

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

- Course Feature: Hesketh Golf Club
- BIGGA Outstanding Achievement Award Winner: *George Brown*
- Zero Turn Mowers
- Harrogate Week: *What Goes On Behind The Scenes*

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Head of Learning & Development - Sami Collins

Email - sami@bigga.co.uk

Head of Membership Department - Tracey Maddison

Email - tracemaddison@bigga.co.uk

Contact Us

Post - BIGGA House, Aldwark, Aline, York, YO61 1UF

Email - reception@bigga.co.uk

Website - www.bigga.org.uk

Tel - 01347 833800 | Fax - 01347 833801

Greenkeeper

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

Editorial

Communications Manager / Editor - Scott MacCallum

Tel - 01347 833800 Fax - 01347 833801

Email - scott@bigga.co.uk



Assistant Editor - Melissa Jones

Tel - 01347 833800

Fax - 01347 833801

Email - melissa@bigga.co.uk



Design

Design and Production Editor

- Tom Campbell

Tel - 01347 833800

Fax - 01347 833801

Email - tom@bigga.co.uk



Advertising

Sales Executive - Kirstin Smith

Tel - 01347 833800

Fax - 01347 833802

Email - kirstin@bigga.co.uk

Printing

Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH

Tel - 01778 391000 | Fax - 01778 394269

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Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £47 per year, Europe and Eire £60. 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



Golf's Time Bomb

An excellent three part report in Scotland's Herald newspaper, written by Douglas Lowe, highlights a growing problem in Scottish golf clubs, which is just as pertinent to the rest of the country.

Headlined "Time bomb" the piece examines the long established culture of 65 and overs receiving subsidised golf, or free, golf.

Douglas admitted that until recently it was a set-up that worked reasonably well with few objecting to supporting the poor pensioners, but that the dynamics were changing fast.

"The baby-boomers, the ones born in immediate post World War II, are due to hit 65 in unprecedented numbers. Anecdotal it is reckoned that this tsunami

of seniors could form as much as a third of golf club membership in five years time. It is a demographic time bomb."

Douglas goes on.

"The trouble is that the system is self-perpetuating. At annual or extraordinary general meetings, where subscriptions and membership policies can be altered, seniors aren't likely to vote to increase their own subscriptions. Moreover, they are the ones with time of their hands to turn up at such meetings en masse to preserve the status quo.

"Beleaguered committees will find it increasingly difficult to balance the books and the first casualties will be the course and the clubhouse - the very assets that need to be in tip-top order to attract new members."

Douglas added that seniors justified their right for subsidised golf because they have supported the club by paying full subscriptions while they were working and unable to play golf much more than once a week and view subsidies as "payback time".

However, from the perspective of the younger working man or woman "the idea of playing an entry fee and a full subscription to subsidise the 'Last of the Summer Wine' brigade is abhorrent. The sums don't make sense to them especially when the seniors are the ones who are playing the most golf by far."

Those of you at members' clubs will probably recognise the above and have similar fears, particularly for the impact it will have on the golf course.

One of the answers is to run clubs on much more business grounds with management teams rather than committees taking decisions for the good of the business rather than self-interest. Many clubs have already gone down this route but there are still many stuck in the old fashioned one member one vote systems.

Another answer would be for members to be issued with tokens at the start of each season and use them to "pay" for each round - 10 tokens for a Saturday morning and seven for a mid week game, for example. If vouchers run out - by seniors playing four times a week - more can be purchased from the club, perhaps at a subsidised rate, while if they are not all used up they can be exchanged for goods in the Pro Shop.

It's an idea which I know works at some clubs in the country and which may help to resolve a problem which is weighting golf very heavily in favour of the elderly and, more worryingly, against the younger golfer coming through.

It is potentially a huge problem for the game and it is well for golf clubs to take action even if that action is not to everyone's taste.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

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A RICH HISTORY AND OPTIMISTIC FUTURE

Scott MacCallum visited Hesketh Golf Club where the recently appointed Course Manager and his team are working hard to return the course to former glories.

Hesketh Golf Club, in Scotland, has a rich history. It is reported as the birth place of the English Golf Union, the club's clubhouse being a Hesketh Club Captain who went on to become the G.C.U.'s first President, while Sir Stanley Brook, Harry and Annie, were among the most famous golfers to play the club's golf.

Scott MacCallum at the renowned Scottish Club of Hesketh. "Having been asked to become Course Manager and develop the club into the future, I was excited to take on the challenge. I had been told that it could mean a lot to Hesketh Golf Club."

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40-42 BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award





GOLF BUSINESS FORUM

KPMG recently announced that its sixth annual Golf Business Forum will take place at The Celtic Manor Resort, Wales, May 4-6, 2009.

The conference, firmly established as the leading, golf business event for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMA), will bring together major players from the golf, real estate, finance and tourism sectors at the venue for The Ryder Cup in 2010.

"The Golf Business Forum is a significant event for the golf industry and has become the major annual meeting point for golf's most important businesses, brands and executives," said Andrea Sartori, Head of KPMG's specialist Golf Advisory Practice in EMA, and founder of the Golf Business Forum.

"The Celtic Manor Resort is an ideal venue for the Forum and we look forward to welcoming our friends, clients and industry professionals from all over the world. Sixteen months before the world's best professionals face each other at The Ryder Cup, the golf industry's biggest players will have their opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, do business, and even to play The Twenty Ten Ryder Cup course."

PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABLE GOLF COURSE

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC), in association with The R&A, will be hosting workshops for staff working at the GTC Approved Training Providers during 2009 to ensure the programme to promote the sustainable golf course is promoted to all levels of greenkeeping students.

David Golding, GTC's Education Director, commented on the special project: "It is the GTC's responsibility to ensure the turf lecturers and guidance officers working at GTC Approved Centres are supported with the relevant information in order that not only today's Course Managers but the future Managers fully understand the benefits of the programme to maintain and manage in a sustainable manner.

Steve Isaac, the R&A's Director – Golf Course Management, added, "In order to get the message across to as many greenkeepers as possible, it is essential that Training Providers understand what sustainability means for golf course development and management and that they are comfortable with the concept. The R&A is delighted to be working closely with the GTC to achieve this aim."



GOLF'S X FACTOR-STYLE 'TALENT HUNT' PICKS WINNERS

A nine year old girl from Oldham and a 12 year old boy from Lymm, Cheshire, have won the world's first ever X Factor-style search for young golf stars.

Katie-Jane Stanley and Jake Williams wowed a panel of celebrity judges at the Playgolf Manchester complex as 13 youngsters competed in the grand final of 'Talent Hunt' - a competition which had scoured the North West for the most promising natural golf talent in the region.

Just as in the TV talent show 'X Factor', the finalists went through a nerve-wracking audition in front of judges, hitting golf balls and explaining what they'd learned during four weeks of intensive 'boot camp' golf training with the Professional instructors at Playgolf Manchester.

Judges including Setanta Sports TV presenter, Charlotte Jackson; Chairman of Selectors for GB&I junior golf Peter McEvoy OBE; Playgolf Manchester General Manager, Craig Whitfield; and event organiser, Andy Hiseman, then had the difficult job of picking two winners – finally opting for St Mary's RC School, Failsworth, pupil, Katie-Jane and Lymm High School pupil, Jake.

The winners each received a year's scholarship to Playgolf Manchester awarded under R&A amateur status guidelines, plus the opportunity to play regularly at local golf clubs.

"It was a stunning event. We have proved that this is a magical formula to unlock junior golf talent, wherever you are in the world," said Andy Hiseman.

"Searching for a golf star in this way has proved to be an innovative and highly emotional experience for all concerned. Competitions like X Factor are ingrained in modern society and 'Talent Hunt' has proved to be a great way to make golf contemporary with young people."

'Talent Hunt' began with open auditions when more than 550 youngsters faced the judges in September. 66 talented young golfers progressed to 'Boot Camp' – four weeks of intensive tuition at the Playgolf Academy, based at Playgolf Manchester, during October and early November.



NEW SOUTHERN AREA MANAGER

Landini has appointed David Parsons to support its retail sales and service dealer network supplying Landini and Valpadana tractors to the groundscape and landscaping industries.

Covering an area that extends from Landini UK's Doncaster base to the south coast, David joins the business from BSG Supplies, where he worked for many years importing tractors and agricultural machinery from a number of countries in Europe.

"David brings a wealth of experience to the post, having been involved in agricultural machinery all his working life," said Landini UK Sales Manager, Adrian Winnett.

"His energetic and enthusiastic approach will stand him in good stead as Landini's sales and market presence continue to grow."



NEW FACE AT KAWASAKI

Kawasaki has strengthened its UK power products operation with the appointment of a new manager to co-ordinate business growth throughout the country.

Chris York joins the Japanese manufacturer as Product Manager, Power Products UK and will be responsible for developing existing dealer relationships and building new areas of growth.

Based in Northampton, Chris knows the groundscape industry well both from a practical and professional perspective. He grew up the son of a groundsman at a local cricket club and has been working with machines since the age of 10 and remains an ardent cricketer today.

Having worked in the industry for more than 20 years, Chris knows the turfcare sector well in every capacity from assembly through to sales and after sales. It's this breadth of experience in the sector and a passion for the business that he intends to bring to Kawasaki's power products range.

SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2009 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Carnegie College, Dunfermline on Tuesday 3 March, 2009.

This year's speakers include Steve Isaac, Director Golf Course Management, R&A; Mark Hunt, Technical Director, Headland Amenity; David MacIndoe, Course Manager, Killarney G&FC, Ireland. Other speakers include Laurence Pithie, Group Golf Courses Manager, Crown Golf; Stuart Staples, International Technical Manager, Scotts International, and finally, David Cole, Superintendent/Estate Manager, Loch Lomond.

Tickets cost £34, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

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

UK DISTRIBUTOR

Rochford Garden Machinery has been appointed sole UK Distributor for the Aztec range of pedestrian sprayers. The sprayers formerly known as Walkover are designed to apply liquid fertilisers, pesticides, weed killers and fungicides easily, cleanly and accurately.

Four models are featured in the range all operating on the same principle.

The Yardmaster has an 18in (45cm) spray width, the Turfmaster 24in (60cm) working width, Rambler a 40in (100 cm) and the Greenkeeper (60cm). The Greenkeeper model also features a hand held spray lance. The distribution agreement is with immediate effect.

SOUTH EAST REGION ANNUAL GENTLEMAN'S DINNER

The South East Regions Golf and Gentleman's Dinner will be held at the Walton Heath Golf Club on Friday, March 6.

This event played at a Club that has been the venue of many major championships including the Ryder Cup in 1981 and the first, of many, European Opens. This year the Club will again be hosting the European Qualifier for The US Open. To be played over both the Old and New Courses in June.

We will, once more, be having a three hole start enabling all to finish together with no long waits before the evening meal.

Entertainment has already been booked for the after dinner spot. This combined with a superb test of golf and the wonderful hospitality of Walton Heath Golf Club should ensure a splendid day.

For more information and entry forms please contact your Section Secretary or Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator on: 01737 819343 or mobile: 07841 948410, email: cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk.

LISTEN UP MEMBERS!

The BIGGA AGM will be taking place during Harrogate Week, Europe's largest indoor turf event that combines both elements of turf and clubhouse management, in the Queen's Suite on Wednesday, January 21 at 5.15pm.

The importance of your attendance cannot be voiced enough. By now you should have received a letter containing the Agenda for the AGM and information regarding a change to the Association's constitution. If you haven't received your letter you can contact BIGGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833800 or visit the BIGGA Website www.bigga.org.uk

THE DISTURBANCE THEORY & MEASURING SUCCESS

BIGGA South West Region invited a team from STRI to deliver a seminar day entitled 'The Disturbance Theory & Measuring Success'. The day was held at Cannington College on 20 November 2008. Attendance was very high with 187 delegates down to attend, with approximately 170 attending on the day. This was the most attended seminar in the South West so far.

Henry Bechelet introduced the day and Richard Windows delivered 'The Thrill of Real Golf', which described the history of golf and greenkeeping over the past century and how influence from America changed the character and golfing strategy of our courses. Henry then gave 'The Fundamentals of the Disturbance Theory' in which the science of plant growth strategies was described and how this understanding can be used to favour the development of the finer grasses.

The morning session then concluded with Henry and Richard delivering 'Greenkeeping Through the Phases', which described how the Disturbance Theory can be used in a practical way to favour the development of the finer grasses without compromising on playing quality. There was plenty to ponder over lunch.

Peter Hickling the General Manager of High Post Golf Club then started proceedings in the afternoon with a presentation on the economic, environmental and playing quality benefits of going through a sward species transition. John Lockyer followed with a presentation on 'Managing Organic Matter', which centred on the need to implement regular laboratory testing to accurately monitor organic matter accumulations. Andy Cole then delivered the progressive and exciting 'Measuring Success', which described the use of objective tools to measure the improvement in performance and quality of the greens. The day finished off with a Case Study on Eastwell Manor, by Steve Gingell, where the Disturbance Theory was used to establish a dominance of the finer grasses in new sand based constructions.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with the delegates finding the day very enjoyable and interesting. The Four Phases of greenkeeping received the most praise. To find out more on this subject, check out the article Pride & Joy on www.stri.co.uk.

The STRI are staging a workshop at Harrogate Week on the subject of Measuring Success on Sunday, January 18, 2009.

<http://www.harrogateweek.org.uk/education/seminars/60/measuring-success.html>

Due to the positive feedback and the ongoing demand for these presentations, STRI hope to organise more events in conjunction with BIGGA through 2009. If you would like one in your area please contact Richard, Henry or Andy at disturbance.theory@stri.co.uk



SOUTH EAST REGION SEMINAR

The South East Regional Seminar was hosted by the London Section recently at the Sandy Lodge Golf Club.

Section Chairman, Rob Phillips, introduced the excellent speakers who covered a varied range of subjects on what proved an interesting and informative day, with some wide ranging and valid points being made during question time at the end of the day's proceedings.

John Pemberton and Tracey Maddison started the day with their presentation on current BIGGA affairs and the recent proposals, for consultation, on changes to the Constitution.

Andy Wight's subject, Pathway leader for Greenkeeping and Horticulture at Oaklands College, was Current Funding for Greenkeeper Training and the proposed changes to education that are planned for the next few years.

Courageously battling with a slight technical hitch with the projector, Tom Malehorn, from Aquatrols, then discussed with us the role of "Surfactants in Turf Management".

Ian McMillan, Course Manager at Walton Heath Golf Club, guided the delegates through some of the many challenges he has encountered, with great success, in his career in Golf Course Management.

After lunch Nigel Church, from Ransomes Jacobsen, described the background and research that goes into the development of machinery for his subject of "Health and Safety Built In".

The last speaker for the afternoon session was Peter Jones, from PJ Associates Ltd, who talked about Bunker Renovation. It was demonstrated that with good planning and work practices, bunkers could be greatly improved during the renovation process.

In conclusion, after question time, the Chairman thanked all the Speakers for their presentations. He also thanked members of the Trade who had supported this and many other events in the Region and Sections, and the Sandy Lodge Golf Club for looking after us so well on the day.

Clive Osgood
South East Regional Administrator

Why not drop us an email with any news, press releases or new product updates you have...

– Send them to Melissa
(melissa@bigga.co.uk)

NOSTRADAMUS?

A superb year of predictions has seen golf writer, Paul Trow, collect two major prizes.

Paul won the season-long 'Pick Your Pro' competition in which golf writers select a different player to win each of the main tournaments over the course of the year, while he also won the 'Great BIGGA Bunker Competition' by being closest in an estimate of how many bunkers were found by the players in The Open at Royal Birkdale.

In winning the latter competition, kindly sponsored in 2008 by Ransomes Jacobsen, Paul won a superb Callaway Golf bag, which BIGGA Communications Manager, Scott MacCallum, presented to Paul at the AGW Championship, held at Wentworth in late November.

Scott congratulated Paul on his Nostradamus-like qualities and thanked Ransomes Jacobsen for kindly sponsoring the competition, while Paul said he had been attempting to win the 'Great BIGGA Bunker Competition' since its inception in 1995 and knew it was a very popular competition among the golfing media.

BIGGA's Communications Manager/Editor, Scott MacCallum (left) with winner, Paul Trow.



A vertical advertisement for Mascot Grass Seed. At the top, the word "MASCOT" is in a green box with white text, followed by "GRASS SEED" in large white letters. Below this is the slogan "The best start for a perfect finish" in a serif font. A large, stylized green and red logo resembling a 'W' or a grass blade is in the center. Below the logo are five small images: a golf green with bunkers, a field of yellow and purple flowers, a green lawn, a golf course with trees, and a golf course with a white building. At the bottom left is the "RT rigby taylor" logo with contact information: "Freephone: 0800 424919" and "www.rigbytaylor.com". At the bottom right is the text: "Rigby Taylor is a seed agent and a major supplier of high quality grass seed mixtures for all amenity situations." The entire advertisement has a red background with green and white decorative elements.

UK WITHDRAWAL OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Scotts Professional has received confirmation that the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health voted for non-inclusion of dichlobenil resulting in the withdrawal of authorisations for plant protection products containing dichlobenil.

The Scotts products affected are: Casoron G, Casoron G4, Midstream GSR, Scotts Dichlo G Micro and Scotts Dichlo G Macro.

So that these products can be removed from the market in an orderly fashion, there is now a period of six months to move existing stocks of product into the market place followed by a further period of 12 months for storage and use by any person. The final product use by date is March 18, 2010.

Details of all affected products, together with the relevant technical information is available on the Scotts Professional website at www.scottspromotional.co.uk. Please contact your distributor or Scotts' Customer Services Department on: 0871 220 5353 if you require any further information.

OPENING OF NEW DEPOT

Sherriff Amenity has announced the opening of a new depot in Scotland and Kenny Archibald joined the company last month as Scottish Sales Manager.

Commenting on the move, Agrovista UK Managing Director, James Robertson said: "Part of our five year strategic plan is to have a national amenity business trading under the Sherriff Amenity brand. This is another step towards achieving this goal."

NEW INSTRATA WINS INNOVATION AWARD

Syngenta's new turf fungicide, Instrata, has won the IOG Innovation Award.

The Award, for the best new fertiliser and pesticide product, recognised Instrata as a significant step forward in helping groundsmen tackle difficult turf diseases and maintain high quality playing surfaces all year round. Instrata contains the exceptional long-lasting residual control of fludioxonil - the first new contact active ingredient for turf diseases control for over 20 years.

Receiving the Award from IOG Chairman, Alex Millar, Syngenta Professional Products Manager, Simon Elsworth, said: "Instrata is a genuinely innovative new fungicide, with properties of immense value to turf managers. New fludioxonil protects on the leaf, in the thatch and at the soil surface, giving outstanding efficacy and making it especially useful in high disease pressure situations at any time of the year."

Alex Millar (left) presents Simon Elsworth (right) with Syngenta's award.



BROWN'S LAST LANDMARK YEAR TO INCLUDE THE 138TH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

George Brown, Golf Courses & Estates Manager at Turnberry, is to retire from his role following next year's Open Championship after more than 23 years at the top of his profession. George, who will step down at the end of July 2009, will remain at Turnberry in a consultative role after his retirement and has appointed Euan Grant as his successor.

Euan joined the Turnberry team in November after previous roles as Golf Course Manager at Machrihanish Dunes and former Head Greenkeeper of The Old Course at St Andrews (27 time host of the Open Championship, most recently in 2005).

Recognising George's hard work and dedication to the Greenkeeping profession, the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) has recently bestowed George with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

A prestigious accolade that acknowledges an individual for their lifetime of service and achievement in the game of golf,

George will be only the fourth person to receive this award after Sir Michael Bonallack OBE, Walter Woods BEM and Jack McMillan MBE.

See profile on George elsewhere in this issue.

The Turnberry Hotel is currently undergoing a multi million pound renovation project following its recent sale to Leisurecorp.

The 101 year old hotel will be restored to the vision of original architect James Miller, by renowned British interior designer, Mary Fox Linton, and will join Starwood's prestigious Luxury Collection portfolio of hotels when it reopens in advance of the Open Championship in July 2009.



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OPTIMISM FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

David Golding, GTC Education Director, gives us optimism as we move into 2009...

As we move into a new year and with the festive season well and truly over, the glass can be well and truly half empty at best, if we let it!

It would be so easy for all of us to feel a little worried as we all feel the impact of the recession.

Yes, as I mentioned in last month's article we are all now having to take stock of our personal lives as well as the business we work in.

I guess most of us are counting the days until the end of the month - payday - which always seems to take longer than all other months. Businesses, especially traditional golf clubs, will be waiting to see how many of the members renew their subscriptions for the New Year and I am sure hoping they can at least retain the majority.

Difficult times for all of us, but can I bring your attention back to one key element I believe in and that is to consider addressing all of today's issues by better communication!

I have fallen victim of this recently and should have known better at my age and addressed matters head on rather than thinking I'll sort it later or it will sort itself out.

I know I have written many an article on the importance of communication and it is 20 years ago since, during my early days at BIGGA, we introduced the infamous Management Courses at Aldwark Manor with Communication Skills always the number one subject requested by the delegates.

As the years have passed our sector has invested heavily in the specialist training courses to improve staff communication skills and it has,

I believe, certainly improved many of us, but we must not slip back!

So what has changed from those halcyon days at the Manor?

The internet is now such a major player in our day to day lives, the mobile phone is a must have tool and this you think should have made effective communication better.

Emails come in thick and fast, website forums are popular for many, texting is vogue but call me old fashioned I still believe in the values of "it's good to talk".

Come on, admit it, we've all been there...some of us having to put our glasses on to either read a text or spend ages writing a text, even worse trying to master predictive text!

Why not pick up the phone, ring the person that you feel might be a "problem" whether it is the Bank Manager, mortgage company or the Chairman of Green, Green Convenor, owner or better still if they are within distance face them head on?

Stress is a killer and too many friends in this sector alone have fallen victim to the pressures of life.

The GTC will continue to ensure communication skills are included in all levels of qualifications and training courses must continue to help us all.

There can be little doubt we have travelled a long way in the last 20 years in greenkeeper education but we must not be complacent.

I honestly believe that a problem shared is a problem solved and there is nothing worse than feeling alone in trying to deal with a problem whether it be of your own making or not.

I am optimistic for the future of our sector despite the current economic situation but we must all keep talking, keep supporting each other and let us not forget, the companies who fared best through and after the last recession, were those that invested in their staff development.

It will take a team effort and while strong leadership is a quality and skill that people admire, all the best leaders have tremendous communication skills and the team ethic has proved the vital ingredient to their success.

A topical example within our sector is the "S" Factor (sustainable golf course maintenance) and we will be addressing this early in 2009 when we will be hosting, with The R&A, a number of workshops for turf staff working within our Approved Centres will come together with those brave "Gingerbread" guys who are working within the sustainable best practices on the ground, to discuss the whole aspect of how best we can share the knowledge and experience to employers and today's and tomorrow's Course Managers.

