

Welcome



A Month of Ups and Downs

August was one of those good month-bad months for the game of golf. Obviously we've been overwhelmed by the Olympics and with golf not an Olympic Sport – if you ask me it never should be, nor should tennis or basketball for that matter – the game hasn't been high profile in August.

But, as I say, there were reasons for genuine elation but also for depression all wrapped up in one 31 day period.

First the good news. Pdraig Harrington's emergence as a genuine golfing superstar.

There are those who argue that his Open win at Carnoustie last year was more of a case of stumbling over the line than a triumphant march towards the Claret Jug. That may be true but this year's Open win at Royal Birkdale was much more convincing and we saw signs of Harrington becoming one of those players who can do exactly what they want when the pressures are at their most intense.

Those signs grew in size - and added neon to make them even more obvious - at the US PGA Championship when he came from no-where, he was in danger of missing the cut at one stage, and absolutely dominated Sergio Garcia and Ben Curtis over the back nine to win his third Major. Anyone who looked at his eyes over the closing four holes, in particular, could see a fire burning that probably only Tiger could extinguish.

The phrase "role model" is vastly overused, but it is fair to say that Pdraig Harrington is exactly what British and Irish golf, needs at the moment – a good guy who gets every ounce from himself in terms of achievement and a man who other people can relate to.

That's the good news. The bad news has been yet another year of awful summer weather. I was on holiday for the first half of August but learning what the weather was like back home made me shudder. Having got back midway through the month the weather hadn't improved and I'm sure there are a large number of courses which have been closed for a period during August.

That's what we don't need. Golf clubs need revenue from visitors and societies and lousy weather doesn't encourage casual golfers to hit the fairways – even if beleaguered courses have been able to remain open for play. Coming on the back of last year, which was the wettest summer since I don't know when and revenue was down, we really needed a bumper summer and that having failed to materialise it may well lead to calls to cut budgets.

Cries that standards are slipping will no doubt follow but golfers will need to get real and appreciate that Course Managers can only do as much as is possible from the resources he or she is given. Any reduction in resource will inevitably mean less can be done. It shouldn't be too hard a concept to grasp.

Just time to wish Europe's Ryder Cup team good fortune at Valhalla and to pass on best wishes to Superintendent, Mark Wilson, and his team for the final preparations and the week itself.

DEVELOPMENTS AT VITAX

Clive Williams retired in August after 39 years in the industry. Having worked for many major players, he joined Vitax Ltd as Commercial Development Manager in 1998 spearheading the company's expansion and significantly increasing the Vitax product range. So much so that following his departure two separate divisions will be created and the post divided between two personnel.

Mike King, heads the new Supaturf Division as Sales and Marketing Manager, covering the whole of the UK (including Southern Ireland) and dealing with Local Authorities and Contractors. Having joined Vitax three years ago from Supaturf, Mike will be in charge of a team of four with special responsibility for the Supaturf range of line-marking paints and chemical and line-marking sprayers. Mike started out in horticulture before moving into amenity and brings over 20 years experience to the post.

Joe Crawley, who recently returned to the company to accept a post with greater responsibility, will be in charge of a new Fine Turf Division developing business, introducing new products and offering technical advice through Vitax Amenity's established UK distributor network. Joe will answer to the title of Sales and Marketing Manager – Fine Turf Division.

Clive Williams is delighted with the expansion of the Vitax team. "Mike and Joe are two well deserving young men," he said. He is looking forward to a retirement full of French travel, fine wines and good food.



Clive Williams



Mike King



Joe Crawley

PGA LAUNCHES POWERPLAY GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

The PGA has added a new Championship to its 2008 schedule, featuring PowerPlay Golf - the exciting new 9-hole format featuring two flags on every green.

With a total prize fund of £34,000, the PGA PowerPlay Golf Championship 2008 offers one of the PGA's most attractive purses. It incorporates three regional qualifying rounds - with 24 golfers from each making it through to a £25,000 grand final.

In PowerPlay Golf, double Stableford points are awarded for birdies or better to the more difficult black 'PowerPlay' flags. Golfers must take exactly three PowerPlays during their first eight holes, with an optional PowerPlay at greater risk on the final hole, but need to choose carefully when to attack the course and when to defend their score.

The three regional qualifiers are at: Midlands: Bransford GC, Worcs – Tuesday, August 26; North: Oulton Hall GC, West Yorks – Tuesday, September 2; South: Wildwood GC, Surrey – Thursday, September 11

The final is at Frilford Heath Golf Club, Oxfordshire, on Tuesday, October 7.

