operations Manager, was instrumental in setting up the unique green keeping training programmes at Duchy College with many local and national industries part of the programme.

The course has many experienced tutors and assessors that work throughout the south west. Brian Summers, Course Manager at Carlyon Bay Golf Club, brings over 40 years greenkeeping experience with him and was one of the founder members of the Devon and Cornwall Section of BIGGA. Terry Farkins, Course Manager at Dartmouth Golf Club, is also a part time tutor, assessor and Internal Verifier at the college. Add to that list, Jonathan Bullen of Staddon Heights Golf Club, Graeme Gallimore of Launceston Golf Club, James Collins formerly of Falmouth Golf Club and Billy Mitchell of Perranporth Golf Club and indeed many more Course Managers in Devon and Cornwall. It certainly stands the college on a very firm platform for the future.

Duchy College gained Greenkeeper Training Committee (GTC) approved status last year, due to the tremendous amount of hard work by all members of staff. The college also enjoys the full support of the Devon and Cornwall Section of BIGGA.

SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2008 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Business Learning Centre, Carnegie College, (formerly Lauder College), Dunfermline on Tuesday, March 4, 2008.

This year's speakers include Gerry Byrne, Resort Superintendent, The K Club, Ireland, Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive, Golf Environment Europe and Archie Stewart, Landmaps Ltd. Other speakers include, from America Ron Alexander, Ron Alexander Associates, Allan Patterson, Head Greenkeeper, The Castle Course, St. Andrews Links Trust and finally Gordon Holms, CSC Amenity. Tickets cost £34, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms will be posted to all members in Scotland and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J.Boyd, Regional Administrator on Tel 0141 616 3440 or pj.boyd@btinternet.com



SECTION SECRETARIES

BIGGA's Section Secretaries converged on BIGGA HOUSE at the beginning of December learn more about the working of Headquarters and have the opportunity of sharing experiences with each other.

Everyone met at Aldwark Manor Hotel for dinner on the Sunday evening before the formal proceedings began at 8.30am sharp the next morning.

The day was chaired by National Chairman, Billy McMillan, and began with John Pemberton giving an overview of the Association's work and current priorities.



Picture shows all the delegates with the BIGGA HQ Staff

John was followed by Head of Learning and Development Sami Collins and GTC Executive Director, David Golding, who underlined what learning and development was available and the funding support which could be tapped into. David spoke on the role of the GTC and answered questions from the floor. Sami stressed the fact that any assistance a Section required in setting up a training course would be forthcoming and, if requested in advance, a subsidy could be provided to off-set the cost.

Following a break Communication's Manager, Scott MacCallum, gave an insight into the various forms of communication available to, and used by, the Association and explained some of the initiatives to expect on the BIGGA Website in future months.

Scott was followed by a talk from Paul Angier, of legal firm, Irwin Mitchell, who provide BIGGA's Legal Helpline and legal support; Frank O'Malley, of Arc Legal Protection, and Andrew Lawrence, of Heath Lambert.

Together they highlighted some of the issues that were currently fielding and stressed that the service was for all potential legal support from complaints about holiday problems; faulty cooks as well as employment problems and they reminded everyone that the service was for BIGGA members and their families and not just the individual member.

After lunch, where the rest of the Headquarters staff had a chance to meet the Secretaries, Head of Membership Services, Vanessa Depe, outlined the many member benefits and services that were available and Sales Manager, Rosie Hancher, explained the working of the Sales Office within BIGGA HQ.

BIGGA Accountant, Stephen Coates, then provided a brief talk on how to go about budgeting for and organising a Section Training Event. The day concluded with a Question and Answer Session conducted by Billy.



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MERGER TALKS EXAMINED

The news that the Board of the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) had decided to terminate merger talks came as a sorry blow to the Board of BIGGA.

Talks, while slow, had seemed to be leading towards a compromise solution and the timetable to produce a report by the end of January 2008 appeared achievable. From the start the representatives of both BIGGA and the IOG agreed upon the principle of a combined business which lead to the signing of a 'Heads of Agreement' document that clearly laid out the purpose of the merger talks. Both sides recognised that the most difficult task facing them would be to produce a report to members that would secure their support, always assuming that the result of the talks indicated that a merger was to be recommended.

An in-depth analysis of existing memberships benefits, membership categories and subscription rates was undertaken by the staff of BIGGA and the IOG and it was noted that while both parties offered an excellent range of benefits there was, however, a large disparity between the categories and subscription levels. A formula was agreed that simplified the categories while retaining the professional standards needed to qualify for Full Membership and an alternative subscription structure seemed to provide an acceptable solution. Additional tangible benefits seemed to be difficult to pinpoint however the commercial advantages of a merger helped focus everyone's mind. In the final analysis it seems that the Board of the IOG does not feel that there are enough significant additional membership benefits to warrant continuation of the talks. That is, and always has been, the prerogative of either party. Meetings were always conducted in an orderly, friendly manner under the competent chairmanship of David Teasdale and the time given by representatives is appreciated by the BIGGA Board. And so where does BIGGA go from here?

Firstly I would emphasise that there has been no fall out between BIGGA and the IOG, if anything there is now a better understanding of each other's business and the common ground that exists. Secondly, the BIGGA Board has established a working party to review its original intention to develop the Association by widening the scope of membership to enable groundsmen to become members in their own right. Groundsmen can currently join BIGGA as Associate members however this gives them only limited benefits of membership. Another objective of the working party will be to consider converting the Association into a limited company, which had been identified sometime ago as beneficial, but was placed on hold pending the outcome of the merger talks. This will include converting the Rules of the Association into a Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Company under company law and also consideration of a business name and possibly a change of name for Greenkeeper International. As with any recommendations that would have arisen out of the talks with the IOG, any major changes will need to be approved by the membership. It is hoped that following full consultation with members that a proposal can be made to an EGM later in the year.

John Pemberton
BIGGA Chief Executive

NINE-HOLE COURSE HELPING TO INSPIRE

A Par 3 golf facility created using Huxley all-weather surfaces is helping inspire and produce a new generation of golfers in north Wales.

Laid out within Coed Helen Recreation Park, Caernarfon, the open access community short course is part of a grassroots golf project developed by Gwynedd Council using money from the Ryder Cup Wales Legacy Fund.



1st green at Coed Helen Recreation Park

Provided by the Welsh Assembly Government and administered on behalf of Ryder Cup Wales by The Sports Council for Wales, the Legacy Fund represents a £2 million investment in grassroots golf resulting from a commitment given as part of Wales' successful bid to host the 2010 Ryder Cup. The funding is intended to help local authorities, schools and golf clubs throughout Wales develop new low-cost open access facilities, seen as being essential in encouraging the take-up of golf by young people and others new to the game.

In addition to the Huxley short course at Coed Helen, the funding received by Gwynedd Council has assisted in the development of community golf facilities at four primary schools in the county.

STUDENTS ENJOY A WELL EARNED BREAK FROM THE CLASSROOM



BIGGA Midland Section supported Warwickshire College recently by arranging two field trips for their level 3 students. The venues were Gay Hill Golf Club and The Belfry. It gave the students a chance to talk to managers on a range of topics and see how management practices need to be suited to the demands of two entirely different operations.

The students met with Course Manager Paul Woodham during the visit to Gay Hill GC and with Kenny Mackay's two Head Greenkeepers for the The Belfry, Eric Olsen and Neil Smith.



HAPPY NEW YEAR GREENKEEPERS

As we move into a new year David Golding, GTC's Education Director, encourages everyone, employer and greenkeeper alike to review their training needs and to really take seriously the need to keep staff development at the top of the agenda!

I often read on turf related websites that the qualifications available for greenkeepers and grounds men/women “do not meet our needs” and we need to launch our own training course and qualification. Why?

While I cannot speak on behalf of the grounds men and women, I hope at all meetings we have presented the case for all the elements required to be included in the various qualifications to enable access for all working in sports turf.

The GTC has led the development of the current range of turf qualifications and has always encouraged the employers and greenkeepers to contribute to the development and review of all awards. The same applies now as we start the review of the Sports Turf apprenticeship framework - Arguably the most important stepping stone for so many entering this great profession? It does not seem that long ago that we did not even have a Turf Apprenticeship!

You can contribute to the review by sending your views direct to the GTC and I can assure you that your comments will be fed into the review process - Lantra will also be consulting widely via their website www.lantra.co.uk.

This is just one example of the transparency of the GTC who always welcome contributions from the sector. We are fortunate to have a choice between the vocational work-based training courses and qualifications plus the more college based awards. Visit the GTC website for the detail of these various awards and don't forget feedback to the GTC is so important to ensure we get it right for both the learner and the employer!

The GTC remains committed to working with both the work-based and the more academic awards as it gives everybody a choice. The career path also on our website shows how the various qualifications complement each other.

Very often criticism of the vocational qualifications is down to delivery issues not the content of the craft, supervisory and management levels. The three levels are developed from the industry skills developed in association with employers and greenkeepers and these are regularly reviewed again with the Lantra SSC. The official nationally accredited qualifications attract Government funding and offered by Centres often Further Education colleges which in turn results in subsidised education.

Back to the delivery issues and the options available to you. I am sorry to keep plugging the term work-based but that is what vocational is, directed at occupational skills, in our case on the golf course. However I make no apology for promoting Course Manager/Head Greenkeepers as the key person responsible to make these awards nationally respected qualifications. In simple terms, developed by the industry for the industry

and delivered to the required standards by the industry.

We all have our part to play!

The Centres can only operate work-based training with employer and the staff involved in the process. Work related courses are a different matter and these are more college suited, as they are more classroom based. From the National Certificate to the Masters Degree, these are brilliant qualifications and on offer through our network of GTC Approved Providers (see GTC website).

My real appeal to you as we move into a new year is that we really look at developing staff skills and knowledge by encouraging bite size learning. I don't want us all to be caught up in the Governments drive for full qualification statistics but rather focus our provider network to service our sector in a manner the GTC believes best suits golf clubs and greenkeepers.

Last month I mentioned the plethora of buzzwords so I don't want to start the New Year with another but bespoke courses or, better still, all responsible providers should offer short courses. I am always confident that courses offered by the various providers will relate to the National Occupational Standards so really there is a real opportunity for the Approved Providers including Professional Bodies to move into this area of educational development.

Employers and greenkeepers having identified staff education and training needs should contact their chosen provider and if you are not offering the subject or course in a delivery method to suit your needs please contact the GTC as we need to know when you have delivery issues.

Our work at the GTC is to work with those providers, colleges, and private companies and individuals who are willing to meet our sectors needs but we need your support by keeping us informed of when your needs are not being met.

The GTC is proud to be the independent body representing the greenkeeping sector in matters relating to education, training and qualifications and you are very much part of the consultative network.

Check out the new GTC website www.the-gtc.co.uk which includes the Training Provider network and organisations offering greenkeeper education and training.

Contact David direct at david@the-gtc.co.uk or Telephone the GTC on 01347 838640

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Industry Update

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Long service awards were presented to several staff at Ransomes Jacobsen, with each receiving a commemorative gift and a specially decorated cake to recognise their commitment and loyalty to the company.

Mick Lewis and Jim Snell, who both work in the manufacturing plant, celebrated their 40 year milestone. Mick is a welder in the fabrication, section while Jim is the Weld Cell Supervisor.



Jim Snell (left) and MD David Withers

Alan Flewitt, the company's International Financial Accountant, celebrated 25 years having joined the company in August 1982 as a Trainee Accountant.

Owen Burch, Senior Payroll Officer, Tony Balaam of the Customer Care department, Shirley Stephens, Main Tractor Assembly Technician and Domenic O'Brien, Inventory & Warehouse Manager, were also presented with 25-year service awards.

Completing the awards, again for 25-years service, were Christian Clifford and Adrian Kindred of the Engineering department; Christian is the Engineering Manager and Adrian is one of the company's Senior Design Engineers.

Commenting on these latest long service awards, Managing Director David Withers said, "I was delighted to be called upon to present these awards recognising the loyalty and outstanding service that these individuals have given to the company. It only goes to strengthen my belief that we have a vibrant manufacturing company here in the heart of East Anglia, offering career opportunities and long-term employment to the people of Ipswich. Having celebrated our 175th anniversary of mower manufacturing in Ipswich earlier this year, I would like to think that we will continue to offer employment opportunities for the next 175!"

IRRIGATION ANNOUNCEMENT

Hunter recently announced that Revaho UK have become Hunter distributors in the UK and Eire. 'This represents for us a tremendous opportunity to sell the irrigation installers the complete package of pipes and fittings as well as the market leading equipment available from Hunter' commented Stewart Penny, Managing Director of Revaho, 'to be honest I'm pretty excited!' he continued, 'with our logistic and marketing expertise we will be concentrating on giving existing and new Hunter customers a much more streamlined and efficient service'.

John Sheppard representing Hunter added that 'we (Hunter) have been looking to strengthen our position in the UK and Eire and our alliance with Revaho will give us the impetus to really attack the market and basically offer sports and landscape irrigation users a better package'.

GREEN APPLE AWARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Nomix Enviro are proud winners of a Green Apple Award for sustainability. Professor David Bellamy presented the prestigious award to the company at a glittering ceremony held at the houses of parliament recently.



Lorna Aiken and Rachel Robbins flank David Bellamy

Nomix Enviro Marketing Manager Lorna Aiken and Business Development Manager Rachel Robbins collected the silver award for Product Innovation for the Nomix Total Droplet Control herbicide application system.

The Nomix TDC Herbicide System Project was developed to minimise the volume of herbicide put into the environment and provides users with a safer means to spray chemicals.

There are already many thousands of customers using Nomix TDC who achieve an excellent level of weed control without wasteful and environmentally damaging herbicide use.

The Green Apple Awards are run by The Green Organisation. This is an independent, non-political, non-activist, non-profit environment group dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting environmental best practice around the world.

EGU SIGNS UP

The English Golf Union (EGU) at Woodhall Spa, has signed a new five-year agreement with Toro for a complete fleet of course maintenance machinery. The prestigious Lincolnshire site is home to two 18-hole courses, the Hotchkin – voted 47th in the world by Golf Magazine – and the Bracken. Opened in 1998, it perfectly complements the Hotchkin, with its large undulating greens and water hazards.

Courses manager Sam Rhodes said: "In terms of precision and quality of cut, ease of maintenance and operator comfort, Toro is our top choice. We also receive excellent back up from Toro dealer Chris Sellars, and our total confidence in them to look after us is a vital component of the deal."



Richard Latham, seated left, and Lely's Jeff Anguige, with, back left, EGU finance director Craig Wagstaff and courses manager Sam Rhodes

As part of its relationship with the EGU, Toro is sponsoring the EGU's well-known Course Rating Manual, which is used at county level to grade golf courses in England. Lynne Fraser, marketing and public relations manager at the EGU, said: "With Toro's support we can ensure that the manual is produced to a very high standard and is a more hard-wearing and substantial document."

TOP DEALER FOR THE FIFTH TIME

For the fifth consecutive year, Etesia UK Ltd has awarded their top accolade for UK Dealer of the Year 2007 to Burrows (GM) Ltd. The company has branches in Leyland and Stafford. At the presentation ceremony, which took place at a dinner following a Dealer Conference at The Puckrup Hall Hotel, Tewkesbury, UK General Manager, Les Malin said, "Burrows have put in a terrific performance this year – their Etesia turnover has continued to grow to the benefit of both businesses."

During the afternoon seminars, delegates received in-depth information about bio-fuels and the benefits to end users as well as to the planet of Etesia's new Bio Concept range of ride-on mowers.

Guest conference speakers included Julian Thompson from replacement parts specialists, Kramp; and Colin Theedom who outlined the variety of funding packages available under the Etesia's finance scheme operated by Tech5.



Burrows (GM) winners of Dealer of the Year 2007

Other awards were presented to... R T Machinery Ltd for Best Overall Performance 2007; Alistair Whitby of Lloyds, County Durham, and Alan Ford of Colchester-based P Tuckwell Ltd were both acknowledged for their Individual Sales Achievement during 2007. The company that had achieved the Best Marketing & Promotion in 2007 was Turner Groundscare of Princess Risborough.

In addition, Etesia's two Area Sales Managers (Richard Williams and Ian Collington) made their own selection of individuals who had had notable success during 2007. These ASM Dealer Awards went to South East Groundcare Machinery from Sussex, and Leicestershire-based R J Holland GM.

Looking towards next year's Etesia Dealer Awards Event, Managing Director, Patrick Vives, launched an incentive promotion whereby dealers can win a luxury 5-star holiday for two to Mexico's Cancun.

QHOTELS SIGNS GROUP DEAL

Leeds based hotel group, QHotels, has signed a five year deal with John Deere, worth around £500,000 in the first year, for the exclusive supply of course maintenance equipment across the group's five golf courses. These include Forest Pines Golf and Country Club Hotel in North Lincolnshire, Hellidon Lakes in Northamptonshire, Aldwark Manor near York, The Westerwood near Glasgow, and Telford Golf and Country Club Hotel in Shropshire.



In addition to the machinery, the deal includes regular product training at the John Deere Training Centre in Langar, with parts back-up and support provided by the courses' local dealers.

Course manager David Norton has added six new John Deere machines to the Forest Pines fleet, bought from local dealer F G Adamson & Son at Swanland, East Yorkshire. These include a 3245C roughs mower, 3235C fairway mower, two 2500E hybrid greens mowers, TE electric Gator and Pro Gator utility vehicles, with the total John Deere fleet now standing at 33 machines.

"All the staff have found the technical training programme at Langar very beneficial," says David. "The company offers a range of different courses, so we normally send two staff on each in turn. We've found it very useful to do refresher courses on even simple things like setting cutting units, for example."

The club is also looking to expand the golf course to 36 holes, with two 18 hole loops replacing the current three 9 hole loops, and create a top class practice facility, which it plans to open in 2009/2010.

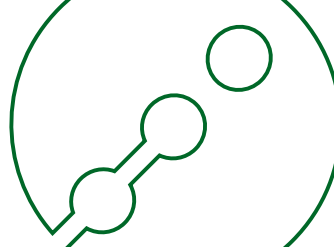
NEW RECRUIT

Chris Buckle has joined the sales team at Ransomes Jacobsen. Reporting to Rupert Price, sales manager UK and Ireland, he will be responsible for golf car sales and territory development in the south of England and Wales.

Chris joins the E-Z-GO team following a 13 year career with a family-owned distributor of power tools based at Christchurch in Dorset.



Membership



VANESSA DEPPE, MEMBERSHIP SERVICES OFFICER, UPDATES US ON MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Changes

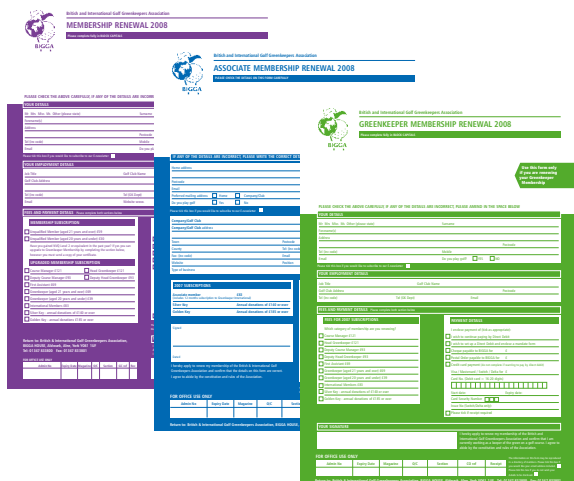
Please do not forget to let us know when you have a change of address or employer. We seem to have incorrect details for quite a few of you. Just ring us on 01347 833800 and we will update your details.

Rent a Car

If you need a car this New Year don't forget that National's Affinity Leisure Programme offers BIGGA Members exclusive rates on car and van hire in the UK and on international car hire in over 80 countries. Call us on 01347 833800 for more on this.

Do it by Direct Debit

If you are looking for a no fuss solution to your BIGGA Membership renewals you can pay automatically every year by Direct Debit. If you would like a Direct Debit mandate just ring 01347 833800 and we will send you the form.



Ring in renewals

Don't forget that if you are late renewing then you can give us a ring and renew over the phone with your credit/debit card.

Harrogate Week

We hope to see you all this month at Harrogate Week. We will be on stand Q69 and if you need to renew your membership or you want to join BIGGA you can do so on our stand. We will also be there to answer any membership queries you may have.

Best wishes for 2008 from the BIGGA Membership Department

BIGGA WELCOMES

SCOTTISH REGION	
Lee Shannon	Ayrshire
Steven Wilson	Central
Grant Hope	North
William Shepherd	North
Martin Fitheridge	East
Jamie Bell	East

NORTHERN REGION	
Matthew Dobbs	North West
Stewart Ptolomey	Sheffield
Carl Sawyer	Sheffield
Nicholas O'Mearia	North West
James Cairns	North West
James Willis	North West
Peter McVicar	North West
Matthew Plant	North West
Terence Harrison	Cleveland
Martin Evans	North Wales
MIDLAND REGION	
Kurt Lambert	Mid Anglia
Robin Patrick Portess	East of England
SOUTH EAST REGION	
Christopher Mitchell	Surrey
Adam Wood	Kent
Nicholas Roberts	London
Lee Austin	Kent
Michael Woolnough	Kent
SOUTH WEST & WALES	
Stan Power	South West
Douglas Spencer	South Coast
Frank McGonnell	South Coast
Ian Reeves	South Coast
Alexander Russo	South Coast
Benjamin Glass	South Coast
Matthew Cropper	South West
Stuart Broom	South Wales
Stephen Cubley	South West
Warren Grant	South West
Christopher Cowley	South West
Sebastian Cavilla	South West
Anthony Simmons	South West
Daniel Bawn	South West
Patrick William Kelly	South West
Paul Bishop	South West
Mark Venner	South West
ASSOCIATE	
Frederick Lewis-Bynoe	Cleveland
STUDENT	
Paul Hope	South Coast
Alvin Michael	South Wales
Andrew Pederson	London
Andrew Orr	West Scotland
Prasanna Upreti	Central Scotland
Dominic McGough	Sheffield
Daniel Woodcraft	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Chris Low	Midland
INTERNATIONAL	
Darian Philo	USA
Scott Veazey	USA
Bjorn Fleisje	Norway
Reamonn O'Neill	Denmark
Doug McLaren	France

Learning & Development

Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund



Unlock the doors to progress through BIGGA'S Education and Development Fund – the key to a great future for greenkeepers, golf clubs and the game of golf.

