

# GI

# GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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writes about America

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New Feature written  
by an anonymous  
Course Manager

# Turnberry

Golf  
Course  
Feature

This year's Open Championship venue:  
as illustrious as the career of its  
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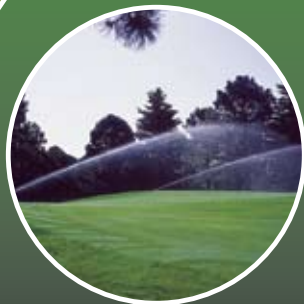






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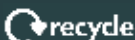
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## WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



# Turnberry... a great place to be

### **My first experience of a Major when I started working in the golf industry back in the mid-80s was The Open at Turnberry in 1986 and I loved every minute of it.**

I was working for Golf Monthly at the time and I recall having to pinch myself when sitting in the caravan we always used during The Open, listening to Karsten Solheim (founder of Ping) explain to Henry Cotton how he had come up with the first Ping putter. These sorts of occasions don't come along every day.

Greg Norman won that Open by five shots including an incredible 63 second round which, typically of the Great White Shark, still infuriated his fans with a three putt final green. Two good putts and he would have shot a 62, in unfavourable conditions, and set a record for Major Championships which would still not have been equalled.

The star of the show in 1986, though, was Turnberry itself. It is quite simply a great place to visit and an even better place to play golf. Like St Andrews it has a certain aura and whenever you are there you have a feeling of being somewhere special.

Much of it goes back to its debut as an Open venue in 1977 when Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus used the Ailsa course as a stage to play out a drama the likes of which we had never witnessed before. The golf was incredible until they came to the 72nd hole and then it got even better. Nicklaus, a shot behind, used all his brute force to force his second shot onto the green from the base of a gorse bush in the right rough while Watson casually pinged in his approach to two feet. Nicklaus drained his 40 footer for a birdie but before the cheers had died down Watson had rolled in his short putt

to win on 268. Third placed Hubert Green was 10 shots back.

That cemented Turnberry's place in golfing folklore and with Norman, and then Nick Price in '94, the course demonstrated its ability to single out the best golfer in the world.

I, therefore, head to Turnberry with great anticipation and look forward to working with the members of the 2009 BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team, who, as usual, have been drawn from all corners of the globe.

I'm sure that the work that George Brown and his team have carried out on the great Ailsa course will ensure that the same thing will happen again. Not a stone has been left unturned to ensure that Turnberry is picture perfect and will be a fitting legacy as George enters his retirement. He is not going completely as he is being retained in an ambassadorial/consultancy role but hopefully it will allow Brenda and himself to have more time for themselves and enjoy doing the things that make them happy.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Assistant Editor, Melissa Jones, every success for the future as she leaves the Association. She has done a wonderful job during her time at BIGGA and she will soon be devoting time to a new baby. Melissa will be greatly missed.

Scott MacCallum  
**Editor**



July 2009

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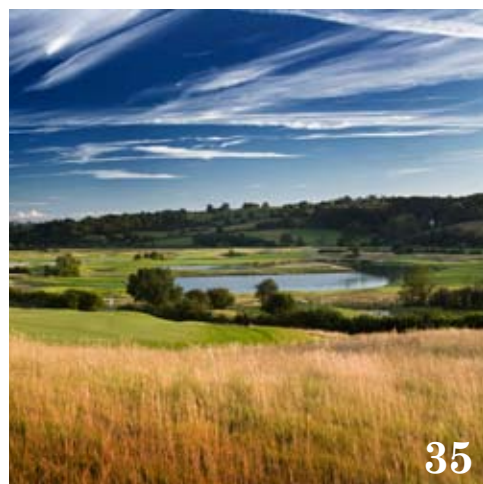
The first in an occasional feature giving Course Managers the freedom to talk more candidly under the clock of anonymity

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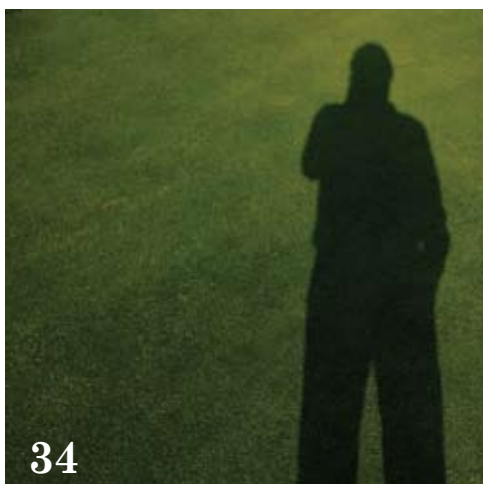




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The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.





## Three Peaks Challenge

"At 4:30am on April 24, 22 others and I started our ascent of Ben Nevis and our attempt of the 24 hour, three peak challenge," explained Ben Kebby, Assistant Greenkeeper at Sunningdale GC.

The three peaks Challenge is an accent of Ben Nevis (1,344m Scotland), Scafell Pike (978m, England) and Snowdon (1,085m, Wales) in 24 hrs. 23 people

attempted this feat in aid of Child Reach, organised through 'Eye On Africa'.

"I was one of 12 to complete the peak to peak challenge, which starts at the summit of Ben Nevis, continues on to the summit of Scafell and finishes on the summit of Snowdon in a time of 19 hours.

I was also one of 12 to complete the harder base to base challenge,

which starts at the base of Ben Nevis and finishes at the base of Snowdon in a time of 23 hours" continued Ben. "So at 4:30pm on April 25 there were 23 people having a few well earned drinks in the café at the base of Snowdon with a murmur of 'never again'!

The event was a huge success with over 5500 being raised for Child Reach...on to Kilimanjaro!

## A WARNING

John Hunter, of Wick-based Hunter Promotions, has contracted Lyme Disease and is warning others who work on, or regularly visit golf courses of the potential dangers.

Lyme Disease is an illness which can affect the skin and in some cases the nervous system, joints and other tissues. It is caused by a bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi* which is transmitted through bites from certain types of ticks.

It is rare in the UK, with around 800 cases confirmed each year, but if it is not diagnosed early it can get into the blood system and cause more longer term and more serious symptoms.

The most common signs of infection is a pale pink, or reddish rash which spreads out from the site of a bite after between three and 30 days. Victims can also complain of aches and pains and feel very tired.

Unfortunately in John's case it wasn't identified early and he is coping with the consequences. However he is keen to alert others to the risk of Lyme Disease and the need to get a good and early diagnosis.



## New Boss for John Deere

John Deere recently elected Samuel R Allen (55) President, Chief Operating Officer and a member of the Board of Directors, he will also take on the role of Chief Executive Officer from August 1. Robert W Lane (59) Chairman and CEO, will serve as Chairman of the board until Allen's expected succession as Chairman.

"The Deere Board has completed an 18 month systematic process

to choose Deere's ninth Chief Executive Officer in its 172 year history," said Lane.

"The board recognizes, as I do, that Sam is a superb, smart, ethical executive, a wise and uncommonly capable leader, and someone with the proven experience and ability to effectively lead John Deere in growing a great, sustainable, global business."





Richard Johnson

## WINNER

Richard Johnson, Managing Director of John Deere Ltd, has been presented with the Michael Dwyer Memorial Prize at the Landwards Conference held recently at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester.

The Award, part of the annual Awards announced by the Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE), was in recognition of his continuing role establishing John Deere as one of the UK's agricultural and grounds care suppliers. Richard, was one of the first to benefit from a Work Placement Scheme when he joined John Deere from Harper Adams in 1987. Since then he has held prominent positions within the company, culminating in being appointed Managing Director in 2006.



## BMW SUPPORT TEAM WENTWORTH 2009

Glorious weather and a superbly presented golf course produced by Chris Kennedy and his green staff contributed to some very good golf that was greatly appreciated by the large crowds who were present for this year's BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth.

Once again a group of volunteer greenkeepers were on hand for stand-by duty on the Thursday and Friday of the event in case of bad weather, with a full complement of over 40 available for any unforeseen circumstances and bunker

raking duties on the last two days.

Conditions were perfect for all four days so all involved were able to enjoy the occasion in the sunshine with not a single squeegee in sight!

Welcome visitors enjoying the golf and hospitality this year included Billy McMillan and John Pemberton.

At the official prize giving on the 18th green Chris Kennedy was presented with a silver salver engraved with some of the most famous names in competitive golf in recognition

of his efforts in producing a golf course worthy of hosting the European Tour flagship event over the past 20 years.

Paul Casey was the popular winner of this year's event getting birdies on the last two holes to just hold off the challenge of Ross Fisher. With this win he moved up to World Number Three and took home €750,000 for his weeks work.

**Clive Osgood**  
SE Regional Administrator



## BEST IN SHOW

Native wild flowers supplied by British Wild Flower Plants (BWFPs) helped The Fenland Alchemist Garden take 'Best in Show' in the Courtyard category at this year's Chelsea held recently.

Designed by Stephen Hall and Jane Besser for Giles Landscapes the garden provides the ingredients for the ancient art of alchemy as practised in the fens. Wild strawberry, Hedge Woundwort, Marjoram, Woad and Cow Parsley as well as native Columbine, Wild Parsnip and Wild Celery were all commissioned and grown at BWFPs' nursery in Norfolk.

BWFPs also supplied Birmingham City Council's Generation garden 'Credit Munch', which was awarded Silver Gilt.

LEFT: The Fenland Alchemist Garden.





Golfer at Close House  
Copyright: Close House Hotel

# Awarded Close House Contract

MJ Abbott Limited has been awarded the contract to build the new Colt Course at Close House Hotel and Golf Resort near Heddon on the Wall in Northumberland.

The championship length course, designed by lead architect Scott Macpherson, of TurnerMacpherson Golf Design, will measure in excess of 7,000 yards.

Work began on site in April and will be completed by October.

The extensive contract includes earthworks, shaping of the course, the construction of greens, tees, bunkers and lakes, the renovation of historic lakes, installation of a primary drainage system, as well as the design and installation of a fully-automated irrigation system, cultivation, seeding and landscaping.

## ANNUAL MATCH

This year's match against the GCMA was held at Strathaven Golf Club on Tuesday, May 12.

The final result was a win for BIGGA by 7½ to 1½ and once again we retained the Trophy, which the Chairman very graciously accepted and thanked his players for a superb team effort.

In the first match, Chairman John Geddes and Steve Hunter, Head Greenkeeper at Strathaven GC halved their match, this was followed by further wins for, Stuart Taylor and Brian Hillen, Archie Dunn and Jim McCormack, Robbie Murdoch and Brian Heggie, Iain Barr and Derek Wilson, Andy O'Hara and Derek Scott, Denis Tweddell and Stuart Ferguson, Brian Bolland and Scott Ballantyne, the only defeat was the pairing of Colin Shanks, from the home club, and Fraser Ross, of Renfrew GC.

Our thanks to the Captain and Board of Strathaven Golf Club, for the courtesy and facilities afforded to us.

As mentioned earlier the course was in superb condition and congratulations go to Steve Hunter and his staff for all their hard work and preparation prior to the event.

In 2010 it is our turn to host the event and we are looking at returning to Central/North Scotland for a suitable venue.

Peter J. Boyd  
Regional  
Administrator

## Professional Development

The Business Interchange programme is run by Life-long Learning UK, the sector skills council responsible for the professional development of those in the further education sector.

The programme intends on taking teachers and tutors back into the workplace in order to both update their skills and ensure that the students they subsequently deliver to local businesses are of the right level of training.

Kevin McAdams undertook a placement at The Belfry as part of his 'Work-based Assessor for Sports Turf Management' programme at Myerscough College.

Before coming to work at Myerscough College as a Sports Turf Assessor,

Kevin McAdams had over 17 years practical experience in greenkeeping. Kevin decided to undertake a Business Interchange placement at his old place of work, the Belfry Golfcourse, Sutton Coldfield. He found Business Interchange 'a really valuable opportunity to practice old skills and pick up new ones'. Over the past few years Kevin had found that he was increasingly at his desk and working less and less in the field. Always a keen outdoorsman, the placement provided Kevin with a good chance to get back in the field and muck in with the basic jobs that his students do on a regular basis.

For more information visit: [www.lluk.org/catalyst-business-interchange.htm](http://www.lluk.org/catalyst-business-interchange.htm)







Sports Turf Manager, Stewart Ward (right) instructing students at Hartpury College

## A Helping Hand

In an effort to help students in landscaping and horticulture gain experience in operating outdoor powered equipment, Etesia has offered machines under permanent loan to Hartpury College.

Sports Turf Manager, Stewart Ward and his team of seven groundsmen maintain the 800-acre campus. They work closely with college lecturers and have active involvement in the teaching sessions.

“The practical nature of our courses provides hands-on experience which is so valuable in future careers,” explained Stewart, adding that in addition to mowing skills they also teach routine care such as oil and blade changes plus general troubleshooting.



Arnold Palmer watches a member of the Welsh Development Squad playing from the Huxley Golf All-Weather Tee surfaces at Celtic Manor

## GOLFING LEGEND OPENS SHORT GAME ACADEMY

The Celtic Manor Resort Golf Academy has become the Wales National Centre of Excellence following the launch of its new short game practice area.

The new facility was officially unveiled recently in the presence of golfing

legend Arnold Palmer.

The new short game practice area features three Huxley All-Weather Golf Greens and three large Huxley All-Weather Practice Tees enabling the facility to be used throughout the year in almost any weather.



## AGE OLD ART RECAPTURED

Greenkeepers at Mold Golf Club in Pantymwyn have been reviving the Iron Age art of dry stone walling as part of a special project to help celebrate the Club's centenary.

An ancient 285 metre dry stone wall, which formed the original boundary for the course when it was just nine holes, had fallen into a dangerous state of disrepair and was in urgent need of attention.

The Club's four enterprising greenkeepers enrolled on a course at Llysfas College where they trained with a professional dry

stone-waller on Moel Arthur.

Head Greenkeeper, Colin Jones, said: “We started on the wall in the winter and worked around our normal greenkeeping tasks and the general up-keep of the course.

Club Captain Martyn Scholes said: “Feedback from the members and locals who can see the wall from the road, has been brilliant and I would like to thank all concerned for their tremendous efforts.”

A commemorative centenary plaque has been attached to the wall to acknowledge its completion.



## Grassfelt Greens Leeds City Centre

Shoppers and workers in the busy Round Foundry area of Leeds can enjoy real grass beneath their feet this summer following the opening of a temporary green space.

Wonderwood, opened in Holbeck Urban Village recently, (the brain child of artist/architects Amenity Space and The Culture Company) is an experiment, which has transformed land earmarked for future development into a temporary, urban inspired woodland clearing.

Two hundred sq metres of Lindum's Grassfelt, the company's patented strong soil-less turf growing in a felt made from recycled British textiles forms the base of the design, which includes children's play areas, tree sculptures, murals and deck chairs.

“Wonderwood has been designed to sit in, play in, lunch in or host a range of outdoor activities,” said Stephen. “Remembering how grass transformed the atmosphere in Trafalgar Square when it was laid for only two days we're sure that the sward, over a period of months will weave its magic in Leeds.”





Golf students at Gloucestershire's Hartpury College honing their putting skills on the new synthetic green supplied and installed by Southwest Greens to Nicklaus Design standards

## NICKLAUS DESIGN GREEN GETS HIGH MARKS AT COLLEGE

Budding PGA professionals studying golf at Hartpury College are developing their putting skills on a tournament-quality synthetic green supplied and installed by Southwest Greens to Nicklaus Design specifications and standards.

The new all-weather green is the latest addition to the College's golf academy and is being used by students working towards a BTEC National Diploma in Sport, specifically the Performance and Excellence in Golf module which involves

two years' full-time study at the college, which is located near Gloucester.

Many of the students will go on to further golf studies at universities or at the PGA's National Training Academy.

One aspect of the new green

of particular importance to Hartpury College's resident PGA-qualified coaches was the creation of subtle slopes, borrows and contours within the putting surface to produce a realistic and testing challenge for students.

## New Team in Place



BIGGA has a new accountancy team in place. In recent weeks Steve Wragg and Angela Wilson have arrived at BIGGA HOUSE to replace departing staff and both have settled in quickly.

Accountant, Steve (40), is a York man who spent ten years in accountancy practice before joining a Construction Company where he also acted as accountant for rugby league team, York City Knights.

A keen cricketer he opens both batting and bowling for York Vale League team, Ben Johnson, while his long hitting of a golf ball since joining BIGGA has already drawn a few gasps. Keeping it on the short stuff is an issue though!

"I'm looking forward to working for BIGGA. From what I've seen

already it is a ready good industry to be involved with," said Steve, who is married to Sue with two children Louis (5) and Pippa (2).

Accounts Assistant, Angela, was born in Bridlington and brought up in York. She spent 16 years with the RSPCA, as volunteer, Veterinary Nurse and Assistant Manager at the York Kennels before a career change saw her move into accountancy. Prior to BIGGA she was working for a plumbing importer.

A keen walker and gardener Angela and partner, Paul, have two dogs - a Border Collie, called Oliver and a Lurcher, called Ralph

"I really enjoy the working environment at BIGGA," said Angela.



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## Out with The Old and in with The New

Lely UK has announced Holly Jones as its new Marketing Executive.

Existing employee, Holly, is stepping into the shoes of Bruce Dawson, who is retiring from his role as Marketing Manager after 35 years of service.

Holly will work across the company's product portfolio, which spans Toro commercial turf machinery, irrigation systems, consumer lawnmowers and garden equipment and Otterbine aerating fountains, as well as a vast agricultural offering,

overseeing its marketing activities with immediate effect.

Meanwhile, Bruce is looking forward to indulging his passion for caravanning around Britain with wife, Christine, as well as spending time with his grandchildren. He also plans to undertake voluntary work.

A familiar industry face, Bruce joined Lely's agricultural division as Scottish Sales Manager in the early 70s and, having relocated to East Anglia as Area Sales Manager in 1979 and progressed to UK

Sales Manager soon after, was appointed Marketing Manager in 1989.

"I'm very much looking forward to my retirement and take with me a lot of fond memories of my time at Lely," he said.

"I wish the company, my former colleagues, and in particular Holly in her new role as marketing executive, all the very best for the future."

ABOVE: Lely UK's new Marketing Executive, Holly Jones, is taking the wheel as the company's former Marketing Manager Bruce Dawson retires.



### NEW DIRECTOR APPOINTED

John Deere has appointed Nicole Chase, former business manager, to the newly created role of Golf Sales and Marketing Director for Europe, Africa and the Middle East (EAME). Nicole will relocate to Germany in order to focus on worldwide growth opportunities for John Deere Golf.

