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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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Inside...

CREAM OF THE CROP

Review of the BIGGA National
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The 2mm Debate

TALKING HEADS FEATURE

Golf
Course
Feature

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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Listed building status needed?

As you will see from elsewhere in this issue – and on the front cover – Wentworth is currently undergoing quite a metamorphosis.

When Chris Kennedy kindly gave up some of his valuable time to show me around I was astounded by the extent of the changes. Some of the new work, particularly on the iconic 18th, is jaw dropping and the hole will quickly become one of the most talked about in all of golf.

The standard of the work is superb and a credit to Chris and all those involved. What they have produced is high quality, to extremely tight deadlines, all at a club where failure is not an option

You must also take your hat off to Wentworth's owner, Richard Caring, whose uncompromising desire to create a true challenge for the modern day professional, not to mention pockets deep enough to make it happen, has to be admired.

But deep down I must admit to nagging doubts about whether a course, which could claim to be among the top four highest profile in golf, along with the Old Course, Augusta National and Pebble Beach, should be so radically altered.

If the West Course were a listed building, and not a 75 year-old Harry Colt-designed golf course, there is no way anyone could make the slightest tweak to it, without building regulations vetoing even the most sensible of ideas. Let's face it, getting council approval for an extension to a three bed semi isn't straightforward.

But when it comes to a golf course - which in the case of Wentworth could be justifiably claimed as a national treasure - complete transformations can be carried out with impunity.

The counter argument is, of course, that a golf course should keep up to date with the people who play the game and with developments in balls and equipment. There can't be a golf course with any history at all which hasn't been extended to some degree or another, or had bunkers moved or added, all to counter the massive distances that the likes of Alvaro Queros or JB Holmes belt the ball.

Also modern day construction is generally required to extend the life of older courses – replacing old water retaining, push up greens, which can't cope with the demands of year round play, with USGA style greens - so why not make design improvements at the same time?

But what if the work isn't done to a high standard, or a course is treated as a mere plaything of a non-golfing billionaire owner.

Now this is exaggeration to make a point so don't shout at me, but what if someone decided the Road Hole on the aforementioned Old Course could be "tarted" up, and the actual road flooded to incorporate a golf-themed log flume ride – at one stroke a water hazard to rival the Swilken Burn and a money making opportunity. Brilliant! Or the Postage Stamp, at Royal Troon, requiring a precise shot through a windmill – better still, a giant letter box! Who would be able to stop it?

Is it perhaps time that we had a Listing Building style status for our historic golf courses? It might also help to force the R&A's hand when it comes to restricting the distance that the ball flies.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

November 2009

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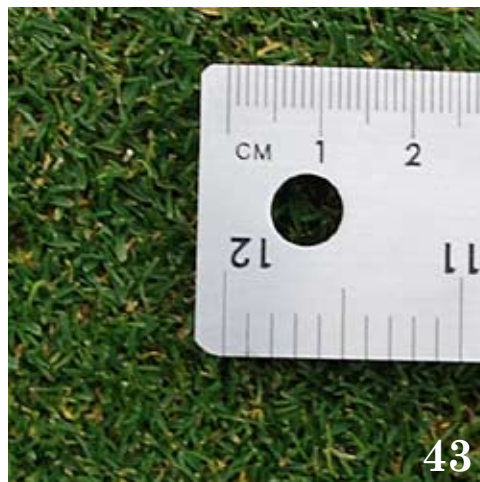
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The most talked about issue in greenkeeping at present begins the first of a two part feature ahead of the Seminar on the subject during Harrogate Week.





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TOP DEALER AWARD

Green Mowers, of Burgos in northern Spain, are the Ransomes Jacobsen Distributor of the Year for 2008. The company was also winner of the Service Parts Distributor of the Year award at a ceremony held during SALTEX.

Presenting the silver trophy to Rosendo Ferrer Delmau and Raoul Cellabos, Managing Director David Withers said, "Throughout 2008 Green Mowers have demonstrated very solid growth and all round performance excellence. They have innovative marketing strategies which have helped to combat the difficult trading and economic circumstances affecting all of Europe and have made significant investment in new premises and in staff training.

UK dealers also featured extensively at the awards with Rickerby Ltd receiving two accolades - Parts Dealer and E-Z-GO Dealer of the Year; Scottish dealer Fairways GM won the Service award; TH White Ltd won the ING Finance accolade, Bird's Vehicle Solutions of Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan were presented with the E-Z-GO Speciality award and Burrows won Iseki Dealer of the Year. Completing the UK award winners, Andy Turbin, of Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd, accepted the Turf Dealer of the Year award from Rupert Price, Ransomes Jacobsen's UK and Ireland Sales Manager.

Elmwood Students to the Fore

Staff and students from Elmwood College assisted with the setting up of the Kingsbarns Golf Course for the recent Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. The tournament is played over three links courses – St Andrews, The Old Course, Carnoustie, The Championship Course and Kingsbarns.

Ten students supported by two lecturers, Stuart Mackie and Alan Clark, were involved in the preparation of Carnoustie and Kingsbarns courses.

The students prepared the fairways at Carnoustie and met with Course Manager, John Philp, and Head

Greenkeeper, Sandy Reid, who gave them and insight into how a course is prepared for a top event.

At Kingsbarns under the supervision of Head Greenkeeper, Innes Knight, the students were charged with the preparation and maintenance of the practise area, as well as cutting tees, fairways and raking bunkers.

"The Dunhill Championship was a great opportunity for me to experience golf course presentation on such a high level. I was happy to be part of this event." Said student, Lukas Boettcher.

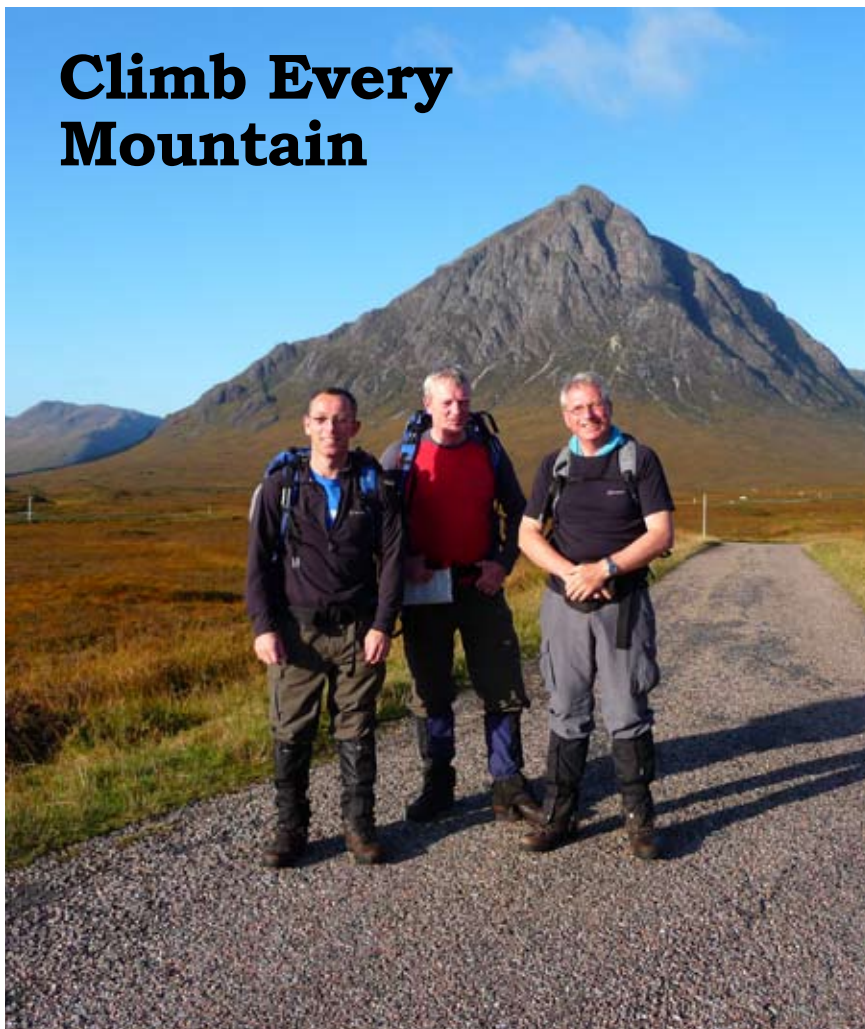
Stuart Mackie, Greenkeeping lecturer

explained the importance of the event for the students saying,

"The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working at a major golfing event and the experience they have gained is invaluable, they demonstrated the attitude and professionalism that is required to succeed at a high level in the industry."

Caption L-R Anke Perplies, Germany; Ajay Malhotra, India; Kelvin Budd, Scotland; Calum Smith, Scotland; Mike Boyle, Scotland; Colin Mason, Scotland; Lukas Boettcher, Germany; Brett Hochstei, USA, and John Galloway, Scotland.

Climb Every Mountain



He may not be doing all of them, and he won't have Julie Andrews with him, but British Seed Houses' Simon Taylor is off to climb the highest mountain in the Americas, and the highest mountain outside Asia.

Cerro Aconcagua, made famous in the film *Touching the Void*, rises to 22,841 ft and is located in the Andes mountain range, in the Argentine province of Mendoza.

For some obscure reason he'd rather be "constantly surrounded by 21,000-foot peaks, providing formidable views of the Central Andes than standing on an exhibition stand at BTME 2010!

"It's something I've always wanted to do and the timings just clashed," explained Simon.

Simon, and two friends from his local village of Swinderby, will be climbing in traditional expedition style using multiple camps en route. The approach involves 35 miles of colourful, spectacular, high desert scenery and allows adequate time to acclimatise to the low oxygen environment, and wait out any stormy weather they may encounter.

"This climb will be very challenging because of the high altitude, cold temperatures, and strong winds. Nothing but an excellent physical condition will do, coupled with basic mountaineering skills. In preparation, we have been training in the Glencoe region of Scotland which provides some pretty challenging conditions itself," said Simon, pictured left.

"Our goal is to get to the top and back down again, all in one piece. And who knows, I may even stumble across an unknown grass species along the way!"

BOOST FOR 300 YEAR-OLD TREE



A section of the 300-year-old great yew hedge at Powis Castle in Wales has been treated for chlorosis, a condition believed to have been caused by soil compaction around the roots, depriving the affected tree of the vital air, water and nutrients needed for strong and healthy growth.

The selected treatment involved intensive decompaction of the rootzone by Terravent machine followed by injection of a blend of 18 beneficial Mycorrhizal fungi, natural fertilisers and organic liquid amendments into the soil.

Commissioned by Adrian Lovatt, Head Gardener at the National Trust-owned property, the treatment was carried out by tree and plant healthcare specialist, Eastwood Tree Services, on behalf of Telford-based Amenity Land Solutions (ALS), who recommended and supplied from its Natural Solutions range all of the organic products that were used to treat the affected tree.

"I sought advice from ALS and the firm recommended Terravent of the affected tree's root zone," explained Adrian.

"Including setting-up, the entire job could be completed by Eastwood Tree Services in around five hours enabling the work to be carried out on a day when the garden was closed."

A two-stage process, Terravent begins with the Terravent machine blasting pressurised inert nitrogen gas into the soil through a steel probe, opening up cracks and fissures to a depth of around 500mm to relieve compaction. The second stage saw the liquid blend of beneficial organic media supplied by ALS injected at a pressure of 8 bar into the holes created by the Terravent's probe, pumped from a mobile mixer tank situated some 90 metres below the treatment area.

With the intensive work completed, the final action will see Powis Castle's gardeners apply a mulch to the soil beneath the tree's canopy to help restore a natural and healthy growing environment, assisted by regular watering.



Big Week at Cowes

Cowes Golf Club's centenary recently was a particularly demanding time for Course Manager, Scott Nightingale, and his team.

"We set the course up as close as we could have done to being tournament standard and really pushed it hard. The greens were on a knife edge during that week," said Scott.

"I had been vee-mowing, sarel spiking, dressing and spoon feeding weekly for the majority of the year running up to the event. We hand mowed greens twice daily at 3mm and were producing speeds of up to 12 on the stimpmeter consistently through the week.

The celebrations, including a golf trick show by world champion David Edwards, ended with a Gala Dinner/Dance at The Cowes Yacht Haven.

"It has been an absolutely fantastic year with everyone really pulling together and singing from the same hymn sheet.

My staff were great and have worked extremely hard, putting in long hours and showing great dedication.

The Management Committee also shown great faith in my skills and knowledge which has paid dividends as the results have been seen on the course," said Scott



Andy and Paul clinch Inaugural Event

The inaugural final of the East Midlands Section Pairs Knockout competition, sponsored by Headland Amenity Products, was held at The Grove.

Andy de Wet and Paul Frith, from Birstall GC, won a tight final against Glynn Buckby, from Market Harborough GC, and Simon Banks, from Banks Amenity Products.

All the competitors met with Mark Hunt, of Headland, on the evening before the match for a meal and drinks.

The match teed off the next morning with Simon making birdie on the first hole. This lead wasn't relinquished until the 11th hole, the match then stayed pretty much nip and tuck until the 18th green. Andy reached the long par 5 in three with Simon on in four. With both players receiving shots it came down to the putting. Simon lagged his putt for a safe six with Paul holing for a guaranteed half. This left Andy with two putts for the match from 30 feet. After 'racing' the first putt past he had a 20 foot putt to win. After a perfect read the ball trundled to the edge of the hole and after having a look at the edge decided to drop in! The first time Andy and Paul had been up in the match was at the final putt to win the game!

All players had a fantastic time and all credit must go to both Mark Hunt and Headland for organising such a great venue for the final to be played and to Course Superintendent, Philip Chiverton, and The Grove for the superb condition of the golf course and hospitality given the previous night in the hotel.

South East Region Seminar Reigate Hill Golf Club, November 12

A few places are remaining at this year's Seminar - arranged and hosted by the Surrey Section - The Decade Ahead.

As we move out of the naughties what does the next decade hold for golf management and Greenkeepers?

With climate change an ever deepening recession and greater demands on Golf Course quality this years Seminar will include five excellent speakers from within the industry, covering a wide range of subjects to help us with the day to day challenges and long term improvements.

Speakers: Mark Hunt, Headland; Martin Ward, Symbio; Laurence, Pithie MG, TurfMasterOne; Tim Lobb, Thomson Perritt & Lobb, and Lee Penrose, STRI Ecologist

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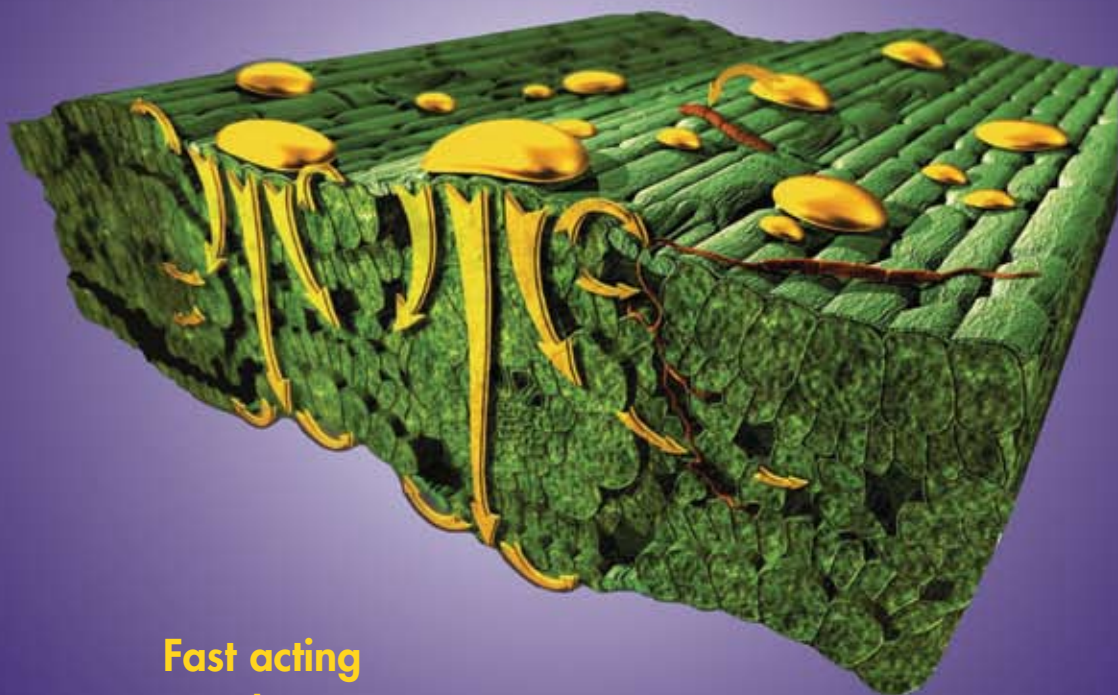
Al Fresco AGM

The South West Section enjoyed another "first" with its first-ever outdoor AGM in beautiful Autumn sunshine at Saltford Golf Club last October.

A total of 24 members attended, with Adam Matthews, Minchinhampton, and Jamie Acton, Worlebury, warmly welcomed onto the Section Committee for the first time.

Paul Worster stood down as Section Secretary to concentrate on his year as National Chairman. In his summing up, Chris Sealey spoke of his gratitude to the Section Patronage Companies for their continuing support, and underlined the importance of Section members being as active as possible within the Association.

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Training Reach Shows No Limits

During July I was lucky enough to undertake two weeks pesticide training on the island of St Helena, in the South Atlantic Ocean.

This was for a project funded by the RSPB, the UK partner of BirdLife International. The reason for this project was to teach local people how best effectively to control invasive weeds on the island. These invasives have taken over habitats and are preventing effective agriculture and horticulture from taking place.

St Helena, an Overseas Territory of the UK, is a sub-tropical island located in the South Atlantic, 1,200 miles from the south-west coast of Africa and 1,800 miles from the coast of South America.

The island covers an area of approximately 47 square miles, 10 miles long and six miles wide.

The next nearest land mass is Ascension Island at around 800 miles away.

St Helena is often described as a volcanic feature which rises dramatically from the sea, with sheer cliffs intersected with deep valleys which slope from the central ridges.

The island has rocky shores, and as one travels inland rolling hills, subtropical forest and grasslands.

St Helena is not the easiest place to get to. I travelled there by flying to Ascension courtesy of the RAF, then onto a three days cruise on the RMS St Helena which is a dedicated passenger/freight/mail ship;

one of the last Royal Mail ships in the world.

During the two weeks I had 48 people to train from various organisations: some from St Helena Government departments including the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department and the Public Works and Services Department, some from Solomons, the islands largest Public Limited Company and others as private individuals, farmers and smallholders.

While there I visited what is often called the remotest golf course in the world. Longwood golf course is situated on the eastern side of the island and is on unusually level land for the island, surrounded by natural volcanic landscapes.

The golf course has 9 holes with 18 tee-boxes. Maintenance is undertaken by the rather aptly named Arnold 'Shotty' Green the Course Manager. Unfortunately he was not there when I visited.

Hopefully I will be able to speak to him when I next visit the island on the way to doing some pesticides training on Ascension Island in February 2010 when I also hope to visit Ascension golf course and will report back! Due to the sub-tropical climate the greens are poorer quality than we are used to, but the locals regularly enjoy a good game of golf, with competitions held most weekends.

*Ian Gower
Ian Gower Associates*

Threat to Edinburgh's Public Courses

The Scottish edition of the Daily Mail has reported that Edinburgh City Council is considering turning their underused municipal golf courses into allotments to meet the demands of the city's gardeners.

The Mail reported that "Thousands of gardeners are waiting for allotments while the city's six municipal courses lie empty for much of the time."

The paper went on to say that a recent council audit had suggested that there were too many public courses which take up a quarter of the capital's green space but that the potential move is sure to raise eyebrows among traditionalists as Scottish golf faces one of its biggest crises in more than a



century.

"Golf is the biggest participation sport north of the Border after football, with as much as 12.7% of Scotland's adult population playing the game at least once a month.

The article closes with a quote from SGU Chief Executive Hamish Grey who warned that "public courses are vital in encouraging youngsters to take up the sport."



Sales Team Back up to Strength

Jill Rodham, who joins the Association as a Sales Executive, is BIGGA's newest recruit.

A direct replacement for Sharon Price, who left the Association at the end of July, Jill brings with her extensive sales experience, having worked as an Account Director for a Telecoms Company and, more recently, in recruitment, where she was based in her home town of Harrogate, as well as Leeds.

Recently married, Jill, and her new husband, Simon, honeymooned in Chicago and the pair enjoy hill walking, particularly in the Lake District and skiing on the slopes of Val d'Isere one of their favourite destinations. She is also an enthusiastic tenpin bowler and socialiser.