GROW GREEN EVENT

At Harrogate Week, John Deere unveiled its new 7500 and 8500 PrecisionCut lightweight fairway mowers and its 7400 TerrainCut rotary. These mowers were joined by a number of other new model introductions at the company's recent Grow Green Event Staged over 10 days at the Luisenpark in Mannheim, Germany.

Available from this October, the 7400 TerrainCut rotary sets itself apart by offering an adjustable mowing width of 1.88m or 1.73m. This is designed to allow flat surfaces to be mown with minimal overlap between the units three separate 685mm decks. Over undulating ground, the decks can be closed up, increasing their overlap to help eliminate misses.

The 7400 can also be operated with an offset mowing position, the left and right decks extending out to 38cm beyond the full mowing width to allow the mower to work close up to a bunkers. This reduces the chance of the mowers weight damaging the bunker edge.

Moving on to the fairway mowers, the light fairway 7500 is a five by 22 inch gang unit with small diameter 5 inch cylinders for a tight cut. Fitted with a fixed and adjustable rear rollers, the cutting units are essentially heavy duty versions of the cutting units used on John Deere's latest 2500B and 2500E triplex greens mowers. Using the same chassis, both the 7700 and 8700 models utilise 22in ESP Extra Strength and Precision cutting units with 7 inch diameter cylinders.

The JX80 pedestrian mower currently sold in the UK has proven popular with golf users, despite the fact that it targeted to domestic user. This model is superseded by the JX90, with two commercial alternatives, the JX90C and JX90CB offering the added durability to suit professional use.

A key design change is the fitting of a steel frame around the engine, with AVS anti-vibration for the handles and new controls. Both 'pro' models meet the latest EU and HSE directives on operator safety.

The mid-chassis 3020 compact tractor series are now offered with 'drive-over' decks.



A turbocharged 36hp engine powers the 7000 Series, with a turbocharged and intercooled 42hp unit driving the 8500.

EMERGENCY WATER TANKS KEEP CLUB DROUGHT WATER COSTS DOWN

Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey has installed emergency water tanks to provide supplies in the case of drought.

Speedcut Contractors of Oxford constructed the three 84,000gallon tanks on concrete bases, complete with automatic circulation and transfer pipework and pumps.

The club is now able to store mains water when it is cheaper, during the winter months. Two years ago they were hit by a Drought Order, forcing them to tanker in expensive grey water (partly treated drainage water but unfit for drinking) to keep the greens alive.

The parkland course, with some heathland characteristics, is regarded as a testing course which was designed by Harry Colt, one of the foremost architects of his day.

Speedcut Contracts Manager Barry Pace said: "Tandridge is a superb golf course and these water tanks will ensure they have a supply of water for the greens during a drought without having to bring in expensive water."

The water tanks at Tandridge under construction



OHIO PROGRAMME

BIGGA member Paul McCormack, formerly of Kirkhill Golf Club in Glasgow, is currently working at Pine Valley Golf Club in New Jersey USA, as part of the Ohio programme. Paul, aged 21, will be based at Pine Valley, ranked number one in America, until October 2008. He is gaining valuable experience there before heading south for the winter to possibly Florida or Carolina.



EDWIN BUDDING AWARD

The International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA) is announcing it will now be accepting nominations for the Inaugural Edwin Budding Award.

Edwin Budding was a pioneer who invented the reel mower in 1830, as well as the adjustable spanner/crescent wrench.

The IGCEMA's Edwin Budding Award recognises those who have made significant contributions to the golf course equipment industry, including those who have excelled in the business, history, design, engineering and maintenance of golf course equipment.

The award will be in addition to those known for their contributions to innovations in the turf equipment industry. The award will recognise those who think outside the box and who have dedicated themselves to improving the industry as a whole. The Edwin Budding award will be awarded to someone in the industry who meets the criteria as set forth by the Association and the Award Committee.

Nominations should be sent to: nominations@igcema.org.

You will receive a confirmation email stating that we have received your nomination.

The deadline for nominations will be October 1 and the winner will be presented the award at Harrogate Week.

For more information visit: www.igcema.org



TREES OFFSET CARBON FOOTPRINT

More than 600 trees have been planted on golf courses all over the UK as a result of Headland Amenity's initiative designed to offset the company's carbon footprint.

Following a prize draw, (the brain-child of Headland's Operations Director Mark De Ath,) which took place during Harrogate Week, nine Course Managers won 70 odd whips each, which were delivered in February and are now in the ground.