"As emerging markets continue to provide potential for growth, we need to consider alternative options beyond our traditional approaches," said Gregg Breningmeyer, Group Director, Sales and Marketing for John Deere Golf.

"And with the recent introduction of several new product platforms, this is the perfect time to take advantage of new, exciting opportunities abroad."

Nicole will be responsible for bolstering sales and marketing support while exploring new opportunities for equipment and irrigation product lines.

### IN BLOOM AT CHELSEA

Kubota showcased a selection from its extensive tractor and groundcare product ranges at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2009.

Among the machines featured were the Kubota GR1600-11 13.5hp diesel ride-on mower, the G23 professional ride-on mower and the B1220 12hp compact tractor.



# Deal Extended



John Deere dealer, Godfreys of Sevenoaks, in Kent, has signed a new, exclusive three year preferred supplier agreement with The Royal St George's Golf Club at Sandwich, which will host its 14th Open Championship in 2011.

The agreement covers the supply and servicing of a full range of more than 30 John Deere golf and turf machines, including greens,

tees and surrounds and fairway mowers plus compact tractors and Gator utility vehicles, for use by Course Manager, Neil Metcalf and his team of 12 greenkeeping staff.

This follows the previous three year agreements signed in 2003 and 2006.

Photograph shows John Deere dealer, Principal Peter Bateman of Godfreys, and John Deere Limited

Territory Manager, Mike Waldron. Royal St George's Course Manager, Neil Metcalf, and Secretary, Christopher Gabby.

Godfreys Area Sales Manager Keith Rogers is pictured with some of the new John Deere machines at the distinctive starter's hut beside the first hole at The Royal St George's Golf Club.

## NEW RECRUIT

STRI has employed Jay Dobson to join their regional consultancy team in Scotland.

Jay, previously with PSD Agronomy, will take over the role of Regional Turfgrass Agronomist, replacing Simon Watson who moved to Syngenta in March - based in Glasgow, Jay will cover clients in Scotland.

Jay has more than 25 years' experience working across all sectors of the turfgrass industry. Prior to his position as a Director of PSD Agronomy Ltd, Jay lectured in Turfgrass Science and related subjects at UCL Myerscough. Here he managed a range of programmes, including Degree and HND Turfgrass Science, as well as pioneering delivery of the NVQ Level 3 Turfgrass Programme.

## New Ransomes Award for Juniors

Ransomes Jacobsen, has sponsored a new award recognising outstanding achievements from junior golfers in Suffolk. Introduced by the Suffolk County Golf Partnership, the award is for young golfers who

deserve recognition for their achievements over the past 12 months.

Nominations are being sought for any young golfers, male or female, under the age of 15, who are deserving of special recognition. They

may have reduced their handicap; helped others within the club; overcome particular difficulties or obstacles; or perhaps achieved success in club competitions.

They may not necessarily be the best

young golfers at the club. An individual award will be presented to the winning boy and girl at a prize-giving ceremony at the Suffolk Golf Partnership Golf Day on July 22 at Halesworth Golf Club.



## Marketing Alliance Formed

Club Car has entered a marketing alliance with SolarDrive, a Denmark-based firm that specialises in solar technology for mobile solutions. Taking advantage of Club Car's extensive distribution network, the two companies will promote the use of solar energy to commercial and golf accounts all around the world.

SolarDrive designs and engineers vehicle canopies made with solar cells capable of capturing and transferring the sun's energy to electric-powered vehicles, including golf cars and utility vehicles.

The solar canopies transfer from 180 to 360 watts of energy to a vehicle's battery system, resulting in considerable additional range between charges in typical applications.

Club Car said it expects the initial adoption by users that are challenged to make it through demanding usage applications on a single electrical charge.

What's more, Club Car says the availability of solar energy in an easy-to-install application may encourage facilities now operating gas-powered fleets to switch to electric vehicles.





# Greenkeepers Training Committee



**A message from the Chairman of the GTC, Donald Steel**

**Donald Steel**, the recently appointed **GTC Chairman**, tells of his respect for greenkeepers, the progress that has been made through good education, training and qualifications but also how there must be a review of the methods of collecting funds from men and woman golfers to support the work of BIGGA and the GTC as he firmly believes it is the condition of the course that is every golfer's number one priority.

**One aspect of golf which has improved out of all recognition over the last 30 years has been the condition and presentation of our courses.**

Tournament players expect perfection every week and usually find it. Club golfers are no different. Their awareness of what they see on television, or on their travels, means that they, too, set their sights high. What is more, they see no distinction between winter and summer, expecting a consistency that enables them to play all year.

Nothing could be better for the game but too many take it for granted. Insufficient acknowledgment is made for the reasons behind the transformation.

Much is driven by the admirable desire to give the best service but it is equally driven by the desire for knowledge; and knowledge, in this context, is based on vastly better teaching. Greenkeeping is essentially a practical pursuit and knowledge and experience stem from active involvement.

It isn't so long ago that recruits to greenkeeping tended to come from farm workers and were paid accordingly. If inclined, they learned as they went along but traditional old Head Greenkeepers were sometimes reluctant to disclose their secrets and often carried them to their graves.

Where improvement has come about is that bodies like BIGGA and GTC have broadened the net by ensuring that proper education is available to all those who want it. It is not too much to hope that one day soon qualification may be a necessity. One of the secrets of a

good teacher, whether it be golf, the tuba or cybernetics, is the ability to break down technical language into simple terms everyone can understand. Teachers have the right to expect pupils to be interested, although that may depend on how well the message is put across.

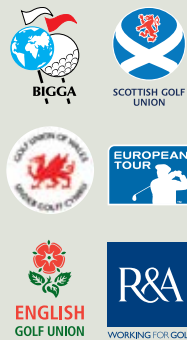
Nowadays, the art of greenkeeping belongs to a more technical world in which everything is highly mechanised. The ability to cut grass surfaces tighter and to have a machine for almost every purpose is one reason why playing conditions are so good. Aeration techniques are more varied but so, too, are those for overseeding fairways as well as greens.

The volume of work that can be carried out is another huge advantage. Irrigation systems are more advanced and drainage systems more efficient although the dangers of over-watering set alarm bells ringing.

Sustainable golf is little more than the old basic principles of greenkeeping under a different name but there is no doubt that fast running courses are more potent forces than those deadened by too much irrigation, and anything which reduces the level of maintenance budgets by legitimate means is to be welcomed.

Greenkeeping teams are much more versatile with qualified mechanics and skilled machine operators forming part of most staffs. Any construction work is now readily tackled as a pleasant variation to routine maintenance. Seminars, conferences and shows give the chance to broaden horizons and compare notes but, in many

The GTC is funded by:



ways, the important message is for the users of our courses to appreciate what has been done for their benefit.

Greenkeepers work unsociable hours, on the course at 5am on summer mornings to prepare for the early starters, and on call all day during major tournaments.

In America, Superintendents are highly paid, influential figures, as well they might be. Maintenance and presentation need skill as well as responsibility for expensive equipment. They may lead a crew of 20 or more but, without the quality of the product suffering, our average greenkeeping staffs are no more than perhaps six. On the other hand, our golf has always been popular because it is affordable and nobody wants to see the game priced beyond the reach of most pockets. We wouldn't change places.

As greenkeeping becomes a more genuine career for young men and women, ambitions will only soar and that can only mean a rise in standards. It might lead to changing policies within Clubs and the abolition of anachronistic green committees.

The lines of communication with the Course Manager could then be by means of one member representing the Club's general committee or board and prepared to do a long enough stint to learn something himself. At all times, he must convince the staff they have full support.

In return should be a pledge from every golfer to contribute a small sum every year towards greenkeeper training and the wonderful playing conditions that nearly all of us experience. Many subscribe now without knowing it but methods of collection need reviewing and made more comprehensive.

We are talking pence rather than pounds, but nothing is closer to the heart of all men and women golfers than our courses and their condition; and, for once, they may be contributing to a cause from which they can see personal advantage by way of a return.



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# Learning & Development

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development,  
with an update on education issues



**July already. This year is really flying by. I'm sure you're all as busy out on the golf course as we are here at Headquarters.**

**Rachael and I have a little circus-juggling act going on with all the events that we are co-ordinating at the moment. I think we could make some spare cash on the side!**



## Toro Student of the Year Award 2009

We have had a magnificent response to the Toro Student of the Year Award this year with 44 entries received from 18 colleges.

This is the highest number of entries that we have received since our computerised records for the Award began in 1996 (the Award began in 1989).

This has, in itself, caused a few logistical problems when organising the Regional Interviews.

We have overcome these problems by drafting in the help of the Regional Administrators to replace me at the interviews, therefore relieving me of a week out of the office flying, driving and interviewing my way around the country in five days.

The interviews will take place in the following locations, shown above right:

**Monday 6 July**  
– York and Exeter

**Tuesday 7 July**  
– Hemel Hempstead and Bristol

**Wednesday 8 July**  
– Hemel Hempstead and Glasgow

Eight finalists will be selected from the Regional Interviews to attend the National Final at BIGGA House on 13 and 14 September.

The eight finalists will be featured in the September issue of GI.

## CPD

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Continuing Professional Development 2009/2010

The new Continuing Professional Development year commenced on July 1, 2009 and will run until June 30, 2010.

To achieve your Certificate of Continuing Professional Development for 2009/2010 you must gain 10 CPD Credits within the 12 month period stated.

Credits can be gained for educational events that are attended including Section and Region events (not golf days), events run by suppliers and companies and events hosted by other associations such as the PGA, GCMA, EGU, SGU, GUW.

If you are unsure if you can claim credits for a specific event, please

The funding provided by Golden 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 Golden and Silver Key Sponsors.

**Contact Details**

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01347 833800 (option 3)  
[www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

contact either Rachael or myself for clarification.

If you would like to register on the CPD Scheme, you can download an application form from the BIGGA Website:

[www.bigga.org.uk/education](http://www.bigga.org.uk/education)  
or telephone 01347 833800 and select Option 3 for Education and we will send one out to you.

### Funding

Government funding for training is available from the Train to Gain fund.

Responsibility for the fund is now with your local Business Link.

To find your nearest Business Link telephone 0845 600 9 006 or visit [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk).

### Free Training

Business Link offer a range of free training in many locations around the country.

The half-day workshops that they run, on a variety of subjects are presented by professional trainers.

I, among many of the BIGGA HQ staff, have attended several of their workshops and I can wholeheartedly say that they are worth every minute of the time required away from the workplace.

You can't get much better value than free of charge!

Go to [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) for further information.

## Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors



Golden Key Individual Members: WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.  
Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Hamish Campbell; Neil Whitaker; Robert Maibusch.





# Chairman's Word

**National Chairman, Peter Todd, gives his thoughts for the month**

**Finding uninterrupted times at work to spend thinking, reading or writing is almost impossible in peak season.**

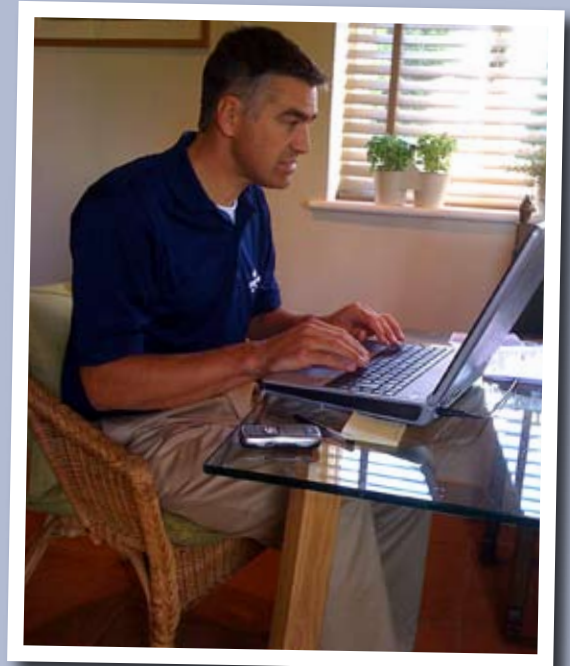
**If it's not one of the phones ringing or walkie talkie radio needing answering, then visitors, meetings etc all eat into the day and leave little room for time concentrating solely on an individual task.**

Having recently broken my leg in a fall on the course I am now working from home for six weeks and discovering what a difference it makes to be able to write a report without all these interruptions. Often we all try and juggle so many things at once only to find little space left to devote to a specific project that you know needs your complete attention which can end up taking weeks rather than days. Taking yourself away from the day-to-day work is only possible when you can rely on others to delegate to. The use of e-mail, laptops and mobile phones ensures you can keep in touch and at the same time enable you to break away to work elsewhere.

Having a well structured team with key members of staff able to step up and deputise helps in these situations. During our recent tournament both first assistants worked together and deputised for The Heritage Head Greenkeeper so he could respond to the call that his wife needed to go to hospital to give birth to their first child. Staff enjoy the opportunity to show what they can do when given more responsibility and you soon discover how much talent you have on your team. Delegating more even when you are not away can bring these benefits and free up some uninterrupted time to focus on areas that would otherwise keep moving down the to do list.

In our part of the country this has been one of the driest starts to the season for years with us experiencing only two thirds of the average rainfall. Play levels have no doubt picked up as a result of the better weather and this should be reflected in higher than expected revenue for clubs. The flip side of this is the prospect that the summer could continue unusually dry and a need to use large volumes of irrigation water. After the two very wet summers in 2007 and 2008 we needed some decent sunny weather to get golfers interested in playing regularly this year but the last two wet years did ensure that this dry part of the UK didn't suffer another drought. The expression that every cloud has a silver lining seems all too appropriate.

Water is fast becoming an expensive commodity at over £1 per cubic metre from some water companies and guarantee of supply looks decidedly shaky in future years. The last two years might have given some breathing space to water issues but we shouldn't be surprised when this subject returns again. Clubs need to look seriously at all areas of water usage. Starting with supply, whether recycling, rainwater harvesting or other suitable measures are a viable option for them. Thinking about your turf, do you have thatch levels under control, is sward composition where you want, do you have a comprehensive wetting agent programme? Is your irrigation system efficient, can you make improvements to coverage, design? The lead time



## Continuous improvement keeps you out in front

to design, obtain permission, secure finance and do whatever is necessary to deal with these problems and put solutions in place before next the drought order appears may prove to be time well invested.

The June edition of GI in the new format resulted from a response to some constructive comments and eagerness of all those involved to make improvements to the magazine. Scott and his team have worked hard to make the changes and bring a fresh look and content. As well as this, the sub committee changes to encourage more members to have an input in Association matters have now been reorganised. With proxy voting in place the move to include groundsman from other turf sports was a truly democratic process and one that should be recognised as a strength of BIGGA to embrace change.

Sport and the leisure industry are going through tough times with the golf sector having to adapt to the changed economic environment. After the recovery period whenever it comes, the golf industry will have gone through changes, some of which will be irreversible. Clubs that have shed

staff numbers may only be able to survive by operating on a lower cost basis in future. On the jobs front it is likely to remain an employers market with strong competition for every position. Whatever happens, clubs will need experienced, well educated and professional greenkeepers who are focused on maximising use of resources and improving their courses.

Being a member of BIGGA provides you with an opportunity to associate with like minded individuals with a shared interest and demonstrates your commitment to professionalism in the industry. In addition, the learning and development programmes, seminars etc, aim to arm you with the information and skills needed to keep you at the front of your profession. Aiming higher is something we should all aspire to and your association wants to help you get there.

**Peter Todd**  
National Chairman



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An aerial photograph of the Turnberry Golf Course in Scotland. The image shows a white lighthouse on a grassy cliff overlooking a rocky coastline. The sea is a deep blue, and the surrounding landscape is a mix of green hills and rocky outcrops. The lighthouse is a prominent white structure with a dark top, situated on a small grassy island or cliff edge. The surrounding area is a mix of green grass and dark, rocky terrain. The sea is a deep blue, and the sky is a clear, light blue. The overall scene is a beautiful coastal landscape.

# What a way *to bow out*

George Brown will end his illustrious greenkeeping career after this year's Open. As Scott MacCallum discovered, he couldn't choose a better way to retire

PHOTOGRAPH: The spectacular surroundings of Turnberry Golf Course, viewed from above  
© Leisurecorp







**There are few more iconic venues in golf than Turnberry. There is the magnificent, and unique, hotel - white with the red roof; the famous links; the white lighthouse, and Ailsa Craig, the giant curling stone-producing rock which stands guard nine miles off the coast but which often looks much closer.**

When they all come into view at the same time you know you are in for a special golfing experience and even more so this month when Turnberry hosts its fourth Open Championship.

Each time The Open has been held in this particular corner of Ayrshire it has been memorable. The Dual in the Sun –, the 1977 classic shootout involving Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus, tops most lists as the best Open ever; while Greg Norman in 1986 and Nick Price in 1994

## “Royal Birkdale was in great nick and Carnoustie looked fabulous, so the bar is getting higher”

George Brown

emerged victorious in two excellent Championships. Expectations are therefore high for 2009.

For one man it will be a particularly poignant occasion as Courses and Estates Manager, George Brown, will have prepared the Ailsa Course for his third Open and the final time, before handing over the day-to-day running of the Greenkeeping team and taking an ambassadorial/consultancy role at the club.

“I’m really looking forward to this year’s Open. In ’86 we were really thrown into the deep end. I’d only taken over the November before, following the death of the then Head Greenkeeper, Russell Brown, and we had an exceptionally young crew without a lot of greenkeeping experience,” explained George, as we sat in the bar of the Turnberry Clubhouse, while, in another room, Open Champion Padraig Harrington was giving interviews to media as part of his sponsorship obligations during a Wilson corporate day.

“In ’94 it was easier as we had the experience of ’86 behind us, and I’ve been lucky that I retained, and I’ll still retain, much of that crew now.

“Between myself and my three Head Greenkeepers, Martin Lothian, Jimmy Johnstone and Tom Cuthill, we’ve got over 100 years of experience at Turnberry while our Mechanic, Jim Campbell, has also been here for more than 20 years. Many of our assistants also have a lot of experience.

“So we’ve all been down this road before. We all know what is expected and they all know what my standards are. Last year I thought Royal Birkdale was in great nick and the year before Carnoustie was absolutely fabulous, so the noose is getting tighter and the bar is getting higher. It’s nice to have experience to draw on to meet those challenges.”

George, who received BIGGA’s Lifetime Achievement Award at Harrogate this January, will have worked for a different Turnberry hotel owner at each of his three Opens and he is delighted that the current owner, Leisurecorp, places so much importance on the golf courses.