The GTC Approved Centres and training providers are there to help employers and learners with individual training needs and courses, as are BIGGA and we at the GTC always offer an open invitation for you to contact us if you feel we are missing something in terms of qualifications, training manuals etc - so please talk to us!

Email the GTC at: david@the-gtc.co.uk

Telephone: 01347 838640

Text: 07831 222659

NOTE: Replies to text messages can take a little while!

GTC is supported by:





Industry Update

HIGH PRAISE FROM THE 'HOME OF GOLF'

St Andrews Links has recently renewed its Toro agreement, with Links Superintendent, Gordon Moir, saying that the Toro equipment the 'Home of Golf' exclusively uses to maintain its greens and tees has "proved extremely reliable and allowed the Links Trust to present the golf courses to the standard golfers expect."

Comprising seven courses, the world-famous St Andrews Links in Fife sustains more than 200,000 rounds of golf a year and so it is crucial that the courses are immaculately maintained.

"Many golfers view their trip to St Andrews as a pilgrimage and have very high expectations. It is vital, therefore, that we present the courses in the best condition we can every day of the year – not just for The Open or the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship."



St Andrews Links Superintendent Gordon Moir, left, and Lely's Jeff Anguige, with, standing, Links General Manager Alan McGregor.

WIMBLEDON WELCOMES SCOTTS

A Scotts Seminar, held at The All England Club, Wimbledon, proved to be a very successful event for the 150 invited guests

Speakers included Eddie Seaward MBE, Head Groundsman at the All England Lawn Tennis Club, who gave an entertaining talk on the Wimbledon Year. He was followed by Leon Terlingen, the Global Professional R&D Director for Scotts Europe, who discussed the advances in fertiliser technology.

He stated that the four point combination for a success was Right Product; Right Rate; Right Time and Right Place, while performance usually was in direct relation to price.

After a short break Simon Barnaby, Technical Manager Syngenta UK & Eire, explained the merits of Plant Growth Regulators in Turf Management featuring the qualities of Primo Maxx.

Simon was followed by Andy Newell, Head of Turfgrass Biology with the STRI and the official agronomist to the All England Club who talked of Testing Grasses for Sport.

After lunch the guests were treated to a tour around the Club where they were able to see the progress on the Centre Court roof and the new Number 2 court which will be ready for the Championships later this year.

HAND ARM VIBRATION SEMINAR

Echo UK are sponsoring a free seminar on the subject of Hand Arm Vibration at Harrogate Week 2009. The Seminar, which is planned for Tuesday, January 20 at 10.15 am in the Queen's suite, will be delivered by Fivesquared (a division of Earlsmere ID Systems), the UK's leading independent vibration assessor. Statistics show that more than one million people are still subjected to levels of vibration that are above the exposure limit level.

Employees are regularly being issued with and are using tools and equipment that offer excessive levels of vibration on a daily basis and vibration information presented by some manufacturers can't be used for risk assessment as it has not been tested under load or indeed in working conditions. Fivesquared carry out major testing projects for Echo on all tools and equipment in actual working conditions, providing data that can be used as part of the risk assessment process. For further information regarding the Vibration seminar at Harrogate Week, or to register attendance, contact Fivesquared on: 01226 750111.

BLEC IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

BLEC Landscaping Equipment Company Ltd has gone into administration. Gary and Sue Mumby started BLEC in 1986 and have, over the last 22 years, built the company into a worldwide enterprise, supplying machines across the globe. At its peak, the company employed 50 people and the premises at Deeping St. James, nr Peterborough, were expanded to accommodate a new office and manufacturing facilities. However, since early 2008, the company has suffered a series of blows, including a severe downturn in orders from Europe and particularly the United States, coupled with the appalling weather effecting UK sales of their large range of landscaping equipment.

The 35 members of staff have been laid off and the premises are now closed.

Gary and Sue would like to thank all of their distributors, customers and suppliers who have shown their continued support for BLEC products over the years and hope that the future brings a more positive outcome for everyone struggling in today's difficult climate.

CRICKET BOOM FOR SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

The first New Holland Boomer series tractor has been purchased by Anthony Hough, Director of Grass for Shrewsbury School. A longstanding New Holland customer, "I always buy New Holland because I get great peace of mind! Buying from a large company which offers such fantastic manufacturer back up is my priority. I have always bought New Holland, and the addition of the Boomer now means that I have a fleet of four tractors all under four years old," said Anthony.

Anthony's existing fleet includes tractors from New Holland's TC range and a TN60DA, which have after market cabs fitted and he comments that they are comparatively small.

"The Boomer has a factory fitted cab which means it is so much more comfortable, there is more space and as a result it is normally the first tractor out of the shed every morning! My staff love it!" he said.



Director of Grass for Shrewsbury School, Anthony Hough, with the new boomer

BUSINESSES NEEDED TO MAKE NEW DIPLOMA A SUCCESS

Now is the time for businesses to sign-up and help shape the country's future workforce. England's next generation of employees and professionals will have the opportunity to choose the new Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies, which enables students to learn about industry from employers.

Aimed at 14-19 year olds, the Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies is an industry-led Diploma that becomes available in schools and colleges from 2009.

The content gives learners an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge required to progress into further learning or employment within the sector. The Diploma can be studied alongside GCSEs and A Levels and is available at three levels.

Some 51 partnerships of schools, colleges and employers across England have already been given the green light by the government to start teaching the new Diploma in 2009, with a complete roll-out across England in 2013.

For information on how you can get involved with your local consortia, please visit:

www.diplomaelbs.co.uk
or contact Lantra Connect
on tel: 0845 707 8007 or
email: connect@lantra.co.uk

18TH CENTURY AVENUE PART OF ON-GOING RESTORATION

Around 130 ancient trees, forming part of a famous 18th century landscape have been treated to one-metre deep aeration treatment as part of ongoing restoration.

Gibside, near Newcastle upon Tyne, formerly owned by the Bowes-Lyons family but now under the protection of the National Trust, boasts 'The Long Walk', an avenue half a mile long lined with Oak, Sycamore and Lime. "As the gardens were designed between 1722 and 1760 the trees are at least 150 years old," said Gibside's Landscape Gardener Keith Blundell.

The gardens, originally designed by Stephen Switzer are open 12 months of the year. Due to the popularity of the attraction, visitor numbers have increased from approximately 30,000 to 115,000 people annually in the past eight years, and this has put more pressure on the long walk, which is one of the main attractions of the property. "Some of the trees were suffering from stress with crown die-back and nutritional problems," Keith continued.

Specialist aeration contractors, Terrain Aeration worked at Gibside for



three days injecting compressed air, via a probe, one metre below the surface to create underground fracturing and break up the compacted soil.

"They worked between the drip lines of the trees and needed to use the JCB hammer to insert the probe most of the time because the ground was so hard," Keith explained. "Conditions in the walled garden, some of which is used as a car park but most of which is dedicated to community and volunteer allotments were much softer."

Membership



TRACEY MADDISON, HEAD OF MEMBERSHIP SERVICES, TAKES A LOOK AT THE YEAR AHEAD

What does 2009 have in store for you?

If you're anything like me, at this time of year, you may find yourself doing a lot of thinking about what lies in store for you in the New Year. You may be thinking about making New Year resolutions, in my case go to the gym more, or just go to the gym would do! Practice more and reduce my golf handicap, explore the opportunities that membership of my professional body offers me, identify useful courses that would help me carry out my job more efficiently...I could go on - but I won't! Making a move towards the things I want is something else. I buy the books, write the lists, talk to people about it - and always find a reason not to begin the task itself! Does this sound familiar? Well not next year, I am determined 2009 will be different; I am going to turn my thoughts into goals and my goals into action. I'll keep you posted!



Make it Happen in 2009 starting with Harrogate Week

Why not join me in making 2009 a year for making it happen. Come to Harrogate Week, starting with Continue to Learn on Sunday, 18 January 2009 and sign up for one of the many workshops or attend one of the 30 FREE seminars available to you - places are limited so make sure you arrive early at your chosen seminar. For full information see the Learning

and Development article in this month's Greenkeeper International. The Membership Team will be on hand at the BIGGA Stand during Harrogate Week to chat with you about any membership issues, we can also check and change your personal details or we can take payment for membership renewals that are due, we can also take new applications from your friends and colleagues who may wish to join BIGGA.

New Year Resolutions

Why not explore the opportunities membership of BIGGA gives you. Visit the members area of the website to remind yourself of the benefits and make it your New Years resolution to attend and support your Section and Region events, all the dates of Section events are available from contacting your Section Secretary or visit 'Your Pages' in the members area of the BIGGA website.

When you get a quiet moment sit down and identify useful courses that will help you carry out your job more efficiently, keep an eye on the BIGGA website and notices from your Section Committee on courses available throughout next year. Many courses are available at a subsidised rate. Come on let's make things happen in 2009.

I will leave you with this thought, I saw it on a poster in a pub in London and it made me smile...

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity.

An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

(Anon)

Which one are you?

If you have any sayings you like to quote why not let me know at traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

This month BIGGA welcomes the following new members...

SCOTTISH

Rory Borthwick, North
John Gammack, North
Connel McKenna, Central
Gordon Paterson, East
Grant Peters, Central
Gordon Simpson, West

NORTHERN

Robert Acheson, Sheffield
James Burkinshaw, Sheffield
Sam Gattens, North East
James McGrath, North West
Daniel Peters, North West
Ian Pogson, North West

MIDLAND

Clive Brampton, East Midland
Edward Campbell, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
John Corbett, Midland
Paul Curtis, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Antony Francis, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Alan Gee, Midland
Ashley Goy, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Robert Jones, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Noel Mackenzie, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Malcolm O'Brien, Midland
Steven Pitts, Midland
Mark Skelton, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Luke Taylor, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Andrew Wale, Midland
Alexander Walton, Midland

SOUTH EAST

Dave Beck, London
Andy Corder, Kent
Martin Dearlove, London
Danny Floyd, Surrey
Joshua Hallil, East Anglia
Martin James, Kent
Alan Joyce, Kent
Nicholas Leach, Kent
Peter Thompson, London
Adam Wicks, Surrey

SOUTH WEST & WALES

James Cooper, South Coast
Nigel Howe, South West
James Palmer, Devon&Cornwall
James Stewart, South Coast
Robert Wills, South Coast

N IRELAND

Martin Fitzpatrick, Northern Ireland
Christopher Larmour, Northern 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

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...



Rachael and I hope that you had a great Christmas and New Year, are fighting fit and looking forward to everything that 2009 has to offer.

Continue To Learn at Harrogate Week

Harrogate Week is approaching fast and the Continue to Learn Education Programme is proving to be very popular with many of the workshops sold out. This year we have over 30 Free Seminars presented by many of the exhibiting companies. Places will be limited, to ensure you get into your chosen sessions arrive early!

Tuesday 20 January

- Getting to Grips with Hand Arm Vibration - Countax
- Benchmarking for a More Sustainable Future - The R&A
- Stress Relief at a US Open Course - Vitax
- EU and UK Pesticide Policy Developments - Grant Stark & Jon Ailbutt
- Turf Nutrition - Getting the Balance Right - Headland Amenity
- Turf for a Changing Climate - Lindum
- Travels With Terry - Machinery/Maintenance Equipment Ideas - Terry Buchen MG
- Eco-Concept in Golf Course Maintenance - Actioneco
- Balanced Programmes - From Organics To Water Management, Farmura

Wednesday 21 January

- 20 Years of Top Flight Winter Sports Maintenance - Dave Saltman, Pitchcare.com
- One Metre Deep Aeration - When, Where and Why? - Terrain Aeration
- Finding Askernish - Gordon Irvine MG, Golf Course Consultant
- Integrated Turf Management Principles and Practice - Ruth Mann
- New Chemistries to Combat Water Quality - Tower Sport Europe
- A Starter Guide to Tournament Preparation - Murray Long, Course Manager, Sunningdale Golf Club
- Using Integrated Management to Improve Turf Quality - Scotts
- Primo MAXX - Latest Research and Developments - Syngenta

Thursday 22 January

- Introducing Velvet Bents to Your Course - British Seed Houses
- From Coal to 36 Holes - Bellwood Trees
- Environmental Issues in Canadian Golf - Bob Burrows, CGSA
- Managing in a Changing Financial Climate - Enviropro H2O
- Online Learning - Myerscough College
- Increasing Fertiliser Use - Efficiency Through Improved Biological Strategies - Novozymes Biologicals

- You Won't Believe It - Sharp Cylinders Allowed Me to Raise my Height of Cut and Increase my Greenspeed! - Bernhards
- Setting the Sprayer to Hit the Target - Tom Robinson
- The Future of Spraying - R & K Kensett
- Compost Teas Help Cut Costs and Chemical Use - Symbio
- Using Latest Weather Information to Assist Course Management - Met Office
- The Science and Nanotechnological Advantages of MEGALEX® and UPPLAUSE® - The Green Solution Ltd

BIGGA CPD Credits are available for all of the Continue to Learn Seminar Sessions and Workshops.

Careers Advice

Do you need careers advice, help writing or updating your CV, writing a letter of application or negotiating a contract? Why not book a session at the Careers Clinic being held at Harrogate Week. Sessions are available on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday with morning sessions available to pre-book by contacting the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 option 3. A careers advice service is also available from a government website www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk or by telephoning 08080 100333. This weblink will be added to the 'Useful Website Links' page in the Members Area of the BIGGA website.

Master Greenkeeper Certificate

Congratulations go to Dan Lightfoot, from Bearwood Lakes Golf Club, who achieved Master Greenkeeper status by passing his Stage Three Examinations in October 2008. Dan will be presented with his Master Greenkeeper Certificate at Harrogate Week during the Opening Session to held on Tuesday 20 January at 10.00am.

A RICH HISTORY AND OPTIMISTIC FUTURE

Scott MacCallum visited Hesketh Golf Club where the recently appointed Course Manager and his team are working hard to return the course to former glories.

Photograph by Alan Birch

FEATURE



Hesketh Golf Club, in Southport, has a rich history. It is regarded as the birth place of the English Golf Union, the initiative coming from a Hesketh Club Captain who went on to become the EGU's first President, while the Bentley brothers, Harry and Arnold, were among the most illustrious pair of brothers ever to play the amateur game.

Arnold won a rare golfing Olympic Gold Medal at the Berlin Olympics in 1936 in front of Adolf Hitler.

A fir tree, presented to Arnold at the time, and known as Hitler's Tree, was planted outside the Hesketh clubhouse where it still sits, despite regular overdoses of a certain naturally produced chemical, applied by members in its early years

While the history of Hesketh is on a par with any club in the country, in recent years, the golf course itself had slipped slightly from the heights it had reached and was in need of a boost.

That arrived in the shape of new Course Manager, Peter McVicar, who took over the reins in July 2007 and who has since made a big impact. Prior to his arrival in the North West Peter had

been Course Manager at the renowned Scottish links of Machrihanish.

"I spotted the advert for Hesketh in Greenkeeper International and looked the club up on the net. I also spoke to some people who had played the course and, having discussed it with my family, decided to apply."

Granted an interview, Peter arrived on the Monday evening for a Tuesday appointment and decided to take a quick look around the course at the earliest opportunity.

"I got stuck in the car park on the Monday evening because the barrier came down and I couldn't get out," recalled Peter with a smile.

It could have been taken as a bad omen but, on the other hand, perhaps he wasn't meant to leave.

"The interview was at 10am but I got here at 5.30am, went out onto the course, chatted with the boys at work and had a proper look at the holes around the clubhouse. They are amazing and I thought that I could definitely make an impression at Hesketh."

Fate was actually working in Peter's favour when he learned that some Hesketh members had

played Machrihanish the previous summer.

"They had had a great time and they asked me why wanted to come from Heaven to Hesketh? I told them that I thought I'd taken Machrihanish as far as I could and that I wanted a challenge. I told them that I felt I could return Hesketh to its former glory."

The job clinched, and having "Talked the Talk", Peter set about "Walking the Walk".

He was greatly impressed with the team he inherited describing them as "awesome", with all the skills required, but perhaps not the opportunity in the past to show just how talented they were.

"We started with the general untidiness of the course then worked on the shaping of the fairways. I don't like fairways that are straight up and down. I like to get a bit of definition in.

He also picked up a tip from architect, David McLay Kidd, who was a near neighbour of his in Machrihanish and which he introduced at the earliest opportunity.

"David suggested that I cross cut at Machrihanish as it lets you see every undulation of the fairway. I've brought that in here and while it adds about an hour and half to cutting time for all 18 holes



I think it's worth it. The golfers appreciate it because it shows that we're putting in the effort and working with dedication and passion," said Peter, whose first request to the club was for new hand mowers.

Since then the greens have all been hand cut and this has since been extended to the tees and approaches.

Peter involves his team – Deputy, Ken Critchley; David Weir; David Williams, Phil Alvey and Alex Mason – in the decision making processes that have resulted in moving the course on.

"We talk a lot at regular team meetings and have a lot of brain storming sessions in which everyone has an equal say."

Having made an immediate impression Peter and the team moved on to some medium and long term goals.

With the aim of introducing some more quality grasses to the course Peter and his team did a few demos of top dressers for the benefit of the committee.

"Previously it used to take a day to top dress 18 greens with a Cushman, shovels and a little drop spreader. We brushed the putting green,

then cut it, then top dressed it, overseeded it and rolled it again, all in the space of 10 minutes and that sold it to the committee. We got the Cyclone spreader, from Tycrop, and we can do all 18 greens in an hour and a half, which means we save a lot of time."

Hesketh will host two days of The Amateur Championship in 2011, while the club also hosted The Junior Open in the week of the Open Championship at Royal Birkdale last year.

"Padraig Harrington came along and was absolutely great with the kids spending a lot of time with them. It was superb publicity for the club."

As part of preparations for the Amateur the club has plans to improve its practice facilities, which will be of long term benefit to the club.

"At the moment we have a field with a green and a bunker but, in three phases over the next three years, we will build a raised tee half Astroturf and half turf with some targets to hit to. Phase Two is better bunkering with another chipping green while Phase Three will involved putting up some fences and fine tuning what we've done."

Peter is very keen to be approachable and

visible to the membership and another of the early initiatives was to have a "Meet the Greenkeeper" session.

"It was basically me sitting in the clubhouse – with my kilt on – answering whatever questions came up."

Around 200 members attended and Peter tackled all issues whether they be agronomic or, more specifically, what he had under his kilt!

"I make a point of coming into the clubhouse on a Saturday afternoon to chat with members and explain what we are trying to do. The best thing we get though is when one of our members calls us over and points out some fescue that they've found. It's obvious then that we are getting through to them.

"We do monthly reports for the members and started out with bullet points but we've moved on to bullet points plus a bit added on for those who wish to know more. It's a great club for passion.

"We've removed the 'Not beyond this point' white lines for trolleys and the members comply while the juniors are great at repairing pitchmarks," said Peter, who also has 24 artisans to assist him.



The Hesketh team with Peter, third from left

A bunker renovation programme has been put in place, which will see around 25 bunkers tackled each winter for the next four years and a rolling programme thereafter.

“Previously bunkers were built into the existing contouring which meant that some face into the rough and others out to sea. We will be building the bunkers and then shaping around them so that they face the hole.”

Peter was instrumental in the setting up of a Course Development Committee when he arrived involving Secretary Manager, Marytn Senior; Professional, Scott Astin; Club Chairman, Alan Tillbrook, and the Chairman of Green, one of the rare female Chairs in the country, Meegan Switzer, who was instrumental in bringing Peter to the Club.

“Meegan leaves the post at the end of this year (2008) but the job descriptions we wrote for the various positions includes an overlap for Chairmen of Green on the Course Development Committee of a year to improve continuity.

They are all good golfers so we are also looking at bringing in a not so good golfer for another opinion,” said Peter, adding that the new Course Policy Document was written with advice gleaned from the BIGGA Website, the EGU and St Andrews Links Trust.

“The first policy document I looked at was St Andrews’. It’s good to start at the top and that’s where I learned of a Course Development Committee.”

The Committee has already had a couple of course walks to assess the course and agree on potential changes.

Among those is to push some tees back, not for the regular members events but for the larger competitions.

“We have bunkers that the good golfers fly over but catch the regular handicapper.

“There are three pros in the shop and they are happy to hit as many balls off as many tees, or would-be tees, as I want, to see where they are landing. From one new tee 12 balls were hit and eight of them went in bunkers,” he revealed.

“It has been agreed that any major changes we must consult a designer. With smaller tweaks we will do them in-house or with the assistance of Stuart Ormondroyd, of the STRI.

While Peter has taken to working in the North West with aplomb his family have adapted just as

well to the change from the isolated Machrihanish area, where the nearest population centre was Glasgow.

“I was asked about this at the interview and I said that the nearest MacDonald’s was 130 miles away but that there here were three within a mile so we’d be alright,” said Peter, who has ensured that his two children are brought up as Aberdeen fans, although, as a special dispensation, they are allowed an English team as well.

With such a fair minded guy in charge Hesketh Golf Club can expect to have as glittering a future as it has a past.



Peter with Club Chairman Alan Tillbrook and Pro Scott Astin, part of the course development committee

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ZERO-TURN MOWERS: ARE THEY ALL THE SAME?



Kubota zero-turn mowers are all diesel powered, the pictured ZD28 topping the four-model line-up. Powered by a 28hp engine it can be specified with a choice of 1.52m side- or rear-discharge deck.

By James de Havilland

In the USA, the way in which grass is mown differs from the approach in the UK and Europe. These differences, however, go beyond accounting for climate, grass types, cut and collect systems and a host of other practical constraints.

In the US, they prefer to ride on a mower than walk behind it. Consider the heat of a typical US summer and this approach makes a great deal of sense. It is also a key to the popularity of the zero-turn. These mowers can be used in restricted areas that in Europe would typically be mown by pedestrian kit.

When zero-turn mowers first made their way from the US to Europe, however, these mowers received a fairly mixed reception from professional operators. With a degree of generalisation, some of the early imports were not built for intensive commercial applications, while those that were included were designs with too shallow a deck to cope with long, wet grass. Almost universal use of petrol engines did not help either.

Despite the fact that the zero-turn market has now matured in the UK, there remain some entrenched views that a zero-turn is not as suitable as a similar capacity out-front rotary for heavy use. The reality is that there are some pretty serious,

heavy duty zero-turn models on the market. Think Ariens, Ferris, Iseki, Kubota, Scag, Great Dane and Grasshopper for starters. In fact there is what now seems to be an ever-growing range of commercial quality zero-turn models offered in the UK.

In the golf sector, it is natural to perhaps think first of the models offered by the 'big three', John Deere, Ransomes-Jacobsen and Toro. And with good reason. These manufacturers know the UK market, and the key models offered by the companies in the UK are well suited to golf course users.