Kerr Rowan, Course Manager of The Carrick Golf Club has used his trees around the greenkeeping sheds so that in time they will create a screen. "This is a beautiful course with great views over Loch Lomond," he said. "We put the trees in two months ago and they're doing well."

The other winners are: Kevin Unsworth, Course Manager at the Royal Winchester Golf Club; Steve McAdams, Course Manager at Lytham Green Drive, Lytham St Annes; Chris Webb, Course Manager at Mid Yorks Golf Club, Pontefract, West Yorkshire; Cedrick Gough, Course Manager at Broadway Golf Club in Worcestershire; Jeff Dickinson, Course Manager at Springwater Golf Club in Nottingham; Rhys Thomas, Course Manager at South Staffs Gold Club in Wolverhampton and Roger Shaw, Course Manager at Ramside Hall Hotel and Golf Club in Carrville Co. Durham.

"It's a bit like sending coals to Newcastle for us," he said, "considering we planted 32 acres of trees when the course was built." Nevertheless, Roger's new trees are all in place, the majority on the right of the 18th hole.



ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY HONORS DOCTOR

Recently the Royal Horticultural Society awarded Professor James B Beard, PhD, DA of Texas, USA the Veitch Memorial Medal during a special award dinner at Hampton Court Palace in London. It is conferred on persons who have made outstanding contributions to advancement of the science and practice of horticulture. Dr Beard has served the international turfgrass landscape community for the past 50 years through his pioneering research concerning sustainable grasses, practical worldwide lectures, renowned writing, and international leadership. He is the first turfgrass scientist to receive this international honour.

PRESENTATION OF THE QUEEN'S AWARD

It was a day of celebrations for Managing Director Stephen Bernhard and the team at grinding specialist Bernhard and Company when they officially received the Queen's Award for Enterprise from the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, Martin Dunne.

The presentation took place on July 21 at the company's offices in Rugby and speaking at the event Stephen Bernhard, said: "We can be justifiably proud of this award which is a tribute to the entire team. And I want personally to take this opportunity to thank all our loyal supporters."

Stephen Bernhard also paid tribute to his father, thanking him for his encouragement and support. Jeffrey Bernhard started a landscaping business in Rugby in 1950, a nursery in 1955 and a garden centre - thought to be Britain's first - in 1960. He also set up a dedicated sports surface business in 1986. This trade involvement influenced Stephen's upbringing and encouraged him to become a horticulturalist in his own right, qualifying at Pershore.

Working initially in the family business Stephen concentrated on the grass maintenance aspects of the landscape company. From here he took an interest in Atterton and Ellis mower sharpening machinery that had a history dating back to the mid 1800s. And in the 1990s he became sole and outright owner of this company under the banner of Bernhard and Company, manufacturing and supplying Express Dual and Anglemaster grinders to sports facilities worldwide.

Stephen said: "This can be a great point for the business to find new directions in which to develop. It is also a time to reflect on how we can better serve our customers as they are the ones that put us here and helped us make the grade."



BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, made a short speech at the ceremony.



Stephen Bernhard with Martin Dunne Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire and Queens Award

THREE NEW DEALERS

Wiedenmann UK, renowned for its fast, deep Terra Spike aerators has announced three new dealers to cover south west England with immediate effect.

Rochfords Garden Machinery will represent them in Somerset; Masons of Chudleigh will represent them in Devon and Fairway Landscapes will represent them in Cornwall.

Wiedenmann Area Sales Manager, Chas Ayres said: "With such knowledgeable and experienced teams supporting the Wiedenmann brand, customers are going to be very well served."

THE R&A ANNOUNCES NEW GOLF CLUB RULES

The R&A has announced revisions to golf's equipment Rules, which are designed to enhance the benefits of accuracy by making playing from the rough a more challenging prospect in future.

The new Rules, which relate to club face grooves, are the culmination of an extensive collaborative research project between The R&A and the United States Golf Association.

This research shows that modern groove configurations can allow players to generate almost as much spin from the rough as is available from the fairway, resulting in a reduction in the value of accuracy.

"Our research has involved input from both Governing Bodies, including substantial laboratory work and player testing at all levels around the world," said Dr Stephen Otto, The R&A's Director of Research and Testing.

"Contributions from golf club manufacturers in particular have been considerable and they have welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the process."

The revised Rules will significantly increase the spin differential between shots from the fairway and shots from the rough.