Evidence of this is the fact that the Ailsa Course closed to all play in October of last year and has only been open for the odd day occasionally since March.

“It is extremely rare for this to happen and rather nice. We knew we

had a large renovation programme to undertake and we also delayed a few projects because we knew this was coming. It gave us a free hand to get on without golf balls flying at us and all the related health and safety issues.”

The team have certainly made full use of this time and the hard work has resulted in some spectacular results over the non-golf period and the previous year.

All the bunkers have been renovated and revetted while 21 more have been added since previous Turnberry Opens.

“We’ve got 85 now which is well below the likes of Carnoustie and Lytham, but I think they are in the right place. The game is changing and the players would just murder the course if we hadn’t put in a few extra bunkers and tees to challenge them. We don’t want to trick it up or make it unplayable, but it has got to host an Open with the best players in the world and offer them a stiff challenge, otherwise they wouldn’t appreciate it.”

The break for play has allowed the team to carry out some intensive work that wouldn’t have been possible with golfers playing the course.

“Being closed enabled us to carry out aeration and vertidrainage of all the fairways and rough, not just once but three times throughout the winter, as well as working on the compacted areas – walkways, pathways and semi,” said George,



The War Memorial Monument  
© Eric Hepworth



Bunker at the 2nd Fairway: Ailsa  
© Eric Hepworth

who highlighted the cause as the problems of powered trolleys with wide wheels, heavy batteries and big bags, as well as new waterproofs which enable golfers to go out rain or shine.

“I’ve got a powered trolley myself and go out regardless of the weather and the number of rounds, coupled with the extra footfall of caddies we have here just adds to the compaction.”

This year has seen the Turnberry team return to a greenkeeping practice not seen for many years and George for one is delighted to see it.

“We’ve been taking seaweed from the beach and mixing it with our compost and that’s something we used to do but labour costs, and the quality of the ready done mix





**The white lighthouse at dusk**  
 © Eric Hepworth  
[www.hepworthgolfphotography.com](http://www.hepworthgolfphotography.com)

**MAIN ABOVE:** The white lighthouse at Turnberry sits on the edge of the course, by the sea, overlooking Ailsa Craig, the giant curling stone-producing rock. © Leisurecorp

**LEFT:** Bunker on the Ailsa course  
 © Leisurecorp





meant we stopped doing it. Now with transport and fuel costs going up it is back to being more economical again to take it off the beach and do it ourselves. It's got to be better to use natural local materials."

While never being complacent six weeks out George was confident that everything that could be in place before July 16 had been done.

"We are in the lovely position where we are nitpicking. There is nothing major to be done," he explained.

While work has been on-going on the Ailsa Course a huge multi-million pound refurbishment has been carried out on the hotel and it too has been closed since last October and re-opens in July as Turnberry, A Luxury Collection Resort, Scotland, following completion of the first phase of the renovations in readiness for The Open Championship. It has resulted in a new supply of staff for the golf course.

"With the hotel closed some of the staff came down to give us a helping hand and liked the work so much they asked for a transfer to the greenkeeping team, including three ladies who had worked for housekeeping but who are now with us on a full time basis. We probably had around 25 people at different times and they became extra hands for us doing labouring work, stacking turf or working on the hotel grounds."

The additional staff are just an example of the investment that Leisurecorp has put into Turnberry at a time when most golf clubs are experiencing the opposite.

"We've only ever hand mowed greens at Turnberry for VIP Tournaments, and I had told my bosses that we didn't have the resources to do it, but now that's all changed and we have purchased a fleet of additional machinery well as increasing staffing levels.

## **"Between myself and my three Head Greenkeepers, we've got over 100 years of experience at Turnberry"**

George Brown

We've gone from 34 to 50 full time staff for the three courses and the Hotel grounds," said George.

"Never had that before, and it happens just when you're leaving," he laughed.

Perhaps the most dramatic change to the golf course for this year's Open is the 16th hole, which is now a superb dogleg.

I realised by looking at the stats from previous Opens and major tournaments that the four weakest holes from a scoring perspective were the par-3s 4th and 11th and the 16th and 17th and you don't really want two of your easiest holes to be so close to the end of a round.





**COURSE FEATURE**

**LEFT:** 16th Tee at Ailsa.  
**MAIN LEFT:** 17th Tee heading out towards the village  
**MAIN BELOW:** 16th green, connected by the viaduct.  
**INSET BELOW:** 3rd Tee, divided by the path.  
 © Eric Hepworth  
 www.hepworthgolfphotography.com



“We’d never been able to do much with the par-5 17th - at which Eduardo Romero, incredibly, hit a drive and a sandwedge during the Seniors’ Open two years ago - because the 16th fairway prevented us from pushing the tee back, but we had to do something.

One of our greenkeepers, Gary Bryden, happened to say that it was a pity we couldn’t move the fairway a bit, and that planted the seed.

“I wrote down a list of half a dozen positives and presented them to my boss, and the R&A. They were delighted with the idea so the R&A’s architect, Martin Ebert, came in and Ely Bros carried out the construction work and we did the turfing in-house. 16th fairway moved over to become a dogleg and so the 17th tee was moved back 80 yards.

“The 16th is now one hell of a hole now while the 17th is also more of a par-5,” he said.

Another hole where George’s input has left a mark is the 10th the Championship tee has been moved on to a little rocky outcrop forcing the a drive over the coastline hopefully to the sanctuary of the fairway.

“I’d been wanting to build the tee out there for years and finally I got the go ahead to do it.”

George, who is 70, had earmarked this Open for his retirement some time ago and his successor, Euan Grant.

Euan has previous Open experience having been Head Greenkeeper of The Old Course, St Andrews, in 2005, has been shadowing him for the last few months, doing a good job and taking the pressure of George.

However he is keen to play down the feelings he expects to have when lined up at the prize giving and the new Champion holds the Claret Jug aloft.

“I’m not going to finish up after the final put on Sunday. There is lots of work to do after The Open when the grandstands and the marquees come down and you’ve got to keep an eye on some contractors as they’re not quite so fussy during the dismantling stage.”

“It is a lovely way to bow out though. To have been in the business all these years and then have the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Open Championship in the same year is a massive bonus. To have just one of them is something you’d dream about,” said George.

“I won’t be under Euan’s feet that’s for sure. I’ll play more golf and pop in for a cup of tea with the boys now and then.”

But you can be sure that there will be no prouder man – including the new Champion himself – standing in the Presentation Party on that July Sunday evening.



**GEORGE BROWN**

Ambassador of Turnberry Ailsa Golf Course

Courses and Estates Manager since November 1985

Received BIGGA’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009



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# Dealing with dry patch

(it isn't all about the wetting agent)

Charles Henderson, STRI Turfgrass Agronomist for the North East, shares his technical expertise

This article comes to you courtesy of the BIGGA Learning and Development Fund.



**During the last four years advising in New Zealand, working with sports turf in a subtropical climate, dry patch has presented itself on several occasions, often leading to disease occurrence, unsightly and bumpy greens and hours of labour being lost trying to treat the knock-on problems and re-wet the affected areas.**

In general, the industry is pro-active in treating dry patch preventatively but it is still common for turf managers to experience the condition. This article aims to discuss some of the issues around the condition, its treatments and accompanying cultural practices that are commonly lacking in treating dry patch.

## Is your soil water repellent or do you have dry patch?

Hydrophobic soil conditions that lead to dry patch can occur for many reasons including:

- The build up of waxy residues that coat the soil particles caused by the bi-product of fungal activity in the affected area. This is often closely linked with fairy rings (basidiomycetes).

- Excessive and/or layered thatch within the top 20-30 mm of the green profile can contribute to dry patch by severely restricting water movement through the surface.

- Allowing soils to exceed a critical moisture deficiency after which re-wetting becomes significantly harder.

- Compacted soils and/or contaminated layers within the soil profile restricting water movement into or through the soil profile.

When trying to prevent and/or treat dry patch of any kind it is imperative we identify the exact cause of the condition to avoid wasted treatments.

## Identifying dry patch preventatively

The best people to identify where dry patch might occur are the turf managers who have worked on the course for several years. Generally speaking, dry patch will occur in the same areas every year, so local experience is beneficial.

If you don't have the luxury of site specific experience, look carefully at your turf. Patches that look different, either through colour (often darker green) or species content

(usually more prone to bentgrasses/fescues), may indicate the presence of dry soil conditions. If areas that look different are identified then take a core sample to check soil moisture.

Examine the soil cores and look for some of the following:

- Any layers that might effect downward water movement.

- Any distinct layer of excessive thatch.

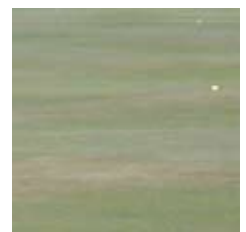
- Drop 'droplets' of water onto the soil core at various depth. Are the 'droplets' absorbed into the soil quickly?

Alternatively 'guestimating' where dry patch might occur for preventative treatments isn't unreasonable, especially in high areas or sloping greens.

## Wetting agent terminology

As new wetting agents 'flood' the market claiming new modes of action, the risk of using the incorrect wetting agents for specific dry patch problems has increased. Using the incorrect wetting agent may result in reduced effectiveness of the application and wasted time.

In general, wetting agents are based on three modes of action:



MAIN ABOVE and INSET ABOVE: examples of dry patch







**about the author**

Charles Henderson is a recent addition to the STRI's South East Consultancy Team. Prior to that he had spent four years as Sports Turf Agronomist for the New Zealand Sports Turf Institute.

- Non-ionic surfactants – designed to help water stick to soil particles.
- Block Copolymers – designed to assist in the spread and retention of water within the soil profile.

- Organosilicones – improving the speed at which water moves through the soil.

In practical terms wetting agents have one or a combination of the following functions:

- Preventative – designed to help water particles 'stick' to previously hydrophobic soil particles.

- Curative – designed to break-down the waxy residues coating particles and wash them out of the rootzone. Note these can also be used preventatively.

- Penetrative – designed to improve water penetration through the surface and soil profile. These can also be used for dew control.

- Dispersion agents – designed to improve the dispersion (even movement) of water movement through the soil profile.

Confused? Many wetting agents on the market today are multi-functional and can act as a combination of the table shown on the right.

It is recommended you contact your regional agronomist to discuss further which wetting agents are right for your situation.

## Example of soil wetting products, modes of action and distributor

Neither the list of products nor the distributors is exhaustive. Other products are available and each product may be available from other distributors.

| Product            | Distributor               | Straight/Blend | Chemistry                                | Advertised Uses |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--|-----------------|
| Advantage pellet   | Farmura                   | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | b, e            |
| Alleviate          | Sherriff's Amenity        | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant and organosilicone  | b, e            |
| Aqua-Aid           | Vitax                     | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | c, f, g         |
| AquaMaxx           | Vitax                     | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, e, f         |
| Aqueduct           | Farmura                   | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | b, e            |
| Aquifer            | Vitax                     | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, f, g         |
| Aqua - zorb        | Turftech/Sherriff Amenity | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, b, d, g      |
| Award Osprey       | Aitkens/Avoncrop          | Blend          | Block copolymer                          | a, b, e, f      |
| Breaker Advance    | Rigby Taylor              | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, b, e, f      |
| Breaker Curative   | Rigby Taylor              | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | b, d            |
| Clearing           | Vitax                     | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | c, e            |
| Correct OARS       | Tower Chemicals           | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant and organic solvent | d, e, f         |
| Dewcure            | Headland                  | Straight       | Non-ionic surfactant                     | e               |
| Dispatch           | Farmura                   | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | c, f, g         |
| Excel              | Sherriff Amenity          | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant and organosilicone  | b, e            |
| Fifty 90           | Farmura                   | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, b, e, f, g   |
| H <sub>2</sub> Pro | Scotts                    | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, b, e, f, g   |
| Inflo XL           | Headland                  | Straight       | Organosilicone                           | b, e            |
| Noburn             | Novozymes                 |                | Yucca plant extract                      | a, e, f         |
| OARS® Curative     | Vitax                     | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant and organic solvent | b, d, e, f      |
| Percol-8           | Vitax                     | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | c, f, g         |
| Primer Select      | Farmura                   | Straight       | Block copolymer                          | a, b, e, f, g   |
| Revolution         | Farmura                   | Straight       | Modified block Copolymer                 | a, b, e, f, g   |
| TricureAD          | Headland                  | Blend          | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, b, e, f, g   |
| Ultraflo           | Vitax                     | Straight       | Non-ionic surfactant                     | a, c, e         |
| XL Fairway         | Headland                  | Straight       | Organosilicone                           | c, e            |

- a – To treat localised dry patch preventatively
- b – To treat localised dry patch curatively
- c – To manage fairy ring
- d – To strip away organic coatings on sand grains
- e – Aid water penetration/dew removal
- f – Help ensure even water distribution in the rootzone
- g – Reduce irrigation requirements

Please note the information contained in the above table has been taken from the respective product labels. STRI does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of these claims



## Prevention is still better than cure

Generally, the industry has moved forward with the treatment of dry patch and the majority of clubs that know they will experience the condition treat it preventatively.

There are a range of products available to turf managers for the preventative treatment of dry patch and much debate goes on as to the effectiveness of each. However, it is as important to ensure you use the correct type of agent for specific dry patch problems.

It's not all about the wetting agent. Simply applying a wetting agent and watering it in without acknowledging what we need to achieve can lead to disappointment. There are numerous accompanying practices we need to consider when applying wetting agent.

Get it in whilst it is still wet. Preventing dry patch using preventative wetting agents requires the product to be moved through the soil profile to depth (0-125 mm). This is best achieved whilst there is still good soil moisture present. Spring treatments (late March/April) will achieve this best but monitor soil conditions.

Irrigation. After the application of any wetting agent watering in of the product may be required. However, the aim of the irrigation after wetting agent applications is to water the product into the green soil profile, not off it!

It is generally stated that people flood their greens to get water to move through the soil profile, this practice will encourage newly applied wetting agents to follow the path of least resistance, washing away from where its required (high knobs) to where it's not (already moist areas).

For example, we apply around 15-20 minutes of irrigation to flood the green applying around 10 mm of water. This risks creating surface run-off washing the product away from where it's required (high area and slopes) or worse, off the green.

Alternatively monitor your greens irrigation and observe how long it is before surface 'ponding' starts to occur (let's say 4-5 minutes), this then becomes your maximum run-time. So, rather than applying 15-20 minutes in one hit, we apply 3-4 irrigation schedules each 4-5 minutes in duration, 1 hour apart. This will minimise flooding and surface run-off whilst ensuring the product is thoroughly washed into the soil profile to depth.

Monitor soil conditions. Apparently our seasons aren't what they once were. As such, applying your

preventative wetting agent the exact same time as last year might not be as effective. It's easy to get caught out by early droughts, especially after the two summers we have just had. Monitor soil moisture in known dry patch areas and evapotranspiration rates, these will better allow you to judge when wetting agent applications should be made.

Get the rate right. This might seem obvious but getting the right rate of product and water rate will significantly impact on how much effect you get from application. Rates too low will significantly reduce the effectiveness of your product and in severe cases could make the application a waste of time. On the other hand, excessive application rates carry a risk of turf scorching. Simple but good advice here is read the label, contact STRI or the company supplying the product for technical advice.

Run the full programme. Starting your preventative programme in early spring will help increase your chances of minimising dry patch occurrence. Rarely in practice will one application last for the whole summer. Following a programme of preventative applications will significantly increase your chances of success.

## Curative treatments

Either your preventative programme hasn't worked or you're just unlucky but it's got to midsummer and you have full blown dry patch. Where to from here?

Once it's at this stage the application of preventative or curative wetting agents alone will have minimal effect. At this point we need to look at curative wetting agents or those that aid water penetration then followed by preventative wetting agents, depending on where your problems lies.

If you're dealing with excessive thatch or fairy ring induced dry patch, a curative wetting agent thoroughly washed into the soil will be effective in breaking down the waxy residues. If you're dealing with low water infiltration or high run-off then a wetting agent to aid water penetration will have greater effect.

Once the dry patch has been fixed, remember the wetting agent isn't going to re-wet the soil profile for you. Additional irrigation (hand watering) and cultural practices will be required.

Hand watering. Targeted watering of difficult to re-wet areas prone to surface run-off will be required, the same logic applies to this too. Simply pouring water onto the affected area will result in washing

the product off the surface, repeated light applications for short intervals will achieve the best results. Monitor the soil profile to observe how far applied water has penetrated the soil profile.

Punch holes where required. In your most severe high spots or sloping greens getting the product into and through the top 20-30 mm is hard. Where such cases present themselves, simply throwing more product and irrigation at them will have minimal benefit. Focus on aiding the wetting agent and irrigation into the profile (not beyond it).

Observe the depth of your thatch layer and punch small holes (4-6 mm) into the thatch layer (not beyond) to create small pod-like capture chambers for water and wetting agent. From these, better surface water infiltration can be achieved.

Take care not to go too deep when dealing with full sand profiles as such spiking may cause the wetting agent to go beyond the problem zone.

Get the bucket out if necessary. Perhaps the most effective and resource efficient treatment of isolated dry patch is to simply insert a bottomless bucket or rings into the dry patch and fill with a wetting agent/water mix. Simply leave this until the water has infiltrated right through the soil profile. Using this method ensures all the wetting agent and water efficiently treats the dry patch and re-wets it.

## Conclusion

The causes of isolated dry patch or hydrophobic soils are varied and so it is important to identify the exact type and nature of dry patch or hydrophobic soil before treating it.

Depending on the type or cause of dry patch you have, the condition will require specific products and treatments to tackle the issue. This might even involve different treatments on different areas of the green. Ensuring we use the correct product will significantly increase the effectiveness of the treatment. However, in many cases simply relying on the product alone to prevent/cure dry patch may lead to disappointing results.

Accompanying cultural practices such as spiking, watering in of the product and hand watering are every bit as important as the wetting agent application.

The correct wetting agent can be effective in preventing or curing dry patch if it is able to get through the soil profile, for it to do this, additional practices might be required.

Another example of dry patch



This article comes to you courtesy of the BIGGA Learning and Development Fund.

Thank you to all our key sponsors





# Strike A Pose

BIGGA's Photographic Competition, supported by Syngenta, is back...

**syngenta**

**Calling all budding photographers! Are you proud of your course? Do you catch yourself admiring it in a certain light?**

The BIGGA Photographic Competition, supported by Syngenta and back for its fourth year, creates an opportunity for greenkeepers to display their artistic flair, while also earning some publicity for their club.