So is it fair to say all zero-turn mowers are the same? Well no. For starters, there are models, that include the Gizmow, that have a steering wheel as opposed to steering levers. Ferris units have a front suspension system. Grasshopper models have a four-wheel chassis, with rear castor wheels enabling the mower skid to operate a range of attachments and not just a deck.

A particularly interesting departure from the 'norm' is the Convertible Mower. This model can be operated both as a ride-on or pedestrian zero-turn. The idea is that in applications where an operator may have reservations about sitting on the machine, such as a steep bank, he can switch to pedestrian mode. On the level, he can then switch back to ride-on mode. This is an interesting idea,

and one that just shows how the term zero-turn should not be used to group all mowers of this type under the same headings.

So how much will a zero-turn cost to run?

Costing a mower of any description will always be complicated by the amount of work done, purchase price of the machine and how long it is kept in service. With a zero-turn, it perhaps helps to also look at how the unit could be used to reduce another cost, such as using a brushcutter.

If the zero-turn shows potential to save costs, these need to be considered. As to costs of running a zero turn, you can do some basics by taking the purchase price and writing it down over a period of five years. Assume the money to buy the machine has to be financed at a rate of say 6% per annum. Then factor in service, insurance and maintenance, this typically weighing in at 5% or so of the purchase price.

Next you need to work out typical annual usage and labour plus fuel costs. If this seems a bit tiresome, an all-in guide cost per hour will range from £16.50 to £22.00. This is based upon labour at £10 and fuel at £1.40 per hour and a 500 hour annual workload. If the latter seems high, consider how these mowers can be used in place of a brushcutter. Most users find a zero-turn is worked harder than initially anticipated.



The John Deere Z Trak 997 can be fitted with a side or rear discharge deck, tough units made from heavy 4.5 mm thick steel. The 44 litre fuel tank should be enough to keep the 31hp diesel engine fed for a full day of mowing.



Pro-Stance 1934 and Pro-Stance 1948 'stand-on' zero turn mowers are powered by a Kawasaki 19hp V-twin petrol engines and have respective deck widths of 0.86 and 1.22m with mulch kit option. Narrow width is a key to these machines appeal, particularly where access is restricted by pedestrian gates.



Powered by a 24hp Kawasaki V-twin petrol engine, the LP25KAW Convertible mower can be specified with a choice of 1.21m, 1.32m or 1.55m deck. Show working in pedestrian mode, the same mower can be converted to a ride-on, without any tools, in a couple of minutes.



Toro Groundsmaster 7200 series 28hp zero-turn mowers can be fitted with a choice of decks, including 1.58 and 1.83 Guardian recycler units. Made from heavy steel, the decks are claimed to be extremely tough and leave a really good finish.



Grasshopper zero-turn models have a four-wheel chassis, this enabling the mower to work with a range of attachments that can include a debris blower or brush. Pictures unit is fitted with a collection system. This is the sort of zero-turn that could well convert existing out-front rotary users.

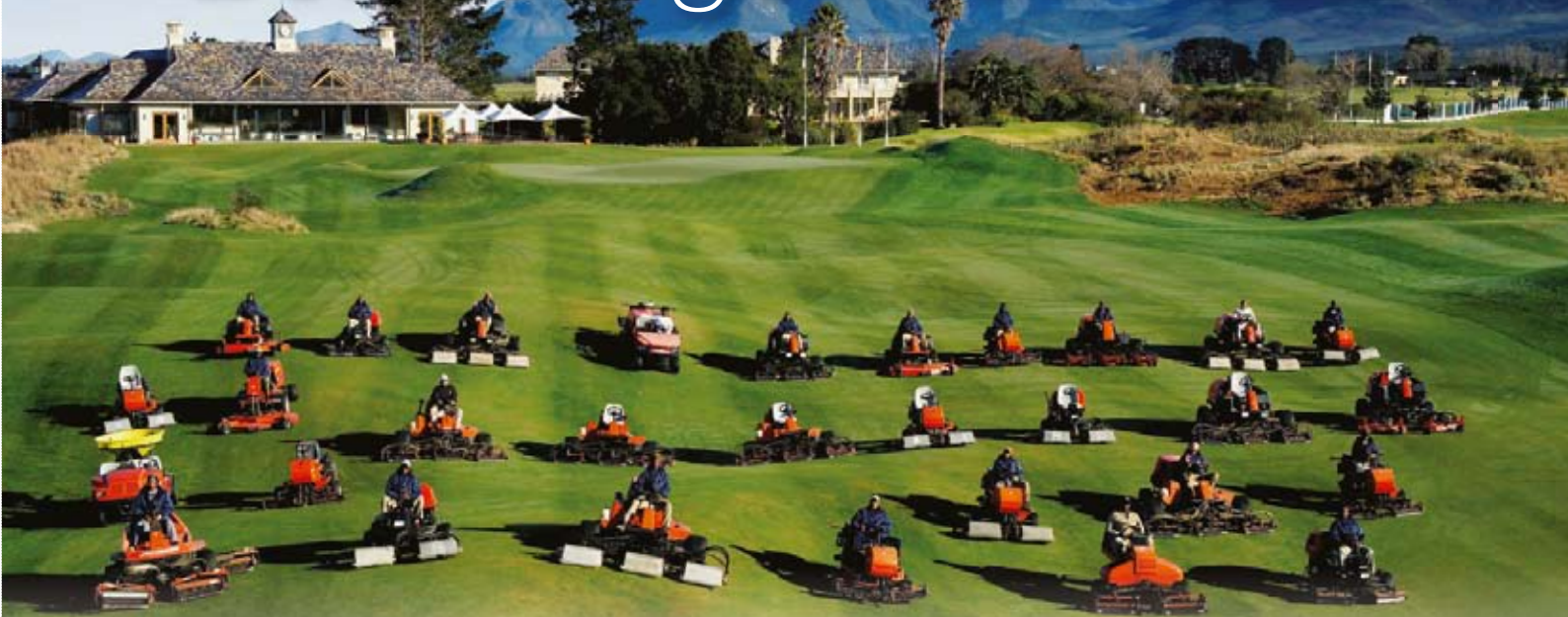


The 33 hp Iseki SZ330 is among the most power zero-turn models, its large 1.83m deck enabling it to match tight turning with a high level of productivity. Large driving and big front castor wheels useful for work on rougher ground.



Powered by a 20hp Yanmar diesel, the Ransomes ZT220D has a 1.50m deck. Small and nippy, this mower is ideally suited to working in and around trees, flower borders and other obstacles.

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Photograph by Mike Beardall



EUROPEAN TOUR



The European Tour has been a BIGGA Golden Key supporter since 1997 and since then through the Main Tour, the Challenge Tour and the Seniors' has visited over 1000 golf courses. Scott MacCallum met with David Garland to talk about the issues of the day.

It's not often you could look back at a European golf season, during which a Ryder Cup was lost, and still see it as a good year. But that's exactly how 2008 should be written up in the history books.

Sure, Nick Faldo's team lost out in Valhalla, but it came at the end of an unprecedented run of European success in the Ryder Cup and, much as it did with the European revival in the 80s, an American win should do much to reinvigorate the event.

But Pádraig Harrington's emergence as a true Champion in Majors with back-to-back wins in The Open and USPGA Championships marked the year out as something special.

It's easy to forget that Harrington teed off at Royal Birkdale not knowing if his injured wrist would carry him more than a few holes and to win in such majestic style, overhauling the amazing Greg Norman, was a wonderful achievement. Then to stare down Sergio Garcia over the back nine of the USPGA Championship to become the first European winner of the modern age took Harrington to another level.

On the European Tour itself, 2008 saw one of the most remarkable chapters in its history with the signing of the agreement with Leisurecorp – new owners of Turnberry – for the Race to

Dubai, which will culminate in the top 60 players on the Money List competing for a \$10 million purse and \$10 million bonus pool in the Dubai World Championship. Makes your eyes water a little doesn't it?

"It is exciting. But it has always been exciting to work here," said David Garland, the Director of Tour Operations, as we sat in his office in the Wentworth-based Tour Headquarters.

"The awards for the players at the top end are fantastic and it's a wonderful contract we have with Leisurecorp," said David, adding that the first of the World Championships will be played over the Earth Course at Jumeirah Golf Estates - a new Norman design.

The Race to Dubai has caused such a stir among the world's top players that many of them, including Camilo Villegas, Anthony Kim, Jeff Ogilvy and Mike Weir among others have joined the Tour, while other big names are considering joining them.

It marks an end to the traditional season finale when the Volvo Masters visited southern Spain, usually Valderrama, with weather often being a headache.

"We're an outdoor sport and weather is an issue. We've just played the Volvo Masters, for the 21st and last time at Valderrama, and we had very poor weather but the construction of

the course made it playable when all the other courses around were closed. That is testimony to what a wonderful venue it has been for us over the years," said David.

The 1997 Ryder Cup at Valderrama was another example of when poor weather nearly disrupted the event and it was only thanks to the wonderful construction and great work by owner Jimmy Patino and his team that allowed Seve Ballesteros to lead his team to a famous victory.

For many years the Sotogrande-based course has been the benchmark for conditioning on the European Tour and David believes that the quality of Valderrama quickened the rate of improvement in the condition of other Tour venues.

David joined the Tour in 1988 and has witnessed first hand the strides that have been made since then.

"That was the first year of the Volvo Masters and Valderrama was by far the best conditioned course in Europe and it has pulled the rest of the courses up to the standards they are now. That gap has now closed and other tournament venues are similar to the quality that Valderrama produces. All are of a high standard now but then generally the standard of regular golf clubs has risen enormously over the past 20 years," he said.

"At the end of the day it is still about golf tournaments but the biggest advances have been

in players services as well as the extent to which a European Tour event is marketed by the tourist authorities in the region or country. They are not stand alone golf tournaments anymore but part of a much bigger picture."

David is well aware of the fact that the Tour causes expectation levels to rise among golf club members and he sympathises with the pressure that results from that.

"People are expecting fast greens all the time and this can't happen. Those clubs who try to achieve tournament speeds all year round can have it backfire and stress out their greens," said David.

"The biggest thing we strive for is not speed but consistency."

With Tour players and officials having their passports stamped in countries their predecessors had only ever read about in books, it means a huge range of golf course and maintenance regimes.

They play on true links like St Andrews, without much rough; tree lined courses like Wentworth; modern courses like the K Club, while they are now in Asia and South Africa where the grasses are different.

"We have been very pleasantly surprised by China because the golf courses we play there are all modern and built to a high specification and they have experienced Course Managers, usually American, European or Australian."

The Tour has six greenkeepers/agronomists who provide support to the venues.

"Richard Stillwell runs the department, while we still use Jack McMillan as well as some very good guys in Eddie Adams, Graham McNiven, Alan Purdie and Scott McLean. There are five Scots in there just to keep Richard on his toes," laughed fellow Scot, David.

Every course gets at least one visit but more are made if considered necessary, while, on occasion, someone can be put into a venue for a few weeks in advance and during the tournament itself to offer advice and support.

"Really, we're there to advise, our team are experts in Tournament preparation and for the 'final tweaking' – the putting on of the lipstick if you like. The event is on television and we want to show the golf course off to its best. It's cutting lines to television cameras, raking bunkers towards the direction of play so we don't get ridges behind the ball."

(The support that comes from the Tour Greenkeeping Department can also help with the amount of cutting that goes on during an event.)

"Generally speaking we have 156 players in the field on a weekly basis and wherever possible we have a two tee start – that gets more people on the golf courses at the same time and makes it a slightly shorter day than a one tee start – but it does put pressure on the greenkeeping team to have the course prepared in time.

"We also get support from Toro who bring in a tournament fleet if extra machines are required."

With the three main Tours – the Challenge, the European Tour and the Seniors' Tour – the European Tour goes to over 100 venues each year and in his 20 years on Tour David has some good news for all Tour, or potential Tour, venues.

"I've never known a situation where greens have died off a short time after the Tour has visited. It's an Old Wives' Tale that we'd have crazy procedures and practices that affect the long term health of the greens. That is certainly not true. It's basic, commonsense greenkeeping

that we advocate. It's aeration, aeration and more aeration."

The Tour has been a Golden Key of BIGGA since 1997 and David is delighted to be able to provide educational support to the Association's members.

"We have a good relationship with BIGGA and would like that to be as strong as possible. We are particularly close to some of the Course Managers, including current BIGGA Chairman Kenny Mackay, since his time at Hanbury Manor, and incoming Chairman, Peter Todd."

David is also a regular visitor at Harrogate Week.

"I really enjoy going to Harrogate for a couple of days. It really is a wonderful meeting place and I can catch up with a number of people at the same time."

The Tour has grown amazingly over the last two decades. It has produced a string of golfing superstars and showcased some of the finest established and new courses in the UK, mainland Europe and beyond.

"We are here for the long term and we can all learn from each other."

As we reached the tail end of the interview, I still had a bone to pick with David. It was a personal beef regarding something the Tour has done absolutely nothing to halt and which has merely reinforced one of the negative images golf has among non-golfers – fashion!

Why is it, I asked, that we are seeing so many gaudy trousers, garish shirts and white belts on Tour?

"Scott, perhaps you're just middle aged!"

After an enjoyable interview it was, I think you'll agree, a very low blow to a legitimate question.



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HARROGATE WEEK

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK



Melissa Jones makes the most of her 'access all areas' pass and takes a look at the hard work that goes into organising this prestigious annual event.

Visitors from around the world will be gathering in Harrogate, England, later this month for the well-established, premier event in the golf and turf industry – Harrogate Week.

Harrogate Week, Europe's largest indoor turf event that combines both elements of turf and clubhouse management, has become a truly international event with 357 visitors travelling from 30 overseas countries as far a field as Australia, South Africa, the USA and Japan.

Harrogate Week's diversity is growing and visitors from all areas of the sportsturf industry – as well as from farms & estates, local authorities and theme parks – will be attending the three day exhibition and the five day world-renowned 'Continue to Learn' education programme.

With 5500 buyers and over 150 exhibitors, attending every year. Harrogate Week's strong brand provides a platform to build relationships between exhibitors and visitors. With 5495

people visiting last year's show, 2009's event is not to be missed.

So that's how prestigious the annual show has become but what exactly has it taken to achieve this? What goes on behind the scenes?

A lot of planning, preparation and general hard work takes place at BIGGA HQ prior to the annual event. Each department plays their part in making Harrogate Week a success and ensuring the show grows in status year-on-year...

SALES/EXHIBITION

The biggest department at BIGGA HOUSE, Sales, has the following staff: Rosie McGilvray, Sales Manager; Pauline Thompson, Exhibition Officer; Sue McDonough, Exhibition Sales; Kirstin Smith, Advertising Executive and Sharon Price, Sales Executive.

Sue McDonough works on the show all year and her job takes on a cycle: "After each January show exhibitors are given until the end of February to rebook their stand slot," explained Sue, who spends much of her time during Harrogate Week, speaking to exhibitors about what they would

like to see next year and how they might like to change their stand space.

Come March the hall space is opened up to everyone, and that's when the game of fitting stands around each other while ensuring exhibitors are happy, begins.

"Much of my job is customer service based," said Sue.

"It's important that we look after our existing exhibitors while also trying to develop the show by introducing new stands and clients."

There are many areas of Harrogate Week that also need organising such as: Where the BIGGA stand will be situated, where the eateries and café's will be positioned and how they will be promoted, and also what form the new 'Social Night' will take around the show.

Sharon's role is to help promote businesses by giving them as many options and opportunities as possible, be it website advertisements, show leaflets or information around the halls.

Kirstin works mainly on generating sales for this monthly publication, Greenkeeper International, and advertisements pushing Harrogate Week and exhibiting companies generally come in to play



Pauline Thompson, Exhibition Officer

in the December and January issues.

Probably the biggest and most complicated role is that of Exhibition Officer, taken on by Pauline Thompson.

Pauline is responsible for all the organisation, contracts and bookings for the show.

Her long annual 'to do' list includes organising security, temporary staff, first aid, the exhibitors lounge, catering points and menu's, internal and external signage, the park & ride, insurance, the Internet Café, marketing, registration, the show guide, welcome packs...the list goes on and on!

The Harrogate Week website also plays an important part in promoting the show, and Pauline is responsible for keeping this updated with the latest show news.

Another form of show promotion are advertisements within various publications. "I work with our Designer, Tom, to ensure our Harrogate Week adverts are eye-catching and the readers attention are drawn to them," explained Pauline.

Once Harrogate Week is upon us, Pauline has an early start on Saturday morning. "The first jobs for the contractors are to lay the carpets, measure out floor space, build the stand shells, and then I begin to schedule the lorries in," said Pauline.

The Sunday sees the middle of each hall filled, with the space and removal lorries being coordinated by Pauline and Mike Coleman, Floor Manager. Monday morning is generally when the smaller stands begin to arrive and by the Monday evening everything is set up and ready.

Once the show is underway, Pauline spends much of her time coordinating the main office, inspecting areas from a health & safety perspective and dealing with any queries.



Sue McDonough, Exhibition Sales



Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development

"Once Harrogate Week is over, the Thursday evening and Friday morning take the same form as build-up but in reverse," explained Pauline, who is always keen to ensure that each show is more successful than the last.

Back in the office Pauline starts the whole cycle again, and begins by collating attendance figures and passing these onto the Sales team so they can, once again, begin selling stand space.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

The Learning & Development department consists of Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development and Rachael Duffy, Learning & Development Administrator.

Sami and Rachael are responsible for Harrogate Week's 'Continue to Learn' education programme.

The department coordinate approximately 65 speakers who run various workshops and seminars. Around 24 of these people will be fringe speakers – exhibitors given the opportunity to run a free session.

Work starts 15-16 months prior to the show, "an outline for the 2009 education programme was drawn up in October 2007," said Sami. "Ideas were finalised in March 2008, they would normally be shown to the education sub-committee, before we go full steam ahead and invite the speakers."

'The Definitive Guide to Harrogate Week 2009' brochure, which details the full 'Continue to Learn' education programme and any fringe seminars booked before it is published, was written in June '08, designed August '08 and went out with the October edition of Greenkeeper International – it



Rachael Duffy, Learning & Development Administrator

is also uploaded to the Harrogate Week website – www.harrogateweek.org.uk

"We are also responsible for the coordination of the required audio visual during workshops and in the auditorium," explained Sami. "We also make decisions regarding the catering arrangements, take bookings via post, phone and internet and produce marketing mail outs promoting the various courses."

Learning & Development also organise the Master Greenkeepers AGM and presentations for events such as: the Environment Competition, Toro Student of the Year, and to those who have acquired new Master Greenkeepers status or achieved a CPD Diploma.

"Badging for delegates and speakers is also a necessity which we organise, as well as sending the 'Continue to Learn' programme to America to have GCSSA credits assigned to courses, and ensuring BASIS credits are also organised," said Rachael.

Sami and Rachael start work at 8am on Sunday, January 18, and control and run the entire 'Continue to Learn' programme throughout Harrogate Week.

COMMUNICATIONS

BIGGA's Communications department, which consists of Scott MacCallum, Communications Manager/Editor; Melissa Jones, Assistant Editor and Tom Campbell, Design and Production Editor, put together articles, press releases and promotional material to do with Harrogate Week.

Tom designs 'The Definitive Guide to Harrogate Week', the 'Show Guide' and various advertisements/publicity material and signage to promote the event.

Scott and I write various articles, which feature within this publication, about the show. And as well as this, it is our job to email out press releases, help put together the Harrogate Week newsletters, and organise the set up of the Media Centre, taking bookings for press conferences, compiling media packs and ensuring the smooth running of the media centre.

After each show we have a departmental de-brief to discuss ways in which we can keep on improving the facilities.

ACCOUNTS

BIGGA's accounts department, which consists of Stephen Coates, Accountant and Tracey Tyerman, Assistant Accountant, are responsible for organising the BIGGA stand as well as collecting and paying out money.

"Our role doesn't just involve dealing with money," said Steve. "We organise the BIGGA stand design and arrange what equipment needs to be hired, ensuring tills/PDQ machines are also ordered."

Steve attends planning meetings at BIGGA HQ, and Tracey and he arrange all the invoicing for the seminars/workshops, advertising/sponsorship and stand space. The hire of Harrogate International Centre is also paid for prior to the show.

PA/SECRETARY

This year Sandra Raper has been responsible for organising an event which is new to Harrogate Week - **BIGGA Social Night**.

Taking place on **Tuesday, January 20, from 7pm until 10.30pm**, the Social Night replaces the banquet that used to take place on the Thursday evening after the show.

Sandra sourced the entertainment – casino tables, arcade games etc, and also picked the menu for the social night.

Sandra compiles agendas and takes minutes for Board meetings and AGM's prior to, and during, the show and helps out with various pieces of admin such as sending out invitations for the Past Chairman's reception and the Bernhard's & Co reception.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership department, which consists of Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership Services; Justine De Taure, Membership Services Officer, and Brad Anderson, Membership Services Administrator, play a part in the annual show coming to fruition, by sitting on various panels and helping to decide how the BIGGA stand will look.

However, the membership departments work really begins once the show is underway. The staff are on hand to help with membership renewals, to generate new members, and discuss any issues or queries members may have.

HARROGATE WEEK CHECKLIST

Just in case your mind is still crammed with Christmas memories and aching from New Year Celebrations, we thought we'd offer you a helping hand by putting together a checklist to ensure you make the most of Europe's largest indoor turf event, Harrogate Week:

- Invite Chairman of Green and Secretary*
- Book Seminar and Workshop places through BIGGA HQ*
- Plan which Fringe Seminars to attend*
- Book Social Night tickets through BIGGA HQ*
- Confirm travel arrangements*
- Have blazer dry cleaned*
- Log on to www.harrogateweek.org.uk for the latest Exhibition news*
- Email friends and arrange to meet*
- Check hotel reservation*
- Create a wish list of the new course equipment and services*
- Confirm with Treasurer how much money you have in the budget*
- Decide which companies you must see during the Exhibition and plan itinerary*
- Do some homework to ensure you get maximum benefit from your chosen workshops*
- Buy a winter coat, scarf and gloves (it's cold in Yorkshire!)*
- Check how many CPD points you need to remain on schedule*
- Prepare your palate for the taste of Black Sheep and Theakston's Old Peculiar*
- Ask your neighbour to look after any pets*
- Put out the rubbish*



STORING OILS

ARE YOU UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST REGULATIONS?

The problem with regulations is that the way in which they are explained can make them appear far more onerous than is actually the case. This, however, is no excuse for quietly ignoring them.

Golf courses with an ageing diesel storage tank should have been made aware of changes made in the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 by their fuel supplier. In outline, a diesel storage tank that does not meet current requirements should not be filled with fuel by the supplier's tanker driver.

