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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

£5.20 FEBRUARY 2010



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Harrogate Week 2010 Review

An 8-page Supplement Inside...



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Anatomy of a Top Dresser, and Growing In Sports Pitches...**

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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Looking for Solutions

I have just enjoyed what was my 15th Harrogate Week and, despite some apprehension leading up to it on account of the weather, it wouldn't be stretching the truth to say that it was one of the best we've done since my first way back in 1996.

There were many highlights. The “2 mil Debate” was a big hit, with tickets more sought after than for Led Zeppelin at the O2, and this despite a new larger venue, brought in as numbers grew. It was fantastic to see a debate, on what was a pure greenkeeping issue, proving to be such an emotive and talked about event.

Other highlights, other than the reassuringly high decibel level of the legendary “Harrogate Buzz” in the Halls, included the Association's Wild West Night on the Tuesday.

BIGGA had moved its official Hotel to the Old Swan, which gave a freshness to the whole week, and the Old Swan staff; Wild West Night organisers; Ransomes Jacobsen's, who sponsored the event, and our own Sandra Raper did a superb job in created an evening that will be remembered for quite some time.

Having enjoyed a successful week, BIGGA can now look ahead and tackle the next 12 months, knowing that the tough times currently being experienced will undoubtedly afflict our sector of the industry for quite some time yet.

On the issue of golf's problems, it has been interesting to follow the recent series “Golf Timebomb” in Scotland's Herald newspaper, written by Douglas Lowe. Aware of the problems the game of golf is experiencing in the Home of Golf, Douglas profiled some clubs which are looking at schemes to attract or retain younger members - to counter an average member age of 54, while he also interviewed David Roy, a former prominent

BIGGA member, and now President of the Scottish Club Managers Association of Europe, and Managing Secretary of the Crail Golfing Society.

David described the pressures on Club Secretaries, with many clubs seeking to hark back to the days of the Past Captain taking on the role of Honorary Secretary.

“I've heard people say: ‘We managed fine with an Honorary Secretary. I don't understand why we're employing this guy. What does he do anyway?’” said David, adding that the workload for every club has increased markedly.

“Now there's health and safety, employment law, licences, fire protection and insurance and child protection policies to look after...”

“There can be no doubt that the practice of employing unqualified people is harming golf,” he declared.

While he was talking predominately about inside the clubhouse, we are all aware of the pressures enthusiastic amateurs – often in the shape of Captains and Chairmen of Green - have put on Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers over the years and how their “interfering” has had such a detrimental effect on so many of the country's golf courses. We can all point to a Captain's ornamental conifer half way down the 1st fairway, which sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb.

Fortunately it is becoming rarer but the message must still go out - if golf clubs are to get the best out of their facilities.

“Leave the professionals to get on with their jobs.”

Scott MacCallum
Editor

FEBRUARY 2010

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Phoenix from the Ashes

Muswell Hill Golf Club suffered a horrendous arson attack just before Matt Plested took over as Course Manager. Since then, as Scott MacCallum found out, things have got a lot better...



There can be few more stressful experiences in life than changing job or getting married so you're a thought for Matt Plested who combined those two activities in the space of a couple of weeks two and a half years ago.

While 1 soldier on the certain knowledge that a wave of "No what" will be the response of many who have been in a similar position, let me give you more information which might just make you a little more sympathetic to Matt.

While he was serving his notice at Old Ford Manor Golf Club, in north London, and about to march down the aisle with his beautiful bride, Matt got a phone call from the Chairman of Green at Muswell Hill Golf Club to say that the Maintenance Facility had burnt down.

"It was a real shock. When I asked him what had happened he told me, 'It's a shame' said Matt, as we sit in his fantastic new facility, is that the fact that the burning started to his nose at Muswell Hill was not to last too long into his married life.

"As well as every machine, all the paperwork - change and irrigation records - went, and we did indeed have nothing but a charred shell."

The fire, in June of 2007, was truly horrific. A total of 55 fire fighters from all over London attended and with a 2,000 litre delivery of diesel that day, and a school just a few yards from the scene, fire officers were made to ensure that it didn't spread beyond the boundaries of the golf club.