The winner will receive a full course profile in Greenkeeper International and a special prize, while the 12 best pictures will be selected for the 2010 BIGGA Calendar.

Photographs will be accepted in three

forms. Prints, transparencies, or digitally. Digital pictures must be at 300 dpi (dots per inch) on the camera's highest quality setting, and capable of being scaled up to A3 print size (42cm wide x 29.7cm high). Please note, cropping may occur if photos are to appear in the magazine or calendar. Also please ensure digital photos do not show the time/date display!

Anyone wishing to enter should email them to: [tom@bigga.co.uk](mailto:tom@bigga.co.uk), entering 'BIGGA PHOTO COMP' as the email subject header.

Alternatively post to: Tom Campbell, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark Manor, Alne, York, YO61 1UF by July 31, 2009.

Only BIGGA members are eligible to enter. Please note Syngenta will have access to the winning pictures and will credit them when and if used.

Winning photographs from last year's competition are shown. At the top of the page is the winner, Marriott Meon Valley GC – Looking West by Dean McMenemy.

Above right is Hankley Common GC – Dewying Green by Gareth Roberts, which came second. Below right is Papillion, Montgomerie (Turkey), by Liam Bergin, which came third.

*So come on...strike a pose!*



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# Lightning Strikes Twice

## for Rigby Taylor

**A lightning storm** caused the competition to be stopped early, but it didn't prevent Rigby Taylor **winning for the second time**

**The Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day has experienced a huge range of weather over the last few years, including hail storms, high winds and two years ago it was postponed because of flooding, but now it can add a thunder and lightning storm to the list.**

Aldwark Manor had rarely looked in better shape when the newly-introduced Shotgun format had all 20 teams tee off at noon in glorious sunshine.

However, black clouds began to gather a couple of hours later and before long a spectacular lightning

storm could be seen several miles to the west of the course.

With safety very much to the forefront, a cautionary eye was kept on it and when the lightning started to hit a little closer, the klaxon went off and everyone returned to the hotel.

At that stage it was still hoped that the golf would restart but after three quarters of an hour, and heavy rain outside, the decision was taken to call it a day and the results were based on the final nine holes that everyone had played.

Winners of the 2009 event were Rigby Taylor 1 - taking the title for the second time - comprising Ian White-

head, Mike Brear, Paul Doherty and Kim Kirkham, who just edged the Northern Region team of Jeremy Hughes, Ian Holoran, Jonny Evans and David Golding on a last six countback with a score of 43, based on two scores of the four counting.

Third place was the BIGGA HQ guest team lead by Chief Executive, John Pemberton; Craig Manson and Russ Grimshaw, with 41 points.

Q Hotels made a superb job of organising the event and brought the buffet forward by an hour to enable everyone to enjoy their meal and make a slightly earlier journey home.

**INSET ABOVE:** The victorious Rigby Taylor quartet show off the trophy

**BELOW:** Aldwark Manor and the course viewed from bridge - in the sunshine before the storm



**Golf Day Tee Sponsors:**







BIGGA Board Team One; Paul Worster anticipates the putt by Duncan Bagshaw, clearly unphased by the pressure of the camera



The pleasant surroundings at Aldwark GC, with the departing Scotts team in the distance



Clive Higginbotham shows the Scotts team how to tee-off!



The Northern Region team, driven away by David Golding



The Northern Region team, runners up overall



The team at Warners crouch for a shot as professional as the magazine they print, Greenkeeper International!



Swinging in the rain...BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, tees off just before the storm





**MAIN ABOVE:** The tricky par-5 14th welcomes some more potential victims

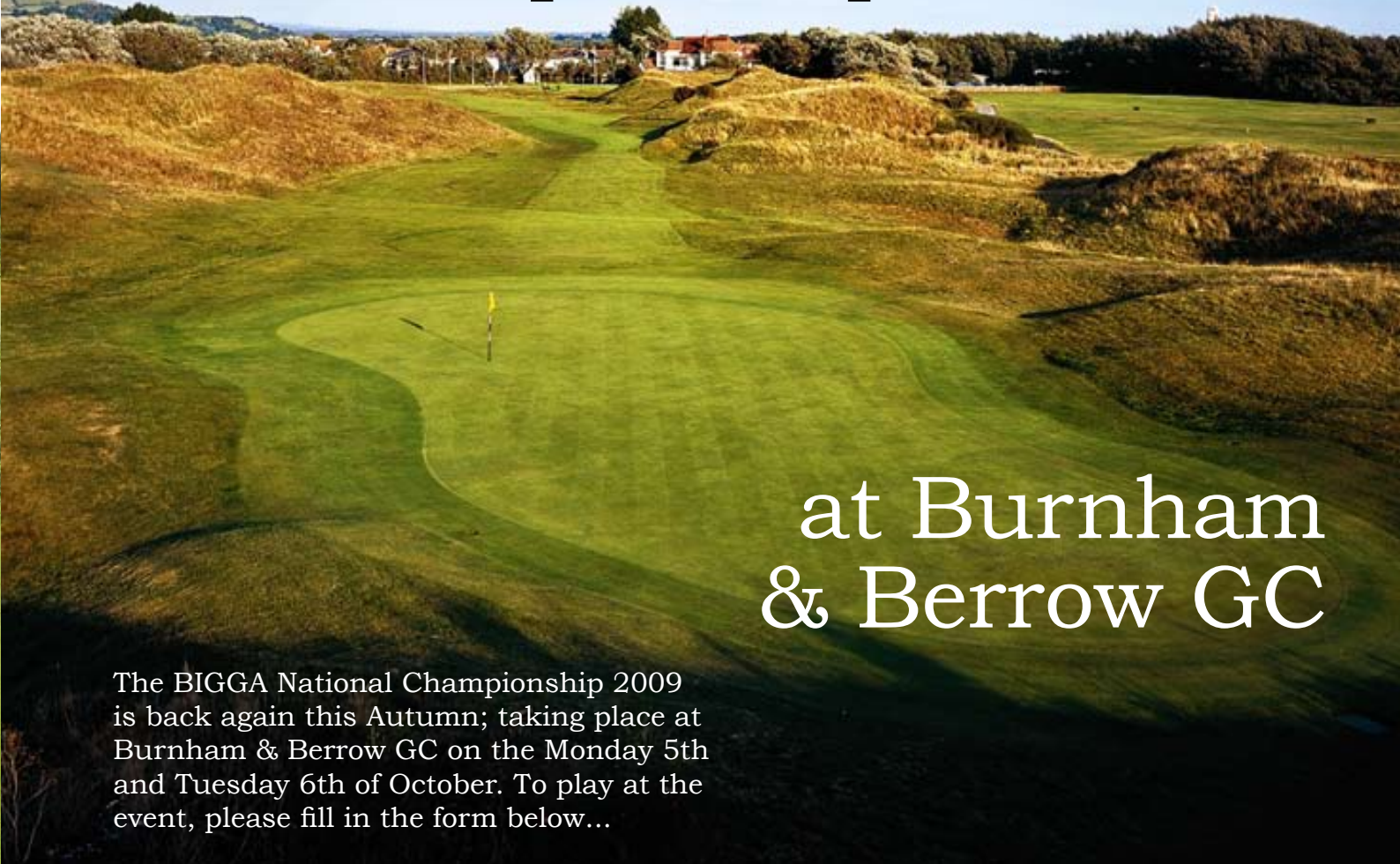
**INSET ABOVE:** Aldwark Manor Course Manager, Richard Gamble, chomping at the bit

**LEFT:** The John Deere team display fine-form off the tee





# The National Championship 2009



## at Burnham & Berrow GC

The BIGGA National Championship 2009 is back again this Autumn; taking place at Burnham & Berrow GC on the Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th of October. To play at the event, please fill in the form below...

### Please select the relevant category:

- Greenkeeper Member
- Associate Member

The entry fee of £80 includes all golf fees, lunch both days and dinner on Monday evening. Please note that there is no accommodation provided.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

..... Post Code .....

Mobile .....

E-mail.....

Membership Number .....

Handicap .....

BIGGA Section.....

### Payment method (please tick)

- I enclose my cheque made payable to 'BIGGA' value £80
- Please debit my Mastercard / Switch / Visa / Delta card with the fee of £80

Card number .....

Start Date .....

Expiry Date.....

Last 3 security digits.....

Issue No. (Switch/Delta only) .....

Signature.....

Date .....

Or E-mail your details to:

**sandra@bigga.co.uk**

Ensure you receive confirmation of entry by return E-mail.

### Deadline for entry is 11th September 2009.



Completed entry forms should be sent to:

**BIGGA National Championship, BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF**

The main tournament for the Challenge Trophy will be played over 36 holes, medal play, with the best overall gross score producing the BIGGA National Champion, who must be a greenkeeper member. The greenkeeper player with the lowest nett score will be presented with the BIGGA Challenge Cup.

There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd over 36 holes in both the nett and gross categories, additionally after each day of 18 holes there will be prizes for winners of handicap divisions. The BIGGA Regional Team Cup and prize will be calculated from the 8 best nett scores over the first day of play. If you have a poor first day an alternative Stableford competition will be held on the second day of play.





# Candid in Camera

**Candid** *adj.* frank, not hiding one's thoughts  
**In Camera** *adj. or adv.* phrase. In private.

There are many things you'd like to say, but can't because of the potential consequences. Greenkeeper International is offering you the chance to be a little more free with what you say, safe in the knowledge that your identity will be protected. The first Course Manager to be Candid in Camera has some extremely interesting things to say about dealing with staff and golf club members...

I'm employed by my golf club to manage the course and enable us to bring in revenue. I use my staff to do that and I believe that I have to have to keep a certain distance between me, as a manager, and the staff.

I have a great laugh with my staff but they know I'm not going to go on nights out and come in rolling drunk with them at 2am. However, I will fight to make sure they get the best equipment to do their job and we all have Gore Tex waterproofs and boots etc.

It's vital that as a Course Manager you remember who pays your wages so when it comes down to a tough decision you have to side with the club. A lot of Course Managers have a fear that if they side with the club their staff won't appreciate them or want to work for them.

That's where a skill in management comes in. I am a Manager, not a Shop Steward and, in my position, I have to be the one to break the news that they're not going to get a pay rise because the club can't afford it. I also have to tell them that I support the decision and that I full agree with it... even if, on balance, I don't.

If I were to say, "I don't agree with the decision and I'll fight to get you a pay rise." and it got out, the management would quite rightly be unhappy with me for not supporting their decision.

You have to remember that the green staff are not going to pay

your mortgage if you get sacked.

I had to make a very difficult decision recently and make a guy redundant. He was a really nice bloke, but as a responsible manager I decided that, as we were not going to undertake any projects over the winter because of budget cuts, we had too many staff and I could make a significant saving for the club. Would I have been able to make that decision if I had been really friendly with him? I reckon I'd have said "He's a good lad. I'll keep him on". But if I had I wouldn't have

been fulfilling my contractual obligation to make the most of the resources and the budget. If the club had overspent on the year would I have been able to say that I'd done everything I could to prevent it? I don't think so.

I would advise young greenkeepers to work hard and to appreciate that there is a big gulf between the job a greenkeeper does and the job a Course Manager does. It's a long hard road to cross that divide and you've got to decided early in your career if you are going to work hard for the five or six years it takes to be able to progress - often perhaps not feeling that you are getting

anywhere. That is what you need to do to put yourself in a position where you can ultimately manage a Turnberry or a Wentworth..

I've learned from some of the best Course Managers in the business and at a young age was taking in how things were done - good and bad - and have put those lessons to good use on the courses I have managed. I'd say watch, learn and take on board.

Don't be disruptive and argumentative. I must admit I was guilty of this a few times when I was younger. When I thought

## A lot of Course Managers have a fear that if they side with the club their staff won't appreciate them or want to work for them

the Head Greenkeeper was doing something wrong I found myself saying, "At college they say you should hollow tine twice a year..."

By all means ask your manager why something is being done, or not done. You can ask his reasoning but don't question his decision making. Don't say, "What are you doing that for?" Much better to say, "Why are you doing that?"

I truly believe that there are very few bad Course Managers out there. Nine times out of ten what sets a not-so-good golf course





off from the rest is ground conditions – how well it drains etc – and the resources that are available to the Course Manager.

You could go to a course at the poorer end of the scale, one which everyone says is bad, give the Head Greenkeeper £200,000 and tell him to buy what he needs and do what he wants.

I guarantee that he'd do as good a job as the next Course Manager.

My budget is half of that at a club a few miles away and they pay their staff more than us and are able to carry out additional work. Just because they overseed four times a year and I can only afford to do it twice doesn't make me the poorer Course Manager. However, a young greenkeeper might think that I'm not doing my job properly until he asks "Why aren't we doing more overseeding?" and I can explain the full picture.

One of the main problems we face is difficult staff and sometimes we have to take the tough decision to go down the performance management route.

A member of staff might be causing you so much grief and trouble that he drags everyone down for 12-18 months. Standards could drop as a result and it could conceivably end up costing you your job.

Someone first advised me to go down the performance management route when I had

a problem member of staff and I must admit I thought that I hadn't got the time to do all of what was required – it would be a year before I would have enough evidence to sack him. But it is the only way that the law is on our side and if we have a problem member of staff we shouldn't be frightened to take the long haul.

It can also have positive results. I started performance management on one guy and he soon became my best member of staff. It gave him a kick up the backside and stopped him coasting.

It made him ask himself if he wanted the job and when he did start working effectively he realised that he quite liked it. You may also find that the person who has been giving you problems hasn't been given any real direction.

If you're performance managing someone they might still be off "sick" for 50% of the time but at least during the 50% they are in they are performing to a standard you want.

If you do things by the book ACAS and the law will back you up. Don't be frightened.

When it comes to the club members despite the fact that I may come across as quite aggressive, people are amazed at how polite I can be to members when they have done something wrong. If, for example, I see a member not replacing a divot I may say to my staff, "I'll have him" but I'll go over and say, "Excuse me Sir, but

would you mind replacing your divot.

It really does help the greens staff and saves us a lot of time and effort which we can then put into other areas of the course."

By saying it in such a way it gives them nowhere to go. They can't very well say that they don't want to help us produce a good golf course.

A lot of greenkeepers would go up to the guy and say along the lines of "What am I? Your slave? Put your bloody divot back." If you take the "Get off my land" approach you will soon alienate 20 or 30 members and they will tell their friends and all of a sudden you'll have the entire membership against you.

At the first sign of something going wrong you'll have real problems.

If you've been firm but respectful towards them they are more likely to say that our Course Manager has got a bit of disease but he knows what he's doing.

What I believe I've achieved since being at this club is a feeling of "Don't mess around with him. He knows his stuff and you can talk to him as long as you don't try to tell him what to do." I've heard them saying "Hello. Head Greenkeeper's about. Careful where you leave your trolley." That's what I want.

A lot of it is creating the environment where members are helping and working with us to produce a top standard golf course.









# Green Credit Where it is Due

**Greenkeepers everywhere are under pressure to do more with less. The summer of 2009 is expected to feature heatwaves, water shortages and cash-flow problems. The Golf Environment Organisation (GEO) can't promise quick fixes for the major issues of the day, but it is empowering Course Managers everywhere to keep environmental performance on the agenda through difficult times.**





**With the launch of its new site - [www.golfenvironment.org](http://www.golfenvironment.org) - GEO has firmly established its position as the leading source of free environmental knowledge and guidance for industry professionals. But while the organisation has served up useful websites in the past, this time around something is very different.**

“Connecting golf course managers with technical information has only ever been half the story. While industry publications, award schemes and educational events do an excellent job of raising awareness within the sector; we’re all guilty of failing to represent our good work to the rest of the world,” said GEO Chief Executive, Jonathan Smith.

“People within golf, and those close to it, are fully aware that baseline environmental performance in the sector is extremely high, certainly far in advance of that which is appreciated by the general public, and often golf club members themselves.

“With the launch of GEO Certification this is all set to change. Greenkeepers everywhere now have access to an efficient and user-friendly tool that enables them to clearly communicate exactly how they are managing their natural resource. This creates a brand new opportunity to improve dramatically

the reputations of individual clubs, and with widespread participation, the industry as a whole.

“And the best news is that registering with the programme – and putting your golf facility onto the GEO Certification map – is completely free of charge,” explained Jonathan.

Archie Dunn, Head Greenkeeper at Auchterarder Golf Club published his Registration Report in June 2009.

“After taking a few minutes to set up an account, our management team spent an hour here and an hour there answering GEO’s simple registration questions. We also uploaded an environmental policy document and received some writing assistance from our long-time environmental adviser. All in all this process took around five hours over the course of three weeks,” said Archie.

“The questions we had to answer progressed clearly through issues such as nature, landscape, water, turf, waste, energy, education and management planning. The information and resources available on GEO’s website are also structured in the same way. It was very easy to find answers for any of the questions we had.

“After pressing the button to submit our application, someone from GEO’s certification team double checked our answers for

## The Certification Process



| ACTION                                     | TIMESCALE     | COST          |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Register on-line</b>                    | ½ day         | FREE          |
| <b>Improve environmental management</b>    | Up to 3 years | Staff Time    |
| <b>Apply for certification on-line</b>     | 1 day         | €150          |
| <b>Evaluation from Accredited Verifier</b> | 1 day         | €600 - €1400  |
| <b>Apply for re-certification</b>          | Every 3 years | Same as above |



completeness. The application was then accepted and a great looking report was automatically generated. It's available for anyone to read on GEO's website and will remain there until June 2012, or until we become fully certified and it's replaced by our certification report.

"Since completing registration we have received a "Certificate of Participation" which is now framed and displayed in our clubhouse. We also adapted a template press release from GEO and have distributed it through local media, advising the local community of our participation in the programme.

"All in all the feedback has been great and our members are very interested in the programme. In fact, many of them have visited our page on GEO's website and voiced their surprise at all the huge variety of expertise required to maintain our golf course to the standard that we do.

"Considering this was all free of charge, and took around half a day to complete, it has been a really worthwhile project so far," added Archie.

While preparing The Twenty Ten Course at Celtic Manor for tour-

## Certification Outcomes

### Accepted

Certification report published; verifiers report published; certified status promoted on GEO website

### Pending

Verifier / GEO provides feedback on improvements necessary for award of certification. Re-verification visit required only in extreme circumstances.

### Rejected

Legal non-compliance or failure to meet published criteria. Nothing will be published. GEO's objective is not to name and shame.

nament play presents a different challenge, Director of Golf Courses, Jim McKenzie, also found the registration process rewarding.