The nature of customer relations, however, can lead to a blind eye being turned, with some courses possibly 'getting away' with a tank that does not meet more recent regulations. The fact that a farmer may still use a pier mounted single skin diesel storage tank with a gravity filler hose system and no bund is not a relevant argument either; different regulations apply to agriculture.

There are more general oil storage regulations that will also apply to lubricating and hydraulic oils. All aim to ensure that oil is safely stored and the risk of pollution is minimised. These regulations will apply to essentially any type of oil stored in:

- tanks
- intermediate bulk containers
- oil drums
- mobile fuel bowers

In England, the Oil Storage Regulations may apply to oils stored above ground outside in containers with a capacity exceeding 200 litres. In Scotland the regulations will affect you if you store oil of any kind at your premises, regardless of the volume.

The Oil Storage Regulations do not apply in the same way in Northern Ireland and Wales, but it remains best practice to meet the requirements of the regulations to prevent pollution. As an incentive, remember you are committing an offence if you cause pollution, either deliberately or accidentally. If oil from your site, or under your care, causes pollution, you may be prosecuted and fined.

Bear in mind that any oil storage tanks are considered a significant risk if they are less than:

- 10 metres away from any surface water or wetlands
- 50 metres away from any well or borehole.



Storage of petrol is covered by a completely different set of regulations than diesel. Anyone looking into petrol storage needs to take specialist advice.



A self-contained bunding diesel tank can be purchased off-the-peg, with designs including units from 1,000 litres capacity. Steel or plastic tanks are readily available, with a choice of filling systems that will include those with metering units and automatic nozzles. Pictured steel unit comes with integral mounting skids.

Containers, bunds and drip trays

You must use oil containers, and this relates to diesel and other oils, that are strong enough and that are unlikely to burst or leak during ordinary use. Leaky fuel cans break the rules in other words. In Scotland this is the key requirement for portable oil containers with a capacity less than 200 litres. In England, you must store containers within a drip tray, bund or any other suitable secondary containment system or SCS for short. Any SCS should contain any oil that escapes from its container.

For oil tanks, intermediate bulk containers and mobile bowers, your SCS must be able to hold:

- at least 110% of the volume of any single container in the storage area, or
- if there is more than one container, at least 110% of the largest container's storage volume, or at least 25% of their total volume (whichever is greater).

For drum storage your drip tray must be able to hold at least 25% of the total storage capacity of the drums. For fuel oil, you must ensure that the base and walls of your bunds are impermeable to water and oil. The base and walls must not be penetrated by any opening that is used for draining the system either. The aim is to make sure they really are sealed.

What is often not considered is the need to locate all valves, filters, sight gauges, vent pipes

and other equipment, other than fill pipes or draw-off pipes or pumps, within the SCS. Where a fill pipe is not within the SCS, a drip tray must be used to catch any oil spilled when the container is being filled. You should make sure this drip tray is clean and empty before each delivery.

Explained like this, it all sounds very complicated. In practice, it is not that difficult to meet all the requirements, but it could involve buying a new fuel storage tanks and investing in a system in which drums of oil can be safely stored. For the latter, your local oil supplier or equipment dealer should be able to help out with affordable systems.

With regard to diesel storage tanks, self-contained bunding tanks, made from steel or plastic, are readily available in capacities from around 1,000 litres. A critical design aspect of these modern units is that the delivery hose and nozzle, along with any metering device, are all stored within the tank bund and can typically be locked away to help prevent unauthorised use or vandal attack.

You will have a choice of hand pump or pumped system, the latter coming with a choice of mains or battery power. A self-pumping system with automatic nozzle is recommended as it will help reduce the chance of fuel spills. It is well worth specifying a tank with an integral fuel delivery meter fitted. This will enable you to monitor fuel use more accurately.



Experience the Real thing!

Win a fantastic weekend courtesy of Rigby Taylor

Every visitor* to the Rigby Taylor stand during Harrogate Week will have the opportunity of entering a free competition to win a weekend in Spain's capital city, Madrid.

But this is not just any weekend, as the winner will receive a pair of tickets for the top 'La Liga' match played on Sunday 3rd May between two of the worlds most exciting teams, Real Madrid and Barcelona!

This fantastic prize includes tickets for the match, scheduled flights with British Airways, two nights in single rooms in one of Madrid's top hotels, breakfast and transfers to and from the airport.

The winner will have category one seats in the middle section of the fantastic Santiago Bernabéu stadium, enjoying one of the best views of the pitch at what is hoped to be one of the games of the season.

To take the opportunity of winning this fabulous prize, just visit the Rigby Taylor Stand C23 where staff will be on hand to explain how to enter.

The competition will be held on the first two days of the exhibition (20/21 January) and the prize-winner will be announced at 4.45pm on the Wednesday.

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

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THE DELEGATION



10 BIGGA members will be travelling to this year's GCSAA Golf Industry Show in New Orleans, as part of a Delegation thanks to Bernhard & Co. Melissa Jones reveals the lucky candidates...

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

About the Golf Industry Show

The Golf Industry Show is an innovative trade show designed for the owners/operators of golf facilities, and the professional members of the golf course and club management industries. Like our very own Harrogate Week, the event combines education, networking and solutions for Golf Course Superintendents, Owners/Operators, General Managers, Chief Operating Officers, Architects and Builders.

The 2009 trade show floor layout is designed to benefit every member of the golf facility team, and is segmented by products and services into three distinct areas: golf course solutions, clubhouse solutions, and range and outdoor facility solutions.

Several special features will spice up the floor in 2009: three networking parks, an interactive construction project and an indoor range.

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

The 2009 event will take place from February 5-7 and is to be held at New Orleans Morial Convention Center. More than 25,000 golf industry professionals are expected to attend this year's show, which will feature more than 900 exhibitors.

Conferences. GCSAA's conference will take place from February 2 to 7.

The Delegation

Name: Graham Pickin
Club: Thornhurst Park
Position: Course Manager



Graham has a HNC in Golf Course Management and has been at Thornhurst Park Golf Club for the last eight years, where he is responsible for managing a team of six greenkeepers, plus one gardener, and maintaining an 18 hole course.

"The trip will undoubtedly open my mind to new techniques and thinking, and I would pass this information on to my staff," said Graham.

"It will revitalise me as a greenkeeper – every time I go to a show or demonstration, my enthusiasm levels go through the roof."

Name: Andrew Boyce
Club: Bath
Position: Course Manager



Andrew began his career as a trainee at Bath Golf Club, at the age of 16. He then went into full time greenkeeper training at Sparsholt College, with a year placement at Salisbury and South Wilts Golf Club. Before returning to Bath Golf Club as a Deputy Course Manager, Andrew worked as an Assistant at Lansdowne and a First Assistant at Castle Combe. Six years ago he was promoted to Course Manager.

"The opportunity to mix, not only with BIGGA delegates, but also Superintendents state side, will not be wasted on me, and I could bring much to the group while away and also to others on my return," said Andrew.

Name: Richard Cutler
Club: La Moye
Position: Course Manager



Richard has an ILM SVQ Level IV in Management, gained at Elmwood College and before joining La Moye last year, held the role of Course Manager at Montrose Links for five years.

"I will use this experience to broaden my knowledge of turfgrass management and industry developments, to network with other greenkeepers and industry specialists, and to help show how professional UK greenkeepers can be," said Richard.

Name: John Keenaghan
Club: Chipping Sodbury
Position:
Head Greenkeeper



John began his career as a Greenkeeping Assistant in 1996 at Filton Golf Club, where he stayed until 1999. John worked at three other golf clubs before joining Chipping Sodbury as a

Deputy Head Greenkeeper in 2003, and in 2006 he was promoted to Head Greenkeeper.

"I will use this experience to speak to as many people as possible, listen and learn, so that I may bring back any knowledge and ideas, and implement them on my golf course," said John.

Name: Jim Brown
Club: De Vere Oulton Hall
Position: Golf Courses & Estate Manager



Jim is a qualified D32-D33 NVQ assessor and L12 trainer with the GTC. He was also nominated to represent Askham Bryan College in the 1992 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year awards.

"Obviously the BIGGA delegation members are encouraged to participate in full interaction with our US colleagues, that experience will not be wasted – benefiting not only myself, Oulton Hall and hopefully the American greenkeepers I meet. Also with my willingness to harness the new ideas and knowledge I pick up from the visit, then use them in my environment, I will share them with my colleagues back home," enthused Jim.

Name: Nicholas Miles
Club: Market Harborough
Position: Course Manager



Nicholas, who began his greenkeeping career at Hellidon Lakes, has a HND in Golf Course Management from Reaseheath College.

"I am looking forward to experiencing the golf show State side, and seeing how education is taught over there. I would also like to see how a golf course is managed and the facilities made available to the greenkeepers," said Nicholas.

"I believe the whole trip will be invaluable in terms of experience gained – learning how a golf course is maintained on differing budgets would be an eye opening experience."

Name: Derek Robson
Club: The Dukes, St Andrews
Position:
Head Greenkeeper



Derek joined The Dukes as First Assistant before being promoted to Deputy, then Head Greenkeeper within two and a half years.

In 2008 The Dukes hosted the Scottish Amateur Strokeplay which, after re-building four greens in the winter of 07/08, was a real challenge to have them grown in time for the Amateur, "but one which my team relished and a superb achievement," said Derek.

"I view the trip as an excellent educational experience and one which will be beneficial, not only to me, but also to my team and the local BIGGA Central Section, which we are very proud of," enthused Derek.

Name: Stephen Chappell
Club: Neath
Position:
Head Greenkeeper



Stephen briefly worked as a groundsman before commencing his greenkeeping career in 1988 at Bath Golf Club.

"I would like to be selected as part of the BIGGA delegation because I feel I would be able to represent our Association in an honest, friendly and professional manner.

"I will share my experience by giving a talk at the South Wales education seminar which we hold annually, each spring. I will also use the experience to try to inspire and develop other greenkeepers, young and old, to get involved in the Association and to better their own careers," said Stephen.

Name: Robert Sandilands
Club: Elsham
Position:
Deputy Head Greenkeeper



Robert has a BTEC National Diploma in Forestry and Environmental Studies, and a BSC in Rural Resource Management.

"I am a forward thinking young Deputy, eager to learn and pick up new ideas and techniques to aid and improve our course and my skills in general," said Robert.

"This trip will be a unique opportunity to boost my skills and experience, and will be invaluable to someone of my age and current experience. I will share my new ideas with current and future workmates for the benefit of the course and golf club as a whole."

Name: Chris Haspell
Club: Castle Stuart Golf Links
Position: Course Manager



Chris, who has designed and constructed six golf courses in Denmark, moved to Scotland in 2006 to manage the turf at Castle Stuart Golf Links and the course itself opened last summer.

"I feel the ideas picked up on the trip will benefit the operation at Castle Stuart, from tee markers to fertilisers and from hydroponics to agronomics. I will use his experience to collect data and ideas, and to forge connections around the UK and Europe, and of course the USA," said Chris.

Education Conferences

Along with the show, GCSAA, NCGOA and CMAA will be presenting their annual Education

Do the job you love and earn the money you deserve!

Lawn Master®

the lawn treatment service...

My name is Bob Underhill. I'm a greenkeeper and also Managing Director of a lawn treatment company called Lawn Master.

If you are like most of the greenkeepers and groundsman that we have spoken to, then you enjoy doing your job, and do it out of passion for turf. This is despite the hours being so long and the financial rewards being extremely poor.


How long will you be expected to keep doing unpaid overtime, with minimal staff levels and no funds, or even under threat of redundancy? Wage rises are now a thing of the past, but you are expected to view where you work as a privilege or substitute for an acceptable salary.

In the last few years Lawn Master has taken top grounds and greens staff from some of the highest paid and most prestigious positions in the industry, as well as the poorest. All have done extremely well, because given the choice customers appreciate and prefer having an experienced trained person, rather than the new inexperienced players in the franchise world.

Last year, in his first five months of trading, one of our new franchisees had a turnover exceeding £55,000 and ended his first year on over £100,000. This person is already on target to double this in year two. New starters this year have already reached £34k by month six. We are having a record year in 2008.

Competitors are no problem for our outlets as we are the only lawn company in the UK to recruit pre-experienced franchisees.

Our funding packages make it easy for any experienced groundsman and greenkeepers like you to own their own business. We need the right people that are experienced and motivated. In return, you'll receive all the support that you need, and join the only network of like-minded real professionals in the UK.




Spencer Haines

Former Course Manager at Hartley Wintney Golf Course



First Year 2007

First months turnover £7k, month 2 £11k. Ended first year on over £110k. On track to double in year 2.

Andrew Lloyd

Former Arsenal Football Club - Groundsman

Started 2008

First 3 months turnover over £18k

Turnover £35K in six months



Brian Aitken

Ex Largs, Turnberry & West Kilbride - Greenkeeper



First 3 months

Turnover Over £17k

On target for £54K in year one!

Barry Dolan

Former Greenkeeper, Carnoustie, Dundee

Started April 2006

Turnover in winter period alone £20k

Turnover 150k in 2 and a half years.



Everyone wants to know how much money they will earn before they actually buy a franchise. Because of our track record we now have the ability to put almost all experienced groundsman and greenkeepers in a position to be able to fund our franchise.

Contact me for a prospectus and further information.

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| ✓ | Your own sellable asset | ✗ | No prospects? |
| ✓ | Extreme earning capacity | ✗ | Cost cuts? |
| ✓ | Be your own boss | ✗ | No pay rise? |
| ✓ | All professionals like you | ✗ | Redundancies? |
| ✓ | Fewer hours for more money | ✗ | No Pension? |
| ✓ | Full Business support | ✗ | Unpaid overtime? |

Please Note

We actively need to talk to you now if you live within an hour of Glasgow, Edinburgh or Aberdeen.

Scotland is becoming a key area for Lawn Master. Everyone wants to know how much money they will earn before they actually buy a franchise. Contact me and I'll send you a prospectus and put you in touch with other turf professionals who have already joined us.

Alternatively you could sit around and wait for your boat to come in one day!
Or you could make the effort to swim out to meet it!



See us at Harrogate Week,
20-22nd January 2009

If you're interested, please contact me on
0845 60 22 054
or email me at bob.underhill@lawnmaster.co.uk
www.lawnmaster.co.uk

A Corporate Member



GREENKEEPER TRAINING

BIGGA is actively involved in raising the standard of Greenkeeper Training. The Association is a member of the Greenkeepers' Training Committee and strives to enhance the level of education through various means, including Section, Regional and National workshops, seminars and conferences.

The range and quality of training now available throughout the UK means there is a training course for every greenkeeper. This should improve the quality of greenkeeping and help to produce better quality golf courses to the benefit of all within the industry.

Golf Course Managers should ensure that their staff are trained to the highest standards. This begins by selecting a training provider that

meets the criteria laid down by the GTC. There is a clear link between education, training and economic success and all clubs should invest in the education of their staff.

Sami Collins

Head of Learning & Development
 British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
Tel: 01347 833800
Email: sami@bigga.co.uk
Website: www.bigga.org.uk

SCOTLAND

ELMWOOD COLLEGE

Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JB

Contact: Sam Letham

Tel: 01334 658842 Fax: 01334 658888

Email: sletham@elmwood.ac.uk

Web: www.elmwood.ac.uk



Information: Full time National Certificate Greenkeeping. Block release: SVQ level II, level III, level IV. Block release and workbased options available. SVQ IV ILM Management, HNC & HND Golf Course Management available as full time and online distance learning. Golf Course Environmental Studies, Construction & Design Management online learning courses. HNC & HND Golf Facility Management. PDA for Football, Cricket Management. SVQ level II & III Landbased Service Engineers and Golf Course Mechanics course. BTLIA Irrigation Management block course various times throughout the year. FEPA and COSHH Health & Safety courses available. Chainsaw, Tree Climbing and Rescue Techniques.

LANGSIDE COLLEGE

Rutherglen Campus,
 Buchanan Drive,
 Rutherglen,
 Glasgow, G73 3PF



Contact: William O'Neil

Tel: 0141 272 3823

Email: woneil@langside.ac.uk

Information: SVQ, SGA, HNC, HND. Full time and part-time courses in Greenkeeping, Groundsmanship, Golf Course Management, Horticulture, Land and Environment and Applied Ecology. Short courses for land-based industries including Pesticides.

GOSTA TRAINING LTD

50 Brook Street, Glasgow, G40 2AB

Contact: Chris Bothwell

Tel: 0141 556 3999 Fax: 0141 556 4999

Email: learn@gostatraining.co.uk



Information: SVQ II, III and IV also Modern Apprenticeship in Sportsturf including other options and GTC Training Manual. Attendance Day release from November - March. Distance Learning also available. Short courses with certification include Pesticides, Chainsaw, First Aid, Risk Assessment, Abrasive Wheels, Full Range of Machinery Courses, Manual Handling and Fire Extinguisher training. Consultancy service for Health and Safety Policy development, Site Risk Audits, Machinery Permit to Use system, COSHH and Noise Assessment.

OATRIDGE COLLEGE

Ecclesmachan, By Broxburn,
 West Lothian, EH52 6NH



Contact: Steve Miller

Tel: 01506 864800 Fax: 01506 853373

Email: info@oatridge.ac.uk

Web: www.oatridge.ac.uk

Information: Full-time National Certificate in Greenkeeping: SVQ Level II and GTC Manual (Day and Block Release) SVQ Level 3 Sports Turf (Day Release) And Fast Track options. Svq Level III in Service engineering, full range of amenity Horticulture, Landscaping and other Landbased subjects at HND And HNC and National Certificate and SVQ Levels: Short Courses NPTC/Lantra Short courses in Spraying, Chainsaw, Turf Maintenance Equipment, ATV etc.

WALES

PENCOED

Pencoed, Bridgend, Cardiff, CF35 5LG

Contact: John Sullivan

Tel: 01656 302671

Email: jrsullivan@bridgend.ac.uk

Web: www.bridgend.ac.uk



Information: Courses offered at Pencoed include N.V.Q. Levels 2 & 3 Sports turf, National and Advanced National Certificates. NPTC and Lantra short courses and certification in a range of land based areas including Pesticide Application; PA1, PA2 and PA6. Tractor driving, hedge laying and dry stonewalling etc.

ENGLAND

ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

Askham Bryan, York, North Yorkshire, YO23 3FR

Contact: Central Admissions

Tel: 01904 772211

Email: enquires@askham-bryan.ac.uk

Web: www.askham-bryan.ac.uk



Information: First Diploma and National Diploma in Horticulture. Foundation & Extended Foundation Degrees in Horticulture, Landscape and Garden Management or Arboriculture. All available full or part-time. Block release courses: NVQ Levels 2 & 3 Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Maintenance. Short courses: FEPA spraying, chainsaw and brushcutter courses.

TRAINING PROVIDERS/
COURSES GUIDE

A full list of GTC approved training providers can be obtained from the GTC.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) are continually reviewing the approved status of training providers offering greenkeeper training courses.

For more information contact the GTC on: 01347 838640 or visit: www.the-gtc.co.uk

Study
online
Degrees in Sportsturf

Myerscough
College

PRESTON • ENGLAND

Myerscough College is one of the UK's leading centres of excellence for the delivery of Higher Education courses in Sportsturf and Turfgrass Science.

Applications are now invited for the following programmes starting in September 2009

Foundation Degree
in Sportsturf

Full-time or online study

BSc (Hons) Turfgrass
Science

Full-time or online study

Join students from across the world, studying in their own time, using our unique web-based online learning network.



Myerscough College's degree programmes are validated by the University of Central Lancashire

For more information contact Course Enquiries on 01995 642211 or visit www.myerscough.ac.uk

BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Hall Place, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 6QR

Contact: Deborah Smirfitt

Tel: Freephone 0800 0711 666

Fax: 01628 824695

Email: enquiries@bca.ac.uk Web: www.bca.ac.uk



Information: Located in the heart of the Thames Valley, BCA has excellent resources for horticultural based training. Programmes include the First Diploma, National Certificate and National Diploma in Horticulture, plus Higher National Certificate and Foundation Degree programmes. Part-time programmes include the NVQ Level 2 and 3 Amenity Horticulture, Sports Turf. A wide transport network is provided as well as residential accommodation on-site.

BRIDGWATER COLLEGE CANNINGTON
CENTRE FOR LAND-BASED STUDIES

Cannington, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2LS

Contact: Will Bowden

Tel: 01278 441234

Fax: 01278 444363

Email: bowdenw@bridgwater.ac.uk

www.bridgwater.ac.uk



Information: NVQ 2 & 3 apprentice scheme, NVQ 2 & 3 programme-led (new 2009) certificate of higher education in Sports Turf Management, BTEC in Golf Studies (new 2009). FEPA training, Chainsaw certification, Greenkeepers Mechanics training.

Note the certificate of higher education and the foundation degree are available as part time options.

DUCHY COLLEGE

Cornwall's College of the Countryside

Duchy College, Stoke Climsland, Callington, Cornwall, PL17 8PB

Duchy College, Rosewarne, Cambourne, Cornwall, TR14 0AB

Contact: Liz Clarkson

Tel: 01579 372345/07785 105087 Email: liz.clarkson@duchy.ac.uk

Contact: Claire Bennetts

Tel 01209 722109/07824 626363 Email: Claire.bennetts@duchy.ac.uk

Website: www.duchy.ac.uk



Information: Duchy College offers NVQ 1, 2 & 3 in Amenity Horticulture (inc Sports Turf), HNC Horticulture, NC and ANC Horticulture, RHS Level 2 and Advanced Certificate, BSc (Hons) Horticulture. We also offer Institute of Leadership and Management courses to Greenkeepers, together with workshops in Business Skills. Short courses in pesticides, plant machinery, vehicles, forestry and arboriculture are also available

ENGLAND

HADLOW COLLEGE

Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 0AL

Contact: Mike Dodd

Tel: 01732 850551

Email: enquiries@hadlow.ac.uk

Website: www.hadlow.ac.uk



Information: NVQs (Levels 2 and 3), Apprenticeships and work-based learning courses available in Greenkeeping, Landscaping and Groundsmanship. We also offer a range of short courses, for example, Health & Safety, COSHH, Chainsaw use, Welding and Pesticide Application. Additionally, full and part-time courses (post GCSE through to degree level) are available in horticulture and a variety of other land-based subjects.

MERRIST WOOD CAMPUS OF GUILDFORD COLLEGE

Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3PE.

Contact: Information, Guidance and Admissions on 01483 884040, email: mwinfo@guildford.ac.uk.

Website: www.guildford.ac.uk.



Information: Part-time courses: NVQ Level 2 Sportsturf college day release and workplace visits/assessments, New Level 2 Sportsturf in conjunction with IOG / NPTC, NVQ Level 3 Sportsturf on-line distance learning, Level 3 National Award college day release for those without qualified workplace assessors, Foundation Degree and BSc (Hons) in Horticulture (Sports Turf), plus various NPTC short courses including Irrigation Certificate Course, Turf Maintenance Equipment and Operation of Mowers throughout the year. Please contact us for up-to-date listings, qualifications and advice. Open evenings are held regularly at the Campus.

MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE

Bilsborrow, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 0RY

Contact: Stewart Brown

Tel: 01995 642305 Web: www.myerscough.ac.uk



Information: Myerscough College is a leading centre for Sportsturf education and training in Europe and has excellent facilities supported by industry. These include a golf course, winter games pitches, an artificial grass pitch, and extensive library, workshop and laboratory resources. Specialist machinery and equipment is used throughout the curriculum to support the development of student learning and understanding of the practical, technical and scientific aspects of their chosen course and career. Courses are available for all levels from Introductory Diploma to an Honours Degree in Turfgrass Science. Courses are available for full-time attendance, part-time or on Online basis. Our FdSc Sportsturf and BSc Turfgrass Science courses are uniquely available ONLINE and have students enrolled throughout the UK, Europe and the American continent. Our Work based Training group offer NVQ's in the workplace from levels 2-4.

OAKLANDS COLLEGE

St Albans Smallford Campus,
Hatfield Road, St Albans,
Hertfordshire, AL4 0JA

Contact: Andrew Wight

Telephone: 01727 737735

Email: andy.wight@oaklands.ac.uk

Web: www.oaklands.ac.uk



Information

Full time courses: National Certificate in Sports Turf Management and Horticulture.
Part Time courses: NVQ L2/3 in Greenkeeping, Lantra work based Apprenticeship.
Short courses: NPTC PA1/2/6 and Chainsaw CS30.1 and CS30.2

PLUMPTON COLLEGE

Ditchling Road, Plumpton,
Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3AE

Contact: David Blackmur

Tel: 01273 890454 Fax: 01273 890071

Email: enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk Web: www.plumpton.ac.uk
Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE).



Information: Foundation degree in Horticulture and Garden Design, National Diploma in Amenity Horticulture, National Award, First Diploma in Horticulture

Part time courses: NVQ Level 1. NVQ Level 2 in Landscaping, Decorative and Sportsturf., NVQ Level 3: Sportsturf. NVQ level 4. Also RHS Certificate and RHS Advanced; IOG National Technical and Intermediate National Diploma. Short courses available: FEPA spraying and chainsaw. Bespoke training following training needs analysis, (TNA).

REASEHEATH COLLEGE

Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DF

Contact: Gareth Phillips or Chard Spicer

Tel: 01270 613236 Fax: 01270 625665

Email: enquiries@reaseheath.ac.uk Web: www.reaseheath.ac.uk



Information: Foundation Degree and Higher National Certificate in Golf and Sports Turf Management; National Diploma in Amenity Horticulture with Sports Turf; NVQ levels 2 & 3 in Sports Turf; Apprenticeships; NPTC Qualifications. NVQ4

On-site facilities include a commercially operating golf course, football and rugby pitches, Crewe Alexandra training grounds

RODBASTEN COLLEGE

Penkridge, Staffordshire, ST19 5 PH

Contact: Keith Ellis

Tel: 01785 712209 Fax: 01785 715701

E-mail: rodenquiries@rodbaston.ac.uk

Website: www.rodbaston.ac.uk



Information: Rodbaston College offers an extensive range of courses, full, part time and day release. Full time programmes include; NPTC Skills for Life, Level One, 1st Diploma, National Award, National Certificate and National Diploma. Higher Education programmes can be studied on a part time basis and include Foundation Degree and the Bsc in Horticulture. Work based learning is available at NVQ 1, NVQ 2 and NVQ 3 and Rodbaston offers very extensive Train2Gain provision. Sports turf and green keeping can be studied to NVQ 2 and NVQ 3 level on a day release basis. The college offers a wide transport network to its learners as well as residential accommodation on site.

WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE

Moreton Morrell Centre,
Warwick CV35 9BL

Contact: Pat Foster

Tel: 01926 318347 Fax: 01926 318300

Email: Pfoster@warkscol.ac.uk



Information: Greenkeeping courses include: Foundation Degree Sports Turf Management (2 yrs full-time, 3 yrs part-time), NVQ Level 2 & 3 day release and work-based options, NPTC level 2 National Certificate Sports & Amenity Turf Management (1 yr full-time, 2 years part-time). A full list of horticulture, landscape design, arboriculture and floristry courses available at all levels. Short Courses include: Chainsaw Operation and Maintenance, Pesticide Application, Fences/Wooden Structures, Landscape Design, Tractor Driving, Hedgelaying and more. Warwickshire College also offer a range of land-based courses, areas include: Animal Welfare, Equine and Agriculture.

BIGGA MEMBERSHIP

Greenkeeping can offer you a career for life and a lifetime of learning



Student Membership of BIGGA (for those studying full-time)

Greenkeeping is a rewarding and challenging career choice for all ages and abilities from school leavers to those considering a career change, let BIGGA help you develop your career as a greenkeeper by becoming a Student Member.

Membership of BIGGA will provide you with: -

Greenkeeper International

The Association's much read magazine packed with up to the minute information and features providing you with valuable research and perhaps even helping you with your assignments. Delivered FREE to you door monthly.

Membership Handbook

Providing you with an extensive guide to the products and services relating to the fine turf industry and the contact details of the major companies supplying those products and services. The Handbook also includes a comprehensive greenkeeper membership section.

Harrogate Week



Entry to a world class trade event. The Trade Exhibition has over 200 exhibitors and 8,500 visitors. There can be no better place to 'Continue to Learn' than taking part in the education programme. Students will find much that will demand their attention including seminars of specific interest. On production of your Student membership card you can attend the seminars FREE of charge. Not to mention the fantastic networking opportunities available throughout the whole of this week, another valuable way of learning...from those already in the industry.

On Course Field Guides

To aid with your study further, Student members are entitled to receive a FREE copy of each of the field guides available in the series. Produced in a handy to use and read format. Thanks to the contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund there are five in the series: -

- Golf Course Grasses;
- Identification and uses of the main grasses found in golf course rough;
- Identification of trees and shrubs on the golf course;
- Identification of damage caused by mammals and birds;
- The major diseases and pests of fine turf.

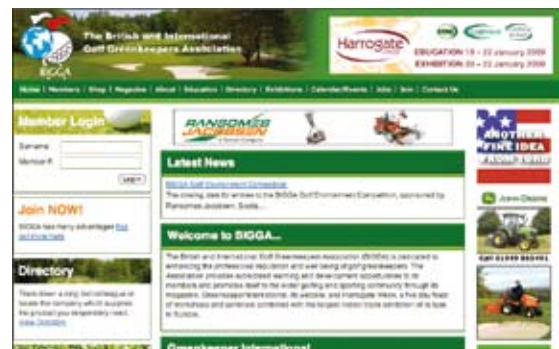
BIGGA Lending Library

Can't find the book you require in your local library or College Resource Centre? Why not check our library listing to see if the BIGGA lending library stocks the title for which you are looking? The lending library is available to all BIGGA members, allowing them to borrow up to two books for up six weeks, the only cost is return postage.

BIGGA Website

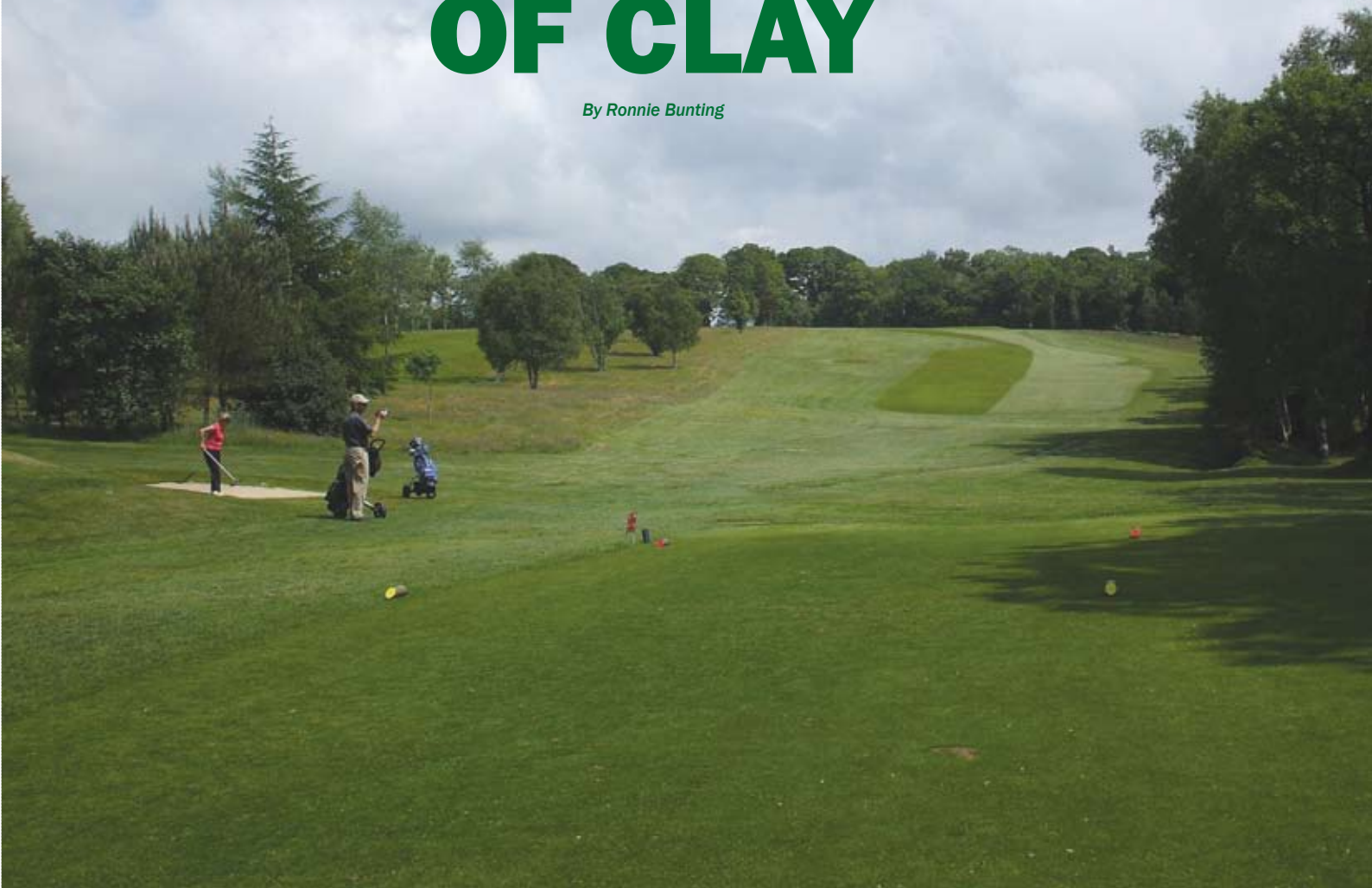
Check out the latest Jobs online by visiting www.bigga.org.uk

Application Form - for an application form either download a form from the BIGGA website at www.bigga.org.uk/join/membership-forms/ or contact the membership team on 01347 833800 option 1 for membership.



THE DELIGHTS OF CLAY

By Ronnie Bunting



At Ballochmyle Golf Club in wettest Ayrshire, I manage a 75-year-old parkland course with the heaviest clay structure imaginable for nearly four years. Field drains of clay horseshoe type tiles installed during the middle of the 19th century, four to five foot deep backfilled with the clay that was dug out to put them in. Trees have been planted with the intention of separating holes but have actually succeeded in blocking almost every drain on the course, I'm sure you get the picture.

Having said that, we have a tight pleasant atmospheric course to enjoy when the golfing Gods are with us.

The definition created by the uncut rough, but sparse enough to allow a ball to bounce therefore, is more easily found but still clearly not where you want to be.

I have endeavoured to define various holes by leaving areas of uncut rough that, when the seed heads and flowers appear, creates a visual hazard, improves the degree of difficulty and doesn't

slow the game down excessively. To achieve this we hire a flail cutter collector and remove large volumes of clippings every September, not an easy task given the shorter daylight hours and constant precipitation keeping all things wet. All the while continuing the necessary course work of regular cutting, aeration, top dressing not to mention holidays, illness etc.

By starving these areas we are thinning the sward of undesirable species, Yorkshire fog and other soft rank grass types, to leave the finer fescues and wild flowers. In doing so we are creating environmental habitat areas that act as wildlife corridors and a sward thin enough for players to see their ball bounce from the wayward shot.

We now have areas that both enhance the scenic values of the course and define clearly where a player doesn't want his ball to be. This makes the entire golf experience much more rewarding or should I say frustrating?

As referred to earlier, the logistics behind this management can be daunting but I have come up with an idea that helps! I want to thin out these

areas even further than I achieve by the starvation theory described earlier. I now fit my Gammibetti 300lt boom sprayer with Hardi Quintastream nozzles (used in agriculture for fertilising) the boom height set at 75cm and the sprayer set to operate at two bar at the nozzle, this pressure is sufficient to stop any drift "most important" as I then add 1.5lt glyosphate (total herbicide) and spray the rough. Needless to say timing should be before the grass reaches the seed head stage, as the seed heads are important for definition and spraying must be done in straight lines.

I spray at right angles to the direction in which the hole is played therefore the discolouration isn't obvious from a distance. It may seem drastic to some who don't appreciate the circumstances but over the last two years the golfers and I are very pleased with the results.

It also means we improve the drying potential letting air into the base of the plant (very important when it comes to cutting) and reducing the quantity of the grass removed lessening traffic damage when cutting and golfers don't get quite as wet when searching for their ball.



BY GEORGE!

The latest recipient of the BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award is Turnberry's George Brown. Scott MacCallum visited him to talk about his life and times.

George Brown was born into the golf business. His dad was Caddie Master at Prince's Golf Club, in Sandwich, his mum was a Cook in the Club kitchen, while young George was a Caddie Boy before he started as a greenkeeper as soon as he'd finished school.

You certainly wouldn't need too much time staring at tea leaves to determine that the game would play a significant role in his life. However, the extent to which George would make an impact on the game itself would have been less easy to predict.

He has gone from caddying for the great and the good to playing with Champions, Presidents and Princes and is known and respected throughout the world of golf as the face of Turnberry. Indeed, when he retires, after this year's Championship, at the age of 71, he is being retained by the new owners, Leisurecorp, as an Ambassador/Consultant for the Resort.

Sitting in the magnificent Turnberry Clubhouse we reflected on a life that has seen George, Golf Courses and Estates Manager, steer the iconic world-renowned Resort through the last two and a half decades and four different owners. It is a measure of his achievement that the Ailsa Course, venue for this July's Open Championship, is currently ranked best in the country by two leading golf magazines.

He also found the time to commit to the BIGGA National Chairmanship in 2003, one of the most traumatic and difficult years in the Association's history.

George is the latest recipient of the BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award following Sir Michael Bonallack OBE; Walter Woods BEM and Jack McMillan MBE onto the Roll of Honour.

"I'm not often lost for words but when John Pemberton gave me the news I was genuinely gobsmacked. I just feel most humble to get it. In many ways I'm not sure I deserve it as there are many other guys I know who have done so much more for BIGGA than I have and who have gone unrecognised," said George

"I've just been so fortunate in my career really going back over 50 years not just in greenkeeping, but in golf in general."

Having started as a caddie at the age of 13 or 14 – he carried for Douglas Bader and Viscountess



Lady Astor, the first lady MP, among others – he moved on to the greens crew.

"There were times in the long hot summers at Princes, pushing that mower up and down with no engine, that I thought there must be something better than this," said George, who also recalls being extremely fit, and thin, at the time.

One thing he did feel extremely fortunate about was his own golf.

"I lived right in the middle of three famous Kent

golf courses – Princes, St George's and Cinque Ports – and I was in the Artisans' Section of them all. It was 10 shillings for each, per annum, so for £1.50 in today's money I had the choice of three Open Championship venues and could play every night of the week."

Becoming a professional was an option and it was a losing bet that saw George move to become a pro/greenkeeper at his next club.

"In the early 60s I played with Mike Ingham,



a Button Boy and one of the longest hitters in the country, several nights a week and there was not a lot in the results. He said I was wasting my time in greenkeeping and that I should try and get a job as a professional. He bet me half a crown that I could and I bet him the same amount that I couldn't. The first job that came up was for pro/greenkeeper at a nine hole course in Alton, Hampshire. I went for the job, got it so lost the bet."

Ironically it was the lack of playing opportunities that decided George to move on from Alton.

"They were good times and a nice part of the world to work. They didn't have a push mower. At Alton it was an Atco - with an engine - so I was going up in the world, but all my pals were playing golf at the weekends while I was working in the shop and I didn't like that."

His next move, in the early 70s was back to Kent to work on a private estate for a wealthy family before returning to Princes, this time as the boss, and it coincided with the arrival of the triplex.

"We didn't have many staff at the beginning - just four including my young brother-in-law, Chris Latham, who is now at Broome Park Golf & Country Club, and Chris Allen, who is now in Sussex - but I well remember getting up at 3.30 on some Sunday mornings, cutting all 18 greens

with the triplex, then rushing off to the next county to be on the tee for 9.30 to play 36 holes for Kent before driving home again."

He left Princes in 1979 to go to Broome Park Golf & Country Club as Director of Golf.

"It was a Donald Steel designed course with squash and tennis courts, a swimming pool and time share development and was one of the most upmarket golf and country clubs in the country at the time.

"I carried out the role of the Secretary, booking in the golf societies and running the golf tournaments. It was my first management job and a real challenge. I've worked under some excellent General Managers and Marketing Departments and learned an awful lot," he said.

However, it was when he became responsible for the bars and restaurants as well that it started to get too much and he was delighted when he got a call asking if he'd like to take up the challenge of getting Turnberry ready for the 1986 Open. The previous Course Manager, Russell Brown, who, coincidentally, had followed George as Course Manager at Princes, sadly died in November 1985.

"I don't know really why I was in the frame for the job, although most of my experience had been on links courses, but the call came at the right time as I was ready for a move," he said, although knowledge of his soon-to-be new home was fairly scant.

"I knew very little about Turnberry. To be honest I had to get out the map to pin it down.

When he arrived the hotel was about to be closed for refurbishment - much as it is at the moment - and George was the only resident.

"I can remember looking out over the golf courses, the lighthouse and the Clyde and thinking 'This will do me'."

And do him it has.

With a current staff of 32 including mechanics, admin staff and gardeners it has moved on from '86 when with The Open looming he had one experienced man on the team, his Assistant, a very young Derek Wilson, who is now Course Manager at Bogside, the rest of the team comprised of mainly YTS guys.

"It was a fantastic Open. The boys all rallied round and worked very hard and between us we put on a good show," recalled George, who still has many of those guys on his current crew.

The '86 Open will be remembered for Greg Norman's win, and a stunning 63 in the second round, and it produced a superb leaderboard with Woosnam, Langer, Faldo, Ballesteros and Zoeller all finishing in the top 10. Norman's 63 included a makeable putt miss on the 17th and three putts on the last.

"One of the finest rounds of golf I've ever seen under the conditions," said George, who recalls poor weather, narrow fairways and tough rough.

He also remembers one particular newspaper featuring Seve praising the course to the hilt on the Tuesday and then proclaiming it impossible and a joke two days later, in the same paper.

His second Open in '94, won by Nick Price, he remembers how that during the week before

the course was beginning to burn up but that he resisted watering. They then had 50 mil of rain over the next four days and he read in the papers that Turnberry had a new irrigation system and that the course was too green as a result!

"People talk about sustainability, education and training but when it comes to actual playing conditions it's the man upstairs who has the last word."

During his time at Turnberry George has played with a host of luminaries and such is his easy manner he has been an ideal partner for anyone from Prince Andrew and President Bill Clinton to young assistants at Section events. He has also played with Champions such as Gary Player, Bobby Locke, Max Falconer and Sandy Lyle.

George was BIGGA National Chairman in 2003, the year in which BIGGA's first Executive Director, Neil Thomas, was to be struck down with a brain tumour which was to cost him his life in early 2004.

"It was a difficult year for everyone with Neil's illness - his family, the BIGGA staff and myself. I was with Neil in America and Canada, he always organised everything down to the last 'T,'" said George.

"One of the things I'm proud of is that I was instrumental in the appointment of John (Pemberton) and we've got a lot to thank John, and the Board, for in steering us through these difficult times which are likely only to get more difficult."

George has some thoughts on those members who see the Chairman's role as elitist and just a jolly.

"I certainly didn't need the Chairmanship for my CV. It is very time consuming and a huge responsibility. Some of those who criticise the role should give it a shot because it's easy to an armchair critic," said George, who does advise anyone who undertakes committee or voluntary work to remember that their day job should always come first.

"My work has always been my priority and people who forget that have often lost their jobs. I've been very fortunate that I had the full support of my General Manager, Stewart Selbie, and also from my three Head Greenkeepers, Martin Lothian, Jimmy Johnstone and Tom Cuthill - not forgetting Jim Campbell, our mechanic, and, the one who keeps everyone and everything in order, Jackie McDowall, our Secretary."

The fact that he loves his work so much has made it such a pleasure for him.

"As a young man I was keen on fishing and hunting so I could have been just as happy being a Gillie or a Gamekeeper. I've combined a hobby with my living. How lucky can you get."

In the run up to the 2009 Open, George is working alongside his recently appointed successor, Euan Grant, who will shadow George until after The Open when he will take over permanently.

"My one wish for the year is that our new owners, Leisurecorp, and all the staff at Turnberry, have a fantastic and successful Open and that we all get the results we are looking for."

After over 50 years in the business George does not deserve anything less.

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syngenta.



David Golding (centre) with Steve Prinn from Askham Bryan College (left) and Danny Burrows, Course Manager at Flaxby Golf Club



FRENCH STUDENTS



HELP WITH ENGLISH DIPLOMA

As from September 2009, 14-19 year olds, in England and Wales, have had the opportunity to complete a recognised work-based Environmental and Land-based Diploma qualification.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee's Education Director, David Golding, has been involved in discussions with the Lantra Sector Skills Council to ensure the Sports Turf sector is represented at Diploma development meetings and has clearly identified the new option for youngsters as a pathway for a longer-term ambition to join the greenkeeping profession.

Within the greenkeeping industry we have long been used to staff completing work-based qualifications such as the NVQ and the established Sports Turf Apprenticeship. Dependant on the Approved Training Provider, delivery of the vocational qualifications and apprenticeship can vary from part-time learning off the job, whereby trainee greenkeepers attend college for block placements of academic-based learning, or 100% on the job

learning but the key to the Diploma, vocational qualifications including the apprenticeship is the on-the-job work experience. However, as an industry, it is essential that we are not only prepared for how this will affect the future of greenkeeping, but also embrace it as an exciting opportunity which will benefit the trainee, existing greenkeeping staff and the golf club as a whole.