The origin of this disaster, an arson, was found to be a 14 year



MATT PLESTED, THE 17th YEAR OLD MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR, STARTING AS A NEW LEAD MANAGER AT MUSWELL HILL GOLF CLUB

Harrogate Week 2010 Review



Harrogate Week Never Fails to Deliver

It takes more than a global recession and arctic like conditions to stop Harrogate Week from being a success. Many would crawl over broken glass to get to Harrogate each year and with an attendance of 5883 over the three days - only marginally down on the previous year and well up on pre-show expectations - that was proven to be the case yet again and exhibitors were rewarded with an enthusiastic and committed audience.

HARROGATE WEEK 2010



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– Andy Boyce,
Bath Golf Club



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

A Stark Reminder to Golfers



Matt Plested, Course Manager of Muswell Hill Golf Club, has come up with a great way of highlighting to members the pitchmark problem which blights so many greens.

By placing a ball in each of the pitchmarks and photographing the results he produced a dramatic image of the impact they can have on a green if left unrepaired which was put on the club noticeboard.

"It was a great away of showing members how many pitchmarks can be left on a green if they don't take time to repair their own and any others they come across," said Matt.

"I think the picture speaks for itself and it has certainly made the point," he added.



Conservative Candidate Visits Sisis

Sisis welcomed David Rutley, the prospective Conservative candidate for Macclesfield, to its factory recently.

He toured the factory, speaking to many of the employees and listening to their concerns about Macclesfield and the surrounding area.

The photograph shows Tom Glazebrook explaining to David, in the assembly area, the SISIS AutoSpred, top dressing machine, with Roger and William Hargreaves, Managing Director.

SkyCaddie Now Official Rangefinder of the EGU

A year after its decision to allow Distance-Measuring Devices to be used at all of its 2009 Championships, SkyCaddie has become the Official Rangefinder of the EGU.

This follows the statement from The R&A announcing amendments made to 'Decisions on the Rules of Golf' 2010-2011 edition which also included a joint statement made by The R&A and the USGA regarding the use of DMDs, confirming that the current practice of allowing DMDs by Local Rule remains appropriate.



Horses for Courses



John Deere has signed a five-year preferred supplier partnership agreement with Arena Leisure plc, the biggest racecourse operator in the UK. The agreement covers the supply and after-sales support of John Deere equipment for use by grounds staff on the racecourses, as well as two 18 hole golf courses and two hotel complexes.

Arena Leisure hosts 25% of all British racing fixtures at 7 racecourses across the country – Doncaster, Folkestone, Lingfield Park, Royal Windsor, Southwell, Wolverhampton and Worcester.



Son of Sir Bobby Robson receives donation from Sherriff Amenity

Mark Robson, son of Sir Bobby, receives a cheque for £467.70 from Paul Foston, of Sherriff Amenity, on behalf of the “Sir Bobby Robson Foundation”.

Sir Bobby Robson fought cancer an incredible five times. Sadly, 17 years after his first diagnosis, he lost that long and courageous battle in July 2009. The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation focuses on the early detection and treatment of cancer and the clinical trials of new drugs that will eventually beat it.

The money was collected on the Sherriff Amenity stand over three days at SALTEX, last year.



John Deere in New Partnership with the Ladies European Tour

John Deere and the Ladies European Tour (LET) has extended their original patron agreement for two more years, during which Deere will be designated the Tour’s official supplier of golf course machinery.

The company will also be an official industry partner of The 2011 Solheim Cup match between the women’s professional teams from the US and Europe (captained for the second time in succession by Alison Nicholas), which will take place at Killeen Castle in Ireland.

Through the Ladies European Tour agreement, LET tournaments will be supported by John Deere equipment and irrigation products through the company’s European golf dealer network. Deere officials will also continue to work closely with the LET’s agronomists, with the goal of helping to produce better quality playing surfaces.



ACTIVE LEISURE CONTRACTS COMPLETE LILLESHALL WORLD CLASS PITCHES

The Lilleshall National Sports Centre, a training venue for England Hockey is now home to a Poligras Olympia water based hockey pitch. The Surface was installed by the Kent based artificial sports specialists Active Leisure Contracts.