"After setting up our account we decided to separate the Celtic Manor golf courses into two applications: one for The Twenty Ten Course, and another covering the Montgomerie and Roman Road courses. GEO will actually certify up to 54 holes under a single application, but given the European Tour status of The Twenty Ten we thought it would be best to maintain two separate certifications.

"Although the standards of environmental management across The Celtic Manor Resort are already very high, registering The Twenty Ten Course has been an informative process. GEO has clearly spent a great deal of time fine-tuning the structure of the programme and has helped my team focus on priority issues and avoid expending time and effort on less significant activities.

"Effectively communicating our environmental performance is very important to Celtic Manor. We're offering a great product, and setting out to achieve the standards required for GEO Certification will only make it better. Our customers want to know that their enjoyment of the game does not carry hidden environmental costs. Promoting ourselves as a GEO Certified golf facility lets everyone know we're managing our environmental responsibility, and if they're interested, lets them see exactly how we're achieving that."

Having worked with the website during its preview stage, Stig Persson – General Manager of Ljunghusens Golfklubb and Chairman of FEGGA – has seen the system mature into a polished product.

"Representing Ljunghusens' environmental work through GEO's website was remarkably efficient. It enabled our management team to constructively collaborate and integrated into our workflow with ease," said Stig

"We applied for certification in mid May and appointed Marten Wallberg, a GEO Accredited Verifier based in Sweden to come out and evaluate our work. During the course of his one-day visit we received a great deal of valuable insight and have established achievable targets for re-certification in 2012.

"No matter the sophistication of any existing environmental programmes, working through GEO's free registration process will certainly help greenkeepers and club managers to structure and prioritise their work - a significant benefit in difficult economic times.

"We've been actively promoting our GEO Certified status in the local community and have been directing people to view our page on GEO's site. The award has actually generated a great deal of interest around the country."

Benjamin Warren, GEO's Director of Communications, is receiving a great deal of positive feedback from clubs that have completed the registration process.

"More often than not environmental management is common sense



[www.golfenvironment.org/auchterarder](http://www.golfenvironment.org/auchterarder)  
[www.golfenvironment.org/thetwentyten](http://www.golfenvironment.org/thetwentyten)  
[www.golfenvironment.org/ljunghusens](http://www.golfenvironment.org/ljunghusens)

ABOVE: Celtic Manor have put themselves on the environmental map

ABOVE LEFT / PREVIOUS SPREAD: GEO Certification makes sense of managing complex environments

BELOW LEFT: Not just on-line - registered and certified participants receive certificates from GEO

management. GEO Certification has been carefully crafted to enable course managers to quickly identify the strengths and weaknesses of their existing programmes, drive on with cost saving initiatives and easily identify priority areas for improvement," he said.

"Whether a golf club is fortunate enough to receive free advisory through bodies such as the Scottish Golf Environment Group, or is retaining the services of an independent environmental consultant, simply working through the system will help to ensure that any support is engaged as effectively as possible.

"While some of the registrations on the site are very comprehensive – Loch Lomond and Celtic Manor, for example – this should not be considered intimidating. It's only natural that high profile, complex sites will be publishing large and complex registration reports. The key is just to create an account and get started. Publishing an environmental policy and making a simple commitment to responsible management is the first step. GEO will not be refusing registrations on the basis that existing environmental programmes lack sophistication. These published reports can actually be used to raise awareness amongst members and co-workers, frame further actions and drive on performance.

"We can state with complete confidence that GEO Certification is the most efficient, most credible and most cost-effective environmental certification for golf. This truly is an opportunity for course managers everywhere to put their golf club on the environmental map."





# The Opportunity of a Lifetime

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year,  
Matthew Wormald, describes his time  
in America, enjoying his prize







**The journey as Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year is one that will change your life, “or at least the way in which you look at grass”. Every experience on the way to becoming student of the year is a character builder and if not you should at least have learnt something from the experience.**

The realisation that the opportunity of a lifetime and the chance to join only 19 other previous winners hit me as I drove up the avenue towards Aldwark Manor on a sunny September afternoon. The next time I would drive through the gates my life was to change forever.

What happened over the next couple of days is an experience that I will never forget. The hospitality that was given to the finalists by Toro and BIGGA was nothing short of superb and helped to put everyone at ease.

As tough as the road was to becoming Student Greenkeeper of the Year, it would turn out to be nothing, compared to what lies ahead. There was still a visa to sort out, a trip to the American Embassy in London, forms to fill out and the underlying worry of what happens if they don't grant me my visa.

Having not been to America before and having 3,000 miles of ocean between me and the place I call home was something I was looking forward to, yet found very daunting.

I arrived in America on January 5, a day before my birthday, after having no sleep the night before, the five hour wait in a snow covered Detroit airport was just what I needed. The snow was something I was going to have to get used to as temperatures were constantly below zero meant it wasn't going anywhere, anytime soon. The five hour wait for my final flight to Hartford soon passed as I found comfort in California rolls and McDonalds.

The first day of turf school started at 8.30am Monday morning, with free muffins and coffee I had the first glimpse of the classroom and the people I was going to be spend the next seven weeks with. I felt that it was important to establish my position within the group from the very beginning and sitting in the right place, was a start. Too far back and you'd be in the rowdy section, too far forward and you were in the quiet section. I opted for somewhere in the middle.

The first week was somewhat slow, with the teachers allowing everyone to get used to their new surroundings and easing us into the harsh study regime that will follow.

By staying at The Comfort Inn, I was part of a large group that became



the epi-centre of most good nights out. In the first week I had classes such as Turf grass management, Soil science, Entomology, Turf grass mathematics, Turf grass physiology, Irrigation, Trees and guest speakers Bret Johnson and Ron Milenski, from The International, with many more subjects to follow in the coming weeks.

Week two saw the introduction of Weeds, a subject which, at first may sound boring but with a teacher like Randy Probstak it was far from it. A test in every lesson meant time away from the classroom couldn't be wasted.

Everyone had settled down into their own regimes and agendas by the end of week two. Been from England I was nick named "Brit" I had spent the first two weeks trying to convince the Americans that Green isn't great and that they should see a proper golf course like St Andrews during The Open. In true American style they dismissed this ideology and said I was full of "s\*\*t". It was a burden I was prepared to carry on my shoulders, as later on I was to get my revenge.

For the two months I was in America I felt it my duty to change their perception that all English people are like Hugh Grant and on the first night out I had my chance, after a long drinking session on a dark pint called "Two Sisters" (which many Americans fell by the wayside) and three ABC burgers in quick succession, I was the talk of the classroom on the Monday morning. I tried to keep nights out to the weekends as the 6 to 6 regime didn't fit well with hangovers.

Week three we were introduced to Guenwha Jung, a Professor in Turf grass pathology. He had an infectious manner which made him hard to understand and I found myself in stitches when words such as Scrotia, Hypea, Mycellium and Spores were blurted out across the classroom.

Another Professor who had equalled enthusiasm was Pat Vittum, our entomology Professor. She has dedicated 30 years to studying white grubs.

At one point we were subjected to looking at the pattern of hairs on a grub's anus under a microscope to determine which species it was, something I recommend not doing with a hangover.

My first taste of ice hockey was good fun, with my American friends telling me the rules I still had no idea what "the puck" was going on.

With free tickets to basketball, ice hockey and lacrosse, evening entertainment was good.



## “At one point we were subjected to looking at the pattern of hairs on a grub’s anus under a microscope to determine which species it was”

At the beginning of February a trip to the Golf Industry Show in New Orleans, or as they say in America "Nawleans", with fellow Toro winner from Australia, Chris Thompson, it was a nice break from the snow. We had no time to rest, as soon as we walked into the hotel we were met by my College Tutor, Richard Barker, saying that we had no time to check in as we were off to the Toro function. The familiar faces from BIGGA of Sami Collins, John Pemberton and Peter Todd were a nice sight in the "Big Easy". It was nice to meet up with Murray Long, a previous winner of Toro Student of the year and other big names within the industry.

The GIS was suffering from the poor economic climate and the turnout on Saturday was poor. Which was good as you could get round to see everything unhindered. A first glimpse of the new GPS mower stirred mixed emotions among greenkeepers and it was interesting to hear people's opinions about.

The break from the snow was welcomed, but before we knew it we were back to the books. With deadlines approaching for assignments and project work, the social scene took a back seat. With everyone studying The Comfort Inn took on a new, quieter atmosphere. One that was back with vengeance when all deadlines were finished.

For everyone else the experience that was Umass, was over, but for me and my good friend, the Aussie, we still had one week left. A trip to

Toro headquarters in Minneapolis was next on the schedule. I am not scared of flying, but when you can touch either side of the "bean can with wings" that your going to be sitting in for the next three hours, you do start to question aviation designers and where they're going with the whole budget airlines thingy. To see what goes on behind the scene was truly an eye opener. We were fortunate enough to visit the factory at Shakopee, where every Toro part is manufactured. We visited the research department, testing areas and the factory floor. The mind boggles at what goes into making machinery, "I for one, will never whinge at the price of a machine". A final meal with Toro Marketing Manager Barry Beckett marked the end of a truly amazing experience.

My thanks go out to everyone that made the trip to America possible. Christine Wilson at Lely UK was an absolute star. I can't thank Toro enough for the opportunity that they create for Student Greenkeepers, it is an award that I hope runs for many years to come as it truly offers a life changing experience. I would also like to thank everyone from BIGGA who gets involved with the award, as I know it's a hard job interviewing everybody.

I wish this year's candidates the best of luck and look forward to meeting the finalists at Aldwark Manor in September to hand over the reigns. A word of advice for everyone, "You can never do too much".

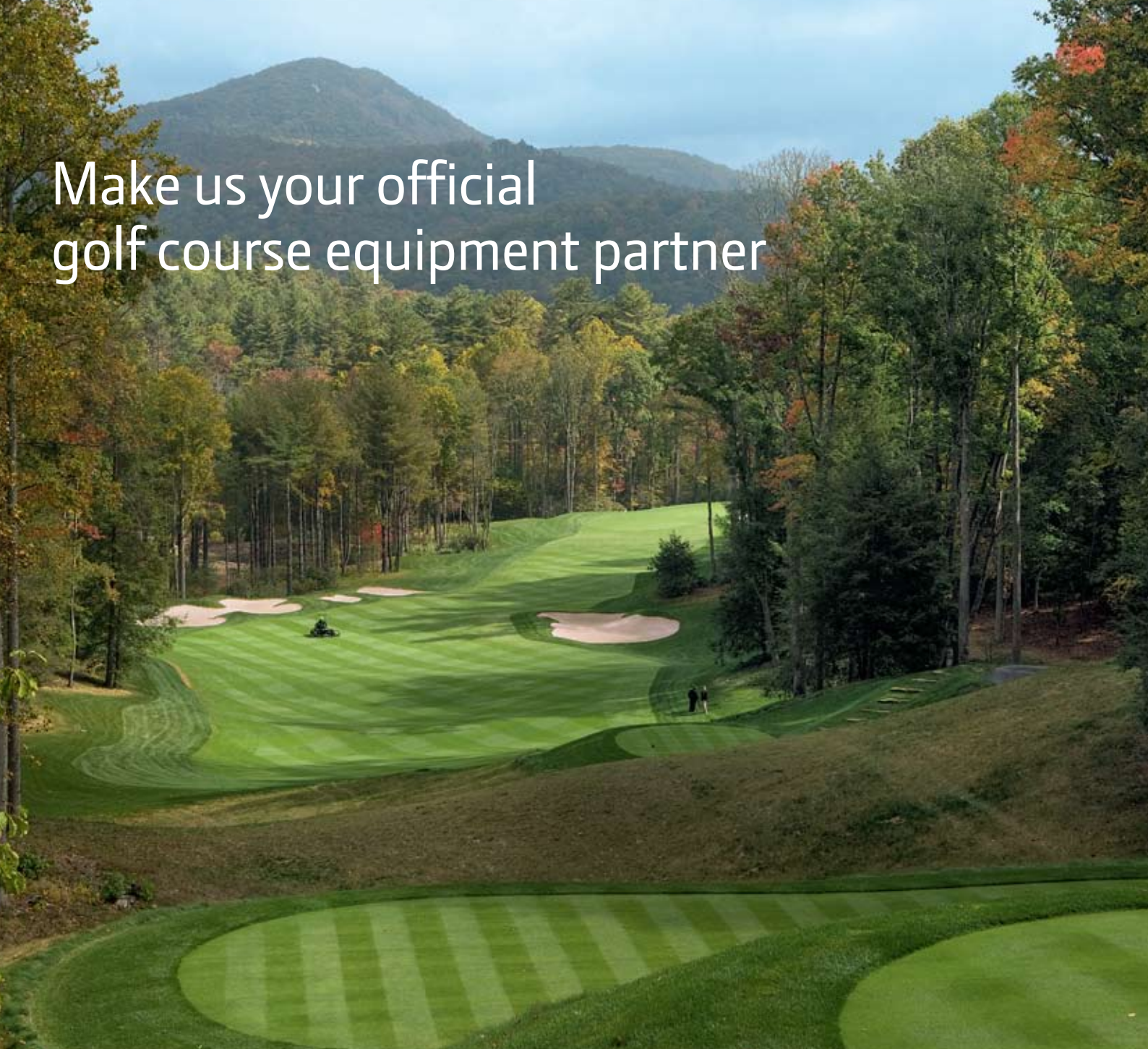


MAIN ABOVE: Matthew with his new friend  
INSET ABOVE: Posing in his uniform  
PREVIOUS PAGE: The University of Massachusetts





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# Only Perfection Will Do

**James de Havilland** writes with his regular insight into current machinery

**There are occasions when there is so much to say that it makes it almost impossible to know where to begin.**

**A visit to The Belfry in North Warwickshire can leave you like that.**

Ask anyone who has played The Brabazon for the first time or seen the superb maturing of the PGA National over the years. They will be forgiven an initial mumble as they try to find a way to let you know what they have experienced.

For the writer, a visit to greenkeeper's workshops at The Belfry was. Situated at the western end of the 17th on The Brabazon, the complex can sometimes be glimpsed

in an extended TV shot down the approaches. For those fortunate enough to be allowed inside, however, it soon becomes extremely clear that the superb appearance of The Belfry has a great deal to do with what is carried out within the unit's boundary fences.

"We look after all the equipment on this site in-house," says Director of Golf Courses and Grounds, Kenny Mackay. "It is our primary task to ensure that Head Greenkeeper, Neil Smith, has all the mowers he needs every morning, prepared and ready to go at 6.00am. And by ready I mean correctly set to the precise cut height he requires as well as being fuelled up and checked."

Kenny adds that the greenkeeping team is not encouraged to check the machines over either, a point that initially seems a bit strange. Many a workshop manager is only too keen to see those that use equipment check the oil and fuel levels before starting up. His argument is that it is the job of the workshop team to ensure any item of kit sent out to do a job is right.

"That is not to say we do not want the greens team to know how to look after equipment," adds Chris Minton, Head Mechanic. "In fact we are starting a series of short courses that explains the mechanical side of the mowers and equipment to those that are using them. Feedback

**MAIN PHOTOGRAPH:** The Brabazon course is maintained to exacting standards, sharp mowers enabling the greens team to deliver a dependable and consistent finish. Tremendous effort goes into keeping all the mowers used at The Belfry in tip top order.





suggests this is really appreciated. What we do not want is anyone adjusting settings that we have done in the workshop. It is our job to get it right and if something does go wrong we are in radio contact to ensure we are on hand to correct it if a problem arises.”

It is perhaps worth putting the work that is carried out by Kenny and his team into perspective; this will explain why they insist it is they, and no one else, the sets up the kit they use. Consider first the 550 acres plus that makes up The Belfry. Next the need to keep three courses and 54 holes in peak condition despite handling between 115,000 to 120,000 rounds a year.

Then consider the number of mowers they look after.

At any one time, up to six fairways, four greens triplex, nine greens pedestrian and five tees mowers will be in action. Then there are three mowers for the roughs and, the list goes on.

In simple terms, Neil Smith will have a team of up to 50 to organise. Kenny and Chris have to ensure each and every one of them has a machine that is set up to deliver the cut Neil demands.

“Besides myself, I have Steve Townsend working with me ‘on the spanners’,” adds Chris. “Part of our job is to ensure the mowers are sharp, all grinding being car-

ried out by us on site. We have a good relationship with Bernhard and Co, our membership of their Premier Club ensures we get a new set of grinders every two years. This guarantees we are always using the latest equipment which helps us keep on top of the job”.

The Toro mowing fleet has helped in the latter respect, the fairway mower cylinders now having a relief cut into the blades from the factory. This saves cutting one in. Chris also checks each and every cylinder prior to allowing it to be used. A pile of green paper test strips is evidence of this as he checks the cylinder across its working width. This is another reason why he does not





## International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (ICGEMA)

Chris Minton has become a keen supporter of the web based ICGEMA, its forums enabling him to 'talk' with course mechanics around the World.

He suggests greens staff have long had associations and magazines that specifically target their needs, but there are few outlets that are dedicated to those who look after specialist golf maintenance equipment.

"I have found I can tap a query into a forum and get an answer from someone in the US," he says.

"Manufacturer technicians are also members of the ICGEMA, and you can sometimes get a reply from someone who works for Toro or Deere.

"It is a useful tool for me."

**Log on to [www.icgema.org](http://www.icgema.org) to find out more.**

want anyone using a mower to 'fiddle' with it.

The degree of self-sufficiency at The Belfry extends to tackling routine drainage work and even undertaking projects that can include installing sleeper walls and waterfalls to protect and enhance famed water features. A look around the machinery compound highlights just how diverse the equipment fleet is.

"We keep a good stock of fast moving parts here," adds Chris. "We have recently installed a rack system to make it easy to access everything and I keep a running stock check to ensure we always have certain belts, blades and filters on hand.

"Although we order parts direct from our key suppliers, we actually buy through our local dealers, Abbey Mower Supplies for Toro and

Turner Grounds Care for Toro and John Deere respectively."

Chris has a dealer service background, a point that he used to help persuade Kenny that working with local dealers is the way forward. It is an approach that has worked well in the three or so years Chris has been at the belfry.

A key development in 2008 was the decision to purchase, as opposed to lease, a 67 strong golf buggy fleet. Including hotel service vehicles, there are a total of 84 vehicles electric petrol units that now need looking after, specialist Brendan Mason having been brought in to manage them. He has a dedicated service and charging zone near the hotel complex, so this side of the operations is separate from the Greenkeeping complex.