"From what I've been told this is a lovely industry to work in and I'm looking forward to learning about the industry and getting to know the people who work in it," said Jill.

BB&O Visit DLF



Home counties and southern greenkeepers heard how turf care innovations to be unveiled next year could transform the method and cost-effectiveness of sowing and overseeding.

Members of BIGGA's B,B&O Section were the guests of DLF Johnsons Seeds at its turf-growing demonstration centre in Inkberrow, Worcestershire, for a training day in early October

Included in the schedule was a conducted tour of DLF's turf development plots showing examples of the seed producer's leading cultivars, including bents, fescues and ryegrass, as well as a tour of the production plant where seed is mixed and bagged ready for delivery.

Amenity Sales Manager, Derek Smith, assisted by Martin Townsend, Turf and Amenity Manager of distributor, Countrywide Farmers, presided over the day, revealing some of DLF's plans for 2010, which he said would

be a watershed year for the seed producer, after several years of trialling turf grass seed treatments at sites across Britain.

"The day was a most valuable one for BIGGA members," said Simon Marsh, Course Manager of Harleyford Golf Club, in Marlow, who helped organise the event.

"It offered an opportunity for greenkeepers of all ages to converse on issues that affect them throughout the year. I'm excited about the new generation that are coming through now and the impact that they will certainly have on the industry."

Derek Smith added: "We were heartened to attract nearly 20 BIGGA members, some of whom travelled long distances to attend the day. Greenkeepers rarely have a chance to see our demonstration areas close up. They certainly proved an eye-opener for some, who went away with firm ideas about how to tackle their day-to-day turf issues."

Scottish Package

The Scottish Region is pleased to offer the following package for the Holiday Inn, Harrogate. The accommodation is from Monday 18 January.

Three nights Bed & Breakfast in en-suite rooms on 18, 19 and 20 January, 2010.

To obtain a booking form for the accommodation contact the Regional Administrator, Peter J Boyd on; 0141 616 3440/07776242120 or email; pj.boyd@btinternet.com



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Chairman's Word

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

For many years BIGGA has been working away at raising the profile of the profession but it can't do this without all of us playing our part in the process.

We all wish to be treated as professionals in our specialist field by players, owners, senior management, committees etc with our ideas, suggestions and views sought in decision making. Raising our profile and gaining wider recognition for our work is very much down to us and the effort we put into shaping this by our own actions.

There are many things that help us to achieve a higher level of professionalism and project this to others -communication, image and appearances, technical and managerial expertise etc. Getting all these right requires a continued effort. We are facing an increasingly competitive world with a constantly altering work environment - changes in technology, legislation



CPD demonstrates commitment

and scientific understanding in our field. To meet these challenges we need to regularly update our skills and knowledge through what is commonly referred to as Continuing Professional Development (CPD). By adopting this approach it is possible to keep up to date with the latest developments and help inject enthusiasm and ideas into your club.

CPD will benefit you personally in your career development, helping you to gain a competitive advantage as well as your club's business. For those seeking higher rewards CPD allows you to demonstrate your commitment to continual improvement. 'Raising the bar' is what it is all about and by delivering higher standards and greater professionalism you are in a much better position to seek rewards that reflect this. Along with the financial benefits CPD will also improve self confidence and help to raise your profile in the industry.

Accreditation schemes linked to membership categories are commonplace in many professional bodies. Different terms such as Class A or Fellow can provide a series of stages that allow members the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to CPD and their level of achievements. The current Master Greenkeeper certification is different in that once achieved it is not an ongoing learning scheme. Moving to link CPD with our membership structure would send a

stronger message about the level of professionalism of members and that Learning and Development is the keystone to BIGGA. This topic is firmly on the agenda for the next sub-committee meeting and your input to the discussions would be welcomed.

Aside from CPD what else can you do to help project a more professional image? - Like it or not people do judge by appearances. It really boils down to looking businesslike and conducting yourself accordingly, if you really want to be taken seriously.

Writing reports isn't a familiar task in a mainly hands-on working environment and an experience that doesn't always come naturally to some when required to do this, so training can prove invaluable. Documents that are submitted for approval such as budgets, recommendations, technical reports etc will carry far more weight if they are carefully worded, well laid out and presented.

Meetings and presentations all require verbal communication skills and offer an opportunity to get your message across. They should be seen as a chance to show how well you have prepared, know the facts and inevitably will display to others your level of confidence on the subject matter. There is no doubt that doing your homework is paramount but equally learning the skill of presenting effectively can make

a difference. If this is an area you would like to improve on then take advantage of the presentation workshop available at Harrogate in January.

Computers and the internet have made the job of working in a more professional manner so much easier - searching for information, corresponding, on line learning, constructing documents and keeping records. For those still trying to manage without an internet connected computer in their workplace it will prove much more time consuming and less likely that you can achieve the same results. It is now a tool that has become essential to do your job professionally and this message needs feeding through to those who can speed up the provision of facilities to your office. BIGGA is providing on-line courses to assist with training in the use of computers at very modest costs to members and I hope these prove useful.

Helping members to be viewed by all concerned as true professionals continues to be an important objective of BIGGA. Gaining that recognition will only result from working together to raise standards across all aspects of our work and demonstrating this by actions. Take full advantage of all the learning opportunities available on a regular basis for you and your colleagues to keep up to date, improving and ahead.



Greenkeepers Training Committee



A message from the Chairman of the GTC, Donald Steel

If experience (better than old age) has one benefit, it is in allowing you to draw comparisons. Where greenkeeping is concerned, the conclusions are invariably that what goes round, comes round.

However, one e-mail last week from America talked of Superintendents looking for ways of trimming costs in the light of a weaker economy.

The suggested method was a drastic reduction in the use of water, fertilisers and chemicals. How are the mighty fallen?

One means of astonishing Golf Course Superintendents in America is to mention the average annual budget for British courses allied to the number of greenkeepers commissioned to look after them.

It prompts open-mouthed disbelief but therein is contained the contrast in philosophies.

British regimes have always been more austere, a formula geared to a different climate and a largely different interpretation of how courses should play.

One of the problems arises over here when Clubs are misguided enough to want to copy the American approach by having everything green and heavily watered but, in spite of consistently higher temperatures, it is surprising in the Southern States how little water Bermuda grasses need.

One of the other spin-offs from experience is saying the same thing in a different way, a subtle exercise in trying to disguise the nature of the contents by means of fresh packaging.

Sustainable golf is the new war cry, "optimising the playing quality of the golf course in harmony with the conservation of its natural environment under economically sound and socially responsible management".

It is a subject that has led to my delving into my old Press cuttings in order to make sure I am not missing anything but,

having worked closely with Jim Arthur over a couple of decades or more, and been the recipient of countless of his oral and written exocet missiles, I don't think I am. At last, I can hear him saying, somebody may be listening.

One item that comes to mind surrounded the time in 1975 when no sooner had the R&A announced that Turnberry would hold its first Open Championship in 1977 than the Ailsa course was reported to be in poor condition.

Alarm bells rang and a magic potion was brewed by Jim consisting of something of a return to nature, a reduction of inorganic feeding, regular aeration and scarification; and a tight hold on water. Does any of that sound familiar?

It also highlighted other lessons. Firstly, that the course is a Club's greatest asset, its sole reason for existence, and that it should receive priority over everything else; and secondly, years of proper management can be swept away in months by heavy-handedness- a clear message that prevention is so much better (and cheaper) than cure.

It was a year or so later that the British Association of Golf Course Architects drew to public attention the need for formalised greenkeeper training of which Jim was also a strong proponent.

The architects were among the first to see the futility of building a host of new courses with only a handful of qualified men to look after them.

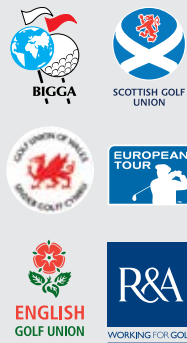
They realised the total dependence of architects on high class maintenance in order to achieve their desired aims.

Today's healthy situation, as far as the excellent standards of greenkeeping are concerned, stem from around that time but so, too, does The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' involvement with golf.

In Brief

Donald Steel praises the work of the UK's greenkeepers, and how Jim Arthur would be delighted at the current move towards sustainable golf.

The GTC is funded by:



They have recently collaborated with the R&A on a book making golfers aware of the value of golf courses in providing safe havens for birds but, as I wrote in the Sunday Telegraph in March 1976, "golf course architects have been trying for years to convince doubters that courses are a natural blend with the countryside and that their aim is to create and maintain natural habitats".

It followed The RSPB's appeal to "Save a place for Birds" launched by its then Director, Ian Prestt.

By way of celebration, they organised a "Save a birdie" competition (how long did it take to think of that title?!) in which every golf Club was invited to take part.

In spreading the word, they were greatly assisted by an entirely unplanned television transmission of an Open when a mother and her young pheasant chicks were spied by an observant cameraman evading the hordes of spectators.

It struck such a chord, in fact, that no programme was allowed to start without a progress report on the birds and their welfare.

In 1987, Sir David Attenborough joined forces with the Royal Society for Nature Conservancy by announcing a new Club tournament, the British Wildlife National Golf Classic, maintaining that "golf courses have always, and will always, provide splendid wildlife habitats for whatever reason they are conserved".

Many golfers play the game as much for its aesthetic delights as its challenge and they and nearly every greenkeeper require no prompting in supporting such a worthy cause.

It has always struck me that sustainability and wildlife preservation go together and that all birds are welcome- except perhaps the Canada goose.



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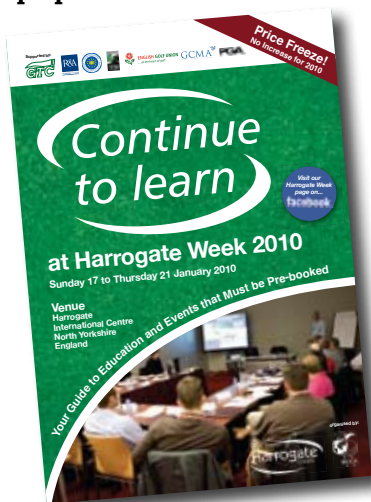
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Learning & Development

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



I can almost hear Santa's little helpers making all the toys and I think it would be quite useful if some of them could come and help Rachael and I out with the Harrogate Week preparations!



Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week 2010

Bookings are coming in fast for the Workshops and Seminars that must be pre-booked.

Details of all the educational events that are taking place during Harrogate Week are available on the Harrogate Week website:

www.harrogateweek.org.uk. Bookings can be taken by, credit card, online through the Harrogate Week website, over the telephone by calling the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 and select Option 3 or by completing a booking form.

The Golf Course Design Workshop makes a welcomed return to the programme.

We have updated the workshops Practical Management of a Safety Management System, Preparing and Delivering Powerful Presentations and Finance and Accounting to continue to meet the changes in the responsibilities of today's supervisors and managers.

We are also featuring three new one day workshops - Emergency First Aid, How to be an Outstanding Manager and Basic Golf Mechanics.

The majority of Seminars that are taking place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are Free of Charge to all visitors to the BTME and ClubHouse Exhibition.

Places are limited and are available on a first come, first serve basis. It is recommended that you turn up in plenty of time for the seminars you are most interested in attending.

Information on all of the Free Seminars is available on the Harrogate Week website.

If you have any queries or want to check availability of any of the Workshops, please contact the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 and selection option 3.

To view the list of confirmed-to-date Fringe Seminars go to Page 55

SAPCA Exhibition and Seminars

The Sports and Play Construction Association is hosting a special one-day event that comprises a



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.

series of informative and educational seminars accompanied by an exhibition featuring the leading constructors of sports facilities, suppliers of related products and services as well as professional consultants offering expert advice on sports facility projects.

BIGGA will be exhibiting at this event. Tracey Madison, Head of Membership Services, and I will there promoting BIGGA and available to answer any questions relating to the Association.

The event takes place on Tuesday, November 24, at Twickenham Stadium, West London and attendance at the event is free of charge. For further information visit the SAPCA website, www.sapca.org.uk or telephone 02476 416316.



Higher Education Scholarships Supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

The most recent scholarships have been awarded to:

Matthew Hutchinson - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf
Geoffrey Fenn - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf

All of the funding that was available from The BIGGA Higher Education Scholarship Fund has now been distributed. Twelve members have benefited in 2010 and over 100 members have received funding towards their Higher Education since the Scholarship Fund was established in 2002.



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Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Hamish Campbell, Neil Whitaker, Robert Maibusch.



BIG NEW FLEET FOR RIO REAL

Rio Real Golf & Wellness Resort, east of Marbella on Spain's Costa del Sol has recently purchased a fleet of 54 petrol E-Z-GO RXV golf cars from local distributor, Green Mowers of Estepona.

"We have purchased these new buggies for numerous reasons; their economy, quality of build and the fact that they are

a new generation of golf cars and have many innovative features. Golf on the Costa del Sol is very competitive and last year we achieved 38,000 rounds; however, this year we are targeting a further 2,000 rounds, which puts an added pressure on the course," said Course Director, Antonio Ortiz Rufino.

"In all of our dealings with Green Mowers they have been very professional and the service levels have been excellent. It helps that they are close by at Estepona, so if we have any issues they can be with us quickly. However, I must say that the buggies have performed very well and we are delighted with them."



Mowers Prove their Worth

Ellesmere College in rural north Shropshire, with a strong commitment to sport and other extra-curricular activities has just purchased its first ever John Deere machines for the extensive grounds and nine-hole golf course.

Ian Morris, the school's Head Groundsman for the past 30 years, chose a John Deere 500 triple cylinder mower and 220C walk-behind greens mower after a lengthy review of machines on the market, and bought them from dealer Charlies Groundcare at Newtown in Powys.

The school has recently bought another 75 acres and hopes to establish a bigger golf course and an extra 17 acres of sports fields in due course. In addition to the existing golf course, there are three cricket squares, 14 grass cricket nets, up to seven rugby or football pitches and two grass hockey pitches, as well as six hard tennis courts.

"We needed to replace another triple mower that was nine years old, so I spent several months looking at half a dozen or so different machines," says Ian Morris.

"This is used primarily on the golf course surrounds and all the college lawns. We cut pretty regularly so we don't bother boxing off, the grass clippings all go back into the ground, but the mower still leaves a nice clean finish.

Belfry Chosen for New RT Launch



Rigby Taylor conference delegates gather in front of the 10th tee.

The Belfry was the venue when Rigby Taylor launched a new range of products for greenkeepers, groundsmen and landscapers.

Over 60 staff and guests attended to hear all about the innovative turf fungicide Eland, a new liquid seed coating and a new and improved range of linemarking paint formulations.

RENEWED AGREEMENT

European Golf Design will be continuing its patronage of the Golf Environment Organisation with the signing of a new three-year partnership agreement. This financial and in-kind commitment will help GEO to continue advancing golf's sustainability drive.

Over the last three years, EGD's support for GEO has enabled considerable progress in enhancing golf's social and environmental role around the world. Patron support fuels core initiatives and projects such as GEO Certification, an innovative on-line programme that helps golf clubs improve their performance, profile and profitability: www.golfenvironment.org

Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive of GEO said: "European Golf Design's continued support is a great boost to GEO. To have the backing of one of the world's premier golf design companies is important to us. It reinforces the fact that GEO's approach is credible, comprehensive, and very relevant to developers, club owners, managers and greenkeepers as well as golf's governing bodies. EGD has recognised the fundamental business value in designing courses and supporting masterplans which generate valued social, economic and environmental outcomes".

Jeremy Slessor, Managing Director of EGD added: "At EGD we take this partnership very seriously. We have already established an environmental policy for the practice, and have begun to footprint and offset our unavoidable carbon emissions. We have been screening projects for their environmental sustainability and training staff in advanced technical disciplines to enable them to make the most informed design decisions."



First Rescue Delivery Arrives in St Andrews

The world's first commercial delivery of Syngenta's herbicide, Rescue, has arrived in the UK, with the first bottles delivered straight to St Andrews Links. The new selective herbicide has been brought in to help remove invasive weed Ryegrass and enhance the desirable fine Fescue grasses that were sown on the Castle Course.

St Andrews Links Trust was actively involved with the successful registration trials for Rescue, which received full approval for use on greens, tees, fairways and rough areas of golf courses in July this year.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at the Trust, said that invasive Ryegrass spoils the visual appearance and the playing quality of Fescue turf surfaces on many links golf courses.

"Our experience from the trials is that we now have an opportunity effectively to remove Ryegrass and other coarse grasses faster and more cost effectively than traditional cultural practices, without any disruption in play," said Gordon.



The new look 2nd green allows the player to see the entire green from the tee.

A photograph of a golf course green with a sand trap, surrounded by trees and a safety fence. The green is in the foreground, and the sand trap is in the middle ground. The background is filled with a dense line of trees. An orange safety fence runs across the middle ground, separating the green from the trees. The overall scene is a well-maintained golf course.

Same Name, Different Course

It's the largest and most demanding project ever to have been undertaken by a British golf club. Scott MacCallum met up with Wentworth's, Chris Kennedy, to see a remarkable transformation of a famous old course.

The decision to dig up, redesign and rebuild, to USGA spec, all 18 greens on Wentworth's iconic West Course has had the greenkeeping industry buzzing since the plan was made public.

Much of the talk was of how Courses Manager, Chris Kennedy, would be able to achieve such a formidable task within the tight time-frame dictated by the end of one BMW PGA Championship, this May, and the start of the next BMW PGA Championship next May, as well as cope with the fierce examination and high expectations that come with hosting top Tour players.

The opportunity to make the changes only came about because the World Match-Play, which had traditionally been held over the same course in the autumn, was moved to Spain.

Well, Chris is currently deep into the project and they are on track to complete in time for next year's Championship, but this isn't the original plan. Oh no, the whole project has grown massively in recent months and it would be fair to say that had what is being done been contemplated earlier it would probably have been dismissed as over-ambitious folly.

The West Course that will confront defending Champion, Paul Casey, and the other 155 players next year at the BMW PGA Championship, will be completely different to the one to which they waved goodbye this May – changes so dramatic they could be compared to a regenerated Time Lord – “He says he's Dr Who, but he looks completely different!” To tweak another sci fi reference – “It's Wentworth, Jim, but not as we know it.”

In fact, only the par-3 5th has remained basically unchanged other than its new green.

Nowhere is that change more apparent than at the 18th hole.

In previous years a potential winner, needing a birdie four to win, would need a drive just inside the bunkers on the left of the fairway then hit a solid approach, either flying all the way to the green or bouncing in, avoiding the two bunkers, leaving two putts on the tricky sloping green.

Faced with the same situation next May, and having congratulated himself on a fine tee shot, the winner-in-waiting will look up and be faced with an eight metre wide creek running down the right side of the fairway with a nine feet high sleeper wall before cutting across

the fairway, in front of a green which has been lifted another half metre above that.

“Originally there were three bunkers on the 18th, and after it was redesigned there were 13, but even then our owner, Richard Caring, said he was disappointed,” explained Chris as we drove around the new look course.

“He said there wasn't enough drama and that he wanted a totally different hole. He then came up with the idea of the creek – we're calling it Richard's Creek – and the elevated green.”

Raised greens is something that Richard Caring – a 2-handicapper who has played on some of the finest courses in the world – is keen on and the new look course boasts several greens significantly higher than their predecessors.

“He has got a fantastic eye and a lot of quality players and European Tour officials have said how much they like the input he has had on the course,” explained Chris. Richard Caring is the owner of Caprice Holdings, whose portfolio includes many top nightclubs and restaurants including Annabel's; The Ivy, Soho House, and Le Caprice, and he has contributed a lot to how they look as well.

The original concept of rebuilding the greens had been under discussion between Wentworth and the Tour, which is based at Wentworth, for some time, in response to certain players who had voiced dissatisfaction with the course's poa greens and subsequently not entered the PGA Championship.

“It was driven by people like Pdraig Harrington and Ian Poulter who were unhappy that we couldn't get the greens at the PGA to the standard we had them for the Matchplay, which was played in the autumn. The explanation was that the Matchplay had enjoyed five months of growth whereas the PGA is in May, when we don't have double figure temperatures until three weeks before the event and obviously the first thing that kicks off is the poa seed.

“The greens were still running at 11 and a half and we'd only lose two inches on the stimpmeter between 7am and 7pm, thanks to verticutting and products like Primo Maxx, but unfortunately there are players who have decided that they can't putt on poa greens and won't take time to learn. It's not just us, Pebble Beach, Pine Valley and many big tournament venues are nearly all poa,” said Chris.

However, the decision was taken to change the greens and Chris



Co-project Manager, Jack McMillan with Chris Kennedy

explained to the owner that the turf was not the most important issue – “That's just the carpet on top,” Chris had told him – and that they needed to rebuild the greens to USGA spec so they would all “perc” at the same rate and react the same to the golf ball, which had been a major concern.