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For details, please contact Rosie Hancher on 01347 833834 or via rosie@bigga.co.uk

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PGA European Tour	01344 842881
Rigby Taylor Ltd	01204 677777
Scotts UK Professional	01473 830492
Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd	01473 270000
The Toro Company/Lely UK	01480 226800

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Hayter Ltd	01279 723444
Heath Lambert Group	01113 246 1313
Novozymes Biologicals	01789 290906
Rainbird	01273 891326
Symbio	01372 456101
Turftrax Group Ltd	01722 434000

Silver Key Individual Members

Clive A Archer; Douglas G Duguid; Robert Maibusch MG; Steven Tierney; Roger Barker; Ian Semple; Paul Jenkins; Robert Hogarth; Nichollas Gray; Trevor Smith; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Alex McCombie; Paul Murphy; Reaseheath College; Steve Dixon; Ian Benison.

SAMI COLLINS, HEAD OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES AN UPDATE



So, Christmas has come and gone, we've all made and broken our New Year's resolutions and the event of the year – Harrogate Week - is on the horizon. Rachael and I are busy checking and cross-checking our lists and we endeavour not to forget anything, including each other!



Once again, we are working closely with the English Golf Union (EGU), the Golf Club Managers' Association (GCMA) and the R&A.

The EGU and the GCMA will be presenting the Continuing Development Seminars on Wednesday 23 January. The morning session will be presented by the EGU and will include sessions on the CONGU Unified Handicap System 2008 and the EGU Course Policy Document. The afternoon session will be presented by the GCMA and will include sessions on the Life Expectancy of Golf Course Components, Training and Education, the Golf Club Managers' Employment Handbook and Managing Change. A luncheon with a keynote speaker is also included. The cost of this event is £50 (inc VAT) for the full day, or £25 (inc VAT) for either the morning or afternoon sessions.

The R&A Conference – Moving Towards Greater Sustainability, A Progress Report will take place on Thursday 24 January. This one-day conference will include four sessions: The R&A, the Principles of Sustainable Course Development and Management, Putting Sustainability into Practice and Moving Forward. With presentations from 16 speakers, the conference will promote sustainable course development and management through the implementation of best practice. The cost of this event, including lunch, is £75 (inc VAT).

On Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 January we will be presenting the Continue to Learn Seminars. Sessions include: Workplace Bullying, Preparing for the Barclays Scottish Open, Noise

and Vibration Management, Pensionsforce – Acknowledging the message, Current Environmental Legislation, Terms and Conditions of Employment, The Way Golf Began and the BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System. These one-hour sessions are designed to inform and enlighten attendees on a variety of subject matters. A generous discount of up to 52% will be applied when booking two or more of the Continue to Learn Seminars.



All of the events featured will take place in the Queen's Suite in Harrogate International Centre. To book your place on any of the Continue to Learn Education Programme, visit www.harrogateweek.org.uk and book online, or telephone Rachael Duffy, Learning & Development Administrator on 01347 833800 ext 522.

Have We Got Views For You! is a one off event being held on Monday 21 January at the Majestic Hotel from 7.30 pm. This is your chance to ask our distinguished panel a question about their life and times in the greenkeeping industry. The panel comprises Jack McMillan MBE, Walter Woods BEM, Andy Campbell MG CGCS, Ken Siems MG CGCS and Stanley J Zontek from the USGA. If you have a question you would like to pose to the panel please email it to education@bigga.co.uk.

FACTS Turf Training Courses

The FACTS Turf qualification, certificated by BASIS, has been designed for anyone providing advice on fertiliser application to sports and amenity turf. The qualification is obtained by evidence of understanding plant nutrition and fertiliser types, environmental issues and legislation.

A dedicated, four-day, modular course for the FACTS Turf qualification is being run by STRI in February 2008. Modules include: The Soil and Playing Surface in Relation to Turfgrass Nutrition, Nature and Properties of Fertilisers and Liming Materials, Plant Nutrients and Choice of Fertiliser, Transport, Storage and Application and Good Practice and Environmental Protection.

To find out more visit www.stri.co.uk or telephone 01274 518908.

Learning & Development

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING THAT STICKS

By Keith Jaynes

Performance is made up of three key components: knowledge, skills and attitude. Each is acquired in different ways, which means that providing balanced learning and performance management programmes forms a central part of the Course Manager job.

Think about riding a bike. No child gets straight onto their first two-wheeler and rides without a few spills in the process. How few spills and how long the process takes before that child can ride competently is in the hands of the parent as a teacher and the child as the learner. This involves not just providing the opportunities to learn but the motivation, too.

This model works in the same way for on the job skills training.

Not surprisingly, it makes little difference how much knowledge the members of your greenkeeping team have or how skillful they are. If they don't have a positive attitude to their work, performance will suffer. Therefore a key part of the management process is to create a working environment that provides inherent motivation for all. More of this later.

A visit to the website (www.the-gtc.co.uk) makes clear that golf has a well-structured approach to training and development, resourced by professionals. This is backed by a solid infrastructure, with a national network of accredited training providers at colleges specialising in land-based studies; and a framework of NVQ qualifications from Levels 2 to 4 devised in conjunction with the industry to promote acceptable common standards of performance nationally.

However, as David Golding notes, it does take a commitment from senior greenkeeping staff to support learners at individual clubs. Successful training needs to be systematic, particularly at entry levels, to ensure it can withstand changes in budgets, resources and work schedules.

There are all kinds of methods for planning and delivering on-the-job training, but the process outlined below offers a time- and cost-effective solution for busy Course Managers.

Some years ago, in the era of government training boards, the Food Drink and Tobacco Industry Training Board introduced a simple method of breaking down 'jobs' into their component tasks or modules.

Initially this was launched as the Meat Module programme – designed to build craft skills in abattoirs and wholesale butchery businesses. So how does a system designed in the meat industry have any relevance to the turfcare business?

The programme had two elements – first a series of module cards that defined the learning elements of each of the tasks that comprise a

particular job. The second was a matrix that listed all the different tasks in addition to the competence of each member of the team to perform them.

1: MODULE CARDS. Every task in a job can be broken down by simply questioning how it should be performed. 'Open' questions are required to analyse the processes involved and, hence, the skills and knowledge required for effective performance.

Open questions are designed to gather information in a challenging way. For example, if a key task were to set up a greensmower for a range of conditions, then some of the questions might be:

- What safety steps are essential before setting the cutters?
- What controls adjust the height of cut?
- Where are they located?
- How are they operated and in what order?

The questions are recorded on cards with the answers on the opposite side. (FIG_01)

FIG_01

SEAT FIXING & ADJUSTMENT

- 1 How is the seat fixed in position?
- 2 How can the seat be moved?
- 3 How can you tell that the seat is correctly fixed in position?
- 4 How many different position controls are there for the seat?
- 5 Where are they located?
- 6 How are they operated?
- 7 What safety measures should be observed when moving the position of the seat?

Seat Fixing & Adjustment

- 1 The seat is fixed by a lock on the lhs of the pedestal. It operates with a spring-loaded pin that engages in the lock.
- 2 Disengage the locking pin by pulling it out and turning it to the right and turn the seat 180 degrees to face the rear. Twist the locking pin to the left so it can engage in the lock.
- 3 When the seat is correctly positioned, the locking pin is fully engaged.
- 4 There are two controls, one for height the other for rake.
- 5 Height adjustment lever is under the seat, rake adjustment a knurled knob on the rhs of the frame.
- 6 Height is adjusted by lifting the lever. Ensure weight is off seat to raise it and on seat to lower. Turn the knurled knob forward to decrease rake and backward to increase rake.
- 7 Never drive with the seat unlocked – safety interlock should prevent this and do not attempt to adjust the seat while driving.

Any skilled operator could provide the 'right' answers matched to the specific machine and the standards of performance expected by the club.

Some answers will also be in the machinery manufacturer's handbook – particularly for safety issues.

The NVQ structure lends itself to this type of instructional approach. For their standards are made up of groups of units that specify the tasks involved in a particular job role. The units are made up of elements – each of which defines a specific work activity. While performance criteria define what needs to be done to perform the task to an acceptable standard – with national standards already defined by the GTC.

Of course, the busy Course Manager will argue that there is already enough to do without developing something new. Plus the fact that the real trick is to ask the right questions in the right order, which is probably easier for professional trainers. However, if the manager's job incorporates staff training then the one-off investment in the time involved is probably worthwhile, since it can be used again and again to meet the needs of new staff or to give existing employees refresher training in areas they may not encounter frequently.

This means that the whole team can be involved in the process as part of a standards-driven initiative – what's more, the cards provide a central resource that can be tapped at any time.

2. RECORD OF TRAINING. Much of the impetus for learning comes from the priority that it is given by the manager. If it is high-profile, team members readily accept its importance and their responsibility in the process. This is where the Record of Training, mounted openly on the notice board in the staff room or workshop, provides not only a record of training but some added motivation for trainees.

The format is a simple matrix (**FIG_02**). Along the top are noted all the different tasks that are required by the team, while team members' names are shown down the side. Competence in each task is noted using a simple key. Tasks in which team members require training as part of their jobs are noted using a minus symbol (-); once they are undergoing training this changes to a plus symbol (+); finally, when they have proved their competence the plus symbol is converted into an asterisk (*).

This provides an immediate visible guide to the overall competence of the team at any given time. It also acts as a reminder to the manager and team members about "gaps" in key competencies where further training is essential to ensure that adequate cover is available for holidays and sickness. Knowledge and skills are about learning and training. Performance is about attitude.

Here the supply trade has some lessons for the turfcare industry. Sales people face a roller-coaster ride of highs and lows as some customers buy and others do not. For them, performance is often more a question of application and perseverance than shortcomings in knowledge and skill. All too often a small deficiency in skill can mean the difference between success and failure.

Because of the pressures faced by the supply trade to cut costs, the structures of today's dealerships are 'flatter' as layers of management are cut out. One such layer has been the sales manager, who would

accompany his sales people to ensure that they were performing up to the standards expected.

FIG_02

Task Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6												14					
Team Member 1	-	-	-	+	+																		
Team Member 2	*	*	-	*	*	*												*					
Team Member 3	*	-	*	*	*	*																	
Team Member 4	+	-	*	*	*	*												*					

One of the sales manager's key skills was to act as a coach and trainer to his sales team, remedying areas where performance improvement was required. In some cases, less experienced sales people required further training, which the manager would organise off the job, while experienced team members might simply have needed to refocus on one or two areas in which their skills or knowledge had been eroded.

The same model works just as well for the Course Manager. Performance involves everybody in the team, not just those under training or with limited experience. In fact, more-experienced members of the team can contribute significantly to the development process if their experience can be harnessed as part of the training process.

Spending time with individual members as they go about their daily routines may highlight development areas that can benefit the whole team. Similarly, involving the whole team in identifying ways to improve performance can also have a very positive impact on results and raising standards beyond those set in national programmes.

If managers ever doubt their role and responsibility for on-the-job training they should always fall back on the proven training maxim: "What I hear I forget, What I see I remember but What I do I understand".

Similarly, the manager's prayer is well worth a mention here, too, because it highlights the reality that good management is about doing that little bit extra to achieve the best results. And since managing is normally about getting results through people, that must mean going the extra mile on the development front.

So "Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to tell the difference."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Keith Jaynes has over 30 years' experience in land-based industries. His company specialises in providing marketing and sales development solutions for machinery manufacturers, distributors and financial services companies operating in this sector. For more information about the modular training approach you can contact Keith on 01904 448740 or 07776 197497.





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HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF HARROGATE WEEK



January can be viewed in two ways. A depressing month – the festive season is over, the Christmas decorations have been taken down and packed away back up into the loft, you're more than likely on a diet after overindulging in December and all you have to look forward to in the immediate future is cold, wet, dreary weather. Or, a brand spanking New Year! – a time for new beginnings, time to make New Year's Resolutions, take up a new hobby, get fit – join the gym, enrol on a part time course, and most importantly, attend the event of the year – Harrogate Week! GI provides a glimpse of what the most important week in January has to offer.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION...

The most comprehensive education programme that BIGGA has ever put together will get the brain going into overdrive this year, and it's not just of benefit to turf professionals and BIGGA members. Many other golfing and sporting bodies are involved in the week with seminars by the R&A, EGU and GCMA and many other workshops that are particularly pertinent for turf professionals from other sporting arenas.

A GLIMPSE AT THE SEMINARS ON OFFER

ARE YOU UP TO DATE? CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Environmental legislation is becoming more and more important in golf course maintenance and is forcing changes in chemical use and the treatment of wastewater. It is important for the golf course manager to be aware of this legislation as liability can lie with the individual as well as the club.

An unplanned ad hoc response to legislation can be expensive for the golf club, whereas knowledge of upcoming legislation allows the club to plan for future legislative changes and to implement change over a longer time period. Legislative change can also be predicted before it reaches parliament. Developing best practice ahead of legislation means that golf clubs can be prepared for legislative changes that would fundamentally affect their operations and allow them to establish long-term change.

This talk gives an overview of current and upcoming legislation affecting golf course management and discusses areas that are likely to be targeted by future legislation.

BIGGA/GCMA SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This seminar will give an overview of the SMS and show delegates how easy the system is to use. At the core of the SMS are Risk Assessments, Risk Profiles and a Hazard File. Using a mixture of text, video, documents and hyperlinks to illustrate its message the SMS is a powerful resource that both BIGGA and the GCMA hope will be adopted by clubs to standardise Health and Safety throughout golf.

COMPOST TEAS FOR CHAMPIONSHIP GREENS - IMPROVE PLAYING SURFACES AND CUT CHEMICAL INPUTS

Many top championship courses use compost teas as part of their management plan to reduce disease and poa annua and increase fine grasses while substantially cutting back on chemical and fertiliser inputs. Understand how this new technology can help you meet your improvement targets for greens, tees and fairways.

DROUGHT, DRAINAGE AND CONSERVATION

Contrasting the summer drought of 2006 and the flooding of 2007, David Green will examine the role of aeration and how it can help the Turf Manager cope with these two opposites. He will then look at conservation of water in the soil, methods to improve water retention without waterlogging, rainfall replacement and just how much water is needed to maintain healthy turf and trees.

ENGLISH GOLF UNION/GCMA



The Continuing Development Seminars are presented in association with the English Golf Union and the Golf Club Managers' Association.

This day long conference provides an opportunity for delegates to bring themselves up to date with the calculations which apply to providing club members with probably their most important golfing yardstick, their Handicap, how the EGU Course Policy Document can be adapted to suit your situation. The life expectancy of golf course components explains that all things have a lifespan and it is important to recognise

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this. Footpaths, Teeing Grounds and even Greens have to be refurbished or renewed at some stage.

The development of training and education particularly since the launch of the new membership structure in March 2007 will be looked at, focusing on the benefits to the Employer and the Golf Club as well as for the GCMA member. The GCMA initiative will also be showcasing Golf Club Managers' Employment Handbook. Continuing the theme of the National Conference, held at The Belfry from 5 to 7 November 2007, Keith Lloyd's guests will expand on a number of topics previously raised. Marketing the Golf Club in this increasingly competitive leisure arena will undoubtedly be a main focus.

GOLF AND TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT IN THE FUTURE. WHAT'S NEXT?

In most parts of the world, the game of golf is changing. Areas where this is seen include: Practice range tees; short game areas; structures for computer swing analysis; new tees to add length; tree removal work for better grass growing environments (trees are bad for grass); retrofitting internal drainage into old greens; topdressing programs for greens, tees and fairways; improved and more accurate golf course irrigation; introduction of new grasses and dealing with the affects of the weather extremes most parts of the world are now experiencing.

GOLF GREEN FERTILISATION IN OUR CHANGING CLIMATE - THE IMPLICATIONS ON LEACHING, PLANT HEALTH AND PATHOGEN ACTIVITY

Mark Hunt examines the relationship between fertilisation and the changing climatic conditions over the past 5-10 years. In particular the talk will cover two areas. The first section looks at the consequences of different types of fertilisation during mild, wet winter conditions in terms of plant health, disease encouragement and leaching of nutrients. The second section looks at fertilisation during hot periods of weather, plant stress and pathogen activity, in particular nematodes.

MASTER GREENKEEPER CERTIFICATE WORKSHOP

Discover how you can become one of tomorrow's Master Greenkeepers at this half-day workshop. The workshop will provide delegates with an in-depth understanding of the standards and expectations of both the golf course inspection and the examination stages of the Master Greenkeeper Certificate. It will offer helpful tips and hints and will give delegates the opportunity to ask questions and discuss each of the stages in detail. This workshop is a must for all future Master Greenkeepers.

NOISE AND VIBRATION MANAGEMENT – A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO LEGISLATION, RESPONSIBILITIES AND MANAGING EXPOSURE

This seminar will give practical guidance on the issue of vibration and noise management with reference to the BIGGA Midlands Section 'Vibration and Noise Workshop' where industry experts gathered to discuss how to use information and structure risk assessments and monitoring and control methods. Noise and vibration tests were carried out on hand operated and ride-on equipment in the working environment of a golf course. Data was then compared to manufacturer's values and advice offered on control measures, exposure limits and compiling records.

PREPARING FOR THE BARCLAYS SCOTTISH OPEN

This seminar will examine the planning that goes into presenting the Barclays Scottish Open that is held at Loch Lomond Golf Club. Looking at the history of the tournament, the preparations, course set up, infrastructure, contractor management and post tournament care.

THE R&A CONFERENCE, MOVING TOWARD GREATER SUSTAINABILITY – A PROGRESS REPORT

The R&A Golf Course Committee held its first meeting in St Andrews in May 2002. Its main objective is to promote sustainable course development and management through the implementation of best

practice. The launch of the bestcourseforgolf.org website in February 2004 has provided a focus for The R&A and a number of projects have been established to support the site.

This day long conference provides an opportunity for The R&A to outline the progress made toward its goal and provide an update on priority projects, with well qualified speakers introducing a wide range of associated issues for discussion.

THE WAY GOLF BEGAN

Is it possible to create a modern day golf course working entirely with the existing vegetation and landforms?

This seminar will deal with the issue from concept to reality and the processes of golf course construction within the constraints of SSSI legislation.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR TOURNAMENT PREPARATION

Starting to feel like you are in the hot seat? It must be tournament time...time to deliver extraordinary (and stressful) turf conditions. This seminar will focus on mower preparation and its relevance to tournament play. There are several areas that will surprise and delight turf managers who are faced with the daunting task of keeping up with the ever increasing demands for tournament play. Discover the relationship between mower preparation and superb playing conditions. Specifically, increased green speed, maintained quality and consistency, resilience and resistance to accumulated stress and overall turf appearance. Share in the lesser known tips and tricks used by leading golf courses around the world during preparation for their own major tournaments.

HARROGATE WEEK ONLINE

Five halls packed with exhibitors representing every element of the fine turf industry should ensure plenty of assistance with those difficult purchasing decisions during the week, however, should you wish to do some swatting before the event, the Harrogate Week website is a valuable source of information. It is divided into easily accessible parts designed to enable every user to get the most from the site.

Enter www.harrogateweek.org.uk into your browser to be greeted with our home page. Click on the large arrow on the home page to enter the virtual exhibition halls. Here you will find the layout of the stands, information on who is exhibiting in each stand space, their stand number and a link onto the exhibitor's website.



The Visitor page is full of practical information to help make your journey to Harrogate, along with your stay during Harrogate Week, a pleasurable experience.

The Exhibitors page offers a Really Useful Product Guide that allows you to locate the suppliers of the many products and services on display during Harrogate Week. Search for the product or service online and visit the exhibitor's stand to see the item and talk to the supplier.

There's a lot more to the website. Have a good look around and if you like what you see, help your friends and colleagues to get a slice of the action too by encouraging them to visit the Harrogate Week website which is available for all to view.

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A modern greens mower needs to match an excellent quality of cut with ease of operation. Although it is ride-on mowers that get the 'new' model attention, pedestrian machines have also developed, the latest designs having some interesting developments.

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL

By James de Havilland

It is often only when you get the chance to operate machines of different generations that some of the finer detail improvements on newer kit show up. Of course there are developments that have helped greens mowers become easier to set up and optimise for a really good finish, but when it comes to actually working the mower, it is the controls that are often the most overlooked advance.

Ride-on greens mower evolution has, if you take a while to think about it, been pretty rapid. From the earliest machines that first started to find their way into the UK in the 1970s, they have changed a good deal. Think of the Toro Greensmaster III imported by Flymo in 1970, the Ransomes-Hahn Tournament Triplex of 1972 or even the model that started 'the modern' ride-on trend, the Jacobsen greens ride-on of 1968.

These early machines now seem pretty dated, but in terms of controls the models that followed them soon settled into a pattern that can see a 20 year old machine not feel as dated as many would think. But take a pedestrian model from even the 1950s and there are those who would perhaps suggest these machines are actually not that bad to operate. In fact, the lack of an OPC, operator presence control, is something many would like, even if the prospect of dripping petrol taps and oil leaks are something most would prefer to leave in the past.

The need for an OPC system has, of course, altered the control systems of the modern pedestrian greens mower. Some early OPC systems were, to put it politely, a bit awkward, with operators often working out a way in which to either tie up the control to prevent the engine stopping during

a tight manoeuvre or working out how to disable the system.

Fortunately, poor OPC design has largely been addressed on modern pedestrian mowers, but it is interesting to note that pedestrian controls continue to exercise the minds of mower designers. Take the latest Jacobsen Eclipse 122 'hybrid electric' greens mower as an example.

Fitted with InCommand, first seen on the 'conventional' Jacobsen PGM22 and Greens King 522/526 models, this control system is used in the same way as before but in this instance it operates the electric motors powering the Eclipse's roller and cylinder. The operator pushes the OPC control up to the mower handle to engage drive, with the InCommand 'T' bar enabling the mowing speed to be adjusted by simply tilting it (See photo caption). Where it all gets a bit more advanced on the Eclipse is with the extra degree of control afforded by using electric traction and cylinder drive motors. The speeds of both can be independently adjusted to allow the cuts per metre to be finely set to achieve the desired finish. The speeds selected for the roller and cylinder show up on an LCD screen on the control, enabling these to be re-set to suit a change in mowing to suit either difference greens or to allow mowing to be adjusted between everyday and tournament play.



The electric direct-drive cylinder motor on the Jacobsen Eclipse 122 offers wider setting flexibility than a mechanical driven system



A second electric motor on the Eclipse 122 drives the rear roller. Its speed can be easily varied



Jacobsen Eclipse 122 users will immediately notice the two electric motors, one for driving the cutting unit and the other for the rear roller. These are electronically operated by the InCommand system, and do away with mechanical control. Maintenance is virtually eliminated.

Both electric motors on the Eclipse are powered by a 48 volt generator. This is driven in one of two ways. Either via drop-in battery pack or as a petrol-electric 'hybrid', a 4.6hp Honda petrol engine delivering the power to drive the generator.

