

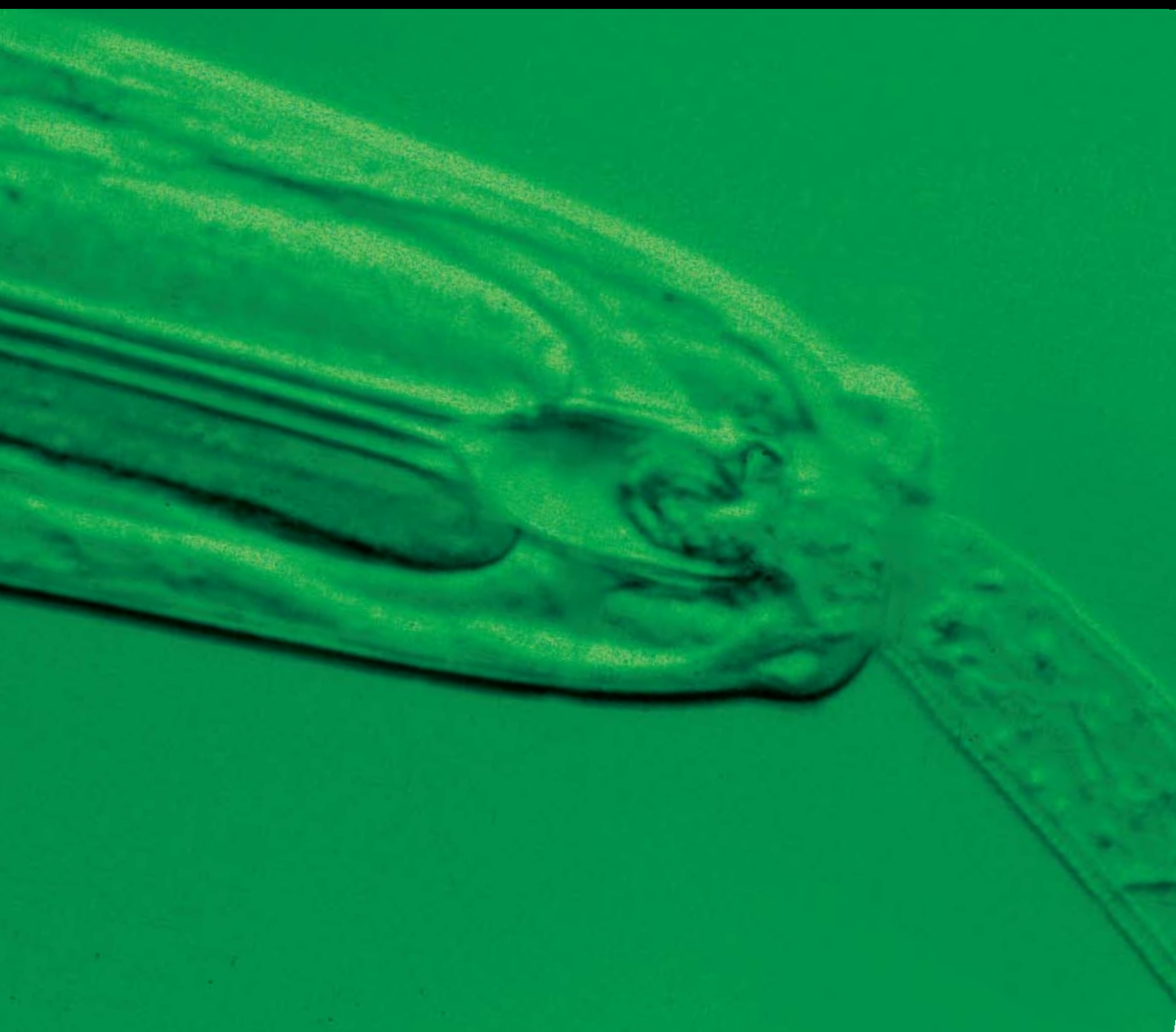


Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

- *Course Feature: St Ives Golf Club*
- *Architecture: Designing for Maintenance?*
- *Sustainability: True Sustainability in Golf Course Management*
- *ATVs: Is a Low Cost ATV The Right Utility Tool for Tough Times?*

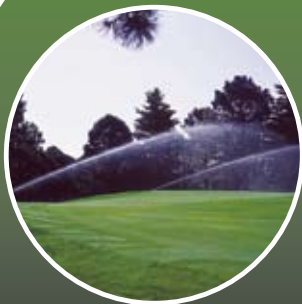
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The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £50 per year, Europe and Eire £65, Rest of the World £95. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.

ISSN: 0961- 6977

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Welcome



Bulging Bellies and Dodgy Tans

Driving into work this morning it was great to see the sun shining, blue sky and minimal cloud cover. I know we've had similar in early spring in recent years and it fizzled out very quickly but surely, surely, this will be the start of a decent spell of weather for us all.

It may not be pretty, but the sight of polo shirts and shorts struggling to contain bulging bellies, on our fairways over the next seven or eight months will be unbelievably welcome because it will mean that weather has been conducive to a successful golfing year.

As I write, I've played half a dozen times this year at my own club and I'm quite pleased to have been quite so active. However, only once has the temperature nudged above zero and each time I've gone out I've resembled Nanook of the North wearing about four different layers, a silly hat and those big mitts which look like you're sporting a pair of flippers.

I'm now longing for one of those stupid tans that only golfers sport in the summer months – one brown hand and one white; brown bands around the legs; brown neck, and brown arms from six inches below the shoulder!

With the sun shining, golf courses are very attractive places to be, and whether it be members, their guests, fee paying visitors, members of societies, or those lucky enough to be invited to a corporate day it all means money coming into golf clubs in terms of green fees, over the bar or in the pro shop.

The other good news recently is the return of the Tiger. He may not have won either of his first two events back but, once he's up to tournament speed he shows every sign of being as good as he ever was. We've missed him. Pdraig Harrington may still have won The Open and the USPGA if he had been in the field, but there would have been much more excitement if the Irishman had had a Tiger on his tail.

I return to the subject quite a lot in this column but golf does owe Tiger a huge debt of gratitude. Not since the 60s, and Arnold Palmer in his pomp, has golf possessed the biggest name in all sport and that can only be good for us all. As an aside, how many of us in the 60s and 70s played Pro-Shot Golf - operating a six inch tall Arnold Palmer to swing at little polystyrene balls and aiming at a foam green that would never lie flat? Is Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 for the PS2, progress? Perhaps...

The one downside with Tiger though is a fashion point. Tiger has changed the golfing look. The collarless shirt has become acceptable in golfing circles and the materials used for a shirt are very similar to those adopted for gym wear – lightweight, breathable etc. They look brilliant on the muscular, wide shouldered, flat stomached athletes who now play professional golf but not quite so splendid on those men and women with the aforementioned bulging bellies!

Scott MacCallum
Editor



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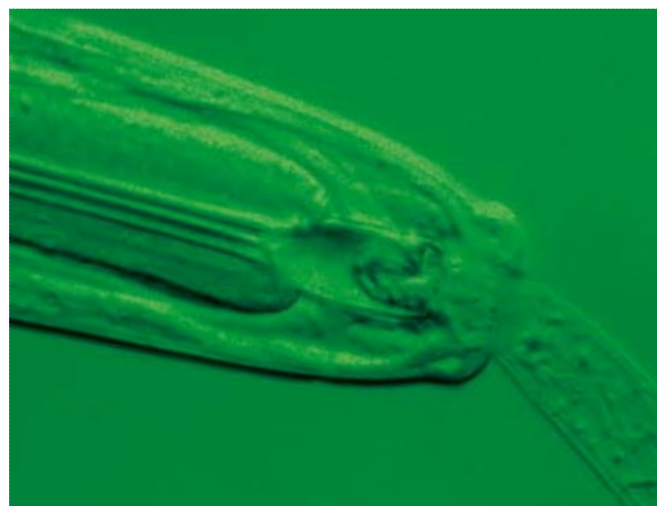
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A REAL TRANSFORMATION

Scott MacCallum visits a nine hole golf club in Cambridgeshire which will soon be completely unrecognisable

Comedians have a joke: "What's the secret of good comedy?" "That, without giving up, show us things that are not as they seem." It's a good joke, but what's more, it's true, and not just for comedy. There are many situations where things are not what they seem, and a comedian's job is to get it right.

But here comes the funny bit. A group of senior, highly respected, members with steady incomes all set up, came together with the new that St Ives Golf Club really was serious about moving forward some serious work would need to be done, and a working party was set up.

These people, a building developer, Keith Fleming, an architect, David Cook and David Christopher, Past President of the Club, who presented a range of core skills, came together and identified that the club was sitting on a land bank that could potentially be the key to the future.



18 months ago, a short time after the project had started. Once the initial working party had set up the basic project structure they turned their valuable work over to another talented member, current Club President, Philip Casey, who has since managed the project. A noted, high ranking administrative officer in the Fire Service, Philip presented the club and shared to some major projects of the future through working committees.

From his beginnings as a fairly bland piece of farmland which rose up at the end of the new course, shaped and sealed, already looks as though it was always destined to be a golf course. "Cameron was given a free reign to produce the type of golf course he thought best and the club was extremely impressed with what he came up with," explained Phil.

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40-42 Is A Low Cost ATV The Right Utility Tool For Tough Times?

Cover photography, showing a predatory nematode eating a root feeding nematode, courtesy of SoilFoodWeb Inc





LELY'S ON COURSE

Lely UK has further expanded its provision of training initiatives with its recent accreditation as a Landbased Technician Accreditation (LTA) training provider.

The LTA scheme aims to provide a nationwide means of benchmarking, monitoring and assessing the competence of technicians working in turf machinery engineering, while the course recognises and develops the diagnostic and technical abilities of engineers together with their customer service and technical mentoring skills.

“Ongoing and high-quality training is the lifeblood of any industry and I’m delighted that Lely is once again at the forefront of its industry in

joining with other manufacturers in the creation of this new LTA scheme,” commented Ian Sumpter, Lely’s Toro Training Manager.

“Not only will it develop the skills of our Toro-approved technicians, but it will also further increase customer confidence in the service they receive from their local dealers and service centres.”

Full details of Lely’s customer training courses, including its NPTC Mower Operator Training and Spray Technician courses, are available in a new training leaflet for 2009 – email Ian Sumpter at: isumpter@lely.com to request your free copy or call: Lely on 01480 226800.

SOUTH WALES SPRING SEMINAR

The South Wales Section Spring Seminar 2009 will be taking place on Thursday, April 23, at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club with the focus on getting greenkeepers talking about greenkeeping.

The speakers for the event are: Lee Strutt MG, G West Development, Perthshire ‘The Growing Pains of a Grow In’; Allan Patterson, Castle Course, St Andrews ‘Castle Course St Andrews - The Story So Far’; Greg Evans, Ealing Golf Club, Surrey ‘The Short Cut To Better Greens’; Gareth Roberts, Hankley Common, Surrey, ‘Hankley and the Heath’; Richard Blizzard & Mark Atkins, Soil Harmony ‘The Life Beneath Your Feet’ & ‘Finding The Balance’.

Each of our speakers will be giving presentations based on their own theories and management practices of both turf grass and site specific issues.

There will also be live demo’s from charterhouse of aeration equipment, over seeders and top dressers.

Cost of the day is £17.50 for members and £20 for non members including tea/coffee and two course buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms will be sent out to Section members, any other interested parties can contact Steve Chappell for further details on: 07970 980899 or: chappell124@hotmail.co.uk.

GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE MANUAL

This manual was devised and written by Laurence Pithie MG then supported and produced by the English Golf Union. It is now available for sale, but only from The Club Services department of The EGU. The retail price is £150 and comes complete with a disc for downloading various files.

The manual consists of 28 different sections and covers virtually all aspects of setting up a maintenance system for managing a golf course.

It is not a manual for growing or maintaining fine turf but it is a series of documents, work sheets and records that will help the person manage their course in a more effective and professional manner.

The contents include the following: A ‘generic’ policy document, varying examples of standards including course & equipment, man-hour studies,

budgeting worksheets and working ledger, capital expenditures, training workbooks, staff appraisals, course audits, inventories, equipment & golf cart information, fertiliser & chemical data, job descriptions, winter play guidelines, reports and newsletter examples, various turf tips & course data.

The purpose of this manual is to act as a reference workbook and to assist others in setting up systems that are simple to use, having being designed specifically for maintaining golf courses.

It can be used in conjunction with more sophisticated software packages although most of the required data is already within this manual.

For the first time, there is now a complete maintenance system that is readily available and can easily be amended or adapted to suit any individual course, large or small.



Laurence Pithie MG

TECHNICAL MANAGER SIGNED UP

Simon Watson has joined Syngenta UK Professional Products as the new Technical Manager. He joins the Syngenta team from the Sport Turf Research Institute, where he has been Turf Agronomist for Scotland and north east England for the past six years.

Simon has a strong science background, combined with the practical application of his knowledge on golf courses, sports pitches, stadia and racecourses with the STRI. He obtained his degree in Environmental Sciences at Coventry University, followed by a PhD and post-doctoral studies, specialising in weed science, at Reading University.

“With the rapidly increasing number of Syngenta products for the turf and amenity industry it is an exciting time to be joining the business,” reports Simon.

“There has always been a significant benefit for turf managers in using quality products, and in developing the optimum ways to get the best results within Integrated Turf Management programmes, which we will seek to further enhance and grow.”



TRAINING COURSE DATES ANNOUNCED

The IOG has confirmed the dates and venues for its training course on the maintenance of synthetic surfaces and facilities, now in their ninth year, in conjunction with Technical Surfaces, the UK's largest synthetic maintenance specialist.

Courses entitled ‘The Maintenance and Management of Synthetic Sports Surfaces’ will be held throughout 2009 at the following venues: Bristol University, Avon on September 24, Birmingham University, on October 29. One will also take place in Sussex with the venue and date to be confirmed.

The IOG has developed this one day course to ensure that those responsible for synthetic

surfaces understand the care and maintenance requirements of the surface and to aid in the provision of a better and safer surface for all non-turf games.

The aim of this course is to explain how the surfaces are constructed and demonstrate the various methods of maintenance for artificial and synthetic surfaces. Synthetic surfaces are now available to all sports and therefore the course is suitable for groundsmen from all sporting disciplines.

For more information contact the IOG on 01908 312511 or visit www.iog.org

GREENS MOWER RIDES THE HIGH SEAS

Ransomes Jacobsen has supplied one of its newest state-of-the-art walk-behind greens mowers for an unusual application – mowing an extensive area of natural grass lawn on Celebrity Cruise Lines latest cruise ship, the Celebrity Solstice.

The 122,000 tonne luxurious cruise liner had its maiden voyage in November last year. One of its many amenities is The Lawn Club, an innovative new country club environment featuring a 2,130 square metre natural lawn situated between the ship's funnels on the upper deck. Guests can play bowls and croquet, practice their putting, picnic with a basket of wine and cheese, or simply feel the grass between their toes, while sailing the oceans of the world.

Celebrity Cruise Lines specification for a mower demanded that the machine would produce minimal noise, so that it would not disturb guests relaxing in the area. Their facilities management

company, Green Roof Services, then had to source an appropriate mower and contacted The Turf Care Co (TTC), Ransomes Jacobsen's distributor in Germany.

TTC provide the Jacobsen Eclipse 122F which features electric drive to the traction cylinder and the cutting unit, but with a choice power units, - a 4.6hp Honda petrol engine powering a 48-volt genset or a 48-volt drop-in battery pack. Green Roof Services selected the drop-in battery option, giving the on-board greenkeeper the perfect solution to his mowing requirements.

For the technically minded, a special porous lightweight growing medium is used instead of soil. It consists of 90mm of heat expanded calcium clay, crushed to provide an open structure and blended with sieved and washed volcanic pumice. A Polypropylene Geo grid is added to stabilize layers and withstand foot traffic.



RECREATING HISTORICAL VALUE

Quite literally hot foot from a successful grow in of Minthis Hills Golf Club in Paphos, Cyprus Phil Helmn MG has taken on the role of Estate Manager at the prestigious Heythrop Park Hotel situated on the outskirts of the beautiful Cotswold countryside.

The new 18 hole Championship golf course has been commissioned by Mr Firoz Kassam, who also owns the Kassam Stadium, home to Oxford United.

"The golf course is going to be one of a kind, it is totally unique with the history of the estate fused into every aspect of the new layout," enthused Phil.

"White Horse Contractors, who are undertaking the construction, under the supervision of Nigel Ely, are doing a first class job and with guidance of John Angus and Nilu Kanani, the Firoka directors, it really is a team effort," said Phil.

The golf course, designed by Tom Mackenzie, is due to open in September this year and is developing well with many strong holes that make the most of the estate's many natural features - its trees, valleys, ridges, lakes, streams and woodlands.

A series of natural springs have been utilised to create pools with moss covered Cotswold stone hand picked from site.

The golf course project centres around recreating the historical value of the estate, restoring it back to its former glory days of 1707.

The formula forms just a small part of the painstaking process the team have undertaken, mapping and re-planting trees and shrubs, trying to re-create the original historical planting schemes including beech and lime tree avenues along with historic orchards and vistas.

The golf course will be a memorable test that can be played at more than 7,100 yards for the more adventurous golfer or if required more modestly at 6,500 yards.

APOLOGY

Our apologies to John Deere this month, in the last issue of GI a news item appeared on page 8 entitled 'On Course For Great Things'.

Due to a mix up the wrong caption was placed with the picture that accompanied this story.

The actual picture was of Killeen Castle, its greenstaff and a fleet of John Deere equipment supplied by Dublin Grass Machinery.

SCOTLAND'S TOP HORTICULTURAL STUDENTS SWEEP AWARDS

The elite of learners from Scotland's land-based industries were recognised by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, in a glittering Awards Ceremony at Crieff Hydro recently.

Horticultural students came out on top winning both the overall Land-based Learner of the Year and the overall runner up prize.

Top learner, Paul Carella, of Bellshill, who completed a SVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture with Gosta Training in June 2008, was presented with four prizes. In addition to the 'Overall Winner' prize, Paul was also awarded the 'Scottish Enterprise Area Learner of the Year' and 'Modern Apprentice of the Year'. He won the 'Horticultural Learner of the Year Award, sponsored by the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), and received £550 as a cash prize and the Peter Alexander Perpetual Trophy.

Paul enrolled with GOSTA Training in 2006 completing his SVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture in June 2008. He was nominated for the Toro Student of the Year where he was runner up for Britain.

"I aspire to do the best I can in all aspects of life and I eventually want to become a Course Manager of a Championship golf course. I study very hard and try to learn as much as possible about Greenkeeping. I feel this makes me a good candidate for the land-based Learner of the Year



Danny Logue, Operations Director of Skills Development Scotland with winner Paul Carella (right).

Award," enthused Paul.

Runner up prize was awarded to Colin Smith from Eccelsmachten, By Broxburn who is studying at Amenity Horticulture and Landscaping at Oatridge College. While he was at the college he reached the UK finals of the Skills for Landscaping competition.

The sixth annual Lantra Land-based Learner of the Year Awards were attended by some 150 guests, including new entrants, key stakeholders, employers, farmers, crofters, land managers, training providers and members of Scottish Parliament. A total of 24 awards were presented with winners aged 14-46 from across Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland with learndirect scotland for business were the principal sponsor of the awards this year with major sponsorship also provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Forestry Commission Scotland and the Cadogan Trust. The annual awards are also sponsored by key stakeholders, training providers, employers, farmers and land managers, demonstrating the commitment of industry to training and the awards.

RECYCLED PLASTIC BOOSTS MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Moray Golf Club at Lossiemouth has been using recycled plastic planking supplied by Fusion Marine, to reinforce the sides of a 700 yard long ditch that cuts across the course. Anti-slip grooved recycled plastic planks have also been used to form the boardwalks to all of the bridges crossing the ditch. Replacement benches have also been made from recycled plastic.

The club is considered to be one of the finest links courses in Scotland, with its old course featuring deep bunkers, undulating gorse lined fairways and smooth fast greens. The shorter and tighter new course is equally challenging.

According to George Paterson, Golf Courses Manager, using recycled plastic as part of the course maintenance programme offers several advantages over more traditional materials such as wood and steel.

"Recycled plastic is very durable and will stand the test of time, whereas other materials will rot and corrode," he said.

"We opted for the material because it is environmentally friendly and very strong, which is virtually maintenance free, with the colour not fading over time."

LECTURER SPEAKS AT CZECH REPUBLIC GREENKEEPING CONFERENCE

Will Bowden, Programme Manager and Lecturer in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management at Cannington Centre (Bridgwater College) was recently invited to present two lectures at the annual Czech Republic Golf Greenkeeping Conference, in Prague.

Representing the college and Schrickel and Partners Design, Bowden presented lectures in line with the conference theme of golf course design and construction: 'Design and management of water hazards on the golf course' and 'Enhancing the biodiversity of your golf course'.

"The experience was fantastic, I was honoured to be invited to speak at the conference and the welcome I was given was second to none. It is always exciting to visit other countries and learn of the challenges and issues they face as an industry. These experiences always enrich personal knowledge and open doors that I am sure our students at Cannington will only benefit from in the future," said Will.

The conference was staged over four days, with International Golf Course Architects attending and giving presentations. There were representatives from the UK, Germany and the US at the show.

"The golf industry in Czech Republic is booming, many of the world's finest designers are involved in projects across the country. This is undoubtedly an excellent place for young, qualified British greenkeepers to explore and make the most of the opportunities available. The Greenkeepers Association of the Czech Republic is putting together a strong educational system and we look forward to working closely with them on developing this. In such difficult times for our profession its refreshing to see some countries thrive," said Will.