Together with the STRI, Jeff Perris and George Shiels, as well as Jack McMillan, who acted as Co-Project Manager with Chris, they agreed to use Colonial Bent, which they'd already used to overseed, on the new greens.

“People have been using Creeping Bent but that creates so much thatch and poa comes in quickly. Apart from that you can't play Creeping Bent greens in winter



ABOVE: Work is well underway on the amazing new 18th hole with the creek crossing in front of the still-to-be-constructed green

time and our business plan works round playing 12 months of the year and we look at 35,000 rounds per annum.

“We all agreed that the grass that would suit us best was Colonial Bent although, to my knowledge no-one has tried it before.”

The contract to supply the turf was put out to tender and after a series of site visits and discussions Tillers Turf were appointed.

“Tim Fell had an area set aside for us in Lincolnshire and the seed was put to ground in the same 15 cm nutrient-filled rootzone as we were using on the new greens. Straight after the PGA we did a core out,”

Wentworth resident, Ernie Els and his company Ernie Els Design, who had been responsible for the

previous re-design three years before, won the contract for the design of the new greens while MJ Abbott won the construction contract. Arden Lea Irrigation completed the team.

“We started on June 1, the drawings for all 18 greens were approved by the Board and a re-opening date of November 6 was set.

“However, as time went by Richard Caring saw the opportunity to create a totally different golf course. Although he loved Wentworth, having played golf all over the world, he felt that the challenge had been reduced over time and that modern players had overtaken the golf course.

“He felt that this was his opportunity to create a tough golf course

that has great impact and be his legacy to the game. It would be something he’d do just once.”

Richard Caring began to get involved - hole by hole, green by green - with Ernie Els toughening up the course and adding difficulty to the greens, and what had initially started as a project covering greens and 10 yards beyond, began to escalate, sometimes stretching to two acres around the green, occasionally amending fairways as well as doing all fairway bunkers.

“The owner always walks the course on the Saturday and Sunday of the PGA and he watched Paul Casey play from a fairway bunker on the 3rd to three feet and make birdie. You need to be good to be able to do it, but he didn’t think that



it should be possible to play that sort of shot so fairway bunkers have all been toughened up. He feels that sort of shot should cost at least half a shot and a player shouldn't be able to play straight to the hole."

Chris is aware that there will be golfing traditionalists who will be unhappy that the original Harry Colt-design has been so radically changed, but having been involved in the project and having spoken with various people including Greg Letsche, Ernie's Head of Design, he has begun to appreciate the counter argument.

"Wentworth is regarded as a Harry Colt masterpiece but the feeling is that if Harry had come along today he'd be thinking along the same lines as the new design. When he was building golf courses they were done with a horse and cart and he didn't have the opportunity to move earth and use the sophisticated machinery that is around today," said Chris.

An example of this comes on the 2nd hole, a par-3 made famous when Isao Aoki holed in one during the World Match-play in 1979 and won himself a house at Gleneagles.

"I'd always thought the hole was amazing the way it was, but Greg felt that on a short par-3, where players were only hitting an 8 or 9-iron, you should always see the ball finish. However, because the front of the green was higher than the back that didn't happen and if there was a hole-in-one you'd have to rely on the crowd telling you or wait until you'd got to the green to find out. You've got to agree with the guy," said Chris, as we surveyed the entire new green from the tee.

Chris is quick to confirm that it is still the Harry Colt routing plan, but he does admit that the new course takes the ground game out of play.

"Modern equipment, the ball and clubs, are designed for a through the air game and the new course takes account of this but that means that the opportunity to run the ball in, rather than fly it in has been removed."

The quality of the work from all concerned has been of the highest quality and Chris has nothing but praise for them. Abbotts used their own turf layers, or brought in professionals, rather than calling in unskilled labour, while they have

ABOVE: The new 17th green now features a fiendish drop off to the right

ABOVE RIGHT: Spectating has been improved at the rear of the 9th by thinning out some trees to show the raised green.

RIGHT: The 12th has become a difficult par-4 instead of an easy par-5

operated an 11 days on three days off schedule with Arden Lea going in on the three days to carry out the irrigation work which has required virtually a new system because fairways have been amended and the bunker has changed.

"The eight inch main which feeds the whole system has been rerouted and we've got double heads on all surrounds which is totally new," he said.

The new course will require more intense maintenance but Chris has been assured that he will be given the staff to make sure that the usual high standards are achieved.

With so many changes to the original spec it inevitably placed increasing demands on everyone involved, but despite this an opening date of early April is envisaged giving Wentworth members an opportunity to play the course in for a couple of weeks before it closes in preparation for the PGA.

It would be fair to say that not many, if any, established courses have ever taken on such a dramatic project between major tournaments but as things stood in late



Courses Manager, Chris Kennedy



September they were on track to pull it off.

“Wentworth tends to be at the forefront of most things and I think, with this project, we are there again.

“I have had some sleepless nights, not to mention some fairly fraught meetings but the greatest pressure came waiting for my daughter, Suzanne, to make me a granddad,” said Chris.

“Callum arrived at seven pounds six ounces. I had to give my apologies for a planning meeting to be there, but I wouldn’t have been anywhere else and Mr Caring was extremely supportive.”

Chris has been at Wentworth since 1989 and done 20 PGA Championships, 20 World Matchplays and 10 Wentworth Senior Masters, but next May the relief he always feels will be all the greater as it will signal the end of the most intense period in his professional life.

“When that final putt goes down on that Sunday afternoon the feeling of satisfaction will be greater than ever and I’ll know by the look on Mr Caring’s face if it has all been worthwhile.”



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Field woodrush

The grass lookalike weed

Dr Terry Mabbett looks at the strange case of the grass that isn't

Broad-leaved plants and coarse grasses are clearly different and easily distinguished as turf weeds, but suppose you are faced with a weed that looks like a grass but isn't and colonises turf like broad-leaved weeds though is essentially unaffected by selective herbicides.

Culprit is field woodrush (*Luzula campestris*) one of the most stubborn and difficult to control weeds of turf in the United Kingdom.

Field woodrush exploits impoverished soil low in humus and nutrients and acid in reaction. Greenkeepers in northern and western regions generally face the biggest and most intractable problems. That said field woodrush will exploit pockets of impoverished acid turf almost anywhere, even within 'chalk-flavoured' alkaline soils in south eastern England.

On the gentle rolling land where north London meets south Hert-

ABOVE: Field woodrush typically grows in patches plainly visible in April due to a mass of brown flower heads (panicles).

fordshire is a small attractive golf course laid out on ancient 'common land' that pre-dates 'Magna Carta', and famous as the actual site of a fifteenth century battle in the 'Wars of the Roses'. The course has its own perennial battle with tracts of wet acid soil on impoverished land within an otherwise fertile and free draining region of the Home Counties.

The whole area is traversed by brooks and ditches and dotted with springfed ponds. Many of the greens become flooded in winter and some fairways are infested with field woodrush. The field woodrush only becomes obvious in April as large patches with a chestnut brown hue from the flowers that may persist for several weeks because the ground is too soft for prompt regular mowing. The patches of white flowers that follow in June are heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*) another other low pH (acid) indicator species.

Field woodrush and heath bed-

straw whether as wild flowers or turf weeds are quite rare in south Hertfordshire, where chalk seams rippling down from the Chilterns to the north provide the overriding soil influence. Without this peculiar pocket of wet acid grassland I would have been forced to travel a long distance to find pictures of the field woodrush used to illustrate this article. That said I doubt whether 'rich' is an adjective the head greenkeeper at this course would use to describe one of the UK's most difficult to control turf weeds growing in perennial abundance in his 'backyard' and well outside of its usual range.

Plant profile

Field woodrush may present a puzzle to all except the dedicated botanist. According to its description field woodrush bears long, narrow and tapering leaves sheathed in a loose layered rosette



Close up on field woodrush with some usefully placed organic fertilizer (rabbit droppings)



Chestnut brown panicles typical of field woodrush



After spring mowing field woodrush retreats into the sward to blend in with coarse true grasses



White flowers of heath bedstraw appear alongside field woodrush in June confirming acid nature and low fertility of the soil



Field woodrush plants showing their tough stolons covered with dead and dying leaf tissue to form a substantial thatch.



Golfers may suddenly find themselves in what looks like and feels like a mini-rough in the middle of the fairway

around smooth stems bearing clusters of brown flowers borne on panicles. On this basis *Luzula campestris* sounds remarkably like a true grass belonging to the plant family Graminae, but this perennial monocotyledon actually belongs to the Juncaceae or rush family. Field woodrush is one of a dozen or so wild *Luzula* species characterised by tufted appearance and dark green grass-like leaves, in this case fringed with long soft and silky leaf hairs. The shiny chestnut-coloured flowers borne on short spikes and developing into three-seeded fruits stand-out en masse in spring, the only time of the year it becomes clearly apparent from a distance.

Profile as a turf weed

Despite being called 'woodrush' *Luzula campestris* is strictly a plant of open aspect grassy places like golf course fairways. That said the 'woody' component of the name could equally well refer to the tough fibrous nature of its stems and leaves which may tear and bruise even when cut with sharp and well set mower blades.

Field woodrush is easy to overlook especially outside its flowering period when the narrow flat leaves blend in with coarse grasses like Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) along the fairway. Mowing scythes off the panicles allowing the remaining vegetative parts to melt back in the sward. But field woodrush will not go away because tough creeping stems called stolons continue to spread relentlessly across the surface of the ground rooting at the nodes. The stolons are sheathed with a thick layer of dead and dying leaves which collectively produce an extremely dense thatch on the fairway where patches of field woodrush occur.

Similarity to true grasses in morphology (shape and form), anatomy (tissue structure) and physiology (metabolism) is why field woodrush is such a troublesome weed and almost impossible to control even with modern selective herbicides. Being a weed of impoverished acid soils it is unlikely to occur in the well-managed and nutrient rich professional turf of greens or tees constructed on well-structured and free draining substrates.

Preferred areas may be sandy and free draining or with poor surface drainage, but invariably of low pH and poor fertility. Massed patches of shiny chestnut brown flowers appearing within a narrow flowering 'window' during April and May is the only time field woodrush

is obvious, without getting down on 'all fours' with a magnifying glass. Field woodrush is generally regarded as a problem for turf in the wetter western and northern areas of the country on soils suffering high leaching, high acidity and low fertility. However, this 'pseudo' grass readily invades and takes over equivalent soil profiles wherever they occur, as seen by this particular infestation on the northern fringes of London.

Hard on herbicides

Selective action of early hormonal-type herbicides like 2,4-D and MCPA and later mecoprop was based on the superior adherence of spray to the bigger and rougher leaf-surface targets of broad-leaved dicotyledonous weeds, compared with the narrower and smoother leaves of true grasses. This surface-based selectivity is supplemented by anatomical (inner structure) and physiological (metabolism) differences between grasses and broad-leaved weeds and responsible for differential herbicide translocation rates and varying vulnerability of target sites in the plants' metabolisms.

Field woodrush appears to resist selective herbicide action on both counts. Plants are morphologically similar to true grasses with narrow leaves, and in this case covered with long prominent white hairs that can only further impede herbicide action. The monocotyledonous lineage shared by Graminae and Juncaceae make field woodrush close in form and structure to true grasses, which is responsible for the generally low susceptibility of *Luzula* to selective herbicides.

Clear-cut differences between dicotyledonous broad-leaved plants (e.g. common daisy – *Bellis perennis*) and monocotyledonous true grasses is the very basis of selective herbicide action. However, any differences such as they are between turf grasses and field woodrush appear insufficient for its commercial control by selective herbicides approved for use in managed turf.

Field woodrush is recognised as one of the most difficult to control weeds of managed turf. Some control is known to occur during routine application of newer and more target specific selective herbicides usually after repeated application. That said field woodrush rarely appears on the 'label' of selective herbicides, even as providing moderate control which is sometimes claimed for other 'difficult' weeds like slender speedwell and yarrow.

'Commercial Experience' is the unofficial industry-used term to describe 'insider' knowledge on incidental control of field woodrush achieved by certain selective herbicides, though it is not listed as controlled on the product label. Reasons for absence of field woodrush from product labels in spite of its high weed status could be many and varied. They are often related to scope of field trials (e.g. insufficient number or diversity of sites) or nature of trials data showing insufficient control for field woodrush to 'pass the test' and appear on the product label.

Cultural control

Golfers have been known to complain about patches of massed flower and seed heads of field woodrush in spring, when golf balls land in what looks and feels like a mini unofficial rough slap bang in the middle of the fairway. But such complaints are generally few and far between because regular mowing should prevent massed appearance of flower heads. That complaints occur at all just re-confirms the common close association of field woodrush with poorly drained acid ground that cannot be mown promptly and regularly during wet springs.

Cultural control is only realistic way of managing severe field woodrush infestations, by feeding fairways adequately to boost fertility and thicken swards. And by investing in high quality lime-based products to reduce acidity and create conditions less to the liking of field woodrush, without altering composition of the turf grass population. Or else ignore the weed and reap some benefit from having fewer casting worms on the surface of an inherently high acid soil. Any recommendations for physical removal of field woodrush should be approached with care because cut pieces of stolon can root to form new infestations.

Field woodrush is also called sweep's brush after shape of the flower spikes but this not a weed that is easily swept away. However, weeds are just green plants in the wrong place at the wrong time and in other sectors *Luzula* species are valued as ground cover plants especially for poor moist soils. Indeed 'Lawns and Ground Cover' written by Geoff Stebbins and produced by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) recommends *Luzula nivea* and *L. sylvatica* 'Aurea' and 'Marginata' for this purpose because they are fully hardy and prefer wet soils and ground in partial shade.



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

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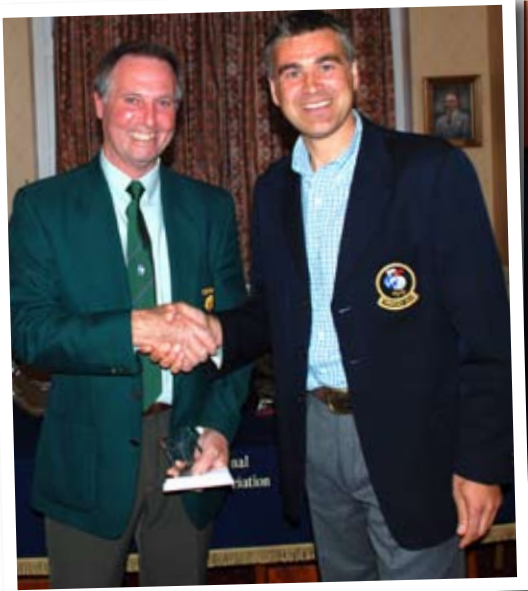




Cream of the Crop

Derek McJannet has been a fine golfer all of his life but his win in the BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse, ranks above all his other achievements





Photographed with BIGGA Chairman, Peter Todd, from top to left to bottom right: Gary Thurman, Associate winner, Regional Winners; Ian Robins, Stableford winner; Gavin Robson, Nett Winner; Derek McJannet with the sponsors, and Richard Whyman, Burnham & Berrow Course Manager, below.

The Association's finest golfers converged on the superb Somerset links of Burnham & Berrow for the BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse.

The field was easily the strongest in the history of the event with a host of plus and scratch handicappers but they all found the course, which had recently hosted The Tillman Trophy, a tough nut to crack, even in the relatively benign conditions.

Winner of the prestigious Challenge Trophy, and BIGGA's Champion Golfer of the year, was scratch handicapper, Derek McJannet, of Matlock GC, who posted a two round total of 148 comprising equal rounds of 74.

The win was all the more meritorious as the 50 year-old Scot, who has been a scratch or better player for 22 years and a +2 player at his peak, had opened up with a double bogey six on the relatively tame par-4 opener.

Indeed, he also tripled bogeyed the 6th on the opening day so his

74 was a very good effort. He also bogeyed the opening two holes on the second day and by his own estimation was five shots off the lead after seven holes. Birdies at the 8th, 10th and 11th brought him back into it and he even had the luxury of a dropped shot at the 36th hole and still won by a single shot.

"I had a 15 footer for par at the last and charged it four feet by, but holed the return," said Derek, who has been Nottinghamshire County Champion twice and Nottinghamshire Open winner once. He is still a county player having represented Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire as well as Ayrshire in his youth where he played at Turnberry and Ballochmyle. He also represented BIGGA and the Rest of the World in the Hayter International in the mid '90s.

"This is a national competition, and there were some excellent players in the field so I'm absolutely delighted. This win is right up there with my best, if not the very best," said Derek, who

was playing in the event for the first time, but he has already set the time aside for his defence next year.

The Challenge Cup for the Best Nett saw a remarkable charge up the field by 19 handicapper, Gavin Robson, whose own club of Burton on Trent had hosted the National Championships four years ago.

Gavin, who was sharing a caravan during the Championship with fellow competitor and BIGGA Board of Management Member Tony Smith, recovered from a middle of the pack nett 79 on the opening round to shoot an astonishing nett 65 on the second day to claim the biggest prize of his golfing career. The round was all the surprising as he had been kept up by his colleague's snoring all night!

To illustrate just how much of a golfing day of a lifetime it was Gavin also nipped in with the Nearest the Pin prize on the 5th hole, getting inside 1 handicapper Oliver Browning's quality effort which had stood for most of the day. Oliver's pain will not be



ABOVE: Myles Wood with his trusty 3-wood

BELOW: Ed Ainsworth tees off on the 17th





reduced when he learns that Gavin's tee shot was topped and bounced along the path before finding its own unorthodox route to the pin. He was shamefaced enough to miss the putt.

His domestic partner didn't fare quite so well being the first man to lose a ball down the opening hole despite the attentions of the ball spotters who were stationed on high mounds on the left of the hole. John Pemberton actually tracked the ball down 24 hours later!

Other highlights on the second day were a holed 3-wood for an eagle 2 on the 11th from fully 197 yards into the wind by the appropriately named Myles Wood, of Berkhamstead GC, and a holed 8-iron on the 3rd by Ian Robins, on his way to winning the Stableford Challenge Plate, from 150 yards.

Among the non-playing visitors to the Championship was Past BIGGA Chairman, Kerran Daily, who was one of the aforementioned ball spotters and Billy Mitchell and Chris Sealey, of the SW&SW Region, who came along to support the event, and in particular, Course Manager, Richard Whyman, who together with his team, had done a superb job in preparing the course for the arrival of their peers. Richard, another Past BIGGA Chairman was in

his element and must have been delighted with the feedback he received from all corners.

Support from the sponsors was excellent. Both Kubota and Charterhouse ensured that no-one could approach the 1st tee without having the opportunity first to admire some of the finest examples of machinery in their respective fields. Colin Hennah, Kubota's Zone Sales Manager South, gave an excellent and lighthearted speech at the dinner having stood in as a last minute replacement for Dave Roberts, who had been taken ill, while Nick Darkin and Richard Charlton, of Charterhouse, were on hand to ensure everything went smoothly. Nick did remarkably well having taken part in a charity 37 mile walk the day before and his feet were a tad delicate during his time at the Championship. Tee sponsors, Ruffords and Groundsman, are also to be thanked for making the event possible.

The club looked after everyone superbly. Club Captain, Stuart Cook, got everyone on side at the dinner by empathising with the assembled gathering with his thoughts on CPD, and how both his profession – Medicine – and the greenkeeping profession were heavily involved with it.



ABOVE: BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, finds what could have been Tony Smith's molitor



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South Africa at the Summit

Golf in South Africa is going through some turbulent times; this latest recession hitting them much earlier and harder than here in Europe. Following the 2009 South African Golf Summit at Fancourt back in April, Kevin Marks visited the Pezula Golf Estate to speak with Course Superintendent Danny Maritz.



Pezula Championship Golf Course covers some 254 hectares of pristine Southern Cape landscape on the cliff-tops at Knysna, overlooking the Knysna Lagoon and the Indian Ocean. The award-winning 18-hole, par 72 course was designed by David Dale and Ronald Fream of GolfPlan USA, and rates amongst the best and the most scenic golf courses in the world. In 2001, just a few months after it opened, the Course was awarded Best New Golf Course in South Africa and in February 2005 Complete Golfer rated it a Five Star Golf Experience.

The clubhouse facilities are in keeping with the overall five star experience and includes an elevated terrace with views to the Indian Ocean, restaurant and golf shop, while adjacent is a short game practice area, driving range and putting green.

The club has close to 500 members of whom 400 are non-resident with many from Britain, Germany and the US, who live in the region for 2-3 months a year. In total around 25,000 rounds are played a year, but

it's the Christmas and New Year holidays that are by far and away the busiest with 80% of the total rounds played during this period.