An excellent example of how an employer in partnership with a GTC Approved Training Provider can benefit all concerned came to light when David Golding discussed the new Diploma with Danny Burrows, Course Manager at Flaxby Park Golf Club in North Yorkshire.

Danny now takes up the story:

"At Flaxby Park Golf Club we have had many work experience students since we opened in 2004, usually for two weeks from local schools. Some students leave knowing that greenkeeping is not for them, while others have left thinking that a career in greenkeeping may be something worth considering. The students we have had

have tended to fall into two categories: either both enthusiastic and hardworking, or have made no secret of the fact that they would rather be at home on the Playstation!

"Over the past month Flaxby Park Golf Club has had two French horticulture students, David Coudray and Sebastian Shvent, for work experience. When I was approached by their tutors at Askham Bryan College, over the phone, I was concerned about the practicalities of this arrangement: could they speak English? Where would they stay? How would they get to work? How much do we pay them? And, most importantly, would they be any good? However, a meeting with their tutor from Askham Bryan and a tutor from their French college quickly set my mind at rest. Yes, at least one would have a good basic knowledge of English; they would stay at the college and be transported via minibus each morning even starting at 6:30am. The only thing to concern me was what sort of workers they would be, no one knew, as no one ever does when they have

a work experience student or a new worker starting. One of the biggest advantages was that we didn't have to pay them, so were getting their skills for nothing.

"On their first day, I welcomed them and introduced them to the other staff. With my poor knowledge of French and Sebastian's basic English, undertaking the Health and Safety induction, fire safety and risk assessments were somewhat of a challenge and involved a lot of pointing and actions! Coming from a horticultural background their interest and eagerness was clear from the outset, regardless of the language barrier, and they were keen to get actively involved in all aspects of practical greenkeeping.

"Because David and Sebastian were only with us for a month, their greenkeeping tasks were limited to those of general maintenance such as switching greens, raking bunkers, changing holes but all training was based on the standards within the GTC's training manual.

"Bearing in mind that it takes at least a couple of weeks for experienced greenkeepers to confidently navigate around a 27-hole golf course, David and Sebastian's work ethic during the month was great and they quickly made friends with other greenkeeping staff. Their eagerness to learn had a motivating effect upon existing members of staff, and provided them with an opportunity to brush up on their own knowledge. David and Sebastian's help was especially invaluable with the new 9-hole Temple Course opening to members during their work experience.



French students with Danny Burrows (right) on the course at Flaxby Golf Course

"Also at Flaxby we have Matt, from King James High School in Knarborough, doing extended work experience every Tuesday until further notice. With Matt only being there for the past month so far his help has been much appreciated and he seems to be enjoying the work based learning scheme.

"I believe all employers have a responsibility to get fully behind the new diploma and encourage students to see if greenkeeping is a career that they want to pursue in the future. It will not only benefit the student but also the golf courses they

are working on, as most managers know you can never have enough staff."

David Golding adds, "following on from my discussions with Danny we are now looking at developing an employers guide to taking on a 14-19 year old as a work placement."

The GTC will be ensuring through Mr Jon Allbutt, our Health & Safety advisor, that all aspects of safety are covered in the booklet and we welcome any input from other employers or Course Managers who have examples or experience of work placements.

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Harrogate Week has a new event for 2009

Non-members
welcome

...The Social Night

at the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

FREE Casino

FREE Games

Chips provided by BIGGA
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Ski Machine
Pool table
Space Invaders

Bucking Rudolph
Pinball machines
Twin Driver Sega Rally

Saloon Bar ShootOut
Pacman
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All for £25
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The Social Night
Tuesday 20th January 2009
(7pm until 10.30pm)

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BIGGA on 01347 833800

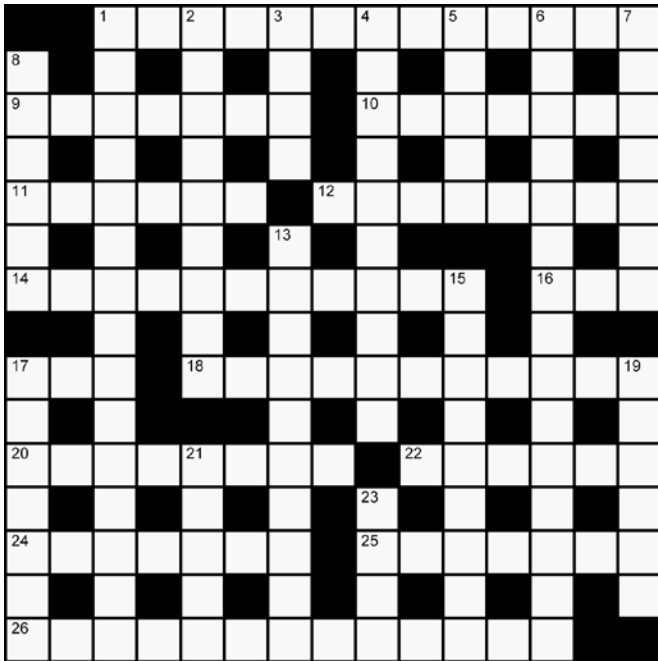
Harrogate
week



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 Team beaten by Bolton Wanderers in the first FA Cup Final to be held at Wembley (4,3,6)
- 9 Word used to introduce a second negative statement (7)
- 10 City of North Island (NZ) famed for geothermal activity (7)
- 11 Building where birds are kept (6)
- 12 Italian region whose capital is Turin (8)
- 14 Disputed ability gained through Transcendental Meditation (5,6)
- 16 Band whose Lexicon of Love album (1982) yielded several hits (3)
- 17 Twosome (3)
- 18 Study of words and word usage, also called philology (11)
- 20 Assortment of different things (5,3)
- 22 Person who is extremely poor (6)
- 24 Colloquial term (mainly US) for prison (7)
- 25 Italian wine originally made using only Sangiovese grapes (7)
- 26 Scottish virtuoso percussionist born 1965, made Dame of the British Empire in 2007 (6,7)

Down

- 1 1995 romantic film starring Whitney Houston (7,2,6)
- 2 Globular (9)
- 3 Surname of the politician who succeeded Leon Brittan as Home Secretary under Margaret Thatcher (4)
- 4 French island possession featured on all Euro banknotes (10)
- 5 Famous (5)
- 6 (Be able to) rotate using very small area (4,2,1,8)
- 7 Extreme (7)
- 8 State of extreme dishonour, opprobrium (6)
- 13 Informal version of the UK's longest place-name (8,2)
- 15 Period during which an embryo develops (9)
- 17 Landed property (often rural) retained by the owner for personal use (7)
- 19 Sleazy (6)
- 21 Figure representing human form (5)
- 23 Line from which darts are thrown (4)

QUICK NINE-HOLE QUIZ

1. In golf what is the name given to the grassed area between the tee and the green?
2. In which game would you find cover point, silly mid off and square leg?
3. Who at the 1984 Olympics, won the 100m, 200m, the sprint relay and the Long Jump?
4. Which sport featured in many of the Beach Boys earliest hits?
5. Which sport uses asymmetrical bars, rings and a pommel horse?
6. Who won Wimbledon every year from 1976 to 1980?
7. Which Grand Prix team's world champions have included Emerson Fittipaldi, Niki Lauda and Alain Prost?
8. What is the name of the method of training a horse to carry out a set routine of movements?
9. Which sport was originally called Mintonette?

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.

4					8	C		5	2	9		
A						5						
7		1			3			2	6	4		
		6				2	A	8	1			
9	7	2	A					5	3			
C	5		1		6	3		9				
					9		6	3	2	B	5	
					6	8			A	3	C	9
					9	A	B	4		7		
	2		8	4				B		5		1
						7						2
	4	3	B			9	1					C

SUDOKU

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

							2	1
		3			7		9	8
	2		4		8			
6					4		5	9
		5				8		
4	7		3					2
			5		1		8	
7	5		8			6		
3	1							

IN THE SHED ANSWERS
can be found on page 54



IN THE SHED



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VOLUNTEERS WANTED...



FEATURE

...FOR BIGGA SUPPORT TEAM

The Open Championship, Turnberry GC, July 16-19

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

It will be your responsibility to make your way to the team's base for the week - Auchincruive College (Scottish Agricultural College AYR) - but after that transport to and from the golf course, shared accommodation and meals will be provided for the duration of the Championship.

You will be expected to report for duty by 5pm on Wednesday, July 15,

and be available until the close of play on Sunday - a meal and bed and breakfast will be supplied for the Sunday evening and Monday morning if required.

This opportunity is open to full BIGGA members only. Younger members, relatively new to the Association, will also be actively considered.

To apply complete this application form and send to: Scott MacCallum, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO61 1UF. For further information contact Scott on: 01347 833800 or email: scott@bigga.co.uk

Closing Date for applications for The Open Team February 1, 2009, and you will be notified later in the month.

Name..... Age		Yes	No
Golf Club.....			
BIGGA Membership No.			
Position			
Email Address			
I have applied for/appeared on the team at:			
	Applied	Successful	
Royal Birkdale 2008	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Carnoustie 2007	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hoylake, 2006	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
St Andrews, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Royal Troon, 2004	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I have been a BIGGA member for more than three years.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I serve, or have served in the last three years, on a Section/Region Committee		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am enrolled on BIGGA's CPD Scheme.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have attended three of the last five Harrogate Weeks.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am/have been a member of the PGA Championship Support Team		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to be a mini bus driver (You must have held a full driving license for three years and be over 25 years of age.).....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am an overseas Member		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

New Products



NEW PRODUCTS



NEW COMPACT TRACTOR

Ransomes Jacobsen has introduced a new compact tractor, the Iseki TH4335, powered by a 32 PS, three-cylinder, liquid cooled diesel engine operating at 2600rpm, which results in reduced noise levels.

Like all Iseki diesel engines, the power plant has been designed to provide high performance at low cost. Maximum speed is 30 km/h and it has a 35-litre fuel tank, 16 percent larger than the TH4260 that it replaces.

www.textron.com



THREE-WAY ACTION ON TURF DISEASE

Syngenta has launched an exciting new fungicide for high-performance turf disease control. Instrata contains the exceptional long-lasting residual control of fludioxonil - the first new contact active ingredient for turf diseases control for over 20 years, they claim.

Additionally, the complementary three-way mix of new fludioxonil with the proven propiconazole and chlorothalonil targets disease at every stage of the life-cycle and gives both contact and systemic activity in the plant.

www.syngenta.com



WASHPAD WATER RECYCLING SYSTEMS

As anti-pollution regulations tighten and environmental inspections increase, washpad water recycling remains high on the agenda and Course Care aims to stay in front with their ClearWater washpad water recycling systems.

Harrogate Week sees the launch of their latest system, ClearWater II and joint MD, David Mears said: "We are excited about the new system and are determined to keep ClearWater competitive. There have been a number of upgrades and we have an increased capacity model. ClearWater remains keenly priced, simple to operate and, we believe, the most economical to run and maintain."

01535 611103
www.course-care.co.uk



GREENLINE CLEANS UP

Lloyds & Co Letchworth Ltd supply the multi-purpose Greenline Combi-Trailer.

This versatile machine can be used for a variety of tasks, from the maintenance of grass areas including cutting and scarifying, to the collection of grass, leaves and wood chippings taking advantage of the high tipping and various size high capacity trailer available, thus saving the necessity and expense of having a dedicated machines for each task, while also giving year round usability.

01462-683031.

NEW ROLLER SUSPENSION

Bobcat has developed a new all-steel Roller Suspension Undercarriage as an option for the T190, T250, T300 and T320 compact tracked loader models. The roller suspension system offers a number of important advantages, including improved ride quality for the operator, improved performance and productivity, better durability for a longer service life, and ease of maintenance. The roller suspension system complements the enhanced standard solid mounted undercarriage, which replaces the undercarriage system previously used on Bobcat compact tracked loaders.

www.bobcat.com

NATURAL NEMATOCIDE

Forging the way for further approvals across Europe, Eagle Green Care, a natural nematocide based on garlic extract, has been approved for use on sports and amenity turf for the control of nematodes in the Republic of Ireland.

Eagle Green Care reduces nematode populations and the damage caused by root knot nematodes and other free-living species in pitches and sports grounds.

www.ecospray.com



NEW ADDITION

Charterhouse Turf Machinery has extended its iconic Verti-Drain range by adding the new 7621 to the line-up.

Designed for contractors, who find that the demand for the Verti-Drain produces a massive workload, or for golf course managers looking to tackle hard compacted fairways, the Verti-Drain 7621 has a working width of 2.1m and weighs in at 1650kg.

www.charterhouseturfmachinery.co.uk

PERFECT 10

Barenbrug will be showcasing its 'Perfect 10' at Harrogate Week 2009 – 10 brand new cultivars that star in the specialist grass seed breeder's 2009 BAR range.

Highlights include four outstanding new fescues for fine and medium-fine turf – Viktorka and Bargreen II, both of which boast unrivalled shoot density and disease tolerance, as well as drought and salt tolerant Hardtop and rapid-establishing Barmalia.

Two mixtures also join the line-up – BAR Sprint for racecourses and, for turf producers, a fast-establishing *Poa annua*-beating mixture, BAR OC.

01359 272000
www.barenbrug.co.uk

DO YOU SUFFER FROM GOLFER'S ELBOW?

Ultralieve claims to be the first therapeutic ultrasound home use device and is the most effective way to combat golfer's elbow muscle spasms, aches and pains and any other inflammatory conditions.

This brand new hand held gadget is a breakthrough in personal injury treatment and pain management allowing Golfers to administer it themselves in the comfort of their own homes with the easy to use handheld device which is registered as a UK medical device.

The device gives you a high frequency massage that penetrates deep below the skins surface to assist in the healing process by increasing blood circulation and reducing inflammation.

www.ultralieve.com

GREEN FUN!

Better Energy Systems has introduced the Solio Hybrid 1000, an energy efficient device that has the power to charge most of your mobile devices without relying on conventional power sources. By combining a high efficiency solar panel with a large capacity integrated Lithium-Ion battery, the Solio Hybrid 1000 has the ability to keep any hand-held electronic device charged even when you are out on the green.

Housed in a rugged waterproof case conveniently geared with a built in carabiner, the Solio Hybrid 1000 can be attached to anything, including your golf bag, buggy or caddie.

www.store.solio.com



THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

JCB Service has strengthened its commitment to the environment with the launch of "Bag in Box" Lubricants – a revolutionary new packaging system for its own brand oils – which is 84% more environmentally friendly and delivers a series of cost and performance benefits to its customers.

Available globally for engine, hydraulic and transmission lubricants, the new system will be extremely attractive to those plant operators with strict environmental policies and stringent recycling targets to meet including large contractors, utilities firms, local authorities and those specialising in waste management.

www.jcb.com



NEW SERIES TRACTORS

Replacing the previous 5020 Series models, the new 5R and 5RN Series utility tractors from John Deere include 80hp 5080R, the 90hp 5090R and the 100hp 5100R. In addition to these standard models, narrow (RN) versions have a maximum overall width of 1.86m and are particularly designed for horticultural use, working in row widths greater than 2.50m.

01949 860491
www.johndeere.co.uk



GOLF: 50 GREAT TIPS

Golf has become one of the world's most popular sports with over two million regular golfers in the UK alone. Whether you're already a keen golfer enthusiast or a newcomer to the sport, Golf: 50 Great Tips is sure to help you improve your game.

With step-by-step instructions and how-to illustrations, this pocket-sized guide reveals the secrets of the world's top golf pros.

Golf: 50 Great Tips is available from all good shops.

SATELLITE ALERTING DEVICE

TRAAKIT is a revolutionary new satellite-alerting device that gives you peace of mind by keeping watch over almost anything you want and alerting you if it is moved.

www.traakit.co.uk

More New Products

... in the next issue of
Greenkeeper International

IS MY DIESEL SAFE?

By David Mears

We all store fuel, be it in tanks, barrels or jerry cans, but are we sure we have taken necessary steps to make our storage as secure as possible? It does not matter which fuel it is, even red diesel has become an attractive proposition for thieves lately. Many people have either experienced fuel theft or know someone who has suffered.

As HM Revenue & Customs are actively ensuring rebated fuel (red diesel) is not used illegally, storage of white diesel is growing along with the need for improved security. So what steps can be taken and what security measures are available?

Tanks outside buildings are the most vulnerable of course and the old single skin ones standing on blocks with a gravity hose (hopefully you still don't have one!) are the easiest to attack. One swipe with a heavy object usually breaks off the tank valve and allows the contents to flow out freely! This makes the thieves' job very easy but also causes pollution for which you will be liable!

Building a "bund wall" round such an installation often is ineffective as the pressure from a full tank would usually send the contents straight ahead and over such a wall with no valve in place! I personally know of two incidents at golf clubs where this has happened. Remember tanks should be top fill – top offtake and compliance with the Oil Storage Regulations is necessary.

A top offtake means the use of an electric pump, usually, and it is possible to have the controlling switch for this mounted inside a locked building.

A purpose designed bunded tank or better still, a fuel station are the preferred options. You may say that determined thieves will usually succeed but they prefer the easy pickings first!

Most popular at present are diesel fuel stations. These bunded plastic bodied tanks usually feature a compact design and the vertical models take up very little space. Depending on manufacturer, they can include many features such as electronic contents gauges, bund alarms, interior lights, fuel filters, flow meters etc. Most have lockable cabinet doors. Recently, one manufacturer, Harlequin, announced extra security features were to be



The latest Harlequin 2500 fuel station with enhanced locking

fitted as standard to all models; the provision of a 2" oil and corrosion resistant alloy lockable oil tank fill point assembly and a 4" lockable oil tank inspection cap in oil resistant polymer. These features in addition to the lockable access door make these models some of the most secure plastic refuelling tanks on the market. It is encouraging to see that Harlequin has also made these two items available as relatively inexpensive retro-fit kits for existing fuel station customers.

If theft and/or vandalism is really a major concern, then the only remaining answer is to go for the high security of bunded steel derv packs. These extremely robust double-skinned tanks are constructed to keep your fuel as safe as possible. The best models feature steel roller shutter covered access and two locking bolts with keys (placed either side of roller shutter). Often extra features can be included, so it's best to check specifications.

About the Author

David Mears is Joint Managing Director of Highspeed - Course Care, a national supplier of plastic and steel tanks. Servicing and maintenance is available from their OFTEC trained and registered engineers. See www.course-care.co.uk for more details and links to further information.



If your tank is like this one then you need to place it!



High security from a Highspeed Derv Pack with roller shutter door

What's your Number?

Name: Simon Taylor
Company: British Seed Houses
Position: Amenity Director



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

How did you get into it?

"I come from a farming background. I spent three years at Harper Adams Agricultural College, where I qualified with a HND. After a spell with a haulage company I wanted to get back into agriculture and saw a job advertised for a Cereal Grain Trader for British Seed Houses. I got turned down in the interview, but later was contacted saying a job had come up on the agricultural grass side. Within 12 months, I was selling on the amenity side. I became a Director in 1999."

What do you like about your current job?

"It's quite varied. It's very much a hands-on position. You can be dealing with clients from all ends of the spectrum, while looking

after the commercial end in terms of budget and finance. One area that interests me is marketing and PR – what I call, the sharp end of the market. At the other end, bringing new material to the market is also very interesting, although somewhat frustrating at times as it is such a long process."

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

"The biggest change has been in the number of major seed wholesalers. There used to be around 20 and now there's only four. Also the improvement in cultivar has been tremendous which has helped turf managers improve the quality of their playing surface, but equally skills of the turf industry have come on leaps and bounds. We all expect higher standards these days."

What do you like to do in your spare time?

"I am a keen road cyclist and race occasionally. I also do the odd marathon - I ran the Loch Ness Marathon in October in 3hrs 22mins, which I thought wasn't too bad for an old duffer like me. I also have two teenage boys who are pretty mad on sport so between

me and my wife, we spend a fair bit of time being a taxi service."

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

"Sitting in a nice climate with a good bottle of wine, but probably not in reality. I've been with British Seed Houses a long time and I want to see the company grow in strength and stature within the industry. I always like a challenge, I've had plenty and am sure will face many more over the next 10 years."

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

"They always say, never mix work and pleasure, and that's true with friends and business, but there are many friendly people in this industry. Everyone in the industry is a friend apart from the odd few who I wouldn't care to name."

Pick a number

"13."

Simon has picked Richard Earl from TurfTrax to take part in next month's feature.



WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?

SITESAFE

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ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

		W	E	S	T	H	A	M	U	N	I	T	E	D	
I	A	P	U					A	O	U	R				
N	E	I	T	H	E	R		R	O	T	O	R	U	A	
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E	V	E	L	Y	N	G	L	E	N	N	I	E			

ANSWERS:

1. Fairway
2. Cricket
3. Carl Lewis
4. Surfing

5. Gymnastics
6. Bjorn Borg
7. McClaren
8. Dressage
9. Volleyball

MONSTER SUDOKO

4	6	B	3	7	8	C	1	5	2	9	A
A	8	9	2	B	6	5	4	C	1	7	3
7	C	1	5	3	A	9	2	6	8	4	B
3	B	6	4	C	2	A	8	1	9	5	7
9	7	2	A	1	4	B	5	3	C	6	8
C	5	8	1	6	3	7	9	B	A	2	4
8	A	C	7	9	1	6	3	2	4	B	5
B	1	4	6	8	5	2	7	A	3	C	9
2	3	5	9	A	B	4	C	8	7	1	6
6	2	7	8	4	C	3	B	9	5	A	1
1	9	A	C	5	7	8	6	4	B	3	2
5	4	3	B	2	9	1	A	7	6	8	C

SQUIGGLY SUDOKO

8	9	4	6	5	3	7	2	1
5	6	3	1	2	7	4	9	8
1	2	7	4	9	8	5	3	6
6	8	1	2	7	4	3	5	9
2	3	5	9	1	6	8	7	4
4	7	9	3	8	5	1	6	2
9	4	6	5	3	1	2	8	7
7	5	2	8	4	9	6	1	3
3	1	8	7	6	2	9	4	5

HUMAN RESOURCES

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REDUNDANCY – WHAT YOUR EMPLOYER SHOULD DO

As the recession continues to bite, it's clear a number of organisations are cutting back on their workforces. It stands to reason that your Golf Club may need to cut costs (and that usually means staff) in order to balance the books. If that's the case there are certain procedures they must follow for any dismissals to be fair.

The first option is for them to seek volunteers. Many businesses are afraid to use this method in case the volunteers are not suitable. There is no obligation on an employer to accept those that come forward. An employer is entitled to state that they reserve the right to refuse volunteers, particularly where it will leave the club with an unbalanced workforce.

Assuming they are making compulsory redundancies, the first thing they require to look at is the pool for selection. From this they require to identify positions for potential redundancy. Thereafter, they need to identify the grounds upon which they will select for redundancy.