THE INTEGRATION OF SPORTS TURF GROUNDS CARE STAFF INTO BIGGA MEMBERSHIP



Following on from last month's piece, some more facts

- BIGGA is a progressive professional body that is capable of representing anyone employed in the maintenance of sports turf
- Greenkeepers and groundsmen have a great deal in common when it comes to managing sports turf
- The better any one organisation can represent the sports turf industry then the more effective that body can become
- If BIGGA does not take the initiative then somebody else will, resulting in a more divided industry that will only be to our detriment
- An increased membership base should improve commercial opportunities for the benefit of all members

There are a number of greenkeepers that are not interested in career development or networking and see no point in joining BIGGA. Changing their view is a marketing challenge.

- A stronger BIGGA should allow for better national and international representation
- There are a great number of groundsmen who do not belong to a professional body because they are either precluded from doing so or do not place enough value on their current options

Anyone who wishes any further information regarding the above should contact John Pemberton at BIGGA HOUSE.

SOUTH EAST REGION - GENTLEMEN'S GOLF & DINNER

After quite a severe night's frost over 80 competitors enjoyed some glorious weather on a golf course superbly presented by Ian McMillan and his team at Walton Heath Golf Club in early March.

Considering that, even on the day before the event there had been a light covering of snow, everyone that played was appreciative of the conditions after the long hard winter.

After the excellent dinner the Captain of Walton Heath, Richard Champion, presented the prizes to the day's various winners.

Jason Hunt, from Addington Palace Golf Club, was the winner of the Ray Day Memorial Trophy - narrowly beating the holder, Ron Christie, and Gareth Roberts in the scratch category.

The South East Region is grateful to the following companies who generously contributed to the sponsorship of this event and many others throughout the year: Avoncrop Amenity Products, C.M.W. Equipment, Complete Weed Control, Ernest Doe & Sons, Headland Amenity Products, Rigby Taylor, The Scotts Co. (UK), Speedcut Contractors, Sisis, Tacit Golf Equipment, Vitax.

ESSEX SECTION EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

The Essex Section Educational Seminar was held at Stock Brook The Country Club recently. The day was well attended with 43 delegates including seven sponsors.

After registration and coffee the seminar was opened with Section Education Officer, Paul O'Kane, welcoming the guests and running through the scheduled programme of events.

The first speaker was Richard Parmee who is Project Officer for the River Colne Countryside Project. He gave a very interesting talk on various aspects of conservation that could be used on golf courses to promote a greener approach and to encourage flora and fauna and wild life onto the golf course. His presentation was well received and sparked a number of enquiries from delegates at the interval.

The second speaker was John Farrell, from Baileys of Norfolk Ltd, who very kindly stepped in at the last minute to present the topic of The Importance of Seaweed in the Soil Medium. This presentation was originally to be given by Ian Somerville, Course Manager and Soil Scientist, Brocton Hall Golf Club, who broke his ankle on the previous Monday. So all credit to John who gave a very interesting talk, pointing out the benefits that seaweed gives us when applied as either a fertiliser or as part of a top dressing.

After our second speaker we all enjoyed a break when a full English breakfast was served. This gave delegates the opportunity of networking.

After breakfast we moved onto our final speakers who were Ben Taylor and Steven Nixon,

both from Bernhard and Company. They gave a very interesting talk about the importance of grinding and its effect on our golf courses. This was quite a lengthy and in depth presentation which gave rise to many questions from the delegates.

When Ben and Steven had finished their slide presentation all delegates were invited to join them and Gary Woodward, Bernhard's Territory Manager, in the greenkeepers' shed where they had set up a grinder for a practical demonstration on how to achieve the perfect grind.

The seminar finished at 1.30pm and we

have received quite a lot of feedback from the delegates. This has enabled us to be confident enough to start organising similar events for next year, hopefully using the same venue.

We would like to thank Terry Peachey for the use of the facilities and the staff of Stock Brook for all the help they gave.

Our thanks also go to, Richard Parmee, John Farrell. And to Ben Taylor, Steven Nixon and Gary Woodward for the thought provoking presentations they delivered.



In the main centre photo from L to R: Paul O'Kane, Ben Taylor, Don Clark (Chairman), Richard Parmee, and John Farrell.

BCPC CHALLENGES EU COMMISSION'S 'BLACKLIST'

The EU Parliament's adoption of the new pesticide regulation on January 13 has led to controversy over claims by the EU Parliament's Rapporteur of a 'blacklist' of 22 active substances which would be banned, starting this year.

"Apart from the unscientific basis of the legislation, we have an immediate issue with the so-called 'blacklist'," said Dr Colin Ruscoe, Chairman of the British Crop Production Council.

"The new regulation does not contain a 'blacklist' of substances, merely the requirement for their evaluation using new guideline studies and assessment criteria. Whether these substances will be withdrawn depends entirely on this further evaluation – which will only just be starting in 2009."

While Green Rapporteur, Hiltrud Breyer claims that the new regulation "is a win-win situation, not only for the environment, public health, consumer

protection but also for the European economy," there are serious concerns about the loss of key products and implications to farmers, growers and those in the amenity sector. As well as the UK, it is likely that Ireland, Spain and Hungary will also oppose the regulation at the forthcoming Council of Ministers.

"In the run-up to the EU Parliament vote, considerable effort was made to highlight the negative impacts and move the legislation on to a more scientifically-based footing," explained Dr Ruscoe.

"Following the Parliamentary vote, it was to be hoped that debate would focus on rational and practical aspects of implementation. It is therefore disappointing – and indeed dangerous – that disinformation by the Commission Rapporteur refers to a 'blacklist' of products," he said.

"The problem we face is that this list will

be widely publicised and people will be misled," warned Dr Ruscoe.

"Agrochemical stockists will be reluctant to supply the products believing that there are safety issues. Food retailers may put them on their 'redlist' of products not to be used by their suppliers. And farmers and growers will not want to use them if it could affect the supply of their produce. This could result in the removal of key products, proven to be safe under the existing stringent risk-based regulatory regime, which have been used for many years by farmers and growers to ensure high quality production of key arable and horticultural crops," he added.

"To obviate this danger we are calling on the Commission to make it absolutely clear that no such "blacklist" exists, and that all products will be evaluated properly against the provisions of the new legislation," he said.

A GREATER UNDERSTANDING



This month David Golding, GTC's Education Director, explains how he is hoping that a joint series of GTC and The R&A workshops, to be held this summer, will help all turf staff employed at GTC Approved Centres understand what the sustainable golf course programme, including the benchmarking service, is all about - David also encourages employers to use the much publicised Apprenticeship scheme.

Much has been discussed regarding just what is behind The R&A's strong support and promotion to golf clubs and greenkeepers of maintaining and managing golf courses in a sustainable manner.

The R&A's benchmarking service is now available which is designed to help courses record, monitor and report on their progress towards becoming more sustainable and as a means of gathering information, not currently available, to give the game more accurate details in order to offer more reliable data to organisations and authorities rather than the more "we know golf is more environmentally friendly than we were" type of meaningless statements.

I know from my attendance at the UK's Amenity Forum where much time and effort has been spent from a huge range of pesticide users on defending the use of plant protection products that the EU Thematic Strategy has really exposed many weaknesses in data, and we think the UK has a good record.

Clearly golf has to have much more reliable data to feed into the various countries regulatory process if we are to continue to have these "tools" to use in the future.

I do not intend to enter into whether there should be pesticides to use or not but the whole debate needs to be aired in a professional manner with leading golf bodies at the forefront of policy making.

The GTC with BIGGA, the British Home Unions, the PGA European Tour and The R&A are all committed to ensuring greenkeeper education and training programmes are current and will ensure the whole sustainability debate is discussed and how best this is explained to all levels of greenkeeping students.

So how do we best address the S Factor?

What we have agreed with The R&A is a workshop format where all staff employed throughout the GTC Approved Centre network, who are involved in delivering turf education, will be

invited to meet with Course Managers and Club representatives who are known to be involved in a sustainable programme of maintaining their golf course.

There will be representatives from the GTC and the R&A at all of the workshops.

It will be an opportunity to bring the theory behind the sustainable golf course programme together with the practicalities of introducing and implementing a programme in reality.

We intend to invite Course Managers, who, together with their club officials, will explain their experiences to the delegates from Centres throughout Britain.

We are hoping for a really hands-on approach to the workshops and our aim is to develop a set of agreed learning materials for students on the range of courses offered by our Approved Centres.

Attendance at the workshops is by invitation only but the outcomes will be made available shortly after the final event.

The GTC would like to thank the following clubs for agreeing to use their facilities and the Course Managers and club officials for their support in the days programme: Wilmslow GC, Burnham & Berrow GC, Glencorse GC, Temple GC, Gog Magog GC, King's Hill GC and Cleveland GC.

The proven way to train your workforce

Nobody can have failed to have seen or heard the Governments recent advertising campaign promoting apprenticeships.

Regular readers will know that as a former apprentice (many years ago!) I have recommended to the GTC for many years that to have a sector

specific apprenticeship is one of the best ways to ensure we can still attract youngsters into greenkeeping.

By us attending meetings to develop and now review the apprenticeship framework, it is important our golf clubs and Course Managers continue to maximise this route to staff recruitment and development.

Millions of pounds have been made available by the Government and during these difficult times for small and medium size businesses in particular, it is easy to forget training.

I encourage all employers and managers to consider this option to access training through a GTC Approved Centre (see our website for Centres) with funding support to maintain staff development.

The main content of the Apprenticeship in Sports Turf – Greenkeeping is the Vocational Qualification both at Level 2 Apprenticeship and Level 3 the Advanced Apprenticeship.

As our sector has an apprenticeship to offer may I remind all employers willing to offer work experience to school students, 14 years and older, that should they be interested in a career as a greenkeeper please make them aware of the Apprenticeship - we can send them a free career pack.

Visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk and www.the-gtc.co.uk for further details. Employers can post apprenticeship vacancies on the www.apprenticeships.org.uk website as well as apprentices seeking employment. Follow the link to The Apprenticeship Service.

David can be contacted at the GTC on Tel: 01347 838640 or email: david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC is supported by:





Industry Update

NEW APPOINTMENT

New Holland has announced a further new appointment to its Groundcare dealer network. To strengthen their customer service in the central belt of Scotland, Bryson Tractors Ltd has joined New Holland's list.

Bryson Tractors Limited is a long established company very active in the agricultural sector. Their new groundcare division has been created to focus on the groundcare market. Nancy Bryson will be heading this division and has lots of experience in the local authority sector with very strong relationships with several local Councils throughout Central Scotland.

James Doyle, Manager of New Holland's Special Focus Group, announced the appointment by saying, "In Bryson Tractors we've found a dynamic company with good contacts, and Nancy has strong links with the market she's going to serve. This appointment is especially important to us in a year where customers are looking at every penny they spend. With Nancy's expertise she can show them the features of blue tractors which will give them great value for money."



NEW SEED TO HELP PROMOTE GRASS GROUP GROWTH

The Grass Group has appointed Lee Ashcroft as its Northern Area Sales Manager.

Lee joins The Grass Group with nearly 20 years of experience working within the groundcare industry and will be responsible for the Northern dealer network, backing them up and offering support with demonstrations and business development.

Paul Trowman, General Manager, commented on the appointment, "We are delighted to welcome Lee to the team and we are sure he will be a great asset to us, his appointment further underlines our continued growth and development in the UK and our commitment to ensure our dealers success with our products."

GO ONLINE

Lamberhurst Engineering, the sole UK importer of Ferrari tractors, Caroni mowers, Seppi mulchers, Pellenc pruners and the Brogio flail head has launched a new company website at: www.lameng.com

More information for customers along with a brand new shop with over 500 products features on the brand new website.



James Doyle from New Holland and Nancy Bryson from Bryson Tractors

TERRAIN ACQUIRES C & P SOILCARE

Terrain Aeration Services has acquired the assets of C&P Soilcare, which has ceased to trade.

Included in the machinery bought by the Suffolk based aeration contractor is the Terralift 2000, the only other Terralift type machine to exist in the UK outside Terrain Aeration's Airforce Terralift fleet. Originally designed and built by David Green, now MD of Terrain Aeration, the Terralift 2000 will be completely re-built in Green's workshops to emerge as yet another Airforce Scamper Terralift. The Deep Drill, also bought by Terrain Aeration was brought into the UK, by

Lynda Green, now Terrain Aeration's Operations Director, who was the first to offer this form of aeration service 15 years ago.

"This machine will be completely stripped and rebuilt before putting into service later in the year," said David Green.

"As the only company offering a one-metre deep compressed air de-compaction service combined with the injection of seaweed nutrient, mycorrhizal fungi, water-storing polymer or de-contaminating biological bacteria in the UK, we warmly welcome all former customers of C&P Soilcare."

BACK IN BUSINESS

Gary and Sue Mumby have announced that BLEC (Global) Ltd a company of which they are the shareholders and directors, have purchased the business and assets of BLEC Landscaping Equipment Co Ltd (in administration) acting by their administrators PKF (UK) LLP.

The new company BLEC (Global) Ltd will be managed by Gary and Sue who are pleased to be back in the business, after a difficult and stressful period in their lives, but they would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contacted them from around the world with their good wishes and support during this time.

BLEC (Global) Ltd will continue to manufacture and supply a wide range of machines and the parts department is also up and running for any parts requirements you may have.

FIRM GROWTH

Dennis has reported 2008 as its best ever trading year with sales up 14% on 2007. Market share has expanded in bowls, cricket, tennis, football, rugby and ornamental lawns, while also working closely with the golf market.

GLOBAL WEBSITE LAUNCHED

Ransomes Jacobsen has launched a new global website, merging the two independent sites previously hosted by the UK company and their sister company Jacobsen in the USA. A wide range of additional features and enhancements, including animation, have been introduced to make the site more user-friendly. For more information, visit the new site: www.ransomesjacobsen.com



EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

Alex Cruickshanks, of Turftec Agronomy, and David Goldstone of Tower Sport (Europe) Ltd after agreeing an exclusive sole distribution agreement throughout Scotland.

Alex is better known when wearing his Daval Industrial Products hat, but since setting up Turftec Agronomy, has enjoyed success in the Scottish amenity marketplace. To further enhance the product portfolio it was decided to utilise Tower's specialist knowledge when looking at wetting agents, as well as many other water management products developed and used successfully throughout Tower's European distribution network.

"This now gives our customer base the opportunity to have a one stop shop, with a technical back up thanks to Tower of being second to none. This also provides our customers with the most up to date and technologically advanced products in the market today," said Alex.

"Having built up the some very prestigious clients throughout Scotland, Turftec are ideally placed to maximise the potential of the product range while providing a distribution service second to none," said David.



NEW ADDITION

Precision Laboratories announced the addition of David Keating to its Turf and Ornamental Sales Team. Keating will assume the role of District Manager for the northeastern United States.

"David brings a diverse background along with solid experience in the fertiliser and specialty chemistry industries. His successful track record will be an asset to Precision," said Don Spier, Vice President of the turf and horticulture business for Precision Laboratories. "His past accomplishments

ALL-WEATHER GOLF SURFACES PROVIDE AN ANSWER TO WATER SHORTAGE

Huxley Golf has announced the appointment of a new distributor in Cyprus to look after sales and installations of the entire Huxley range of golf practice, teaching and playing aids. Trading as Huxley Golf Cyprus, the new company is based near Limassol and is owned and operated by golf course designer and keen golfer, Mike Keay.

Speaking enthusiastically about his appointment, Mike said: "Huxley Golf has proved it's the real thing by gaining official supplier status from the Professional Golfer's Association. The PGA has had a long-standing working relationship with Huxley Golf since 1990 and recognises the company as the leader in its field."

Mike Keay, who studied Golf Course Design and Construction at Guelph University in Ontario, Canada, is keen to demonstrate the benefits of Huxley Golf's premier all-weather surfaces to golf course operators, golf enthusiasts and professionals. He explained: "Golf is still a relatively new sport in Cyprus. However, a small number of excellent courses are operating and more are planned."

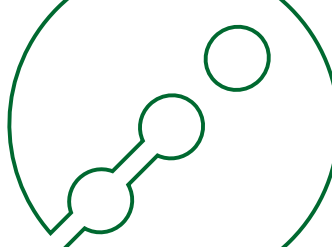


are certain to bring additional value to current and potential customers. David's knowledge of the fertiliser industry will support the release of our new nutrient product, Uptake Technology™."

Keating will be responsible for professional turf sales and customer relationship management.

David will promote Precision's "Best of Class" products that maximize resource management, saving customers water, time, money and labour.

Membership



AN UPDATE FROM BIGGA'S MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

Weekend Leisure Breaks

BIGGA Members can now enjoy great discounts with InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) of at least 25% off weekend stays and up to 35% on Friday and Sunday nights'. The offer is available at participating Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn and Express by Holiday Inn hotels across the UK and Europe from 1 January 2009 until 31 December 2009 so go ahead and treat yourself to a weekend break. To book from the UK call 0870 400 8135 and quote 'Exclusive Rate'. To take advantage of other great offers during the year, please visit www.ichotels.com/exclusive

BIGGA Membership Categories and Annual Subscription Fees

As reported in last month's Greenkeeper International, BIGGA are streamlining their Membership Categories, a full description of the revised membership categories were given in last month's Membership Update and are available on the BIGGA Website.

As of April 1, 2009 the annual subscription fees are as follows:

| Category | Annual Fee |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Full Member (Category 1A) | £125 |
| Full Member (Category 1B) | £75 |
| Associate Member (Category 2A) | £55 |
| Associate Member (Category 2B) | £27.50 |
| International Member | £90 |
| Student Member | £25 |
| Affiliate Member | £85 |
| Retired Member | £30 |

Full Member Benefits

After the shock of the economic downturn comes the shakeout of recession, redundancies are not just something you read about in the paper – they're happening to people you know, neighbours, family and friends. If you are a greenkeeper (full) member of BIGGA as part of your membership you have access to a legal helpline who can advise you on all aspects of employment matters. Also, if you are finding yourself under more and more stress then contact the Greenkeepers Support Service, a confidential, professional telephone counseling service which can help you proactively manage stress by providing immediate emotional support.

If you have recently been made redundant and have concerns about renewing your membership subscription please contact our membership team.

This month BIGGA welcomes the following new members...

Scottish Region

Robert Cleisham, West
Greig Easton, Central
Marc Gentles, East
Brian Hunter, East
Euan Little, North
Ross Ovens, East
Nicola Townend, East
Andrew Allan, North
Fraser Baillie, North
Callum Barclay, North
Michael Beaton, East
Thomas Fairfield, North
David Munro, North
Robbie Scott, East

Northern Region

Michael Allister, North West
Barry Askham, Northern
Daniel Cavill, Sheffield
Keith Emery, Northern
Jack Fox, Sheffield
Jordan Gibson, North East
David Golding, North West

Tim Harrison, North West
Graeme Marshall, North West
Edwin Newsham, North East
Lewis Pattinson, Northern
Daniel Reeve, Sheffield
Tim Saville, Sheffield
Sean Stephenson, North West
Jake Stickney, Sheffield
George Turnbull, North East
Phillip Worth, North West

Midland Region

Brendan Clifford, Mid Anglia
Craig Collins, Midland
John Collinson, Midland
Stuart Darby, Mid Anglia
John Edgar, BB&O
David Green, Mid Anglia
Marion Lewis, Midland
Michele Lombardi, BB&O
Alastair MacInnes, BB&O
George Marston, Midland
Gerald Orchard, Mid Anglia
Gerald Orme, Midland
Joe Willcocks, Midland

South East Region

Stephen Batchelor, Kent
Thomas Brooks, East Anglia
Leigh Chapman, East Anglia
Dominic Cheeseman, Surrey

Terry Clark, East Anglia
Mark Clements, East Anglia
Anthony Halligan, London
Harry Harding, Kent
James Kent, East Anglia
Chris Laws, East Anglia
David Ray, Sussex
Stephen Silvester, East Anglia
Richard Southall, East Anglia

S West/S Wales Region

Amanda Biggs, Surrey
Tom Bunt, Devon & Cornwall
Leslie Eldridge, South Coast
Tony Hursey, Devon & Cornwall
Daniel Jenkins, South Coast
Paul Martin, South Coast
Hillery Murphy, Surrey
Andrew Smith, South Coast
Ben Trickett, South Coast
James White, South Wales

N Ireland Region

James Devoy, Northern Ireland

Overseas

Matt Byers, Republic of Ireland

CONTACT US By telephone - 01347 833800 (option 1 for Membership.)



Tracey Maddison
Email: traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk



Justine De Taure
Email: justine@bigga.co.uk



Brad Anderson
Email: brad@bigga.co.uk

Other useful telephone numbers (for greenkeeper members only)

Personal Accident Helpline 02075 603013
Greenkeepers Legal Assistance 0800 177 7891
Greenkeepers Support Services 0800 174 319

Thought for the month...

"Adversity is a fact of life. It can't be controlled. What we can control is how we react to it".
Unknown, Source

Whether you are an optimist or a pessimist will matter a great deal as to how you cope with adversity.

Learning & Development

Key Sponsorship:

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF GREENKEEPERS

The funding provided by Gold and Silver Key Sponsors is used to produce training and career aids, DVDs, CD Roms, field guides and provide refunds for training fees and subsidised learning and development courses. The funding also helps support seminars, workshops, courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

Many young greenkeepers owe their career progression to the assistance they've had from the Learning and Development Fund. An equal number of established greenkeepers have also been able to access the fund to continue their professional development thanks to the donations of the Gold and Silver Key Sponsors.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING KEY SPONSORS



GOLDEN KEY



Golden Key Individual Members

JH Greasley; WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.



SILVER KEY



Silver Key Individual Members

Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Sam Langrick.

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, provides a departmental update...

Planning, planning, planning – guess what the word of the month is? March, April and May are the months where all the planning and updating takes place for the next nine to 12 months. Believe it or not the programme for Harrogate Week 2010 is taking shape, entries for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award are starting to arrive, the Master Greenkeeper Certificate scheme has been updated and the annual archiving of old files has commenced.