Because the management of the equipment fleet is well structured,

both Kenny and Chris can plan ahead. Certain tasks have to be put on hold during major tournaments to avoid noise being picked up during TV coverage. As an example, all grinding work is carried out ahead of schedule and machine wash-down is restricted to specific times.

"Chris maintains accurate machine service records," adds Kenny. "He will read off the hours on all units to ensure they are serviced in line with the manufactures recommendations. This enables us to adhere to any warranty conditions. It is inevitable that he has to spend a fair part of his time doing 'paperwork' but that is all part of running an efficient workshop. We just have to remember it is our job to provide Neil Smith the kit he needs to do a first class job. It is something we take great pride in doing."

**TOP LEFT:** The workshop parts store carries a range of fast moving parts, a new rack system making it easier to the right components quickly. A parts inventory is kept to ensure restocking is not overlooked.

**TOP RIGHT:** The use of the latest Bernhard grinding equipment helps Chris Minton and Steve Townsend on top of keeping all mowers sharp. Quality of cut is the key workshop priority.

**BELOW LEFT:** Steve Townsend inspects, adjusts and tests the performance of a pedestrian greens mower. Although greens staff are encouraged to know what makes a mower tick they are not 'allowed' to adjust any settings.



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# A QUICK GUIDE TO...

## MULCHING MOWERS

Husqvarna provides ten top tips on the benefits of using mulching over traditional cutting/collecting methods

### 1. Make sure your machine is capable of mulching.

It is essential that you identify the correct machine for your needs. We would recommend a pedestrian mower for smaller grass areas, and a ride on machine for larger lawn sizes of over half an acre. Due to its maneuverability, an outfront rider is ideal in complicated and tight areas.

### 2. Make sure the decks are mulch capable.

There are a variety of decks on the market that offer different cutting methods. Mulch plugs and blanking plates are available as accessories for some decks that come with a collector, although a deck designed primarily for mulching, will most certainly give a better performance. The Husqvarna Combi deck is designed primarily for mulching but also has the benefit of quickly and easily converting to rear discharge making it suitable for a wider variety of areas and conditions.

### 3. Make sure the weather conditions are correct.

Obviously, to ensure best performance and finish avoid mulching during prolonged periods of excessively wet weather. In periods of dry or drought conditions the mulched clippings help to retain moisture within the soil.

### 4. Use your mulching mower to improve poor grass areas.

Regular and correct use of mulching can improve grass growing conditions by helping to create a micro environment that releases up to 50% of required nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.



### 5. Choose the optimum time to mulch.

The ideal ground temperature to mulch is between 5-30 degrees, too warm or too cold prevents the micro climate that ensures the breakdown of the clippings. Early morning or late evening mulching, ensures maximum moisture retention during dry periods.

### 6. Clean and maintain your lawnmower.

Regular maintenance and cleaning is key to ensure the longevity of your machine and an optimal cutting performance. A clean deck chamber ensures maximum area to optimise the multiple cutting and reduction of clippings before they are returned to the lawn. A better finish is also achieved through sharp blades. If the cut is clean and sharp the risk of dehydration and disease decreases, compared to the cut being rough or jagged. Dull blades can cause up to 20% higher fuel consumption compared to sharp blades.

### 7. Pay attention to the cutting height.

The decomposition of the grass occurs more rapidly if only one-third of the blade length is cut. No more than half of the length of the grass blade should ever be cut as this would increase the risk of dehydration due to a loss of fluid within the plant. A minimum height of cut should always be maintained to maximize the micro climate; this is approximately 30mm-50mm in the United Kingdom.

### 8. Cut little and often.

To achieve the best result we would recommend that you cut the grass regularly. In the height of the cutting season we would suggest every 4-5 days. Leaving the grass to grow too much will require multiple cutting to return to the normal maintained height and ensure the best finish. Reduced mowing time occurs due to the time recovered by the removal of the need to manage the collected clippings.

### 9. Go green.

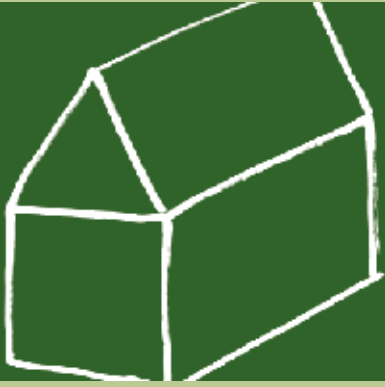
Mulching is a more time efficient way to maintain your grass, the lack of clippings means no time is spent on collecting! Since more councils in the UK are refusing to pick up green waste this alleviates any trips to the local recycling centre and equally the managing of large compost heaps.

### 10. Reap the benefits.

Although at certain times there is a need to manage weather and grass mowing conditions, improvements in deck technology, along with the additional benefits gained throughout the year of, reduced mowing times in general, the opportunity to improve health, reduction of costs in fertilising and watering together with the environmental arguments have all been influential in seeing a significant increase in the adoption of mulching within the UK over the past 10 years.

**Husqvarna are pleased to offer a product demonstration service should you wish evaluate the benefits yourself, for further information and to locate your nearest dealer please visit [www.husqvarna.co.uk](http://www.husqvarna.co.uk)**

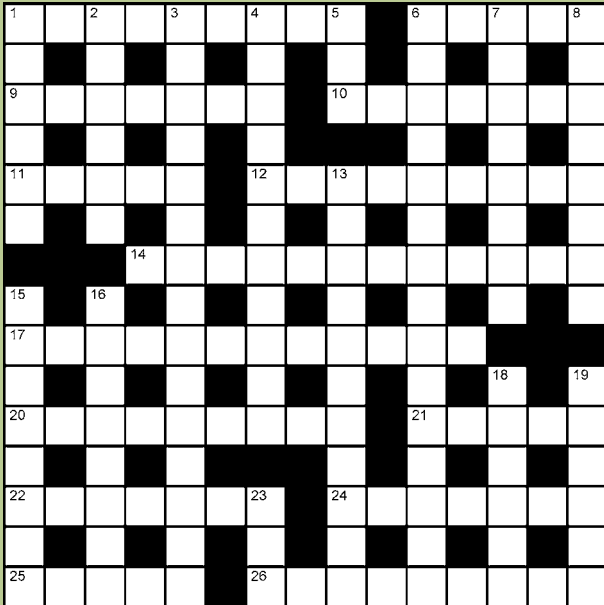




# in the shed

Our monthly puzzle page to keep you entertained when you're forced indoors..

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

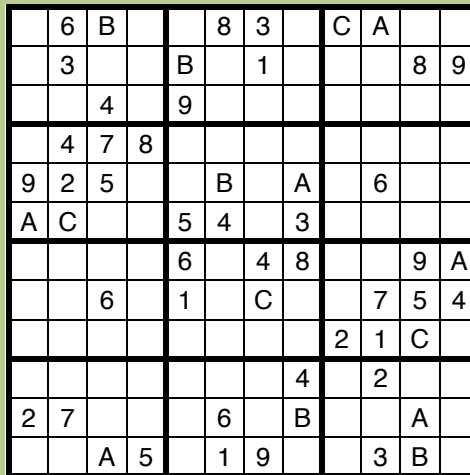
- 1 Belief based on insight into God and the soul (9)
- 6 Payment made to add call time to a mobile phone (3-2)
- 9 Opera house at which Puccini's Turandot was premiered in 1926 (2,5)
- 10 Implement for practical (usually household) use (7)
- 11 Rice cooked in seasoned broth (5)
- 12 A country's withdrawal from international politics (9)
- 14 Pompous, specialist jargon (12)
- 17 One who uses the mind creatively (12)
- 20 Pay back, compensate (9)
- 21 US state, capital Boise (5)
- 22 Former paper size, 48x72 inches (7)
- 24 Shakespeare work whose titular character is married to Desdemona (7)
- 25 Country which borders France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia (5)
- 26 Traditional outdoor stage (9)

### DOWN

- 1 Bulbous plants with single, showy flowers (6)
- 2 Without difficulty (6)
- 3 US monument poetically called "Mother of Exiles" (6,2,7)
- 4 Decide on one's actions ad hoc (4,2,2,3)
- 5 Mail on Sunday magazine (3)
- 6 1938 Hitchcock film set in the fictional country of Bandrika (3,4,8)
- 7 In Greek mythology, god of the sea (8)
- 8 Director of the 1988 Harrison Ford movie Frantic (8)
- 13 Delighted (4,3,4)
- 15 Prime Minister who was preceded and succeeded by Gladstone (8)
- 16 African republic once known as Abyssinia (8)
- 18 Perennial plant, native of Mexico, Columbia and Central America (6)
- 19 Scottish loch, the UK's largest lake (6)
- 23 An obstacle; cause friction (3)

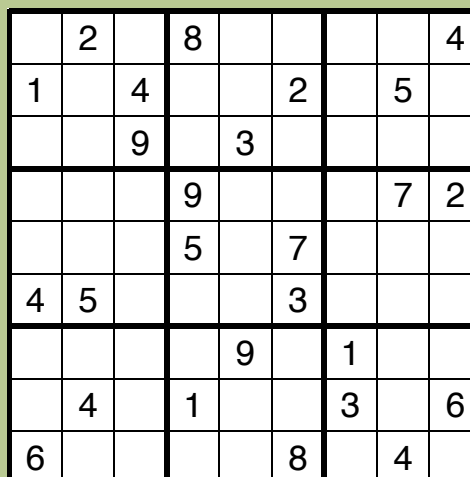
## QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

1. How many inner wire rings are there on a dartboard?
2. If you were putting numbers on new changing room lockers to be numbered from 1 to 100, how many times would you use the number 9?
3. Which famous group performed the first ever song on Top Of The Pops in 1964?
4. In the Adrian Mole Diaries, what is the surname of his girlfriend?
5. Charlotte Edwards led England's women to World Cup glory in which sport in March 2009?
6. Which supermodel is seen pole dancing in the White Stripes video for the song I Just Don't Know What To Do With Myself?
7. Which band has released albums titled Word Gets Around, Just Enough Education To Perform and Pull The Pin?
8. Who wrote the novel Revolutionary Road, which was made into a successful feature film?
9. In the Star Wars films, which two actors played Obi Wan Kenobi?



## MONSTER SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 4x4 box contains the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



## SUDOKU

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





## NEW RANGE

Kubota has launched the new B20 Series compact tractors. Superseding the previous best-selling B1410 and B1610 models, the new B20 Series comprises 3 models. The 12hp B1220, the B1620, with a 16hp engine and the 18hp B1820.

Featuring the Kubota E-TVCS (Three Vortex Combustion System) liquid cooled diesel engines, which achieve increased power and torque while emitting fewer pollutants and using less fuel, these exciting new tractors provide rugged performance, versatility and comfort.

0800 023 1111  
www.kubota.co.uk



## POWER, PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMY

The new Ferrari Cobram is now available in a range of three models with two engine sizes of 49HP and 58HP exclusively from Lamberhurst Engineering.

The new models have been designed to add concrete value to the investment: lower fuel consumption, greater performance and wider usability of the machines. The principle that inspired the project was that of creating tractors that produce the most favourable working conditions and offer their owners more competitive financial management.

08456 121 141  
www.lameng.com



## OIL LEAKS - NIL

New from Echo, the CS-680 Chainsaw is ideal for work around the farm, park or forest. Powered by a 66.8cm<sup>3</sup> two-stroke Echo engine and 50 cm bar, this chainsaw weighs just 6.6kg, providing practical performance and versatility.

In addition, this new model is fitted with an automatic lubrication feature. The lubrication of the chain ceases when the chain is not turning, therefore when the saw is idling, there is no oil being pumped to the bar and chain, resulting in zero oil leaks, and a reduction in oil consumption.

01844 278800  
www.echo-tools.com



## SECURITY CONSCIOUS

The new MowerSafe from Dennis has been built with security in mind - it has a bolt down capability, is easy to position and is maintenance free. The MowerSafe fits any machine up to a 61cm (24in) cutting width. Bigger versions are being developed.

01332 824777  
www.dennisuk.com



## RANGE EXPANDED

Spaldings has expanded its professional grass machinery range with the introduction of additional Ransomes spares. The spares are to fit the post 2003 Ransomes mowers TG3400/TG4650 (Sport 200/Magna 250 Heads).

The new Ransomes range consists of a comprehensive selection of lift arms for direct replacement of cylinder mower parts.

01522 507 500  
www.spaldings.co.uk



## NEW AGRICULTURAL SPECIFICATION

Massey Ferguson has added four agricultural specification models to its 1500 Series compact tractor range.

Aimed primarily at the agricultural, horticultural and landscaping sectors, as well as vineyards, orchards, smallholdings and estates, the new tractors are known as the MF 1529A, MF 1532A, MF 1540A and MF 1547A, rated at 28, 32, 38 and 46 DIN hp respectively.

**i** [www.masseyferguson.com](http://www.masseyferguson.com)



## BOXER RANGE PACKS A PUNCH

GreenMech are proud to announce the latest addition to their product range. The company has formed an alliance with Compact Power Inc, of Fort Mill, South Carolina to distribute the Boxer range of mini skid steer loaders and attachments. GreenMech will distribute the products in the UK, France and Germany.

**i** 01789-400044  
[www.greenmech.co.uk](http://www.greenmech.co.uk)

## HOLE PAINTING NEW SPRINKLERS

Tower Sport (Europe) Ltd has the sole distribution rights for a new product, Tidy Whitey.

The product works when the aerosol is attached to the applicator after shaking thoroughly. Depress the aerosol and then turn it a quarter turn and the hole is painted.

**i** 0113 322 0048  
[www.towersporteurope.co.uk](http://www.towersporteurope.co.uk)

John Deere Golf Irrigation has introduced a new range of sprinkler heads to its growing irrigation component range, designed specifically for UK and Irish golf and amenity turf applications.

**i** 01949 860491  
[www.johndeere.co.uk](http://www.johndeere.co.uk)





## Section Notes

Please email your notes to [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk) by the 5th of the month

All the latest news from your Section

# Around The Green



## Scottish Region



### Central

Hopefully by the time you read this the weather and the season has been kind to you and everything is picking up. I know the rough really shot up on our courses towards the end of May so that's the current cry from golfers at the moment.

Communication is a funny thing, we are often accused of not giving our members enough information about what we are doing so recently at the Links Trust we started to email a database of our season ticket holders work which we thought they might find interesting and when they so something out of the ordinary they would know what it was and why we were doing it. One such email explained why we were cutting the rough back and scarifying it on part of the 17th of the Old Course. Within two hours, one season ticket holder had called the Daily Mail, but of course not with the correct facts. The result was the Mail ran an incorrect story on the Saturday and most of the Sunday papers ran the same incorrect story the next day.

At the time of writing another has contacted a golf magazine complaining because he doesn't want to understand the facts. Sometimes it makes you wonder if it is worth it.

Back on the hickory golf and some of the staff at St Andrews had an outing to the Kingarrock course, near Cupar, where, for your £20 green fee, you get a set of hickory clubs, 3 golf balls, a history lesson, a dram, ginger beer, shortbread and 9 holes of golf. Great fun, more info on

[www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk) where you will also find Jon Wood won the winter photo competition and more details about the education courses we are running this coming winter.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping  
St Andrews Links Trust



### East

I start with this month's report on a sad note by announcing the passing away of Dick Dugan after a long illness. Retired Head Greenkeeper of Glencorse Golf Course Penicuik Edinburgh and Life Member of BIGGA - Dick was a great supporter of all the golf events in our Section.

Dick was a great character in the profession and I am sure, all who knew Dick had a funny story to tell. He will be sadly missed by many, our thoughts go out to Dick's family.

Our Spring Meeting that was held at Eyemouth golf course on Tuesday, April 14, courtesy of Bob Wortley and his committee.

We were very fortunate to have good weather on the East coast and the golf course was in great condition. A special thank you must go to Mark Pagan, the Head Greenkeeper, and his staff, for the way the course was presented for us on the day.

Looking down through the prize list, the Eyemouth boys did a good job on the cleaning up of the prizes. My question is when do they get time to practice their golf, or are they just natural born sportsmen.

I was fortunate with the draw in playing with the local greenkeeper Dougie who clubbed me for most of the round. Managing to win the sweep money from the Rigby Taylor boys Big Gary

and Jim - cheers guys, I am sure you both will put in for expenses for that day.

Nice to see Graham Wood and his wife Helen at the meal, presentation of prizes and raffle, thanks Stuart for bringing both along. Our grand raffle! I think just about everybody went home with something. A big thanks to the trade who kindly donate the prizes for our raffle on the day.

We hope to see more faces at our Summer Outing The Willie Woods Trophy where members can invite a guest along as a partner, the venue for this is Kingsknowe GC.

Our tireless Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, will keep you all posted with this event.

The winners: Spring Meeting at Eyemouth GC, Scratch Winner (78) Benn McLeod, Gullane GC, 1st Class Winner (80-7-73), Tom Murray, Ratho Park GC,

R/up (85-5-78), Mark Pagan, Eyemouth GC, 2nd Class Winner (83-9-78), Douglas Greenshields, Eyemouth GC, R/up (88-13-75), Ian Watson, Gullane GC, 3rd Class Winner (92-19-73), Bob Wortley, Eyemouth GC, Veteran Winner (79-5-74), Alistair Holmes, Seahouses GC, Patrons Winner (83-13-72), Stewart Clayton, Greensman Ltd, Novelty winners, Nearest The Pin: Douglas Greenshields, Longest Drive: Mark Pagan, both Eyemouth GC.

Until next month's report  
Tom Murray



### North

I start this month with an apology for leaving the results of the 200 Club out of last month's article.

£30 Gary Smith, £30 Robert

Hardie, £30 Simon Hoy and there was a bit of a dispute as to who won the £100. Someone, mentioning no names, thought that it was a joint ticket and was quite rightly over the moon, until Robert Hardie confirmed that it was his partner in crime, Billy Craig's ticket. The guy in question wasn't happy but I'm sure Billy will get you a couple of drams from his winnings!

Right now that has been cleared up we'll carry on with the rest of the Section notes. I hope everyone is doing fine and you are all getting the praise that you deserve for presenting the course in pristine condition - yeah right, that will be the day. The weather has been pretty mixed over the last month but a couple of weekends ago we staged the Scottish Amateur Strokeplay and you could not have asked for better weather if you had tried...scorchio is not the word.

The Scottish Chairman is 60. Just thought I would slip that into the conversation. He had a party to celebrate at the golf club in Ellon with a great turn out and I'm sure that he raised a fair amount of money for his chosen charity. The rest of the North committee had turned up to wish him many happy returns, apart from one, his best buddy, Hugh McClatchie. It just wasn't the same without you there with your usual wit.