The project, funded by Sport England, involved laying a high performance insitu rubber shock pad onto which the Poligras Olympia surface was bonded using

a unique full stick porous bonding adhesive. This is the same surface that was used at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and subsequently at other major international hockey facilities across Asia.

The project was completed in four weeks by the Active Leisure Contracts installation team and overseen by a senior Technician from STI who designed and manufactured the surface system.

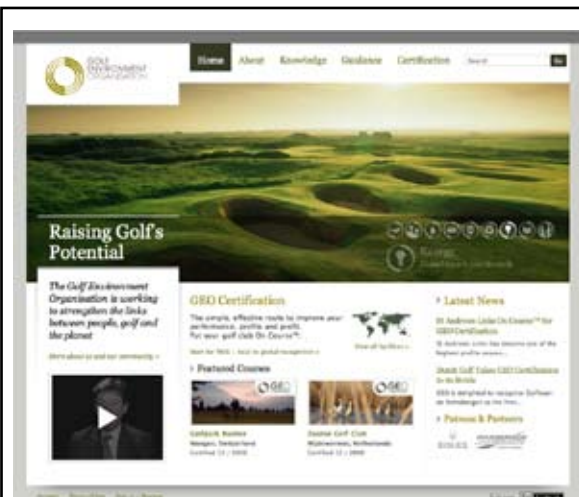
Health and Safety Training

In association with the Health and Safety Executive and Jon Allbutt Associates, BIGGA has prepared four one hour practical talks for delivery direct to staff by Head Greenkeeper/Course Managers.

It can also be expanded and used by BIGGA Sections to deliver locally relevant training to larger groups. The 'tool kit' of notes and posters will be available on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk It is recommended that this training is carried out during the winter months and at other times when convenient; the topics are particularly important as part of a new employee induction programme.

Maintaining high levels of competency is a key factor in an effective safety management system to reduce the risks of accidents when using work equipment on the golf course. The four topics are:

- Belt Up on Slopes – assessing the risks of working on slopes, wearing seat belts where they are provided on equipment fitted with Roll Over Protective Systems, agreeing site specific safe systems of working to reduce risks of roll over accidents.
- Slips, Trips and Falls – assessing risks to avoid accidents, trip hazards in the shed, using hand held work equipment on slopes, working at height using ladders, steps and 'home made' equipment.
- Check Your Machine – a practical guide for greenkeepers on what to look for each day before starting work.
- Watch Out! – a practical guide for greenkeepers on spotting hazards on the golf course, having an effective system for reporting incidents. A managers guide to investigating accidents and dangerous incidents.



Click the link for St Andrews Links

St Andrews Links has become one of the first golf venues committed to achieving GEO Certification, from the Golf Environment Organisation.

The Links has been recognised on several occasions in recent years including receiving the Overall Award at the Golf Course Environment Awards run by the STRI last year.

The new accreditation programme aims to become the hallmark for sustainable golf and measures all aspects of a golf venue's operations from the courses to clubhouses and greenkeeping facilities. It was launched by the Golf Environment Organisation, a non-governmental organisation, at the BMW PGA Championship last May.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links, said: "We place a great deal of emphasis on managing the courses and facilities in as sustainable a fashion as possible. There is a long tradition of sensitive and sustainable management at the Links and, as the Home of Golf, we have a responsibility to take a lead in encouraging the golf industry to take these practices on board.

"This accreditation programme is an excellent way of ensuring golf courses adopt this approach in a structured way and we look forward to working with the Golf Environment Organisation."

There are several major environmental projects currently being undertaken at the Links.

A reedbed washdown area was recently established on the 17th hole of the Jubilee Course which enables water that has been used for washing machinery to be fed through two gravel beds which have been planted with common reed. The reeds filter out the impurities, allowing clean water to be discharged to a soakaway.

Other recent projects at the Links include dune reinstatement work, an extensive grassland management programme and soft engineering work for coastal protection of the Jubilee Course.

Jonathan Smith, of the GEO, added: "Decades of strong leadership and responsible, balanced decision-making has positioned St Andrews Links at the forefront of sustainable golf."