Club Managers Association of Europe

As you will be aware, BIGGA has signed an agreement with the Club Managers Association of Europe (CMAE) to enable course managers to develop their careers and become club managers. This can be achieved by gaining the Certified Club Manager (CCM) qualification a challenging education programme designed to equip club managers with the tools they need to fulfil their role.

The CCM is based on the following 10 core competencies:

- Private Club Management
- Food and Beverage Operations
- Accounting and Financial Management
- Human and Professional Resources Management and Leadership
- Inter-Personal Skills
- Marketing
- Golf/Sports Management
- Buildings and Facilities Management
- External and Government Influences

For further information and to download a copy of the CMM Certification Programme go to www.bigga.org.uk/education/downloads or visit the CMAE website www.cmaeurope.org.

The book, *Contemporary Club Management*, produced to support the CMM is now available from the BIGGA library.

Use Tesco Clubcard Vouchers to pay for Training

The National Extension College (NEC) offers an extensive range of distance learning courses that can be paid for using Tesco Clubcard Deals Tokens. £2.50 in Clubcard Vouchers gives £10 worth of Clubcard Deals Tokens. Courses include:

- Project Management
- Report Writing

- Assertiveness at Work
- Time Management
- Business Basics: Book-keeping
- Business Basics: Marketing
- Chartered Management Institute (CMI) qualifications

For further details visit www.nec.ac.uk

The Open University also accepts Tesco Clubcard Deals Tokens for their courses. For further information on the courses offered visit www.open.ac.uk.

Land-Based Learner of the Year 2008 Awards



Congratulations must go to Paul Carella, from Bellshill Golf Club, in Lanarkshire, for his success at the Land-Based

Learner of the Year Awards. Paul scooped the top prize, Lantra Land-Based Learner of the Year as well as three other prizes, Scottish Enterprise area learner of the year, Modern apprentice of the year and Horticultural learner of the year.

Paul, who completed a SVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture with Gosta Training in June 2008, was a runner-up in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2008 and has also been presented with the Harry Diamond Quaich by the BIGGA Scottish Region.

Learning and Development Updates

Higher Education Scholarships

The first Scholarship of 2009 has been awarded to Stephen Clark to study for a Foundation Degree in Sports Turf.

To apply for a Higher Education Scholarship download an application form from www.bigga.org.uk/education/downloads.

BIGGA Library



We have added one new book and a DVD to the BIGGA Library:

- Contemporary Club Management* – Joe Perdue
- USGA Recommendations for a Method of Putting Green Construction* – USGA DVD

A REAL TRANSFORMATION

FEATURE



Scott MacCallum visits a nine hole golf club in Cambridgeshire which will soon be completely unrecognisable

Comedians have a joke. “What’s the secret of good comedy?” Then, without giving any time to think, the answer is blurted out, “Timing”.

It’s a good joke, but, what’s more, it’s true, and not just for comedy. There are many situations where timing is everything and getting it right can make an enormous difference.

Such is the case at St Ives Golf Club, in Cambridgeshire. A lovely nine hole parkland course, with a clubhouse tucked behind the local secondary school. The membership had always dreamt about the possibility of extending to 18 holes, and over the last 20 or so years there had been much talk about possible options. Indeed, a plan to buy the adjoining Poultry Research Station and build an additional nine holes was put to the membership but ultimately failed to materialise.

But here comes the timing bit. A group of senior, highly motivated, members with exactly the correct skill sets, came together with the view that if St Ives Golf Club really was serious about moving forward some serious work would need to be done, and a working party was set up.

Those people, a building developer, Keith Fleming; an architect, David Cook and David Christopher, Past President of the Club, who possessed a range of core skills, came together and identified that the club was sitting on a land bank that could potentially be the key to the future.

And here is the other bit of immaculate timing. The working party spoke with planning authorities, went out and contacted potential developers and eventually sold 10 acres of land – covering two of the existing two nine holes - to a medium sized

property developer for a substantial sum, right at the top of the property boom.

That money has enabled the club to purchase land from a farmer a couple of miles away on the other side of St Ives, and they are in the process of building a superb 18 hole inland-links course, complete with stunning clubhouse and driving range facilities which are also currently under construction.

It looks like a no-lose situation for the golf club and indeed it is, but if it is so easy why aren’t more clubs, with courses restricted by housing, going down the same route?

“It sounds easy, but there is a lot of very hard work and the negotiations are extremely complicated and requires the support and approval of the membership to take it forward,” explained Club Manager, Mike Kjenstad, who joined St Ives



18 months ago, a short time after the project had started.

Once the initial working party had set up the basic project structure they handed their valuable work over to another talented member, current Club President, Philip Casey, who has since managed the project. A retired, high ranking administration officer in the Fire Service, Philip possessed the skill and talent to run a major project of this nature through steering committees.

“Once the project is complete, I am sure that the membership will come to appreciate how much devotion and work that Philip Casey has lent to the project and reward his efforts accordingly” said Mike.

The new course is designed by Cameron Sinclair and built by Ely Golf Construction Ltd, while, Phil Gates MG, pictured left, came on board as Course Manager a year ago.

From its beginnings as a fairly bland piece of farmland which rose up at the end, the new course,

shaped and seeded, already looks as though it was always destined to be a golf course.

“Cameron was given a free reign to produce the type of golf course he thought best and the club was extremely impressed with what he came up with,” explained Phil.

With heavy clay soil to contend with the course was designed and shaped so water would run off the roughs and into man made wetlands. The water gathered in the wetlands is then pumped into the 5,000,000 gallon irrigation reservoir at the top of the course, making the club self sufficient in recycled water.

The heavy clay also dictated that the fairways would require significant investment in primary and secondary drainage and this has certainly been the case which has been complemented with a 75mm of sand capping.

Phil who, along with his current on-site team of Robert Duff and Gareth Morgan, have been developing the new course and setting up the

fantastic purpose built maintenance facility that the Club has invested in.

Phil spent much of his initial time on site involved in meetings, setting up budgets, liaising with Ely's and working with Mark Campbell, Head Greenkeeper on the original nine hole course.

"I've been very impressed with the high quality of work that Ely's have done," said Phil, who brought grow-in experience with him from working on what is now The Wiltshire and Dummer Golf Clubs in the early '90s.

Every Friday morning a site meeting involving Phil, Cameron, Adrian Cook from the club and either Nigel or Mark Ely is held to assess progress and make whatever tweaks are deemed necessary.

"Course Development Officer Adrian, is excellent in liaising with Cameron and Elys making sure that what work set out the week prior is done and any small things are picked up. Ely's are very good at fixing those small things and making sure everything is carried out to standard," said Phil.

The grasses selected are a mono culture of Velvet Bent for the greens; green and tee surrounds are pure fescue, while there is 15% rye grass in the tees and approaches to take the wear and tear. There is 30% rye in the fairways. The rough is 95% fescue with 5% bent. The seed was supplied by British Seed Houses with Barenbrug supplying the cultivars for over-seeding.

"When finished the course will look like it has been cut out of two foot long grass, with the holes sculpted through the wispy fescue. The wetlands will be planted with wild flowers and there are 2,000 gorse plants to go in along with a small number of Scots Pines to give a little definition and character on some holes. There is one established tree on the course – an oak on the 4th."

The Clubhouse has a splendid courtyard design while the outfield of the state-of-the-art 8 bay driving range with 4 allocated to Achnusnet Europe for the company's custom fit business. The range will also have a unique floodlighting system using a combination of uplighters and special low level lighting.

"Undoubtedly the exceptional rainfall over the past two summers has delayed the project and given those circumstances may lead to a revised opening date. The Steering Committee realises the investment involved and the responsibility they have been charged with to ensure that the project meets the member expectations" said Mike.

The members have been kept fully informed of developments at every stage with every reported issued by Cameron or Ely's posted on the club noticeboard and website.

"Having already carried out all the background work to get us to the stage the skyline of the course and buildings showing maturity each day is generating more interest and enthusiasm among our members.

"We had a foundation ceremony last September and invited all members to come and there is genuine excitement about moving over," explained Mike, who is well aware of the quantum leap St Ives Golf Club is taking.

"It is going to be a big step for the club but I think we are starting to put a good team together



The new clubhouse takes shape

to support that," said Mike.

The 525 members of St Ives will enjoy their membership fees being kept at the same level as for the old nine hole course when we re locate. The new facilities will enable St Ives to increase its membership but maintain a sensible ceiling to ensure the course is not flooded with play and maintain the enjoyment for its members.

The Club will still hold 30 acres of land in reserve at the old site which could potentially also be sold off for housing and secure the long term future of St Ives.

"Eventually we may have the luxury of not having to take societies and will not be financial forced down the route relying on external income to make the books balance" said Mike.

Back at the course Phil and the guys are working hard to ensure the grow-in work goes well and they are enjoying the demands that building a new course brings.

"I am learning management of USGA greens, bent grasses, fescues, construction inputs, water management and will be drawing up a wildlife

policy to be implemented. Having worked on the parkland course with poa greens this is an enjoyable learning curve" said Rob.

Ultimately there will be a team of seven, including the guys who move over from the existing course.

What St Ives has achieved is quite mind blowing – leaving a lovely but geographically restricted nine hole course steeped in history and moving to what will undoubtedly will be the finest golf course in Cambridgeshire – so what advice would Mike give to any other clubs in similar circumstances?

"You have to have skilful people in place with the ability to progress the project, control it and manage it. They need to be dedicated professional people with the time on their hands to commit such a project," explained Mike.

As I said timing is everything. You need the ideal people in the ideal place at the ideal time willing to dedicate bucket loads of effort, and, of course, selling land at the top of the market.

A recipe for real success!



Left to Right Head Greenkeeper Mark Campbell; Gareth "Trigger" Morgan, Rob Duff, Craig Marshall and Course Manager Phil Gates MC.



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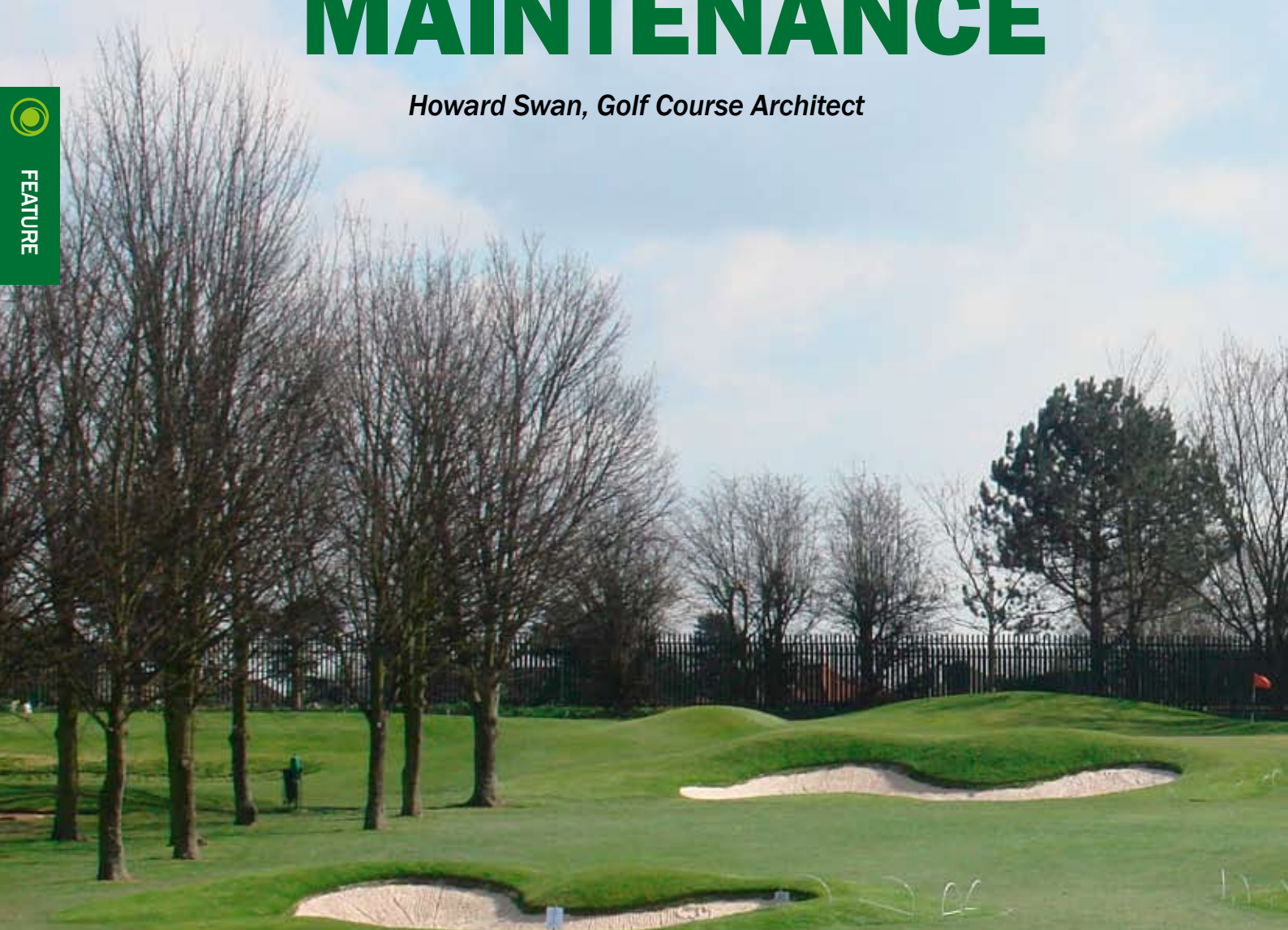
partners in turfcare

DESIGNING FOR MAINTENANCE

Howard Swan, Golf Course Architect



FEATURE



Times are tough... Everyone is looking at the bottom line...at spending... should I? Shouldn't I? Take care of the pennies and, hopefully the pounds. Many are not spending at all, cutting back to any bare minimum...or even less.

Scary stuff, dangerous business, and where is it all taking us to? Golf Clubs closing, bankrupted by lack of cash flow, reducing staff on and off the course.

So we all need to be focused; more cute; more thorough; more professional in what we do, whether it be a golf course architect or greenkeeper. We all need to show just how much better we are than in better times; how better we can perform when the chips are down.

From my design point of view, I have to convince clubs to continue to invest wisely in their

courses – I like to think that it is the course, which is paramount in attracting players, members – and not decide to do absolutely nothing. Some will, no doubt...but nature will catch them out and eventually they will need to spend more just to keep up.

Therefore, a continuous process of renovation is needed on each and every course. At any time we see enough of the Captain, the Secretary, the Committee man leaving their mark and some legacy it often is. At these tough times it is nonsensical to adopt such a way forward wasting valuable resources, particularly money. Consistent, steady evolution of the course must be undertaken.

I therefore argue that the renovation process needs to be in the hands of professionals – yes, golf course architects working hand in hand with Greenkeepers – ones of sound mind, experience

and expertise, caring for the course with which they may be entrusted as custodians.

Custodians for the long term, I would suggest, not for just a year or two, that makes good sense as no business, successful, was ever founded on short term profit rather than long term growth and...that word...sustainability. Enough of the one year committee efforts, the annual legacies to be left as we see so often.

So if we can convince clubs to keep investing in the structure, in the fabric of their courses, spending sensible sums of money, year on year. What should we as golf course architects be looking to do to improve the product which can attract the player, the member or visitor alike, the green fee player and sustain the business of the enterprise?

And it must be the course which is the primary focus to do just that.



In overall terms, it is essential to look, holistically, at the course, all of it, wall to wall, top to bottom...firstly...

- Its routing
- How is its length?
- Is it long enough?

Many are too long, extended in my view for the sake of it, for the sake of an ego, for the sake of marketing, or a “more is better” philosophy.

- How is its rhythm?
- How do the holes flow?
- How does it circumnavigate the plot?

Does it make good use of the topography...the vistas...the natural lie?

- How does it stir the emotions?

Many don't have a good rhythm, a good flow or par-3s,4s and 5s and the necessary balance and variety between them again, against par, against SSS.

And many courses just aren't memorable. They may have the odd good hole – the signature, as the PR boys like to call it, but not enough “Wow!” to stand out among the competition. It must!

- And how is its safety?
- Internally?
- Externally?
- Are there danger points?

Many courses are unsafe because or not just too small a parcel of land on which they are laid out, particularly the old ones, but many are unsafe because there is inadequate separation between holes and boundaries – houses, roads and the like, and between holes themselves,

between tees and greens, between greens and tees and some are a clear result of poor, myopic design and dangerous.

Golf balls do hurt a lot!

We can avoid accidents with sensible, thorough architecture! Most of the time!

Its components, most importantly.

- Are the greens big enough?
- Do they have enough pin positions – for maintenance, for variety, for challenge?
- Are the slopes, mounds mowable? – with reasonable ease, efficiency, safety?

Many, many fail in each respect.

- Are the putting surfaces testing?
- Have they good borrows?
- How is the sward?
- The rootzone?



- The drainage?
- The potential to sustain growth?
...and playing performance?

Could go on and on asking the questions and, in a renovation exercise, one needs to.

And no less importantly, the tees.

- Are they big enough to take the wear, particularly the par-3s?
- Are they located correctly to maximise the strategy of each hole?
- Are there enough flights to give all levels of golfer a reasonable playing chance?
- And are they built properly with reasonable slopes which can be easily mown?

Even more questions that the golf course architect and the greenkeeper can ask of the course... and they should.

And the bunkering, which can contribute so much to the quality of the course.

- Are they in the right places or, in this day and age of progressive club and ball technology, redundant?
- Do they drain?
- What is the sand like – the right colour, depth, performance?
- Are the bunker mounds mowable?
- Do they look good?
- Do they allow reasonable forward play?

They need to fulfil all these. They must not frustrate.

And there are many more facets of the course which need to be looked at improved to make better play, better conditions, better maintenance and presentation.

The field drainage, the irrigation, the traffic routing and its management - players and greenkeeping staff – The landscape and the environmental setting of the course.

All contribute to the maintainability of the course and to the efficiency...and economy of the greenkeeping effort.

Finally, I have to say that even if the structure of the course...its overall design, the performance of its components...is okay, or improved, the gloss needs to be put on it, to shine, to impress, to create that wow, that it needs to out perform its neighbour.

Routinely, it is the province of the greenkeeping team, but it is a matter of the course's design and hand in hand with the golf course architect there is always the opportunity to frame the greens, the tees, the bunkering, the fairways with varied, contoured dimensions of mown grass, less mown grass and managed vegetation.

Designing for maintenance, perhaps, maintaining for design, perhaps, but together architecture and greenkeeping can make that vital difference in producing courses of real quality.



Howard Swan is one of Europe's most senior and respected golf course architects. He is working in close to 30 countries on some new projects. Today not as many as yesterday, but on many renovations at home and abroad. He was President of the (now) European Institute of Golf Course Architects and has for almost 20 years conducted his design masterclass for BIGGA at Harrogate and around the country.

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GOOD SOIL BIOLOGY

FEATURE

The Answer to Practical Sustainability

By Martin Ward



Much of the discussion on how to design and implement sustainable practices, both financial and environmental in course management is about as effective as designing a two legged stool, because it concentrates on soil chemistry and physics and almost completely ignores the vital role played by soil biology in grass management.

In healthy grass systems the indigenous soil and soil biology provides the plant with all the chemistry it needs. True sustainability will never be achieved if we continue to override hundreds of millions of years of evolution.

The idea of applying minimal amounts of ammonium and ferrous sulphate for nutrition and hollow coring to remove thatch sounds reasonable at first hearing but, is in fact seriously flawed. It may work on those special few fescue dominant links courses which need very little nutrition but

practical experience shows that when applied to heavily trafficked parkland courses is almost certainly destined to fail.

Ammonium sulphate and ferrous sulphate are mostly made by combining ammonia (a toxic gas) or scrap iron with concentrated sulphuric acid in temperatures over 800°C. These products have salt indices of 69 and 85 respectively. Repeated additions of mineral salts kills the soil biology and creates many of the problems that take up the greenkeepers working day and much of their budget.

To apply 100Kg N per hectare as ammonium sulphate means you apply a salt equivalent of about 350Kg. Iron accumulation is partly responsible for the black compacted soil, iron bands, aggregated fines forming root breaks and concentrations of iron oxides familiar to all green keepers. In excess it has fungicidal properties and as we shall see beneficial fungi are essential for fine grasses, root growth, nutrient retention, low disease and friable free draining soil.



Dead soil of with excess thatch iron bands, black layer, compacted soil, no life and no roots.

Until recently, overlooking soil biology was due to lack of knowledge. But commercial laboratories now analyse soils for all the groups of microbes that make up healthy soil and compare the types of bacteria, fungi nematodes and protozoa that live under the different grasses found on golf courses.



Electron microscopy unveils the soil food web (Photo courtesy Laverstoke Park Lab)

We often hear comments like, “there are lots of bugs in turf rootzones” and in many cases there are, but not necessarily the correct microbes to grow fescue or bent in low input, disease - free conditions. When sports turf rootzones are analysed, you often find the biology to grow *Poa annua* and plant pathogens which is very different to that needed for healthy perennial grasses to thrive.

So how do we develop the correct soil biology for sustainable fine grass management and how does it work?

Growth without fertiliser

First we have to understand how nutrients get into the soil without added fertiliser.

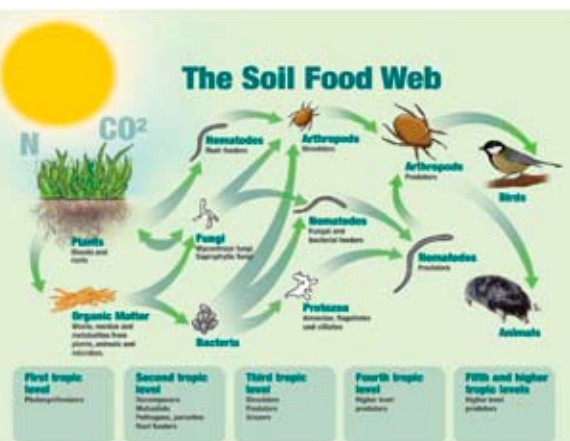
Grass produces a huge amount of energy via photosynthesis. In fact, grass feeds the planet providing the world with most of its proteins and carbohydrates through flour, meat and milk. Grass however leaks about 50% of its proteins and carbohydrates underground. In chemically managed systems most of this energy is wasted but it is this energy that must be used to grow healthy perennial grasses.