As there is no mechanically controlled drive 'clutch' on the Eclipse, Ransomes Jacobsen can safely claim the mower will have reduced maintenance needs. There are no cables to adjust and, because the clutches have been replaced with electric motors, clutch and cable wear and tear is eliminated. It is almost impossible for the operator to be 'ham fisted' when it comes to engaging drive too, a point that will also help the quality of work.



It may look familiar, but the latest C series greens mowers from John Deere benefit from some key changes over the existing B models. Note the clutter free control system

Toro and John Deere are also evolving their mowers. Take the recently introduced John Deere 180C, 220C and 260C models. These have been made lighter and are now claimed by the company to be among the lightest walk-behind greens mowers currently available. Why is this of relevance? After all, a relatively 'heavy' pedestrian machine has long been held to offer many advantages. The answer is more that these models will still be heavy enough to do their job, but be lighter to manoeuvre. Hand mowing a green can start to be pretty tiring is the mower used has to be manhandled to get it to turn as desired.

Powered by the latest 4hp Honda petrol engine, the new 'C' series Deere mowers are based upon the proven B and are designed to meet the latest emissions and environmental regulations. Featuring true cutting widths of 18, 22 and 26in (46, 56 and 66cm) respectively, the reduced weight C Series are claimed to allow the operator to more easily follow cut lines and overlap with more accuracy.

The OPC system features a quick release mechanism to disengage traction. Details like this will have a great influence upon the mower an operator would choose to do the job. Deere also suggests the new C series now offer lower noise and vibration levels, the loop-style handlebar offering a range of adjustments to suit the personal preferences of most operators.



Familiar 'dead man' loop under D-handle has to be eased to the left and pulled up to engage the mower....



... the thumb operate lateral control having '+' and '-' to the left and right to increase or decrease mowing speed.

BIGGA'S 2008 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

By Scott MacCallum

There can be no more fitting a duo to receive BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Awards. Walter Woods BEM and Jack McMillan MBE were BIGGA's first two Chairmen and their careers have followed similar routes to the top. Both arrived in greenkeeping from other routes – Walter from coal mining and golf and Jack from farming but both found their vocations immediately. Both moved south to better themselves and although Walter moved back to St Andrews both families have remained friends for years.

There can be no better known family within the worldwide greenkeeping fraternity than the McMillans.

Billy is the current BIGGA National Chairman and Course Manager at Tyrrell's Wood GC; Ian is a former winner of the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping and Course Manager at Walton Heath GC; Cameron is Course Manager at the new and prestigious Queenwood GC and Bobby is at Hendon GC while mother, Rita, possesses agronomic knowledge that could put a Master Greenkeeper to shame.

But Daddy of them all is Jack, a man who has been at the centre of greenkeeping since 1946, rising to Course Manager at the world famous Sunningdale Golf Club and who, well into his 70s, still acts as a consult for the European Tour and his own portfolio of clubs.

Jack was BIGGA's second Chairman, following on from Walter Woods, and it is therefore fitting that both should be awarded BIGGA's Lifetime Achievement Award in the same year, becoming the first greenkeepers to receive the accolade.

"I thought it was a lovely tribute to two old men," said Jack, as we sat in his home in Camberley, Surrey.

"I've had a lot of nice things but for this to come from your peers and your Association is as nice as you get."

Among those nice things is an MBE, and the picture of him being presented with it by the Queen sits among the vast array of photographs and pictures that adorn the house. Rita keeps a scrapbook which includes the letter from John Major at 10 Downing Street informing of the impending award, in 1993.

"Rita knew about it for six months before I did," said Jack, still sounding mildly miffed.

"If someone had told me back in 1946 that I'd receive the MBE for services to the golf course industry I'd never have believed it," said Jack, who suspects that BIGGA's first President Viscount Whitelaw may have been behind his nomination.

"He and I served in the same regiment, the Scots Guards, which may have had something to do with it, as he was fond of Walter and I."

Jack's route into greenkeeping didn't come through golf but from

agriculture. During the war effort, as a small boy, he worked on a farm near his home in Newton Mearns, near Glasgow.

"I loved horses and was quite happy working on the farm but when my father was demobbed he wanted me to stay on at school and certainly didn't want me in agriculture as there wasn't money or a future in it. But I was a strong willed boy and had made up my mind that I was leaving school and we finally agreed that I could leave as long as I went to night school."

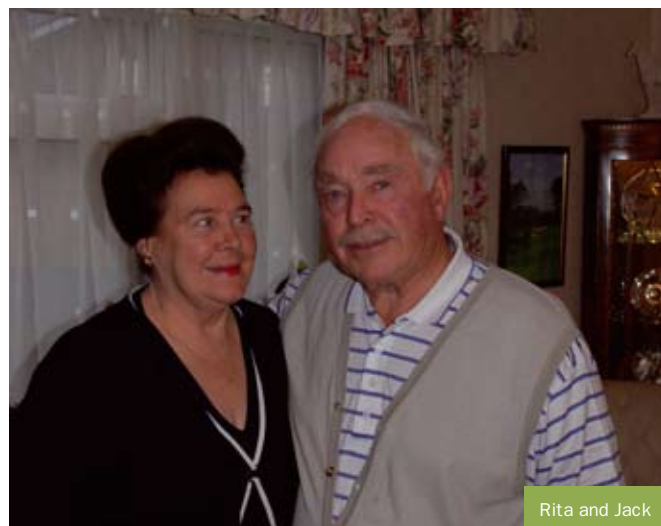
The greenkeeping link came when one of Jack's neighbours was called up for National Service and Jack was asked to replace him as a greenkeeper at East Renfrewshire Golf Club, working under Tom Dobson, who had won the Scottish Amateur Championship at Muirfield in 1925 and who was Pro/Greenkeeper at the club.

"That first year 1946-47 was one of the severest winters I've ever known, we were under snow for four months, but, like a lot of the kids who worked on farms, we were used to hard work and had an affinity with the land, I found that I was comfortable with that and loved the golf course."

When he was old enough Jack went into National Service himself and signed on for an additional three years – he was a Sergeant and a PT Instructor.

On returning to civilian life he didn't go straight back into golf but took a job cutting wood in Ayrshire for three years before taking a job at Elderslie Golf Club, near Paisley.

It was then that he became more involved with the design and construction side of the job as two holes which had been extended where causing problems.



Rita and Jack



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"The 15th and 16th holes were such that two many balls from the 15th were being cut onto the railway line which ran alongside the hole so I asked Tom Dobson to take a look and he suggested reversing them so they were played clockwise to keep the balls in the property.

"There were no machines so there was a great deal of drudgery in the work involved and we used the knowledge that we had at the time but we made the course changes.

The Elderslie Centenary Book says that the only man who wasn't worried was the man who was doing the work. We also prepared the course for the first two Elderslie Trophies which is one of the main Scottish amateur events on the circuit, before I applied for and got the job of Head Greenkeeper at Cardross GC for £16 a week."

Again Jack and his team made their mark on the course extending three short holes the 11th, 12th and 13th into a par-3, a par-4 and a par-5. "We started in the autumn of 1964 and we were open for play in May '65 – two men, three boys, wheel barrows and manual work. It was a dreadful wet winter and we had a long way to move the shaping material," he recalled, adding that those holes are still played the same way today. While at Cardross Jack played in the first ever Ransomes Scotland-England match at Woodbridge GC.

"I'm delighted to tell you that Scotland won and that Walter Woods played for England!"

It was while on the trip that he became aware that greenkeepers were better off in England both financially and had greater resources to do the job.

"It was a thought to uproot six children and move south but I applied for a job at Bush Hill Park GC, in North London, and moved south."

Five years later they moved to Effingham GC.

"I liked Effingham. It was a lovely downland course, free draining and a great medium for a golf course as the chalk retained water and the capillary properties pulled water out in a drought. Fescue thrives on it."

But the opportunity of working at Sunningdale, one of the top golf clubs in the world cropped up and Jack applied. Hugh McGilvary was the Head Greenkeeper and was suffering from arthritis and felt he needed to move on.

"Hugh was a great friend of mine and I never thought he got enough credit for bringing the Associations together. He was a remarkable man and travelled to all the meetings in his own time and with his own money. "I'd played the courses in 1976 and thought they were two of the loveliest courses I'd ever seen. They were beautiful but the greens were like chewing gum.

"After I'd been interviewed and offered the job Keith Hammond, the Secretary, told me that when I'd left and the panel were discussing the candidates the Chairmen of Green said that he hadn't understood one word I'd said but that he thought I was the man for the job."

Jack remained at Sunningdale for 10 years and prepared the grand Old Course for a Walker Cup (in 1987) and a succession of European Opens, Brabazon Trophies and a Sunningdale Foursomes every year.

"Sunningdale was a joy to be there. It's a special place for everyone. The philosophy in those days was that presentation wasn't as important in those days as it is now. "What was all important was playing conditions tees, fairways greens. The objective was good firm tees, good firm fairways and good firm greens. Everything else was incidental."

"Sustainable golf doesn't need to damage the characteristics of the course. You want to make it visually attractive for the guys who want to play it. I personally think the problems are caused by preparing courses for Tour events. You can't blame young greenkeepers because TV cameras accentuate every flaw. Back then Walter and I were doing well but if you compared it to how well Carnoustie was prepared for The Open last year what we did doesn't come close. Things have moved on."

Jack took the courageous step in 1990, at the age of 59, of setting up his own consultancy.

"It was a big leap and I terrified myself. We had to find a home, take out a mortgage knowing that going into business for yourself that there are no guarantees. But working at Sunningdale does open doors and, although I hadn't started with any clients friends in the industry asked me to do work for them including former PGA Captain, Geoffrey Cousins, and Sky commentator and Sunningdale member, Bruce Critchley, who asked me to consult on a new Seve Ballesteros course in Provence.

He soon began a partnership with agronomist George Shields, forming McMillan Shields. Later, together with Walter, Jack worked for the European Tour, initially looking after five Tour venues each.

He has worked for the Tour ever since although just last year reduced his commitment, now looking after the UK based Qualifying School venues and Loch Lomond, where his close relationship with Ken Seims has worked extremely well. He also retains a small number of his longer standing clients.

However, you can't imagine Jack doing anything other than working as a man who has influenced greenkeeping in places including Sri Lanka Indonesia, France Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Russia.

His enthusiasm will never dull and he's kept bright by his own greenkeeping family and the extended greenkeeping family who are always made so welcome.

"The great thing is meeting young greenkeepers who have gone through the education system and seeing how talented they are in man management. My old management came from the Scots Guards. When you told someone to do something you expected it done and that's the wrong way to go about things."

He does still worry for the young Course Manager who is criticised by golfers who have no idea of the level of resource he has at his disposal.

"I still believe the three main constituents for running a golf course is staffing levels, equipment provision and a reasonable consumables budget. If these things are in place and the guys are capable of doing the job they can do the job."

Jack is extremely proud of his own family's achievements but also those of his extended family and he reckons over 40 of his former staff are now Course Managers. "When we're sitting at the family dinner golf courses will always come into the conversation, but also very proud of all the other young lads who are part of this family people like Jim Grainger, who is now at Ringwood in Manchester.

Of his fellow Lifetime Achievement Award winner Jack couldn't be more praiseworthy.

"I'm fond of him. He's good at what he does and he's a good friend. I don't know or a kinder person. Sometimes we'll agree to disagree. He's a cracker! I admire him for what he's achieved and it was a joy to be in the States when he got his Old Tom Morris Award.

Right at the end of the chat Jack said something which probably sums

up the greenkeeping industry better than anything.

“For me, I’m comfortable when I’m among greenkeepers.”

How well put.



There’s currently no more famous a name in golf than “Woods”.

Of course there’s Tiger, who has been the best player in the world for almost 10 years while greenkeeping’s own Woods – Walter, has been the best known face in the greenkeeping world for decades.

It’s therefore fitting that he, along with the head of the best known family in greenkeeping, should be the first greenkeepers to be recipients of BIGGA’s Lifetime Achievement Award – following in the illustrious footsteps of BIGGA President Sir Michael Bonallack OBE, who received the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

Walter is not unfamiliar with receiving awards. He holds the BEM, while he was awarded the Old Tom Morris Award by the GCSAA in 2002, joining such luminaries as Arnold Palmer, Bob Hope, Jack Nicklaus and President Gerald Ford.

“Winning the Old Tom Morris Award is the finest achievement I’ve ever had. I was so proud and humble, but the importance of getting an award from your own Greenkeepers’ Association means more to me than anything because it is coming from your peers – the people who you have been working with over the years,” he explained.

I’m so pleased to be receiving it at the same time as Jack as we have been good friends for over 30 years and he is someone I’ve always looked up to. He’s very knowledgeable and a great friend. Rita is a great woman and I’m proud of every one of the family,” said Walter, who revealed that he, Caroline, Jack and Rita will be enjoying a cruise together early next year.

Walter is quick to share much of the credit for his success, and that of the Association, the formation of which he played a big part, with fellow greenkeepers.

“I was lucky to be right man, in the right place at the right time when things occurred. Before BIGGA I was President of SIGGA and worked with some very enthusiastic men in the run up to the coming together of the three existing greenkeeping associations. People like Jimmy Kidd, Chris Kennedy, Alistair Connell, Cecil George and Jimmy Neilson - there are too many to name them all. SIGGA was a very go ahead Association,” he recalled.

The origins of BIGGA go back to the mid ‘80s when there were moves by the PGA to bring greenkeeping under its auspices.

“I remember a meeting with a fellow from the PGA who suggested that we might join with them. We all thought this might be quite good and were quite enthusiastic about it. But then something began niggling me. I wasn’t sure what it was, so I thought I’d speak with Michael Bonallack, then Secretary of the R&A.

“I mentioned it to him and he didn’t think it was the way to go as we would be losing control of our own destiny and losing all that we’d done in the long history of greenkeeping. He thought it would be better if we formed one Association out of EIGGA, BGGGA and SIGGA and said the R&A would put funding into a new Association.”

Walter then began travelling up and down the country meeting with representatives from the other Associations, including Bill Lawson, who was in the BGGGA and was very enthusiastic about it, and in Walter’s view, perhaps the biggest supporter of the lot.

With consultants paid for by the R&A guiding the three Associations’ representatives through the process at meetings in centrally-placed York the new Association – BIGGA - began to take shape.

“There were arguments and suspicions between Scotland and England and people with sentimental attachments to their own Association but ideas came out of the meetings.”

When it was all resolved and BIGGA came into being in 1987, Walter became the first Chairman and Jack the first Vice Chairman.

One of the early things they did was appoint an Executive Director and the interview panel was most impressed by the quite confidence and common sense displayed by Neil Thomas, who was to lead the Association until his untimely death in early 2004.

“Looking back 20 years on the progress that has been made has been unbelievable. I was a Board member for a lot of years and notice the improvements more than most people,” said Walter, who still recalls the many, many train journeys he has made over the years to and from York and Leuchars, near St Andrews.

“It was sometimes five or six time a year, more at the beginning, and I started to know every crack in the railway line.”

All this time Walter was still in charge of the most famous golfing land in the world St Andrews Links where he was the Links Superintendent.

“I don’t think if it was today, and I was in Gordon Moir’s position, I would have been able to do it. I used up all my holidays working for BIGGA and was putting in extra time on the course at weekends but it’s a much harder job now than when I was working there.”

A lot of water had passed under the bridge prior to Walter’s arrival in St

Andrews and what had gone before was very much the making of the man who prepared The Old Course for four Opens – in '78, '84, '90 and '95 – and countless other top tournaments.

Surprisingly Walter didn't always want to be a greenkeeper. In fact he started out by working in a woollen mill and a grocers before working on the pit head of a coal mine.

"That's where fate comes in as I remember the Pit Manager, a Mr Gold, knowing that I was a keen golfer, saying to me that the President of Tillicoultry Golf Club, a Mr Stevenson, a coal merchant, had mentioned that the club was short of a greenkeeper and that if I was willing I could work there in the summer and if I didn't like it my job would be kept open for me at the pit," recalled Walter, whose golfing prowess has seen him play county golf both north and south of the border.

"I took the job and immediately knew that I'd found my niche. I knew greenkeeping was the job for me.."

Walter revelled in the producing a golf course, making it look good and having people tell him it looked good.

"You must remember there were no powered mowers in the early days and you didn't apply much fertiliser because if you did you had to cut it much more," said Walter, who has his very first push mower from Tillicoultry. It's still used on a lawn which looks immaculate.

Tillicoultry provided him with a good basic apprenticeship giving him a chance to pick up all the skills and before long he was asked by a golfer friend to take over at Braehead GC, near Alloa.

"I was Professional/Head Greenkeeper on £18 a week, although it was mainly greenkeeping, and Caroline looked after the bar. Together with our three kids, we lived above the bar and locker room."

Walter worked his socks off, he'd never been fitter, extending the course to 18 holes with the help of volunteers and it began to improve, to the extent that they were taking £100 a week in green fees and the same over the bar. But the extra work involved in maintaining 18 holes wasn't reflected in his pay packet and when he saw a job advertised in Golf Illustrated at Stanton-on-the-Wolds GC, near Nottingham, he applied and was successful.

"We moved into a modern semi-detached house and I thought we were in heaven. It was a parkland course with plenty of grass and was easy to look after – and I had five of a staff! Can you imagine that? It was unbelievable. Having five men made greenkeeping very simple but the guys didn't know what had hit them working with a guy who had been used to working on his own."

To Walter, Stanton-on-the-Wolds was a brilliant golf club but it wasn't long before his head was turned by another.

"Playing county golf I came across Hollinwell and I'd not seen a course like that in my life. I thought to myself if the job ever came up I'd apply for it. As fate would have it the greenkeeper retired not long after. I applied for it and got it.

"This was perfect for me as I was looking after one of the most beautiful golf courses in the whole of Europe, and one of the finest clubs in the world, working for some of the loveliest people with a select membership of 300. If I needed anything I just put it on paper and I'd get it.

"Ransomes triplexes were coming in but people were suspicious of them because they thought being able to cut greens in four or five hours would cost jobs. I thought the opposite. If I could get the job done quicker I could get the team onto other jobs and make the course better."

During his time south of the border Walter had the time to become more involved in education – attending BGGGA courses, visiting Bingley and reading books – and this passion for education has stayed with him ever since, whether it be his own personal education or forging a path for greenkeeper education as a whole.

"I started writing basic reports about how many men it took to do certain jobs and how long they took, fertiliser information and time sheets and I began to feel more professional."

When the job at St Andrews came up Walter never for a moment thought he'd get it but he was interviewed and was taken in by the smell of golfing history when he walked round.

What did strike him however was that none of the professionalism of Stanton-on-the-Wolds or Hollinwell was in evidence.

"It was just chaotic – divots everywhere and not much organisation – and while I thought I could handle the golf courses I wasn't sure what else would confront me.

"I was asked back for a second interview which was in the R&A Clubhouse and I was taken into a big room with a long table with one big chair at the end and four fellows down each side. My first thought was that at least I was near the door. It frightened the wits out of me.

"I told them that while the greens and tees were in superb condition I didn't think it was terribly well presented and a bit chaotic. I got the impression they knew that."

A week later he was called to say he'd got the job, and Walter's reaction?

"I immediately wished I'd never applied! I knew I'd be leaving Hollinwell to take on something I wasn't sure I could handle, but I came up to St Andrews and the rest is history."

He enjoyed his 21 years at St Andrews, meeting famous people like Jack Nicklaus and President Ronald Reagan among others and being involved in bringing St Andrews up to spec with improved practice facilities, irrigation systems, new maintenance facilities, the re-designed Jubilee course.

But he is quick to say that the courses have never been better than they are now.

He also found time to be Chairman of Elmwood Colleges Advisory Committee and helped shape the greenkeeping curriculum across Scotland, liaising with City and Guilds and the modern variations.

"You get great satisfaction in seeing improvements in young greenkeepers and I'm very proud to have pushed the Association and the education system forward. My contribution would be very small but I was there to kick start it at the beginning.

"I've been away from the Board for a year now and it's only when you've been away that you realise how much the Association has progressed. It will only get better as time goes on and I'm proud as blazes of the thing."

Walter and Jack are two of the guests on Have We Got Views for You Harrogate Week's newest attraction on Monday January 21st in the Majestic Hotel at 7pm for 7.30pm. Make sure you are there to hear from the legendary pair along with Stan Zontek from the USGA; Ken Siems MG CGCS and Andy Campbell MG CGCS. Anyone with a question can email it in advance to education@bigga.co.uk



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The competition will be held on the first two days of the exhibition (22-23 January) and the prize-winner will be announced at 4.45pm on the Wednesday.



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* Only bona fida, practicing greenkeepers, groundsmen, landscapers and local authority amenity employees will be eligible to enter.



CHILD PROTECTION

By Kirstie Jennings

In recent years, child protection has been one of the most discussed issues in sport, and golf has not been different. But why has this issue become the 'hot topic' and why do golf clubs and those within them need to do anything different? After all, we have been successfully looking after children within our clubs for years.

There are several aspects to that answer, but the first part is simply that sport is a place where children can be found, and where there are children, there are risks to their welfare. According to the NSPCC, more than eight million children participate in sport each week, which shows the importance of sport in children's lives. Sport, and membership of a club, can play an important role in the lives of children, helping them to develop social and life skills, as well as keeping them active. It should be a positive experience for all children, but for some there is the possibility that they can be at risk of abuse, or suffer the consequences of poor practice simply from a lack of planning or awareness on the part of adults.

Evidence shows that some adults use sport to gain access to children for their own inappropriate purposes; children have been physically or emotionally punished for poor performances on the course by parents with a strong desire for their child to achieve; and the behaviour of children even adults at the club has tipped over into unacceptable bullying.

So why do we need to do anything different? The answer is that we have a legal responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children that take part in our sport, as well as a moral obligation. The government has clearly set out the areas it thinks that those "that offer services for, or work with, children must have" addressed in order to meet their legal responsibility. Golf clubs must consider the way they cater for children and build in good practice and procedures to make sure that the risks to children are minimised as far as is reasonably possible. Each and every member of staff and volunteer within the golf club has a part to play in making this happen.

Sport England are keen to support the government in their aims and has asked that all sports work towards and achieve the Standards for Safeguarding Children in Sport. Golf has achieved the first two levels, and is awaiting the outcome of its submission against the Intermediate Level of the Standards.

Golf has had a number of child protection cases that have been managed

by the governing bodies and in some cases the police or social services, some of these cases have involved greenkeepers. The number of cases is not alarming, and not out of proportion with other sports, or the number of young people and adults within golf, but nevertheless, they have happened and require that we address the issues involved in the cases and improve our procedures as a result.