Danny Maritz is the managing director of TurfWorks, the turf maintenance contracting company responsible for the course at Pezula, a contract which the company has had for the past two years. Previous to this, he was director of golf course maintenance for 10 years at Turftech, a grounds care company based in Johannesburg.

His team, which by European standards is still large, at 30 strong, has been reduced by 14 from a year ago; a reflection of the economic situation. Rory Hopper is his first assistant and he has a head mechanic with two assistants, working from a 1,800 m² workshop, where all servicing and repair work is undertaken.

"We were the first tee to green cool season grass course in the country," he said, "when the course was constructed 11 years ago. The tees and greens are bents and the fairways are a rye/fescue mix. I know I'm biased, but the

views here are awesome; you've got ocean, mountains and the fynbos (the natural shrubland or heathland vegetation of the region); it's one of those courses where to play it once is not enough.

"From an environmental standpoint we are very limited in how we can manage the fynbos. One of the conditions of the planning consent is that we are prevented from cutting it unless it is encroaching onto the course. We are obliged to remove any invasive species, but are extremely limited when it comes to making changes to the course.

"Because of all this natural vegetation we also have plenty of wildlife and some quite large game including Grey Buck, Bush Buck, baboons and Caracal, a large wild cat. We also have one of the deadliest snakes in South Africa, the Puff Adder, so that tends to stop golfers charging into the fynbos to retrieve balls!

"We've just experienced the driest summer ever; from January to March we had just 102mm of rain compared to an average of 260mm. The Knysna river hasn't dried up for 81 years, but it did this year.

"You would expect that this would give us huge problems, especially as we don't have access to any municipal water supply. However, we've overcome this by building our own water recycling plant at the civic council's sewage farm down in Knysna and pump 1.2 million litres of water a day to irrigate the course."

When you look in the sheds at the greenkeeping facility, you immediately see an eclectic mix of equipment, but the mowing equipment is mainly orange in colour. Danny has a long association with Jacobsen equipment and the South African distributor, CSE.

"We run two LF3400 fairway mowers and they have been a revelation," he said, "they've been totally reliable and we've had no issues in the two years we've been using them. The quality of cut is excellent and no downtime.

"We hand cut the greens whenever possible and use Eclipse 122s; I've got eight of them and they were the very first off the Jacobsen production line. They feature electric reel drive and, now that we're over the teething issues, they are performing really well.

"Our trim and tees mowers are Tri-Kings. At TurfTech I used run 12 of them and they are very good machines, especially for banks as

they have three-wheel drive; the cut is excellent and I love them.

Danny has some interesting views on golf in general and in South Africa in particular. Sitting in his office, chatting over a cup of coffee after we'd toured the course he said,

"The credit crunch, recession or however you want to describe it is having a real impact here in South Africa. We simply have to continue to do a good job with less money and that has meant less staff.

We've also cut back on fertilizers and chemicals and any other non-essential expenses. Being a resort course we have exceptionally high standards and have always cut our fairways every day. However, now economic circumstances dictate, and we are mowing every second day, with no discernable difference. 75% of excellence is now acceptable. And we haven't seen any appreciable difference to the quality of the course as yet, but it's going to be a real challenge.

"Maintaining the presentation standards is our major issue. I think it all started with the US Masters, many years ago. Today, when the golfer goes to a course he expects to play Augusta, or something close to it. They expect the greens to be striped and running at 12.5 on the stimp meter and the fairways at 8 or 9.

"And that presents a major problem. Your average golfer might expect this level of presentation, but he won't actually be able to cope with the greens, so he probably won't have an enjoyable experience. It's a real dilemma."

This was one of the themes raised at the Fancourt Golf Summit by Frank Thomas, a former technical director of the USGA and inventor of the graphite shaft. From his research, which included a 53-question survey returned by 18,400 golfers, it concluded that courses are too long and too difficult for the average golfer. Another interesting statistic was that 95% of all courses are designed for just 0.55% of the golfing population, i.e. the 'Scratch' golfer. In other words, over 99% of all golfers across the globe will probably have an unenjoyable round of golf because courses are designed for a massive minority!

An example of this occurred, surprisingly, at the Fancourt Summit where delegates had the opportunity to play the Links course at the resort. Over 30 competitors went round and a few thought it was awesome, but the rest wouldn't play it again. Some



people lost 12 golf balls!

In contrast, The River Club at Sandton, Johannesburg, is mowed wall to wall, under trees, the rough is short, you can always find your ball and the members there enjoy their golf.

Danny is not at all enamored with the ranking of golf courses and feels that there are some gaping holes in the system.

"One of the major issues we have here in South Africa, and especially down here on the Garden Route, is that everyone wants to be ranked No 1. You can ask any greenkeeper or superintendent and they'll all say the same. However, the whole ranking system is a total bluff, unless every adjudicator plays every course, and that doesn't happen.

"I'm a member at a local club, which is a lovely course, but it's definitely not up to the standard of Pezula. It's ranked 15th and we're ranked at 24. They are consistently ranked in the top 30 when it comes to conditioning and we're not even in the top 50.

"What worries me is how many superintendents have lost their

jobs because of the rankings; it's playing with people's jobs. The problem is it's all subjective and there appears to be no criteria for the judging.

"What we need down here is a joined up marketing campaign to encourage the world's golfers to come. Pinnacle Point, Oubaai, Simola and Mossel Bay are all trying to get their act together and provide a 'Pay & Play' network. With the Soccer World Cup here in 2010 we have a great opportunity to showcase our facilities and it's an opportunity that we mustn't miss."

Having toured the course, with its views of mountains and ocean, it's not surprising that this is a popular and successful golf resort. The course is the centerpiece and even at '75% of excellence' it was in magnificent condition. The challenge now for Pezula and for golf in South Africa is to draw golfers in from Europe and further afield. With the Soccer World Cup in 2010 they have the perfect opportunity to showcase their product; like Danny says it's an opportunity they cannot afford to miss.



Course Superintendent,
Danny Maritz

The BIGGA Golf Course Fund

Scott MacCallum chats with Cecil George, whose dream is for BIGGA to have its own golf course

The BIGGA Golf Course Fund, launched in Harrogate at the AGM nearly two years ago, is the vision of a man who has identified a BIGGA built and owned golf course as a means of securing the Association's long term future.

Cecil George retired from Lenzie Golf Club in the mid-90s but, at 82, his commitment and drive on behalf of BIGGA is as strong now as it ever was when he was a key figure in the development of the Scottish greenkeeping education programme, or sitting on the interview panel for the Association's first Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

Cecil is a man of strong conviction and ever since SIGGA investigated the possibility of building its own golf course in the '70s, long before that Association became one of three which joined to form the new BIGGA, he has carried the torch for the idea.

"We have over 6000 members, yet we don't have a golf course of our own. Don't you think that's peculiar – an Association of greenkeepers without a course?" said Cecil, speaking a short time after returning from playing in a West of Scotland Section event.

Those Scottish SIGGA members obviously thought so, and they even got so far as discussions with Ayrshire County Council on the matter.

"We intended to build a golf course. The late Harry Diamond, Head Greenkeeper at Ayr Belleisle, was very much involved and personally negotiated with Ayrshire Council, who actually said that if we were to build a course they would be willing to give us the land for a penny a year.

"It didn't get any further than that. I'm not sure what held us back, probably money like everything else."

But the idea has stayed with Cecil to this day and after raising the matter at a number of AGMs he finally got approval for the setting up of the BIGGA Golf Course Fund at the 2008 AGM and he proudly

handed over a cheque as the first contribution.

He is under no illusion of the sums required to make it work but is adamant that the money would have to be raised through donation before starting any work.

"We would have to have the money in place before we started and I certainly wouldn't want to get in debt to the banks. Look at what has happened at other clubs where the banks have called in their loans. I wouldn't want to risk the future of the Association."

In fact, Cecil sees the project as offering security rather than the reverse.

"It doesn't take any great intellect to realise that BTME can't go on forever and BIGGA must find other ways to fund its operations."

Cecil has gone as far as earmarking a part of the country where he believes the new course could be built.

"I've been looking at a map of the country and believe that we could find extensive land – preferably links – between Scarborough and Bridlington, where there are currently only around seven existing courses. Both towns are reasonably sized holiday destinations to bring in visitors and I believe there would be a good membership catchment area."

Once the finance has been raised, and Cecil believes that greenkeepers would make a million pounds go a long way, a committee of "sensible thinking people" would be formed to ensure that all interested parties are involved.

"I would see greenkeepers volunteering to work on the building of the course – a working holiday along the lines of the Support Team at The Open. I don't know a greenkeeper who can't do construction work. We have all the expertise it's just a case of tapping into it while I'm sure we could rely on our friends within the industry to lend us the necessary machinery."

Once completed Cecil would see the BIGGA Headquarters

relocating to the new site and a small accommodation block and greenkeeping teaching academy being built.

"We could accommodate those people who have travelled to the course for training courses while I'm sure we would get regular visitors coming to see the course from all over the country and it would be great for them to be able to stay," said Cecil, who would expect the course to have a full time Course Manager and team but offering opportunities for others to learn and train on the new facility.

The new course would be built to the very best specifications and taking account of the modern day professional golfer in terms of length and difficulty with around 125 acres required – although 300 acres would make so much more possible.

"If we were to build a links, and knowing that the likes of Lytham St Annes can't go on hosting The Open forever, I'd love to think that BIGGA's course would host the Championship one day. You never know..."

If successful Cecil doesn't see it stopping at one course and can one day envisage a group of around four or five BIGGA courses spread around the country.

"When we are clear of the current financial difficulties I'd love to see this project move forward. We'd need to be aware of all the stumbling blocks but only through the eyes of an optimist can the difficulties be overcome. You never get anywhere if you're a pessimist,

"I know that some people think that the idea of a golf course is just a pipe dream but if we don't look to our own future with an optimistic point of view there will be no future," said Cecil, sounding as eloquent as ever.

Anyone wishing to support the BIGGA Golf Course Fund should send donations to BIGGA Golf Course Fund, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF.



Cecil George makes the first contribution to the fund at the 2008 AGM

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9.30am – 10.00am

Enhancing the Biodiversity of the Golf Course

Presented by Will Bowden, Programme Manager Sports Turf, Bridgwater College

10.15am – 10.45am

European Greenkeeping Passport – Your Future?

Presented by members of the European Greenkeeping Education Unit Management Team

10.30am – 11.00am

How do I Choose my Wetting Agent Programme?

Presented by David Goldstone, Managing Director, Tower Sport (Europe) Ltd

11.00am – 12 noon

An Introduction to the CMAE and the Certified Golf Club Manager Programme

Presented by Jerry Kilby, Chief Executive Officer, Club Managers' Association of Europe

11.15am – 11.45am

Sustainable Aeration and Drainage for Golf Courses, Trees and Winter Sports Pitches

Presented by David Green, Managing Director, Terrain Aeration

1.15pm – 1.45pm

Sustainable Turf Management – Utilising Soil Potential with Organic Matter

Presented by Ton Terlouw, Melspring Business Development Manager - Green Division, Sherriff Amenity

2.00pm – 2.30pm

Nematode Management – A Developing Story

Presented by Mark Hunt, Technical Director, Headland Amenity Limited

2.30pm – 3.00pm

Greens Construction

Presented by Lee Strutt MG, AGS, Golf Course Manager, Ochil Developments

2.45pm – 3.15pm

Nutrition for Early Spring Growth

Presented by Graham O'Connor, Symbio

3.15pm – 3.45pm

Performance, Profile and Profit - Real Benefits from Environmental and Social Action

Presented by Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive, Golf Environment Organisation

4.15pm – 4.45pm

RESCUE: Using a Selective Ryegrass Killer on Golf Courses

Presented by Dr Simon Watson, Turf and Amenity Technical Manager, Syngenta

Wednesday 20 January

8.20am – 10.30am

The 2mm (or above) Debate - Greens Sward Composition and Management

1.45pm – 2.30pm

Irrigation Planning and Installation - Behind the Scenes

Presented by Chris Lomas MG, Golf Course Manager, The Berkshire Golf Club

4.00pm – 4.30pm

Smart Watering for a Healthier Environment

Presented by Adrian Hanbury, Sportsturf Manager, Hunter Industries and Revaho UK Ltd

Thursday 21 January

9.45am – 10.00am

False Economy in Grounds Management

Presented by Richard Brown, Amenity Field Sales Manager, British Seed Houses Ltd

10.30am – 11.00am

A Tree for all Reasons

Presented by Andrea Grey, Sales Manager, Bellwood Trees

11.00am – 11.30am

Growing Turf for the West Course at Wentworth

Presented by Tim Fell, Managing Director, Tillers Turf

11.15am – 11.45am

The Case for Higher Education in Golf Greenkeeping

Presented by Dr Andy Owen and Stewart Brown, Myerscough College

11.45am – 12.15am

Integrated Vegetation Management

Presented by Ian Graham, Managing Director, Complete Weed Control

12 noon – 12.30pm

Sustainable Turf Management – Understanding the Benefits of Cold Process Seaweed Extract

Presented by Franck Hennequart, OGT Project Manager and Scientific Officer, Limagrain

More seminars will be added.

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Lateral thinking key to saving money



James de Havilland looks at ways in which you can ensure your facility is being cost effective and environmentally responsible at the same time

As many golf clubs around the World are now finding, the global recession and its impact upon revenues and profitability has not followed a fixed trend.

One point that is clear, however, is that those clubs that have made the most of what they have to offer have seen a less dramatic impact upon their 'bottom line'. But there are other things you can do to help trim your costs.

Don't worry. This is not going to be a patronising list of 'ideas' to help bring in revenue. There are enough marketing experts who can tell a club how to try and drum up extra business when money is tight. That said most clubs are doing a pretty good job by themselves. You only have to telephone a few courses to see that there are some interesting incentives on offer that have helped keep green fees coming in and club revenues ticking over.

In fact the best 'scheme' remains the same as it does in the good times; ensure both members and visitors are kept happy by offering a good overall package. A decent round of golf and a friendly club atmosphere offer the lasting value that keeps people coming back. Great golf, fair pricing, decent catering and friendly staff will never go out of fashion and are the keys to success in tough times.

So if your marketing and 'customer care' is in good shape but you

still need more, what else can you do? The key can sometimes be to think laterally.

Energy saving is a good example. Just stop and think how much it costs to keep various chillers running in a club bar. If the answer to that is you have no idea on this sort of detail cost, you would not be alone. If you also think this level of detail understanding is not relevant you may also be missing the point.

So make the same question more global. By how much have your electricity costs increased over the past five years? You should have an answer. The next question is obvious. Have you done anything to try and reduce these energy costs?

In fact you can give yourself a nasty shock by looking at all utility bills. Water and sewerage costs have all increased. Oil and gas costs have fluctuated, a fall in price from the peaks we have experienced over the Winter of 2008 proving so welcome that it is easy to overlook the overall trend; all forms of energy are getting more expensive. Even business rates have rocketed in some parts of the UK. All this is before you take in the costs of looking after the course and general club infrastructure.

So what can you do? With regard to electricity, modern control systems should mean it is easier to manage certain details such as lighting. It is pretty obvious that there is no point in having a light on if there is

no one around to benefit from it. It is also a waste to artificially light areas bathed in natural light. And why allow a chiller to run when there are no bottles to be chilled within it?

Although the savings that can be made by careful electricity management may seem small, it is surprising how they can help trim your bills. It is well worth contacting your electricity supplier and having them carry out an energy audit to see if they can help.

Water consumption is another hot topic. A big roof is a huge resource when it comes to collecting rainwater, so this is well worth looking into. Company's like Evesham-based Even Products (www.evenproducts.com) can supply self-build water tanks that will hold around 100,000 litres of water for under £3,000. A simple rain water harvest system can be set-up for around £5,000, a sum that will look pretty reasonable against most mains water bills.

A roof can also be used to trap the sun. Although photovoltaic tiles allow roofs to be converted into mini generators, the installation costs are still extremely high. So although these systems may be great for your environmental PR, covering a roof with these electricity generating units should not be considered for their value in saving money. The story can be different on a new build, however, particularly if you can get a

Solar hot water heating systems have been in use in the UK for many years. Designed to help reduce reliance of fossil fuels, many systems are installed simply because they can help reduce CO2 emissions. The ability of these solar collectors to save money has been questioned, critics suggesting it can take a 25 years or more to 'earn back' the installation cost. The recent hikes in energy costs have, however, helped change many a sceptics mind, solar hot water heating now having a much reduced pay-back period.



grant or some other incentive.

The sun can also be harnessed to heat water. This is arguably the most viable 'solar' system to consider as it is 'relatively' inexpensive to retrofit a collection array and solar hot water system into an existing building. The key is to ensure the hot water generated is used to supplement an existing system. You cannot rely on a solar system to generate hot water year round or on overcast summer days. But when in action, modern collectors can generate impressive amounts of hot water, even in winter. The downside is commercial systems can be costly, even allowing for capital allowances.

Grants may be available to cover certain 'green' initiatives, but these are currently thin on the ground. The best way to establish what may be on offer is to contact bodies to include the Solar Trades Association (www.solar-trade.org.uk) and the Energy Savings Trust (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk).

On more general matters, the Golf Environment Organisation has an excellent paper on this issue. Entitled 'Practical ways to improve energy efficiency in golf facilities' it outlines ways to save energy that do not necessarily involve doing anything more than managing your resources more efficiently:

www.golfenvironment.org/pub/doc/tree/10/EnergyEfficiencyinGolfFacilities.pdf



ABOVE: A top golf club will focus upon all the small details that make playing a round pleasurable from start to finish. Helpful staff, good signage, affordable refreshments and good presentation can all help keep existing custom and attract visitors. Behind the scenes, keeping an eye on costs is a key to remaining buoyant in choppy economic water.

LEFT: Recycling and composting waste generated during course maintenance is by no means a new idea, but few clubs have the room to deal with large piles of unsightly debris. The answer is to shred everything to reduce its volume, but a shredder is not a cheap tool. So why not hire one in? Tight budgets need not interrupt good course management.



LEFT: Harvesting rain water need not cost a fortune. As a guide, a system that can store around 100,000 litres of water collected from roofs may cost a little as £5000. Used as a non-potable water source for vehicle wash bays and irrigation, harvested water is a great way to save money. What is more, you do not need a huge roof area; from a roof space of 50 x 10 metres you can expect to collect up to 600,000 litres of water a year.



BIGGA

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The 2mm Debate



Eight leading figures from golf clubs across the country give their views on the current big talking point in greenkeeping

Earlier this year the BIGGA website bulletin board was buzzing with discussion over the merits and potential effects of low cutting heights and aggressive maintenance versus a more traditional approach.

The effect on sward composition of various management strategies, and in fact what type of sward is desired, was very much at the heart of the discussion.

The discussion brought together many differing opinions and passions, all in the strong belief that their management technique is the right one in each case. There is no doubt that part of the beauty and fascination of the profession which is greenkeeping, is that we all work in such varied locations, and often under differing conditions, financial resources and customer base. Much of the current thinking is one of the sustainable management of golf courses. This philosophy has its roots in traditional greenkeeping techniques and has the backing of the games governing body, the R&A. The STRI have also played a fundamental role in the need for a more sustainable approach and the publication of STRI Disturbance Theory, Bechlet et al (2007), sparked numerous nationwide education seminars and subsequent debate within the industry.

Key to the success of any management strategy is meeting the balance of achieving the agronomic requirements while providing surfaces which are desired by the golf club. Today's global television and 24 hour media coverage enables the golfer to form an opinion and expectation to what is considered as acceptable in terms of playing performance. This expectation may well be unfair and formed with blinkered vision to what resources the greenkeeper has available and to what type of construction is being managed.

Many viewpoints have been heard since the discussion board thread first sparked intense interest and debate in such an important topic. Harrogate Week 2010 will include a debate session entitled "2mm or above", and will involve many key players within the industry. Managers and Superintendents from some of the country's most high profile courses will exchange frank views with representatives of the Gingerbread movement and those who employ aggressive management techniques. The debate will also draw on the opinions of STRI, R&A and from the world of golf architecture.








The interactive debate will take place on Wednesday, January 22, in the Harrogate International Conference Centre. As a forerun-

ner and introduction to the event Greenkeeper International present the first of two articles which outline the management strategy employed by some of the Course Managers who will be on the debate panel.

The full list of the debate panel is as follows; Debate Chairman - David Croxton; Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping, St Andrews Links Trust; David Cole, Course Manager, Loch Lomond; Kenny Mackay, Course Manager, The Belfry; Greg Evans, Course Manager, Ealing Golf Club; Stuart Yarwood, Course Manager, Lymm Golf Club; Daniel Lightfoot, Course Manager, Bearwood Lakes Golf Club; Paul Lowe, Course Manager, Bromborough Golf Club; Euan Grant, Course Manager, Turnberry; Richard Windows, STRI; Ken Moody, Creative Golf Design; Paul Seago, Course Manager, Renaissance Golf Club, and R&A advisor

This month's article is a Talking Heads' feature which explores the current management techniques and philosophies employed at each golf club.