As grass grows as a natural part of its metabolism it leaks proteins and carbohydrates through its roots, bacteria live around the root system feeding on this nutrient and fix nitrogen from the air. Protein also contains a lot of nitrogen. When the bacteria in turn get eaten by protozoa or nematodes higher up the soil food web they excrete ammonium which is recycled back to the plant providing the grass with the nitrogen it needs.

With a healthy soilfoodweb you only need to stimulate photosynthesis by aeration or applying very low amounts of potassium, nitrogen or even iron to get lots of nutrient leaking from the roots. Sustainability is converting this nutrient to ammonia to ensure a constant supply of nitrogen is available for grass growth. It is quite possible to grow *agrostis* on a USGA specification rootzone using less than 40Kg N per hectare per year



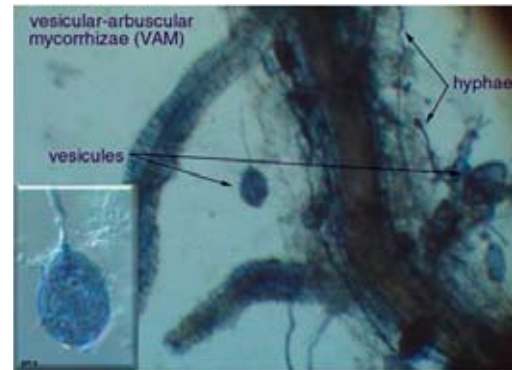
Protozoa eat bacteria and excrete ammonium



The biological make up of healthy rootzones. Moles and birds excluded. (Picture courtesy SoilFodWeb Inc)

Reducing fertiliser use

Research has shown (publications in STRI Journal July 1997) that grass inoculated with mycorrhizal fungi grows better in low nutrient conditions. All new constructions should be inoculated with mycorrhizae to ensure low fertiliser inputs. Mycorrhizal grass absorbs water and nutrient much more effectively reducing fertiliser and irrigation costs.



Mycorrhizal fungi massively extend the root system and form a protective barrier against disease and salt.

Get the chemistry right

Biology and chemistry must be managed together. Golf greens and tees are designed to maximise drainage at the expense of high fertiliser input and leached nutrient. Best practice chemistry and biology are overlooked in the design and build. To reduce fertiliser inputs there are several simple steps the course manager can take to improve soil chemistry by increasing cation exchange capacity (CEC) and base saturation.

Essentially, CEC measures the potential of soil to hold on to positively charged nutrient ions and base saturation measures the proportions of these alkaline (base) nutrients that are actually in the soil. The main alkaline positive ions in the soil are calcium, potassium, magnesium and sodium. Another essential positive ion is ammonium.

Opposites attract so the higher the CEC i.e. the more negative ions in the soil, the greater the amount of the essential plant nutrients that will be held in the soil.

In most soils the majority of negative ions are on clay and humus, both in very short supply in a new USGA or 80/20 rootzone. All good agronomists and fertiliser suppliers will analyse soil for CEC and base saturation and it is very easy and inexpensive to add calcium, magnesium and potassium in the correct ratios to ensure that the soil contains adequate base cations instead of other common cations such as hydrogen, aluminium and iron. CEC can be increased by adding zeolites or naturally by degrading thatch and converting it to humus and at this point we need to discover just how important thatch is to sustainable management.

Thatch is a friend

Thatch is part of the foundation for healthy grassland soil, everybody knows dead grass degrades and releases nutrient but it does so for four very important reasons involved with:-

1. The promotion of fine grasses over *Poa annua*.
2. Providing resistance against plant diseases.
3. Ensuring soil friability and therefore good drainage and oxygen transfer.
4. Increasing the CEC and nutrient holding capacity of the soil.

i.e. the key elements for sustainable grass management with minimum surface disruption.

Soil fungi degrade thatch and can easily be introduced; there is no need for aggressive hollow coring and top dressing with sterile rootzone, unless the rootzone does not drain. Apart from the physical disruption, financial cost, loss of income and the simple fact that most members won't allow it aggressive hollow coring and top dressing is counterproductive to sustainable management.

Growing perennial grasses

Poa annua is genetically programmed to seed and die for a very good reason. Annual seeding plants form the first stages of plant species progression; they colonise bare or compromised soils then in time perennial grasses, shrubs, deciduous trees or coniferous forest will colonise the soil. Perennial grasses predominate when the grass is cut or grazed.

New or bare soils can be quite sterile as there is no thatch to feed fungi and bacterial levels are quite low so Poa annua has growth mechanisms and a shallow root system that rely on the limited bacteria in the soil. Poa annua puts most of its energy into producing seed and relatively little goes underground to associate with mycorrhizae or to feed the supportive food chain (which is why poa annua needs more fertiliser than other grasses).

When poa annua dies, thatch is formed and this is food for fungi and a more complex soil food web can now form that supports perennial grasses.

If you weigh the bacteria and fungi found around the root system of Poa annua there is about 10 x more bacteria than fungi and little or no mycorrhizal fungi in the root systems.

However around the root systems of fescues or agrostis in healthy soil you find approximately equal amounts of bacteria and fungi and mycorrhizal colonisation of the root system.

So why does nature start with poa annua and develop fescues and bents while many golf courses do the opposite? Thatch is the preferred food for fungi so biological thatch degradation will provide the fungal dominant conditions needed for perennial grass growth.

The mineral salts in inorganic fertilisers and anaerobic conditions caused by water logging or compaction and excessive use of fungicides kill fungi and create the bacterial dominant conditions for Poa annua.

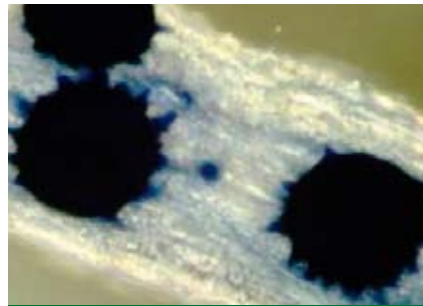
Fescue and Agrostis without stress

You do not have to stress poa annua to convert a green from poa annua to fine grass. Create a fungal dominant soil by degrading thatch to feed fungi, colonise the roots with mycorrhizae, use the root exudates as a source of nitrogen so reducing the use of inorganic salts, do not overwater and perennial grasses will grow.

Disease management

Fungal diseases attack weak plants and in the majority of cases it is unrealistic to provide blemish free surfaces without occasional use of fungicides. However, beneficial fungi and bacteria in the thatch layer and rootzone play a major role in limiting disease. There are four natural mechanisms that turf managers can use to reduce the incidence of disease.

1. *Mycorrhizal fungi, soil fungi and bacteria recycling root exudates provide a protective barrier around the root physically preventing pathogens from attacking the root.*
2. *Some soil fungi and bacteria will eat pathogens to prevent them from killing the host plant.*
3. *A high population of beneficial fungi in the thatch and soil will competitively exclude many pathogens,*
4. *Some soil microbes produce toxins that kill pathogens, this is the basis for many of the new strobilium fungicides.*



With no protective barrier the root is open to attack by fungal disease (stained blue)

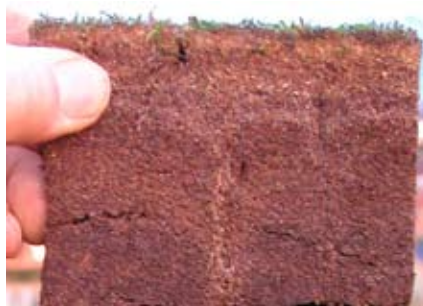
Nematodes

Many courses report damage by root feeding nematodes. This is a symptom of poor soil. In a healthy soil food web predatory nematodes will eat root feeders. There are many more beneficial nematodes than root feeders. They play an essential role in creating healthy soil. Image of predatory nematode eating a root feeding nematode is shown on the cover, and on pages 24-25.

Healthy Soil

Healthy sandy soil is a rich brown friable mix with lots of air and no compaction.

This contrasts starkly with older golf greens which often have a number of root breaks caused



Root zone profile of 108 yr old green with a complete soil food web. (Picture courtesy Strawberry Hill Golf Club)

by top dressing on old turf, a build up of fines and iron to form a pan, chemical build up and black layer, general compaction or just poor construction.

Good soil biology creates friable soil that requires less physical disruption and top dressing. Again, it is fungi and beneficial nematodes that do the job. Bacteria and fungi produce polysaccharides, which help soil to aggregate, while fungal hyphae move through the soil followed by fungal feeding nematodes which break up the soil forcing the particles apart creating air space. The nematodes create small channels coated in excreted ammonium creating ideal conditions for root hairs and roots to penetrate. This in turn breaks down soil pans and root breaks releasing locked - up nutrient for plant growth.

The great advantage of using microbes to create friable soil is that you do not have to hollow core to replace your biologically active root zone, with its high CEC and correct base saturation ratios - with sterile topdressing.

Turn thatch into plant food

Remove thatch physically, compost it and you get humus rich compost full of trace elements and macro nutrients. Degrade it in situ and you get the same results without the physical disruption and the costs of top dressing, labour, machine use and course closures; giving financial sustainability. Thatch will degrade with thatch reducing microbes, moisture and oxygen.

Some swards have a biomass of thatch degrading fungi and bacteria to do the job, but you may need to use a commercial inoculant or compost teas. Reputable suppliers will guarantee their thatch eating microbes. Sorrel rolling, scarification or new liquid aeration technologies will provide the oxygen required in all but the most horrendous thatch without major disruption.

Sustainability

When thatch degrades, nutrients are released and humus is created which increases CEC and reduces the need for inorganic fertilisers allowing the soil biology to thrive. Soil biology converts the proteins and carbohydrates released by the plant through its roots into ammonia and plant food. Thatch provides food for fungi creating the fungal dominant food web needed for perennial grasses. Fungi and nematodes create a friable open root zone. Plants are healthy and disease is excluded except under very high stress.

This is the path to sustainability.

About the Author

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Anyone with views on Martin's article can email: scott@bigga.co.uk, or discuss the issues raised, on the website: www.bigga.org.uk



Safety Management System



RJ International Golf Course

The BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, has been developed to:

- Make golf clubs safer
- Introduce best practice
- Standardise Health & Safety throughout golf
- Reduce costs for golf clubs

Why do you need a Safety Management System?

Because:

- It incorporates all your legal requirements to comply with Health & Safety Legislation
- Clubs have responsibilities
- There are penalties for not complying – up to £20,000 fine and/or course closure
- Golf clubs are hazardous places to work

The Safety Management System contains help and guidance to enable golf clubs to:

- Set a Health & Safety Policy
- List hazards and assess risks
- Plan for the future
- Introduce audit and review procedures

The Safety Management System is accessed through the Members area of the BIGGA website (www.bigga.org.uk) and the GCMA website (www.gcma.org.uk)

sponsored by



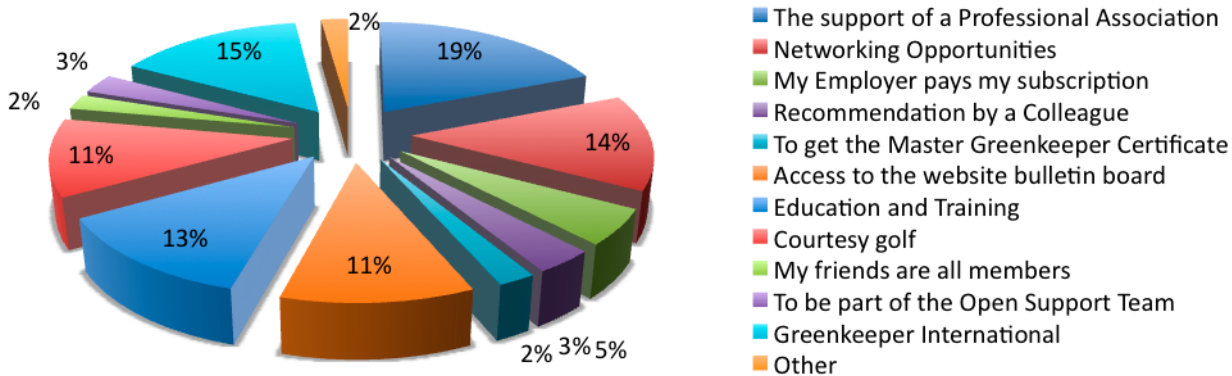
THE BIGGA MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

An unprecedented number of you took part in BIGGA's on-line survey over Christmas and the information gleaned from the results has been extremely useful to the various departments at Headquarters. This will be used to help shape BIGGA's direction and policy in the future.

We have highlighted some of the more interesting results here...

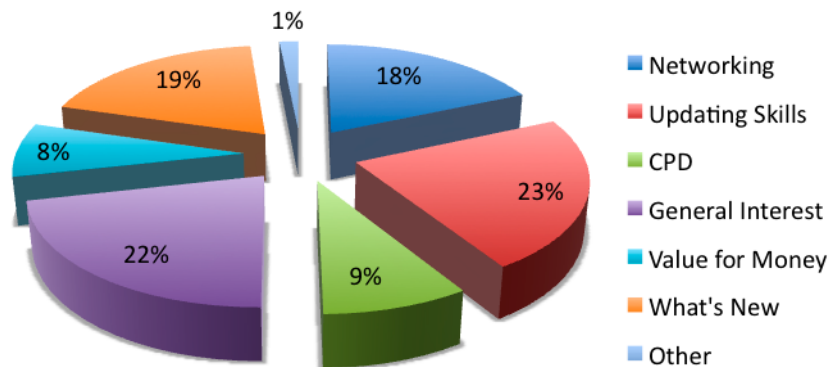
What were your reasons for joining BIGGA?

There are many factors which members cite for joining BIGGA. The support of a Professional Association, networking opportunities and courtesy golf are a some of the main reasons. The Master Greenkeeper Certificate is also a huge incentive.



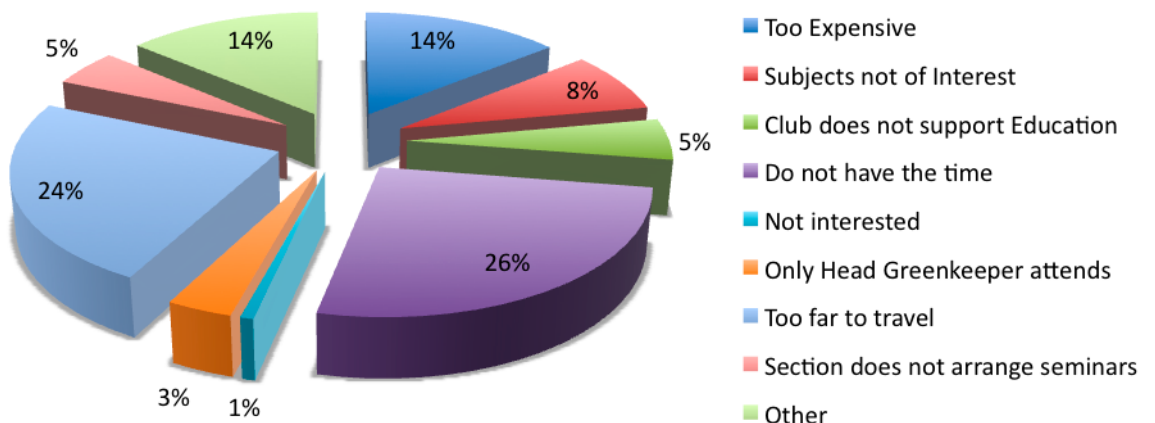
Why do you regularly attend BIGGA Educational Seminars and Courses?

This gives a clear picture that BIGGA members attend events to update their skills, to find out what's new and for general interest as well as the opportunity to network with other greenkeepers.



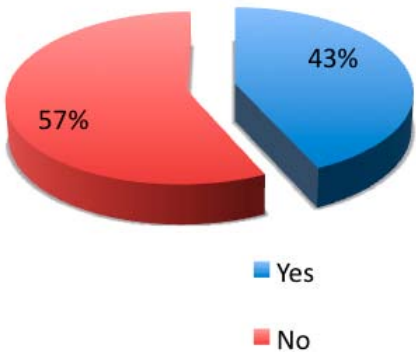
What prevents you from attending BIGGA Educational Seminars and Courses?

The results of this question show that many members feel that they do not have the time to attend educational events and that they are too far away.



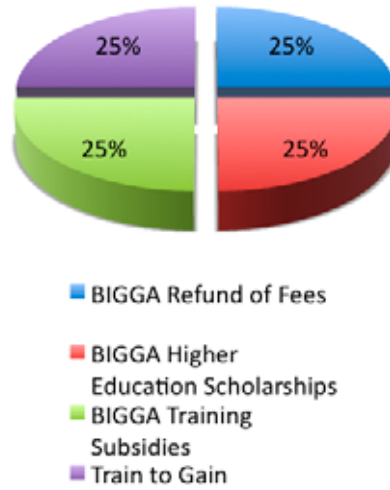
Are you aware that, upon request, bespoke training can be provided by HQ in your Section?

This indicates that we still have some work to do in promoting the bespoke training services provided by BIGGA.



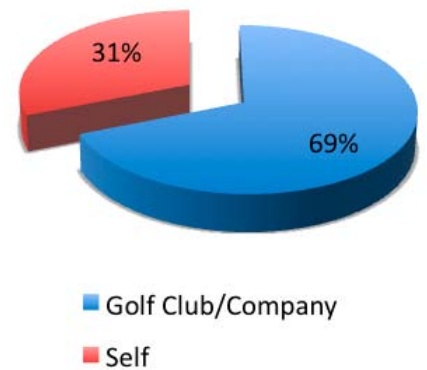
Are you aware of the funding opportunities available to you?

Awareness of funding shows an even split for the funding opportunities that BIGGA offers as well as the Government supported Train to Gain scheme.



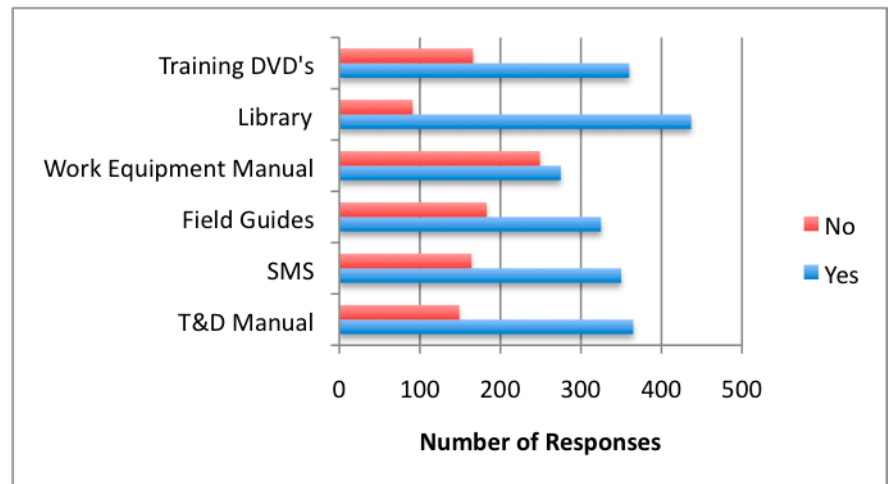
Who pays your subscription?

Over two-thirds of members have their subscriptions paid by the golf club or company where they are based.



Are you aware of the training aids available from BIGGA?

The awareness of the training aids offered by the Association is good, however we need to continue to promote the services and ensure that they continue to be available to members.



How useful are the following items in Greenkeeper International?

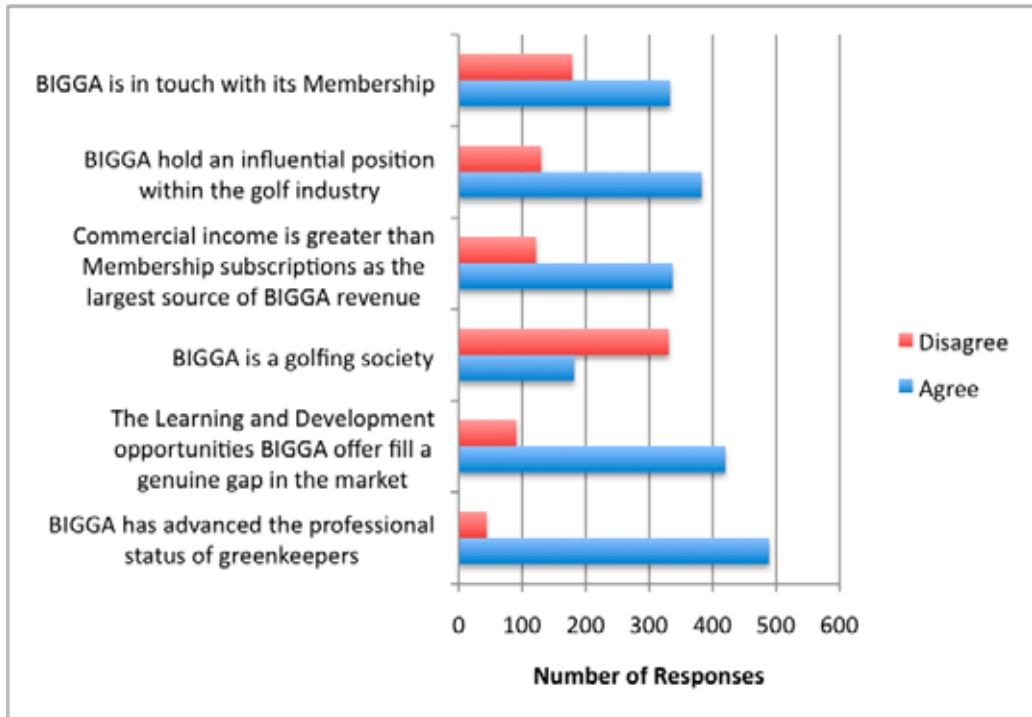
BIGGA Members rate the coverage of Technical Articles as the most useful part of the magazine. The table shows the percentage of members (with actual quantity in brackets) who rate each section as Useful or Very Useful. More than half of those who responded find each part of the magazine useful!

| Item | Very Useful | Useful | Not Useful | Don't Read It | Response Count |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|---------------|----------------|
| Course Features | 41.4% (230) | 54.5% (303) | 3.8% (21) | 0.4% (2) | 556 |
| Continue to Learn Feature | 35.8% (197) | 53.6% (295) | 8.5% (47) | 2.0% (11) | 550 |
| Buyers' Guide | 13.9% (75) | 63.1% (346) | 17.2% (94) | 5.8% (32) | 548 |
| Recruitment | 38.2% (211) | 53.7% (297) | 6.5% (36) | 1.6% (9) | 553 |
| Around the Green | 26.5% (147) | 62.1% (344) | 9.7% (54) | 1.8% (9) | 554 |
| Education | 40.0% (219) | 50.2% (275) | 7.8% (43) | 2.0% (11) | 548 |
| Membership News | 22.7% (126) | 62.1% (345) | 12.6% (70) | 2.7% (15) | 556 |
| Industry News | 28.6% (158) | 64.7% (357) | 5.3% (29) | 1.4% (8) | 552 |
| New Products | 43.3% (241) | 52.9% (294) | 3.1% (17) | 0.7% (4) | 556 |
| Technical Articles | 56.5% (313) | 40.8% (226) | 2.0% (11) | 0.7% (4) | 554 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | 569 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | 32 |

Do you agree with the following statements?