The On Course Reports for St Andrews Links can be read on GEO's website at:

- www.golfenvironment.org/oldcourse
- www.golfenvironment.org/new-jubilee
- www.golfenvironment.org/eden-strathtyrum-balgove
- www.golfenvironment.org/castlecourse



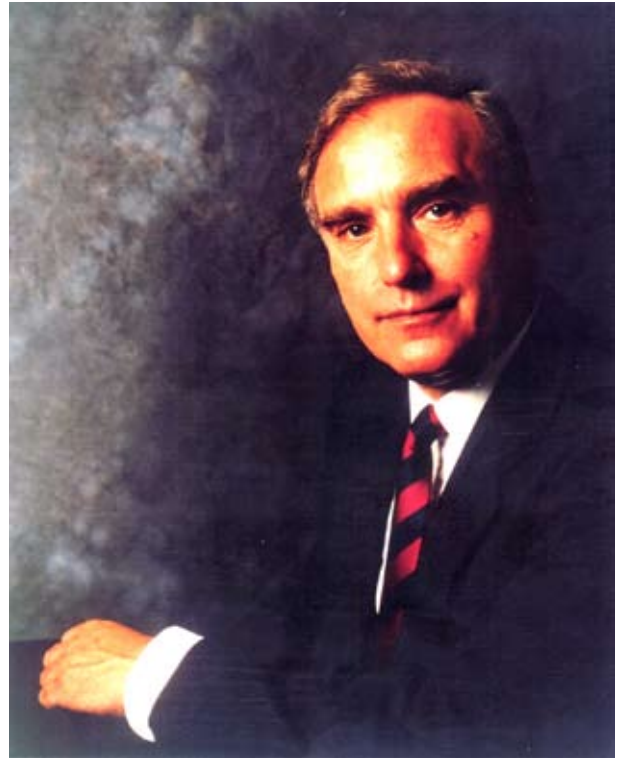
Winter Practice Makes Perfect

While offices and classrooms around the country were abandoned as the white blizzards descended upon us last week, spare a thought for golfers of all ages across the country.

You may have been able to slack off your new years resolution to visit the gym each morning, but for anyone involved in outdoor sports, fitness and skills must be practiced whatever the weather.

That golf practice is 'snow' joke for all those gearing up to the start of the 2010 golf season this April.

Brogan Townend, 15, winner of the U16 global final of the Faldo Series in Rio de Janeiro last November, has been able to continue practising her putting throughout the wintry weather with her own Huxley all-weather artificial golf green.



Bob Dodsworth

Former Chief Executive of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies, Bob Dodsworth, died in hospital in January, aged 73.

He joined the company in 1963 as Chief Accountant and served for 16 years as chief executive until his retirement in 1993.

He was very active in the business community of Ipswich and held several non-executive directorships with the Ipswich Building Society, Ipswich Port Authority, the East Anglian Daily Times Group and the Eastern Regional board of National Westminster Bank plc.

He was on the board of Christchurch Park Hospital for over 20 years, the last eight as chairman.

In 1988 he was made a Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk.

David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen, commented, "Bob Dodsworth was a devoted family man and was at the helm of the company at an important and successful period in its illustrious history. He will be sadly missed by his wife Hazel, sons, John and Simon, and his five grandchildren and everyone who knew or worked with him. On behalf of all of us at Ransomes Jacobsen I would like to express our deepest sympathy to Hazel and the family."



Great Day for Mark

Mark Day who has worked in the industry for the best part of 18 years has been promoted to Tacit's National Accounts Manager for Great Britain and Ireland.

Mark has helped to establish Tacit to be universally recognised as the market leader in the development, production and supply of golf course equipment.

His brief is to ensure our proven track record of excellent quality and service is combined

with a unique balance of commercial and technical expertise to provide greenkeepers with value enhancing solutions.

"Mark has shown over the years to a fixture of the green keeping industry, his sound knowledge of course equipment and his enthusiasm and larger than life character makes him the ideal person to take Tacit's vision into the future and I have no hesitation in appointing him to lead our sales team," Tim Webb – Managing Director.

JSM DISTRIBUTION DEALER RECOGNITION AWARDS



In what was for most, a very testing season, two JSM Distribution dealers certainly stood out. Product promotion, Brand awareness and subsequent sales orders are all that can be asked of a dealer network.