In December's magazine we ask a series of questions based around the merits of aggressive management versus the traditional approach, and also looks at the practicalities of species transition programmes.

	What type of construction are you managing?	What is your estimated sward composition?	Do you have a target Summer green speed?
<p>Euan Grant Golf Courses & Estates Manager Turnberry</p> 	<p>Members & Hotel Residents Ailsa: native soil construction Kintyre/Arran:mixtureofnative soil and USGA construction</p>	<p>Ailsa: 80% bent / poa 20% other (fescue, Yorkshire Fog, rye) Kintyre / Arran: old greens similar to Ailsa, new greens 80% fescue, 20% bent / poa</p>	<p>No. Very weather dependant. Upwards of 8½`</p>
<p>Dan Lightfoot Course Manager Bearwood Lakes</p> 	<p>USGA (no blinding layer) at a private members club</p>	<p>80% annual meadow grass 20% creeping bent grass</p>	<p>10 for day to day play and 11 plus for tournaments</p>
<p>Gordon Moir Director of Greenkeeping St Andrews Links Trust</p> 	<p>The majority of our courses are Links and therefore build on a sandy base. However two of them, The Castle Course and Strathtyrum are both built on USGA spec greens, albeit to slightly different specs and standards.</p>	<p>This varies across the courses from 99% fescue/bent on The Castle Course to 80% fescue/ bent 20% poa/crested hair grass/rye on the Old to 50% fescue/bent 20%poa on the Strathtyrum</p>	<p>Anything between 8.5 to 10 depending on what is on, weather conditions etc. On The Castle Course we try to keep between 8.5 and 9 for the wind and slopes.</p>
<p>Greg Evans Course Manager Ealing Golf Club</p> 	<p>110 year old clay based 'push up' greens with little to no land drainage. Private members club</p>	<p>70 - 80% Poa 30 - 20% Colonial bent This is a visual estimate. This is from 100% Poa greens pre 2006.</p>	<p>10.5 - 11 everyday play 12 - Major club comps 13 - 14 Two external comps</p>
<p>Stuart Yarwood Course Manager Lymm GC, Cheshire</p> 	<p>8 x 101 yr old push up loam 4xUSGA 6yr old 6xClay push up 35yr old</p>	<p>65% Bent / 30% Poa / 5% Fescue/Yorkshire fog</p>	<p>8-9 1/2 ft</p>
<p>Kenny Mackay Director of Golf Courses and Estates</p> 	<p>A mixture of sand/ soil Brabazon and Derby and USGA on PGA and new green on Brabazon</p>	<p>70/30 poa/ bent</p>	<p>Brabazon 11 PGA 10 Derby 9</p>
<p>David Cole Golf Course Superintendent/ Estates Manager Loch Lomond GC</p> 	<p>10 Year old USGA greens</p>	<p>60-70/30-40% poa bent</p>	<p>9-10ft</p>
<p>Paul Lowe Course Manager Bromborough GC, Wirral</p> 	<p>USGA Members course</p>	<p>100% annual meadow grass</p>	<p>9ft Day to day 10ft tournaments</p>

Range of mowing heights? General & low	Type of Mower?	Routine maintenance
3.5 – 5.5mm	Ailsa: Toro1000 through the week / GM3250 weekends Kintyre / Arran: Toro GM3250 or JD 2500E	Regular aeration – procore with star tines or hydroject . Fortnightly topdressing (light). Regular brushing, verticutting as necessary. Winter ½” vertidrain monthly / slit tining twice before Christmas
2.25 – 3 in summer 4-5 in winter	Toro 1000s for majority of weekday mowing Toro 3250 with DPAs for weekends and other circumstances eg before dressing / save time Graden turf iron and Greentek vibra rollers throughout summer	Two maintenance weeks Vertidrain, core, overseed and scarify, topdress, Otherwise tine once a month on average and v cut every 2 – 3 weeks during the season 100-150 tonnes per season of sand and groom regularly
Low 4mm for short periods. Winter 5.5mm although we may go to 6.5 on The Castle Course. Could cut as little as once/week through winter	A mixture of Toro 1000’s or Toro 3250D’s on all courses depending on time, staff and competitions. On The Castle Course we use Toro Flex 21’s, occasionally we use a 3250D at weekends. We use the Tru turf irons a lot, summer and winter including behind aeration.	Vertidrain twice a year Verticut as required Hydroject or solid tine monthly through the growing season. Topdress on a regular basis as required, mostly through spring and early summer And more...
2mm in summer 3mm winter If the need to speed the greens up is required, we add a roll as well.	Summer – JD 2500B ride-on. Eleven blades with no groomers. 8 months of the year (Mar – Oct). Winter – Range of hand mowers. 4 months of the year (Nov – Feb).	VC – Every fortnight. From 1 to 3mm plus in to the soil. Sand after every VC. Apply 200 tonn per year Verti-drain monthly from Mar-Oct. Range from 8mm to 25mm. Hollow core once a year in Oct. NO AERATION IN THE WINTER Irrigation is based on a weather station and course experience. Fertility is on a little and often method. A six week cycle based on one granular feed, followed by two liquid.
4.5mm-5mm summer 6mm-7mm winter	John Deere 2500 Triple summer John Deere 220B hand mowers weekly in Winter Turfworks Vibro rollers fortnightly Brush weekly	Vertidrain:- April (8mm) ; August 12mm, as deep as poss! Solid tine monthly/8mm/5mm ; Verticut 2-4 times /year Star slit/brush summer weekly ; Deep slit 8” winter weekly Earthquake Sept ; 100-150 ton Sand/Compost topdressing per season
Winter 4.5 to 5mm Summer 3 to 3.5mm	Toro 1000 Toro 3250 Roll greens every other day in the season to increase the green speed and keep surfaces smooth	V Mow in Spring Scarify hollow tine in summer for quick recovery Verti drain in winter Topdress once or twice in spring and then only in renovation about 150 tonne per year. Regular grooming and brushing
4-5mm	John Deere 180 pedestrian mowers. Alternate between groove and smooth rollers depending on weather and turf conditions. Utilise side winder and vibro rollers a couple times per week when conditions favourable	One ½ hollow tine in autumn combined with medium heavy topdress and fescue and browntop bent overseed Two ¼ hollow tine spring and mid summer combined with medium topdress and browntop bent overseed Pencil 5mm tine every 3 weeks combined with light topdress during growing season Verti drain 8mm tine at 200mm deep in winter Light Verti cut when weather condition allow
4 – 5mm summer 7mm winter	John Deere 220c hand mower x3 John Deere 2500 ride on	DT- phase one. Remove thatch problem – aerated 58 times – solid tine, slit and hollow tine. Verti-cut fortnightly during growing season brush in the winter. Regular top-dressing = 200 tonne. Wetting agent monthly. Hand water only.

	Overseeding	Expected nitrogen input	Annual Rainfall	Expected pesticide use
Euan Grant Golf Courses & Estates Manager Turnberry 	Seasonal overseeding – July -September. Pure fescue – 50% slender creeping red & 50% chewings	40 – 50 kg N / Ha	1000 – 1250 mm	Preventative used prior to larger comps. Contact applied as necessary – 1 or 2 pa
Dan Lightfoot Course Manager Bearwood Lakes 	Barenbrug All Bent 4gms/m ² 3 times/year May, August and whenever else we can fit it in!	165 – 175kgN/Ha	650mm	3 preventative – one each for maintenance and one in September/ October 1 extra for fairy ring in summer(heritage) 2 contacts at half rate when needed – hopefully not!!
Gordon Moir Director of Greenkeeping St Andrews Links Trust 	Barenbrug On greens two or maybe even three times a year. Usually with 100% fescue but occasionally an 80/20 mix	Between 30 and 80kg/ Ha Depends on the course	6 5 0 m although it seems like a lot more these past 3 years !	We might spray for leather-jackets depending on how active the crane flies are this autumn and if we notice a heavy infestation towards the end of the year.
Greg Evans Course Manager Ealing Golf Club 	3 times per year using pure colonial bent. Months will be Mar, July and Oct. First two will be at 3g/m ² with the last at 4g/m ²	100 – 140 kgN/ha	2008– 524mm 2009 – 328 so far	4 applications a year. 2 x preventative Oct & Nov 2 more if needed for the rest of the winter.
Stuart Yarwood Course Manager Lymm GC, Cheshire 	BSH Aberroyal Bent. 150kg in August Mascot Slender creeping/ Chewings fescue 150kg in sept	45-55kg/N/hect (Lawnsand, ½ 8.0.0, Sulphate Ammonia/ Iron) No P or K applied. No N after July, only sulphateiron/seaweed if needed.	950mm	1x Headway or iprodione in july/august for Dollar Spot Usually Knapsack, extending to blanket if needed! No preventative/curative Fus. Apps for 5 years.
Kenny Mackay Director of Golf Courses and Estates 	Don't overseed my green unless I have lost some grass coverage work with what I have in the sward.	95kg per hectare	850mm	Regular user of fungicide when required if the environmental conditions make it necessary preventative programmes in place for tournaments and high risk conditions in Autumn late summer
David Cole Golf Course Superintendent/ Estates Manager Loch Lomond GC 	Overseed greens fescue 25gms m ² and browntop bent 4gms m ² after ½ hollow tine. Overseed greens browntop bent after 1/4 hollow tine. 4gms per m ² . Overseed greens browntop bent after 1/4 hollow tine. 4gms perm ² .	75-100kgs/Ha Nitrogen 5-10kgs/Ha Phosphorous 150-200Kgs/Ha Potassium Micronutrients also utilised	2000mm	6 preventative fungicides every 8 weeks from March 1st. This limits the amount of curative applications. Curative if required but preventative apps has reduced this dramatically. Insect spray in Autumn
Paul Lowe Course Manager Bromborough GC, Wirral 	None... yet!	60kg	850mm	2x preventative & 2 contacts. Was 14 contact in 2006

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A QUICK GUIDE TO...

SPRAYING

Steve Graham offers some tips on spraying



1. *Communicate your intentions*

Golfers are also members of the public and many have a fear of pesticides brought about by lack of information and inaccurate media reporting. By providing advance notice of the spray operation and placing visible signs on the course will help reduce or even eliminate members concerns and misunderstanding. Always ensure your spraying practices are in line with Club policy and Risk Assessments.

2. *Spray only when conditions are favourable*

Always check the local weather forecast and note wind speed and direction. Spraying should only commence when climatic and ground conditions are favourable. On courses with ditches, ponds and lakes a LERAP* assessment must take place.

3. *Keep up to date*

Many chemical products that previously had Approval are being withdrawn from the list. Always check with your supplier the current status of all products before spraying and dispose of those that are out of date or that have been removed from the Approvals list. Read the product label and ensure the minimum recommended protective clothing is worn. Never leave pesticide containers unsupervised.

4. *Accurate targeting of the spray is essential*

Do not exceed the calibration speed when spraying as this may cause boom bounce or even spray turbulence, resulting in uneven application. Adding a spray pattern indicator such as 'Trailblazer' to the tank solution will alert the operator to excess overlap and/or missed areas. If there is insufficient spray solution left in the tank to complete the operation again check the pressure gauge but also recalibrate nozzle output and check for worn nozzles.

5. *Spray drift can be controlled*

Eliminate spray drift by selecting the correct pressure/nozzle combination. High pressure means smaller droplets that can carry in the wind. Fitting low drift nozzles such as the Billericay Air Bubble Jet can reduce spray drift by up to 75%. Stop spraying immediately when spray drift becomes unacceptable.

6. *Plan to finish with a near empty tank*

Plan the spraying operation so that the tank contents are applied only to the target area. Where this is not possible, empty any remaining solution in areas that are compatible with its approved use or, in areas approved by the local environment agency. If there is excess spray solution left in tank it might mean that the pressure gauge is inaccurate or the filters are clogged.

7. *Personal safety is a 'no brainer'!*

Never eat, drink or smoke whilst spraying. If a break is taken during the operation remove any contaminated clothing and wash hands and face thoroughly. At the end of the operation, wash all exposed skin with soap and hot water. Also, don't forget to wash the protective clothing that was worn, including the inside of gloves, face visor or goggles.

8. *Clean up responsibly*

After spraying, hose down the outside of the sprayer (including the prime mover),

remove nozzles and thoroughly flush out the tank, pump and spray lines with clean water. This must be done in an area that complies with local environment agency regulations. To remove all traces of pesticide and keep the tank free from residue buildup, a tank cleaner such as Clearspray can be used.

9. *Be safe and, secure*

To complete the spray operation, ensure all chemical containers are securely closed and stored in an approved storage facility. Empty, or unwanted containers must be disposed of in accordance with the Code of Practice.

10. *It's the Law, but also your protection*

The law states that adequate records must be kept of all operations involving the use of pesticides. To comply with the Control of Pesticides Regulations (1986), records should be completed immediately after spraying has finished. Remember, memories quickly fade and these records are useful for referring back to applications undertaken in the past and as a record for any dispute that may arise if the operation was unsuccessful.

* LERAP – Local Environmental Risk Assessment Procedure

For further information and advice on spraying:

Contact Rigby Taylor Ltd

Freefone: 0800 424 919

E-mail: sales@rigbytaylor.com

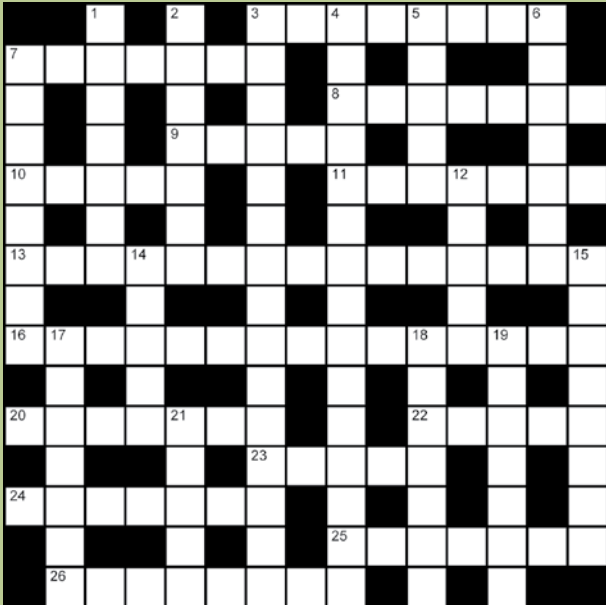
Web: www.rigbytaylor.com



in the shed

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

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 3 Staffordshire-based manufacturer of classical pottery (8)
- 7 Day of rest and worship (7)
- 8 Equivalent word (7)
- 9 Designation of (usually Scottish) mountain over 3000ft (5)
- 10 Strain of bacterium causing serious food poisoning (1,4)
- 11 US equivalent of estate agent (7)
- 13 Sign of continuing trade despite adversity (8,2,5)
- 16 Hyde Park event of 1851 (5,10)
- 20 Man who is devoted to pleasurable pursuits (7)
- 22 More or less, roughly (5)
- 23 Type of Japanese mattress (5)
- 24 Self-propelled underwater missile (7)
- 25 Long-tailed Australian marsupial (7)
- 26 Sailing boat with three hulls (8)

DOWN

- 1 Easily understood (7)
- 2 Sir Walter Scott's epic poem about the Battle of Flodden Field (7)
- 3 Beatles song about growing old together (4,2,5,4)
- 4 Lack of order (15)
- 5 Dosh, moolah, rhino (5)
- 6 NASCAR speedway in Florida (7)
- 7 Drug-resistant bacteria (8)
- 12 Hungarian pianist, composer of La Campanella (5)
- 14 Country of which Lombardy and Piedmont are regions (5)
- 15 Semipermanent (4-4)
- 17 Preclude, dismiss from consideration (4,3)
- 18 Sir Walter Scott novel in which Robin Hood appears (7)
- 19 Hero-worship (7)
- 21 European freshwater fish of Cyprinidae family (5)

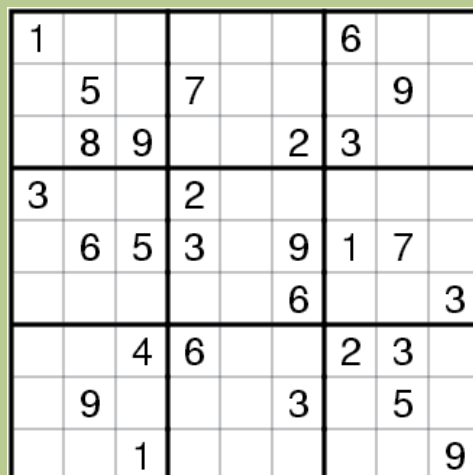
QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

1. Who is the current BBC Sports Personality of the Year?
2. Who was the first person to break the four minute mile?
3. Who is the record goal scorer for the England football team?
4. Who was the last British driver to win the Formula 1 title more than once?
5. Who famously scored six sixes off one over in 1968?
6. Who secured a record fifth Olympic Gold Medal for the UK in Sydney in 2000?
7. Who has recently announced her retirement from competitive sailing
8. Who coached the England team which won the Rugby Union World Cup in 2003?
9. Who won the Olympic 1500 metres at both the 1980 and 1984 Olympics?
10. Who won The Derby in 2006?



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.

Puzzle Answers on page 69

NEW WALK-BEHIND GREENS MOWER FEATURES HYBRID TECHNOLOGY

John Deere's new 220e E-Cut walk-behind greens mower combines hybrid electric drive with a contour hugging Quick Adjust cutting unit, and is designed to provide a top quality finish on golf greens, tennis courts, bowling greens and other fine turf areas.

This model joins the existing C Series range and features a standard 11 blade, 127mm diameter reel with a cutting width of 56cm and simple bedknife-to-reel adjustment.

Utilising the 2500's ball-joint yoke design and an electric drive motor eliminates the need for a mechanical drive link to the cutting unit. The independent contouring head therefore hugs the slightest undulations of the green, making it easier to achieve the perfect cut in any conditions.

The electric reel makes adjustment of the clip frequency particularly straightforward, by simply turning a dial to set the desired clip rate.

The hybrid design also reduces weight on the cutting head and allows the mower to be run at lower engine revs, making it quieter as well as more manoeuvrable. A weight transfer system linked to the drive roller means that as the standard grassbox fills, minimal weight is added to cutting head, which produces a more consistent height of cut across the green.

www.deere.co.uk

The September issue of the magazine featured John Deere's new Turf Sprayer but contact details were listed as Toro's Web address. Apologies to John Deere and Toro and anyone who experienced confusion as a result of the error.





NEW TORO GRANDSTAND™ STAND ON MOWER FROM HAYTER

The new Toro GrandStand™ stand on mower from Hayter offers a cross between the Mid Size walk behinds and the ride on zero turn mowers.

Available with a 122cm Turbo Force side discharge deck and powered by a 19hp Kawasaki V Twin engine, the GrandStand™ is fast, highly manoeuvrable and compact, offering improved visibility

and greater productivity. The exceptional visibility of the GrandStand™ protects the operator, the mower and the property as the operator is better able to steer clear of obstacles, move under overhanging branches and identify changes in terrain.

The GrandStand™ also provides excellent operator comfort with a suspension platform reducing fatigue and

increasing productivity. The suspension is self compensating for operators of different sizes. All controls are within easy reach to prevent constant stretching and straining. The flip up platform converts the stand-on to a walk behind for maximum versatility.

www.hayter.co.uk



NEW CORDLESS HEDGE TRIMMERS

STIHL has introduced two new cordless hedge trimmers to the market. The STIHL HSA 65 and HSA 85 hedge trimmers may be cordless but they deliver the same standards of performance and build as STIHL's petrol driven models.

Powered by a 36 V lithium ion battery pack, the new hedge trimmers' quality, high speed blades ensure a swift and clean cut and the trimmers' relative low noise will make them particularly popular for use in public and noise sensitive environments.

Petrol powered machines provide mobility, but they can not be described as low noise. Electric hedge trimmers are quieter, but the power cable restricts their versatility and reach.

www.stihl.co.uk

NEW FUNGICIDE FROM RT

Rigby Taylor's new fungicide Eland has chemical properties which allows it to bind tightly to the waxy cuticle when applied to the leaf's upper surface.

Its local systemic properties allow the active ingredient pyraclostrobin to move through the leaf and control the disease on its lower surface. This provides dual protection as it protects both sides of the leaf regardless of which side it is applied.