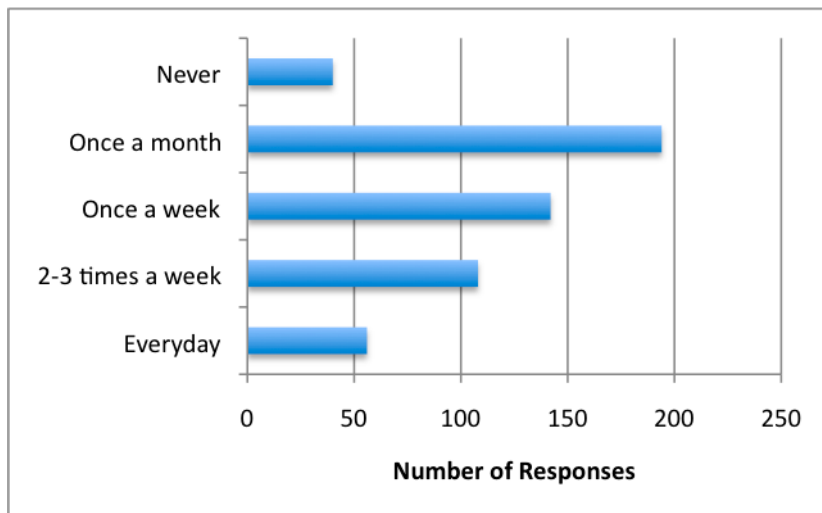
Most agree that BIGGA has advanced the professional status of greenkeepers, while many praise the Learning and Development opportunities.

On the other hand, most members disagreed that BIGGA is a golfing society.



How often do you visit the BIGGA Website

Most members currently visit www.bigga.org once a month.



How useful do you find the following areas of the website?

The Bulletin Board is a huge favourite among visitors to the website, with a large chunk of members valuing the Recruitment page.

All other areas are regarded as useful.

| 23. How useful do you find the following areas of the website? | | | | | Response Count |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | Very Useful | Useful | Not Useful | Don't Use It | |
| Bulletin Board | 42.9% (219) | 43.2% (221) | 2.7% (14) | 11.2% (57) | 511 |
| Members' Poll | 10.3% (52) | 48.9% (248) | 21.1% (107) | 19.7% (100) | 507 |
| Members' Area | 27.2% (138) | 55.7% (283) | 4.5% (23) | 12.6% (64) | 508 |
| Shop | 4.1% (21) | 37.1% (188) | 27.2% (138) | 31.0% (160) | 507 |
| Education | 24.2% (122) | 56.0% (283) | 6.1% (31) | 13.7% (69) | 505 |
| Directory | 9.3% (47) | 54.5% (274) | 13.5% (68) | 22.7% (114) | 503 |
| Jobs | 32.9% (169) | 52.2% (268) | 4.3% (22) | 10.5% (54) | 513 |
| Events | 18.6% (94) | 61.0% (308) | 6.5% (33) | 13.9% (70) | 505 |
| Exhibitions | 18.3% (93) | 58.5% (298) | 8.6% (44) | 14.5% (74) | 509 |
| What else do you use the BIGGA website for? | | | | | 57 |
| | | | | | answered question |
| | | | | | 520 |
| | | | | | skipped question |
| | | | | | 81 |



Golden Key Profile



FEATURE

BUCKING THE TREND



Scott MacCallum meets up with Andrew Robinson, Managing Director of BIGGA Golden Key Company, Rigby Taylor

Waking up in a cold sweat is a state which must be approaching epidemic proportions among businessmen worldwide, but you can be fairly sure that Andrew Robinson, Managing Director of Rigby Taylor isn't one of those afflicted.

Bolton-based Rigby Taylor is a company very much bucking the trend in these troubled times and is, in fact, aiming for 10% growth in 2009. And it's not just blind optimism with three new reps having been appointed in the last three months and with them having just taken delivery of three new trucks with off loading facilities built in to improve service levels it's all pointing to a positive outlook.

"We've grown our sales on average 10-12% every year over the last four years and we are working hard to give value for money during these tough times. Asda and Tesco aren't struggling at the moment as they deal in necessities and giving value for money. We see ourselves as a one stop shop offering essential products from our Mascot range which include Fertilisers, Chemicals, Grass Seeds, Line Marking, Specialities, Top Dressings and Golf Course Equipment to the golf industry,"

said Andrew, who works extremely closely with Chairman, Bernard Hedley.

So how has Rigby Taylor been able to buck the trend? Well, Andrew attributes much of the company's recent success to being a supplier to Manchester United, and the path the relationship with the Premiership, European and World Champions has taken them down.

"Through Manchester United we got involved with Envirowise, a Government funded organisation, which is all about minimising waste and reducing the carbon footprint. We had been a supplier to Manchester United for 17 years but four years ago the club decided that as part of its "Reds Go Green" Environmental Management System it would introduce some of its main high profile suppliers to the Manchester United - Envirowise supply chain programme," explained Andrew.

He admitted that initially he had been a little sceptical about how Rigby Taylor would benefit from becoming involved, and went along to the first meeting inclined to think that it would be no more than a series of boxes to tick to retain Manchester United as a customer. However, when he was told that significant savings could be made he began to see the real value of taking part.

"Envirowise said that any decent company could save a minimum of 1% of turnover, but that it could be as much as 4%. With Rigby Taylor turning over £20 million I could see the level of savings it could bring us."

Working very closely with Keith McIntosh, Manchester United's Environmental Manager, and Envirowise, Rigby Taylor's management team set about looking at every aspect of their business with a view to improving their carbon footprint and their service to customers.

And the results that have been achieved are astonishing and Andrew has been invited to speak at Envirowise seminars as one of the programmes real success stories.

Rigby Taylor has saved £205,000 on deliveries over three and a half years alone, which equates to 66,000 road miles and 1.5 million pallet miles.

Much of that has come from identifying the fact that transporting water-based products was an expensive exercise and, working with their own suppliers, they have developed better quality concentrates and powdered products.

Through these meetings a revolutionary new white lining product was developed



Andrew with Tony Holt (right) Director of Linemark (UK) Ltd and inventor of revolutionary Impact linemarking paint

“We had been a supplier to Manchester United for 17 years but the club decided to introduce some of its main high profile suppliers to the Envirowise supply chain programme”

Andrew Robinson

FEATURE

which has subsequently taken that particular market sector by storm.

“Previously a white lining product would arrive as a three litre concentrate to which the customer would add 12 litres of water. With that 15 litre mix you’d spray one football pitch. Our supplier came up with Impact, which is a three litre pack which doesn’t need any water adding to it. That three litres does one football pitch, so there is no messy mixing required. It really is incredible science – almost magic!

“It means that a council with 20 football pitches doesn’t have to turn up with 20 packs and 240 litres of water and mix on site. We have a 10 litre bag-in-a-box which means the operator can do three pitches before swapping the bag and going off to do the next three. It saves so much time and is much more efficient.”

Indeed a council with 100 pitches will save 30,000 litres of water a year and Andrew says that some councils have gone from having to use a transit van with 1,000 litres of water on board to a much smaller van.

Another area where significant savings have been made is in liquid seaweed.

“A 10 litre pack will spray 18 greens, but we’ve got one of our suppliers to produce a two kilo pack of powdered seaweed which is 100% pure and to which the greenkeeper adds water. So instead of us transporting pallets of liquid we’ve got this one small pack instead of something five times larger and heavier.”

Rigby Taylor has also liaised with suppliers to make sure that wherever it is practical deliveries are made direct to the customer rather than via their own warehouses, while bespoke solutions to golf

clubs have also proven to be a great success.

“If a Course Manager is using more than one product instead of supplying him with 20 litres of this and 20 litres of that we make them a 200 litre drum and a pump which comes pre-mixed. Often mixing products increases the benefits of both and once the club has ordered its fifth drum we will come and collect the other four from them, this saves the club money on disposal of empties.”

Rigby Taylor is celebrating its 90th birthday this year having been formed by Mr Herbert Rigby and Mr Robert Taylor in 1919 to sell degreasing solvents to cotton and textile mills. A fertilisers division was formed a short time later as the company moved into the area of business for which it has become known since then.

A management buyout in the early 80s, led by Bernard Hedley, and an expansion from being a northern focussed company to one which serviced the entire country was the making of Rigby Taylor. The development of the Mascot range, in 1981, was another significant milestone.

Since then Rigby Taylor has become one of the best known names in the industry and well placed to survive the ups and downs of the current economic situation.

Among these have been the high cost of fertilisers, brought about from a major mining collapse in China, which reduced the stocks of potash, and the strong Euro which has upped the cost of dealing with those in the Euro-zone but Andrew has worked hard with suppliers to ensure good value, not to mention quality, for customers.

“Along with our Product Manager I set the challenge to our suppliers of reducing our chemical costs without reducing the quality of the product and they rose to that magnificently.

“All our outfield granuals now include recycled Organic material which has a natural NPK so we’ve gone from a chemical analysis to one which is partly chemical and partly organic. This has extended the release of the product so it’s not as quick release as it was, but a much more gentle release which reduces the clippings.

“So it’s not costing the client any more money for a better product than before,” explained Andrew.

Rigby Taylor has a sales team numbering 50, the largest in the country and they pride themselves on forming close relationships with their customers and helping them wherever possible to produce what is right for the club and right for the golf course.

“Our reps work on a six weekly visit schedule and can advise on what is a probably 4,000 different lines. We recently took on Pin Seeker as a supplier which has meant us breaking into signage and golf course furniture while another new addition has been Rainbow, which produces pathway materials,” explained Andrew, who spends his time between the three sites at Newbridge, Guildford and the head office at Bolton, he also enjoys his visits out to see Customers and finding out their needs.

When it comes to EU pesticide legislation Andrew admits that they are watching developments with interest but points to the recent addition to the Rigby Taylor portfolio as part of the strategy.

“Rigby Taylor won’t rely on any one particular market sector. If there was a pesticide ban it would be painful but it wouldn’t kill us. We try to be as diverse as we can.”

He is very keen that golf clubs help the overall situation by only using product that is licensed for amenity use.

“The clubs who are using agricultural products at the moment are not doing us any favours as the better the amenity sector behaves the more chance the UK will be left to manage our own affairs without the need of European legislation.”

With 2019 in its sights you can be sure that Rigby Taylor will be working hard to ensure that the current successes stretch way beyond its 100th birthday.

HOW CLOSE ARE YOU CUTTING YOUR GREENS TODAY?



By Andy Cole

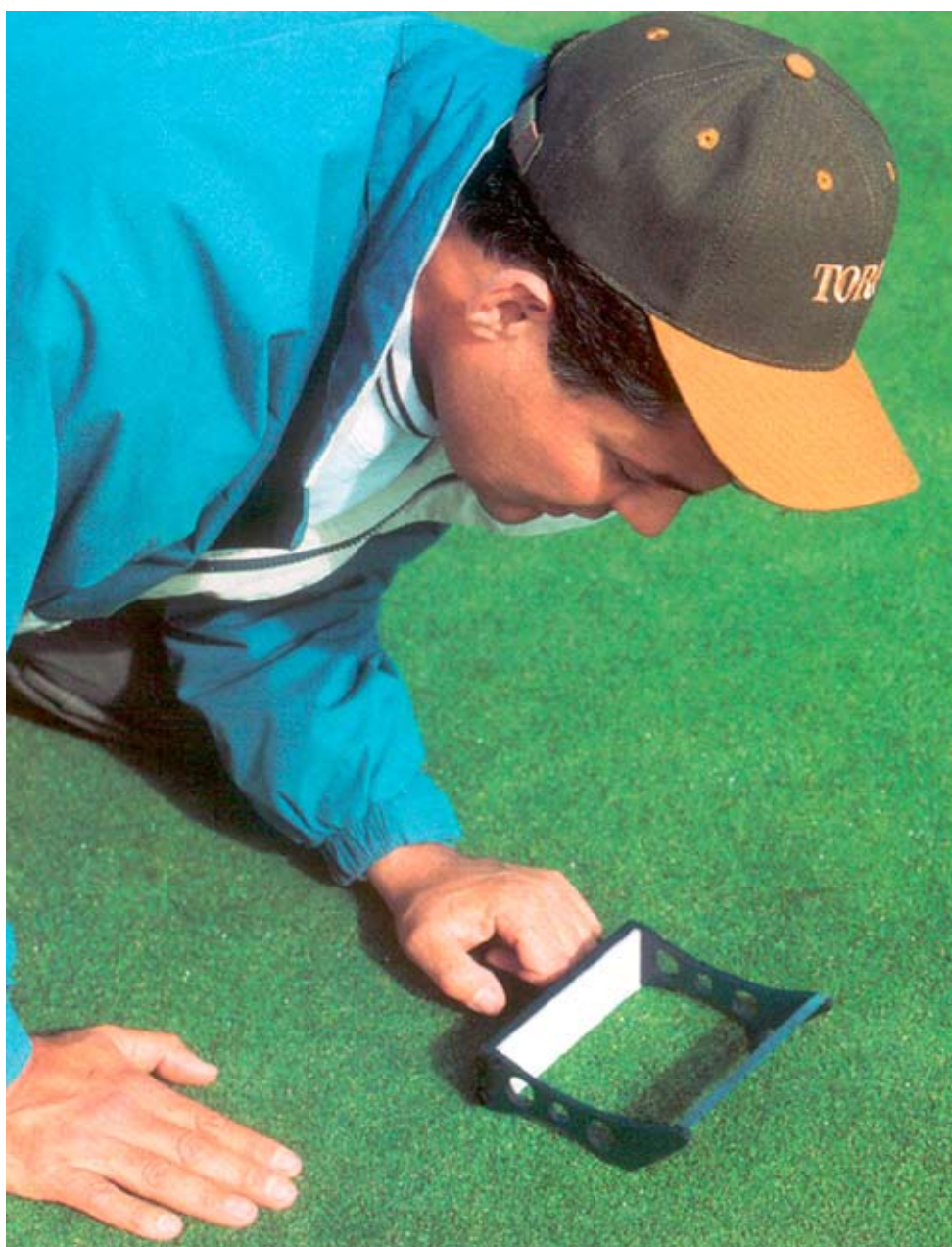
Mowing is fundamental to good turf management but how much attention is paid to the detail of this operation as well as understanding the effect it has on the short, medium and long-term quality of the putting surface? Golfers consistently want greens cut shorter in pursuit of pace but do they understand the effect that actual height of cut has on species composition and sustainability?

The height of cut of a greens mower is set on the "bench" using a variety of tools and gadgets to assist the greenkeeper in creating the length of grass required to provide a smooth and consistent putting surface. A steel mower gauge, was and still is, used in many quarters as the standard tool to set the height between the rear and front rollers and the cutting edge of the bottom blade. Indeed, three old pennies were sometimes used to set the gauge to provide a bench setting of 3/16in. Depending on who set up the greens mower, the bench setting would be a "tight" or "loose" 3/16in, which could account for some variation in the actual height of cut presented on the greens.

The modern approach to "bench setting" a greens mower employs the use of an Accu-Gauge



Prism gauge (supplied by John Deere)



Worms eye view of the leaf blade. Lets you view the "actual height of cut"
Turf Evaluator (supplied by TORO Irrigation)



An example of "bench setting"



Hand cutting versus triple mowing – an ongoing debate

setting bar, where the fixed nut has been replaced with a needle attached directly to a dial, allowing the greenkeeper to set the machine to fractions of a millimetre.

The height of cut used for the Ryder Cup at the Belfry in 2002 was 2.72mm! By removing the emphasis on feel, the greens machine can be set more accurately and any greenkeeper using the gauge should be able to set the machine exactly the same.

However, this element of machine set-up is only one part of the mowing process which has to be considered by the greenkeeper.

The "actual" height of cut, i.e. the length of the grass left after mowing, is often quite different to the bench setting, though many still refer to the bench setting as the height of cut.

The actual height of cut can be affected by a variety of different factors including the relative softness of the turf; weight of different machines; triple machine versus hand machine etc.

Greens units can also be set up with the bottom blade in a neutral position or relaxed position, where in the latter instance the bottom blade pushes the grass before it is picked up by the cutting cylinder. This achieves a slightly longer cut compared to the bench setting.

Conversely, an aggressive position will achieve a slightly closer cut compared to the bench setting where the cylinder picks up the grass before it hits the bottom blade...who said greenkeepers were just grass cutters!

The actual height of cut can be measured with the aid of a genuine Prism Gauge available through John Deere or the Toro Turf Evaluator which allows a horizontal view of the grass via a mirror.

Care must be taken to ensure the gauge is

used as a guide and confirmation of how the grass is being cut. It can nevertheless be used to good effect to achieve the same height of cut when alternating between hand and triple machines.

It is generally felt that a more flexible approach to mowing heights is required across the country. This could influence the texture of the turf thereby helping to generate smoother greens with slightly greater pace.

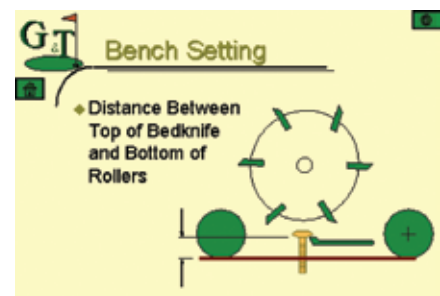
The general principle is to adopt as low a mowing height as the turf will comfortably tolerate, without putting the turf under undue stress. These heights will of course vary through the year due to differing weather conditions, or be influenced by specific competitions and timing of other maintenance practices.

In essence, we need to move away from being tied to the numbers (dictated in agronomic textbooks) and use your own judgment and skill as greenkeepers to balance the needs of the golfer with our agronomic aim of increasing the finer fescue and bent content of the greens.

Without doubt height of cut is a factor in achieving a desired level of pace and uniformity but should not be regarded as the overriding factor

The effects of fertiliser, water, thatch, etc. all play a part in green speed and it is essential that you avoid creating lush growth through over-feeding and over-watering. Such lush conditions create the need for additional verticutting and grooming in an attempt to create the smooth and consistent surfaces desired – you are then actually fighting against your own inputs!

In my experience, one of the main difficulties for greenkeepers is differentiating between the bench setting and actual height of cut. Where pace is lacking, invariably the actual height of cut is found to be longer than the bench set and yet the



(supplied by John Deere with thanks)

first point of reference is the fact that the greens mower has been set to cut at 4mm.

It does not matter how the height of cut is measured on the machine, if it is not cutting at the height that you are trying to achieve, you will never get the best out of your greens.

Always check both the bench set, which should be your first point of reference, and then check the actual height of cut on the green.

Of equal importance is the quality of the finish, making sure the blades are sharp and the machine on-cut.

Through the summer grass cutting will take up the majority of your time on the golf course. Make sure that all your cutting units are set correctly and for the long-term sustainability of the course and the encouragement and retention of the finer grass species...make sure you know how close you are actually cutting.

About the Author

Andy Cole is STRI Turfgrass
Agronomist for the Midlands

New Products



NEW PRODUCTS



GROUNDS MAINTENANCE RANGE LAUNCHED

Spaldings has extended its grounds maintenance portfolio to include a new range of professional tools from Spear and Jackson. The innovative new tool selection is taken from the established Spear and Jackson catalogue and features products from the 'County', 'Elements' and 'E-Series' range.

The shaft of each tool is weatherproofed for enhanced durability and is carefully crafted from hardwearing woods such as Ash before being coated in a resilient lacquer. The integral ergonomic handle is forward tilted for maximum comfort at the ideal digging angle, ensuring that unnecessary effort and strain is avoided.

www.spaldings.co.uk

ABSOLUTE READER

Esoteric Golf Technology of Sweden has introduced the Absolute Reader putting aid for the 2008 / 2009 season.

This product was first shown at different tour events in 2007, and was very well received and highly anticipated by the European Tour Players and coaches. It is an innovative new product that created a lot of buzz at the PGA Merchandise show.