So JSM had no doubts as to which of their dealers to award their Dealer Sales Recognition awards.

Pictured are Steve Halley, Cheshire Turf Machinery, and

Norman Bartlett, Nairn Browns, Glasgow, receiving their Dealer sales recognition awards from David Timms (JSM Distribution) at BTME Harrogate.

Commenting on the awards, David Timms, Sales Manager for JSM, said "The awards are just a small way of showing our appreciation to the two companies, for their outstanding efforts in promoting our product line throughout 2009."



Two new men for IGCEMA

The International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA), the Association representing professional Equipment Managers and technicians, has welcomed two new members to their Board of Directors.

Chris Minton, left, is the Equipment Manager at The Belfry. Chris studied Agricultural Mechanics at Moreton Morrell College of Agriculture.

Stuart Hall, right, is Equipment Manager at John O Gaunt Golf Club, in Bedfordshire, where he has been since 1987. Having attended horticultural college in Milton Cambridge, Stuart Hall started his career as a greenkeeper until he was given the opportunity to help out in the workshop. Shortly after, Stuart was given the opportunity to attend Shuttleworth Agricultural College where he spent three years learning agricultural engineering.

Stephen Tucker, IGCEMA's newly appointed CEO stated; "It is great to see such a diverse Board of Directors this year. We have members from Australia, United Kingdom, United States and Canada. I think we can really be proud of ourselves for truly making the IGCEMA an International Association."



Cold Weather Helps Training

The recent spell of snow and frost provided an opportunity for local golf club green-keepers to come indoors for training.

Hosted by Oswestry Golf Club and supported by Sherriff Amenity, eight greenkeepers attended a training seminar to learn some of the latest pest and vermin control techniques. This allows them to update their skills whilst gaining certification to meet stringent legal requirements.

The picture shows (left to right) Oswestry Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper, Gareth Woosnam; Greenkeeper, Gareth Jones, and Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Gary Barnfield, with their certificates.

SUPPORT FOR HAITI QUAKE RELIEF

JCB has donating diggers worth \$150,000 to help the disaster relief effort in Haiti following the devastating earthquake.

The gift of two 3CX backhoe loaders is being made by JCB Chairman Sir Anthony Bamford in response to an appeal from relief agencies for foreign aid.

The machines are being made available to the US Government, which is taking a leading role in the relief effort on Haiti which was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter Scale.

"The scale of the devastation is unimaginable and it's heart-rending to see the human suffering caused by the disaster. There is clearly a lack of equipment on the island and I hope our gift of JCB machines will help in some small way to alleviate that suffering and in the rebuilding in the aftermath of the earthquake," said Sir Anthony.

Where's the Sustainability?

After the 2mm debate in Harrogate I thought I was in the wrong movie. I personally find this debate not helpful in the days of sustainable maintenance. I believe 99% of all the people on this debate cannot see any sustainability behind this. I doubt that golfers wish to have average green speed above 9-10 on the stimpmeter, even on flat greens. So why should they go down this road?

The only reason behind stimpmeter green speeds above 10 for regular play is competition between some greenkeepers, or personal ego problems.

Regarding the recent article about the work at Wentworth (November issue), may I make some comments?

How sad. Another historical golf course monument is now destroyed. Was this really necessary? Mr Colt would not be satisfied, if he were still alive. There are a lot of golf courses in UK and Europe, which proved that it could be done without changing the whole design. It is the same story when Royal Birkdale changed its 17th green. These golf courses like Wentworth, Royal Birkdale and so on should be under protection and not touched anymore. When are we going to stop this?

You are right, Editor it is finally time for the R&A to impose some changes on the balls.

Creeping bent does not create more thatch than Colonial Bent. It is up to water and fertiliser input, which creates the thatch.

**Norbert Lischka MG
Falkenstein GC
Germany
Via email**

Congratulations from the GCSAA

I would like to say thank you to you and all of your staff for the wonderful hospitality that was afforded to the entire GCSAA contingent at the BIGGA Conference in Harrogate.