Eland is very fast acting and is effective within minutes of being applied and rainfast within an hour of application. The product also offers a unique benefit in that treatments stimulate an increase in the plants capacity to convert nitrate to nitrite in the leaf resulting in the treated turf exhibiting an enhanced healthy green colour is formulated as a water dispersible granule and supplied in 250 gram bottles, enough to treat 2,000 square metres.



www.rigbytaylor.com



KAWASAKI ACCESSORY RANGE RE-LAUNCHED

Kawasaki's Engine & Power Products Department has re-launched its range of accessories.

The current line-up which features a Twin Turbo Blade for the KBL27 and KBH27 brush cutters has dual blades that rotate in opposite directions to deliver precise cuts and prevent clogging, self-sharpening and is 5-10 times faster than competitive blades, it is also easy to mount, remove and maintain.

The 7mm articulated hedge trimmer provides more than 500mm of effective cutting length is easy to manoeuvre for straight or angles cuts and its high tensile steel blades provide clean cuts with superior durability.

As well as the Twin Turbo Blade and the Articulated Hedge Trimmer Attachment for the KBL27 and KBH27 brush cutters, nylon line, manual and tap & go heads are also available for the complete brush cutter range.

The vacuum attachment for the portable and lightweight KRH300A hand-held blower, which is easy to mount also includes a metal leaf shredder as standard.

www.kawpowr.com



BRUSHCUTTER GETS MAKEOVER

Etesia's new Attila SKF 85cm brushcutter has a totally different 'look' to previous machines in the Attila range. Designed for clearing the thickest of brambles, bracken, saplings and dense undergrowth, this latest ride-on cuts its way through virtually everything in its path, reducing overgrown vegetation to mulch.

A 15hp Kawasaki engine provides plenty of power in tough conditions. Variable

speed is up to 10km/h in forward and 7.5km/h in reverse with an overall maximum output of 8500m²/h. Hydrostatic transmission gives instant drive control, so speed can be adjusted by hand or foot controls according to site conditions and, when necessary, allow the cutting unit time to process large volumes of material, thus reducing the risk of blockages.

Etesia has also incorporated cruise control – a feature which has not been used on previous models.

Ergonomic design includes adjustable suspension seat with good all-round visibility. All controls are positioned within easy reach of the driver. Soft-grip steering wheel with guiding knob puts the user in total control.

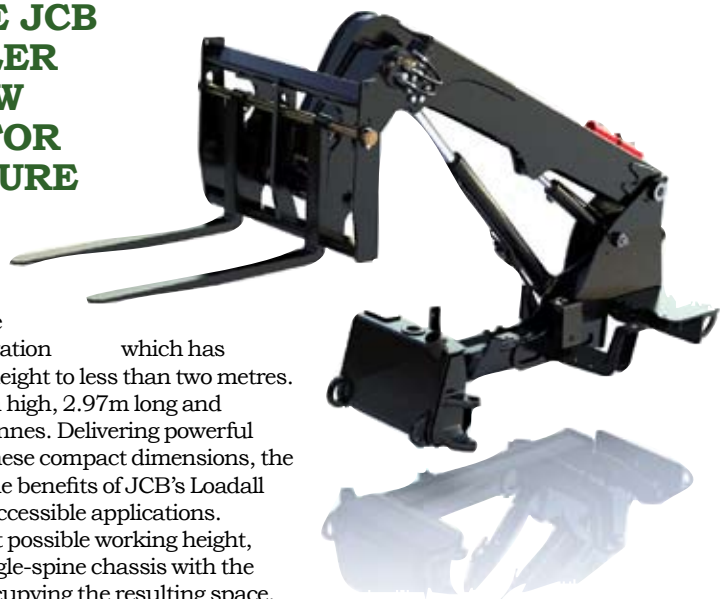
www.Etesia.co.uk

INNOVATIVE JCB TELEHANDLER OFFERS NEW SOLUTION FOR HORTICULTURE

THE SMALLEST Loadall telescopic handler model ever produced by JCB is the result of a design innovation which has reduced the machine height to less than two metres.

The machine is 1.8m high, 2.97m long and weighs less than 3.5 tonnes. Delivering powerful performance despite these compact dimensions, the Miniscopic will bring the benefits of JCB's Loadall range to previously inaccessible applications.

To achieve the lowest possible working height, JCB has an off-set, single-spine chassis with the machine's cab then occupying the resulting space.



www.jcb.com

RANSOMES JACOBSEN LAUNCH NEW FINE CUT ROTARY MOWER

Ransomes Jacobsen has launched the Jacobsen AR-522 fine cut rotary mower. Specifically designed for maintaining greens and tees surrounds and intermediate areas of rough, the five-deck rotary features the new Jacobsen TrimTek™ cutting decks.

Design of the new deck features a downdraft blade that keeps the clippings suspended longer for exceptional mulching results. Three-tiered discharge openings distribute clippings more evenly for a superior after-cut appearance. The volume of each individual deck has been increased by 26% allowing the AR-522 to cut in the most severe conditions.

It also boasts excellent traction capability and features superb horsepower per width of cut.

The chassis and operating platform are the same as the Jacobsen LF fairway mowers, so commonality of parts reduces the need to stock multiple spares. The control system ensures that the machine starts at the correct glow plug temperature, prevents driving with the parking brake engaged and shuts of the decks should the mower overheat.

 www.ransomesjacobsen.com



ATV PRODUCTS RELEASED

Broadwood International, manufacturer and distributor of Wessex products, has launched 12 new products specifically designed for the ATV market.

The new Wessex products include a five-strong line-up of trailers, incorporating a dedicated livestock trailer, a road-legal trailer for transporting ATV's, high- and low-sided trailers, and a tipping trailer that has a high tipping profile – so no shovelling out the last part of the load. Another useful feature, particularly when one bears in mind the rough terrain these products are used on, is that all the Wessex ATV trailers are fitted with bolt-on stub axles, minimising the cost of having to repair a bent axle.

 Email: sales@broadwoodintl.co.uk

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Section Notes

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

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



Scottish Region



Central

The Section held a very enjoyable outing at Crieff GC on Sept 17. The course was presented in excellent condition by Charlie MacDonald and his staff and for once this year the weather was kind to us, it was just unfortunate that the turnout was poor with only 17 greenkeepers in a total of 34 attendees.

Principal prize winners were, Best Scratch David Simpson, Crieff. Best Nett, Paul Murphy, Downfield. Best Nett, Class 1, Sandy Reid, Carnoustie., Best Nett, Class 2, Gordon McKie, St Andrews. Best Nett, Spring and Autumn combined, G. McKie, St Andrews. For the full list of prizewinners, check out the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

The golfing season is over for another year so I hope the weather is kind to us all as we spend the next few months, repairing the damage done this year and preparing for next season. It always amazes me when golfers think that this is our quiet time when it is anything but.

At St Andrews the winter is always our busiest time with all the renovations and winter projects or improvements going on, even more so this winter as we complete final preparations for The Open next July.

Gordon Moir



Ayrshire

Glorious sunshine and blue skies greeted the 36 participants

at our Autumn Outing held at Powfoot GC, on Thursday October 1. There were some excellent scores returned over the well presented and scenic course! Our thanks to Course Manager and Club Champion, Neil Hamilton, and his team for the superb condition of the course. Likewise to Club Captain, Dr Liam Kiernan, and the Committee for allowing us the day and to the catering staff who looked after us well and provided some excellent fare!

On behalf of the Ayrshire Section I would also like to express our appreciation to the Patrons and trade reps for their continued support through difficult financial times.

Scottish National Chairman, John Geddes made the journey down from the North of Scotland to attend the event. John helped with the prize-giving and ably assisted Iain Barr with the scorecards, which was a caper in itself. Think we'll need a 10 minute briefing and maths lesson before some are let loose at the next outing.

On to the results for the day then;

1st Class. 1. Allan Smith, Powfoot, 39 pts; 2. Stephen Higgins, Ardeer, 37 pts; 3. Stephen Cairns, Dumfries & County, 36 pts; 4. Neil Hamilton, Powfoot, 36 pts. 2nd Class. 1. Duncan Gray, Pines, 36 pts; 2. Garry Ross, Royal Troon, 36 pts; 3. Paul Tulloch, Bogside, 32 pts; 4. Stephen Sharkey, Bogside, 32 pts. Trade Prize. Alastair Eccles, British Seed Houses, 35 pts.

Special mention to Stephen Higgins for getting his name on the illustrious Harry Diamond Jug for the second time with scores of 42 & 37 points respectively. Well done Stephen!

We had a great day down at Powfoot thanks in part to a good turnout from guys travelling over two hours each way in a lot of cases! So just a quick note of appreciation -Thanks!

Friday, September 11 saw 11

brave souls set sail for the Emerald Isle where we were confronted by a well practiced and unfairly sober team of County Down golfers. The weather was perfect and the course at Royal Belfast, in immaculate condition, as we battled to keep possession of the Shield. Unfortunately it wasn't to be as we lost by a half point, 3pts - 2 1/2.

County Down Captain, Jamie McCune, reclaimed the spoils and thanked the Club and Course Manager for the use of the course and facilities.

As usual the match was played in good spirit and we all enjoyed meeting up once again.

Thanks to all the lads who made it such a great day and especially Terry Crawford for the arrangements for the weekend's golf and pub crawl (stagger?).

Our sincere thanks to Terry, and Clandeboye Golf Club, for allowing us to play the Ava Course on the Saturday and to enjoy the fine facilities. The food and drink were excellent and friendliness of the staff much appreciated.

Willie McMeiken, Turnberry, and Garry Ross, Royal Troon, have been chosen as the Patron's Award winners for this year and will receive a copy of Jim Arthur's book as well as the EDUCATIONAL! trip to Harrogate.

It was decided at the last Scottish board meeting to suspend the annual Patrons' Award Lunch for the time being, which is usually held in December. This action was taken in light of the current economic climate, with the hope being to direct contributions toward educational opportunities.

That's all for now folks!

Any news to denis.t@hotmail.co.uk or 07939 104701

Cheers!

Denis Tweddle



East

Hello members. I hope that you all have had a good golf season for your courses this year. And now it's all go with the winter programmes drainage, bunker renovations, new tees, re-turfing areas, tree pruning, etc etc, all in readiness for the next season. Great fun.

When do we ever get the time for all this and to squeeze some rounds of golf in! Well maybe for the lucky ones.

I don't think that I mentioned in my last report that James Neilson (Jimmy) donated a bit of silverware to be played for at our AGM. venue and, knowing Jimmy, he likes to do things in style. The prize? "The Claret Jug"! Jimmy wants more members to come along and support Our/Your Section. So young and old try and find the time to come along and have your say, play golf and listen to the gossip at the 19th.

All the dates and venues can be found on our Section News or by phoning any of the committee.

Our Section Autumn Outing was held at The Royal Burgess Golfing Society on Wednesday, September 30.

I must mention that the Royal Burgess is one of the oldest golfing societies in the world, dating back to 1735. Having played their golf firstly at Bruntsfield Links, in Edinburgh, and short spells at Muirfield, Bruntsfield and Royal Musselburgh, as these courses became over crowded they had to move. Then they found ground six miles to the west of Edinburgh and are there, to this day, at Barnton. It was looked over by Tom Morris who said it was a fine piece of land for a golf course and thus is was built. It opened for play in 1897.

We were very privileged to play the golf course, that has graced many big tournaments and royals over the years.

A total of 32 members attended, but with the weather closing in and the rain and dull day, only the hardy ventured out into the unknown..... All did make it back as the lights of the "Grand" Royal Burgess clubhouse was like a beacon for the lost souls who braved the day. We were lucky our group was playing behind our Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, who showed the way for us as he donned a brightly coloured jacket, which guided us home.

All the Winners from The Autumn Outing

Scratch: Dean Muir, Muirfield, 72 gross.

1st Class: Tom Murray, Ratho Park, 73 nett. 2. Bill Lyon, Muirfield 75 nett. 2nd Class: Jamie Donnet Murrayfield 87 nett; 2. John Geddes, Ellon, 88 nett. 3rd Class: George Oliver, Murrayfield, 78 nett; 2. Gary McKenna, Baberton, 83 nett; Veterans. Alister Holmes, Seahouses, 76 nett; Patrons'. Hugh Fraser, Huxley Golf, 69 nett. Novelty Prizes. Nearest the Pin. Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Parks. Longest Drive. Alister Holmes, Seahouses.

Our Chairman, Stewart Crawford, thanked Roger, the Course Manager and his greenstaff, the Captain and his committee at the Royal Burgess for having the East Section BIGGA. He also thanked the patrons for their support over the year and for the future.

Until next month.
Tom Murray



North

As I write this, the weather has definitely taken a turn for the worse. The cold mornings have started and even the odd ground frost has made an appearance. High winds have wreaked havoc with us, what with sand blowing out of the bunkers and trees falling all over the place and just when we get it all tidied up, along comes another day of high wind and we have to do it all over again.

It is very time consuming but

if the course isn't tidy you soon get told by the powers that be. Can you sort this out? Can you sort that out? Yes, but just add it to the rest of the other jobs on the list.

Hopefully by now you've all started to draw up your Winter programmes, if not already begun them. I know next door at Royal Aberdeen they've already started their retvetting duties. A total of 25 bunkers are being re done. They are also building a new championship tee at the 4th hole ready for the Walker Cup in 2011.

Hopefully, by now you will of all recovered from the Autumn outing at Alyth. I think that from the people I have spoken with, they all enjoyed their day thoroughly. By the looks of it there were a few sharks going about on the day too! Eh Niall. I wasn't there due to work commitments as was the Chairman, Hugh Mclatchie (just to give the rest of the committee a chance), but by all accounts Brian had the course looking good. On behalf of the Section I would like to pass on my thanks and congratulations to all at Alyth GC.

Nearest the Pin. Robert Paterson and Richard Pirie.

Sweep. 1. Niall Bruce; 2. Jim McCormack; 3. Kenny Liddell; 4. Gary McCandless
Guest Bill Harvie Trade Kenny Liddell, Committee Robert Hardie

Veterans 1. Jim McCormack; 2. George Simpson. Class 3. 1. Niall Bruce; 2. Dale Robertson; 3. Scott Davidson; Class 2 1. Jim McCormack; 2. David Middleton; 3. Kevin Spowart. Class 1. 1. Robert Hardie; 2. Simon Hoy; 3. Derek Green; Scratch; 1. Robert Patterson 2. George Mitchell

The Mark Main Trophy for the best two nett scores over the Spring and Autumn outings went to Kevin Spowart, of Royal Aberdeen. Well done, Kevin, and thank you for supporting the Section.

The 200 Club results are as follows: £30 Brian Cocker, Rosscro Macrae, Lindsey Johnstone £100 Stuart Robertson.

Having been away on holiday I came back to find out one of our members hasn't been too well. My old mate Richard "Dicky" Pirie, from Newmachar GC, has been a little under the weather and wish you a speedy recovery mate. A pint is long overdue mate.

Patrick Wood, from Newmachar, obviously fancies himself becoming a bit of a Forrest Gump later on in life. He didn't do his ambition any harm when he recently took part in the Great North Run down in Newcastle. I had to get clarification of this from his boss as previously he just gets the t-shirts and ends up not doing the race for one reason or another! Well done, Patrick, and I wonder what your next test is going to be.

That's it for this month, if any of you have any news or stories just drop me a line on the number below.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links
07813889374

Northern Region



North Wales

November already where does the time go! Best wishes go to any course that's holding a firework display we looked into the legal side of it and you need to start writing the hundreds of pages of risk assessments in May to get them done in time.

The autumn tournament took place on October 1, at Eaton Golf Club, with a happy field of players taking advantage of really well running greens and a beautiful course in exceptional weather.

The results are as follows: 1. Johnny Evans, Carden Park, 36 pts; 2. Iwan Jones, Eaton GC, 35 pts (home advantage there me thinks); 3. Paul Gator, of our next host course, Caldly GC, with 34 pts; 4. Steven Roberts, of Flint GC with 32 pts. Best guests were, 1. Alex Kegg, 39 pts; 2. Peter Parry, 34 pts. Trade prize went to Section Chairman, and everyone's friend, Terry Adamson. Nearest the Pin prizes went to Johnny Evans on the 11th green and Deiniol Gegid (please excuse me if I've got the name wrong I was writing this down over a very crackly phone line) on the 17th green.

We need to thank Gavin Clarke and his team for providing with such a magnificently kept course and the clubhouse staff for their warm welcome and the scrumptious food. As a

thank you the Section donated £50 to the Captain's Charity. As previously mentioned the Christmas tournament is taking place at Caldly Golf Club on November 2,6 the format is a four person team with a shotgun start at 10.30. This competition is always well attended so get your entry slips in early.

In local news Peter Maybury, of Vale of Llangollen Golf Club, and his wife, Caroline, celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary on the 18th of this month and I would like to thank her for the 20 mostly happy years we've spent together. That's about it so,

All the best until next month.
Pete Maybury Petemayb66@aol.com 07756001187
Johnny Evans
Johnny.evans@tesco.net



Sheffield

Hello again everyone,

We have finally reached the end of the season and will now be well into our winter programmes. I hope that everyone had a very successful season and despite the difficult economic times still provided excellent golf.

Our last competition was held at Sherwood Forest GC. I am sure everyone who attended would agree what a fantastic day we had. I would like to thank Kim and his staff for providing a wonderful course for us to play, it was a real pleasure. Thanks also to Glenn Sawyer, from Golf and Turf Machinery, for sponsoring the day and providing a fantastic prize table once again. The only disappointing thing to come from the day was the poor attendance of greenkeepers. I have heard a few things from reps on this matter and you do not have to attend lectures to be entitled to play golf. Please support your Section.

The results are as follows: 1. Simon Dye, 39pts, Hcp 5; 2. K. Aston, 38pts, Hcp 13; 3. R. Jones, 34pts, Hcp +1; Trade P. Fell, 35pts, Hcp 13.

The National Championship was held in early October and our Section had three representatives. Thank you to S. Dye, A. Unwin and R. Jones for representing the Section. Congratulations to Richard who finished

second. Well done, Richard.

One of our members has decided to put greenkeeping to one side for a while and is going on the trip of a lifetime. James Whelan, from Rotherham GC, is going travelling to Borneo for three months. Good luck, James and have a fantastic time.

Finally, our Christmas golf will be held at Rotherham GC on November 30, I hope to see many of you there. It will also be the AGM on the day as well. Hope you all have a good month and I will speak you in December.

James Stevens

Midland Region



Midland

Well I hope that by the time you read these notes that the majority of the downside of my favourite season has been cleaned up, the leaves. With that in mind please consider this month's calendar sponsor Abbey Mowers for your machinery requirements; www.abbeymowers.co.uk <<http://www.abbeymowers.co.uk/>>. Also I would like to mention that Bob Pilsbury/Mr Toro has eventually (65+) decided to retire. Bob worked at Abbey Mowers for the last 11 years and thoroughly enjoyed promoting his many red babies, as he had done so for 40 years. A leaving party was held for Bob at a local pub and Pete Mansfield, of Toro Lely, made a surprise visit and presented him with a selection of cut crystal. Mike Shaw also made a presentation and thanked him for his years of excellent service. From both the folks at Abbey Mowers and the Midland Section we wish you a long and fruitful retirement. Be careful on that Velocette, we don't want you falling off again Dick!

Over many a year we have been blessed with the superb courses that have been gracious enough to afford our tournaments. Yet again our Comp Sec has delivered beyond the call of duty. Such being on 4th December our Christmas event at Woburn, no less, entry being the princely sum of £30! You had better be quick to get your entrees into Gary if you have not already done so. I would give my

right arm to play there. Unfortunately my left hand may well be recovering from the knife. It's better than having claws though.

And now for the long awaited result of the Scotts Doubles event. The finalists were Richard Beacham & Gary Turner pitted against Ed Stant & Paul Woodham, the final winners being Paul & Ed after a contest that does not reflect the score of 6&4. The course was of course superb, and a special thank you to Nia Frost for taking the time to represent Scotts while on maternity leave. Good luck with that Nia. Also thanks to Nigel Tyler and Rhys Thomas for driving the contestants (well one could not expect Nia to travel so far when pregnant. There is still chivalry in our modern world). Our thanks to Scotts for their continued support of this long running event. So the question is who will be victorious next year? p.s. and surprisingly it was very windy on the day, really! What's this I hear, Gary, tweeting like a birdie, must be in love. Believe it or not, the boys at Harbourne will testify. Been there, done it.

Wind swept Mac.

Sean McDade



East Midlands

Hi All

The final of the inaugural Headland Pairs comp was played at The Grove in Hertfordshire during September; this was won by my partner – Paul Friith and I, one up against Glynn Buckby and Simon Banks. A fantastic day was had by all and here's hoping to an even better competition next year.