When practising green reading, you have to be sure that the ball starts on the line that you are aiming at. The Absolute Reader is a green-reading tool where the ball will always come out straight, no matter how you hit it. By hitting the ball with your putter, you get the feel for the proper speed of a certain break.

www.esotericgolf.com



NEW WEBSITE

The new website for Echo power provides the latest information and specification for the full range of Echo brushcutters, chainsaws, hedgetrimmers and power blowers, as well as the Bear Cat range of Chippers, Chipper Shredders, Trim-mowers and Stump Grinder.

There is a product registration facility, as well as a list of frequently asked questions with comprehensive answers, and some useful seasonal gardening tips on the use of Echo products.

[01844 278800](tel:01844278800)
www.echo-tools.co.uk

NEW STEERABLE SELF-PROPELLED AERATOR

Classen has launched a new 'steerable' pedestrian aerator, aimed specifically at small landscaping/garden maintenance firms and the rental/hire market.

The new model permits aerating to continue while making turns around bushes, trees or an irregular lawn edge. The two models, TA25D and TA17D, will cover 8,839 sq.m/hr and 5,893 sq.m/hr respectively and a coring depth of up to 7cm.

The split drive system also provides excellent control when aerating on slopes and gives a level of control during turns that cannot be matched by other similar sized aerators. The powered left/right control allows easing turning around obstructions and provides increased control on slopes and side hills.

www.jsmd.co.uk



NEW PEDESTRIAN ROTARY

Etesia has launched the PRO51X. This 51cm rotary is the latest heavy-duty model produced by this European company and they have now made it available in the UK in time for the 2009 grass cutting season.

Powered by a 4-stroke air-cooled OHV Honda 5.5hp GXV160 engine, this self-propelled lawnmower has variable speed giving the operator total control in all ground conditions.

www.etesia.com



NEW RANGE OF GENUINE OILS

Yanmar has developed a new range of genuine oils that are suitable for all its industrial engine applications.

There are four products in total including diesel engine oil, transmission oil, synthetic diesel engine oil, and engine coolant. The packaging design has also been improved with new ergonomically shaped 1litre bottles with a textured easy to grip surface that reduces the chances of dropping the bottle.

[01869 363692](tel:01869363692)



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No plugs or cores are removed, so there is no clean up involved. The soil is loosened by the vibrating action of the tines or fingers, the harder the conditions the more effective the results, however little disturbance is caused to grassed areas.

www.jsmd.co.uk



YET ANOTHER NEW YES! GOLF PUTTER

The third new model putter offering for 2009 from Yes! Golf is *Jennie*.

Jennie came about as the result of the remarkable success of her cousin, *Sandy*, which was released in Europe in June 2008. The heel-shafted, *Jennie* will suit the player who likes a little more toe hang than usual, in order to help with bringing the head back to square at impact during a moderate swing arc. Two, ball-width bosses on the back cavity frame both the ball and the single sight line in the back cavity to encourage accurate alignment of the ball, the centre of the face and the intended target.

www.yesgolf.co.uk



NEW CUTTING HEIGHT ADJUSTER

Allett has introduced a fast, convenient and precise cutting height adjuster for its Shaver, Tournament and C-Range fine-turf pedestrian mowers.

Known as the Quick Height Adjuster, the device consists of a micrometer dial and threaded rod assembly attached to either end of the mower's front roller.

Each click-turn of the dial moves the front roller up or down by 0.4mm, altering the height of cut by an identical amount depending on the direction in which the dial is turned.

To be fitted as standard to Allett's 20in and 24in Shaver and Tournament mowers and to the C-20 and C-24 cartridge head machines equipped with a 10-bladed cutting cylinder, the Quick Height Adjuster will be included on all new machines delivered this spring.

www.allett.co.uk



INNOVATIVE LIGHT TOWER

Doosan Infracore Portable Power (DIPP) has launched the new V9 light tower offering several innovative features that improve reliability and convenience, reduce fuel consumption and lower operating costs. Like all the Portable Power products marketed under the brand name Ingersoll Rand, the V9 LightSource is built to withstand the rigours of everyday applications in the toughest conditions, providing advantages in plant hire, construction and roadwork projects as well as many other applications.

Among the innovative features of the V9 LightSource is the electrical system which has been designed so that components are electrically self protected when the tower is switched off by the 'emergency stop' button rather than powered down as normal using the key switch.

www.doosanportable.com

A QUICK GUIDE TO...

Course Surveys

Archie Stewart let's you know how to make the most of your survey

1. Define your aims

Golf course surveys can cover many aspects of course management. They can show everything from the legal extents of the course, the area of all the playing surfaces, the differing habitats within the course, to providing the distance measurements and maps for scorecards. When commissioning a survey think about what you want it to show, now and in the future. Financial considerations are uppermost at the moment, it is not necessary to have all the bells and whistles from the outset.

2. Take ownership

Accurate surveys are an essential part of course management so it is important that the management team are involved in all aspects of the survey and that they ensure the survey is used fully. The golf course is the biggest asset the club has so it makes sense it is recorded properly. The information the survey provides should be used by green staff and office staff in the day-to-day running of the club.

3. Communicate

Maps are an ideal method of communication between course management and committees, committees and members, the club and the general public. Up to date maps can be used to show new bunkers or explain work schedules. Maps can be used as signboards to show the location of public footpaths.

4. Look to the past...

Greenkeepers don't work forever, some even retire, so use a survey to record all the details that may be kept in the greenkeeper's head, so the knowledge can be passed on. Recording the position of drains that have been replaced or repaired in the past will save the future ground staff a lot of digging and head scratching.

5...to plan for the future

A course survey is like a snapshot of the course; golf courses change and evolve with time.



The survey should be updated regularly to show changes. The initial cost and benefit of the survey are wasted if it is just kept in a drawer.

6. New developments

When planning new developments record the location of underground services such as irrigation pipes, drains and cables as they are put in. Even if there is no existing accurate survey, GPS can show the as laid location and it can be added as a layer if a survey is done in the future.

7. Accuracy

Many courses will have members with either recreational GPS or golfing GPS units such as Skycaddie, while these will provide a basis for maps and distance they are not accurate enough for a full course survey. Accurate information will bring cost savings, by knowing the correct area for each green, tee and fairway combined with accurate calibration of spreaders and sprayers will ensure correct application of fertiliser and sprays.

8. Adding to the survey

Your course survey should be a living document that records the course now and is able to take that information into the future, so be prepared to invest in it. Ensure that the first base map is

compatible with other systems so that in the future it will be possible to add details such as soil type and soil sampling information, rainfall, any constraints like SSSI, rights of way, listed buildings or sites of archaeological interest.

9. Provide time

Most surveys will come in digital format to be used with computer mapping, so bear in mind that provision of a computer and training will help utilise the benefits of the survey for planning and record keeping.

10. Action

While changing weather patterns will put strain on drainage and irrigation systems and the financial storms batter budgets, investment in a course survey today will provide a good return at all levels of golf course management.

CONTACT DETAILS

Archie Stewart, Landmaps Ltd

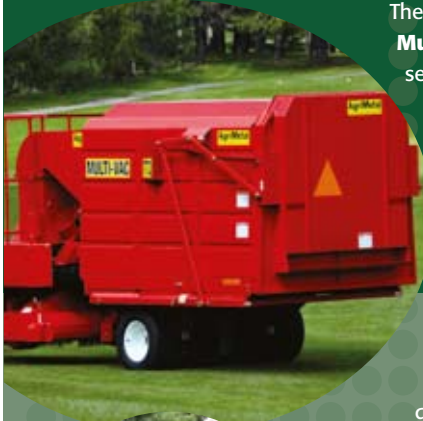
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IS A LOW COST ATV THE RIGHT UTILITY TOOL FOR TOUGH TIMES?

By James de Havilland

ATVs, or quad bikes if you prefer, have struggled to find a niche in the golf, sports turf and wider amenity sector. It is easy to come up with arguments why this is the case, but does this also mean we are overlooking the merits of these machines?

If an ATV were to be in the dock, charged with not being fit for sports turf and amenity purpose, there would be quite a long list of 'evidence' that could be levelled against it. How about seating for just one person, no weather protection and limited carrying capacity? Then add petrol power as the killer piece of detail. Verdict: These tools are just too limited to appeal the sports turf and amenity sectors.

These arguments have now been used for so long that many may wonder why there is a reason to 're-open' what should be an open and shut case against the ATV. The reality is that these days nobody can afford to just assume a particular tool remains unsuitable for a specific set of task. We live in interesting times, after all.

So, rather than consider what an ATV does not offer it is perhaps worth reconsidering what these tools can do. The first and most relevant point is that they have a light footprint. Fit turf friendly tyres, as opposed to the cleat pattern that enables most ATVs to excel in traversing really tough terrain. Next, inflate the tyres to no more than 0.2 bar/3 psi and you can drive a suitably shod ATV across the finest of turf without the risk of doing any damage.

Now consider this same ATV equipped with a sprayer, and the complete package starts to make a degree of sense. Add the narrow width of these vehicles, the most portly squeezing through a gap of under 1.30m, and it is clear an ATV can access the narrow spots that could well be off limits to a wider utility truck. There is no reason why an ATV could not be used to spray a bowling green.

That said ATVs have a notoriously poor turn radius and a tendency to chew up turf in a tight turn. This is down to the fact that most do without a differential in the rear axle and, in the case of the

widely available 4WD models, the front wheels not only have a relatively modest turn angle but a fair degree of resistance to overcome too. The words 'clean', 'tight' and 'turn' are not usually blended together in a sentence describing ATVs.

So, after coming up with a potential use for an ATV, the next paragraph counters it with an equally valid reason to look at something else. The point that is missed, however, is that not all ATVs are 4WD models and that some have a rear differential. Step forward the Kawasaki KLF300.

Weighing in at around 240kg, fuelled up and ready to go, the little KLF300 will pull at trailed load approaching 320kg, is nominal 15kW/20hp 270cc petrol engine driving through a five-speed semi-automatic transmission that allows for a gentle spraying pace through to a top speed that will easily meet the demands of most users.

Of equal importance, this ATV is the only mechanical transmission utility 2WD model the writer knows off to be fitted with a locking rear differential. With drive to both rear wheels



Kawasaki offers its KLF 300 in 2WD form, this model benefitting from a rear differential. This enables this ATV to turn not just pretty tightly but more cleanly too. With moderate care, amenity operators can see many years of service from an ATV, a point to consider when looking at true operating costs.



Trailed attachments have the added advantage of fitting behind both ATVs and utility vehicles. On level terrain a light, 2WD ATV will pull around 250kg, more powerful models coping with double that even over rougher terrain.

C-Dax. ATVs are more than just a means of getting from A to B, with a range of attachments from manufacturers to include C-Dax and Logic greatly extending what can be done with them. A mounted sprayer is a key application,





The agricultural sector has taken the ATV to heart, livestock farms in particular exploiting the ability of these units to get to hard to access parts of most farms. Note the use of gloves, hard hat and eye protection, a key basic requirement that should be adhered to.

engaged, the turn radius is 2.9m. With the diff in its default unlocked mode, the KLF300 will turn within a more modest 2.6m. Slow for the turn, easing the KLF300 around on a hint of throttle, and the turn will be clean too.

Anyone who knows their ATVs will realise the KLF300 is based upon a model that first saw the light of day way back in the 1980s.

The current 2009 machines are well proven in other words. And, at around £3,900, ex VAT, they continue to make a good case for themselves as an affordable, potentially turf friendly, ATV.

Kawasaki, as with the likes of Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha, do not offer ATVs in road legal, quadricycle form. If you want a KLF300 to travel down the road, it will do so on the back of a trailer. There are ways to make a non-homologated ATV road legal – farmers have done so for years – but the restrictions are such that if road travel is a priority it is probably better to go for a homologated quadricycle.

In broad outline, a quadricycle will have its power output restricted to no more than 15kW, be fitted with a catalytic convertor, and have lighting equipment suitable for highway use; in other words indicators and road legal headlights that dip to the left. Entry level models are available from what appears to be an ever growing range of importers, KYMCO being among the most established in the UK.

So how much will you need to pay for a road going ATV? As an example, the 2WD KYMCO

MXU300 RL, a CVT dual-range automatic designed for heavier use, has a sticker price of £3,043, ex VAT and registration fees. Well under £4K on the road in other words.

Larger models, including the 2/4WD MXU 500 RL have output restricted to under 15kW too, but the larger engine has more 'oomph'. The penalty is a much heftier price tag of £5,699 ex VAT and registration fees.

So what about other ATVs and the choice of utility models on offer? At the extreme end of the power scale are 50hp plus v-twin engine models. Units made by Polaris and Can-Am can be specced up in two-seater and load platform guise and ready for the road too. There is a far broader spectrum of ATVs on the market than there was at the turn of the century.

The key point is not to dismiss an ATV because it has perceived weaknesses but to rather take a look at what an ATV can do. Fit a tow hitch, and larger models will pull up to half a metric tonne. Add a winch, and an ATV can be used to carry out jobs to include light tree clearance.

The rear rack can be fitted with more than just a spray tank and the hitch can operate a light top dresser. You can even tow powered mowers or light gang sets.

The biggest reason not to consider an ATV will remain the light utility vehicle, but the latter will cost considerably more. If you are looking for a light runabout that can be used for a range of light duties, perhaps now is the time to take another look at an ATV.

Manual or automatic?

Automatic CVT drive is now widely found as the only transmission option on a broad range of ATVs. The once universal semi-automatic manual transmission with a foot operated gear shift remains an option from some manufacturers, Honda resolutely sticking to this format with ESP, electronic shifting, adding a modern twist to a proven concept.

The key reason 'manual' transmissions remain popular is that it is easier to keep a relatively constant speed. Although a CVT transmission can settle to a reasonably fixed working speed in level going, as it will with a utility vehicle, a geared drive and centrifugal clutch combination seems to do it better.

Honda now offer the 420 Fourtrax AT automatic as an alternative to its foot and push button shift 420 siblings, the new model arguably proving the best of both CVT and manual transmissions. This is because the ATV can be operated in a manual ESP mode to enable the operator to select and hold a given forward speed.

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WARNING

THIS COULD DAMAGE THE HEALTH OF YOUR COURSE

THE MASTERS

Television Commentator and former Ryder Cup golfer, Ken Brown, offers thoughts and advice on Augusta and The Masters

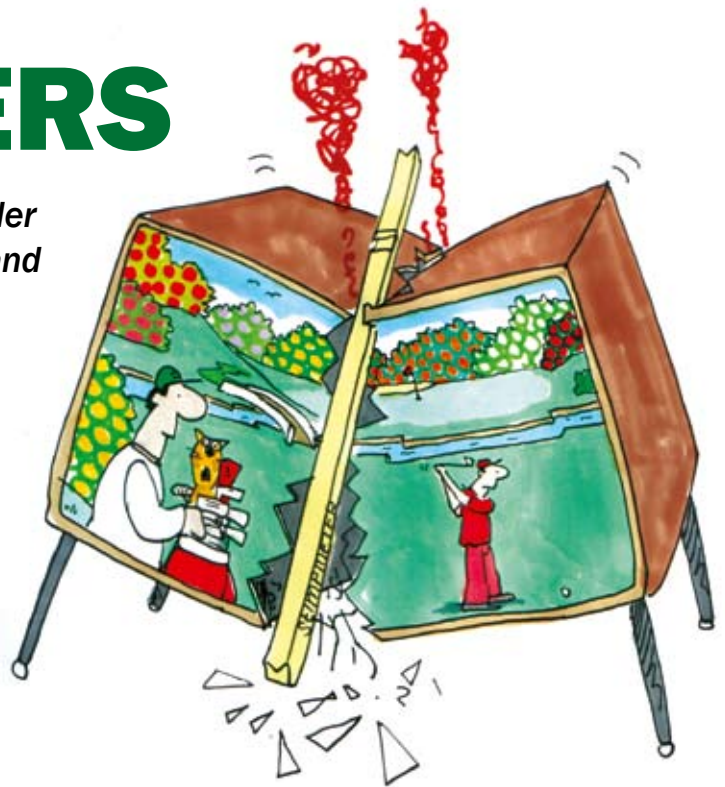
Beware, "Masters" is back at a screen near you, from Georgia, the must see Augusta National Golf Club. Golfers from around the world will watch the yearly drama unfold gripped by the golf and the outstanding arena that Augusta provides.

The course will be an avalanche of spring colours, immaculately manicured emerald green fairways lined with columns of cathedral pines and the yellow, pink and red of the azaleas. Add to this almost guaranteed sunshine and you have what appears to be a heavenly setting for golf.

Surfacing from what has been a cold and snowy winter it is easy to be tempted into thinking that this is what our own course should resemble. It is rather like being seduced by Charlie Dimmock and rushing out the next weekend to buy some expensive decking to cover over what is already a perfectly good lawn forgetting that you have just opted for a rather expensive, less practical and high maintenance alternative.

This Georgian horticultural golfing playground is achieved with vast amounts of money and an army of green-keeping staff. The carefully selected cultivars of grass have been developed specifically for Augusta greens with the exact amount of water and fertiliser applied with eye dropper precision. The on course weather station predicts any necessity to use the sub-air system which controls the temperature of the soil. The shrubs are cosseted to ensure their flowering is simultaneous with Masters week. The course remains closed for six months of the year. At Augusta green-keeping has become more of a science than an art.

The effect of this spectacle has been to influence golf club committees to follow suit. With enough water and fertiliser the green and



stripy look can be readily achieved, however as with most things in life you can have too much of a good thing. Excessive water and fertiliser can encourage the proliferation of meadow grass which in time shrouds out the finer fescues and bents resulting in thatch and poor drainage. There is a huge difference between perfect looking turf and perfect turf for playing golf.

The course conditioning for the Opens on the Old Course at St. Andrews has always been just right. Despite the large greens only around a thousand pounds a year is spent on fertiliser and we are always presented with wonderful natural putting surfaces which are both delightful and just as nature intended. Efforts to preserve the native characteristics have been consistent with Alistair Mackenzie's thoughts that St Andrews Old Course was "too sacred to be changed". Imagine you are on the first tee and your view of the Swilken Bridge is obscured by a row of leylandi cypress dividing the first and eighteenth fairways, a simply ridiculous idea. Why then consider planting rhododendrons and laurel at

your club? Maybe more thought should be given to our own indigenous species such as heather and gorse dependant on the setting.

In times when money is tight clubs should keep things simple, less can be more. Decisions should be made with planning, professional advice, and forward thinking. When planting trees think fifty years and not five, it will cost you more to take them down than put them up. Clubs don't need greens running at 1.1 on the stimp meter, narrow fairways cut at 1/2 an inch in a tartan stripe and long rough. The mantra "difficult" equals good for 99.9% of golfers doesn't hold water. There's never been a more important time than now for clubs to make sure that golf takes less time, is more enjoyable to play and costs less.

Augusta National is the perfect place for Masters golf, but The Old Course at St Andrews is still the bench mark for golf.

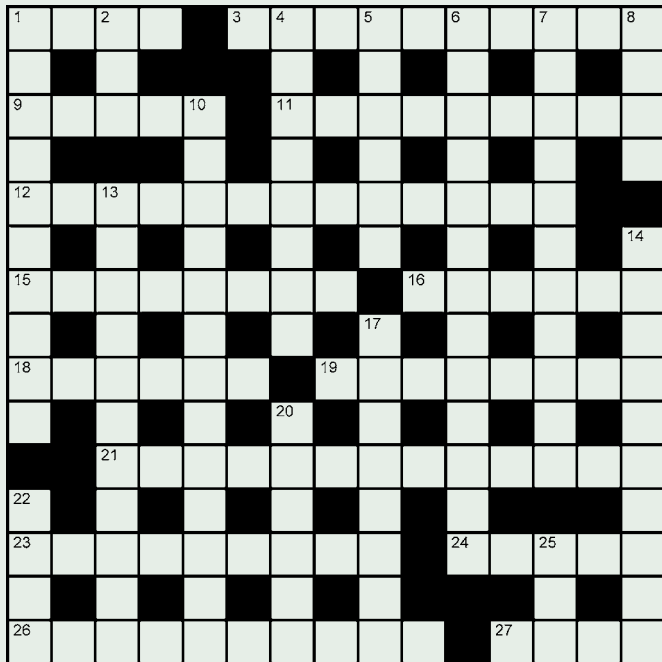
**Ken Brown works with Creative Golf Design
Creative Golf Design Ltd, 6 Barony Way, Chester,
CH4 7NP, UK. Tel/fax 0044 1244 659265**



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

- 1 Senegalese hip-hop performer Aliaune Thiam's stage name (4)
- 3 System of beliefs (10)
- 9 You Little —, Feargal Sharkey hit that followed A Good Heart (5)
- 11 Chiaroscuro that imitates relief work (9)
- 12 Ancient town in Co Antrim, NI (13)
- 15 Expulsion (8)
- 16 Joules and ergs are measures of this (6)
- 18 Cheapjack, tawdry (6)
- 19 "Going —" - wearing trousers without underwear (8)
- 21 Liking gained after experience (8,5)
- 23 Worked hard (9)
- 24 Follower of what is regarded as the oldest religious tradition (5)
- 26 System whereby cable/satellite users are charged for individual programmes (3-3-4)
- 27 Affectedly quaint (4)

Down

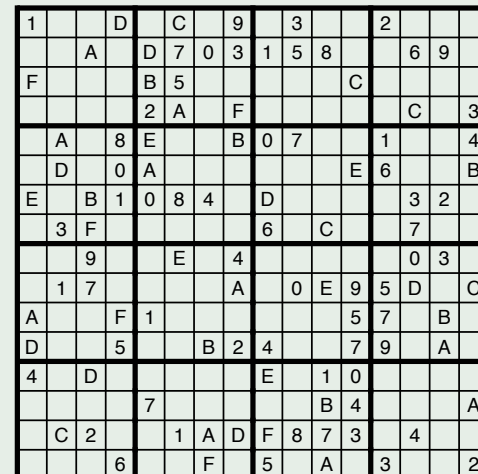
- 1 Ian Paisley's description of Pope John Paul II in 1988 (10)
- 2 Kimono sash; witchcraft practised in the W Indies (3)
- 4 Dance move used in e.g. the can-can (4,4)
- 5 Hang around (6)
- 6 Bitter exchange of abuse or insults (8,5)
- 7 US desert city previously called Agua Caliente ("hot water") (4,7)
- 8 — Rocher, global cosmetics company (4)
- 10 Honest (4-3-6)
- 13 Large star system of a type suitable for detection over great distances (5,6)
- 14 Longest side of a right-angled triangle (10)
- 17 Utterly lazy (4-4)
- 20 In the Hebrew calendar, third month of the civil year (6)
- 22 Come to an end (4)
- 25 In the historical present (3)

QUICK NINE-HOLE QUIZ

1. What is the common name for the medical condition epistaxis?
2. Who did Ted Turner, the media tycoon, marry in 1991?
3. Who has written a series of letters entitled 'Dear Fatty' in the form of an autobiography?
4. What type of material is produced in a ginnery?
5. What is made using soda, lime and silica?
6. What sort of creature is a cassowary?
7. How old is Juliet when she dies in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet?
8. How is the chaparral cock, a ground cuckoo native of Mexico, better known?
9. What was the name of King Henry VIII's older brother?