Golf has to tackle these issues as a sport- it is not just a case of dealing with our own issues within our own club, but rather requires us working together to make sure that all children, no matter where they are, have a positive experience, and that our problem is not passed on to another club, elsewhere. The national governing bodies in golf recognised the benefits of working together for both themselves and the children in our sport some years ago, when they formed the Children in Golf Strategy Group (CiG), initially to develop a child protection policy. The group consists of major national governing bodies of golf across Great Britain and Ireland, and is supported by the R&A and the Child Protection in Sport Unit of the NSPCC, which is at the forefront of safeguarding within sport.

A child protection policy was written and distributed to golf clubs, but it soon became apparent that this alone was not going to change practice within golf clubs. Junior Organisers and Secretary Managers were asking for guidance on the practical implementation of the policy. The real issue was what a golf volunteer, coach or member of the golf club staff did at the Saturday afternoon coaching session, or during the summer holidays when the club was full of young people playing golf all day, and not writing a policy that clubs agreed to, but put on a shelf and forgot about. The CiG Resource Pack was produced, which provides advice and information that coaches, clubs and volunteers can follow and adapt to suit their own needs. We are close now to the release of the revised version "Guidelines for Safeguarding Children in Golf" early in 2008.

Club should now request Criminal Records Bureau disclosures for those working with children, whether they are volunteers or members of staff. Staff and volunteers should attend child protection workshops to help them better understand the issues involved, and procedures should be drafted by the club to help them address children's needs.

But safeguarding is not just about protecting the children within golf, but also about equipping the adults working with them to better prepare

themselves for the challenge and therefore to better protect themselves against misunderstanding and false allegations. If we don't help the volunteers and staff working with children, then they will be less likely to feel able to come forward and volunteer, and that can't be of benefit to the children or the future of our sport.

It is easy to see how important the issue of safeguarding is to PGA professional coaches, junior organisers, or Secretary Managers, and how they must introduce procedures and exercise good practice, but where do greenkeepers fit in? What relevance does this have for them?

The answer depends on the greenkeeper's role within the club to some extent. In some cases, greenkeepers will have minimal contact with children, but in others it will be more significant, but in all cases, an understanding of the issues involved in safeguarding will be beneficial.

It is important that greenkeepers understand the policies and procedures of the golf club where they are working, so that they know the context that the club is operating within. The club may have a code of practice relevant to working with children, that all within the club should have read and understood - it will provide guidance on the type of behaviour that is considered appropriate when around children. Greenkeepers will come across young people during the course of their work, and should follow the code of practice. This is important when junior members spend time working alongside greenkeepers, for example, on work experience, or where they are "helping out" during the holidays.



It is possible that some clubs will require that greenkeepers obtain a Criminal records Bureau disclosure as part of their work, due to the nature of their contact with children. The club is only doing what it is required to legally in order to ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so, and should be supported in these efforts. Working within a golf club provides all staff with access to children, and it is essential that we all recognise the responsibilities and obligations that this brings with it. Golf is a great sport, where children can learn so much about life, mix with different age groups, and develop skills that will benefit them throughout their life, quite apart from experience the joy of taking part. Lets make sure that we all contribute in a positive way.

The CiG Resource Pack can be found at www.childreningolf.org. If you have any queries about the issue of safeguarding, or have any concerns, please contact the NSPCC Golf Development Officer on 07974 916699, or the England Golf Compliance Officer on 07949 111924.

Kirstie Jennings is Compliance Officer & Development Manager for the English Ladies Golf Association www.englishgolfunion.org www.englishladiesgolf.org



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www.harrogateweek.org.uk





WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?



Name: Martin Ward
Company: Symbio
Position: Managing Director

How long have you been in the industry?
"18 years."

How did you get into it?

"I started Symbio with my brother David (the technical brains behind the company) to take new biotech research from the laboratory to the market place. Initially we developed biotech solutions to clean contaminated soil and polluted water. At the time golf greens were mostly managed with high inorganic chemical inputs which contaminated the soil, we saw a market demand for re establishing natural growth processes in sterile golf greens, initial product trials to reduce fertiliser use were successful and we have not looked back."

What other jobs have you done?

"Farm hand and international banking specialising in project and new technology finance and capital markets working in China, S. Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines and Scandinavia."

What do you like about your current job?

"Developing new environmentally friendly solutions to improve conditions and helping our customers develop better playing surfaces using fewer chemicals. In sports turf management we were the first company to introduce biological thatch reduction, black layer treatment,

mycorrhizal inoculants, seedcoats and fertilisers."

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?

"Surprisingly few. The biggest two are the realisation by a growing number of clubs that to be successful in a competitive market the Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager must be an integral part of the core management team, and the fact that natural growth processes provide better playing surfaces than flooding the grass with chemicals."

What do you like to do in your spare time?

"Rugby (coaching and admin), skiing and organic gardening. The best times are when my children return from their studies and work commitments and the family is together."

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

"Hopefully Symbio will be a world wide company by then so I could be anywhere."

Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?

"Some of our customers have been with us from the first years. We could not have made it without their continued support and advice."

What do you consider to be your lucky number? "4."

Pick a number "29"

Martin has picked John Nicholson of John Nicholson Associates

WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?



Hobbies

Here's something you didn't know about me...



Name: Rachael Duffy
Hobby: Fitness Training
Occupation: Learning & Development Administrator at BIGGA HQ

How and when did you get into fitness training?

"I first got into fitness training just as a way of keeping fit and looking after myself. I then decided to investigate becoming a qualified teacher with the help of my local gym. I finally put myself on a course and took my exams when I was eight months pregnant with my daughter, 14 years ago. My love for the industry has meant I have continued to teach three classes a week, two at Aldwark Manor Spa and one at the local community centre in Easingwold."

What is it about fitness that appeals to you?

"Keeping fit is a huge part of my life. By doing my own personal training I'm challenging myself everyday to get fitter and reach new targets - One of which is running. I decided, last October after having a knee operation, I wanted to do something new and help others at the same time. So I devised a training programme and started training with my friend Angela with an aim of completing The Great North Run in September. Our training included running two 10k's, the Jane Tomlinson run and the Abbey Dash both held in Leeds, with swimming and gym sessions. We finally completed The Great North Run in 2 hours 20 minutes - Not bad for the first attempt, defiantly something we can improve on for next year! Between us we raised over a £1000 for our chosen charities, MIND and RNIB.

"The sense of achievement finishing one of the largest half marathons in the world over 50,000 runners of all ages, sizes and disabilities is just fantastic. I remember saying to Angela it's got to be the big one next year "The London Marathon", the buzz lasts for days.

"Fitness is a way of meeting other people and helping them reach their goals. One of the important things in life is your health by doing regular exercise can help you enjoy life to the full."

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Retired Links Superintendent,
St Andrews Links and recipient
the Old Tom Morris Award

Andy Campbell
MG CGCS
General Manager,
The Dukes and
Old Course Hotel
Landscape,
St Andrews



Ken Siems
MG CGCS
Director of Golf,
Loch Lomond
Golf Club



Stanley J Zontek
Certified Professional
Agronomist and Director,
Mid Atlantic Region,
United States
Golf Association



Jack McMillan MBE
European Tour Consultant
and retired
Head Greenkeeper,
Sunningdale Golf Club

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The Majestic Hotel
Monday 21 January 2008
7.00pm for 7.30pm





GETTING WHAT YOU WANT, NO SORRY 'NEED'

By Kevin Munt

The Rolling Stones said it best 'You Can't Always Get What You Want...But if you try sometimes, well you just might find, you get what you need.'

Having been on both sides of the golf club managerial fence, I thought I would give you my take on how to get what you 'need' from the bosses at your club.

Firstly, a little secret that you should be aware of, most bosses at some time or another think that their employees are messing up and not telling anyone, or worse still they just aren't aware that they have a problem. To check this a boss will pick an element of your operation, which may seem random to you, and ask minutia questions about it. If you are hesitant and evasive then, rightly or wrongly, there is a fair chance this boss is going to assume that you have not got a grip on your work.

So now you know this 'secret' your job should be to make sure you can demonstrate that you know what you are doing at all times. It is called reassuring him/her, and the best way to do this is by keeping them in the 'loop'. Keeping your boss in the loop on a regular basis should be one of your priority tasks.

THINK YOU'RE THE BOSS

Prepare your request from the boss's perspective. What will matter to him/her? Whether it is your total annual budget or simply a request for time off think, 'what is your boss's agenda?' Do they have pressures they need relief from, will your request help or exacerbate this pressure?

How often, as a child, did you ask your parents for something, justifying your request with "because everyone else has one", just how successful

were you with that tactic? Avoid the 'me too' approach and make sure you have an angle that will at least get you a fair hearing.

WHO NEEDS IT?

We all know that you need a deep soil aeration machine, its bl**dy obvious isn't it!

"What you mean that great lump that you haul over the greens bashing huge holes in them and making them bumpy!"

Now, you know you need it, you know the golf course needs it, but do your members think they need it? Also which of the above views is your boss going to take?

Think all the scenarios through, be very well prepared, and make a very strong case by doing your homework, have all the negatives aspects covered before you even consider making the request.
Preparing the ground

It does amaze me that Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, as people who spend most of their lives preparing the ground so that they get the best possible result, often fail to do this when it comes to the business side of their jobs.

The most time wasting thing you can do is to walk into the boss's office under prepared. This means you must have prepared a positive response to every negative comment and have watertight figures backing up those positives. If you think that a wonder machine is going to get your course open for an additional five days in the winter, generating an additional £2,500 in total spend at the club, say so. Nail your colours

to the mast and have the courage of you convictions, if you don't it will be seen that you really don't 'need' it!

Good bosses appreciate individuals who are serious about what they do, and are willing to take the time to fully understand well conceived proposals.

BE ON A MISSION

All good organisations have a 'Mission Statement', or the phrase I prefer 'A Sense of Common Purpose' - this will be based on your club or company's strategic objectives. If your club doesn't have one hopefully you will be working to a 'Course Management Policy'. (If you have none of these do something about it, you will be seen as being at the head of management thinking).

Ensure that you link your proposals to these club/company initiatives and objectives. Define where your request(s) fit in, how they impact on both improvements and profits, and highlight the risks of not giving you what you need.

COURSE MANAGERS ARE SALESMEN

Selling! Oh yes you are in sales territory now and you have got to be much better than the company rep who has got a vested interest in you getting this proposition through. In sales there is a piece of jargon called a 'Value Proposition'. A value proposition is a short statement that clearly communicates the benefits a potential customer/client gets by using your product, service or idea.

"Why should we buy this specific product or idea?" asks your manager, your value proposition should answer this question in a compelling way. The aim is to help them see the specific value of your request and in doing so, you will grab their attention so that they say, "Yes this is right for the club and I am going to support it".

Also ask yourself what am I going to do if the answer is no. You may well be asked what the alternatives are, make sure that you have creative ways in which to get what you and your club requires.

APPROVED

Congratulations you have done it. The Board of Management has approved your request for a budget matching that of The Wentworth Club. You can go and get your course into tournament condition all year round! As you do, don't forget the following:

- Credibility. Follow through on actions and deliver what you said you were going to.
- Reporting. Remember to keep the boss 'in the loop' if you want to be well received in the future.
- Results. Keep a track of progress and quantify results, this will aid the success of future 'need' requests.

Remember bosses need people who have unique expertise. You don't have to be an expert in every element of your job, but you are employed for your specific area of knowledge. Believe it or not your boss values this, make sure you are able to articulate this expertise with confidence 'and you just might find, you get what you need'.

AUTHOR

Kevin Munt is Principle Consultant of KMgc, a management consultancy specialising in the Golf Club operational development.

Kevin has been the Course Manager at The Wentworth Club, Royal Dornmoch GC and Hankley Common GC and was the Operations Manager of the Buckinghamshire GC.





Immingham GC

PREPARING FOR A RAINY DAY

Scott MacCallum meets two head men who had to cope with an exceptional situation last summer

There you are preparing for one of the biggest events in the club's calendar and the weather turns against you. Not fine, but I'm sure it's a situation most of you have had to deal with at some time or other. However, what faced Rob Welford, of Cleethorpes GC, and Steve Beverly, of Immingham GC, last June, is far removed from anything all but an unlucky handful of you will have ever encountered.

Let's face it how many of you have taken out a boat and rowed along the very fairways on which you'd normally be looking for a nice tight lie in June?

The golf clubs' location and the month will perhaps have given some of you a clue but Rob and Steve were in the middle of the horrendous flooding which engulfed much of the Humberside area in the height of last summer and from which some unlucky residents have still not recovered. While the area hit the national news the flooding also arrived just a few days before the clubs hosted a pro-am and Club Championship respectively.

June was, indeed, a bizarre month with two separate deluges each of which on its own would have created turmoil on any golf course at any point in the year but in June was all the more remarkable and high quality evidence that our climate is undergoing quite an upheaval.

"We had 245 mil of rain in June against an average of the last five years of around 60. The year before in the drought we only had 11 mil so we went from thinking about putting down wetting agents, and relieving stress, to the absolute opposite. Our course was closed for two days following torrential rain on the 15th of the month and then we followed to weather forecast and could see another load of bad weather coming," said Rob.

Steve's situation was even worse.

"We had 331 mil of rain in June, that's 13 inches, while we had 126 mil on the 25th alone – five inches. We knew there was going to be a lot of rain but when the forecasters say that you don't expect that much. You maybe expect about an inch," said Steve, who recalled that it started pouring at 9pm on the Sunday night and didn't stop until 9pm on the Monday.

Both men were helpless as they saw the rain set back all their plans for the big week ahead.

"All we could do was watch the water levels rising. You'd see puddles, which were 30 yards apart, joining up and making bigger puddles and seeing rivers running through the course and with our pro-am due we were trying to work out what to do," said Rob.

"As soon as it stopped on the Monday night we started assessing the situation. Can the event go ahead? If so will we play the full course or will we have to shorten some holes. What's the best way to get rid of the water?"

"It's not a situation you deal with on a regular basis... thank God! The Heads of department – Secretary, Pro, Catering Manager and myself – met and the first thing to decide was whether we could go ahead because, with 42 teams and 168 golfers coming, we had to decided whether to cancel the order for food and drink and give all the players, many of whom were already calling to ask what the position was, warning.

"We looked at the long range forecast and it wasn't too bad so we felt that as long as we could get the greens playable we would go ahead," explained Rob.

The priority was getting the fairways playable and using a pump borrowed from Immingham to supplement their own they began pumping.

“We had both pumps running 24 hours a day so obviously we had to have guys coming in late at night to refuel them but eventually we got 99% of the water pumped off the fairways and there was only one hole, the 314 yard 6th which we had to shorten to a 150 yard par-3,” said Rob, who added that the bunkers remained GUR.

“It all worked very well and on the day people were pleasantly surprised at how well we had got the course into play and we had pictures up showing them how the course had looked just a few days before.

“We were still able to double cut the greens on the day and they were putting at around 8.5, normally we’d be hoping for around 10-10.5 for a pro-am but green speed wasn’t the priority – getting the course open was.”

While Rob was working miracles to get Cleethorpes open for the Friday pro-am Steve had made the decision to cancel the Club Championship on the Saturday, hence they were able to lend the pump to their neighbours.

“The members were fairly understanding. For me to have 15 holes open for Saturday was less important than Rob having his course dry for the pro-am,” explained Steve.

“It was an Act of God and when it comes from the sky people are more understanding.”

Having witnessed the non-stop rain and knowing the course’s predilection to flooding anyway Steve was more than concerned when he set out on a course inspection. Little did he know then that he’d finish the trip in a boat!

“It was morbid curiosity more than anything to see how bad it really was. Down at the bottom end there is normally a small pond but it had flooded over the pathway, up to the tee and onto the next green while the force of the water had washed away the pathway on top of a culvert. It also washed away about six to eight feet of the bank making it much wider.”

Steve and his team kept walking but were met by a remarkable scene.

“It looked like something from the Lake District. You couldn’t see any grass while a drainage dyke was flooding back towards us pouring water onto the course. The only way to continue to the inspection was by boat and we had shovels for oars. It was one of those scenes you could either laugh or cry about and we just took the comical approach.”

Despite everything, the team had nine holes open on the Wednesday and about 10 members played while others arrived with their cameras to record the scene.

A major casualty of the flooding and discovered when the water levels receded were the leatherjackets with hundreds of them lying on the surface having drowned.

“Some areas lay wet for two to three weeks after the second flooding and not having dried out fully from the first meant that they had been wet for over a month so it was a case of how to reinstate them and reduce the chances of it happening again,” said Rob.

“We raked off the debris then because the grass was just rotting we dressed out the areas and reseeded. On some of the hollows near we raised the area so it wasn’t such a pronounced hollow and less likely to puddle.”

One consequence of the high moisture levels in the soil profile was that



in July and August grass grew, as Rob points out “like stink”, which meant men who would normally be doing other course duties were permanently attached to their mowers.

“It was a very stressful time as in June you are looking to get the course at its best but because of Mother Nature we couldn’t do it. Normally praying for a bit of rain at that time of year. I found that quite demoralising.

“Our priorities changed and instead of looking at the whole course it was a case of let’s get the greens as good as we can and later in the year we’ll turn our attention elsewhere,” said Rob, who has recently found the ideal sand for the course after trialling as many as a dozen varieties.

“Being so flat and exposed we needed sand that would remain in the bunkers and having done 12 bunkers we’ll be doing the remainder of the 76 bunkers over the next three to five years, sorting out the drainage issues as we go.”

At Immingham Steve, who, in his 18 months at the club, had worked hard to improve the drainage on the 11th, 12th, and 13th holes which were built on solid clay saw that work begin to pay dividends.

“When the fairways were three feet deep in water in the middle of summer you did wonder what it was going to be like in the winter but, although some members were saying the holes wouldn’t be open again for the rest of the year, we had them open a week later. That proved to me that the work we had done was working,” said Steve, adding that they also received a goodwill payment from the neighbouring oil refinery after what looked like a film of oil appeared on some fairways.



Cleethorpes team with a Chairman of Green, John Stanley (second right)



The Immingham water boys

Steve, who joined Immingham from Cleethorpes, has had a baptism of fire in the job.

“Like many I was dubious about how I was going to cope with everything in a first Head Greenkeepership but, although I’d had numerous issues to contend with, I feel I’m coping.

“We had the driest April on record with five mil of rain and our irrigation pump broke down. In May we had a Ransomes triple stolen and joy ridden around the town causing £3000 worth of damage– it’s only just been returned to us. One of our greens was dug up on the eve of Invitation Day. Last Friday a horse got loose on the course and we had to repair hoof prints on a couple of greens while there was another attempt to break into the sheds last night – we even get plants stolen from out of the ground,” revealed Steve.

Driving up to the course you see static caravans which still contain families unable to return to their homes.

“It puts it into perspective. I certainly wouldn’t swap and have a dry golf course and flooded home but we still have to face our problems when we arrive at work,” said Steve.

With such a close friendship Rob and Steve always have someone to share their problems with and help each other out.

They met at Reaseheath College, living two doors apart when we were doing the HND in Golf Course Management, and sharing many a pint and although they went down different paths they kept in touch. Steve did his year out at Forest of Arden and before taking an internship at Pinehurst. He returned to St Pierre before Rob tipped him off about the



Deputy's job at Cleethorpes when Rob moved to Immingham.

Rob did his placement at East Sussex National and was offered a full time job there after finishing his course and then answered an interview for a Deputy's job at Cleethorpes.

"Course Manager, Les Howkins, and I hit it off immediately and a 45 minute interview became two hours. I got the job and then 18 months later Les was doing some consultancy for Immingham and recommended me for the post of Head Man. I then contacted Steve about my old job," said Rob.

When Les moved to Cotgrave Place G&CC Rob returned to Cleethorpes and six months later Steve moved in the opposite direction to his first headship at Immingham.

"Taking over from a guy (Les) who achieved his Master Greenkeeper while at the club was not easy. It's far easier to go into a job where you can make an impression quickly but I learned a lot from Les and he has returned to play golf and complimented me on some of the changes I've made," said Rob.

Steve also learned a lot from Les but is also quick to give credit to Bill Lawson, of Heswall, who was the man responsible for him entering the profession.

"I did work experience with Bill and then worked for two summers at Heswall. He was the man who encouraged me to go to college," said Steve. Both Rob and Steve have learned well and have experience which will stand them in good stead the next time they have to prepare for a rainy day!



Casual water at Immingham



Coke, Hoover, Biro, Levi's, Aga, Barenbrug. None of these great names were born great, or had greatness thrust upon them.

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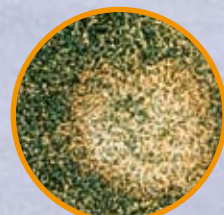


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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

The Wentworth Club, May 22-25 2008

BIGGA are to provide a Greenkeeping Support Team for the BMW PGA Championship at The Wentworth Club, May 22-25.

As a team member you will be involved in walking with a match and raking any bunkers found by the players, as well as aiding Chris Kennedy and his staff, should adverse weather occur.

You will be responsible for your own transport arrangements to the course, while there is no overnight accommodation provided. Being a member of this team will not be detrimental to your chances of making The Open Championship team.

Applications should be sent to: Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator, 34 Howard Close, Walton-on-the-Hill, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20 7QF.

The Open Championship, Royal Birkdale, July 17-20

This is your opportunity to work at Royal Birkdale GC to assist Course Manager Chris Whittle, and his team with the preparation of course and be a part of the on-course team which accompanies each match ensuring bunkers are raked in a correct and professional manner.

It will be your responsibility to make your way to the team's base for the week – The Lancashire Manor Hotel, Upholland nr Wigan - but after that transport to and from the golf course, shared accommodation and meals will be provided for the duration of the Championship.

You will be expected to report for duty by 5pm on Wednesday, July 16, and be available until the close of play on Sunday – a meal and bed and breakfast will be supplied for the Sunday evening and Monday morning if required.

This opportunity is open to full BIGGA members only. Younger members, relatively new to the Association, will also be actively considered. To apply complete this application form and send to: Scott MacCallum, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Aline, York, YO61 1UF. For further information contact Scott on 01347 833800 or email scott@bigga.co.uk

Closing Date for applications for The Open Team February 1, 2008, and you will be notified later in the month.

Name _____ Golf Club _____
 Position _____ Age _____

I have applied for/appeared on the team at:	Applied	Successful	Yes	No
Carnoustie, 2007				
Hoylake, 2006				
St Andrews, 2005				
Royal Troon, 2004				
Royal St George's, 2003				
I have been a BIGGA member for more than three years				
I serve, or have served in the last three years, on a Section/Region Committee				
I am enrolled on BIGGA's CPD Scheme				
I have attended three of the last five Harrogate Weeks.				
I am/have been a member of the PGA Championship Support Team				
I am willing to be a mini bus driver (You must have held a full driving license for three years and be over 25 years of age.)				
I am an overseas Member				

Note: A place on the team is open to all full BIGGA members but priority will be given to the more active members. Also, subject to sufficient experienced applicants, no BIGGA member will be eligible to appear on more than three consecutive teams. A limited number of places will be made available to overseas members. Please ensure that you have spoken to your golf club or Course Manager prior to applying and have arranged the time off. From this year should you be chosen you must send a passport picture of yourself to BIGGA HQ.