Everyone was very helpful and accommodating and our group had a great time. The International Summit was the best one that I have been to and I strongly believe that this will be a new beginning for all of us to strengthen our collaborative efforts moving forward. I will begin setting up our next conference call this spring and I look forward to also speaking with you and Ken Cousineau on a more regular basis as well.

Please let us know if there is anything that we can do for you and your team while you are in San Diego attending the GIS next week.

All the best and thanks again.

**Mark Woodward
CEO
GCSAA**

Letters



Please email your notes to: scott@bigga.co.uk



Congratulations from the PGA

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you for allowing me to join with you last Wednesday evening for dinner during your Annual Conference on Congress week.

It was an excellent evening and it is amazing just how many people we seem to know in this world of golf. Everywhere I turned there was another familiar and welcoming face which only added to what was an already most enjoyable occasion.

I know that all of us here at the PGA are looking forward to working on a more continued and closer basis with BIGGA and I personally will look forward to working with you in the leadership of this initiative.

All best wishes and kind regards

**Sandy Jones
Chief Executive
PGA**



Greenkeepers Training Committee



David Golding, Education Director,
with a monthly update from the GTC

I trust by now the big freeze is over however during January I can honestly say Aldwick Manor's greens looked as good as any in the world!

Covered in snow for weeks and weeks it reminded me of my apprenticeship days at Buxton & High Peak Golf Club where during the then regular annual New Year dump of snow I gained life skills totally unrelated to greenkeeping.

By January/February we had painted the golf course "furniture", in some cases more than once and the machinery had all been stripped down and serviced mainly in house but with some outside assistance e.g. the gang mower cylinders off for a re-grind....but what next?

I was fortunate as an apprentice as I was trained by not only an excellent greenkeeper but also a very multi-skilled man in Ray Norton. Ray sadly died a young man but his skills and knowledge very much live on through his son, Steve, who is the Head Greenkeeper at High Peak and I think he was typical of many traditional Head men of the '50s and '60s in that they could turn their hands to anything and I mean anything.

I am sure this is the case today at the majority of golf clubs. If there is a crisis or a job that wants doing "yesterday" who do they call? The greenkeeper (not Ghostbusters!)

The GTC endeavours to ensure the greenkeeping qualifications and courses include all the skills and knowledge to provide employers with multi-skilled employees who can maintain and manage the golf course but it is the added value of greenkeepers that we often cannot include in the qualifications or apprenticeship scheme.

How random would "Apply undercoat paint to surface" look in a greenkeeping qualification?

Unless I have missed something in the last 40 or so

years in the industry, today's greenkeepers are very practical men and women who can turn their hands to most jobs!

These skills are often passed on by the Course Managers and often never factored into the overall benefit to the business by the employer.

A talented multi-skilled Course Manager is arguably the golf clubs greatest asset and passing on the skills and knowledge throughout the staff is just part of the day-to-day responsibilities and an enthusiastic greenkeeping apprentice could learn so much from the "boss".

I hate to hear of greenkeepers being "laid off" especially during the winter and I can only say in Buxton we did operate with a minimum number of full time staff all the year round and a part timer in summer, but we kept busy.

Ray taught me not only everything I needed to know about machinery servicing and preparing for the advent of spring but new skills like plumbing, decorating all of which I experienced in the clubhouse.

I am sure this still happens and whilst we have no plans to add Units from other qualifications into greenkeeping qualifications I hope you appreciate the point I am making?

Golf club employers, I am sure, appreciate the range of skills brought to the business by the greenkeepers and I hope the practical multi-skilled professionalism in greenkeeping is acknowledged and rewarded.

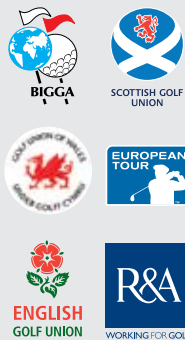
Although the GTC and its Approved Centres desperately try to keep up with the changing funding priorities of the Governments funding agencies, very often by the time I can give you today's priority group for funding, the goal posts have moved.

However for some time now, the 16-19 age group of apprentices have their programmes funded and then it is up to the various

In Brief

This month David remembers his time as an apprentice greenkeeper and how, in the depths of a big freeze not only did he retain full employment but gained new skills, which have proved priceless. David also lends his support to the current apprenticeship framework and encourages employers through their Course Managers to keep signing on apprentices.

