

# Letters

## THANK YOU

I attended Wentworth for the BMW PGA Championship, as a volunteer, via BIGGA, for the four days.

The first two days I was on standby for bad weather, and then on Saturday and Sunday I followed play, raking bunkers where necessary.

I am not a golfer, and in my day to day job do not have the time to observe the game. Attending Wentworth, following world-class players around the course, gave me a real opportunity to observe and appreciate the game for the first time.

The Wentworth West Course is always used for Championships as it is the most challenging. The course is very mature and undulating in places, with plenty of interest, and I felt privileged to be able to be there.

I found everyone I came into contact with very friendly, and helpful.

I would like to thank Clive Osgood for making my four days there possible, and wish the other greenkeepers I met all the best for the future, in particular Fred Deaman, for pointing me in the right direction.

Also thanks to Pike Hills GC for giving me the time off to attend Wentworth.

George Jones  
Greenkeeper  
Pike Hills GC  
York

## LEUKAEMIA CHARITY DAY

May 18 saw the Leukaemia Classic held at Rhuddlan Golf Club. The charity day competition saw 43 teams of 4 playing stableford, with the best two scores being recorded. A greenkeeping team entered the competition kindly sponsored by Major Owen Ltd. The inside knowledge of the course proved to be no help to the team recording a feeble 68pts - the winning score of 87pts taking the honours on a most enjoyable day.

Over £10,000 was taken on the day with further donations and raffle takings to be added. Rhuddlan Golf Club would like to thank Major Owen Ltd, Jason Moody of Seoul Nassau, Gerald of Farmura and Dave Austin of Rigby Taylor for their generosity.

Many thanks  
John Morris  
Course Manager  
Rhuddlan Golf Club

Greenkeeping team from left to right, Jonathan Pritchard, Miles Johnson - Rhuddlan GC, Darren Anderson MG - Abergele GC, John Morris - Rhuddlan GC.



## BMW SUPPORT TEAM WENTWORTH 2008

A team of volunteer Greenkeepers were on hand at The Wentworth Club for the BMW PGA Championship held at the end of May.

A small team were on stand-by duty on the Thursday and Friday of the event in case of bad weather. Fortunately the weather was kind on these two days and the monsoon threat predicted for the Saturday, and particularly for Sunday, did not materialise.

A full contingent of over 40 volunteers were available for the last two days of the Championship for what turned out to be routine bunker duties, although some were armed with squeegees just in case!

Welcome guests this year included Past Chairman, Billy McMillan and Vice Chairman, Peter Todd both enjoying the day's golf and hospitality.

Chris Kennedy and his team of Greenstaff presented the West Course as a great test of golf for the large early season field of contenders of this prestigious event.

The winner of this year's event was Miguel Angel Jimenez who beat Oliver

Wilson on the second extra hole of a sudden-death play-off after tying on 11 under par 277 in the regulation 72 holes.

Clive Osgood  
S E Regional Administrator





Please email your letters to Scott MacCallum, [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)  
 or Melissa Jones, [melissa@bigga.co.uk](mailto:melissa@bigga.co.uk)  
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## VEHICLE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

We recently bought a Kubota Utility vehicle for general greenkeeping duties at my home course of Eaglescliffe Golf Club.

Through the supplier – Lloyds – it was registered to go on the public roads necessary in order to maintain boundaries and distribute goods and equipment to different parts of the course etc, via any one of four different access points.

No problems were experienced relating to the registration - apart from one thing – it came back as “Private/Light Goods” or “PLG”. Thinking this was an over-sight I took all of the relevant paperwork down to our local DVLA office.

The assistant checked everything through but said she would need to confirm the change was OK. After some time she came back saying she had consulted the DVLA “hotline” and the information received said that golf course use was not considered agricultural. I asked why this was the case as the vehicle is fairly specialised and does not even have an enclosed cab. I asked why the use was different to say a dairy farmer who was maintaining grass; she said we are not classed as an agricultural producer. I informed her we already have two tractors which I have just re-taxed that have been on an agricultural classification for over ten years! She was unable to answer on this point, but advised me to contact DVLA in Swansea direct.

If the argument is that a tangible agri-product has to be produced, then vehicles associated with country parks and stately homes cannot tax vehicles as agricultural and I would question the bulk of the Forestry Commission’s fleet.

If maintaining hedges with a cutter attached to a vehicle is not agricultural then farmers are breaking the law, however if this is part of an agricultural spectrum of use then golf clubs surely qualify?

The official DVLA website states:  
 “Vehicles used solely for the purpose of agriculture, horticulture and forestry are exempt from vehicle tax...”

So why do golf course vehicles not fall in to one of these categories?

Course work can fall into all three!

The DVLA site continues: Agricultural machines - The following vehicles can be taxed in the ‘agricultural machine’ tax class:

### Agricultural tractor

A tractor used on the public roads only for purposes:

- relating to agriculture, horticulture, forestry
- activities falling within cutting verges bordering public roads
- cutting hedges or trees bordering public roads or bordering verges which border public roads

### Off road tractor

A tractor which isn’t an agricultural tractor which is:

- designed and constructed mainly for use off road more than on roads
- is not capable due to its construction of going over a speed limit of 25 miles per hour on the level under its own power

### Agricultural engine

A machine specially designed or permanently converted to perform an agricultural operation on the land (e.g. a combine harvester).

### Light agricultural vehicle

A vehicle which:

- has a weight not exceeding 1,000kg
- is designed and constructed so as to seat only the driver
- is designed and constructed primarily for use other than on roads
- is used only for the purposes relating to agriculture, horticulture or forestry

### Agricultural lift and loading vehicle

A vehicle which is:

- designed for off road use
- designed to lift and load
- and used only in agriculture, horticulture or forestry

There is no mention of golf courses being exempt from agricultural classification, infact it can be seen that virtually all golf clubs will own a machine which falls within it.

There is an odd point in the above regarding “Light Agricultural Machines” this stipulates “is designed and constructed so as to seat only the driver.” This is potentially a very unsafe situation given the nature of the activities undertaken by these machines. In an age when using a mobile phone while driving is considered unsafe are we really condoning the use of a hedge cutter at head height while driving a vehicle along a public highway or worse along the edge of a footpath?

Clearly this should not be the case and for safety reasons a second person should accompany the driver or was this overlooked? God forbid anyone should jump to the conclusion that the DVLA employee draughting the regulations did not know what he or she was talking about!

Golf has always been classed as a country pursuit and is closely linked to the maintenance of hedges, trees and scientific sites crucial to our indigenous wildlife. When these areas are on the periphery access has to be possible allowing machinery and operators to do their job. In the overall scheme of things this could be as infrequent as several times a year nevertheless there could be an impact on safety if work is not carried out in terms of highway visibility or fire risk.

There seems to be a lack of common sense on this issue, as the vehicles involved are all agricultural machines, doing agricultural duties and are on private land for 99.9% of the time.

If golf clubs are forced to re-tax their vehicles for the small amount of time they are on the road they will incur a big increase in their costs and I will predict they will not do it. Local councils will find they will need to contract out work which was formerly done by golf clubs on their boundaries.

We are supposed to be conserving fuel and working efficiently, when does the DVLA plan to start?

### Information:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/OwningAVehicle/TaxationClasses](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/OwningAVehicle/TaxationClasses)

**Brian G Ramsden**  
**Green Committee Chairman**  
**Eaglescliffe Golf Club**