THE CHOSEN ONES

10 members of the BIGGA Delegation will be travelling to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in Orlando, thanks to Bernhard & Co. Melissa Toombs reveals the chosen ones.

Orlando is a major city in central Florida. With an estimated population of 220,186 it is the sixth largest city in Florida.

The city is best known for the many tourist attractions in the area, in particular the nearby Walt Disney World Resort, which is located in Lake Buena Vista about 20 miles south of Orlando. Other notable area attractions include SeaWorld and Universal Orlando Resort. The region sees an estimated 52 million tourists a year. Orlando has the second largest number of hotel rooms in the country (after Las Vegas, Nevada), and is one of the busiest American cities for conferences and conventions with the Orange County Convention Center, the country's second largest in square footage. It is also known for its wide array of golf courses – 168 to be exact! - With numerous courses available for any level of golfer.

Once again 10 BIGGA members will be flown to the United States for the experience of a lifetime, thanks to the sponsorship of Bernhard & Co. While in Orlando, they will visit local golf courses, attend seminars, meet with superintendents to discuss how greenkeepers do things the other side of the pond, attend functions and of course be able to enjoy the GIS (Golf Industry Show) Conference and Exhibition.

ABOUT THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW

The Golf Industry Show is an innovative trade show designed for the owners/operators of golf facilities, and the professional members of the golf course and club management industries. Like our very own Harrogate Week, the event combines education, networking and solutions for golf course superintendents, owners/operators, general managers, chief operating officers, architects and builders.

GIS is presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) and the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA), along with other supporting organisations.

The 2008 event will take place from January 31 to February 2 and is to be held at The Orange County Convention Center. More than 25,000 golf industry professionals are expected to attend this year's show, which will feature around 1,200 exhibitors.

THE DELEGATION



Name: Graeme Gallimore
Club: Launceston, Cornwall
Position: Course Manager

Educated to NVQ Level 3 and with a Certificate in Management Studies, Graeme has recently taken on the role of Section Education Representative for Devon and Cornwall. Currently Course Manager at Launceston Golf Club, Graeme spends some of his spare time teaching NVQ knowledge at Duchy College and is an active BIGGA Regional Committee member.

While away Graeme is looking forward to "viewing alternative types of machinery and the management available, in order to see how UK greenkeepers could adapt and utilise any of their initiatives." Graeme is excited about meeting likeminded professionals and establishing new working opportunities during his stay in The States.



Name: Nicholas Nottingham
Club: Luffenham Heath, Lincolnshire
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper

Nicholas began his career at Rutland County Golf Club, before moving onto North Luffenham Golf Club and then finally to Luffenham Heath Golf Club, where he has been working as Assistant Greenkeeper for just over three years. Educated to NVQ Level 2, Nicholas has just started work on his NVQ Level 3.

"This trip will further my knowledge of greenkeeping. By learning new things/skills then hopefully the golf club will benefit too," said Nicholas, who would like to work towards a management position.



Name: Ian Smith
Club: Dundonald Links, Ayrshire
Position: Greenkeeper

From 1995 until 2002, Ian was a PGA Professional Golfer based at Sutton Hall Golf Club in Cheshire. Ian only began his career in greenkeeping in 2003, when he worked for a short period of time for South Ayrshire Council as a Seasonal Greenkeeper, before gaining a position at Dundonald

Links at Loch Lomond Golf Club. Ian has a HND in Golf Management Studies and is qualified in Sports Turf to NVQ Level 3.

"To meet my peers from both sides of the Atlantic at such a well respected show will be an invaluable experience. With education seminars and machinery demonstrations it would be great knowledge to gain for my career and also to take back to my club," said Ian.



Name: George Pendrich
Club: Gleneagles, Perthshire
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper

George has a HNC in Golf Course Management and is currently working towards a HND.

An active member of the Association, George was a member of the Open Support Team at Carnoustie this year and is a former Toro Student of the Year winner. George's career in greenkeeping begun in 2004, when he took on the role of Seasonal Greenkeeper at Gleneagles. He then became a full time greenkeeper at the club and was promoted to Assistant Greenkeeper last year.

"This trip will give me a much better understanding of the business end of greenkeeping, America is a very competitive environment and I would hope to get an insight into making best use of available resources, therefore making me a better manager as well as a greenkeeper," said George.



Name: Kerr Rowan
Club: The Carrick, Loch Lomond
Position: Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Kerr has worked at Gleneagles, Turnberry, Dundonald and currently The Carrick in Scotland. He has also worked at Westchester CC and Augusta National in America as well as spending some time working on golf course in Australia. Kerr has SVQ Level 3 in Golf Greenkeeping and a HND in Golf Course Management.

"I feel the trip will be an excellent chance to broaden my horizons, the chance to meet and talk with the experts in our industry will surely increase my knowledge and make me a better greenkeeper. The chance to represent BIGGA and be part of the team for the week would be a great thrill and would give me a greater insight into our trade," said Kerr.



Name: Russell Lewis
Club: Hale, Cheshire
Position: Head Greenkeeper

Russell, who is currently studying for his BSchons, has achieved NVQ Level 3 and has a foundation degree in Sportsturf Science. A career in greenkeeping begun for Russell in 1996, when he started greenkeeping as a trainee at Northop Golf Club. He worked his way up to First Assistant at Northop and then decided to work in the USA for six months. Russell was promoted to Head Greenkeeper at Hale Golf Club about a year ago.

Russell is looking forward to being able to communicate with other greenkeepers from around the globe and to building up a network within the industry. He's also looking forward to "seeing the latest equipment available on the market, taking in seminars from the leading guys in the industry and seeing first hand what the UK greenkeepers are striving towards."



Name: Simon Marsh
Club: Harleyford, Marlow
Position: Head Greenkeeper

Simon is educated to City & Guilds Level 3. He started his greenkeeping

career in 1980 as a trainee at Hartley Wintney Golf Club, and worked at five other clubs as Head Greenkeeper/Groundsman before taking up the post of Head Greenkeeper at Harleyford Golf Club.

"I have a great deal of knowledge to share and a passion for the greenkeeping profession. I am lucky to be doing what I have always wanted to do. The best way to learn is to look at and talk to people and their golf courses to see if you can improve your own," said Simon.



Name: Michael Bush
Club: St Mellion International, Cornwall
Position: Course Manager

Michael started his career in golf course construction and after two years went into greenkeeping at Lanhydrock Golf Club. He then moved to St Mellion International and worked his way up from Assistant to Course Manager. Michael has acquired SVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 3.

"The benefits of this trip for me will be to see how Championship courses are managed in The States. This will include different feeding programmes and maintenance policies. Also to learn about new technology which has not been adopted in the UK," said Michael.



Name: Daniel Lightfoot
Club: Bearwood Lakes, Berkshire
Position: Course Manager

Daniel has a MSc in Sports Surface Technology and is Course Manager at Bearwood Lakes Golf Club.

Daniel began his career as an Assistant at the Hertfordshire Golf Club where he was promoted to First Assistant then Deputy Superintendent. He then moved to Gatton Manor Golf Club as Deputy and was promoted to Course Manager. After this Daniel accepted the position of Head of NVQs at Merrist Wood College. In 2005 he accepted his current position.

"The trip will enable me to expand on my knowledge and broaden my ideas. I will experience new techniques and ideas which I can try, to improve the quality of my golf club. I am also looking forward to representing BIGGA and Bernhards at an international greenkeeper event.



Name: Kerry Jones
Club: Garnant Park, Swansea
Position: Course Manager

Kerry is qualified to NVQ Level 3 and has completed numerous other qualifications. Kerry's greenkeeping career began in 1993, when he took the post of Assistant Greenkeeper at Palleg Golf Club. He worked at three other golf clubs before taking up his current position at Garnant Park Golf Club in 2001.

"I have never visited America and am looking forward to the chance of seeing how we compare with our counterparts in the US. I have a modern approach to the greenkeeping profession, with regards to balancing the commercial needs and golfer expectations, while always respecting the traditions of greenkeeping that have been practices for many years before me," said Kerry.

EDUCATION CONFERENCES

Along with the show, GCSAA, NGCOA and CMAA will be presenting their annual Education Conferences. GCSAA's conference will take place from January 28 to February 2.



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GREENER OUTLOOK FOR GOLF COURSE MACHINES

Mike Beardall looks at the changing face of fuels on golf courses as more environmentally-friendly equipment becomes available

Machinery on golf courses has traditionally been powered by petrol or diesel. But now in the 'greener' age biofuels, gas and electricity are playing their part in meeting the demands of the environment lobby, and bio oils that leak onto grass do not have the devastating effects resulting from mineral oil spills.

The Government has set targets which aim, in the case of fuel, to raise the amount of fuels from renewable sources sold in the UK by at least five per cent in 2010. And on golf courses many conservationists are encouraging course managers to buy equipment which runs on greener fuel.

"The benefits are many," says Ron Perera of New Holland. "The reduction in pollutants, fuel security of the future by using natural supplies and not relying on fossil fuels, and less emission of carbons into the atmosphere."

Mower engines which run entirely on sunflower oil have been introduced by manufacturers such as Etesia in the last 12 months and many already run on LPG or can run on SVO (straight vegetable oil) or PPO (pure plant oil).

Biodiesel is the most popular fuel at present which is part diesel and part plant oil.

In Germany and Austria, where green fuels are the norm, it has been shown that it is 20 per cent cheaper to run machines on biofuels, and it is on costs that most course managers make their decisions.

"Money is the number one reason for people to switch fuels," says Tim Evans of Renewable Zukunft (future).

"In surveys all machinery users across the UK put saving money before saving the environment, which is a sad fact but true – and ultimately good for the environment, because biofuels are cheaper to produce and save money in use."

Some of the problems of running engines on pure vegetable oil have been addressed by manufacturers.

Mower producer Etesia's research and development team recognise that an engine run on vegetable oil tends to "gum up", especially when cold - the resin build-up eventually causes serious damage.

To overcome this problem they developed a dual ignition system whereby the unit is initially fired up and runs for a few seconds on diesel supplied from a small fuel tank.

When the temperature reaches around 200 degrees, an electro-valve automatically switches supply to the main bio oil fuel tank to enable normal mowing and other tasks to be carried out.

Once the operator has completed his work, he switches back to diesel for the last couple of minutes to allow the fuel to clean through the engine.

During 2007, Bio Concept Hydro ride-on rotaries have been put to the test in France where local authorities have been successfully cutting and collecting grass with Etesia mowers fuelled by rapeseed oil.

Throughout these extensive trials the machines experienced little or no loss of power and performance remained unchanged. Fuel consumption matched that of diesel and emissions were considerably reduced.

Engine manufacturer Lombardini is supplying new engines to powered ride-ons in the Hydro rotary ranges that can simply switch between conventional diesel and B30-diesel (30 per cent plant oil) according to fuel availability or operator choice.

The two fuels are interchangeable – no modifications are required and there is no need to clean either the tank or the engine.

Toro introduced biodiesel-powered mowers and a hydrogen fuel-cell utility vehicle at the GCSAA show in California last year (2007).

Two dozen models of Toro's new biodiesel ground equipment were on display with new diesel-to-biodiesel conversion kits. Toro's new turf equipment will be delivered to commercial customers in 2008.

Toro has branded the equipment "Biodiesel Ready," meaning it can run on 20per cent vegetable oil and 80per cent petroleum (B20). Vehicles that run solely on biodiesel fuel could be on the market as early as 2009, said Steve Wood, Toro's biodiesel project manager.

"The time is right for Toro and the industry to commit to this effort," CEO Mike Hoffman said. "Our biodiesel readiness initiative is part of a commitment to developing innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers and help to better the environment."

Ransomes Jacobsen is another manufacturer committed to the use of alternative power in the golf sector and back up this assertion with a range of machines powered by electricity or LPG.

The E-Z-GO ST480 has a payload of 363.2kg (800lbs) and can run on

LPG. And an electric version of the MPT 800 is available with a 36 volt motor. The MPT 1000 is also electrically driven with a 36-volt, DC high efficiency series motor and the capability of carrying a heavier payload of 450kg (992lbs).

LPG-powered versions of the 800 and 1200 are available offering significant fuel savings and a reduction in harmful emissions.



Electric greens mower

The Jacobsen Eclipse 122 hybrid greens mower was introduced at BTME last year and redefines tournament quality of cut with a choice of fixed or fully floating cutting units, two electric motors for traction and cutting and alternative power options.

In true hybrid fashion, there are two power options: one uses a 48 volt genset powered by a 4.6hp Honda petrol engine, while the other is a drop-in 48 volt battery pack.

The Eclipse 122 has a fixed cutting unit, while the 122 F has an independently mounted, fully floating cutting unit which produces an optimum cut in any conditions.

Both machines utilise the exclusive Jacobsen In-Command™ OPC system for easy operation, while the use of electric motors reduces maintenance requirements.

SEPARATE PANEL?

The problem with mineral oil is that it is persistent. It does not readily biodegrade, it's toxic and most importantly it's non-renewable.

Says Tim Landsell, technical director of Ransomes Jacobsen: "The cost of remediation is expensive - there's clean-up cost, downtime of equipment and possible fines from legislative bodies.

"Clean up costs for Bio Oil spills are less. It comes from renewable sources and can mitigate sanctions and possible fines. It helps to preserve our environment and can have enhanced performance properties over mineral oil."

Turf Kill: If the plant is exposed to a sufficient amount of oil, the leaf,



Bio oil prevents spill damage to grass



As Tim Landsell explains: “For non-rhizome grass types self regeneration is just not possible. Once an individual grass plant is suffocated, there is no way it can regenerate. The solution, in this instance, is to reseed the affected area after 30 days following a bio oil exposure. Reseeding post petroleum oil exposure would not be possible for years without soil remediation.”

A recently published study by engineers at the Cushman Division of Ransomes Jacobsen showed that the use of soaps and other surfactant cleaning systems on mineral oil turf spills actually exacerbated the turf kill effect due to a “spreading out” of the petroleum oil’s toxic effects. The same cleaning aids when used with biodegradable fluids, speed up the rate of biodegradation.

Inevitably, oil leakages into the golf course environment will occur. To minimise the environmental effects of this exposure a number of approaches can be employed:

The use of biodegradable oils to replace mineral oil in lubricant applications.

Spill remediation aids, such as soaps or cleaning to “wash away” oil. Topical oil absorbents to “suck up” the oil.

Well maintained equipment to minimise leakage risk.

stem and root will be coated with an oil film. This will cause the worst case scenario regarding oil spill effects. Oil is not soluble in water. An oil film on a leaf will block the tiny leaf pores, stopping gas and moisture diffusion between the leaf and atmosphere, as well as prohibiting photosynthesis.

Oil coating a root will stop the soil water and oxygen absorption process between the soil and plant. If the oil coating remains on the leaf and root for a sufficient amount of time the plant will suffocate and die, typically within a week.

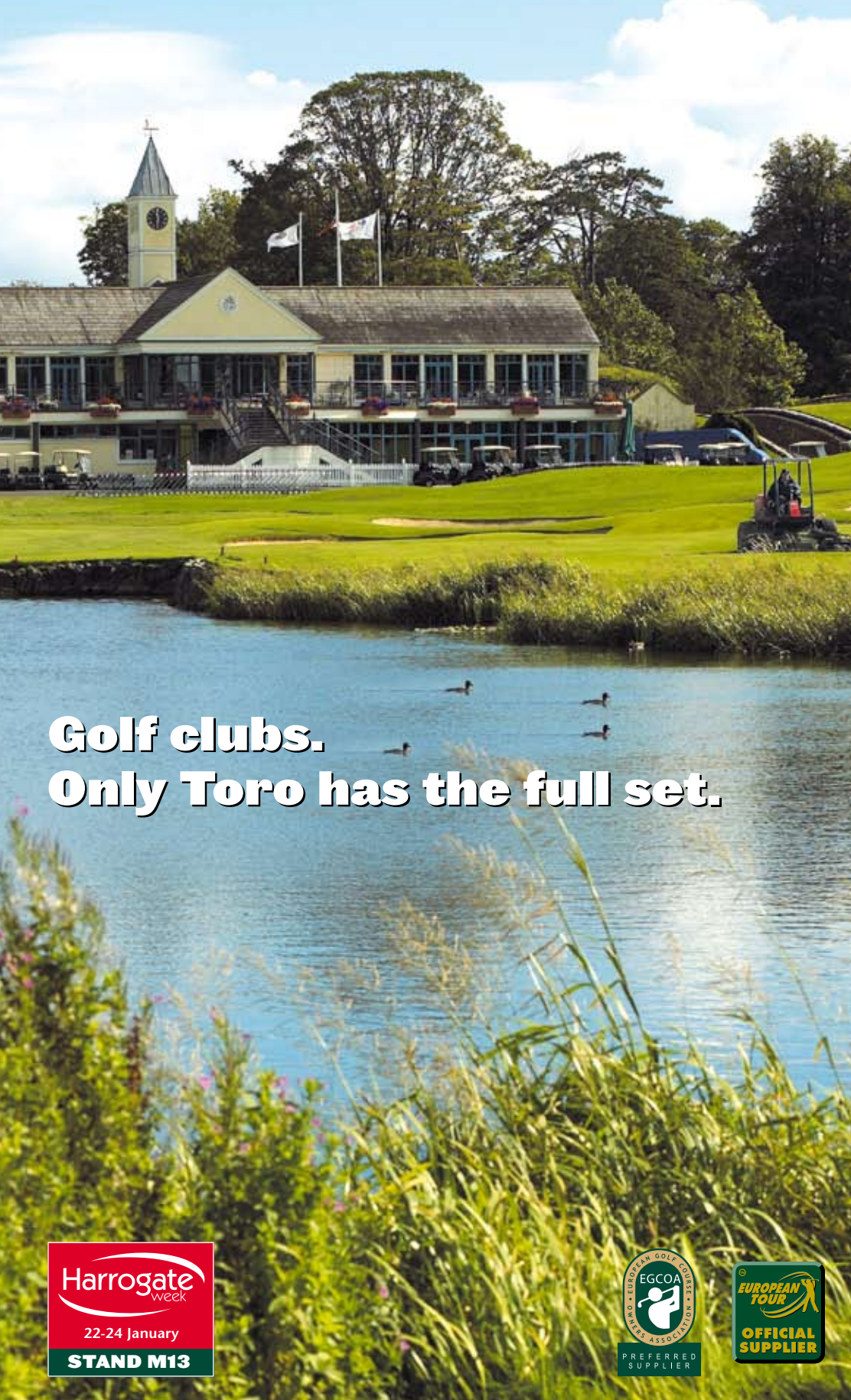
Soil Contamination: Another effect from significant oil exposure is the effect on the soil. Mineral oil is a known toxic material to living things. When sufficient oil is released into soil, the previously discussed plant effects occur.

But, more importantly, the presence of mineral oil in the soil causes a “sterilisation” of the soil, which causes a decrease in the level of micro-organisms present. Grass plant regeneration into the “sterilised” area is highly unlikely and the soil in a mineral oil spill zone must typically be removed and replaced so that reseedling of the region can be done.

Mineral oil will biodegrade and its rate of biodegradation in soil will typically occur over a period of one to two years. Conversely, other oils, such as natural esters (vegetable oils) or synthetic esters, biodegrade over a two to three week period.

For this reason, biodegradable lubricants are finding more and more use in spill sensitive applications. They minimise the turf kill effects on grass because they essentially disappear fast enough (biodegrade) to allow the grass to regenerate.





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Groundsmaster 3500-D Sidewinder
With a side-shifting rotary cutting deck, you get easy and safe mowing round bunkers, trees, lakes, on banks and even down into steep dykes.
**Reelmaster Sidewinder also available.*



Reelmaster 3100-D
An innovative trim mower perfect for tees and surrounds.



Reelmaster 6500-D/6700-D
Tough, powerful 38 and 45hp workhorses giving you high performance with the finesse to tread lightly over your turf.



ProCore 648 greens aerator
The fastest and most productive pedestrian greens aerator on the market, with a large 48in working width. It gets greens back in play quicker than ever before!

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www.toro.com



Count on it.

New Products



VACUUM SWEEPER

Trilo will be launching the new SG300 high tip, vacuum sweeper at Harrogate Week. Built to the same high quality and with many of the features of the SG400, including a brush inside the suction hood and 6 metre wanderhose and it only needs 35hp to power the SG300, it fits perfectly into the range.

As the new Progressive mower importer for the UK, the company will also have at the show for the first time, the Pro-flex 120 mower - capable of mowing the worst in undulations without scalping, while leaving a perfect cut.

www.trilo.com



NEW GENERATION

Scotts' Harrogate Week offering includes the launch of a new generation spray pattern indicator.

Turf Mark Extra is the latest generation of spray pattern indicators for use with herbicides, fungicides and liquid fertilisers. The new Turf Mark Extra has the addition of a buffer to help stabilise the pH of the spraying solution, plus an anti-drift agent.

www.scotts.com



GIVE BUNKERS A SHARPER EDGE

DJ Turfcare will be showing the Atom Bunker Edger, which has gained more than 200 satisfied users among course managers and greenkeepers in the UK at this year's show.

Unique in the golf industry, the Atom trims bunkers up to eight times faster than any other edging device.

With a 17-inch (436mm) hardened spring steel blade and a powerful two-stroke Komatsu Zenoah engine, the Atom Bunker Edger safely cuts through sand and soil to sever grass runners underground.

01483 200976
or email: sales@djurfcare.co.uk



EUROPEAN LAUNCH

Harrogate sees the official launch of Headland's DewCure onto the European market, one week before the product's American launch at the G.C.S.A.A. show in Orlando.

DewCure is a unique new liquid surfactant, specifically designed to suppress dew and moisture formation on turf, over an extended period.

DewCure is available in 10 litre packs.