The new Rules will augment the existing limitations on grooves and will affect all clubs (with the exception of drivers and putters), with the new regulations limiting groove volume and groove edge sharpness.

Essentially, larger volume grooves have the ability to channel away more material, such as water or grass, similar to the tread on car tyres. At the same time, sharper groove edges facilitate a better contact between club and ball, even in the presence of debris.

Both new regulations will apply to golf clubs with lofts greater than or equal to 25 degrees (generally a standard 5-iron and above) with only the rule limiting groove volume applying to clubs of lesser loft.

The Rules will apply to all clubs manufactured after 1 January 2010. Clubs manufactured prior to this date, which meet the current regulations, will continue to be regarded as conforming under the Rules of Golf until at least 2024.

It is intended that the new Rules will be introduced as a Condition of Competition at top professional level from 1 January 2010 and at top amateur level and in other professional events from 1 January 2014.

The R&A and the USGA will introduce such a Condition of Competition at their respective championships in accordance with this schedule.

The world's top professional tours for both men and women, and the organisers of golf's major championships, have all indicated their support for the new groove regulations and their intention to implement the Condition of Competition in 2010.

"We believe that this rule change is necessary to reinforce the importance of accuracy at the highest levels of the game.

However, beyond that the new Rules will be phased in very gradually," said David Rickman, The R&A's Director of Rules and Equipment Standards.

"The vast majority of the golfing public will enjoy many years' use of their existing equipment within the Rules and this, of course, will also apply to any purchases they make from manufacturers' existing model ranges."



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BIGGA ENVIRONMENT COMPETITION

BIGGA staff - John Pemberton, Chief Executive, Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development and Scott MacCallum, Editor & Communications Manager; recently attended an update meeting at 2007 competition winners golf club, Hollinwell (Notts).

The meeting was held with the Environment Competition sponsors and judges, to discuss progress made with the current competition and potential initiatives for future years.



MIDLAND GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY

A Midland Region Golf Management Trophy day sponsored for the 11th successive year by Scotts UK Professional was held at

Gay Hill Golf Club on August 6. Teams from 18 golf clubs enjoyed a course superbly prepared by Course Manager Paul Woodham and his staff. A "Shotgun Start" at 9.30am meant that many teams had a very early start to the day, but a welcome coffee and bacon bap on arrival prepared them for the task ahead.

Once again the format of 4 man teams playing a Stableford with the best 2 points scores on each hole counting proved very popular. The winning team, led by Course Manager Antony Bindley, was Kirby Muxloe Golf Club with 88 points. The team from Wellingborough Golf Club, led by Course Manager Ian Marshall, was 2nd with 86 points, and 3rd was the team from Glen Gorse Golf Club, led by Course manager Frank Kempster, with 82 points. Nearest the pin on the 10th was won by Richard Lowe from Drayton Park Golf Club, and longest drive on the 17th was by Paul Woodham, the local Course Manager.

The picture below shows the Kirby Muxloe Golf Club team, with Antony Bindley centre with the trophy, and Mark Rayner from Scotts on the right.

The Midland Region of BIGGA thanks Gay Hill Golf Club for hosting the event and Scotts for their continued sponsorship.



MAYOR OF IPSWICH VISITS RANSOMES JACOBSEN'S

The Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor David Hale and the Deputy Mayor of Ipswich Councillor, Inga Lockington, together with their respective consorts visited Ransomes Jacobsen's head office and manufacturing facility at Ransomes Europark in Ipswich recently.

The Deputy Mayor met one of the company's employees, Doug Shemmings who retired a few days after the visit, at a function in the town and expressed an interest in visiting the company. It only took a couple of phone calls and the visit was arranged.

The mayoral party were met by Managing Director David Withers and his management team and over a buffet lunch were given an overview of the company's history and the position it occupies today as one of the leading turf maintenance equipment manufacturers in the World.

After lunch the party toured the manufacturing plant, where they saw the production processes involved in the manufacture of today's modern grounds care equipment and spoke to several of the staff. The visit was completed with the party teeing off on the first hole of the company's new three-hole golf course, with the Mayor agreeing to return in October to perform the official opening ceremony.



NEW APPOINTMENT

After 12 months as the IOG's part-time Education & Development Officer, Ireland, Donal Kearney has now been appointed full-time IOG Regional Adviser, Ireland.

The move is another step in the IOG's Challenging Perceptions strategy and it complements the recent appointment of Ian Mather Brewster as Regional Advisor for the North. Both are new full-time positions created by the IOG.