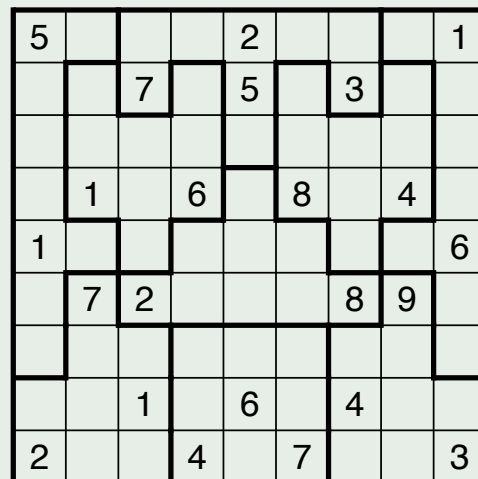
MONSTER SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 4x4 box contains the numbers 1 to 9 and the letters A,B and C.



SUDOKU

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



IN THE SHED ANSWERS
can be found on page 55



IN THE SHED



News from the Chief Executive

I would like to start my column by paying tribute to the late Alex Millar, whose funeral Billy McMillan and I attended last month. Alex was a retired groundsman and Chairman of the IOG at the time of his death.

I had the pleasure of first meeting Alex during the talks in 2007 between BIGGA and the IOG and his passion for the grounds care industry was immediately obvious. He was astute, likeable and a role model for others and anyone who spent time with him quickly appreciated being in his company. Alex was someone for whom I had the highest regard and he was the perfect gentleman who will be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues in greenkeeping and groundsmanship.

On a lighter note at last there are signs of spring being just around the corner, the daffodils are coming into bloom, the crows are nesting and the daylight hours are slowly increasing in length. As we emerge from a more traditional winter all our hopes are pinned on it being a better summer than experienced over the last couple of years. I sympathise with greenkeepers everywhere who annually suffer from the Augusta syndrome, how the industry can get the golfer to appreciate that not all clubs have the ability (or budget) to create Augusta like conditions remains one of our most difficult challenges.

Who knows, perhaps a weaker pound may help the UK holiday industry, a bit more sun may encourage golfers out onto the golf course a little more often and some good weather should help greenkeepers in their quest to produce better playing conditions, despite the budget constraints that we are all experiencing.

There is no doubt that the current world economic crisis will do golf, both as a sport and as an industry, no good. The major tournaments are coming under scrutiny from sponsors who are having to make soul searching commercial decisions, possibly for the first time in many years. BIGGA is no exception and the downturn in advertising revenue in particular is having an adverse impact in our profitability, requiring some close scrutiny of our overheads. It's not all bad news though. Stand bookings for our own exhibition in Harrogate next year are coming in steadily and Halls A, B, C and M are filling up. Once fully booked we have several options for expansion including Halls Q and D but it's too early to commit at the moment.

Plans are well under way in the restructuring of BIGGA into a company limited by guarantee and the intention is to have the new company in place so as to enable trading with effect from July 1. In due course members will receive formal notification of the changes but in the meanwhile anyone requiring further information should contact HQ.

During the coming months I and some of my colleagues at BIGGA HOUSE will be attending some of the Section and Region events around the country and we look forward to meeting members. Please take full advantage of the opportunity to discuss Association matters, we welcome your views!

John Pemberton
Chief Executive



SCOTTISH REGION - CENTRAL

Over 50 Course Managers, Greenkeepers, Golf Club Committees and members from some trade organisations attended a seminar at The Castle Course - organised by STRI and supported by The Scotts Company. Entitled "The Art of Objective Greenkeeping" those present heard some excellent deliveries from Richard Windows, Henry Bechelet, Andy Cole, Alistair Beggs, Lee Penrose and Kelly Harmar. As well as a brief course walk at the end of the day there was also a demonstration and explanation of a few new tools which will shortly be available to help put objective figures to turf firmness and surface smoothness.

The next event we have planned is an evening seminar from Stan Zontek, of the USGA Greens Section, John Kaminski, of Penn State, and Lane Tredway, of North Carolina State Uni. They are over in the UK on a fact finding study tour (it involves beer and golf) and have kindly agreed to come along to the training room at Elmwood College at 7pm on April 23. These three have a wealth of knowledge in research and experience and some of the subjects they hope to cover would be how putting green management influences disease activity, how management has changed over the past 20 years and the effect climate change is having on our greens. This should be a great night with plenty of opportunity for questions.

You should shortly receive our annual newsletter (if you haven't already done so) along with the entry form for the Spring Outing at Scotsraig. The Committee would again ask you reply quickly if you plan to attend the outing and please send your cheque with your entry form as we will not accept money on the day, no pay = no play!

Finally, we have a number of events lined up for the autumn. On October 26, on the morning of the AGM, we have a training course on disciplinary procedures, how to structure them and follow the correct procedure. On 17 and 18 November we plan a two day Ecology Course with assistance from STRI, and on December 2 a half day course on carrying out staff appraisals. We are hoping to secure some funding for some of these but most of all we need your support.

More details can be found on: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Gordon Moir

Section Notes

Please email your notes to melissa@bigga.co.uk, or scott@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of the month.

Suggested word guide: 500



EAST

Spring is in the air, the grass is waking up...we hope.

Our Section were very fortunate to be invited along on February 17 to a new development of two Donald Ross Memorial Championship courses that are presently being constructed at Whitburn near to the old Polkemet colliery site in the west Lothian area.

The site that the courses are being built on are actually old mining's, meaning that the coal waste, shale is being graded and used largely to build and construct the two new championship golf courses along with other materials that are handily available on site.

Alex Muirhead, Site Engineer and Consultant, tells me that the courses should be completed by 2012 and at an approximate cost of £12 million for the two championship courses. The area is reputed to be the biggest global land move site in Europe.

We must thank Jim Davidson and Graham Miller, from Henderson's Grass Machinery for sponsoring the excellent afternoon that we had at the Heartlands Site.

Our two Patron Award winner's, Joe Robertson and Adam Sherwood, were true to their word, thanks lads. They have produced a written report of how their experience at Harrogate went. There report can be accessed on the Regional pages on our BIGGA website.

I attended Oatridge College Greenkeeping Advisory meeting on Friday, February 20. The purpose of the meeting was to put forward proposals of changes to SVQ levels 2/3. Revalidated NCG and possibly add further short courses for the future.

People on the move are Bruce Cruickshank's, presently Course Manager at "The Roxburghe" Golf Course Kelso, who is moving to pastures new in the spring time. Bruce will take over at Hamilton Golf Course as Course Manager. Ronnie Frame (Rigby Taylor), has now has taken up the post at Sherriff Amenity - we wish them both all the best in their new jobs.

Our spring meeting is almost upon us, I hope the weather is kind to us when we are playing golf down at Eyemouth, it can be a bit open to the elements there and there aren't many hiding places, but I am sure that Mark Pagan, Head Greenkeeper, will have organised the sunshine for us. A full report of how the scoring went will be recorded for the May issue of our Section news. So play well...fore!

Ross Prowse, formerly of Marriott Dalmahoy, is now working at Muckhart GC. We are delighted to announce that Ross's wife Lynn gave birth to a baby girl, Rebecca, on Saturday, March 7 and the both of them are well.

Ross is a bit of a runner so that will come in handy when Lynn needs him to run and get things for Rebecca - that will keep you fit Ross.

Until next month

Tom Murray
tom.murray@rathoparkgolfclub.co.uk



NORTH

The season is just around the corner now and your respective councils/committees will be pacing up and down wondering whether or not the course is going to be ready for the first competition of the year. Hopefully most of us are nearing the end of the winter work but in all honesty it never ends does it? We all seem to be finding other little jobs that could be done, 5 minute ones as one of my mates would say. It just seems to be never ending, you think that you're there then the Greens Conveynor pops in and says, "Can you just do that for me please?"

The 200 Club cards have all been sent out to you by Robert Hardie. Can you make his life a little easier by returning any unwanted cards. This enables him to get them punted out to other members and to get the maximum amount of monies possible.

Ben Brookes
benbrookes@yahoo.co.uk
07813889374



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH EAST

Well, I'm looking out of the window - what do I see, more snow - here's me thinking summer was just around the corner. I've seen no rain for a couple weeks and that blasted white stuff is back again - I will be glad when this winter is out of the way, it seems that it's been here for six months.

Having recently heard from a rep. then getting confirmation through the local newspaper - Close House will not only be starting work on their new clubhouse but also starting on the construction of the new 18 holes



Around the Green

championship course, the starting date I'm unsure about.

Dates for the Section golf competitions are as follows: Wednesday, April 22 at Whitley Bay GC, Wearside GC on October 14 - again on a Wednesday members will be notified. If anyone has any news, just give me a ring.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH WEST

Hello everyone, we have the Spring Seminar coming up on Friday on April 24 at Birchwood Golf Club on the disturbance theory and objective greenkeeping. This seminar will have four experts from the STRI - Henry Bechelet, Richard Windows, Andy Cole and Alistair Beggs.

It will last from 9.15am until 3.15pm and will cover the subjects of formulating your ideal, fundamentals of the disturbance theory, greenkeeping through the phases, organic matter testing and performance measurement and development - a very interesting seminar. The cost will be £20 for members and £25 for non-members. Forms are available from Nick Gray, of Bathgates, and Phil Dewhurst, of Rigby Taylor, or you can contact me for details and forms. The cost also includes lunch.

The re-arranged Bert Cross Memorial Trophy has been played and the first winner of this magnificent trophy, kindly sponsored by Richard Campey, was Peter Hogan - well done Peter. Our thanks go out to Bathgates who kindly sponsored the Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive. The day went really well and the hospitality of the Captain of Wilmslow Golf Club was magnificent - as he very kindly supplied the wine for the meal. The course was up to its usual, very high standard and the new caterers provided us with a meal fit for a king.

The Spring Tournament this year will be played at the West Lancashire Golf Club, on Monday, May 18. The Summer Tournament will be at The Warrington Golf Club on Friday, July 3, and the Autumn Tournament will be at Mere Golf and Country Club on a date to be arranged. The annual match against the North Wales Section will be on Wednesday, June 10 at Bolton (Lostock Hall) Golf Club. I will require a team of 12 for this event which will be sponsored so the day will cost nothing, all as you have to do is get there and win.

Please contact me if you wish to play - if you wish to play in any of the tournaments please send a cheque payable to BIGGA, North West Section for £20 to Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Billy can be contacted on mobile number: 07985175825. I can be contacted on: 01512894625 or my email is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



NORTHERN

Well I hope by now we have seen the last of the winter weather and all your courses are looking well for the start of the season.

There is little to report this month but can I remind you all that the first event of the golfing calendar in 2009 is the Spring Tournament at Pannal Golf Club on April 29 and is a 10am tee off. Can I also remind you that all names and payments must be received at least seven days prior to the event.

Just one other thing this month, you should all have received a copy of this year's fixture list by now but if you haven't received yours then please let me know on the number below.

We are currently in the process of looking into setting up a Facebook page for the Northern Section so I will hopefully bring you more details of this next month.

Adam Speight
07739319060
speight619@btinternet.com



SHEFFIELD

Hello again everyone. I am sure as you read this article you will either be at work or just finished work and you will have experienced a glorious early April day. It should be true, according to very early weather predictions, that we are going to have a 'great' summer. I hope this is true as I think we deserve a good summer after the past couple we have had.

I hope those of you that attended the spring lecture enjoyed the day - I must thank Geoffrey Davison for giving up his time and coming to Rotherham and giving us the lecture. I am in the process of organising lectures for the back end of the year, if anyone has any suggestions as to what they would like to see please feel free to contact me.

I am sure now that the Weather is getting better that you are all dusting the golf clubs off and are raring to go for the new season. You will all be sent invitations to the first golf match which is on May 19, at Hallowes GC - we



hope to see as many of you there as possible. You will also be sent 2009 fixture cards with this invitation.

The Section website is still ongoing - I am trying to ensure that the site that we end up with is the best possible, so the research into it is taking a little longer than expected. I am trying to get this done as quickly as possible and get the site launched.

That is all from me for now, I hope April goes well and speak to you all in May.

James Stevens
jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com
07738719614



NORTH WALES

Spring should be starting to kick in now, lovely warmer weather and a bank holiday weekend to boot! The season truly starts here.

Sherriff Amenity ran a training course on the use of aluminium phosphide (phostoxin or talunex) at Northop Golf Club, on March 24, anyone who wants to use these as part of their mole or rabbit control must now be certified to be able to buy them. Anyone interested in enrolling on future courses please get in touch with Terry Adamson.

The annual North West/North Wales Spring Seminar will take place on Friday, April 24 at Birchwood Golf Club, Warrington. The subject of this year's seminar is Disturbance Theory and Objective Greenkeeping, the seminar is being given by STRI agronomists and should be exceedingly interesting.

The Spring Tournament is going to be held this year at Rhyl Golf Club, an intimate course just up past the Sun Centre on the Prestatyn road, as always on these days we always have a good time, so dig out your entry forms and make sure you get your tee booked.

In local news Johnny Evans and his wife, Tina, both of Carden Park, took receipt of a baby boy in March, named Dylan James he bounded into this world weighing a bonny 7lb 5oz.

I'm afraid that's all the local news I have for this month but I'm here for any news you want to pass on contact details below.
All the best until next month.

Pete Maybury
07756001187
petemayb66@aol.com

Johnny Evans
Johnny.evans@tesco.net



MIDLAND REGION - MIDLANDS

I dare say that at the moment we are all far too busy to be trying to workout my usual nonsense. So let's keep it short and to the point for once, hopefully like our Graminae.

The Section would like to give a huge thank you to James Doyle, of New Holland, for stepping in at the eleventh hour to sponsor our spring event at the De Vere Wychwood Park GC. Entry forms for such and all our other events can be downloaded from the Section's website, or by emailing Gary on: gc.tpgc@hotmail.co.uk Also the start sheets can be found close to the date on the website.

The Scotts Doubles shall also be drawn at the spring venue, however please be aware that the final's date has had to be altered to the 14th September and being played at The Oxfordshire GC. Our thanks to Scotts for their continued sponsorship of this long running and successful competition.

Also, the autumn event has had to be altered to October 23, and the AGM will be held at 6pm there. Our thanks to Burton GC and to Gavin Robson.

I'm hoping that we don't have too many April showers, and that we get a summer for a change. Well, one can live in hope!

Sean McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all. April is finally here, although winter this year seems to have flown by, probably a result of the variety of different weather conditions we have experienced in the past few months. We have just taken on some late winter bunker and drainage work and that, coupled with tree work still outstanding, will keep us busy until the grass really starts growing.

It is that time of year now that everyone is able to set off hollow coring and topdressing their greens and bringing them up to scratch for the rapidly approaching golf season. It is also the time of year when budgets are approved and generally memberships are up for renewal. Everyone knows this is difficult any time of year, however this one may be the hardest yet. What we all need is a nice warm dry summer to get all the golfers flocking back to our courses.



Around the Green

Wednesday, February 18, was our East of England Section Winter Seminar at Newark Golf Club. The day included talks from Neil Pettican and Jane Leyland, from Barenbrug, on grass seed production, breeding and future advances in grass seed. We were also pleased to welcome back Henry Bechelet, from the STRI, accompanied by Andrew Cole, who turned up with a variety of gadgets aimed at testing the ball roll and firmness of the greens. All talks were very interesting and informative, unfortunately the weather cut short the course walk, but we were taken on to the 18th green where various tests were carried out. All the results showed that the green was in fantastic condition so well done Graham, or is that just your staff ha ha! Many thanks to everyone involved in organising and speaking on the day and also to Newark for hosting us and providing their famous "cow pie" for lunch.

Our first golf day of the season is just around the corner. Everybody should have received a fixture booklet which has been very kindly produced by Aitkens this year. Our first event is at Toft Golf Club on Wednesday, April 22 - tee off at 1.30pm. Please arrive early for coffee, bacon rolls and the usual banter. All names of people playing to Bruce Hicks of Boston Golf Club as soon as possible please. Hopefully we will see some new faces this year.

On a personal note, I would like to wish Happy First Birthday to my son, Archie, for March 22. How time flies, it doesn't seem like a year since he was born, yet he is now taking his first steps. He is getting nearer and nearer to being handed a bunker rake!

Many thanks Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club



SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Saturday, March 7. I hope I'm not too late with this month's jottings as the deadline is normally the 5th of the month but as the Gentleman's Dinner was on March 6, I wanted to report on what turned out to be an excellent day's golf.

Golfers from the South Eastern Region teed off from three tees and my group did so from the 8th. We followed a four ball that included Mike Gould, Copthorne GC, and Anthony Freeman, Roehampton Club, and knowing from old that they could both hit a long drive I pointed this out to my companions and watched them with anticipation. Mike hit an excellent shot and then Anthony teed up. The ball rose almost vertically to a height of about six feet then dropped and stopped about 10 feet behind the ladies' tee. Anthony offered to do what is expected on these occasions but as it was still quite chilly his playing partners declined, preferring to let him buy the first round back in the clubhouse. The 8th hole is a par 5 and much to his credit, Anthony, even with his initial lack of concentration, ended with a par. The Longest Drive was on the 18th and just getting past the signature sign with my third shot, I read the name and then realised that Anthony Freeman had achieved that most unusual feat of winning both the longest as well as the shortest drive.

The best score of 41pts was Derek Cunliffe, Rigby Taylor, who won the guest prize. Ron Christie, the defending winner from 2008 came second this year with the winner of the Ray Day Memorial Trophy being Jason Hunt - one of Ron's greenkeeping team at Addington Palace GC. Jason, well done, I hope you will enjoy your year and remember that bunker raking and strimming every day is not only character building but also a reminder not to try so hard next year. Thanks go to Ian McMillan and his staff for presenting Walton Heath GC in such excellent condition and thanks to whoever was responsible for the weather. With no water hazards Garry Ogilvie retained his dignity much to the disappointment of his playing partners and the day finished with a delicious meal and again no raffle prize for yours truly.

Martyn Gray, Deputy at Bramley GC, and his wife, Lynne, are still celebrating the birth of, Lewes, born on December 17, 2008 who weighed in at 7lb. Congratulations to you both and remember that a football team can consist of five players so you won't have to go for the full 11.

There is little else to report on a slow news month, especially since I have not been on holiday or visited the Isle of Wight since Christmas. I thought it was most spiteful of Ron Christie in his year's report to complain that it was all I ever wrote about - just because I turned down his two chapters on the life and death of the Addington Palace dung beetle. My use of the word dung is more suitable for this monthly magazine than in Ron's original title. If there are any more budding columnists out there with ideas of making it as a writer please send your articles to someone else.

Brian Willmott



KENT

Hi guys. Just a brief report this month in honour of the companies who have chosen to sponsor and support us this year. Their contribution to the Section funds is vital and is also the reason that we have been able to reduce the entry fee to all of our events this year to £25 for Course Managers, Head Greenkeepers and Trade and just £20 for Deputies and Assistants. We know times are tough but hopefully as many of you as possible will now be more able to afford to get away from it all for a few events with us. We would like to thank the following companies for their support: Avoncrop Amenity, Banks Amenity, Bourmes, Clearwater, Ernest Doe's, Godfreys Headland, John Shaw Machinery, MAB Groundscare, Rigby Taylor, Scotts, Sherriffs and T. Parker & Sons.

I hope you had a good day at Walmer and Kingsdown. Report to follow next month. Thanks to Clive Osgood for organising a great Annual Gentlemen's Dinner at Walton Heath Golf Club and thanks to Ian McMillan for presenting such a superb course steeped in traditional values.

Until next month, Best of British

Rob Holland



LONDON

An excellent turnout of over 70 delegates attended the Irrigation Workshop held at Ealing Golf Club in North West London.

Independent irrigation consultants, Irritech Ltd, lead by Roger Davey and his team split us into three groups and covered a comprehensive and wide range of situations regarding correct and efficient water usage. This included the installation maintenance and repairs of irrigation systems, diagnostics of electric and controller problems and the correct layout and spacing of sprinkler heads using the latest GPS positioning system. There was also time to answer any queries regarding individual problems, some regarding future regulation changes that could possibly affect our own watering programmes.

Our thanks go to Greg Evans, and Ealing Golf Club, for looking after us so well, and to Irritech Ltd for a very informative day.

For more information or if you have any ideas for future London Section Events don't forget to check us out on the website: www.biggalondonsection.co.uk

Clive Osgood



ESSEX

Wow! The Section seminar was a truly fantastic success with 43 attending (a report on this can be found on the news pages of this magazine).

Let's hope that the seminar we are planning for next year will be even better attended, congratulations to Paul for arranging such a good day and thanks to all of you that attended.