Most employers look to carry out a selection matrix with a number of criteria in it, i.e. flexibility, length of service, absence, sickness, performance, transferable skills and disciplinary record. Wherever possible, these criteria must be objective and measurable. For example with flexibility, in order to make it objective, you need to determine how points will be scored. If someone can carry out four tasks, they may score, for example, five points. This can then be reduced where employees score lower if they can only carry out one task.

With length of service, if an employee has one year's service he scores one point, two year's service two points etc. Since age discrimination legislation was introduced, last in first out cannot be used as a sole

selection criteria without risk of it being held as discriminatory.

With sickness absence again, if you have no absences you can score five points, up to three absences four points. Again this can be done on a sliding scale as you consider appropriate. Absences for the care of dependants or other absences protected by law should be excluded. The same can be applied to conduct/disciplinary record.

Finally, in respect of transferable skills, you again need to identify where those skills will be transferred to within the business and therefore how an employee comes to score each of their respective marks.

Having done this, your employer needs to embark on individual consultation with affected employees. This should last for at least one week (preferably longer) during which time the employee can either work or be invited to remain away from the workplace in order to consider their options and take appropriate advice.

During the initial consultation, it should be pointed out to the employee why the redundancies are necessary. Employers should explain why the employee is being proposed for redundancy based on their score. An explanation should be provided as to how their score was arrived at. It is not necessary to share everybody's score with affected employees.

Employees should then be given one week to take advice and to consider their position, make representations or suggest alternatives.

Once the week has been completed, the employee should be brought back in for a second consultation meeting at which the employee must be invited to make any representations they wish. If the employee makes representations these must be considered by the employer.

The final point to bear in mind is that an appeal process must also be followed in the case of redundancy dismissal.



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News from the Chief Executive

It hardly seems five minutes since 31st December, 1999, when we were all anticipating the arrival of the new millennium and the prospect of computers everywhere suffering millennium bug problems on the final stroke of midnight. What happened - nothing, and we all breathed a sigh of relief and looked forward to life in the 21st Century.

Who would have thought though that nine years later the world would be in such a state of economic crisis. Share values around the world have been decimated, financial institutions are going into receivership and retailers are resorting to desperate measures to tempt us to part with what few savings we may have. However for all of us the collapse of the Stock Market is devastating, whether a shareholder or not somewhere in our lifestyle we will all be affected. It all sounds rather gloomy, and I suppose it is, but no matter how badly off you are there will always be someone who would swap places with you. Those of us that enjoy good health, the support of a close family and have good friends should recognise how comparatively well off we are.

I do not however wish to underestimate the consequences of stress at home or at work due to financial or other pressures. As from this month members of the Association will have access to a new benefit in the form of a stress advice and counselling helpline, available all day every day, something that has been recognised as being a vital addition to the existing range of member support services.

The knock-on consequences for golf are only just starting to have an effect and I fear that 2009 will be a year when we really start to feel the recession bite. What, therefore, can members do? I suggest that we all look at how we contribute towards the success of our employer and what we could do to improve our own performance, the performance of the business and perhaps gain that competitive edge. There will inevitably be winners and losers but to some extent we can all influence our own destiny. We can sit back and watch and wait or we can look for new opportunities to do what we do better, taking advantage of training and education along the way.

As Chief Executive of BIGGA one of my roles is to try to help the Board move the Association forward on a secure foundation. An increasingly difficult challenge! The full inclusion of groundsmen as members would help with the building of this base and may present new opportunities, but it is not vital to the ongoing survival of the business. Survive we will but develop we may not, unless we are all prepared to accept change in one form or another.

During 2009, I and key members of the team here at BIGGA HOUSE will be making more effort to attend Region and Section events in order to improve the link between the membership and its Headquarters. Better use will be made of Greenkeeper International and the BIGGA Website as communication tools and a series of surveys and focus group meetings are planned with the ultimate intention of increasing the value of being a member. The services and contacts at Headquarters are not fully appreciated by the membership and I would hope that Members come to identify the Staff as being their first point of contact when they need help, advice or information. It is your Association, so please use it!

I encourage as many of you as possible to get to the Association's event in Harrogate later this month which presents not only the opportunity for education (much of it at no cost to you or your club) but also the chance to catch up with news on products and suppliers as well as providing a rewarding once a year networking opportunity.

I wish all members a healthy and successful 2009 however don't forget that you are part of a professional organisation that wants to help you and the industry go from strength to strength. Be a part of it and not apart from it!



SCOTTISH REGION - AYRSHIRE

Hope you've all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, just a few lines and dates for the diary!

The Section AGM was held at Bogside at the end of October where Derek Wilson agreed to stay on as Secretary, much to everyone's delight! Yours truly has taken up the reins as Chairman from Stephen Higgins, with George Morrison in as Vice-Chairman and Duncan Gray is back on committee!

Tracey Maddison, from HQ, also attended the meeting which added a bit of freshness while subtracting the usual language!

The Patrons' Award Lunch took place at the Terraces Hotel, in Stirling, on December 4, where this year's recipients, Martin Lothian, Turnberry GC, and Marshall Sloss, Beith GC, partook of fine food and drink while also enjoying an excellent speaker, or two, if you include Mr Cruickshanks who was at our table - apart from that the day was great!

Cathkin Braes will host the Scottish National Tournament, on June 11, and the National Championship is to be played at Burnham and Berrow, in Somerset, on October 5 and 6.

George Brown is to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award at Harrogate this month so if any of you can make it down to help him celebrate this special accolade, not many possess, I'm sure you'll have an enjoyable time.

We're looking to get a footie match with the West in March sometime so if anyone is interested in avenging our unlucky defeat a few years ago then give me a bell on: 07939104701 or email me at; denis.t@hotmail.co.uk more news next month, I know, you can hardly wait! Auf Wiedersehen!

Denis Tweddell



NORTH

I am sure you have heard it a hundred times over the past week or so but let me, on behalf of the committee, wish you all a very Happy New Year. How many of you woke up on the 1st with a cloudy head? Who had to go into work on the Thursday morning? Nae Luck!

The AGM finally went ahead in November, at Meldrum House. There were 23 members attending in total, which I don't think was too bad considering it was word of mouth. On the day the golf was of a Stableford format with local bandit, David Stephen, coming in 3rd place with 34 points, 2nd was Alex Cruickshank on 34 points, but with a better inward half and coming in, in 1st place was Paul Marshall, from Cruden Bay, with 36 points. Well done Paul! Thanks go to Kenny Harper and his squad of lads for getting the course in great nick despite the weather. A big thank you from the committee for all those that attended, it really is appreciated.

The final 200 club was drawn at the AGM too. My work colleague, Mikey Fullerton, finally won £30. He came running through into the bothy with his cheque. His eyes nearly popped out of his head. He was so pleased he said, "About time I won something on the 200 Club." He only bought the ticket in March. Some people haven't won in 10 years. Ross Macrae, of Huntly Golf Club, won £30, as did George Patterson, from Lossie Golf Club. The big prize of £100 went to Ian MacLeod, of Tain Golf Club.

It has been decided that next year's outings will be at Portlethen and



Alyth. I am sure there will be a good attendance at these outings and I'm also sure that Neil and Brian will put on a good show for us all. The dates have yet to be confirmed but they will be posted at a later date.

The Patrons' Award Dinner took place on December 4, in Stirling. Our Patrons this year are Dale Robertson and Jim McCormack. Well done guys. They have a trip to Harrogate to look forward to now. To win the Patrons' Award you have to turn up at outings and seminars which are scored as a points system and you've guessed it, the two with the most points win the Patrons' Award.

We also have in our Section, The Scottish Chairman. He is, of course, John Geddes, from McDonald Golf course, in Ellon. Well done John and we hope that everything runs smoothly over the course of your stint as Chairman.

Two of my old mates have become dads again! Firstly, Stephen Brown, Deputy Head of Hawkshill, and his wife, Terri, had another boy, Thomas. Well Done. Is that it now or will you be going for the girl? Also Head Greenkeeper, at Huntly, Ross Macrae and his wife, Nicola, had another boy too; baby, Jonathan, only this was their 7th! Congratulations to both of you and your families!

Kevin Strachan, of Strachan Plant Hire, has asked me to put out the feelers regarding a demonstration of his recycling equipment over three days in March. The 3rd, 4th and 5th to be precise. This will hopefully be taking place at his depot in Echt in Aberdeenshire. I will have more definite details in next month's edition but in the meantime you can contact him on 07801297070 if you need to find out more.

That's it for this month. It does tend to die down over the winter months so any news is much appreciated.

Ben Brookes
07813889374



CENTRAL

Hopefully everyone had a good Christmas and New Year and many of you are now looking forward to Harrogate.

The Section had a committee meeting at Elmwood, on December 3, where a number of items were discussed with regards to staging both educational and social events for members. The committee is willing to try and put on anything the members would like but do require a commitment from people to attend because most things have a cost implication and we cannot afford to run anything at a loss. All we want to do is break even on each event. Many of the courses we are considering are pitched at different levels, from the practical ones such as chainsaw certification, vermin control, A1 assessors qualifications, irrigation repairs and manual handling to more managerial ones for Deputies and Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers such as disciplinary training, writing risk assessments, team building or an environmental workshop, etc.

Some members would just like a social event so we are willing arrange a ten pin bowling evening or a curry night with a guest speaker, whatever is suggested - just contact your committee. For all the latest developments, please visit the website: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk Something we have re-introduced are the two competitions last held a couple of years ago, a photo competition and a funny story competition. There will be a £25 prize in each category to be decided in April and again in October, full details of both, the rules and how to enter are on the website. Many of the trophy winners from last year's golf outings will be contacted by members of the committee and asked to return the trophies to Andy Mellon, at Elmwood, as

soon as possible. This is because many haven't been engraved for a number of years and we would like to get them up to date as they are an important part of the Section's history.

Finally, we intend sending a newsletter out around the end of March, along with the entry form for the spring outing which will be at Scotsraig GC, on April 30. Hopefully, by then we will have a list of events with dates and costs for next autumn and winter.

Gordon Moir



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH WEST

First things first the North West committee would like to wish everyone a very happy new 2009. We hope the weather is a little kinder this year.

In December we were to hold the AGM and Bert Cross Memorial Golf Day but unfortunately the weather beat us and with Wilmslow Golf Club closed the golf was cancelled. The AGM went on and 13 brave souls had a very informative meeting. We came up with a few ideas for 2009 and we are busy working on these plans now. We have also got a few new faces on board and here they are: North West Section committee 2009, Secretary, Chris Sheehan, Chairman, Alan Donlevy, Treasurer, Billy Merritt, Clive Poole, Colin Denny, Adie Holt, Peter McVicar, Nick Gray, Phil Dewhurst, Dave MacAvoy.

I hope that everyone can visit Harrogate Week. There is plenty for everyone this year and the education side is fantastic so please make an effort to attend if you can. I am still finalising the fixtures for this year and as soon as I have them all I will send them out to everyone. You can access any forthcoming fixtures in the member's Section on the BIGGA website: www.bigga.org.uk - under Your Pages.

Chris Sheehan



NORTHERN

Just a quick note to wish you all a very Happy New Year, I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and that Santa brought you everything you asked for!

With the Christmas Golf and AGM on December 11 having to be cancelled due to the weather, the AGM has been rescheduled for Tuesday, January 13 at Cookridge Hall Golf Club, with a 7pm start. Anybody wishing to attend please get in touch as soon as possible.

You will all hopefully by now have received a full fixture list for events and the annual seminar in 2009. If you haven't received yours by the end of January please let me know and I will arrange to send one out.

I hope to see a few of you at Harrogate this month and again, a very happy new year to all.

Adam Speight

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



Around the Green



SHEFFIELD

Welcome everyone. Hopefully you all had a fantastic Christmas and the New Year has started well. I have quite a bit of news this month which is very welcome. So here goes.

Firstly I would like to thank everyone who attended our Christmas golf, I am sure you will all agree that it was a fantastic day. I would like to pass everyone's thanks on to Tim and his staff at Worksop, for once again presenting a wonderful course for us all. Once again there were some quite amazing scores from our members. The results are as follows: 1. Steve Pickering, 40pts; 2. Darren Coup 38pts; Trade, Dave Smith.

Congratulations also to everyone who won a prize. Once again a big thank you goes to Mike Brear and Mark Robinson from Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day and all the other trade members for supporting the Section so well.

The AGM was once again well attended and things ran very smoothly, unfortunately this year we have had two committee members leave. On behalf of the Section I would like to say a big thank you to John Lax and Chris Astle for their commitment to the Section. All other committee members will be carrying on in their roles. Ian Whitehead agreed to fill one of the vacant positions on the committee and I would like to welcome him to his new role and we on the committee look forward to all his fresh new ideas. As a committee we will once again work to ensure that we have a successful year and move the Section forward once again.

Finally, I have a big congratulations and a get well soon. I would like to offer big congratulations to Mick Gillet, from Hallamshire Golf Club, on the birth of his first child. Good luck Mick to you and your family.

A big get well soon goes to Dave Chappell, from Rotherham Golf Club, who has recently had a hip operation. Get well soon Dave, I know your staff at Rotherham are missing you loads.

That is all from me this month, I will speak to you all again in February and hopefully have a lot more news to give to you.

James Stevens Section Secretary



NORTH WALES

Happy New Year! 2009 beckons us in with open arms and with the current financial situation I'm sure it will bring loads of challenges too, although I'm also sure that as resilient as we greenkeepers are, we will ride the coming storm with flying colours.

The Christmas tournament took place at Prestatyn Golf Club and on a suitably seasonal frosty day we played a course that was set out as expected, beautifully, the sun came out and made the day even more exceptional. We need to thank Dave Parry and his team for the amazing course, the catering for the mouth-watering food (some found the turkey so succulent they had a whole leg on their plate!) and we must also thank the other staff at the club and their members for making us feel so welcome.

The results were: 1. Leasowe team, 88pts; 2. Abergele Wanderers, 85pts; 3. Stuart McCall's team, 84pts.

The bus to Harrogate will be running as normal the only difference is we

will be going on Wednesday 21st instead of the normal Tuesday, as always the coach is free for members with a nominal fee for non-members, if you have any inquiries or want to book seats please contact Jeremy Hughes who I'm sure will do his best to sort you out.

We seem a little short of local news again this month so please feel free to contact Either myself or Johnny Evans if you have any local news.

Here's to a happy and prosperous new year to all. All the best until next month.

Pete Maybury
07756001187
or petemayb66@aol.com

Johnny Evans
Johnny.Evans@tesco.net



MIDLAND REGION - MIDLAND

Well what's your New Year's resolution then? Give up the dreaded weed, the demon brew, spend more time with the lovable brats/wife or husband (in most cases). Mine being, after coercion and advise, to compile our notes/newsletter with the same enthusiastic and literal obscurity that (by my own omission) has dwindled with the familiarity of the passing of time. To those who feel my obscurity is foul I suggest a dictionary, to understanding souls. Unfortunately, no room for such this month. Normal service shall be resumed next month. May your god help you?

Our Christmas event was held at the lovely South Staff's Golf Club. I'm sure all were looking forward to playing such a prestigious course in its fullness. Unfortunately due to frost and snow, temps were rightly enforced, it was a miracle that the course was open at all. However it was evident that the course was in superb condition as presented by Course Manager, Mr R.Thomas and his fine team - Our thanks to you gentlemen. The results of the day were: 1. G. Turner & P. McCrainor. 2. R. Hayhurst & M. Chamberlain. 3. P. Mills & J. Parlmer. 4. A. Folds & M. Gilgreast. 5. M. Hughes & M. Gash. 6. H. Middlebrook & S. Harvey. Our thanks to M. Chamberlain, of Tacit, for sponsorship of the main prize table. Nearest the Pin in 2 went to G.Turner and N.L. to D.Fellows - thanks to Sherriff Amenity. Also our thanks to Turners, John and Kev for the halfway house tea, coffee, and sloe gin.

Our greatest of thanks to South Staffs Golf Club for affording us their very gracious hospitality, and also thanks to Peter Baker for his very honest, informative, humorous and personal accounts of his experiences of Ryder Cup and Pro Tour golf.

Our very successful Scotts Doubles tournament was played between S.Harvey/N.Smith and P.Nixon/T.Cheese at the magnificent venue of Wentworth and the former were crowned winners. Well done gentlemen, but surely all are winners. Our thanks to Scotts for sponsoring this fine event. For next year's final we have been fortunate enough, via Scotts, to play the final at the lovely venue of the Oxfordshire Golf Club, our thanks to Scotts for their continued support of this great competition. Don't forget to get your entry in before the spring competition. I shall give you more details of this year's events next month.

Our annual match against the East Midland Section was played at Kedlestone Park Golf Club and the course was in great condition as presented by Course Manager, Dave Leatherland, and his fine team. Yet again the East



Midland Section were the winners, congratulations to them. Our thanks to Tony Cheese/Rigby Taylor for their continued sponsorship of this match.

May I wish all a very Happy New Year, and let's hope for a dryer season this year.

Sean McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Happy New Year everybody. Hopefully Santa brought you everything you wanted this year, in greenkeeping terms that would be a cold, dry, windy Christmas period so there are no worries about disease kicking off during this traditional down time.

So as 2009 dawns we can look back on 2008 and firstly say, "Where did it go!". It doesn't feel like a year since I wrote my first scribbles for these pages.

So what have we learnt from 2008, well we have been hit by the "credit crunch". This means many things to many people however as far as we are all concerned it means golfers becoming more careful with their money, which in some cases can lead to falls in membership numbers and golf club revenue. Societies are lessening in both amounts that are out there and the numbers that play in them, again leading to a fall in golf clubs income. So where does this leave us humble Course Managers trying to maintain our precious golf courses in these turbulent times? Well for all but the very lucky few of us I guess it means a tightening of the belts and finding cheaper more cost effective ways of producing high standard golf courses.

2008 was a good year for growing grass, there was never an excessively hot spell, and warm dry spells were always followed by periods of rain. Never good working conditions, but always a relief when the greens begin to dry out and the hose pipes are dug out the back of the sheds. Winter this year has brought frost in October and three snowfalls before mid December, none of which have been experienced in the last few years. Whatever does Mother Nature have in store for us next?

2008 was a good year for the East of England Section. All golf days were well supported and the Section continues to be a fun and friendly place to be. The fixtures are being finalised at the moment, but any golfers out there that have not joined us before please feel free to do so.

Our final golf day of the year took place on Monday, December 8, at Holme Hall Golf Club, in Scunthorpe. A good turnout enjoyed a golf course well prepared by Jim and his staff, the frost that morning and the rain that joined us on the back nine did nothing to dampen peoples spirits. After everybody had dried off, the catering staff served the first Christmas dinner of the season up to us. After the meal was our traditional Christmas bring and win prize draw. Once again there was the usual selection of wacky, rude, useful and edible gifts in store for the unsuspecting person unwrapping them. Once again, many thanks to Holme Hall Golf Club and to LMS for sponsoring the day.

The results of the golf were as follows: 1. Gary Salisbury, Adi Kitchenson, Russ Latham; 2. Steve Beverly, Graeme MacDonald; 3. Tito Arena, Rob Bemment.

Nearest the pin - Allan Walker (although there is a school of thought that he may have took "placing" a bit too literally and placed his ball nearest the pin and not 30 foot away where it landed!) Longest drive - Dave Coupland.

May I also pass on congratulations and best wishes of all in the Section to Dave Coupland with his golfing career. Everybody knows he made a very

respectable appearance at The Open at Carrnoustie, last year and hopes to follow this with amateur success next year, followed by a trip to the European Tour Qualifying School at the end of next year. All the best, and if you are available for the match vs the trade next year then let Allan know asap.

A quick date for the diary of 2009 is Wednesday, February 18, at Newark Golf Club where our winter seminar will be held. Details are yet to be finalised, however part of the day will include presentations from Barenbrug's Neil Pettican and Jane Leyland on the subject of how grass seed gets from plant form into bags, the processes involved, and methods of breeding different cultivars. Full details will follow.

I will finish with a quick mention of a change at committee level. After 20 years of serving on the Midland Region board, Graeme MacDonald is standing down. On behalf of the committee, many thanks for all the hard work and time you have put in to representing us over the years. Rob Welford has stepped in to join Allan Walker as our voices at regional level.

Looking forward to seeing everybody at Harrogate.
Steve Beverly



BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

Happy New Year! Another year bites the dust, Christmas is over, new resolutions begun, the credit crunch has emptied our pockets and we are all ready to rock and roll for 2009.

I am trying to reflect on the past year and realise that not all have had it given to them on a plate - indeed the crystal ball seems to cast doom and gloom. The economy is always making the headlines and then more rain for those who have already had enough to bring them to breaking point with the possibility of yet more flooding. So I hear you all say - what's the future for us in the Chinese Year of the Ox.

This year is one in which success will escape without a sustained mindful effort. The sort of problems that are encountered in the year of the Ox tend to be home front problems that seem to be never ending. The Ox year needs discipline and it is not the time for unruly behaviour or taking short cuts. In this year success is achieved solely through hard work.

"So, is this going to be a tough year?" I hear you all ask. With the credit crunch always making the news, only the Ox seems to know, but judging by the words of Chinese wisdom I feel we need to tread slowly and see that our courses prosper in an ever changing climate that will be testing enough for us and difficult to navigate in the year ahead. On arriving at Frilford Heath Golf Club for this year's Annual Turkey Trot, any doom and gloom soon disappeared.

Frilford Heath Golf Club is situated near the "dreaming spires" of Oxford and in the heart of the Cotswolds.

The courses are designed in classic golfing country and provide 54 holes of championship golf with heathland characteristics that will test the most accomplished golfer to his limit and frustrate those who can only wish that they were immortal.

As part of Frilford Heath's centenary events, the England v France International Golf Match returned back to the club in May last year. Consequently, victory was assured, France defeated and sent back across the channel without the trophy that has been strongly contested by the two nations biennially.

The delightful old clubhouse provided excellent facilities and a first class restaurant which was managed by Steward and Mandy Wood, who ensured



Around the Green

gastronomic delights were enjoyed by all who attended the day.

Thank you to Frilford Heath Golf Club who in their centenary year provided us with the courtesy of the course and Steve Styles, Executive Director, ensured we all had a great day at the club. Our thanks go to Sid Arrowsmith and all his staff for providing first class playing conditions on the Blue course which challenged the winning teams all the way to the finish line. It is no wonder that at this event we had a record turnout just short of 100 greenkeepers who competed with good spirit to make the day a good one.

Our thanks to the main sponsor of the day – Avoncrop Amenity, and to Barry McCloskey and Darren Homer who presented the prizes to the following winners: 2. Team Two Hopes: Chris Lomas, Philip Ryder, Mark Hancock, Richard Davies. 3. Team The New Crooks: Alec McIndoe, Eric Kinlon, Andy Thrift, Graham Glen. Sean Haymer and Joe Newman won the Turner groundcare putting competition. Various others, too good to mention, won the 9 long drive and near pin prizes that were in abundance on every other hole.