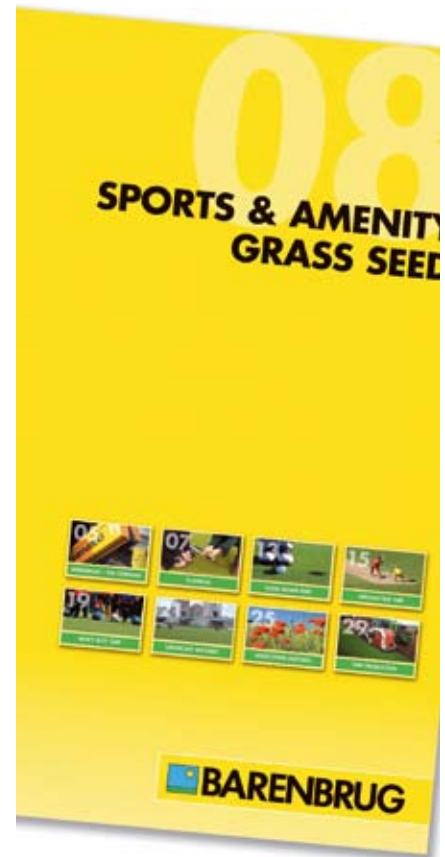
01223 597834
or email: info@headlandamenity.com



NEW MIXTURES AND WEBSITE ON SHOW

Barenbrug is unveiling details of new amenity cultivars and its 'intelligent' website at Harrogate Week.

The introductions are headed by a new 100 per cent fescue blend BAR 22. Containing hard, slender creeping red and Chewings fescues, BAR 22 is suitable for close mowing down to 5mm.



Also new for 2008 is Bengal creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera). Barenbrug claim Bengal has excellent drought tolerance for the species.

The website includes a wealth of technical data including Factfiles. Introduced originally by Barenbrug to ensure the technical data from its international and UK-based trials, breeding and research and development programmes was disseminated to those who can make best use of it, this service will also be available through the website.

www.barenbrug.co.uk

New Products



NEW PRODUCTS

NEW GOLF SPRINKLER

Toro says the new DT (Dual Trajectory) Series golf sprinkler it is launching at this year's show is the most advanced, durable and flexible irrigation sprinkler of its type. This latest range incorporates many proven features from the company's best-selling 800 Series. These include a special feature called 'selectable trajectory', which makes it very simple for users to adjust the trajectory of the main nozzle to either 15 or 25 degrees to better withstand wind or avoid obstacles.

Meanwhile, on the turf equipment side, the company will be giving a debut to Toro Protection Plus (TPP). This is new plan which, says the manufacturer, provides machinery customers with the industry's most comprehensive protection against unexpected and unwanted repair bills.

www.toro.com



COMPACT TRACTOR UNVEILED

A new 32hp compact tractor with an 8 x 8 synchro-shuttle transmission and creep speed option will be unveiled by Massey Ferguson at this year's show.

Known as the MF 1532, the tractor replaces the existing MF 1533 model in Massey Ferguson's 1500 Series compact tractor line-up for the grounds care market.

www.masseyferguson.co.uk



LOW MAINTENANCE FINE TURF

Hailed as the ultimate in low maintenance fine turf, Lindum's new Low Maintenance Fine is designed to be both drought and salt tolerant, with reduced feeding, aeration and mowing requirements.

Ideal for greens and surrounds on links courses, tees and sand based greens, Low Maintenance Fine is also recommended for exposed droughty areas and banks, which are difficult to maintain.

01904 448675
or visit: www.turf.co.uk



WATERLOO VICTOR ARRIVES AT HARROGATE

Terrain Aeration's Airforce Scamper Terralift machine will be on show at Harrogate for the first time.

With a range of compressed air pressure between 8 and 20 bar, easily controlled by the operator, Scamper is specifically designed for one-metre deep aeration treatment on all fine turf.

01449 673783
or visit: www.terraenaeration.co.uk



EXPANDED PRODUCT RANGE

Farmura have expanded their product range to include water management products from Aquatrols which complement the Farmura liquid organic feeds, soil conditioners and specialist turf products and bring together under one roof recognised names such as Porthcawl, Revolution, Ferrosol and Primer Select.

www.farmura.com



CONTACT AND SYSTEMIC TURF FUNGICIDE

Bayer Environmental Science is launching its new Contact and Systemic turf fungicide Dedicate® at this year's show.

Dedicate® is a FAST, long lasting, broad spectrum fungicide which both cures and prevents turf disease all year round, "whatever the weather". Rainfast within the hour. Dedicate® controls Fusarium patch, red thread, dollar spot and others including Anthracnose in managed amenity turf.

01223 226680



LATEST ADDITIONS

Campey Turf Care Systems will show the latest additions to its range at this year's show.

Highlighted innovations will include the ingenious Raycam Aera-Seeder, which combines the seed box and spiked roller, designed for optimum flow and accurate placement in the ground.

Campeys also offer the Vredo super-compact overseeder in 0.8m, 1.2m and 1.6m widths, their narrow dimensions give great manoeuvrability and a lightweight footprint, at a seeding width of 35mm.

 www.campeyturfcare.com



SPEED SEED

Charterhouse Machinery will promote the latest developments in its professional grounds care equipment line-up at Harrogate Week, together with the tried and tested products that have established its strong reputation in the industry.

Among the new machines on show will be a compact 1.2m wide version of the popular SpeedSeed overseeder, a lightweight unit designed for unrivalled manoeuvrability as well as high work-rate performance and ruggedness.

 www.charterhouseturfmachinery.co.uk



DIAL-IN SYSTEM CUSTOMISES WATER MANAGEMENT

Vitax launch their new Dial-In System of Customised Water Management at this year's show.



Designed to be used with their comprehensive Aqua-Aid range (Aqua-Aid soil penetrant, Aquifer surfactant, Oars Curative organic acid removal system and Percol 8, biodegradable soil penetrants) the Dial-In Water Management system uses information collected direct from the golf course to produce individual programmes, tailor-made for turf managers.

 01530 510060
or visit: www.vitax.co.uk

GROUND CARE HAND TOOLS RANGE EXPANDS

Spaldings has recently introduced a Spaldings Truecraft range of hand tools, ideal for amenity and turf care specialists, and also expanded its Bulldog product offering.

The Truecraft range incorporates carbon steel and fibreglass to create hand tools that are not only strong, durable and light but also robust enough to meet the demands of contractors and groundcare professionals.

 01522 507500
or visit: www.spaldings.co.uk

STRENGTH IN DEPTH

New Holland's will show the impressive comprehensiveness of the company's ground care and amenity tractor line-up at this year's show.

Among highlights will be the TN family of tractors ranging from 60-95hp, designed for an exceptional power to weight ratio. Some models can be fitted with New Holland's unique SuperSteer front axle for outstanding manoeuvrability. As the front wheels turn, the front axle articulates to provide an increased turn angle. This reduces the risk of scrubbing the turf.

 www.newholland.com

PEDESTRIAN MACHINES

Dennis will have a full display of its precision mowing machinery at Harrogate Week, and will give an insight into exciting developments planned for the year ahead.



The FT range will feature prominently on the stand. Available in widths from 430mm-610mm (17in-24in), the innovative pedestrian machines accept 11 quick-change cassette attachments for mowing, scarifying, verti-cutting, rolling, slitting, brushing and other essential tasks.

 www.dennisuk.com

New Products



NEW PRODUCTS

WAGING WAR ON NEMATODES

Floratine launch their new Turf Action Plan (TAP), specifically designed to help the grass plant win against attack by nematodes at this year's show.

A foliar feed package consisting of Astron to promote rooting and generate energy, Floradox Pro, which improves the plant's immune system and also helps rooting, and ProteSyn, which aids photosynthesis.

www.floratine.co.uk



NEW SUPER MODEL

The new Soil Reliever Super 54 & Super 70 models from JSM Distribution will make their UK debut at Harrogate Week 2008.

Featuring a new design concept in deep tine aeration, both models utilise their tri-roller design to follow even the most demanding of golf green contours. Ensuring a consistent, even depth without the risk of the tine heads contacting the putting surface.

www.jsmd.co.uk



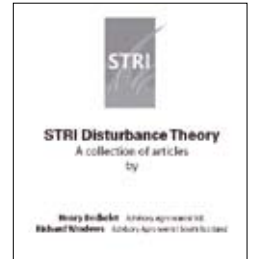
IDEAL FOR LEAF COLLECTION

It is that time of year when Mother Nature donates to us her generous gift of leaf fall! Without the correct machine for the job, tidying up open spaces can present a problem.



DISTURBANCE THEORY - THE BOOK

STRI Disturbance Theory, the Book, is now available from STRI's bookshop at www.stri.co.uk



STRI's latest title is made up from a collection of 15 articles, written by STRI's turf agronomists, Henry Bechelet and Richard Windows plus a contribution from Alistair Beggs, Northern Area Manager.

The 15 articles explore all aspects of the Disturbance Theory and how it relates to practical modern day greenkeeping. The authors' objective in producing the book is to provide greenkeepers with an understanding of the philosophy and approach required to achieve sword species progression in golf greens, without compromising playing quality.

www.stri.co.uk

STUMP GRINDER

Echo Bear Cat have launched a new Stumper Grinder.

The new Stump Grinder is powered by a 11hp Honda OHV engine, with recoil start and a safety engine kill switch, designed to shut the engine off when the grinder is disengaged.

It's fast and effecting cutting head means that a 10" diameter stump, 8" tall (4" above, 4" below) will take only 5 minutes to clear.

www.countax.com



Etesia have launched their solution - the Hydro range of ride-on mowers. With their unique direct rear ejection system that cuts and collects, even in wet or long grass, these rotaries offer more than just superb mowing - at this time of year their anti-clog capabilities mean they can also double as superb machines for picking up leaves, litter and other debris.

www.etesia.com

NEW

**rainfast
within 1 hour**

Disease protection that sticks and stays



New DACONIL WEATHER STIK gives complete protection from major turf diseases, even in the most difficult weather conditions.

The formulation of new DACONIL WEATHER STIK ensures strong bonding of the powerful fungicide to the leaf surface - ensuring it will not be washed off by rain and giving longer lasting protection from disease infection - and it is rainfast within an hour.

Used on its own or combined in a programme with other Syngenta fungicides, like HERITAGE and BANNER MAXX, as part of an integrated management plan, DACONIL WEATHER STIK delivers excellent disease control whatever the weather.

Syngenta Crop Protection UK Ltd., Whittlesford, Cambridge. CB22 4QT.

Website: www.greencast.co.uk www.greencast.ie

Distributed in the UK and Ireland by Scotts Professional

Scotts Professional, Tel: 0871 220 5353, Email: prof.sales@scotts.com

DACONIL WEATHER STIK® contains chlorothalonil (MAPP 12636, PCS 02680), BANNER MAXX® contains propiconazole (MAPP 13167, PCS 02715),

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www.greencast.co.uk
www.greencast.ie

NEW HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT REGULATIONS

Under Working Time Regulations all workers had the right to four weeks paid leave. This entitlement, however, could include any right to paid public holidays. The new rules state full time employees are now entitled to a minimum of 24 days paid holiday per annum and as from 1 April 2009, the minimum entitlement will increase to 28 days per year.

New rules - the key points

- The extension to holidays will be implemented in two stages, with the annual statutory entitlement increased to 24 days (4.8 weeks) from 1 Oct 07 and 28 days (5.6 weeks) from 1 April 2009
- From 1 April 2009, a full time worker will be entitled to 28 days' statutory annual leave. This equates to the current entitlement of 20 days plus eight public holidays. The new rules do not give the right to take time off on the public holidays themselves where these are normally worked
- Employers who give their workers a minimum of four weeks holiday plus public holidays' need not provide the workers with additional leave – assuming they give at least four days public holidays now and at least eight public holidays from April 2009.
- Until April 2009, employers may make payments in lieu of the additional four days (0.8 weeks) entitlement. Thereafter, the additional leave may not be replaced by a payment in lieu except where a worker's employment is terminated.

• In contrast, the additional entitlement of eight days (1.6 weeks) may be carried over into the following leave year. Employers may, during the period 1 October 2007 until 1 April 2009, make payment in lieu to their employee in respect of the additional four days holiday. Thereafter they will not be able to do this.

• Employers whose employees' leave is increased owing to the new rules will be obliged by S.4 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide those employees with a written statement containing details of this change to their employment particulars.

Public holidays - There will be no new right to take time off on any specific public holiday. It follows workers not contractually entitled to take leave on such days must, make holiday requests in the normal way for these days.

Long Term Sick Leave - The impact of long term sick leave on annual leave entitlement is in a state of uncertainty and is the subject of court proceedings at present. The House of Lords has referred a number of questions to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Until a judgment has been made by the ECJ no firm advice can be given regarding paid holidays and those unfortunately on long term sick.

This article has been supplied by Xact who advise BIGGA on health and safety issues. The Company has recently expanded its services giving expert advice on employment law and human resources to its clients.

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Level Par is a unique blend of velvet bent grasses from BSH. With unrivalled shoot density and a very fine leaf, the combination of Avalon and new Vesper produces an enviable putting surface. But the benefits don't stop there. Once established, the dense sward has a lower nutrient requirement than any other commercial bent grasses, so your greens won't cost the Earth.

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In the Shed

Greenkeeper International brings you 'In the Shed', a puzzle page to keep you entertained when the weather forces you in or for when times are slow.

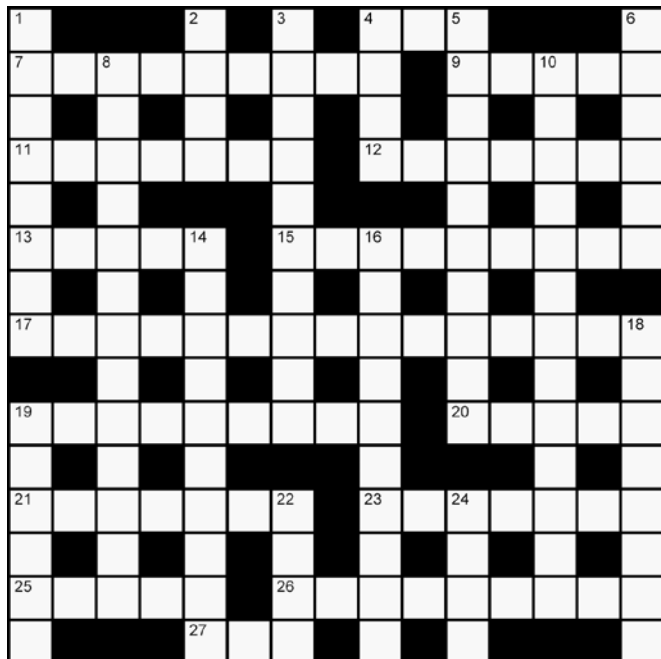
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 4 Britain's dominion over India 1757-1947 (3)
- 7 Sung without musical accompaniment (1,8)
- 9 Metalworker's block (5)
- 11 Implement, apply (7)
- 12 Of a car, of unpredictable or unsure handling (7)
- 13 Immature organism which must metamorphose to develop (5)
- 15 Appearing less than healthy (3-6)
- 17 Item of visual trickery (7,8)
- 19 Pastry shell filled with savoury meat and (usually) a sauce (3-2-4)
- 20 Make oneself subject to (5)
- 21 Continually (3-4)
- 23 Dessert named after Russian ballerina (7)
- 25 Flock of geese in flight (5)
- 26 Imagined as perfect (9)
- 27 Small boat used to pull larger vessels (3)

DOWN

- 1 Battle of 1815, later applied to mean any crushing defeat (8)
- 2 Branch line or connecting road (4)
- 3 Reminiscent of a bygone era (4-6)
- 4 A large number (of) (4)
- 5 British group whose "Deeper Underground" went to no 1 in 1998 (10)
- 6 Important participant, typically in business (6)
- 8 ANCESTRAL GIFT (anagram) (2,5,6)
- 10 British decoration awarded for military gallantry (8,5)
- 14 Profession also called "comptroller" (10)
- 16 Writing implement, "Magic Marker" (4-3,3)
- 18 Former province of north west France (8)
- 19 Disappear (6)
- 22 Self-righteous, narrow-minded person (4)
- 24 Nauseating, loathsome (4)

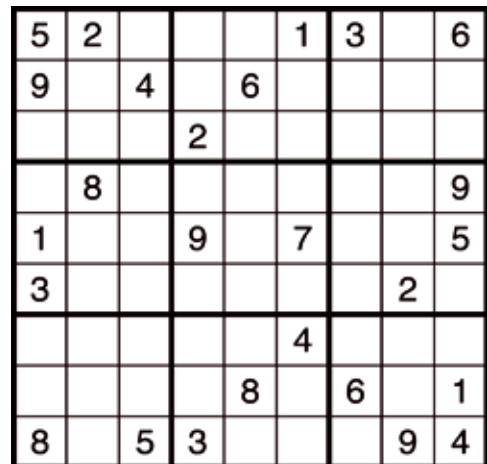


QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

- 1 Alfred Nobel, the man after whom the Nobel Prizes are named, was originally well known for inventing what?
- 2 On a standard dartboard, what is the lowest number that cannot be scored with a single dart?
- 3 Which politician was once replaced by a tub of lard on the TV show Have I Got News For You?
- 4 What is the most common colour that appears in the flags of the world?
- 5 Which American state is known as the Sunshine State?
- 6 What was the name of Elvis Presley's manager?
- 7 By which nickname was Edward Teach better known?
- 8 Who wrote The Canterbury Tales?
- 9 In what year was the Bank of England founded?

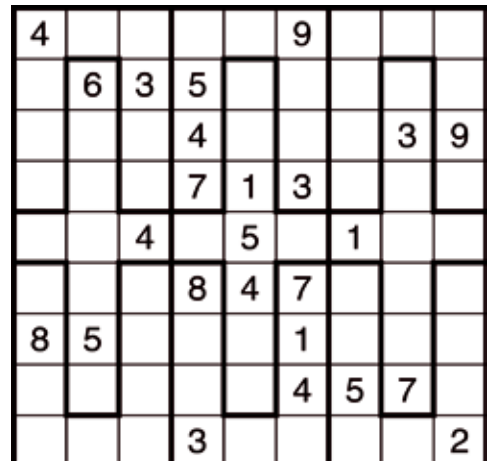
MONSTER SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9 and the letters A,B and C.



SQUIGGLY SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 12 box shape contains the numbers 1 to 9.



IN THE SHED ANSWERS ON PAGE 66



IN THE SHED



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POST TO: BIGGA HOUSE, ALDWARK MANOR, ALNE, YORK, YO61 1UF**

SOIL SCREENER AT ROYAL ABERDEEN GOLF CLUB

We all know how expensive it is to haul anything by road these days with mounting fuel costs making the purchase and delivery of materials very expensive. Over the past year or so Kevin Strachan of "Strachans Plant" has been using at various golf clubs around the North East his screening plant which can recycle old composted material into a very usable construction product for making tees etc. We all have areas on our courses where we dump grass cuttings, turf, cores and other organic material to compost but never really use it again. This machine can produce high quality material for use on all areas of the course. It will also screen sand and hardcore materials for use on roads and paths.



The cost of hauling these types of materials up to the north east of Scotland is becoming very expensive so to find a machine that will recycle old material is very welcome. Because we are using material that has come off the golf course we know that it is compatible with existing soil conditions. With the environmental issue now a major part of how we manage our courses this machine and type of recycling is a way forward to reducing haulage costs and the amount of lorries on the road. The machine will screen down to 5mm, which is ideal for divot work and 8-12 mm for construction material. The output of the machine is between 100-150 ton per day depending on the type of material screened.

This type of machine and process has a place in the management of resources on golf courses today and will become more and more common in years to come. Worth thinking about if you have tons of compost lying around on your golf course doing nothing.

*Robert Patterson
Royal Aberdeen*

**MEET THE BOARD
EDUCATION 20-24 JANUARY 2008
EXHIBITION 22-24 JANUARY 2008**



There will be the opportunity at Harrogate for members to meet with a Board member on a one-to-one basis in private. This will be by appointment on Tuesday afternoon and all day Wednesday and Thursday.

If you would like to book an appointment before the event then contact Sandra Raper at HQ (telephone 01347 833800 email sandra@bigga.co.uk) or during the event a time can be booked at the BIGGA stand in Hall Q.

SUSSEX FOOTBALLERS

The Sussex Section football team recently played against Surrey at Three Bridges Football Club.



I would like to thank John Wart, from Albourne Irrigation, for sponsoring the pitch and also a big thanks to Mike Ring and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the kit. The game was not for the faint hearted and was full of commitment. Surrey scored early doors and we equalised through Dan Beard. Unfortunately Surrey were too strong for us and it ended 4-1 to Surrey.

The score was a bit flattering but congratulations to them and a big thank you to Dave Langham for sorting out things his end. The pictures are of the Sussex team and of the hand over of the new kit between Vice Chairman, Matt Crosslegs and the sponsors Rigby Taylor, represented by Mike Ring.

*Rob Hudson
Sussex Section*

JIM FRY



We are sorry to have to report the recent death of BIGGA Honorary Life Member, Jim Fry.

We were honoured to have Jim Fry as the President of the South Coast Section of BIGGA and served tirelessly on the committee for many years offering sound business advice and support. He rarely missed any of our events such as was his enthusiasm for greenkeeping.

Jim would often turn up at a golf event and be found deep in conversation with Club or Section members, offering his wealth of knowledge in all aspects of life. One of his highlights was to go to Harrogate where he would meet old friends. Many will remember the lengthy discussions he had with his old friend the late Jim Arthur, if you joined in you were in for a long night.

In his memory the Section have named the annual knockout golf competition the 'Jim Fry Pairs'. This is played for throughout the summer, with a mounted bronze putter as the trophy.

Jim will be sadly missed not only for his generosity to the Section but also as a friend and advisor.

RIP Jim.

*Tony Gadd
Section Chairman*



News from the Chief Executive

As another year draws to an end let us look back at 2007, at what has been achieved.

There seems to be a number of members dissatisfied with the performance of the Association voicing opinions on not only the BIGGA website but on other parties' websites. I am disappointed these people do not feel able to contact HQ and air their views, sometimes there is a simple and logical answer. I do not have any excuses and the buck stops with me for the efficiency of the office. My only wish is it had not been necessary to make the staff cut backs we did - we are now missing those extra pairs of hands. However, like all commercial operations we need to balance the books - we reduced a budgeted loss of £133k down to an actual loss of £1,800 in 2007. I'm accused of being out of touch with the grass roots membership but no one knows better than I how tough it is in golf today, and HQ staff and myself try to attend as many Region and Section events as time allows. Please also remember the RAs are members of HQ staff and I speak with them on a regular basis.

I get accused of not communicating with the members however I find it equally frustrating that members do not communicate with me! Let's look at what we have achieved this year: tens of thousands of pounds spent on subsidising Regional, Section and National training and education, over £15k spent on education grants to individual members, RA support to members at disciplinary meetings, financial support for families following the accidental death of several members, a better than expected financial result thereby helping medium term stability, in my view a much better acceptance by the other bodies in golf of the professional standing of the Association and its members, a new website - the list goes on. I'm sure many of your golfers expectations could be realised if you had a large enough budget, well I'm in the same position as Chief Executive. I have 6,500 members many of whom have differing views on life, views that sometimes are unachievable.