Congratulations to Dale and John who have been picked to represent the North as part of the Open Support Team at Turnberry this month. Well done to you both, but I can't help thinking that it will come as a bit of a shock to you, Dale, as you'll have to do something that you haven't done for a number of years...work - the lads told me to put that.

The Scottish National Tournament will of come and gone by the time you read this. I am sure the lads at Cathkin Braes would have had the course in tip top



condition. A report will follow in next month's magazine.

Finally, back to the trade's competition that is played in Aberdeen every year. As I mentioned in last month's issue - the second team did us proud, but not too proud. The first string were unlucky to get beaten by the Surveyors in the quarter finals. The teams were made up of Robert Patterson, Neil Sadler, Ross Macrae and Dennis Grant. Hard luck lads better luck next year. Hopefully we'll be able to put two teams in next year.

Ben Brookes Murcar Links  
07813889374

## Northern Region



### North West

The spring tournament was held at the West Lancashire Golf Club with a blustery day in prospect the idea was to keep hitting the fairway off your drive, a prospect in which I failed miserably. West Lancs golf course was in fantastic condition and my thanks go to John Muir and his staff for the way in which the course was presented. John could not be there on the day due to a well-earned break but I am sure he would have been very proud at the great comments that were made on the day.

My thanks also go to the Secretary, Stuart King, and the committee for kindly allowing us to play and also to the catering and bar staff for their hard work and patience. The clubhouse has just had an extensive refurbishment and is a worthy addition to the wonderful golf course. My thanks also to Gary Potter, from A.L.S.; Peter Marshall, from Tacit, and also to Nick Gray, from Bathgates, who kindly provided prizes for the day. Now onto the winners. Best Gross was won by Gary Burgess, 74; Best Nett, Peter Hogan 67; Vets Prize, Dave Macavoy; the Guest Prize was won by Frank Melia, Longest Drive by J. McMullen and Nearest the Pin by K. Sweeney.

I know everyone will be very busy now but don't forget the summer tournament coming up on Friday, July 3 - if you wish to play in it please send a cheque for £20 to Billy Merritt - he can be found at The Lodge, Beacon

Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Billy can be contacted on his mobile: 07985175825. I can be contacted on 01512894625 or my email is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



### North Wales

I might as well come straight out with it what do you think of the new look Greenkeeper International? I think it's an improvement, but that's just my opinion.

On May 20 we played the spring tournament at Rhyl Golf Club and on that glorious spring day all 37 in our party enjoyed the great course and what was roundly accepted as some of the best greens that were around.

Results are as follows: 1st Andy Peel, Bull Bay, 36pts, 2nd Paul Gater, Caldy, 34pts; 3rd Ian Becket, Mile End, 34pts; 4th Haydon Jones, (Chirk), 34pts. Nearest the Pin went to Haydon Jones on the 7th hole and Dave Povey on the 12th hole.

The Trade Prize went to Section Chairman, Terry Adamson, with 35 points, and Best Gross went to Section Secretary, Jez Hughes with 77. Andy Peel and Jez Hughes now qualify for the BIGGA National Championship later in the year. Best of luck if you take part! Best guest went to Jim Adamson with 40 points. A great thank you goes to Ian Buckley and all at Rhyl Golf Club for an excellent day and the very warm welcome extended to us.

The annual North Wales/North West took place at Bolton Golf Club on June 20 - a full written report next month.

In local news, yes I do once again have local news! Andy Hughes, of Carden Park, and his wife, Sarah, became proud parents for the 5th time with the birth of their 1st son Emlyn who came bounding into the world weighing a bonny 5lb 15oz on April 28.

Congratulations also go to Emyr Price, of Royal Saint David's, Harlech, on achieving 35 years of loyal service to the club, not that he gets any respite for such service with a challenging year ahead the course is hosting three major events - the Ladies British Open,

the world one-armed Golf Open Championships and the S4C r.c.w. Ladies Championships of Europe.

Well I think that's it for this month, all the best until next month!

Pete Maybury petemayb66@aol.com 07756001187

Johnny Evans Johnny.evans@tesco.net

## Midland Region



### Midland

Well here we are again with our notes, and not surprisingly I have received diddly squat from anyone. Therefore all I have is to thank this month's calendar page sponsor, Burrows. Please consider them for your machinery needs and servicing, they can be contacted on: 0870 242 6952. Also please get your photos to Richard asap so as we can prepare next year's calendar. Please email your photos to: rich71@btconnect.com

Looking forward to reporting on the summer event results from Harborne next month.

Sean McDade



### East of England

Hello all. Here we are half way through the summer already, where has it all gone!

Our May golf day was held at Elsham Golf Club. A good turnout with some new faces was pleasing to see. The golf course was in superb condition as always. The day was won by Colin Hopper, Head Greenkeeper at Elsham, no comment will be made about setting the course up for yourself and knowing how it would play! Second was Steve Hopkins and third was Adi Kitchenson. The Trade Prize was won by Carl Chamberlain.

Nearest the Pin was Carl Chamberlain and Longest Drive was Pete Watts. Many thanks to all concerned at Elsham Golf Club for accommodating us during the day. Also thanks to the sponsors of the day, F.G

Adamson & Son, John Deere dealers.

Our next golf day is at Boston West Golf Club on Thursday, July 23. Tee off is 1.30pm but arrive early for coffee and bacon rolls. Full details will be sent to you soon.

Many thanks Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club  
steveimmingham@aol.com  
www.eastofenglandbigga.com

## South East Region



### Surrey

Sunday, June 7. June's edition of Greenkeeper International has Surrey Section members dominating most features. Page 8 shows the Drift Golf Club's answer to Darth Vader demonstrating the new Greens Hover Mower and on page 34 a photo of Epsom's answer to the last of the Mohicans trying to find his Greenkeepers and showing where he buried last year's Derby winner. Page 36 shows Dave Langheim's legs.

Thursday, May 28. Hindhead GC was glorious, the greens were sensational, and the buffet was sumptuous. Steve Holmes and his crew made sure Hindhead GC were in shipshape condition and the perfect venue for this year's National Qualifier. Results: James Hunt was the Scratch winner. James Penfold, Best Nett with Gavin Kyle and Lee Blackburn, runners up. Tom Kenny, playing off 7, had an unfortunate 124 gross score, but did hit a magnificent Longest Drive. Yours truly organised the chocolate box raffle, sponsored by Tacit.

This edition's Daddy of the month belongs to Robin Jackson, Course Manager at Bramley GC. Robin fully praised his wife, Jacqui, for her part in the proceedings on April 20 and Joshua, 6 lbs. 11 oz., has been screaming about it ever since.

Those interested in my endeavours to find a holiday venue for this year must remain disappointed as no decision has been made to date, although I have been told by Surrey members on many occasions where to go. While thanking you for those suggestions, I remain.

Brian Willmott





## Kent

Hi all. Finally some decent summer sunshine has graced the Garden of England and in almost perfect conditions the cream of Kent greenkeepers (and trade members) took to the rolling hillsides of Lullingstone Park Golf Course for our National Qualifying event. The extensive course was presented superbly by Melvyn and his team for the event where any scores of note were hard earned and richly deserved. Long carries over deep rough, narrow, sloping fairways and many hills to negotiate definitely sorted the fit from the fat! My own respectable front nine score was annihilated by a disastrous back nine as my energy levels sapped ever closer to critical point!

This was not helped by a very noticeable absentee on the day. On the morning of the event I was phoned by a very apologetic Vic Maynard, of Ernest Doe's, to say that his refreshment wagon, the provider of sustenance in all weathers and saviour of many a days poor golfing performance, had, unfortunately, been stolen at a golf day in Essex on the previous day! As a result, many of us simply had to admit that our game was not good enough as the usual excuse of too many trips to Vic's beverage box was cruelly taken from our armoury. So after much walking on a very warm day, the eventual winners were: 1st Wayne Syers, Lullingstone Park GC, 2nd Russ Bain, Chislehurst GC, 3rd Aaron, Lullingstone GC, 4th Kev Morris. Longest Drive also went to Aaron (apologies for not knowing your surname) and Nearest Pin to Kev Morris. Great shot mate.

As was mentioned earlier, this was also our National Qualifying event so congratulations to Wayne and Russ who will go on to represent the county at the National Championships later on this year.

Many thanks to Brian Willmott, and Tacit, for providing some great prizes and to all at Lullingstone for their hospitality. The informal barbeque in the

evening was the perfect way to relax after our expedition across the rolling terrain of the North Downs. I sincerely look forward to a return trip soon.

The next event is already upon us! On July 9 we shall be descending en masse (hopefully!) to Gary Branchett's course at Tenterden. Vic shall also be making a return with his new wagon so I'll see you there! Please see Kev's e-mail for start times etc. and this column next month for results and news. Remember that it is still only £25 for Course Managers and Trade and £15 for anyone else to play in our events so please do support them.

If anyone has any news or views they can contact me on the number below.

See you at Tenterden Best of British

Rob Holland  
07843 410755



## Essex

Greenkeepers were out in force at the Wentworth Club on Bunker Raking duty for the BMW PGA Championship at the end of May. Four of us from the Essex Section graced the fairways and the odd bunker. Long time stalwart of the event, Andy Cracknell was joined by Sam Anderson, plus Arnold & Mark Phipps-Jones - they all joined other greenkeepers from the Southeast Region, under Regional Administrator, Clive Osgood's watchful eye. Clive had the raking rota running like clockwork in his normal organised manner.

Great weather greeted the team and players alike. The course was in fantastic condition as always and a pleasure to walk around, with some of the best golfers in Europe. This is the last competition to be held on the old greens of the West Course. At the beginning of June I understand there all to be dug up and replaced with USGA greens, the work is planned to be completed and the course back in action for the end of the year, so we were told by Course Manager, Chris Kennedy.

I for one look forward to

walking the course and seeing the changes and hopefully not having to rake too many bunkers.

Chris Kennedy was very appreciative of the work done by the voluntaries spending a few minutes on the 18th after the prize presentation thanking the guys.

Formethenextstopis the Open Championship at Turnberry, where again I will be walking the fairways, with I hope some of the best world players and hopefully not having to put rake to sand or squeegee to water. I will give you all an account of the week in the coming months.

The Knockout draw has been made and the website will keep you all up to date on the state of play.

The Summer Trophy, at Burnham-on-Crouch Golf Club, will be well past when you read this bulletin, I will give an account of the day on the website and place a round-up in next month's issue.

The next golf event is the re-named "Essex Trophy" to be held at Canons Brook Golf Club on Wednesday, August 19. We have re-named this event, because we found we had slipped a month or two and were having the winter trophy in September or October.

If you have any news for the website or these Section notes please contact me on: 07764862337 or via email: [essexbigga@talktalk.net](mailto:essexbigga@talktalk.net)

Arnold Phipps-Jones  
Press Officer

## South West & Wales



### South West

Will Bowden has been in touch to discuss the latest initiative at Cannington College.

He is putting together a Water Resource Management short course of approximately six to eight weeks featuring one day's college tuition per week, which will run alongside the Foundation Degree programme next year, and is open to any greenkeeper in the South West. The start date is likely to be

around late September 2009. Will would like to gauge industry interest in this course, which will feature external lecturers such as Roger Davey and Kneale Diamond, who will help endorse and deliver the course. Successful candidates would receive a certificate, or diploma in Water Resource Management at the end of the course.

As Will says, "It should be a good course and will touch on all aspects of water use and management including irrigation, water sourcing, usage and of course legislation. I will get industry experts in to talk and deliver units that are best delivered by people in commerce and the rest will run along as part of the FDGSTM qualification. If the candidates do an assignment they will get a diploma, but if they simply attend and complete, they will receive a certificate. I am keen to build on this idea so any feedback or comment would be most welcome by email to [bowdenw@bridgewater.ac.uk](mailto:bowdenw@bridgewater.ac.uk) Costs are likely to be in the region of £100 - £200 per candidate". Please do email Will with any interest, questions, or comment.

The Section Team was back in action last week, and as I've always said "we can't lose under present Captain, Wayne Vincent". We were well looked after at Cirencester Golf Club with the course in sparkling condition, and the greenkeepers ran out winners by five matches to one (with only home greenkeeper Richard Louissou failing to ease past the winning post.) He'd obviously burnt himself out preparing the course which was absolutely perfect. Thanks to Cirencester for hosting the event, and thanks to the Secretaries for a keenly contested day out. Spare a thought for Brian Rimes the Secretaries organiser - Brian drove all the way up from Plymouth, only to play against and be soundly beaten by two blokes who live less than a mile from the course! No justice, and he was still just about smiling by the end of the day.

The next event will be the Scotts Trophy, and while I won't be there myself due to holidays, I hope it is a good and well supported day. The course at Filton is in top condition having recently hosted the County Champs so should be another successful tournament.



I was recently very fortunate to be invited to Celtic Manor to watch the Wales Open as a guest of Toro. This was a great day out, spent in the company of John Keenaghan and Wayne Vincent, and well looked after by Keith Carter, of Handy Garden Machinery. The 2010 course was in superb condition, and should be a worthy venue for the Ryder Cup.

Back in the Section, we are hoping to run further Excavator Safety Training, Safe use of Tractors and Attachments, and Manual Handling and certification courses during the late summer\autumn, and some hedge laying\stone walling tuition and demonstrations during the winter. Please do contact me with any interest as it takes time to organise these things, and it is important to have interest and volition.

There is also a joint BIGGA | GCSMA education event to be held at The Kendleshire on September 30. This day is aimed at Managing Secretaries, Course Manager\Head Greenkeepers, and Deputies and will feature practical advice on how to improve the golf club, relations with members and staff, and how to solve disputes. Full details to be circulated shortly. Please contact Bob Williams at Chipping Sodbury GC for further information.

Finally, I've spoken with both our injured colleagues, Ali Turner and Roger Neale. Ali is progressing slowly and is at last able to put weight on his leg, although he doesn't expect to be fully fit until the autumn. Roger Neale, whose accident took place only a couple of days before his wife went into labour with their first child, was reminiscing about the birth. I could only imagine 6 foot 3 inch, 16 stone Roge, in the Delivery Room, with crutches, feeling queasy, and trying to keep out of the way. I also managed to spare a thought for the harassed midwife - "Gas and Air for Mrs Neale, and for Christ' sake give Mr Neale a full general anaesthetic and strap him to that chair in the corner - if he knocks over one more sample jar with those blasted crutches, I won't be responsible for my actions".

Father and child are now doing well. Congratulations Roger, from us all.

Paul Worster



## South Coast

The management trophy at Barton on Sea Golf Club was a great success resulting in Tony Gadd's team running out winners. The course was, as I expected, in superb condition and the hospitality second to none.

The summer tournament is getting closer - July 9 at Hampworth Golf Club, so contact Kevin asap. Another reminder about the autumn tournament on the Isle of Wight - remember the day is courtesy of the Section so all you have to do is get there

Until next month  
Chris Sturgess



## Devon & Cornwall

Not much to report this month, as I'm sitting here writing this we are getting an absolute deluge after an almost 'French Riviera' week of weather!

Let's hope that wasn't our summer.

I understand there's a Digger Training course coming up on Tuesday, August 4 at Trethorne Golf Club for 10 - this hasn't been confirmed yet but I suspect it will have by the time you're reading this.

Congratulations to the Duchy College, at Stoke Climsland, and Steve Evans for their recent Greenkeeping Seminar, which I understand was very popular with the 80 plus that attended, providing up to date knowledge from specialists from within the industry.

I hope everyone's keeping on top of the grasscutting etc, and as always if there are any up and coming events or stories you would like mentioned, please let me know.

Jerry Cole



**John Pemberton**  
Chief Executive

**At long last the question of Full Membership for groundsmen has been resolved with a resounding vote last month in favour of a change to the Constitution. However let's not run away with the idea that this will open the floodgates and an Association built by greenkeepers will be taken over by groundsmen.**

There is a natural synergy between all those practitioners employed in the maintenance of sports turf and so why not share best practice, training and education? A great deal of effort is already being expended on recruiting and retaining greenkeeper members and now the challenge is to market the benefits of membership to a groundsmen audience. I wish to make it clear that we are not looking to challenge the IOG, we are merely looking to provide an alternative choice of membership body to groundsmen, who may even wish to think about being a member of both BIGGA and the IOG.

In June, Sami Collins and I attended a third meeting at The Belfry with representatives of the PGA and the GCMA when we sat down to progress earlier talks on how our three organisations can develop and provide unified education to agreed common standards, especially at management level. Skill sets that you can argue are equally applicable to other related activities. The more we talk the more we discover that we have much in common and there is no doubt that the foundations of a close working relationship have been securely laid down.

The latest set of management accounts for the Association clearly demonstrate why it has been necessary to reduce staffing costs at HQ by way of redundancies. Advertising revenue has fallen victim to the cut backs in spending by both suppliers and clubs and the green shoots of recovery in some politicians' crystal ball are certainly not apparent in golf. We are, however, no different to the majority of businesses in our downturn, we are all very aware of the current economic climate and its effect on every day life.

The incorporation of BIGGA into a company limited by guarantee is well under way. It is the intention that the new limited company will be in operation with effect from July 1, 2009 at which date all assets and liabilities of BIGGA (unlimited) will be transferred into the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.

Funding problems continue to place a question mark over the future of the GTC in its current form. This aspect of greenkeeper training and education is vital to the success of the system and rest assured that BIGGA will do what it can to help maintain its existence.

**John Pemberton**  
Chief Executive





# Membership

Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update

## BIGGA Membership Handbook 2009/2010

We are currently working on the next edition of the BIGGA Membership Handbook. Contained within the handbook is a listing of all current members. To ensure your listing is up to date, make sure the Membership Department have your latest contact details. Please note that no personal information is contained with the listings.

The BIGGA Membership Handbook continues to be a vital industry tool that goes from strength to strength each year, this edition will be no different, packed with information, facts and figures it is designed to help you find that crucial member with ease, whether it be supplier or fellow member. The Handbook is valued and viewed by many as being an important membership benefit.

## BIGGA Membership benefits...

### ...You

Whether you come to us as a Full, Associate, International, Affiliate or Student Member we will work with you to help you get all you can from membership of BIGGA.

### ...The Golf Club

The learning and development available through BIGGA assists in developing well trained, motivated teams – a valuable asset to any golf club. This in turn will help to produce a high standard of course maintenance.