Thank you to all our sponsors throughout 2008. We have had great support from all the trade which has included Sheriff, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, Golf & Turf, Browns, Gem Professional, Headland, Greentech and Banks Amenity. A special mention to Jon Beck and Ian Richardson who served us well at the halfway house with their usual flair and wished us Bon Appetit.

The AGM commenced and the following officers were elected: Sid Arrowsmith, as Chairman for the Section; Adam King, Secretary; Frank Booth, Treasurer; Alec MacIndoe, Education; Jake Japie Snyman, Website. Simon Marsh, Matt Smith and Eric Kinlon were elected as committee members with yours truly as the scribe for another year.

A special thanks to Alistair Higgs, the new Head Greenkeeper for Donnington Valley Golf Club, who throughout 2008 co-ordinated the golf days as Match Secretary. Alistair, as well as Dan Lightfoot, will be standing down this year due to work commitments and the challenges that await. Dan and his wife recently gave birth to their second child. Congratulations and thank you both for your support.

If any member has any news or views they would like to share, or would like more information about the Section and forthcoming events in 2009 you only have to log your cyberspace details and e-mail address with the new Secretary, Adam King, Radley College, who will only be pleased to keep you informed and up to date. Adam can be contacted at ajk@radley.org.uk

See you all at Harrogate Week in a few weeks time and wishing you all a great New Year and hope the Ox keeps any greenkeeping gremlins at bay.

Mark Day
mark.day@tacitgolf.co.uk



MID-ANGLIA

Happy New Year one and all. Hopefully, you have had a peaceful Christmas with no real problems during the busy holiday period. Not much news this month, I'm afraid, so I'll keep it brief.

Golf Meetings 2009 are as follows: Spring – in discussion, Summer – tba, Autumn – October 7 at Mid-Herts Golf Club, Winter – December 7 at John O'Gaunt Golf Club. Thanks to Simon Banks, from Banks Amenity, for sponsoring Golfer of the Year this year. The spring tournament will again be the qualifier for the National Championship. Entry forms must be in at

least one week before the competition is due to be held to allow Richard Saunders to organise the events properly and there will be no exceptions, thank you!

Please also visit the "Your Pages" Section of the BIGGA website as you can find out all the latest information for the Mid-Anglia Section. As venues for golf and training courses etc are arranged, they will be posted on these pages first.

The Section has recently organised several successful training programmes which have been fully subscribed. If you are interested in attending any of the training days please see the BIGGA website ("Your Pages" link) to see what courses are on offer or contact Gerald Bruce by emailing gerald@berkhamstedgc.co.uk.

Congratulations to Dunstable Downs Golf Club's Luke Burman and wife, Becky, on the birth of their first child, Oliver David Burman, on November 25. Both mum and son are doing well.

The Winter Texas Scramble was also held at Dunstable Downs Golf Club and Frank Scullion and his staff had produced the course to an excellent standard. Snow had been forecast and despite it freezing hard in the early part of the night and then heavy rain first thing in the morning, the sky lightened at tee off time and underfoot conditions were very good. Thanks Frank, Gary and the rest of the lads. Also, sincere thanks to Dunstable Downs Golf Club for kindly hosting our event. The food was also excellent and a big thank you to the caterers too.

Barry McCloskey, from Avoncrop, was the generous sponsor of the day and provided an excellent prize table. Winners this year were Nigel Broadwith, Kevin Armstrong, B. Gaynor and M. Stakeman, John O'Gaunt Golf Club, 56.1pts; 2. Trevor Dealey, Dale Housden, K. Housden and A..Henderson, Caddington GC, 56.2 pts. 3. Simon Banks, Mark Ely, Rob Catlin and Phil Gibson from "Trade Bandits & Phil" 56.5pts. Longest drive winner was Dale Housden, again, (somebody check his balls) and Nearest the Pin was Rob "get inside that" Catlin. Golfer of the Year was Myles Wood, from Berkhamsted Golf Club, which was kindly sponsored by Simon Banks, of Banks Amenity. Thanks to everybody for organising, sponsoring and supporting the event, it was most enjoyable yet again.

Finally, the committee are looking into the possibility of having a Section Golf Tee Shirt with our logo embroidered onto it. If there is enough interest then it can be taken to the next stage, please let me or anyone else on the committee know if you would be interested in this idea.

Any news or items of interest are always welcome. Hosts for Golf Meetings would be very much appreciated as well. Look forward to seeing you at Harrogate Week.

Craig Spooner
craig.spooner@limagrain.co.uk



SOUTH EAST REGION - KENT

Happy New Year! Firstly a quick report on our annual Turkey Trot at Birchwood Park.

Thorough preparations prior to the event ensured that the day ran like a well-oiled machine. Some of the attendees, presumably in some form of homage, were equally well oiled later on in the day but nothing could detract from this great occasion and I certainly won't be naming names in this column!

After meeting early to discuss the day's format with the assembled we



all headed down to the first tee in anticipation of a great day on the well-presented course (though I say so myself!). Months of intense preparation saw the course in fine fettle and there was an air of optimism on the tee as our determined group set about their business. The gloom cast by the heavy cloud cover was negated handsomely by the Christmas cheer being dispensed by the ubiquitous Vic Maynard and the Ernest Doe party bus.

Kev was doing his best David Bailey impression on the 1st tee taking photos of each group before the off. These shall all be adorning our webpage by now so have a look. After a couple of holes the threat of rain lifted and we were all able to take advantage of the now ideal conditions. High scores were the order of the day for most but, ultimately, none could come close to matching that of our website guru, Danny Stunt, whose winning score of 48 points off of a 24 handicap was nothing short of daylight robbery! Worryingly, that's two years running that a 48 point total has taken the prize!

Full results as follows: 1. Danny Stunt, Chislehurst; 2. Paul Rudkin, Sundridge Park; 3. Russ Bain, also Chislehurst - They obviously get a lot of time off to practise!).

After a great game an equally great Christmas dinner followed served by Birchwood's finest. Our AGM followed and I would like to thank Peter Todd for joining us at this point to explain the proposed constitutional changes to our Association. The rest of the AGM was whizzed through by Kev with the status quo being preserved for another year. A fun raffle with some very comical, seasonal prizes ensued raising plenty of laughs (see website photos!).

At the end of the night everyone who attended was given a bottle of wine together with next year's fixture card with details of another five events for you to enjoy. Many thanks to everyone who helped make the day a success, Birchwood management for their hospitality, the waitresses, my guys on the course and all our sponsors for providing so much to keep our Section alive and well.

Lastly, I'd just like to wish you all the best for the coming year and hope to see some of you at Harrogate, if not at Walmer & Kingsdown, on March 19.

Best of British as always guys.
Rob Holland
www.kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



ESSEX

What a day! We ended the season as we started at Upminster with rain. The Essex Golf & Country Club hosted the Christmas Progressive Stableford and AGM. The day started with heavy rain, which dampened the course, so much so that at 9.30am half an hour before we were due to face the shotgun start the greens were flooded. But it eased as we left the confines of the clubhouse and rain in the wind was all we had to contend with for the first holes, after that the day turned out quite well with the opportunity to discard the waterproofs and swing the club around a bit better.

The golf was interesting and entertaining due to the format of two scores counting on the first six, three on the second six and all four on the final six - with par for the team being 108.

The AGM was held after the golf and was attended by around 65 members and Guests and our Sponsors. The proceedings were chaired by Don Clark our out-going Chairman who was later returned to the position for another year. Don thanked all of the Committee, our sponsors and Clive Osgood for their support over the past year. He also congratulated all of the

winners of our Section competitions and the Pairs Knockout, plus our teams that represented the Section at National level and the team that played the Surrey and Sussex Sections in the annual three-way battle.

The Treasurer, Tom Smith, announced that we had made a small profit over last year but the end of year audit is early and not a true representation of where we are really at. We still had two Section events to run and our new Seminar - the money for these should really be out of the 2008 accounts. So we do not have as much in the coffers as would appear. He hopes that the 2009 season will attract the same if not more sponsors for our Section, as we would like to run a bigger education seminar in our 2009 season.

Antony Kirwan, our Competition Secretary, stated that we had had a good turn out of members throughout the year but we will try next year to encourage more to both join and play in our matches. Next season we are to play at the following courses. spring: Colne Valley, summer: Burnham-on-Crouch, autumn: Cannons Brook, winter: Stapleford Abbots, Christmas: Orsett. Antony expects the tee off times to be a bit earlier next season due to the late evening finishes and as most of our members have early starts the next day the committee feels that the earlier starts would be better for everyone. We intend to send five members to the National Championship later this year, the format of how we select the players will be decided at our next committee meeting (watch this space).

Clive Osgood outlined the proposed changes to the constitution to be put forward at the National AGM; these he stated were available to read in last month's Greenkeeper International. He thanked the committee for their hard work over the past year.

All members were last year elected for a two year term so after Don Clark was returned as Chairman for a further year and there was no any other business the meeting was closed and dinner was served.

There were after dinner speeches and thanks to the Essex Golf and Country Club for entertaining us for the day, Chairman Don thanked the club, Food & Beverage Manager, Chris Hill, and Chef, Kelly Smith, for a fine meal, and for looking after us so well. Seniors' Captain, Ray Mabbut, replied for the club, he was joined by his Vice Captain, Roger Farson - they both accompanied Course Manager, Martin Forrester, in his team on there own course, having dined with them I know that they enjoyed the day and Ray spoke very well of his adventures in I think to him a new format of play.

After the speeches Ray presented the prizes to the winners. Spring Trophy at Upminster - Richard Linin, Summer Trophy at Warley Park - Antony Kirwan, Autumn Trophy at Three Rivers - Sam Anderson, Winter Trophy at Bentley - Andy Cracknell, and the Matchplay Knockout - Mark Stopps/Mark Keysell. Trade Golfer of the Year went to Mark Keysell (Rigby Taylor) and Golfer of the Year - Antony Kirwan.

There then followed the presentation of the Christmas winners: 1. Bentley - Mark Stopps, Neil Peachey, Dennis Johnson, Alan Levett; 2. Channels - Richard Dunmow, Malcolm Smith, Kyle Smith, Nick Tutton; 3. Orsett 2nd Team - Jeff Taylor, Stuart Rodger, Michael Hockley, Richard Herring.

The Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin were both won by Daniel Hughes, Forrester Park.

Thank you again to The Essex for a nice day.

Next season I'm hoping to have a new look website for you, so watch out for that.

Please contact me at essexbigga@talktalk.net
or call me on 01206 852353/07764862337

www.essexbigga.co.uk

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



Around the Green



SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION - SOUTH WEST

Happy New Year to everyone. I hope that the new "email invite" system worked for everyone last year, and you all got an invite to the Christmas Tournament okay. Please can anyone who didn't get an invite let me know so I can add your name to the lists. Similarly, if you change Providers or Addresses - again, please let me, and Justine at HQ, both know.

Might I suggest a New Year's Resolution for us all - visit another club nearby to you, where the greenkeepers may not be active members, tell them exactly what's on offer here in the South West, and persuade them to come to at least one meeting this year. Tell them that there is a committee of local greenkeepers - who are giving up their time and working hard to improve conditions, status, stature, and prospects within their industry. Tell your friends - it can't be done alone - full support is needed, now more than ever. Join your Association and support the industry.

Thanks and congratulations to Jane Jones, Chris Sealey, and all the Regional Board for the excellent Regional Seminar at Cannington, back in November last year. The STRI "Disturbance Theory" guys were on top form - and I certainly felt a lot less disturbed by the end. The theory has evolved significantly in a year, and I was really glad I attended. It was also very nice to see John Pemberton and Tracey Maddison join us for the day, and it was interesting to hear John explaining how the Association needs to move forward, and how we all need to carefully consider the future direction.

Further Excavator Safety Training days are available in the New Year, as are Chainsaw Training Courses. Do please let me know any other issues or training that you would like covered or arranged.

A Section Seminar is planned for early March featuring major industry issues. Watch this space!

And finally - Back at 'Minch we've had yet another break-in at the New Course - (three in 18 months now). The work's mobile rang at 9.30pm on a Monday night - I should've known better than to answer but rashly picked it up without thinking.

Yep - it's the alarm monitoring company - the New Course greenshed intruder alarm's gone off and as the named keyholder, could I get over there and sort it out. My sons and I jump into the car and drive straight there. When we arrive, we pull down to the sheds - pitch dark in the middle of the golf course, and can immediately see (a - the door's been forced open, (b - the alarm box's been smashed off the wall, and (c - the lights are on inside. As we turn the car, the lights inside the shed promptly go off. Ah...

Had it been at home - we might've attempted to storm the building - however as it's at work - we retire to a safe distance up in the main car-park and dial 999 on the car phone. The police come on immediately saying there's been a rash of break-ins that evening and they're very stretched, but the helicopter's in the air and it'll be sent to the area asap. "Stay on the line in case there's a problem," ordered a terse voice. "Wow" we think, suitably impressed. Within a couple of minutes we can indeed see the helicopter - the only slight snag being it appears to be hovering over the Old Course (four miles away). We check on the phone - postcodes and all. The response is at once patronizing and insistent - "Of course we're in the right s*dding place - and the helicopter can see a single person making off on a pushbike". "We've got some ground forces moving in - is anyone authorised to be in the immediate vicinity of your premises at this time of night?" "No certainly not" we chime - "don't let him get away".

Things got a little blurry after that - we could clearly hear the slow rhythmic

tick-tick-tick of a bicycle being ridden carefully into the night, which was harshly interrupted by the multiple slamming of car doors, the hasty drawing of truncheons, and someone yelling "There he is Lads - GO - GO - GO!!" (By now there's the sound of panting and heavy running footsteps, and the bicycle's suddenly going tick tick tick tick tick). This was followed by the muted sounds of a scuffle, and someone screaming - "place the shopping bag on the ground, and move away from the bicycle!" followed a little less certainly by - "keep the walking stick where I can see it".

At this point a new, forceful, and outraged voice was heard bellowing phrases such as "Young Whippersnappers" - "Dunkirk" - "El-Alamein" - "Why did we bother?" - "Dinner with the Chief Constable" - "MP" - and - "My Solicitor...." Finally we hear a sheepish "Well - ahem - thank you for your assistance with our enquiries sir - do enjoy the remainder of your ride home".

With that the voice comes back on the line - "The New Course you say?" "Yes" we chorus wearily giving the postcode yet again. Within seconds, the helicopter's overhead and no less than seven squad cars come screeching into the car park, and completely ignoring us trying to direct them, disperse all over the golf course in mainly the wrong directions in a spray of mud and loose grass - before someone reverses back into the car-park and asks us where the buildings are. Just when we thought things were settling down, the dog unit arrived complete with baying Alsations and Rambo in control. It was difficult to tell who galloped into the sheds the faster (scattering valuable Forensics and DNA everywhere) - Rambo, or the dogs.

Unsurprisingly, by this time the villains were nowhere to be seen.

Have a very peaceful New Year and enjoy Harrogate Week. If anyone has some proper news - please, let's have it!

Paul Worster paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



DEVON & CORNWALL

Hello everyone, hope you all had a relaxing and peaceful Christmas. With another year underway one of my initial thoughts is that we have a drier more seasonal summer generally as the last three have been somewhat wetter than average!

The 12th was the date of our November meeting at Bowood Park Golf Club at Lanteglos, on the edge of Camelford in Cornwall. The weather was very pleasant, somewhat surprisingly as recent days had been mainly rainy ones! The course was presented in an excellent condition by Rob Cook, Course Manager and his team, with the fairways - I'm sure Rob won't mind me mentioning, surprisingly dry and firm given the recent weather, a credit to him and his team! I myself normally play golf but on this occasion was unable to get there early enough so I caught up with the course walk at the greenkeepers complex.

Barenburg and Cornwall Farmers sponsored the day and the golf was won by Tony 'Jacko' James, Head Greenkeeper, Killiow Park, 39pts; 2. Richard Antenen, Bigbury GC, 35pts; 3. Richard Shapland with 31pts. The winner of Nearest the Pin was Jim Sheehan, Head Greenkeeper, Truro GC, and Shaun Warren won the Longest Drive.

A big thank you to Bowood Park and all the staff, especially the caterers for the wonderful meal!

A special thank to George Sheils, our guest speaker for the day, for his 'How to keep your course open during wet weather' topic on the course walk and 'How Green's staff can help your club survive the credit crunch' speech after our meal.

Thank you to Graeme for a successful 'Communication' course, and thank



you to Launceston GC for the free use of their facilities, the feedback was very positive but a shame more senior greenkeepers didn't take advantage, especially considering the low cost. A reminder the spring workshop will be held at St Mellion Golf Complex on March 4 on the subject of Machinery set up, fault diagnosis, health and safety and a grinding practical and theory session. If there are any subjects you would like covered please contact Graeme or myself.

Jerry Cole 07764 224582 greenwaysjrc@aol.com



SOUTH WALES

Hello everyone. Hope you all had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year. A quick update, Henry Stead who has been writing for this column has been very busy recently and has passed the responsibility on to me, so a big thank you to Henry for the work he has done in the past.

Ok, firstly the Christmas competition, which was held, as is the tradition, at Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club. The weather held off to enable a reasonable turn out to play on a golf course that was in superb condition. Well done to Paul (PJ) Johnson and his staff for all their hard work.

The results were: 1. Andy Roach, Haverfordwest GC, 33pts; 2. Darryl Bray, Morriston GC, 30pts; 3. James White, 29pts. The silver salver prize for best scores throughout the season was one by Andy (I'll have to get a bigger mantelpiece) Roach. Nearest the Pin was won by Alan Abel (who narrowly beat Andy Roach's shot) and the trade prize, for which Andy thankfully doesn't qualify, was won by Peter Holstrom.

One of the golfers playing that day was Ian Kinley, who has recently been appointed as Course Manager at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club. Ian announced his arrival in Wales by blasting a huge drive down the 18th to win the Longest Drive competition. Croeso i Gymru Ian! Welcome to Wales.

A big thank you to the sponsors for the day, namely Vitax, who have sponsored this event for as long as I can remember. To Joe Crawley, UK Sales Manager for Vitax, for taking the time to think of different prizes every year. This year it was cases of wine that Joe thought would make people forget about the credit crunch, and everything else for that matter!

Thanks again to Paul and his team for the excellent golf course, to P & K's Captain, Mr Jeff Vincent, for attending and presenting the prizes, to Pam and her staff for the excellent Christmas dinner and to Julian Bartlett-Jones for being a more than capable MC.

On the education front, the winter series of lectures starts again in January, details of which will be sent to you shortly. Your support is vital for their continuation so get yourselves down there! If you require a lift - phone a rep!

A get well soon message now to an old colleague of mine, Andy Matthews at Mountain Ash Golf Club. Andrew has been fighting the big 'C' for a few years and just when he thought it was gone it came back with a vengeance, leading to major surgery in 2008. So get well soon Andy, and when you are well enough to return to work, have Phil Huish give you some easy jobs to do i.e. the ones he normally does!

Also get well soon to Gary Humphries at Llanwern Golf Club. Not sure what's wrong with him but the words 'two bricks' was mentioned.

Thanks to all our sponsors for the golf events of 2008. Here's to seeing you all again in 2009.

Ceri Richards celticceri@aol.com 07831168645

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Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440
Mobile: 07776 242120
Email: pj.boyd@btinternet.com



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
Tel: 01476 550115
Mobile: 07866 366966
Email: petelarter972@aol.com



Clive Osgood
SOUTH EAST
Tel: 01737 819343
Mobile: 07841 948410
Email: cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk



Jane Jones
SOUTH WEST & WALES
Tel: 01454 270850
Mobile: 07841 948110
Email: janejones1@btconnect.com

BUYERS' GUIDE

"THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER, JUST THE WRONG CLOTHES"

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For winter and wet weather work, probably the two most important pieces of greenkeeping kit are a good set of waterproofs and some sturdy waterproof work boots. The old adage that "you get what you pay for" applies here, just as it does in so many things. Purchasing the right standard of gear should be regarded as an investment; it will mean that your greenkeeping team will stay healthier, happier, be more effective in their work and lose less time to illness. For sure, this is one of those times when prevention is better than cure!

A suitable waterproof jacket should be long enough to sit on; this will mean that when bending or sitting, the wearer's lower back and waist will be well covered. The fabric must be tough enough (tough does not have to mean heavy) to withstand contact with gorse or brambles and it should be breathable so that the wearer remains comfortable even under the most energetic working conditions. The fit and construction of the garment must allow for ease of movement and the capacity to accommodate other layers underneath for colder weather. An integral hood is an important extra for extreme wet weather. Over-trousers should demonstrate the same waterproof and breathable characteristics as the jacket and should have an adjustable waist plus zipped leg cuffs to allow for easy putting on and removing over boots. Most over-trousers will slip down a little during work and for safety reasons it is wise to consider wearing braces to prevent trousers dragging on the ground.

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Chairman's Column

ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END

As I write my final article, it is with some amazement that the year has passed so quickly - we are now already back at Harrogate Week and into January, for what hopes to be a fantastic exhibition and education forum. I believe it is a must for Greenkeepers and Groundsman alike - indeed any other sports' Managers would also benefit from attending the week, meeting exhibitors and looking at planning for the year ahead.

Our new Chairman, Peter Todd, is taking over at a tough time but I believe he will be an excellent Chairman and help the Association build bridges in all sectors of the market place.

It will be an extremely busy year, speaking from experience, and it is fantastic that he has the support of his Club in such a tough financial climate. My own advice for him is just to be aware of how quickly the year passes - before you know it you are half way through.

At the moment we are now seeing the backlash in the economy, especially on the golf courses as we are in our traditionally quieter months, and financial decisions are having to be taken with regards to staffing levels and costs. It is important that we can improve our versatility over the next few months and hope that we at least get a good start to the year, in terms of weather, to encourage the golfers to return to the high numbers in the spring - something that we haven't really seen in the last few years.

I always seem to be talking about the weather, but hopefully we can have a positive outlook in 2009 and we can have a big year with golfers responding by coming to the courses in their droves.

Great weather allows us to produce a higher quality of turf, again something that hasn't really been open us is in the last few years with the prolonged wet weather. This, in turn, might see new golfers coming to the courses to play. In turn, we have to be more open to all levels of people and standards than we have perhaps relied upon in the past. Pricing issues may be addressed this year also which will again open up the availability of golf to families and a wider audience.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, Maria, Iain, Ruth and Cameron for their support in my role as Chairman over the last year. Also, my employers the Quinn Group, and, in particular, Nigel Gray, for allowing me to attend at lot of events, on behalf of the Association, and allowing me to make a



big commitment to the benefit of BIGGA.

It has been my privilege to enjoy this opportunity and I have learnt much and met with many great new and old people within the industry.

I look forward to seeing you all at Harrogate and best wishes everyone for 2009.

Kenny Mackay
Chairman

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