2008? There is no doubt in my mind golf as an industry is starting to feel the commercial squeeze. Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers must address their management training needs if they are going to cope. It's no good just being a good greenkeeper any more, in order to survive those with responsibility need their skills honing. BIGGA has helped in the past and aims to provide more 'bite size' management training modules in the future. It will be teaming up with the GTC, the Home Unions, the GCMA and potentially the PGA to address training issues, in particular at management level. This doesn't mean we will be abandoning those below CM/HG - suitable training courses will be arranged where there is sufficient demand.

Learning and Development is no longer an option but a necessity, part of BIGGA's aim is to get better support for this by the employer. I've been proud to represent the Association at various meetings and conferences during 2007 where I have always been treated with respect. Times have moved on and so must we but we can only succeed through unity.

I wish everyone a trouble free 2008. Let's hope the sun shines, the puts drop and golfers recognise the difference between 'nice to have' and 'achievable'!

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH – AYRSHIRE

Firstly, hope you're all well and had a great time over the Festive season. It's been a while since you've heard from me but never mind eh!

To catch up on last year's relevant news I'll start with the classified results from the Autumn outing at Shiskine GC which were as follows: Middlesbrough 0 , seriously now!

Harry Diamond Jug – G. Morrison – 1.1 G. Morrison; 1.2 B. Aitken; 1.3 B. Gray; 1.4 I. MacDonald; 1.5 S. Higgins. 2.1 G. Taggart; 2.2 R. Bunting; 2.3 I. Barr; 2.4 D. Gray; 2.5 M. Sloss. Trade Prize- Alistair Taylor

Our thanks to the club for allowing us the tee times, to the friendly staff who served up some delicious fare and refreshments and to the Head Greenkeeper and his crew for presenting a fine course on a dry day with a touch of gale force winds added for extra effect!

The BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota, held over The Dundonald GC and Kilmarnock Barassie GC in October, I am told, was a resounding success with a couple of local boys picking up top prizes! Clandeboye GC hosted the second playing of our match v the County Down Greenkeepers and although we only had four from the Section it seemed like eight or was that just the Guinness? No, we managed to hire four mercenaries who did a grand job. Before the result I would just like to say a massive thanks to Terry Crawford for arranging all the tee times and pub crawls and everything! Cheers pal! To the club and all the staff who made the trip so memorable we really had a great time, thanks! And last but not least the greenkeepers themselves who made us most welcome. Oh! And that rep who insisted on getting the first four rounds of drinks in for all! Nice one!

The result ended 3 – 1 to the home side, but came right down to the wire with myself and Colin Shanks just missing out on a half at the 18th and Duncan Gray and his partner, Ronnie, losing their match after being 3 up with 4 to play! I ken! It was all in good spirit and Duncan made up for it by holding an impromptu lecture at the hotel at 2am that night - much to the night porter's delight!

On to recent news then, George Morrison, Largs GC, and John Wilson, Bogside, are the Patron's Award winner's this year. Congrats lads! The Portland course at Troon will be the venue for the Spring with the date in April to be finalised. The Pines GC, in Dumfries, will host the Autumn Outing where we will also be trying to arrange the match with the Irish Greenkeepers, but it's a long way off so watch this space every few months or so? Adios mis amigos and remember "Let's be careful out there"

Denis Tweddell denis.t@hotmail.co.uk 07939 104701



CENTRAL

Hi, I hope everyone has recovered from the excesses of Christmas and New Year and have a quiet spell before it all starts up again at Harrogate towards the end of the month.

Around the Green

The Central Section had a very successful evening seminar at Elmwood on November 28 when 40 people turned up to hear Prof John Kaminski, of Connecticut, Prof Mike Fidanza of Penn State and Stan Zontek of the USGA Greens Section give presentations on Dollar Spot, Fairy Ring and growth regulators. A larger report has been posted on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Unfortunately I was unable to attend as I was in Marseille giving a presentation to the French Greenkeepers Association, AGREF, at their annual conference and show, Green Expo. Although the show is nowhere as large as BTME, there were over 500 people attending from a membership of around 1,000. Like Harrogate it was also partly a social occasion while they have strong desire continually to improve and a healthy thirst for knowledge. There was also a strong representation from the French Golf Federation with whom they have a strong relationship.

Five members of the Central Section were part of a delegation taken to the RJ factory at Ipswich by Ian Bridges and Scottish dealers Fairways (GM). They had an interesting visit looking at the latest additions to the RJ product range, the ongoing factory upgrades and the investment in training which included the progress on the recently commissioned three hole golf facility on site, designed by Howard Swan.

Congratulations to Simon Connah, of St Andrews Links, and his partner, Niki, on the birth of their second child and welcome to new member, Steven Wilson, who is an Assistant Greenkeeper at the Duke's Course.

The venue of the spring meeting has yet to be confirmed by the club in question but this will be finalised shortly and posted on the website. Invites will be sent out to members in early March along with a newsletter similar to last year. If anyone has any news about things happening in the area then please contact myself at gordonmoir@standrews.org.uk

Gordon Moir



EAST

I start this month with a sincere thank you to our Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, for all his sterling efforts throughout the year, which culminated in organising the Patrons' Lunch at the Terraces Hotel in Stirling.

The education meeting at Oatridge Collage on November 16, was attended by several committee members when the main discussion point was future training programmes, with particular emphasis on Levels 3 and 4. The aim is to organise 'bite' size training days in key areas in these two levels.

Our congratulations this month go to Martin Kohler, Kingsknowe Golf Club, and his partner, Paula, on the arrival of a daughter, Alicia. I understand from Stevie that Martin will be allocated some light duties, until he becomes immune to the sleepless nights!

On December 4, greenkeepers from across Scotland attended an educational day at Carnoustie Golf Links. We were met by Golf Course Superintendent, John Philp who enthralled all with a guided tour of the championship course. His technical knowledge and enthusiasm for his

subject were there for all to see. On behalf of everyone in attendance I would like to thank John for giving us some of his valuable time, and for his courtesy on the day. The Dinner Dance on Saturday, December 8 at the Kilspindie House Hotel, Aberlady, with 30 in attendance. A good time was had by all. Next year's Dinner Dance will be held at the same venue on Saturday, December 6 – book the date now to avoid disappointment!

Our former Chairman, Graeme Wood, is making a slow but steady recovery from his illness, at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Edinburgh, where he is getting regular physiotherapy sessions. Our thoughts are with Graeme and his wife, Helen, at this time.

Until next month, Mike Dooner



NORTH

Happy New Year to everybody, hope it was prosperous for all. Another year is upon us God knows what kind of weather we will get this year. Hopefully drier and warmer than last year.

Harrogate is just around the corner and will be eagerly anticipated by greenkeepers around the country. Not much happening in the Section at the moment to talk about. One new member is Grant Hope, Apprentice Greenkeeper at Dufftown Golf Club, welcome to the North Section Grant. Also William Shepherd, First Assistant at Ellon GC – Welcome William.

Kevin Strachan has kindly agreed to sponsor the 200 Club next year so our thanks go to him for this kind gesture. Kevin has been busy at a few clubs in the Northeast with his screener and tilt buckets making new tees and bunkers. He is currently in at Royal Aberdeen G C re-constructing the 1st and 6th tees, which are being re-developed at the moment and some mounding features to screen some holes on the back nine prior to the Walker Cup in 2011. This is part of a long-term plan with new bunkers and tees added and more mounding between holes planned for the next three years.

Murcar Golf Club recently won the Scottish Tourist Board Golf Club of the Year. It was awarded for excellence in all areas of the club. The award was presented at a ceremony at the St Andrews Bay Golf hotel to the Captain of the club, Steven Price. This is tremendous achievement for the club considering they were up against Kingsbarns, Carnoustie to name but a few. Martin Fullerton, Assistant at Murcar is going to be a dad again in the summer. Murcar are also pushing on with more alterations to extend and toughen up the course with new tees and bunkers being added around the course.

Robert N Patterson



WEST

Welcome to this month's report. I would like to congratulate Kerr Hunter who was appointed Course Manager at Gleddoch Golf Club earlier in the year. Kerr was Assistant at Hilton Park and then went on to Dumbarton

Around the Green

Golf Club as First Assistant. The Section would like to wish you all the best in your new post. I apologise for being so late with this news.

In my last report I forgot to mention that Robert Bruce won the trade prize at our autumn outing at the Vale of Leven GC. Sorry Robert and many congratulations on your prize.

Committee news—this year's AGM was held at Higgs Castle on a very wet and windy day but the good news was there were approximately 50 members in attendance. Gordon Homes, of CSC, was the first guest speaker talking on primo-max growth regulator. The talk was very informative and was received very well from the body of the hall. Also to Stuart Ashworth, from Indigrow, who did a first class speech on their product list.

Douglas Macintosh, Chairman, conducted the proceedings very well covering all areas on the agenda so well done, also for your hard work over the past year. We still have no Vice Chairman to take over from Dougie for 2009 so anyone interested please get in touch. Many thanks to the Captain and committee for the use of their facilities and for courtesy of the course afterwards.

Stuart Taylor, our education convenor is stepping down. Stuart has done a great job over the past few years and all on committee would like to wish him all the best for the future. I will be taking over on education and I am planning a seminar for late March/early April.

There are also several training courses organised over the next few months any clubs interested please contact Fraser Ross for details, courses can be organised with topics that will suit the needs of the members.

Trade news - Kenny Hunter has returned from foreign shores, after spending the last couple of years in Dubai working for Toro. Kenny has decided to return home as he was missing the great Scottish weather, he has taken up a post with Bernard's so you will see him over the next couple of months after he settles in. Welcome back Kenny we look forward to seeing you at the Section events over the next year.

I went along to the Scotsturf show during November and I was very impressed with this year's set up. The show was very busy with a wide range of companies showing their wide range of products and machinery.

Clubmasters v Greenkeepers match - This year's match was held over Clobber Golf Club with the Clubmasters coming out on top after a close match. I would like to apologise to the clubmasters for the lack of team members from the Greenkeepers, next year we will make sure we have a full team so we can win back the trophy.

Many thanks to Clobber Golf Club for the use of their course and to the staff for their hard work on the day. I would like to thank Gary Smith, from Scott's, for sponsoring the day and for the continued support from the Scott's company.

Annual night out - This year's bash was held at Jongulars Comedy Club on November 23. A total of 20 members attended and the general feed back was very good, if anyone is interested next year's bash will be in the same place so put it in your diary for 2008.

The STRI will be holding a seminar at Loch Lomond Golf Club on February 19, the topic will be The Disturbance Theory on the Golf Course, there will be a limited number of places available so if your interested please get in contact with myself or David Carson Rigby Taylor.

Fraser Ross 07970 366 355 Karen.ross@tesco.net



NORTHERN – NORTH EAST

Firstly in the news this month is Tony McLure, of Whickham GC, who was trying to qualify to play on the Seniors European Tour. Playing at Quinta de Cima GC in the Algarve. Tony shot two 75s to finish in the top half of the field and finishing joint 13th to qualify for the finals the following week. The finals were played at Pestano Golf Resorts[Pinta Course] where Tony did quite well with scores of 76,70,71,75 and just missing out on qualifying for the tour next year by three shots not bad for first attempt and probably surprised a lot of people on his ability to play in the Seniors Tour. No doubt Tony will be trying again in 2008.

Vandalism is still ripe around the golf courses, Newcastle Utd GC are currently losing up to three and half dozen flagsticks each week, damage to the irrigation boxes, branches torn off trees and then smashed up a memorial bench. Let's hope it quiets down.

Another greenkeeper is on the move, David Cuthbertson, Course Manager at Slaley Hall, will have took up a new post by the time you read this. He is moving to Rockcliffe Hall GC this is a new course under construction and I believe it is owned by the Chairman of Middlesborough Football Club. I wish you well Davy for the future, if you are still going to support Sunderland you'd better think twice on that one.

And lastly if any of you are going to Harrogate as I said in the last report, I will be on the BIGGA stand and look forward to meeting you. Well I won't be there this year or any other year as I have had my services rendered after 20 years and it's all down to technology over the last couple of years. I had been doing less and less so I will most likely see some of you when I pop down for a day. If any of you have any news just give me a ring or send an email.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH WEST

I hope everyone has had a great Christmas and look forward to seeing some of you at Harrogate in the coming week.

This is a very quiet time of the year so I don't expect too much news. Here is the contact information for anyone who requires it. The Secretary Bert Cross on 0151 7245412 or myself, Chris Sheehan on 0151 2894625 my e-mail is jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk for golf tournament details contact Billy Merritt at The Lodge, Beacon Park GC, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Mobile no. 07985175825.

Chris Sheehan



SHEFFIELD

On December 3 we held our Christmas golf competition followed by our AGM. May I take this opportunity to thank the Captain, Brian Haxton and Worksop Golf Club for the courtesies of the course.

Once again, we were made very welcome and I would like to pass on congratulations to Tim and his staff for the wonderful condition of the course. Also thanks must go to the catering staff, bar staff and David Dufall for all their help in making this day a success. The sponsors of these events also play a major part in making the day successful and this competition's sponsor was Rigby Taylor, whose representative, Mike Brear, provided us with an excellent prize table.

The winners of the competition were: 1. Richard Jones, 38 pts, H/C 0; 1.2 Darren Coop, 38 pts, H/C 0; 1.3 Andrew Bunting, 37 pts, H/C 11; 1.4 Colin Hopper 34 pts, H/C 8; 1.5 Paul Hill, 34 pts, H/C 14; 1.6 Kevin Hazlehurst, 34 pts, H/C 16. Guest winners: Ian Collett, 35 pts, H/C 15; Gary Bardhill, 32 pts, H/C 15. Nearest the pin: Peter Fell, 72 inches.

A big thank you goes to all our sponsors and supporters throughout the year. Thanks to Steve for running the raffle! A special mention goes to James Whelan, of Rotherham Golf Club - well done.

On a serious note would all members please be aware that in future no application forms for golf competitions will be accepted after the official closing date that is on the form. This also includes any telephone calls. All forms must be accompanied with the correct payment required. The forms are sent out in plenty of time and therefore there is no excuse for late arrivals.

AGM - Last year's minutes were read and passed. Next year's golf competitions are: May 12, Coxmoor GC; July 7 - Grange Park GC; July 23 - Otley GC; Sheffield Section v Northern Section - September 9, Hallamshire GC. Christmas competition TBA. The Treasurer's and Secretary's reports were read and passed. Chris Astle announced his resignation after seven years as Section Secretary. I am sure you would all like to join with the Committee in thanking Chris for all his hard work for the Section.

Election of Officials - President, N. Maltby; Chairman, G. Brammah; Vice Chairman N. Maltby; Secretary, J. Stevens; Treasurer, A. Sampson; Competitions, R. Needham and S. Currie; Committee, C. Astle, A. Unwin, J. Lax. The Committee would like to ask that all members, in future, wear their BIGGA ties to all Section functions.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to say I hope you have had a good Christmas and have a great New Year.

Robert Needham



MIDLANDS

Education and Training News – After a busy few weeks which have seen the Irrigation Workshop, excavator training and Noise and Vibration Management seminar, I had just about had time to sit down and digest

some of the feedback from the events. It appears that there would be sufficient interest in running a one day 'Irrigation Electrical Fault Finding workshop'. The subject was briefly covered during the event at The Belfry but a purpose hands-on day may be worthwhile. Please let me know if you are interested. I have also had an enquiry about running a 'Pesticides Update and Refresher course'. This again would be a hands-on refresher covering latest legislation, calibration and techniques. We would need a minimum of 10 candidates for this event. There is also a possibility of running another excavator course. It is important that you confirm your interest as soon as possible so I can make arrangements according to the demand.

Paul Woodham



EAST MIDLANDS

Just to remind everybody that entries have been sent out for the Go Karting with the Christmas Tournament Entry slips, for the event that takes place on February 20. Closing date for entries will be the January 21, non members of golf clubs will then be approached to fill the remaining places. Five-A-Side Football will be taking place the week before Harrogate please ring the Secretary Dan Rodgers on 07745 227224.

Dan Rodgers Shirland Golf Club www.shirlandgolfclub.co.uk



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all and welcome to my first column for these pages. Firstly I would like to thank Allan Walker for his contributions over the last couple of years. Hopefully you will enjoy reading what I have to write and if anyone has any news or information you would like to be included then don't hesitate to contact me. As you know I have to write this over a month before you read it so I will try my best to make it as up to date as possible.

I hope everybody had a good Christmas and New Year and is ready to face the challenges that 2008 will bring. Ideally that won't include three feet of water on the fairways in June!

January means that BTME is on the horizon and our annual pilgrimage to Harrogate. As a thank-you to all our golf day sponsors, we will be having a reception in the St George Hotel (across the road from the show) at 2pm on the Tuesday. All Section members are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, November 27 saw our first winter seminar at Peterborough Milton Golf Club. The day was well attended and we were treated to interesting and informative presentations from Sam Maclean, of Bernhard and Co, and Jim Mackenzie, from Celtic Manor Resort. There was also a grinding demonstration from Bernhards Tournament Support team. Many thanks go to Bernhards for sponsoring the day, to Sam and Jim and to Peterborough Milton for their hospitality. A seminar day is also being organised for February, full details to follow.

As I write this, our last golf day of the year is due to take place at Market Rasen. I am sure that John and his team will have had the course

Around the Green

in top condition for all of us and there will definitely have been some entertainment in the Christmas bring and win prize draw.

Most of the 2008 golf fixtures have been finalised, starting with Pottergate GC in April. A full fixture list will be here next month and will also be placed on the website. Once again if anyone has any news or information for me then I can be contacted on

Steve Beverly www.eastofenglandbigga.com
07932516633 or steveimingham@aol.com



BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

Happy New Year! Since January is named after Janus, the Roman god of gates and openings, this gives us all an ideal time to look back on the past year and forward to the New Year.

To make sure all goes well in the New Year, the Annual General meeting was held on 21 November at the Beaconsfield GC situated in a lovely part of Buckinghamshire on the edge of the Chiltern hills when the following were elected to serve for 2008: Sid Arrowsmith, Chairman, Alec MacIndoe, Education, Dean Jones, Secretary, Frank Booth, Treasurer, Alistair Higgs, Match/Handicap Secretary and yours truly – Scribe for another year. All ably assisted by Committee Members, Dan Lightfoot, Matt Smith and newly appointed Erik Kinlon. A thoroughly enjoyable day was organised by Keith Willcox, Club Secretary and David Jennings, Catering Manager kept the wolf from the door aided and abetted by Alf and Pauline behind the bar at the impressive clubhouse looking out over the course.

A relaxed Texas Scramble format with a chance to experience this Harry Colt masterpiece over this nicely bunkered course with large greens was indeed a true pleasure and educational experience to all who took part.

Bill Patterson and his staff are to be congratulated for, despite several days torrential rainfall, they ensured its fine condition to the delight of all who played and the following winners: Dougie McGregor – Long Drive, Graham Down – Nearest the Pin. Winners of the Avoncrop Cup were 1st the Green Rings – Alec MacIndoe, A. Thrift, G. Ferris and E. Kinlon; 2nd Burnham Boys – S. Lawson, C. Lillitou, Rob Hogan and L. Bishop; and 3rd Goody's Mob – A. Higgs, C. Taylor, D. Goodchild and C.Small. The Ely Cup presented to the Golfer of the Year was awarded to Ben Kebby, from The Berkshire GC. Thank you to Barry McCloskey, and Avoncrop, for sponsoring this event and to all the other trade who participated and sponsored us throughout 2007.

In early November the Buckinghamshire GC hosted a Seniors Tour event playing for The Kingdom of Bahrain Trophy. This event was not scheduled on the tour to be played in the UK and to the shock and surprise of Erik Kinlon and his team, with only several weeks' notice, he had to produce a course fit for tournament conditions. After a bit of double bubble and working late into the night this world class golfing venue was transformed to provide a stiff test for the elite of the European Seniors Tour.

Greenkeeper members through the region provided Erik and his team with support in preparing the course over the tournament which was a

great success. Erik would like to thank all the team who volunteered their time and effort and he has promised to provide you all with a Celtic shirt and a pint at Harrogate.

No mention has been made about any New Year Resolutions but I did hear a rumour about a rep who goes by the name of Roger Clarke, a former West Ham fan, who apparently became disillusioned with the Hammers and after a weak moment in Portugal fuelled by Sangria, decided to have a tattoo of the MK Dons stamped where the sun don't shine. If there is any member unfortunate enough to have witnessed this, please contact Ross, at Abbey Hill GC, who will provide all the necessary counselling.

Looking forward to 2008 – make a note in your diary about the Harrogate BTME exhibition which is just about upon us. You know it is a good idea to come and see everything under one roof and see what is the latest on show – all designed to make life easier and with education on the agenda it must go to the top of your list.

I hope many of you can make the journey and I look forward to seeing you there. Best wishes to you all!

Mark Day mark@tacitgolf.com



MID-ANGLIA SECTION

Happy New Year One and all, I hope you were able to enjoy the festive holidays even though I am sure your respective golf courses have been very busy. Harrogate is just around the corner and I look forward to seeing those of you making the pilgrimage this year. It is sure to be another good show with some interesting speakers and all you could wish to see.

On the educational front, the Mid-Anglia Section are running two courses in the early part of the new year. There is a Chainsaw course and also a Sprayer Update course, so any interested parties please contact Gerald Bruce, at Berkhamsted Golf Club, who can provide further details. Golf this year kicks off with the spring tournament at the Bedfordshire Golf Club. The summer competition is to be held at either Cherwell Hills or Silverstone. Panshangar hosts the autumn event and finally, tour cards for the following year will be decided at Chesfield Downs. More details to follow later.

Open Championship qualifying takes place at Ashridge on July 2 and is well worth a visit – you might even carry a bag if you are so inclined! And congratulations to Jim Cassidy and his wife on the arrival of their son, Conor James Cassidy, who I am told is very cute and chatty. Also, good luck to Chris Hunt, of Woburn, who is embarking on an exciting new venture.

Let's all keep our fingers crossed that winter doesn't last too long and that spring actually decides to turn up this year. If you have any items of interest please call me on the number below.

Craig Spooner
craig.spooner@advanta-seeds.co.uk



SOUTH EAST – SURREY



G'Day and Happy New Year possums. I'm just getting over jet lag after my journey down under so this report is going to be short and sweet. I'll show you the bite mark that the Great White gave me when I call as it's just above the scar that the crocs tail left when he tried to get away. But enough of this 'Steve Irwin' chat for it's time for another jab of the anti snake bite serum and a little blow on my digeridoo.