### ...Your Business

If you are a business looking to promote your product within the fine turf industry, whatever your budget the BIGGA Sales Team can provide valuable advice on maximising your advertising and promotion.

Visit the BIGGA website for information on the benefits membership to BIGGA offers you, a golf club or a business at [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) select "Join" from the options along the top and "Benefiting You" from the choice on the menu on the left hand side.

## The Importance of Networking

With 26 Sections around the UK there is always a 'friend' nearby.

Whether you are just starting out as a sports turf professional (greenkeeper or groundsman) or at the pinnacle of your career, networking is likely to play a large part in your success.

Networking is about creating a set of contacts and subsequently building a trust and creating a genuine relationship with the people you meet. It provides the opportunity for you to discover people who may be able to help with queries/problems you encounter during your career as well as the opportunity for you to offer your assistance to others.

For people new to networking, it might seem a daunting prospect. But by investing time in other people you might soon find that your career is reaping the rewards.

*Top tips for networking: Be yourself, Be open, Smile, Let people talk, Push yourself, Know what you want, Enjoy it.*

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

If you are a Full Member of BIGGA you are encouraged to be registered on the BIGGA CPD Scheme. You may think that CPD isn't for you, but everyone can benefit.

## What is CPD?

The Institute of Continuing Professional Development, or CPD Institute for short, defines CPD as:

"Continuing professional development is the systematic maintenance and improvement of knowledge, skills and competence, and the enhancement of learning, undertaken by an individual throughout his or her working life".

A bit wordy perhaps, but in essence CPD is a combination of approaches, ideas and techniques that will help you manage your own learning and growth. Remember, one size doesn't fit all. Wherever you are in your career now, and whatever you want to achieve, your CPD should be exactly that: yours.



### Contact Details

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### OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

**Personal Accident Helpline**  
02075 603013  
**Greenkeepers Legal Assistance**  
0800 177 7891  
**Greenkeepers Support Services**  
0800 174 319  
**Debt Counselling Helpline**  
0800 174319

## BIGGA welcomes the following new members...

### Scottish Region

Grant Dilasser, Ayrshire; Fraser Allan, East Kieran Close, West; Scott Douglas, East Kevin Duncan, North; Bruce Gray, Ayrshire Derek Green, North; Grant Hope, North Stephen Logue, West; Robert Mackinnon, North John Mair, Ayrshire; Brian McNair, Central Robert Mullins, East; Susan Murray, Ayrshire Ian Oglivie, East; Darren Skinner, North

### Northern Region

Ben Burrill, Northern; Leigh Bush, North Wales Rhys Butler, North Wales; John Ganderton, Northern; Mark Jackson, North Wales; Greg Letij, North West; Maurig Lumley, North Wales; Jason Parry, North Wales; Kevin Perry, North Wales; Chris Stirk, Northern Joe Sykes, North East

### Midland Region

Peter Allen, Midland; Phil Dodd, Midland Daniel Gascoyne, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Clive Harper, Midland; Michael Lovatt, Midland Matthew McVeigh, Midland Bruce Poynter, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Matthew Sargeant, East of England Julian Sliwinski, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Richard Tranter, East of England Paul Young, Midland

### South East Region

Chris Allen, Surrey; Jennifer Ball, Kent Kevin Bass, Kent; Christopher Boakes, Kent Andrew Bowers, Surrey; Benjamin Brandreth, Kent; Ryan Casteldine, Surrey Daniel Chaplin, Sussex; Tom Clark, Surrey Carl Curtis, East Anglia; James Curtis, East Anglia; Paul Giles, Surrey; Stephen Golesworthy, Surrey; Joe Green, Sussex Thomas Gurney, London; Darcy Jury, Surrey Graham Kimble, Surrey; Miroslav Kisely, London John Schiltz, London; Jack Sims, London Jonathon Smart, East Anglia; Tom Smith, Surrey Stephen Turner, Essex; Christopher Wheatcroft, Surrey; James Wilkinson, Sussex Clive Winter, Sussex

### S West/S Wales Region

Thomas Bath, South West; Tom Brearley, South Coast; Lee Carter, South West Paul Chester, South Coast; Greg Chick, South West; Ray Mitchell, South Coast Jack Nicholas, South West; Tom Nicholas, South West; Kevin Sanders, South West; Raymond Scourfield, South Coast; Joseph Silvester, South Coast; Robert Wood, Devon & Cornwall Tom Wright, South West

### Overseas

Eamonn Ahern, David Beamish, David Begley, Thomas Begley, Michael Calnan, Donal Coleman, Gerard Donnellan, David Dukelow, Martin Finegan, Gerard Finnegan, Kieran Galvin, Conor Healy, Sinead Healy, Patrick Kent, Kevin O'Byrne, Edmond O'Dowd, Thomas O'Meara, Claran O'Sullivan, Shane O'Sullivan, Tony O'Sullivan, Patrick Skerritt, Eoghan Walsh; all Republic of Ireland Abel Edinomo, Nigeria Abushie Odihill, Nigeria Shaheed Odihill, Nigeria Matthew Baddiley, New Zealand



# Assistant Profile

Each month we take a light hearted look into the life of an assistant greenkeeper...

**Portsmouth FC fan, Peter, works at Hankley Common, or at least he did until his Course Manager reads this! From golf clubs to nightclubs, Peter has a wide variety of interests...**



**Name:** Peter Oliver  
**Age:** 24  
**Club:** Hankley Common GC  
**Position:** Assistant Greenkeeper  
**Nickname:** Monty!

**How long have you been greenkeeping?**  
7 years

**What was it about the career that attracted you?**  
My brother was a greenkeeper so always interested. Was helping in the pro shop at Old Thorns Golf Club when Derek Cunliffe asked me if I would like to work the summer as a greenkeeper. The rest is history.

**If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be?**  
Not a clue. As I said before always interested in the game of golf.

**Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?**  
Raking bunkers gives me satisfaction when finished as a job well done. Although it's not something that I look forward to so much after a thunder storm.

**Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?**  
Cutting fairways - I don't like being on my backside for too long.

**What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot?**  
In my time things have improved a lot including conditions and education. As in life, long may this continue.

**What are your favourite hobbies?**  
Golf, and I play a bit of football. I also like clubbing.

**And your favourite band?**  
Stereophonics and all dance music.

**Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?**  
Portsmouth FC.

**What is your claim to fame?**  
None really, so far. Was once caught on the TV cameras at a Leicester City v Pompey football match celebrating an away win.

# What's your number?

Our regular and random profile of an industry figure continues with this month's lucky number...

**Tim Fell of Tillers Turf comes under the spotlight**



**Name:** Tim Fell  
**Company:** Tillers Turf  
**Position:** Managing Director

**How long have you been in the industry?**  
26 years.

**How did you get into it?**  
I must have been born with a green gene because I was mowing my parent's lawns at a very early age. It was a natural progression to grow the stuff.

**What other jobs have you done?**  
Agronomist with Commonwealth Development Corporation, Swaziland. Chemical Representative with Fisons Plc.

**What do you like about your current job?**  
I feel enormous satisfaction when someone compliments our turf. Growing a large area of high quality turf, and achieving consistency year after year, is very challenging. Our production team does an exceptional job.

**What changes have you seen in the industry?**  
The size and automation of machinery have been the most visible. Gone are the days of stacking turf by hand. And the use of 10m-wide GPS-guided mowers means that cutting 200 acres per machine per day is a snap. The selling of turf on the internet kicked off a few years ago, and is now responsible for a large percentage of sales to homeowners. Our retail site, [www.turfshop.co.uk](http://www.turfshop.co.uk) is a useful income stream for the company. The Turf Growers Association (TGA), of which I am currently Chairman, has made great strides in the last ten years. It is now a very professional organisation which sets the standard for turf production in this country.

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**  
I play trumpet in a jazz band, fish for trout between March and October, and play bridge during the winter.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?**  
I can't see that far ahead.

**Who do you consider as your best friends in the industry?**  
My very best friends are our customers. Not far behind are our suppliers, who make up a very important part of our team in providing us with great products to work with.

**What do you consider to be your lucky number?**  
I don't have one.

**Pick a number**  
7.

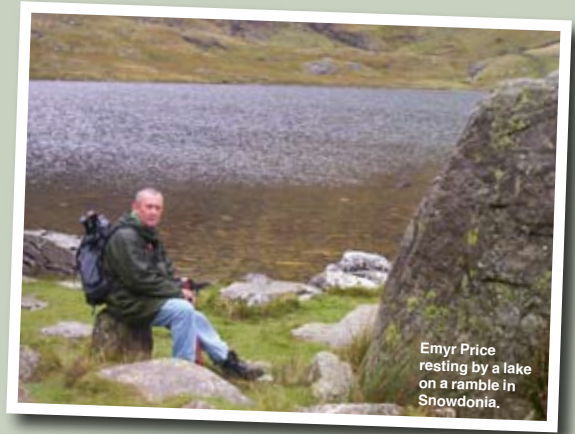
*Tim has picked Derek Boulton, from Hayter, to take part next month.*



# Letters



Please email your notes to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)



Emyr Price resting by a lake on a ramble in Snowdonia.

## BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP 2009

Dear BIGGA

As you may not be aware, this year was my 20th PGA Championship at Wentworth and what a wonderful way to celebrate the occasion with such fantastic weather and a great result with Paul Casey taking the championship title.

This year's BMW PGA Championship was a particular success for all at the Club, BMW and the European Tour and I wanted to thank Clive Osgood and all of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team who assisted us in making it one of our best.

Please pass on my thanks to all who took part and I look forward to seeing you and the team here again next year.

With best wishes and kind regards

**Chris Kennedy**  
Golf Courses Manager, Wentworth Club

## CONGRATULATIONS ON 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

Dear BIGGA

At the beautiful links course that is the Royal St. David's golf club, under the watchful gaze of the aged Harlech castle, congratulations go to Emyr Price on reaching 35 years of service at the golf course Harlech so proudly boasts.

You would expect after such service Emyr would like to take it easy but he and the greenkeeping team are facing their most challenging year yet, hosting three major events: Ladies British Open Amateur, World One Armed Golfers Open Championship and S4C RCW Ladies Championships of Europe.

**Pete Maybury**  
Vale of Llangollen Golf Club

# Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!

## Not just for Greenkeepers

A complete range of turf industry jobs are available on

[www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

With over **14000** visitors to our job pages every month  
You are sure to attract the quality of candidate required

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- call Kirstin today on 01347 833832.

“ I wish to thank the team at BIGGA for their help and advice in placing our advert on the BIGGA website. The good response to the advert will allow us to employ someone who we feel is ideally suited for the job.”

Tony Hawes, Course Manager, Potters Bar Golf Club



# 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**  
**BIGGA**

**Tel: 01347 833800**  
**Email: [sami@bigga.co.uk](mailto:sami@bigga.co.uk)**  
**Website: [www.bigga.org.uk](http://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](mailto:sletham@elmwood.ac.uk)

Web: [www.elmwood.ac.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:info@oatridge.ac.uk)

Web: [www.oatridge.ac.uk](http://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](mailto:jrsullivan@bridgend.ac.uk)

Web: [www.bridgend.ac.uk](http://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.

### 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](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)

## Study online Degrees in Sportsturf



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

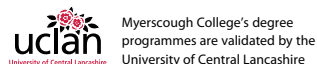
#### Foundation Degree in Sportsturf

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.



For more information contact Course Enquiries on 01995 642211 or visit [www.myerscough.ac.uk](http://www.myerscough.ac.uk)

## ENGLAND

### ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

Askham Bryan, York, North Yorkshire, YO23 3FR

Contact: Central Admissions

Tel: 01904 772211

Email: [enquires@askham-bryan.ac.uk](mailto:enquires@askham-bryan.ac.uk)

Web: [www.askham-bryan.ac.uk](http://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.

### 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](mailto:enquiries@bca.ac.uk) Web: [www.bca.ac.uk](http://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: [bowdenv@bridgwater.ac.uk](mailto:bowdenv@bridgwater.ac.uk)

[www.bridgwater.ac.uk](http://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

Corwall'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](mailto:liz.clarkson@duchy.ac.uk)

Contact: Claire Bennetts

Tel: 01209 722109/07824 626363 Email: [Claire.bennetts@duchy.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.bennetts@duchy.ac.uk)

Website: [www.duchy.ac.uk](http://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.

### 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).

### 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.

### 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

### 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.

### 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.

### 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

### 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.





# Student 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.



### 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](http://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/](http://www.bigga.org.uk/join/membership-forms/) or contact the membership team on 01347 833800 option 1 for membership.





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# BUYERS' GUIDE



## Drainage: an important element of any golf course

Drainage is the lifeblood of any golf course and while much of the work is ultimately unseen by the golfer without it many courses would be unplayable for much of the year.

And it will only remain so. With projections for the next 70 years warning of a 16% increase in rainfall, coupled, incidentally, with significantly higher temperatures, drainage of golf courses will become even more important.

Meiklem Drainage, which now operates out of purpose built premises in Kelty, Fife, is already busy and by all accounts will be busier still.

It has carried out drainage improvement work on five of the St Andrews Links Courses – the Old, the New, the Jubilee, the Castle and a complete drainage system on Strathtyrum as well as Kingsbarns while it has also carried out trenchless drainage at Duff House Royal in Banff and the new G4 Course, at Blackford, next door to Gleneagles.

Off the golf course, Meiklem has also carried out work at the new Queen Margaret University College in Musselburgh and HM Prisons at Saughton and Perth.

Drainage is near the top of most enlightened golf clubs list of expected expenditure and drainage companies will be well placed to keep their order books full.

**Meiklem Drainage:**  
**John Meiklem**  
**07808 897 300**  
**or Colin Hutchison 07808 897 312**

## BUYERS GUIDE CATEGORIES

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 Forth House, Bracknell Lane, Hartley Wintney, Hants, RG27 8QP  
 Telephone: 01252 844847  
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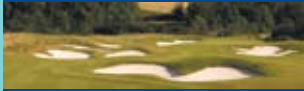
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# On the Soapbox

A new vehicle for people within the industry to express their viewpoint

**Greenkeepers are prone to complaints, this is a harsh fact. I have come to the conclusion that this is an occupational hazard and one that we have to accept as an inevitable fact.**

We endure the unrealistic expectations placed upon us by members who see tournament standards on TV and expect the same at their home club. When those impossible expectations are not met, they criticise. But most of us put up with it; we work hard communicating and educating them. We do this because we love the job and we are realistic and educated enough to realise that those high expectations and nonsensical ramblings that happen at the bar are just that... nonsensical.

Speed of greens is the prime example; ask a golfer how to improve the speed of the greens and what would he say? Simple - CUT THEM LOWER! Well, if only it was that simple. If greenkeeping was that simple then why employ an experienced and educated greenkeeper at all? Why don't we all just do what members tell us to do, get the 13mm spanner out and hey presto... quick, TV tournament greens? Sadly some do get the spanner out, and throw a spanner in the works for everyone!

Cutting lower increases stress, this is a scientific fact, not rocket science, just simple plant science. We all know that the plant leaf is used to gain energy from the sun. We all know shade and a smaller leaf restricts the energy source to the plant. Yet some still advocate cutting at 2mm. This is a quick fix, and a quick fix attitude in greenkeeping is dangerous. Cutting our greens at ludicrously low heights to satisfy the moaning member is not only placing pressure on your grass, more disturbingly it places pressure on other greenkeepers. We place pressure on neighbouring golf clubs and their committee members, and who gets the brunt of the pressure? The poor greenkeeper who is thinking long-term. The quick fix answer may take the pressure off your shoulders short-term, but the long-term damage has been seen many times, a 13mm spanner is not the answer.

At the moment most greenkeepers and golf clubs don't cut at 2mm. They don't because they are educated to know better. We have all read, we have all seen and heard of the problems, some (like me) have even inherited the problems and are now working hard to rectify those problems. I now have 100% poa greens, thatch &

disease problems, Why? Because for the past 20 years or so we have been under so much pressure to achieve the unrealistic expectations set on us by members who know no better.

Why do we listen to those who know no better? Why do we not listen to our own expertise? Why do we stop listening to the experts? Sadly we still refrain from listening to those same experts saying the same thing. Those educated folks at the STRI, the R&A, the seed producers, and the college education system and, of course, the late great Jim Arthur. They are the educated guys, they have seen more, they have learnt more and know more about fine turf than those guys at the bar will ever know. Maybe it's time we listen to those educated guys instead!

## Why employ an experienced and educated greenkeeper at all? Why don't we all just do what members tell us to do, get the 13mm spanner out and hey presto... quick, TV tournament greens

I suppose many would answer, those moaning members pay our wages. Yes, you are right; however, they don't pay for us to be submissive. They pay for our expertise; they send us to college, pay for seminars, books and publications. So how can they expect us to ignore all what we know, and all that they have paid for? They shouldn't. We are custodians of the club, we have a responsibility to safeguard our club's future and communicate our methods back to them.

We, as an industry can bang on about poa being a good grass until we are blue in the face, but if we are claiming that it is only good at 2mm and as long as there is a reliable water supply, a reliable chemical and fertiliser supply and our budget will sustain the extra cost, then quite frankly it can't be that good. I work on poa greens and it can produce a good surface, but at what cost? Are we confident that the reliable water supply will still be with us in the future, are we confident that chemical and fertiliser will be freely available. Are we confident that the expectations from our members won't increase?

My belief is simple; members' expectations will increase. I believe no matter what standard your greens are

now, the expectations will still increase. If you are cutting at 2mm now, you may have reached your Utopia. Can you sustain that? Can you improve on that? In the future your members will demand more, then what? Can we ever truly fulfil the high expectations placed upon us? I believe you can't. I believe we need to steadily improve, year on year.

Let's benchmark our courses now, let's collect data, let's be honest with our results and let's have those results for future greenkeepers to use as scientific backup. For years we have tried to defy science and fight Mother Nature, and during those years I have never seen this being done with any long term success. When are we going to learn? Maybe we won't. But maybe it's time for change... finally.



Course Manager at Bromborough Golf Club in Cheshire, and a Gingerbread Man!

*Paul Lowe*

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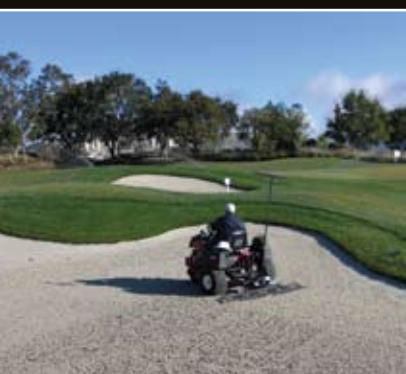
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