By the time you read this the Autumn comp and AGM will have taken place on October 15 at Matlock GC, let's hope this unseasonally good weather continues a bit longer!

Hot off the press – yesterday the annual East Mids vs Midlands match was played – sponsored by Rigby Taylor, at Trentham Park GC. The East Mids won by a score of 9 – 6. I think that makes it five years in a row the East Mids have been victorious – better luck next year guys! The day was played in

great spirits – as always by both sides and thanks has to go to Trentham Park and their Course Manager, Gary Cunningham, for the superb condition of the course.

Places in our Autumn Education day are filling up fast although at the time of writing there are still some available. The speakers during the day are Greg Evans, Paul Lowe, Frank Newberry and Andy Cole, of the STRI. For anyone interested please get in touch with myself ASAP on the e-mail below.

You should have all had a letter for the Christmas tournament by now to be played at Wollaton Park on December 8; we look forward to seeing you all there.

As always I can be contacted at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com with any news or information.

Thanks for now.

Andy de Wet



Mid-England

Earlier this year the Section ran several educational courses for the benefit of our members. Eight guys achieved their certificates in Cross Cutting and Maintenance of Trees, Four chaps completed the Felling of Small Trees course and a further eight people qualified as First Aiders after their four day course. Funding is available again this year and next although no courses have been arranged thus far. If you are interested in First Aid, Spraying, Tree Maintenance or anything else that would be of use to you or your staff then please contact Gerald Bruce at Berkhamsted Golf Club.

Don't forget to get your entries in for the Turkey Trot at John O'Gaunt Golf Club on December 7 where we will be playing the Carthage Course. Please let Richard Saunders know as soon as possible as to whether you will be playing because it is always a very popular event and Richard would not like to have to disappoint you.

We are already looking for venues for next year and I will let you have the details as soon as venues/dates are confirmed.

Next month I hope to bring you the report from Mid-Herts GC, The National Tournament and a summary of our AGM. In the meantime, if you have any news, suggestions or thoughts please e-mail me at the address below.

Craig Spooner

craig.spooner@limagrain.co.uk

South West and South Wales Region



South Wales

Hi Everyone! Hope you are all well.

Well! What a difference a month makes! Following all that rain we then had the driest September for 12 years! All this gave Turf Managers the chance to do some well needed autumn renovation. So I'm sure your Sisis Auto Turfman had plenty of use and liberal amounts of Fisons Greenkeeper 2 was applied. Though I'm sure things may have changed since I was a Greenkeeper!

First the result of the match between the Greenkeepers and Secretaries, which was held at Neath GC. The course was presented in superb condition which was a credit to HGK (and Section Secretary) Steve Chappell and his staff. In a closely fought contest The Greenkeepers emerged victorious, winning 4 - 2 to retain the CWC Shield. The victorious team were: Andy Roach (Capt), Darryl Jones (Vice), Rhys Norville, Stuart Ross, Emyr Nickels, Gary Humphries, Gareth Knight, Colin Thomas, Clive Moran, James Cuell, Steve Chappell.

Thanks go out to: Alan Abel, Complete Weed Control, for his continued support of this annual match and for his hospitality at the bar and for providing wine with the meal and the whiskey for the N-T-P and L/Drive. Thanks to Neath Golf Club for the use of the facilities; Thanks to Wesley and Judith for providing really good three course meal enjoyed by all; Thanks to the GCMA for their company during the day and their continued efforts in

the matches against us. Green-keeping team at Neath: John Amos, Jason Davies, Meurig Lewis, Kerry (best mechanic in the Rhondda) Lewis.

Nearest the pin winners: Simon Buddville (Sec's); Bruce Nickalass (Sec's); John Sulley (Sec's); James Cuell (G/Keepers). Longest Drive: James Cuell (G/Keepers)

So well done the our lads and commiserations to the Secretaries. My advice to the Secs is to get some practice in! Not during work hours though!

RT Matchplay news now, and, at the time of writing I have been informed that Paul Handy and Rhys Norville recently beat the seemingly invincible duo of Gary Humphries and Rhys McDonagh to reach the final at 10B. Upon hearing this news 10B police, the local Indian restaurants and hotels breathed a sigh of relief. The local pubs however saw a potential bumper night fly out the window! The other semi final between Mark Wilshire/Mark Anderton v Daryl Bray/Leigh Davies has yet to be played but could see an all Newport GC final. It could turn nasty!

Talking about Newport GC, a big well done to Rhys Norville, who recently won The Toro Student Greenkeeper Of The Year Award. This is a great achievement and it's the first time that anyone from the Section has won this award. He's a talented golfer too! It's not fair! Well done, Rhys! I'm sure this award will stand you in good stead for the future.

Still on the subject of awards, if you remember, I mentioned that Dan Duffy, Head Groundsman at The Liberty Stadium, had recently won Championship Groundsman of the Year award, as awarded by the FA. Well, He topped that by being voted IOG Groundsman Of The Year, at Saltex, in September. So, a great year for Dan and thoroughly deserved. Shame about the teams that play there! Only joking!

On the trade front I would like to congratulate Peter Lacey, for joining Farmura Environmental and taking over from Gerald (The Great) Orme as their Technical Manager for South Wales. So Peter, or can we now call you 'Porthcawl Pete'? I think I can speak ferrosol when I say 'all the best' in your new job. I'm sure you will be a revolution!

Finally, if for some strange reason you were at the recent Scarlets v Munster game at Parc Y Scarlets, then no you weren't seeing things. It really was me cutting the pitch with a pedestrian rotary mower at the end of the game, closely (well not that closely) followed by three RT Reps. We all started at the same time but I think Peter and his mates must have been enjoying too many pastries at their numerous sales meetings recently and I ended up opening a commanding, if slightly squiffy lead! I was absolutely cream crackered at the end though. The things we do for a free seat!

That's all for now. A report on the Autumn Golf Meeting and AGM at Southerndown GC will appear in next month's Around The Green.

Anything that you would like mentioned in this column, you know, weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, hilarious mishaps then please contact me on:

celticceri@aol.com
07831 168645
Ceri Richards



South Coast

Welcome to the November Around the Green, your committee have decided to spice things up a little in the form of each committee member taking a turn at guest writing this column over the coming months starting with yours truly. So go easy on us, as we are all new to this journalism lark.

At the last committee meeting it was decided due to the continual drop in numbers for our golf outings that we will return to the old system of mailing out an application form to each individual member, rather than the e-mails which seems to have been a bit hit & miss. There is a considerable cost to this but it was felt if we can increase numbers at the outings then it would be money well spent.

On the application form we are asking for monies to be paid in advance of the event this is to help the committee with confirmed numbers and reducing the need to handle lots of cash on the day (remember it's the tournament convenors' day out

as well). We hope you will assist us with this.

We are considering setting up a system for payment through Internet banking as well as cheques. Your thoughts on whether this would be of use to you would be appreciated.

Autumn Outing. On Thursday, October 1, the Section held our autumn outing at Shanklin & Sandown GC, on the Isle of Wight. All who attended had a fantastic day and many thanks must go to Course Manager, Paul Knight, and his staff for the excellent condition of the course and also to the Captain and Council for allowing us the courtesy of the course.

Our thanks also to our sponsors of the day Avoncrop Amenity and Rigby Taylor these days would be so much harder to organise without your continued support, and a special thanks to Dave Rogers for looking after us all on the ferry crossing.

Again our numbers were very low and as this day was free as previously advertised the committee really are stumped as to how we can get the numbers up, so if you have any ideas please let us know.

Scores. 1. Joe Cooper, 38pts; 2. Chris Bitten, 35pts; 3. Ian Noble, 34pts 4. Robert Hogarth, 33pts; 5. Kevan Glass 33pts; 6. Tim Harper, 32pts.

Nearest the Pin. Joe Cooper. Longest Drive. Ian Noble

Your AGM was held on the same day, there were no changes to the committee and the main topics discussed are the ones mentioned already in these notes.

Here at Remedy Oak we have just completed our hollow-coring, overseeding and top-dressing programme, I, am grateful that August and September have been so much better weather wise I would have hated to go into Autumn with the levels of rainfall we seen in July. Saying that, I cannot remember a season with so much pests and disease around we have had the lot with dollar spot being a huge problem on fairways, and I know from speaking to other guys some off you have suffered from anthracnose on greens. Bad enough in winter or early spring but attacks during the summer is pretty tough going.

Typical that we get all these attacks in a year when we are all trying to trim costs and

now we are having to use more chemicals than normal to tackle the problem. I don't know what the answer is but somehow our industry needs to find a way of narrowing the gap in costs between the chemicals we use and their equivalent within agriculture.

Things on the education front are quiet at the moment but I do know Sparsholt College recently held an awards evening for the latest group of Greenkeepers to qualify to NVQ Level II, so congratulations to all of you.

If any one has queries or problems you think the Section can help you with or should know about give me a ring or e-mail on the details below and we will try and help.

Next month's guest columnist is Phil "Joe" Cooper, from Milton Abbey School, so if you have anything of interest or thoughts on what I have talked about in these notes please give me a ring on - 07879 424737 or e-mail hogiethehun@aol.com. And I will pass it on to "Agadoo".

Happy Greenkeeping
Robert Hogarth
Remedy Oak



South West

Sadly - getting quite close to my last report now - in fact this is it! Unfortunately, not too much going on just now, and not much feedback from elsewhere, but hey - you know me - before I bow out, I'll take a few moments to reminisce on events since 2004 when I started writing this column.

My report from Feb '05, at Weston Super Mare, leapt off the page. I can't think of Weston Super Mare without the old Aged Cutler song springing to mind. However, this day was so cold with a bitter wind and snow flurries that Afge's Wurlitzer would've frozen solid, and even the seagulls were sitting in a gloomy huddle outside the travel agents in the middle of town. I closed that report by wishing Richard Whyman, then incoming BIGGA Chairman, all the best for his year in office. Kinda déjà-vu there then!

And later that year, there was no escape from the pressures of

work – I'd sneaked into the local pub on the way home and someone bellowed "Oi. I want a word with you" – (Bob the Barman) sounding unusually belligerent. "I want to make a complaint – I was playing round the Common yesterday, and your blokes were there shovelling cow pats off the fairway. I got into that nasty little quarry on the 10th and had four or five shots trying to get out (not much of a golfer, Bob the barman) when one of your blokes handed me this horrible old shovel with cow muck dripping off it and said "Ere, 'ave a go with this" and then split his sides laughing." "Sorry Bob," I muttered – "S'pose a free pint's out of the question?"

A really sad story cropped up in summer 2006 - Four players came into the clubhouse bar at one of our local clubs after an evening game. One of them was bragging loudly about encountering an adder on one of the fairways and actually chopping its head off with his sand iron. Apparently there was a little old guy listening at the other end of the bar, and he asked how long this particular snake had been. "Well over two foot-six, grandad" came the smug reply, "or at least it was until it met me - har har" "Do you realise," continued the elderly gent, "if that adder really was two foot six inches long, it was well over 80 years old, and you've just killed it with a golf club for no good reason at all". There was complete silence - the bravado just melted away, and the golfer was apparently inconsolable.

In 2007 there was a nasty explosion at one of the chemical works at Avonmouth (30miles to the south). The police rang at lunchtime to inform us that a cloud of potentially toxic chemicals had been released into the atmosphere, and was heading our way so we'd be well advised to clear the course. We toured around advising players of the situation and offering lifts back in. Yep, you've guessed it – most of those faced with a choice between near-certain death, and missing their afternoon's golf, decided to risk it and play on. One player however, sniffed the air and said – "Yes – I thought there was a funny smell – quick, take me in". We did so, but I didn't have the heart to tell him that he what he could actually smell was the TX10 fertiliser

we'd put on the greens the day before!

I also had a nasty experience on the course. Standing by our lake in a quiet moment I noticed a snow-white swan soaring through the air to make a magnificent landing on the water. I was just thinking "wow" - when my mobile rang (unfortunately not a nice purr-purr ringtone, but an annoying beedle-beedle-beep). This enraged the swan, which emerged from the lake, wings beating and hissing menacingly towards me. I'm now in full retreat, and for some reason, still trying to take the call. When I finally got the phone near enough to my ear to hear I realized there was an even bigger menace on the line – Angela – from Alpha (name changed) Paints. I could just make out disjointed phrases like "order six cases before Xmas" and "15% discount". "I'm terribly sorry" I blurted, "but I'm out on the course, and I'm having a little difficulty with a swan". "Oh dear" muttered Angela – obviously miffed that I'd deflected her sales patter – "a swan – what is it?" "Well", I panted – " it's a stonking great white thing with a wing at each corner, and at the moment it's running across the grass towards me". "My God" said Angela, (now sounding quite concerned) – "You want to watch out for that – they're strong enough to break your arm". "I couldn't care less about my arm" I bellowed, "it's certain other parts of my anatomy I'm more worried about" – and then she hung up. Women!

Okay – enough. The Section held its 2009 Autumn Tournament and Annual General Meeting at Saltford Golf Club in early October. Course Manager Darren Moxham, Lucy Sellick and Matt Devlin were the undoubted stars of the day – the course was in fantastic condition with scarcely a blade of grass out of place, and yet due to illness, these are the only three greenkeepers currently available to work on it. They are my heroes, and definitely win this year's prize for Course Presentation. Thanks very much guys we really appreciated it. The competition results were as follows - 1. Matt Worster, Minchinhampton, 42pts; 2. Simon Kew, Shirehampton, 40pts; 3. Darren Moxham, Saltford, 39pts.

The AGM itself was held



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

Firstly, I would like to welcome Jill to the Team at Headquarters, she joins the Sales Department following the departure of Sharon in July.

Her arrival is very timely with work on Harrogate Week starting to pick up pace. The exhibition is filling up nicely and as with everything it could be a lot better, but I do feel that in the present climate it could also have been a lot worse!

Learning and Development is a major part of what BIGGA is about and watch out elsewhere in this edition of Greenkeeper International for details of the show seminars. A quick reminder that full information on these, and all aspects of Harrogate Week including exhibitors, can be found on www.harrogateweek.org.uk which can also be accessed through a link on the home page of the BIGGA website.

Many of you will be aware that the Association has been approached by Pitchcare with a view to working together on the development of a new trade show that would embrace all of sports turf and sports facility maintenance and management. Based on surveys that they have carried out, they believe that this is what the industry would support and their suggestion is that we consider a change of venue from Harrogate - their preferred option being the NEC, in Birmingham.

This proposal was considered by the BIGGA Board at its meeting in October and, for the avoidance of any continued speculation, I wish it to be made clear that at this moment in time the Board do not wish to pursue the matter any further. The Association is committed to building on the existing success of Harrogate and while the current two show position (Harrogate and SALTEX) may not be ideal for some companies, it never-the-less provides a workable compromise.

While on the subject of rumours I would also like to clarify the position between BIGGA and the IoG. Merger talks may have broken down at the end of 2007 but the two organisations are not at odds with each other. BIGGA's move earlier this year to allow sports turf groundsmen to join as Full Members was not an act of confrontation merely a natural extension of its business following the recognition of the synergy between greenkeeper and groundsman. I am in communication with Geoff Webb, CEO of the IoG, and we are looking at what, if any, common issues can be addressed by working together. This is no different to the approach that I am taking with other CEO's.

Within the sports industry there is a great deal of Best Practice that can be shared and it's long overdue that we all sat down and helped each other!

There is a meeting of Section Secretaries planned to take place at the end of November at Headquarters and this is an opportunity for members to have their views brought to the attention of the Staff. Market research and feedback is important and over the coming weeks we will be sending out surveys to certain groups of the membership. Please take time to respond and thereby help us to improve the value of being a member.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Pemberton'.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive

outdoors on the veranda overlooking the 18th green. 24 members and trade attended, and Adam Matthews and Jamie Acton joined the Section Committee as Secretary & Assistant Regional Rep respectively. A warm welcome was extended to them both. It was agreed to reinstate the Greenkeeper Amateur Tournament for next year, and Chairman, Chris Sealey, closed the meeting by thanking the Section Patronage Partners for their continuing support in difficult times, and reminded members of the importance of being as active as possible within the Association.

As mentioned above – Adam Matthews is taking over from me as Section Sec. Adam is a wonderful guy who will do really well. Please do give him your support by making the transition as easy as possible. I'm still on the Section Committee, and I intend to assist Adam in ensuring that education is available to all Section members. In this regard - I'm speaking at a Safety Seminar at Wiltshire County Hall on November 19. The day is in response to a number of accidents on golf courses in recent months. Invites will be circulated shortly - do please make an effort to attend, Jon Allbutt is the main speaker and always worthy of taking time out. This opportunity, along with the likes of the recent Manual Handling and Chainsaw Courses, which BIGGA is pleased to part-sponsor, are so important to help us all in our daily lives.

Finally – thanks for reading my column over the last five years – I've really enjoyed writing it, (but am probably going to have to change my style somewhat in the Chairman's column). Please read that also – BIGGA appreciates your support – it is after all your Association.

On a parting note - should you happen to have read elsewhere that Associations are yesterday's news and on their way out, then let me reassure you – "YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET". Watch this space!

Paul Worster



Surrey

No icebergs, so I'm back from cruising the Baltic, complete with parrot and large Jolly Roger. Only two bad sea days and the rest dry and sunny. The cruise was excellent, the ship, the food and the excursions to foreign cities all first class. If that ship had been hit by an iceberg, the country would have saved millions from its pension bill as the OAPs on board were everywhere.

I have just been informed that the Surrey Bowl was won by Ron Christie and Roger Tydeman, beating Dave Worsfold and Martyn McEnroy, at Foxhills GC. Thanks to Roger for running the competition and I am sure there was nothing dubious about the fact that he also helped to win it.

The annual Cresta Cup competition took place at Wimbledon Park GC, on September 17. Many thanks to Wimbledon Park GC and Dave Langheim, for the course was in excellent condition, including the very quick greens. Mark Harvey came first, followed by Tony Bremer and in third place, Chris Lomas. Nearest the Pin. Sean Sturrock, Longest Drive. Chris Lomas.

Sadly Paul Skinner, 32 years as First Assistant at Malden GC died in August. Alex Armitage said Paul was just 60 years old and had been at the club for 44 years. Condolences from Surrey Section to his family.

Paul Hutton celebrates 25 years service at Hankley Common GC and Gareth Roberts would like him to know that due to his amassed experience, he need now only rake bunkers on odd days and to keep even days for strimming.

The South East Regional Seminar is at Reigate Hill GC on Thursday, November 12. Will any latecomers contact Clive Osgood, the South East Region administrator, on 07841 948410.

The Captain of HMS Braemar, the ship that carried me to the Baltic, would give us a daily report, which always ended with the reassuring phrase 'all is well' and so like him I end this month's report - All is Well.

Brian Willmott



Kent

Autumn. A time to reflect on the season's highs and lows, your successes and failures and how you managed to maintain your courses in another year of extreme weather. There is a lot to be gained from reflection on how we all manage our courses differently in increasingly difficult conditions. And I don't just mean the extreme dry weather this year playing a major part in making our courses in this region less attractive than normal, the recession means that golfers are more demanding and will not pay a green fee unless they can justify its value.

Travelling to neighbouring courses and discussing strategies with like-minded individuals at our golf days has proved to be very influential in dictating my approach to course set up and we have had a good year as a result. Reflective analysis now means that you can be well prepared for future years.

Nobody knows everything, but between us we probably have most bases covered. Although the basic principles of greenkeeping are the same wherever you go, we all have different strategies and priorities in how we achieve an end result. I have never yet met a fellow professional who was not happy to discuss his methods in achieving what he had produced as sharing knowledge is a easy way to improving everybody's courses. At our golf days, the best greenkeepers and tradesmen in the county are all gathered regularly for a light-hearted event, but I often hear people asking each other about particular problems they are experiencing and what others have done to overcome them. Answers are readily given and management practices tweaked at the earliest opportunity in order to utilise the new-found knowledge.

Sometimes we all have to justify going to our Section events to ourselves (during busy periods), or to our employers who regard our golf days as just that. Personally, I believe that I would be failing in my job if I did not utilise all such opportunities to network with some of the best

professionals in the county and steal as much of their knowledge as possible in order to ensure the future of my course. I'm told that in the five years that I have been involved with running the Kent Section that over 90 different greenkeepers and related tradesmen have joined us at various events all of whom have a story to tell. Make the most of what's on offer, especially if it's free and so readily available.

Redlibbits Golf Club provided just such an opportunity recently and Ken Morris's dramatic improvements to the course in such a short space of time were inspirational to all. A combination of professional turf and woodland management practices has quickly resulted in a very attractive course and an environmentally sound area. A family of Moor hens had nested in a newly created habitat on the side of the lake in front of the first tee. Unfortunately, David Ray's errant opening drive reduced their population to the tune of one, but we won't mention that.