Remember that Paul O'Kane still wants to hear from you if you need any training. You name it and he'll try to run it, that's if he has enough people to make it feasible. Training is important and sometimes your club does not have the resources to do the particular training need, so I'm sure we can help. Plus Paul can, on occasions, arrange subsidies to help with the costs. Send him an email: greenkeeperpaul@yahoo.co.uk

The new website is now up running and is attracting a lot of attention. In the first month of the restructure, we had over 500 visits from 85 different visitors (big brother, that's how I know). Keep looking, and if you have time, please send me any news or something you feel would be of interest to put on the site.

The first golf day is nearly with us at, Colne Valley Golf Club and the date for your diary is Wednesday, May 13. Keep a look out for the entry form in the post, or download one from the site.

The same goes for the Knockout Trophy, download an entry form and get your team in; the reward is a free entry to the BIGGA National Tournament in 2010 if you win.

Any information for inclusion on this page or on our website should be sent to me at essexbigga@talktalk.net or on 07764-862.337. Also look us up at: www.essexbigga.co.uk

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION - SOUTH WEST

At last – some half-decent weather. All those little construction jobs coming to a close, and looking forward to getting the mowing machines out again. At Minch we've taken some machines on operators lease. This is a five-year programme, (and the red machines have a five year warranty). At the end of the period, we either make a final purchase, or hand back and renew the machine. Never taken machines on these terms before so it should be interesting to see how it works.

Each total annual payment is actually less than we'd normally spend on outright purchasing in a year, so on paper it looks a good deal as we get all the machines straight away, the Treasurer knows how much he's spending, and repair bills should tumble. Watch this space I guess.

Well done to all those who turned out for the Waste Legislation Seminar at Chipping Sodbury on March 5. Jon Bird from the SWEA (Severn-Wye Energy Agency) told us all we'd ever need to know about low energy bulbs and also explained how it is possible to make savings without spending any money at all. He has advised us at Minch, plus several other local clubs, and he now has a pretty good picture of how golf clubs work. All too often – there is no one in absolute charge of "energy" in all departments. What is needed, is someone to take a little time walking around the various parts of the club and examine what is actually happening.

For example – do the beer coolers need to be running all night when no one drinks beer? Is there air conditioning, and if so, does it get into a situation



Around the Green

where it is trying to cool the air when the heating system is trying to heat it? Do the urinals need to flush at night, or can this be turned off? When one or more light bulbs have blown – this is the time to convert to a run of low-energy, as low and normal energy bulbs don't mix on the same run. Jon also dispelled a certain myth about fluorescent tubes taking more power to turn on and off rather than to run continuously. This is complete myth – when a light is on, it is consuming power. If it's not in use – turn it off!

Kelly Harmar and Richard Studdart, of the STRI, then gave us a very positive and enthusiastic run-down of the latest in environmental legislation. It is important to regard legislation in a positive light. It does give protection to employees, protection to users of the facility, and protection to our environment. We looked into ways of conserving water, energy, and re-using or recycling waste.

It was very nice to welcome Colin Webber, and Paul Woodham, who are from outside of our area. Colin, who owns and manages his own course near Barnstaple, gave a great deal of insight into his own methods which include harvesting rainwater from roads and roofs and storing this water for irrigation on the course, and flushing toilets in the clubhouse. Paul Woodham, Course Manager at Gay Hill Golf Club, Birmingham, also gave us a good deal of input by chairing one of the work-groups in the latter part of the session. Many thanks to both – and indeed to all who attended.

I'm sure you'd all join me in offering our sincere condolences to Chris Sealey on the recent loss of his mother. Even with all the arrangements to deal with, Chris still took the time to wish everyone well for the Seminar. I would just add my personal thanks to Chris – he chairs both Section and Region, and will be taking a seat on the National Board before long.

Please continue to canvas other clubs for new members – if you can spare a few minutes to visit other local greenkeepers and talk to them about BIGGA, and all there is on offer – it will be an immensely positive image for our Association. Times are difficult, there is no question, and we all need to input as much as possible to see us through.

Seven members contacted me to express an interest in Chainsaw Training. We are working with Tim Bendle, a local Lantra instructor, who teaches a four-day "Occasional Users" chainsaw course, which is ideal for greenkeepers. It is not CS30 or 31, but a full users' version nonetheless. You could not use it to become a Tree Surgeon, for example, but it does licence a greenkeeper to use a chainsaw to fell small to medium trees at his place of employment.

The first four to enrol, are part way through completing the four days at Cumberwell Park, and our grateful thanks to Mark Haring for the use of the facility. There are a further three people waiting for a second course – another person is required, and this could then be arranged. The cost is £425 for the four days – please let me know any interest. Also – we will run another seminar in the autumn if there is demand – please let me know any subjects you would like to see covered.

I have application forms for the 2010 Ryder Cup Support Team that can be emailed directly to you – please let me know if you're interested.

Finally, Chipping Sodbury are hosting the English County Finals in September. John Keenaghan is interested in having some volunteer assistance on standby for help on the course, and particularly in case of bad weather etc. Please let John know direct, or drop me a mail and I'll forward it, if

you're interested and available. It is a chance to see the course set-up for a major amateur event.

In the meantime – please let me know any other Section news or events, and I'll look forward to seeing you at one of our golf events in the later part of the year. The matches will commence with the Section taking on the Secretaries at Cirencester Golf Club in early June. Please contact Wayne Vincent if you're interested in representing the Section in this match.

Paul Worster
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST

This month's report will be quite short. The only news worthy event was the seminar held at Canford Magna Golf Club - which was very well attended, I really enjoyed all the speakers and found it very informative. Tony Gadd is recovering from an operation so will have to tell us his life in golf another time. So that is about it. I need your input please - phone me with anything on: 07773138409 or email me.

Till next month,
Chris Sturgess



DEVON & CORNWALL

Our February meeting was held at Thurlestone Golf Club on the 10th. Thank You to DGM and Scotts - our sponsors for the day. Unfortunately I was not able to attend due to illness so bare with me as my informants for the day I guess had too much sun or was it something else!

The competition for the day was individual Stableford, which was won by Andrew Prowse, from Porthpean, second was Tony James, from Killiow Park, and unfortunately nobody could remember who was third - so apologies to whomever it was and well played. Nearest the Pin again was Andrew Prowse and the Longest Drive was by Andy Powell.

Our thanks go to Vic Dyer, the Head Greenkeeper, for the course walk, and to him and his team for a course in lovely condition. Thanks also to Thurlestone Golf Club for the use of their course for the day and their hospitality, also thanks to the caterers for the meal that I understand was very nice.



Steve Gingell, from STRI, gave a very good talk on 'When and Where to Aerate'. Thanks, once again, to Steve for giving up his time for free.

A couple of items to include that I meant to have mentioned last month! Congratulations to Scott 'Scotty' Gibson who is the new Course Manager at St Enodoc Golf Club. Scotty has been at St Enodoc for many years and I'm sure will do a great job. Good luck Scotty from us all.

To Andy Parker who parted company with Crediton Golf Club recently - all the best for the future Andy from everyone in the Devon and Cornwall Section. Finally, best wishes to Terry Clarke, who is now in charge at Crediton. Good luck Knobby.

Jerry Cole
07764 224582
greenwaysjrc@aol.com



SOUTH WALES

Hello Everyone/Sut Mae?

Spring is upon us (well, the time of year that used to be called spring but has now been replaced by winter then summer, but you know what I mean) and that means the Annual Spring Seminar at Royal Porthcawl GC, on Thursday, April 23.

This year, your Section Secretary, Steve Chappell, has arranged for a trio of top Course Managers, from some markedly different golf courses, to come along to this event and give a presentation on their experiences at their courses. The Schedule is as follows: 9am - 9.45am registration. There will then be presentations by the following: Richard Blizzard and Mark Atkins, from Soil Harmony (the sponsors for the day), 'The Life Beneath Your Feet'; Lee Strutt MG, of The West Development, Perthshire, 'The Growing Pains Of Growing In'; Allan Patterson, Castle Course St Andrews, 'The Story So Far'; Greg Evans, Ealing GC, Surrey, 'Short Cut To Better Greens'; Richard Blizzard and Mark Atkins 'Finding The Balance Between Soil Health, Golfing Demands And Healthy Turfgrass'.

There will also be a demonstration of Top Dressers, Overseeders and Aerators organised by Charterhouse Turf Machinery. 4pm Finish. The cost of the day is £17.50 (members) and £20 (non-members.) This includes tea/coffee and biscuits and a two course buffet lunch (which, from the benefit of experience I can heartily recommend!) Booking forms should be with you by now, if not please contact Steve Chappell on: 07970980899.

Thanks to all that attended the Parc Y Scarlets talk in February. An informative tour of the new stadium was given by Head Groundsman, Dean Gilasbey, then it was over to Machynys Peninsular Golf Club for an informative presentation by Derek Smith, from DLF Trifolium, on DLF's products and,

among other things, the pro's and con's of the new Annual Ryegrass mixtures. Thanks to Dean and Derek and also to Marcus Weaver, Head Greenkeeper at Machynys, for arranging for us to use his club's facilities, and thanks again to Countrywide for sponsoring the evening.

Also a big thank you to the 40 or so people who attended Avoncrop Amenity Drainage seminar at Whitchurch GC. It proved to be a very informative day, brightened only by the rain that turned up just after we had all ventured out to watch the Blec Sandmaster in action on the 1st fairway. Thanks go out to the speakers from Sportsturf Contractors Ltd, Scotts, Terralift, Ruffords and Aquadyne and to Whitchurch GC for agreeing to stage the event there. I would also like to thank the delegation from Llanwern GC for making sure that there were no bacon rolls left over!

Belated Happy Retirement wishes go to David (Dai) Williams at Tredegar Park GC. Dai retired just before Christmas but I forgot to mention it. Sorry Dai! Happy Retirement! Maybe you can go visit Ray Burrows and pinch his cake and sandwiches like he used to pinch yours!

Also, while reading the Devon and Cornwall Section notes, I read that Stuart Dymond, at St Enodoc, is retiring. I used to call on Stuart years ago and remember that I always received a warm welcome. A true Cornishman and therefore very much like the Welsh. Happy Retirement Stuart.

Thanks for all the information you have sent in (none!) If you do have anything you want mentioned then please contact me on the number below. See you soon.

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Whats your Number?



Name: Austin Jarrett
Company: Turfmech Machinery Ltd
Position: Managing Director/Owner

How long have you been in the industry?
"I started as a machinery salesman in 1987."

How did you get into it?
"I'm an Agricultural Engineer by qualification. After spending a couple of years teaching Engineering in Fiji, South Pacific, I returned to a downturned agricultural industry and a sideways move into turf production and maintenance machinery seemed to be a good idea."

What other jobs have you done?
"Lecturer in Agricultural Engineering, Machinery Salesman."

What do you like about your current job?
"I have a passion for machinery, engineering (sad but true!) and business. This is my perfect job. I work with some great people too."

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?
"Customers and competitors have all become so much more professional and expert in what they do."

What do you like to do in your spare time?
"Running, snowboarding, mountain biking and spending time with my three children."

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?
"I hope to have an expanded Turfmech company offering a wider range of specialised machines. The recent purchase of Allett Mowers has been very successful and further growth by acquisition of British manufacturers could be on the cards. If the Great British Pound will stay at the proper value, our machines will be competitively priced in the rest of the world too."

Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?
"I have many great friends within this industry worldwide. It's a very friendly industry. Many have been very helpful to me, as the Turfmech business has grown. I'm not going to name anyone in case I miss someone out!"

What do you consider to be your lucky number?
"1".

Pick a number
"1". *Austin has picked Dave Steward from Scotts*

NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW – AVOIDING A PRISON SENTENCE

BIGGA's Health & Safety series produced by Xact
www.xact.uk.com



The UK government introduced a new health and safety Act, the Health and Safety (Offences) Act 2008, which came into effect on 16 January 2009.

The new Act amends the existing Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASWA) and substitutes a schedule of maximum sentences that one might face if prosecuted. Serious accidents from un-cleared spillages, trips over boxes and cables, unsafe floors and stairs all may contribute to a failure to ensure a safe place of work and may now attract a prison sentence for an employer if tried in Magistrates or lower Courts instead of the more usual monetary fine that they may have previously expected.

It is a common misconception that all health and safety responsibilities lie with the employer. Under section 2 -7 of the HASAW various duties for employers are stipulated. Among other duties:

• **Employers have a duty to their employees and others who are affected by their business not to expose them to risks to their health and safety.**

This catch-all duty stipulates that employers or those who are in a 'managerial capacity' have a duty to protect the safety of employees, members, visitors and other third parties who may use or come into contact with a Golf Club.

It is important to remember that employees also have a large part to play in ensuring a safe place of work and that there are legal duties contained within the Health & Safety etc Act which specifically charges employees with maintaining safety in the workplace. Employees who fail to observe these duties can also find themselves in Court standing alongside their employer in the event of a serious accident.

The defined duties of employees are:

- **Take reasonable care of the health and safety at work - of themselves and any other people who may be affected by their act or omissions e.g. do not use equipment that you are not trained to use, ensure that your actions do not place any of your co-workers or others in danger.**
- **Co-operate with their employer and others to enable them to comply with statutory duties and requirements e.g. where control actions are specified in risk assessments then employees are required to adhere to these.**
- **Must not intentionally or recklessly misuse anything provided by employers or anyone else in the interest of health, safety and welfare e.g. horseplay with safety equipment, over-ride safety devices and alarms to enable faster working.**

Previously, infringement of HASWA would normally only have received financial penalties but now both Lower and High Courts have been granted wider and stronger punitive powers.

Many businesses including golf clubs may see health and safety to be a side issue but everyone has a right to be safe and the new penalties are aimed to enforce this.

Cutting costs on health and safety and training may seem like a good idea in this time of economic recession. However, such savings in the event of an accident to one of your employees or persons using your Club may prove to be far more costly in time, money and reputation than any monetary benefits gained.

Letters



OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

GI's Editor made an appeal for old photographs in last month's issue, after being sent a picture from the late 60s/early 70s, by BIGGA Life Member, Bob Moffat. BIGGA's Chief Executive, John Pemberton, recently discovered the picture below. We have spotted Past BIGGA Chairman, Andy Campbell – he is in the middle row, second from the left.

If you recognise anyone else in this picture or have any old greenkeeper pictures you'd like to send in, please email them to: scott@bigga.co.uk Alternatively you can post them to: BIGGA House, Aldwark Manor, Alne, York, YO61 1UF.



Dear Greenkeeper International

I feel I should respond to the letter from Graeme Gallimore in the March issue of Greenkeeper International concerning an article I wrote on grinding.

Mr. Gallimore didn't seem to recognise that it was an open discussion on the pros and cons of relief grinding.

To my knowledge all grinding manufacturers offer relief grinding and most mower manufacturers send out new units relief ground. The article tried to establish why this practise is maintained as it adds an additional process to the manufacture of a mower. To answer this question, the grass cutting equipment manufacturers were consulted independently and their responses were quoted in the article. They came up with several similar valid arguments as to why they choose to relief grind.

Non-contact mowing has been an established practice for many years. However, there are some manufacturers (as stated in the article) who encourage light contact mowing. So while non-contact is still the preferred choice of greenkeepers, it has yet to be adopted universally.

With regard to the importance of the bottom blade, it is accepted that the sharpness of the bottom blade is equally important as that of the cylinder but the article was actually about the proven benefits of applying a relief angle to any blade, so I felt no need to focus on one blade over another.

I am unsure why he felt the need to mention the STRI article as I understand that most greens maintenance staff would agree with grinding as a preference to backlapping anyway. Apart from which, the content of said article has appeared in print several times before so it's by no means news.

I stand by the integrity of my writing which was produced with the full co-operation and approval of two of the world's major mower manufacturers, who I'm sure will be happy to answer any further questions on the subject.

Yours sincerely
Charmian Robinson, ABR Publicity



In the Shed

ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

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QUIZ ANSWERS

- Nose bleed
- Jane Fonda
- Dawn French
- Cotton
- Glass
- A (flightless) bird
- 13 years of age (nearly 14)
- The Roadrunner
- Arthur (died in 1502 while still heir presumptive)

MONSTER SUDOKO

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SQUIGGLY SUDOKO

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BUYERS' GUIDE

Planning your Irrigation

"As we approach the new irrigation season, it is time to reflect on the past two summers and the effect this has had on the industry.

The sheer quantity of rain has had the effect of making golf club Committees oblivious to the need to forward plan the needs of their irrigation systems. We have in the past witnessed many times the panic driven reaction to the fact that all of a sudden the sun shines and the grass turns brown. "We want water now!" they cry. Inevitably they find that all irrigation companies are busy working elsewhere and that the quality of their golf course starts to suffer.

We need to ensure that all Committees are aware of the need to consider that wet summers may not actually be the norm and that global warming may be real. The forecasters are predicting a hot summer so the need to plan ahead is urgent. Whether this includes upgrading old pipework, replacing old sprinklers with more efficient types or extending the system to cover new tees, all such work needs to be planned and budgets set aside to cater for this. This should involve the full co-operation of all the parties involved. The Head Greenkeeper should consult with the industry experts to get advice on the most cost effective and water efficient systems. These should be accurately costed and presented to the Club's Committee for approval. All such work takes time and should therefore be considered as early as possible.

Oakdale's T & G Irrigation is one such company ready to help Clubs with their planning. The CEO, David Baxter, is a professional Project Manager and Chartered Civil Engineer with all the qualifications needed to design irrigation systems. Paul Curtis has been promoted to Managing Director while remaining hands on."



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Gordon Hogg, Secretary, Aldeburgh Golf Club, Saxmundham Road, Aldeburgh, Suffolk, IP15 5PE

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Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Golf Club

Require a Head Greenkeeper

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We are now looking for a Head Greenkeeper to continue with these improvements as well as leaving his/her mark on the course. The applicant should have the following attributes:

- HNC / Level 3 qualified as a minimum
- Excellent team leading and motivational skills
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3. Enter your login details and select the BIGGA Training & Development Manual from the left hand menu.
4. The Training Manual will load and the user can click on Enter the Site to view a welcome video or can select 1-9 or 10-18 on the top menu bar.
5. You can progress through the manual hole by hole or go straight to the hole you wish to view. You can also skip to holes 10-18.
6. When you select a hole you will be presented with a window that explains what that hole is about. You can then select from the bottom tabs, video or sub-text (downloadable documents and links).
7. When clicking on a downloadable document it will automatically open in your default word processor. This can then be amended, updated and saved to your computer's hard disk or printed and filed in your personnel files.



Chairman's Column

Utilising New Communications is Key to Success

Two weeks of dry, sunny weather in March was just what was needed to get more golfers through the clubhouse doors and out onto the courses. With subscription renewals due by April 1 the fine playing conditions have provided a welcome kickstart to the season and encouraged people outdoors.

Despite the lack of grass growth golfers expectations start to rise as soon as the spring sunshine appears, yet it's too early to begin verticutting and top dressing.

Two years ago we moved members' main competitions into the period May – October rather than April – September, this coincides more closely with our growing season and when we are able to provide the best playing conditions. Keeping greens renovations out of the main part of the golfing calendar is commonly demanded at many clubs, however, this can often result in less than favourable recovery times.

The first week of April is the earliest we like to schedule our spring renovations while another is timed during the summer holidays when play levels diminish. Getting these dates fixed in the club diary along with golf events is essential, but it is important not to be pushed into carrying out hollow tining out of the growing season. Educating Managers and Club Secretaries, as well as members, on the merits of carrying out thatch control is part of our job and well worth making the effort. With their support and understanding our job becomes that much easier.

The use of the internet and e-mail has changed all of our lives, but none more so than at work. Utilising this to communicate with members, visitors, management and colleagues can be an effective way of getting our message across on a regular basis. Sending out an e-mailed newsletter containing a course update column with photos offers an opportunity to educate and inform golfers of our work and its benefits to them.

Many clubs have grasped the marketing opportunities that the use of websites and e-mail presents to enhance their communication with both existing and potential golfing customers. Is your club one of them? Since the rapid growth of golf clubs in the 1990's, the competition for business has become intense and now more than ever the need to retain existing members and attract new customers.



Peter Todd, far left, with the 2008 European Open Support Team

Having a club website with stunning images of the course not only creates visual appeal, but should also focus minds on the importance of course presentation to attract business and the key role greenstaff play in this.

Recently we have equipped our workshop with a computer and internet connection to improve efficiency and management of the machinery fleet. As well as looking up parts online, ordering etc the ability to download machine hours via wireless hour meters each time a machine enters the maintenance facility will be available very soon. This will make it much easier when trying to keep track of equipment due for service and maximise use of the mechanics time.

As part of a current pumphouse project to convert from fixed to variable speed drives we have also installed a cable link to our irrigation control computer. It will enable the pumphouse to be monitored remotely by an engineer and ultimately save delays and travel costs compared with calling someone to site every time.

Equipping our greenkeeping staffroom with a flat screen TV & computer connection is next on the list. Staff training and education play a key part in achieving constant improvement on the courses and a budget area that brings rewards to the business and job satisfaction to the team.

As I write, with just 10 weeks to go to the European Open, the last month has been focused on checking sand levels in bunkers. Staging a major event provides a deadline to meet and tasks like this are an integral part of the work. Meeting the challenge of providing a professional tournament venue brings significant benefits to the club's greenkeeping team and everyday customers.

For the staff it's an opportunity to showcase their work, which inevitably all eyes are upon. As a member, it offers the chance to play the course like the pros, where all the additional effort and resources have provided them with more challenging playing conditions.

In the build up period there is a careful balancing act between preparing for the event while focusing on the normal golf business. In these less than certain times we have to remain focused on all 52 weeks of the year as well as the week of the tournament. However, the publicity, raised club profile and spotlight on the greenkeeping staff provide welcome recognition of their hardwork and the achievements of all the team.

Peter Todd
National Chairman

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