England vs Scotland at Hankley Common GC on November 7 was another draw so England retain the trophy. I just wonder what the result would have been had I not had to go to Australia. Greenkeepers vs Secretaries at The Berkshire GC on November 28 was a victory for the BIGGA boys by one point. Report on the Turkey Trot and AGM will appear in the February edition as will full details of my day by day Australian adventure.

Brian (Koala) Willmott



KENT

Happy New Year! I hope you are all looking forward to what promises to be a great year for us in Kent as we have five, yes five, golf events confirmed at some great venues in all corners of the county. If you have not yet received a fixture list then please consult our website for full event details. We are now preparing a similar sized event list for 2009 so if you want the glory of hosting a day for your greenkeeping colleagues please contact us via the website.

Our Turkey Trot, at Birchwood Park, was a resounding success. On a morning where the rain clouds threatened briefly 45 of us were greeted by glorious winter sunshine at the first tee as well as Vic Maynard and the Ernest Doe's refreshment wagon. I can honestly say that I played my best round ever (a gross 82) and foolishly believed that 43 points might give me a chance of winning! That was until Gary "The Mexican" Branchett rolled into town with his amigos. I shall attribute his 48 point winning total to the condition of the course which my team had presented in fine fettle again. Gary won the Scott's Shield for his efforts and a 14lb turkey, as well as earning himself a considerable cut from the handicap secretary next time out! Everybody was a winner on the day, however, as bottles of wine were presented to all who attended the most popular golf event the section have staged thus far.

A very brief AGM followed a fine Christmas dinner where Kev Morris managed to wrap up proceedings in about five minutes flat! Basically, the committee will stay on in their current roles and there were no issues raised from the assembled masses. The rest of the evening was a great laugh as we all thoroughly enjoyed each others company in the bar. For details of this part of the day ask someone else! We would like to thank all our colleagues who have regularly attended our golf days and seminars and, again, our growing list of superb sponsors. Without their support the section would seriously struggle as their funding helps us subsidise all our events and provide prizes for the winners. Please show your support for them in the coming season. I hope to see a few of you at Harrogate soon. Best of luck for the coming year.

Rob Holland

SUSSEX



Hello again. I hope you are all well and have had a good year. It does seem to have passed us by quickly again. by the time you read this Christmas will have come and gone, you never know we may have had our first real frost. What a strange year we have had weather wise, you must wonder what the new year has in store for us.

There has been a few events happen recently, the first of which is the football match we had against Surrey which held at three bridges football club. I would like to thank John Wart, from Albourne Irrigation, for sponsoring the pitch and also a big thanks to mike ring and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the kit. The game was not for the faint hearted and was full of commitment. Surrey scored early doors and we equalised through Dan Beard. Unfortunately Surrey were to strong for us and it ended 4-1 to Surrey. The score was a bit flattering but congratulations to them and a big thank you to Dave Langham for sorting out things his end. The pictures are of the Sussex team and of the hand over of the new kit between Vice Chairman, Matt Crosslegs and the sponsors Rigby Taylor, represented by Mike Ring.

The next event was the AGM which was held at the Dyke GC. We did have a nine hole competition which was sponsored kindly by Gary Ogilvy (an ugly more irritating Ian Beale) from Avoncrop. There was a good turn out for the AGM this year, with 16 members in attendance.

Derek Farrington has stepped down as Secretary, so a big thanks to Derek for all his hard work. His replacement is Dave Allen, from Singing Hills, who was brave enough to step up to the plate.

The last event of the calendar was the Turkey Trot which was held at Worthing Golf Club. The course was in lovely condition and a big thanks to George Barr and his team for providing such a great venue. A big thank to everyone at Worthing Golf Club for their great hospitality. Also good luck to Ian Stevens, the Secretary of Wothing, who is moving on to pastures green in Devon. He did say we are all welcome to visit, apart from George! The sponsors of the day were Avoncrop so a big thanks to them and Gary O.

Moving on to the results; 56pts T. Bremer, A. freeman, M. Harvey and I. Sellars; 54pts J. Edmonds, A. Jones, C. Wells and D. Roddis; 54pts G. Ogilvy, D. Hinks, J. Coles and Sean; 52pts T. Woolley, D. Ansell, D. Farrington and P. Day; 52pts M. Crossley, P. Crossley, G. Scott and P. Scott; 51pts P. Ward, J. Budd, and K. Myers; 51pts R. Short, N. Baillee, M. Reed and C. Lusty; 50pts G. Pollard, E. Green and D. Ray; 49pts unknown; 48pts R. Hudson, P. Dunbar, S. MCarthy and N. Simpson; 48pts G. Barr, I. Evans, D. Howie and Mclizar; 48pts D. Beard, D. Allen, S. Lake and D. King Spooner;

47pts East Brighton GC lead by Andy Painter; 46pts B. Waters, C. Waters, R. Azvan and T. Stone; 46pts Less Shrub and co; 45pts Palmers; 45pts M. Gould, M. Willow, P. Ray and D. Haskell. Thank you to everyone who attended, we had a great day and an even better evening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for there support over the year. Have a great Christmas a look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Rob Hudson

Around the Green

ESSEX



The Christmas Tournament and AGM took place at Orsett Golf Club at the end of November on a typical overcast autumn's day with grey skies but slight warmth in the air. A very well presented course was laid out not for the faint hearted, with some cunning pin positions there to deceive.

The format, new to most was, a Progressive Stableford. The best two scores on the first six, best three on the second and all four on the final six. This format certainly makes you work as team and also puts a competitive edge on the team game. Having asked around most found it a better way to end the season than our previous Christmas matches of Texas scramble.

Following the golf, the AGM took place and was attended by around 70 members guests and trade. Chairman Don Clark led the proceedings and after introducing the committee went through the normal AGM issues. He then went onto thank the sponsors of this year's events; Avoncrop Amenity, Banks Amenity Products, Ernest Doe & Sons, Rigby Taylor and Tacit. He also thanked all the trade who kindly sponsored the raffle table for all of our events. Neil Peachey and P Tuckwell Ltd for their sponsorship of the section calendar and Andy Turbin and Ernest Doe & Sons for sponsoring the inaugural, Essex, Surrey and Sussex regional golf event held at Colne Valley.

New rules for the Section have been drawn up and the membership were asked to approve these, they are now posted on the website. No new committee members came forward for election so on block the committee were re-elected to the positions of: - Chairman, Don Clark, Secretary, Martin Forrester, Treasurer, Tom Smith, Competitions, Antony Kirwan, Education, Paul O'Kane, Press Officer, Arnold Phipps-Jones. Antony announced that the first team knockout had been a success, though there was still the final to play. Next year's knock-out will start earlier so as to give members more time to arrange and play their respected games. Watch this space and also the website to find out about entry details.

After the AGM the year's trophies were presented to the five winners of the tournaments this year, Gosfield Lakes Golf Club, Nick Gates, Theydon Bois Golf Club, Adam Millward, Colchester Golf Club, Ray Clark, North Weald Golf Club, Don Clark, Golfer of the Year went to Adam Millward, and Trade Member of the Year, Michael Fance.

The evening meal was served, followed by the prizes for the day: 1st on C/B 114 points, Steve Vale, Malcolm Smith, Kyle Smith, Neil Tutton; 2nd on C/B 114 points, Antony Kirwan, Neil Peachey, Roy Sprong, Steve Crossdale. 3rd on C/B 114 points, Mark Keysell, Andy Cracknell, Mark Stopps, Gary Smith; 4th on 113 points, Steve Denton Chris Wild, Arnold & Mark Phipps-Jones. Longest Drive, John Potticary. Nearest the Pin, Neil Tutton. Andy Turbin of Ernest Doe & Sons presented the prizes, to whom we thank for sponsoring the day. Our thanks also go to Orsett Golf Club for allowing us the course for the day and to Don Clark and his team for a course to be proud of.

Next year's events are at the following venues Upminster, Warley Park, Three Rivers, Bentley, and The Essex, dates will be coming in the New Year.

I would like to wish you all a belated Happy New Year and a good Greenkeeping year ahead. Contact me at highwoods.photographic@talktalk.net or call me on 01206-852.353

Arnold Phipps-Jones



SOUTH WEST AND WALES – SOUTH WEST

A Very Happy New Year to everyone in the South West. Many congratulations to Jane and the South West Regional Board for the very interesting and informative seminar at Cannington back in November. All speakers excelled themselves, and despite one or two technical problems the day was a huge success. Jim McKenzie gave us a fascinating insight into everything involved in getting the Celtic Manor Resort ready for the 2010 Ryder Cup, and Colin Webber gave the most amazingly frank and emotional account of the building and opening of his Portmore Course. Well done and thanks to all.

Further NVQ 3 one day courses are arranged at Cannington College as follows – and having attended two of the last three myself, I can't recommend attending these forthcoming days too highly. Remember, you don't have to be enrolled for the full NVQ to attend. 07.01.2008 – Golf Course Presentation. 27.02.2008 – Manage Oneself. 26.3.2008 – Create Grassed & Planted areas.

Contact George Pitts, at Bridgwater College, on 01278 655144 or 07929 754401 or email pittsg@bridgwatercollege.ac.uk to discuss content and times etc. Not too much else to report this month – I've just represented Nobby at the annual Section Secretaries meeting at BIGGA House. The purpose of the day was to meet the staff team, and hear about all the latest initiatives, news, and national Association activities, and to report back to the membership. The scope and depth of the work at HQ is actually quite amazing, and the whole staff team are just so enthusiastic. There's no question that times are hard in the golf industry, and it's necessary to diversify and think outside the box to balance the books. But against somewhat of a global downturn – their enthusiasm and dedication is making it work.

But they can't do it without our support, input, and participation as members. Harrogate Week looks like being a big success again, but will only be confirmed as such, by all of us attending. I always try to place my early spring orders while I'm there as an encouragement.

Back at Minchinhampton we've had yet another break-in. The door to an old outbuilding (which is actually right in the middle of the golf course), was kicked in for the umpty-eighth time. This has happened so frequently that we don't actually store anything worthwhile in there – just one or two old railway sleepers on the floor, and an owl-box in the rafters. But as there had been a spate of recent local break-ins, I thought I'd do my duty as a good citizen and report it. I'd got five minutes before a meeting so I rang the police non-emergency line, and this is a verbatim transcript of the conversation.

“Good morning, Gloucestershire Police – Rachel speaking, how may I help?” (It did sound more like an insurance company call-centre than the nerve-centre of Glos. police, but at that point I was prepared to give



her the benefit of the doubt.) "Good morning" I replied politely – "I'd like to report a break-in at Minchinhampton Golf Club please. The door to a storage barn on the course has been kicked in during the night – luckily the building was more-or-less empty so nothing was actually taken." "Okay sir, no problem, I'll just take a few details. "Your name please" – "Paul Worster – I'm the Course Manager". "Thank you sir – your address please" - "17 Chesterton Grove, Cirencester..... "Thank-you sir, your date of birth please" – "27th January 1950...". "Your Country of origin please sir" Er – Britain" "Your group of ethnicity please sir" (bit harder that one) "What? – Well Anglo-Saxon I suppose?" " Thank you sir, but" (and here Rachel lowers her voice to a conspiratorial whisper) "actually I meant your colour please" "Ah" – (by this time the correct answer was actually bright red because I'm getting a bit fed up and Rachel's got the hint) "Sorry sir, just a few more questions – it's for Home Office statistics see?" " Have you had occasion to contact the Police on this, or any other matter, within the last six months?" "Um, well, I did find a pair of spectacles in the street a little while ago and handed them in at Tetbury Police Station". "Have you handed in spectacles before sir?" (By this time, I'm late for my meeting, I haven't even started to report the crime, and to top it all I've just been branded a serial hander-in of spectacles.) At least you'd have thought that Rachel would be hard-pressed to make the conversation any more bizarre – right? Well actually no.

"Turning to the crime itself sir, where exactly did this take place?" "Like I told you," I replied testily, "the door to an empty storage barn in the middle of the golf course was kicked in last- night". "What time did this happen sir?" "During the bl*dy night" I muttered heavily – "sorry, say between 7pm and 7am." "Was anything taken sir?" "No, luckily the barn was empty apart from two railway sleepers and an owl-box". "Was there any CCTV footage sir?" "No not from the middle of the golf-course – but, ha ha, I suppose we could always ask the owl?" (By this time, Rachel is completely oblivious to my sarcasm, and sensing the finishing post ploughs on regardless). "Are there any forensics at the crime scene sir?" "No, the door is a pile of splintered matchwood, but come to think of it there were one or two feathers on the floor – hey, maybe we should pull the owl for questioning after all?" "Who is the victim in this particular case sir?" "Well what's left of the door wasn't looking too clever the last time I saw it, but I guess it's the golf club". "Okay, thank you sir, I'll give you a crime number and you'll be hearing from victim-support over the next few days – they can arrange counselling in case anyone's been traumatised by this event". (Of course the only person remotely traumatised was me - but that was by Rachel).

I couldn't help thinking if I'd been reporting a bank-raid, the villains would have been off scot-free and at least a couple of time-zones away by the time Rachel had taken the details. How about some proper news from your clubs next month?

Paul Worster
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST SECTION

A very happy New Year to you all. Christmas is over and a lot of you will now be thinking about BTME at Harrogate. For those of you going, have a good time, enjoy the seminars and don't drink too much!!

The last bit of business for 2007 for the Section was the Turkey Trot

held at Barton On Sea GC on December 5. For regular readers you will know I always make comment on the weather conditions for the day and how lucky we are to always get excellent weather. Well, this year's weather was not perfect but considering everyone drove to Barton in monsoon conditions and that the rain cleared the conditions were not too bad. However, the wind was a touch strong and definitely freshened up the players. Sadly, I could not go outside as we were playing off two tees so with much regret I had to stay in the warm. I was informed from the players that the course was in magnificent condition, many congratulations and thank you to our chairman Tony Gadd and his team for presenting a great course. As usual we were very well looked after by the staff at Barton. Thank you to the catering, bar staff and all others at the club for looking after us and making us so welcome. The Captain Ray Hunt accompanied us for the day's play and joined us for the meal and in a speech made us very welcome and also sponsored Nearest the Pin. Thank you Ray for your kindness. Our gratitude also goes to the sponsor for the day New Forest Farm Machinery and Blade Amenity - the Turkeys always go down very well! So the results for the day: Category 1- 0-10 (H'cap): 1. Rob Patrick, 36 pts: 2. Ed McCabe, 32 pts. Category 2 – 11-18 (H'cap): 1. Simon Justice, 32 pts: 2. Chris Bitten, 31pts. Category 3 – 19-28 (H'cap): 1. Ben Glass and overall winner for the day, 37 pts: 2. Les Uniacke, 27 pts. Nearest the Pin: Ray Meakin. Longest Drive (Sponsored by Rigby Taylor): strongman Chris Bitten! It has to be said that Kevan Glass on his first tournament organisation did an absolutely magnificent job. Tony Gadd thanked Kevan and everybody agreed with the compliment. Also Alan Magee wins a prize for top performing raffle ticket sales person and Chris Bitten spent £4 on tickets and won about a "million" pounds worth of prizes – well I'm sure you all agree he does deserve it.

Chris is working hard in the preparation of next year's educational seminar which is planned to be held at Canford Magna GC sometime in March. More details are to follow. Back to Alan Magee: Alan is now the organiser for the Jim Fry Pairs Competition. Entries for the competition are to be sent to him at 12 Sutton Close, Poole, Dorset, BH17 8SS. The cost is £12 per pair. Standard FBBB rules apply with a nominated home course before the closing date. The closing date is March 31, 2008. Any questions please feel free to call Alan on 01202 606668.

As a reminder, the new Tournament Organiser is Kevan Glass. Please contact Kevan from now on for booking and payment of Golf Days at the following address: Apartment 1, Forge Side Court, Lepe Road, Langley, Southampton SO45 1SS or on mobile 07859 053054 or on e-mail: glassy2003@hotmail.com.

Have a great New Year!

Joe Crawley 07721 389200

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Section Notes - Can all notes be emailed to: melissa@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of the month prior to publication please. Suggested word guide: 500



In the Shed

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QUICK NINE HOLE QUIZ

- 1 Dynamite
- 2 23
- 3 Roy Hattersley
- 4 Red
- 5 Florida
- 6 Colonel Tom Parker
- 7 Blackbeard the pirate
- 8 Geoffrey Chaucer
- 9 1694

MONSTER SUDOKU

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SQUIGGLY SUDOKU

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Birstall Golf Club



Requires a

COURSE MANAGER

The successful candidate will:

- Be qualified to NVQ3 or equivalent with spraying certificates P A 1,2, & 6 also CS 30 and 31 certification would be an advantage
- Have at least 5 years golf course experience.
- Possess the ability to lead and motivate staff.
- Communicate clearly and effectively and have a good knowledge of IT.
- Have proven ability to manage resources within budgetary controls.
- Have knowledge of all relevant Health and Safety and other appropriate legislation.
- Have a sound knowledge of irrigation.
- Being a golfer would be desirable.
- Salary dependent on experience and qualifications.

Birstall Golf Club was founded in 1901 it is a mature meadowland course, its main feature being a diversity of indigenous trees. The Club Council has ambitious plans for future development and seeks an equally ambitious Course Manager to lead and share in this vision.

Closing date 31st January 2008

Please apply in writing to
The Secretary, Birstall Golf Club, Station Road, Birstall,
Leicester LE4 3BB.

RECRUITMENT



Branston Golf & Country Club are looking for a Golf Manager (Full time)

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Minimum of 5 years experience working within a golf course environment including course management. Preferably qualified to NVQ Level 3 standard or equivalent. Experience and knowledge of irrigation systems and machinery. Working knowledge of health & safety regulations. Experience with golf booking systems/course usage. Ability to manage budgets, costs, suppliers and resources. Excellent communication skills.

Closing date for applications 31st January 2008.

Please apply for an application form and outline job description to Bonnie Fairhurst on 01283 528329.
or email bonniefairhurst@branston-golf-club.co.uk
www.branston-golf-club.co.uk



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www.haggscastlegolfclub.com



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Please apply in writing or by email, with CV to:
The Secretary, The Royal St George's Golf Club, Sandwich,
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- Proven communication skills
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Patrick Shanahan
General Manager
Wimbledon Park Golf Club
Home Park Road
Wimbledon Park SW19 7HR

or alternatively
e-mail your CV and letter to patrick@wpgc.co.uk

CLOSING DATE: 4th February 2008

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When you join you are automatically given membership of one of the 27 sections around the country. As an active member you can attend golf days and other social events on a regular basis enabling you to network amongst others in the industry. Look at the 'Around the Green' section for contact details.

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ABOVE: Greenkeeper International magazine
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A SAD GOODBYE

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I fondly remember my experiences on the farm as a wee boy doing a summer job and seeing the farmer get the tractor out of the shed. Now this was no ordinary tractor, it mostly spent its life in the shed and would only be brought out for special occasions. It was a fruit farm and most of the lugging was done by wheelbarrow and of course by the seasonal helpers from the village and surrounding towns. I remember the tractor driver getting it out was quite an event. It was an old Massey Ferguson with a spotlight on the front, not only did it have its own shed but it had clothes too. Before this tractor went to work there was a hive of activity. Firstly it was undressed with all its finery removed; then the battery, which was stored elsewhere was fitted; next it was fuelled from a watering can and then dusted down.

It was then the big moment when Willie would start the engine with a cloud of smoke. He would then start a process of twiddling and turning a knob and when finished he drove the tractor in all its splendour out of the shed to get to work.

As usual I have gone off the subject and delved into my past, but the reason for the story was not wasted I hope. Yes the tractor was wonderful and will always be a special memory, but it was not the tractor that inspired the story, it was Willie who made it a truly wonderful experience and that's what I really wanted to touch on in this my final column.

Yes we do it with grass, with the wonderful machinery available today, but my most memorable experiences during this past year have without doubt been the people I have met along.

Now to mention by name all those who have made my journey such a pleasant one would be impossible. The passion I had been told was weaning and lost forever, but it's still evident to me in abundance and that's got to be a good thing.



The world is a changing and we have to adapt, taking with us all that is the special and developing into the future.

This year we've had a major push on sustainable golf, it's hard to pick up a magazine without the subject matter being discussed. Well is it the new magical recipe for success or not? Well of course it is, because it's nothing new. It's been with us since time and memorial it's called good greenkeeping. A new name for a tried and tested system for producing a fine golfing venue with judicial imputes of all the ingredients to produce fine turf that can take the game of golf into the future with the blessing of the general public.

The point is this, it should not or ever be viewed as an evangelical visionary new idea because that turns people off to the fact that it's got to be right way to go forward.

I am firmly of the opinion that the basics of good greenkeeping are as relevant today as they have ever been, so what has changed that makes this such a hard thing to achieve in some cases? Trust me, no two courses are the same and the management at your golf club should be different from the one down the road. Of course the basics never change but they do have to be fine tuned to suit your own land mass. I am concerned there are those who wish to criticise the efforts of well meaning members of our Association and

have an answer to all the ills and, of course, a remedy for a better way forward. They do so with no real interest other than their own and I have seen a groundswell of opinions that have harmed the well being of the incumbent greenkeeper and the course, but also employ the tactic of financial savings as the buzzword for their very existence.

Well, take note, I for one have an interest in the well being of you all at heart and to those that think otherwise. I'm not that old and will be around for a wee while yet and if I have achieved nothing more this year then I have had my eyes opened to bad practice and the dumbing down of the art of greenkeeping. Make no mistake I am buoyed to challenge the sometimes unethical, practices that needs weeding out of this industry.

We have within our ranks some very special people from whom I am sure we could all take great lessons. I know this to be true because I have met many of them. This year my life has been enriched beyond my wildest dreams and, frankly, I don't think I have met a bad greenkeeper on my travels. You are an amazing lot with an ability to share your experiences and help others around achieve bigger and greater things. This, mixed with a dusting of greenkeeping passion and sprinkled with a determination to succeed, means we all have an assured way forward so I urge you to consider this - rub shoulders with as many other greenkeepers as you can. I have been greedy this year and have received all the benefits of doing just that. I have had a ball and for that I thank you all for the opportunity. It has been a life changing experience that I will never forget. If we can master the art of people then we will truly become masters of the art of greenkeeping.

So it's a worn out Chairman that passes on the mantel to Kenny Mackay and if he enjoys the experience as much as I have he will have a wonderful year. I am looking forward to a quieter life and seeing more of the kids, I have missed them like crazy at times this year and I plan to make up for lost time. I will also remember all those special people that have made my term as Chairman a truly amazing experience.



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