Superior local knowledge was paramount to the days golfing successes as the ever-entertaining Kev Morris, very undiplomatically, won the day with 42 points. Second was Darren Burton, from North Foreland, on 40 and third was Kev's very able assistant at Redlibbits, Mark Roach with 39 points. Longest Drive was won, as usual, by Darren Burton and Nearest the Pin, by Tom Mutch.

In just a couple of weeks now, November 26 to be exact, is our final get together of the year for the Turkey Trot at Birchwood Park. This will also include our AGM at some point of the evening so please come along if you have issues to raise or let us know by letter if there is a constitutional issue you would like us to address. This is always a great day with a lot of fun elements and prizes as well as all of the opportunities discussed above.

We also have a full and very exciting fixture list for next year which shall be distributed on the night. If any of you wish to host an event in coming years please let us know. We have had some great days over the years at courses which I didn't know existed until we went there. This county has so much to offer in terms of its venues and custodians of the land and

this is constantly reminded to me whenever a new venue is visited.

We have a lot going for us in Kent. Make the most of it.

Best of British
Rob Holland



Essex

Sorry about the lack of last month's news, due to an excessive workload at home and work it got missed out of my itinerary.

Cannons Brook Golf Club, back in August, and what a fine day greeted us. Warm, but not too warm, and a course that we have not played before. It was a challenge to say the least, as we had no idea of the layout. The course was fantastic condition and some of the holes were a real challenge with blind shots and trees that made you wonder if there was enough room to place the ball on the fairway (if it was there at all). A big thanks to Graham Lapwood and his team for a presentation, to be proud of. Our thanks to Cannons Brook for allowing us to play and to the catering staff for a fine meal. Also to the trade members for supporting us, with fine prizes for the raffle table. Finally to the players that made the long haul West.

Prizes went to the following players.

Overall winner and 2009 National Championship place. Nick Gates.

Div. 1. 1. Andy Cracknell; 2. Paul Hollingsway. Div. 2. 1. Stuart Rogers; 2. Ray Clark. Guest, Steve Butler. Trade, Mark Keysell. Nearest the Pin, Roy Sprong. Longest Drive, Stuart Rogers

Stapleford Abbots was our next port of call at the end of September, with some fine golf to boot. The course was really in great condition, seeing the long dry spell we have just had. Course Manager Paul and his team produced some of the most consistent greens I've played on for a long while, though there are quite a few ponds and lakes lurking out there to catch the unwary. Thanks to the Stapleford Abbots for allowing us to play and to the chef for a fine carvery.

Overall winner and 2010 National Championship place. Stuart Rogers, 40 pts

Div. 1. 1. James Lilly, 39 pts; 2. Tom Bownes, 36 pts. Div. 2.1. Mark Hollingsworth, 39 pts; 2. Malcolm Smith, 38 pts. Guest & Trade Prize, Matt Wise. Nearest the Pin, Tom Bownes. Longest Drive, Tom Bownes

Back in July I spent six very pleasant days at Turnberry, for the Open Championship, working on the BIGGA Support team. What an absolutely fantastic experience, not only being out there with some of the best players in the world. But also the ambiance between my fellow greenkeepers, not only on the Support team, but also with the Turnberry staff as well. The course was fantastic (the TV cameras did not lie). The early mornings and the long days did nothing so spoil my enjoyment, even down to the 420-mile journey each way. I was even up at 5am on the Tuesday after my return to resume my normal work (though, thank God, there was no rake propped against my office door).

Our next event is the AGM and winter team event, so make up your teams, there must be two BIGGA in a team of four. Entry forms on the web site soon.

Finally, the AGM. It's time to elect your committee, this year the Chairman and Secretary have both resigned from office due to work and family commitments, so we are looking for members who are willing to join the committee and work towards improving the section both in membership and stature. All officers of the committee are up for re-election and anyone wishing to be nominated should contact Martin Forrester no later than Monday, November 23 which will be the day that you also need to have any items that you wish brought up at the meeting, with the secretary.

Contact for Martin. 07984-867939 or mdwforrester@hotmail.com

If you do have any news for the website or for Greenkeeper International, please contact me on 07764 862 337 or via email essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



Rosslare Golf Club Vacancy 'Head Green-keeper'



Applications are invited for the position of Head Green-keeper at Rosslare Golf Club, Co. Wexford, Ireland.

Rosslare Golf Club is a long established private members golf club, founded in 1905, comprising 2 courses with associated practice range, putting and chipping greens. We are situated in the South East corner of Ireland in the village of Rosslare on a narrow sandy peninsula fringing Wexford harbour.

The 'Old Course' is an 18hole Hawtree and Taylor par 72 layout of 6786 yards. The 'Burrow' course, opened in 1990 is a 12 hole par 46 layout of 3956 yards designed by Christy O'Connor Jnr. Both courses are situated on typical 'links' land.

The vacancy arises due to the planned retirement in 2010 of our long serving head green-keeper. We are now seeking applications from persons who are interested in the position and can demonstrate strong abilities in all aspects of green-keeping in a 'links' environment.

The successful candidate will be capable of organizing, motivating and managing the green-keeping team and must bring a high standard of presentation to the links. Candidate's will ideally possess all relevant green keeping qualifications, will have a history of success in a similar position and will

- Be able to implement Health and Safety and other relevant legislation.
- Understand and assist in the preparation of an annual budget and manage the agreed budget.
- Motivate, manage and supervise the green-keeping team.
- Implement a plan for the establishment of a sustainable environmentally friendly course.
- Prepare and implement training plans to meet the needs of the existing staff.
- Manage and maintain the course machinery including an automated irrigation system.

The salary for this position is negotiable.

Closing Date for applications is Nov. 20th 2009

Applications in writing including a full CV to

The Hon. Secretary, Rosslare Golf Club, Rosslare, Co Wexford

Tel:- +353 53 91 32203

e-mail :- manager@rosslaregolf.com

website:- www.rosslaregolf.com

The Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh



Head Greenkeeper

- Manage all aspects of the course and clubhouse surroundings to the highest standards (including preparation, presentation, maintenance and improvements)
- Line manage, motivate and develop training programmes for an experienced team of greenkeepers

The Person

- Qualified, as a minimum to NVQ level 3 or equivalent in sports turf management
- Proven record in leadership and man management skills with experience of maintaining a parkland style course with typical soil conditions to a high standard
- Able to demonstrate a knowledge of basic construction methods to carry out general improvements to a golf course
- A fine eye for attention to detail

Salary and benefits will be by negotiation dependent upon experience and qualifications.

Please apply by e-mail or in writing with a full CV to: Mr Richard Fletcher, Fletcher Jones Ltd, 12 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2DP. 044 (0)131 229 7151; E-mail: apply@fletcher-jones.co.uk

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Membership

Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update

BIGGA Members save money on Education

BIGGA Members are eligible for a 50% saving off the price of the two-day and one-day workshops and 55% saving off the half-day workshops on the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate Week 2010.

Example of how to save money...

A Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper who is a member of BIGGA attends the 'How to be an Outstanding Manager' one day workshop on Monday, January 18, and 'Good Soil Chemistry and Biology the Answer to Practical Sustainability' half day workshop on Wednesday, January 20, saving themselves or their golf club £165. See table below for comparison.

Monday 18th January 2010

How to be an Outstanding Manager

Member Rate	Non Member Rate
£105 + VAT	£210 + VAT

Wednesday 20th January 2010

Good Soil Chemistry and Biology

Member Rate	Non Member Rate
£50 + VAT	£110 + VAT

TOTAL

Member Rate	Non Member Rate
£155 + VAT	£320 + VAT

By being a member of BIGGA this Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper will save a total of £165, which is more than the price of one years membership of BIGGA.

It makes great financial sense, if you are attending the workshops from the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate Week, to be a member of BIGGA.

If you or somebody you know is planning on booking a seminar or workshop on the Continue to Learn Programme and is not a member of BIGGA, then point out the savings they can make.

BIGGA Membership Benefit of the Month – Section and Networks

The Association's Sections and networks are active throughout the UK, with 26 Sections hosting events there is something for everybody. Current members of BIGGA can gain access to the Bulletin Boards (in a recent BIGGA Membership Survey 86% of respondents indicated the bulletin boards were either "Very Useful" or "Useful") where members can gain access to a vast amount of useful, important and vital information for greenkeepers and other sports turf professionals, golf clubs and businesses involved in the fine turf industry. Here you can discuss popular topics such as '2mm all summer anyone?' or 'What's the difference between a Course Manager and a Head Greenkeeper?' and keep updated about Section seminars and events.

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



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(option 1 for Membership)

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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

Graham Anderson, East
Mike Boyle, Central
Jamie Dunnett, East
Stuart Harkern East
Brett Hochstein, Central
Alan Jeffrey, Ayrshire
Marc Lawrence, Central
Joseph Loffelmann, East
Colin Mason, Central
Lorn Mcluckie, West
Scott Poole, East
Andrew Scott, North
Lifen Song, Central

Northern Region

Christopher Chapman, Northern
Daniel Draper, Sheffield
Michael Goodhind, North West
Marc Kerr, Cleveland
Jonathan Mellor, North West

Midland Region

Paul Ashcroft, Mid Anglia
Alex Blanchard, Mid Anglia
Damien Bowe, Mid Anglia
Sam Breakes, Midland
Lee Cole, Midland
Nikki Colin Mortimer, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Keith Grist, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Matthew Haynes, East of England
Matthew Hughes, East Midland
Gary Knight, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Chris Notley, Mid Anglia
Nicholas O'Dell, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Mark Pettit, Mid Anglia
David Spencer, East Midland
Graham Vyce, East Midland
Reece Watson, Mid Anglia
Adam Wilkinson, Midland
Stuart Wilson, Mid Anglia
Craig Winkless, East Midland
Andrew Wood, East Midland

South East Region

Ryan Bezzant, London
Ian Cannell, Essex
Dennis Crompton, East Anglia
Adam Djalalpour, London
Alistair Flint, Essex
Ashley Fox, East Anglia
Daniel Hartley, Essex
Robert Hill, Sussex
Barry Jennings, London
Liam Mulkerrins, Surrey
Stuart Olive, Essex
Anthony Thacker, East Anglia
Michael Weekes, Kent
Christopher Woodcock, Surrey

Northern Ireland

Richard Barbour
Michael Crawford

Overseas

Ian Camp, USA

Assistant Profile

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

When he's not bumping into Professional Golfers in Pro Shops, this month's interviewee, Ben Wallis, is looking after the greens at Rookery Park

Name: Ben Wallis
Age: 20
Club: Rookery Park
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
Nickname: Greenfinger

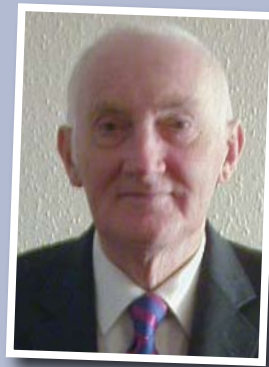


- 1. How long have you been greenkeeping?**
Three and half years
- 2. What was it about the career that attracted you?**
Opportunity came up at the club at the right time. Part time became fulltime.
- 3. If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be?**
Golf Professional
- 4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?**
Mowing semi rough with the new Toro Sidewinder because you are sitting down and hand mowing greens because it is good exercise and it always looks good.
- 5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?**
Raking bunkers.
- 6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot?**
Having all the necessary equipment to do the job.
- 7. Hobbies?**
Golf (1 handicap), swimming, gy and carp fishing 25 pounder best so far.
- 8. Favourite Band?**
Nickleback
- 9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?**
West Ham United
- 10. What is your claim to fame?**
Spoke to Open Champion Paul Lawrie in the pro shop at The Belfry.

What's your number?

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

Rod Feltham of Avoncrop Amenity comes under the spotlight



- 1. What is your position within the company?**
Managing Director
- 2. How long have you been in the industry?**
Over 30 years
- 3. How did you get into it?**
In 1978 I joined a Bristol company as Sales Manager, responsible for growing the business in Amenity Horticulture and in 1990 formed Avoncrop Amenity Products.
- 4. What other jobs have you done?**
I spent my early working years in agriculture/horticulture, selling pesticides and fertilisers and for 8 years was an Area Manager for Pan Britannica Industries (PBI).
- 5. What do you like about your current job?**
The challenge customers create in modern day turf management along with the huge satisfaction of heading up a very successful team.
- 6. What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?**
The management of sports turf has changed during recent years due to many opportunities available for training, greater expectations of the golfer, leading to a more professional approach and greater depth of knowledge with budgetary skills & presentation.
- 7. What do you like to do in your spare time?**
I enjoy spending time with my young grandson and when the time allows, walking in the Lake District and playing Lawn Bowls. I am also a keen supporter of Bristol City FC.
- 8. Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?**
Retired I hope!
- 9. Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?**
Many customers have been with us since in 1990 and without them, we could not have succeeded. These are my friends.
- 10. What do you consider to be your lucky number?**
5

Rod has picked Nigel Wyatt of Abbots

BUYERS' GUIDE



VERDE SPORTS LTD

Verde Sports Ltd is a family owned company, which was established by the late John Hessey and his wife Nancy in 1988 and is now run by his daughter, Niki.

Since this time Verde have been a leading supplier of artificial surfaces to the golf market, producing golf and fairway mats, winter tees, pathways, adventure golf and putting surfaces.

Verde are based in the manufacturing area of North West England and are a hands on, loyal and friendly team. Celebrating their 21st year in business, Verde believe that long-term relationships with trade distributors, golf clubs and private customers has contributed to their success.

Verde are acknowledged in the industry for their excellent customer service, often offering next day UK deliveries, distributing all over Europe as well as Worldwide.

The short to medium term objective is to produce a wholly British product – with all the consistency of supply and high level of quality that goes alongside having a British manufacturing base.

Recently, the company re-designed its website to produce an even more informative and customer friendly interface. This effectively showcases their range of products and services and allows for instant purchases to be made via its “buy online” facility.

Verde Sports will continue to grow alongside the increasing popularity of artificial grass surfaces and they remain committed to being at the forefront as the industry moves forward.

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High Court Upholds Compulsory Retirement at 65

On September 25, 2009, the High Court considered the issue raised jointly by Age Concern and Help The Aged, that it was contrary to age discrimination legislation for employers to be able to retire a member of staff when they reached 65 years of age, regardless of their actual capability in the role.

It was held by the High Court that the current compulsory retirement at 65 was lawful, at this point in time. It was justified in terms of it being consistent with European Directives on social policy, noting that retirement at 65 was a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim".

However, the ruling went on to acknowledge the apparent inconsistency that was highlighted by the charities and noted that compulsory retirement at 65 will be reviewed and it is likely that the normal age of retirement will increase in 2010 to 68 years of age.

The charities had sought the removal of any compulsory retirement age.

At least six months before an employee's 65th birthday, the employer is required to write to them giving notice of retirement. At that point, the employee can write to the employer requesting to work beyond the age of 65. The employer will then arrange a meeting to discuss the request and a

decision will be made. The employee has a right to appeal where their request has been declined.

Government delays Agency Workers

The government has delayed the introduction of the Agency Workers Directive (AWD) until October, 2011, as part of efforts to cut the cost of business regulation.

The AWD gives temporary staff the same employment rights as permanent staff after 12 weeks' work, including pay. There had been speculation that the directive could have been implemented as early as next spring, but the legislation has now been delayed until October 2011.

The announcement today by the Business Department is part of moves to cut the costs of regulation to business by £6.5bn by 2015.

Mike Emmott, employee relations adviser at the CIPD, said: "We're pleased that the Government has pushed back the implementation of the Agency Workers Directive to the last possible date - we've consistently called for such a delay.

"Implementing the directive in the early stages of a recovery could have been particularly damaging, as firms will be willing to take on temporary workers at an earlier stage than they are willing to commit to permanent appointments. Early imple-

mentation could therefore have delayed the recovery and prolonged unemployment."

Lord Mandelson also revealed a delay to the implementation of the right to request training in small firms.

David Frost, Director-General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "With these announcements, the government is sending out a positive message to business.

Additional employment legislation would be a real barrier to job creation at a time when unemployment could approach three million."

Redundancy Pay Rises

As announced in the recent budget, the Government has increased the statutory limit on a week's redundancy pay from £350 to £380 effective from October 1, 2009.

The move is designed to cushion the impact on employees made redundant. Normally the increase is effective from February 1 each year.

The Government has further made it clear that there will be no further increase in February 2010 and the £380 limit will remain until February 1, 2011.

The limit will also apply to other payments such as the basic award for unfair dismissal.



in the shed answers

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On the Soapbox

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

End of term report. What's bothering The R&A as we go into winter? And what's on the horizon, looking into next year?

On the playing surfaces, the big worry is still the mania for speed. Not just in the UK – we find this wherever we go in the world. Low handicap golfers are the main culprits – but turf is not managed solely for their benefit and neither is it indestructible!

We are looking at giving more publicity to “advisory” speed limits, so that greenkeepers can advise their committees accordingly. Speeds of 8-8.5 feet are more than acceptable for the average golfer, who pays the bills! And if a sward is composed of the right species, speeds can be increased to 10.5 feet for short periods by rolling and top-dressing. Anything much beyond that slows play and proves stressful for most golfers – and the turf.

Finances will continue to be a big worry for clubs, as the cumulative effects of economic downturn kick in. Revenues are best maximised by a course which is playable all the year round. Costs will have to be contained and treasurers will look across the board for savings.

However, wherever savings are planned, make sure your committee is under no illusion about the consequences! Levels of presentation will have to be lower if manpower or machinery budgets come under pressure. In the longer term, of course we would argue that many clubs could save substantially on their fertiliser/water/pesticide budgets by switching away from *Poa annua* – but, again, committees need to understand the consequences and I'll touch on that again at the end.

Another trip to Denmark this year continues to focus our minds on the pesticide issue. Over there, about a third of their courses are pesticide-free because they're on public land. The other two-thirds – about 120 courses – have to deliver a 75% reduction by 2011 or face further legislation from the Danish Government. You can see the thinking: if one third of courses can manage without, why can't the rest?

Governments are not bothered about the niceties of course presentation – in today's political climate, non-golfers call the tune. And they have decided they don't like pesticides. No wonder Danish greenkeepers are turning over to fescue/bent swards so rapidly! And so successfully!

However, the new major theme in Brussels is biodiversity, or rather preventing

loss of habitat and biodiversity. Golf has a wonderful story to tell on this one – but we're only just starting to tell it. For example, we've just published a joint book with the RSPB “Birds and golf courses: a guide to habitat management”, written by Keith Duff and Nigel Symes.

The number of breeding bird species on a course, a major indicator of habitat diversity, can be significant and golf also provides a home for really threatened species such as the skylark.

Perhaps the major difficulty in promoting the positive side of golf is our lack of objective data, which can then support the story. Whether you're dealing with pesticide legislators in Brussels or debating biodiversity with sceptical environmental NGOs, it helps if you can deal in hard facts! That's part of the logic behind our data collection/benchmarking system, which we are continuing to develop.

There's a lot happening behind the scenes on this one: the first version is very compre-

part of “protection” for greenkeepers, but other support systems also need to be better developed.

The traditional one has been the agronomists' annual visit – and we still believe that agronomists play a crucial role in diagnosing problems and monitoring the long-term health of courses.

However, the Danish experience has also shown quite clearly the success of local networks of course managers in building mutual support when times get tough on a course, which, from time to time, they invariably do. Especially when switching away from *Poa annua*. We'd like to see more of those networks and we also think there's a role for senior course managers to act as mentors when such networks are absent.

So, end of term? As my old headmaster seemed to say to me every time, “could do better”.

Plenty for The R&A to go at as we look into next year – and for those who face the challenges, plenty of reasons for optimism!

Managing the crop while the consumers trample all over it is a highly specialised business

hensive, and had to be in order to ensure its scalability/adaptability across the world. However, as time goes on we are developing systems which are specific for a country, eg. New Zealand and Denmark, as well as evolving an entry-level system which will enable clubs to collect a small number of “key performance indicators”. Most of the list of relevant indicators is coming from a consultation exercise with working greenkeepers.

Data collection, however, extends beyond the need to support golf's claims for biodiversity or reduced pesticide usage. Reliable data is a key aid to improving management practices, as well as supporting course managers in their dealings with committees. And it is that last point which is perhaps our major concern going into 2010.

Wherever we go in the world, we are faced with a common problem: how to make sure that greenkeepers are allowed to manage their courses, without unhelpful interference from golfers. Managing the crop while the consumers trample all over it is a highly specialised business and one way or the other we have to get that across to golfers!

Access to solid and reliable data is a major



Nick Park is the Advisory Member of the R&A Golf Course Committee

Nick Park



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