The GTC is funded by:



Centres to try and negotiate with the funding agency to contract for 19+ apprentices.

I apologise for not being more specific regarding funding but I encourage employers and Course Managers to contact their chosen Centre/Training Provider and look to interview an apprentice and explain the training programme which is based on the vocational qualifications Levels 2 and 3.

The apprenticeship framework also includes additional skills designed to ensure the apprentice has all the communication skills including numeracy and literacy.

In summary an apprenticeship not only suits the majority of employers looking to recruit new staff but Course Managers can train them on the job using the national standards of the vocational qualifications and support from the chosen centre, oh, and not forgetting the additional skills that will stand the apprentice in good stead for the rest of his/her life.

Back to the decorating...

For further information on the apprenticeship framework visit the GTC website:

www.the-gtc.co.uk

David has recently received some good news for Scottish golf club employers from Lantra. Employers in the land-based industries including golf courses now have the opportunity to receive £1,000 to encourage them to invest in a new apprentice.

The GTC with the Lantra, Sector Skills Council are making business aware of the funding available that is open to apprentices of all ages. Visit the following link for more information:

www.lantra.co.uk/funding

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Learning & Development

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

In the words of Lennon and McCartney, "I've got to admit it's getting better – it's getting better all the time" (Getting Better, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967)...

The Continue to Learn Education Programme at Harrogate Week 2010 was a triumph. Rachael and I have soaked our feet, rested our brains and are ready to take on what 2010 has to throw at us!

In all seriousness, it is always extremely rewarding to see all the planning and preparation that has taken place over the last year come to fruition and the cherry on top of the icing on the cake is to receive such positive feedback from our Members and other visitors to the event.

As a Professional Body, we at BIGGA strive to deliver the very best for our Members. Events such as Harrogate Week reinforce that the time and energy devoted not only by the staff, but by the volunteers on all the Committees we work closely with is appreciated.

I am delighted to report that we had over 1600 attendees at the 129 hours of education events that was delivered over the course of the five-day education programme.

We ran a series of workshops that included some familiar titles and presenters as well as introducing some new, and what have proved to be very popular, titles and presenters.

For the delegates on the 'How to be an Outstanding Manager' I'm sure you'll join me in confirming that Shona Garner is quite an inspirational presenter!

It would be remiss of me not to thank the Gold and Silver Key contributors to the Learning and Development Fund for their support in enabling us to present Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week.

A big THANK YOU goes to you all.

The planning for 2011 is already underway (the ideas file has been building for several months already!) and your suggestions are requested.

Please forward any ideas or brainwaves to me. Serious planning takes place in April, so all submissions should be emailed to sami@bigga.co.uk by the end of March.

BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships



For those of you who attended the AGM, you would have heard that Ransomes Jacobsen has agreed to continue supporting the BIGGA Higher Education Scholarship scheme in 2010.

All greenkeeper members of BIGGA, in or about to enter higher education could apply for a scholarship.



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.

To be eligible for a scholarship, you must meet the following:

- 1. Be a Greenkeeper Member of BIGGA**
- 2. Be working as a full-time greenkeeper**
- 3. Have been a BIGGA Member for a minimum of two years**

Applicants should be aware that the fund may award scholarships of up to 50% of the cost of the course, however, it will typically be capped at £1000.

Application forms can be downloaded from the education pages of the website: www.bigga.org.uk

Or it can be requested by contacting the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 and selecting Option 3.

My thanks go to Ransomes Jacobsen on behalf of almost 100 Members who have received a BIGGA Higher Education Scholarship.

Up until 31 December 2009 Ransomes Jacobsen had invested £120,000 into the scheme, all of which has been distributed to our Members.

The further investment in 2010 will allow a minimum of eight Scholarships to be awarded.



Contact Details

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PLANT OF THE YEAR FOR '09



E-Z-GO's World Headquarters in Augusta, Georgia has been named one of American magazine IndustryWeek's 2009 Best Plants of the Year.

According to IndustryWeek, despite possibly the roughest economic conditions in many decades, the winning manufacturing facilities still

pursued process and people improvements, and achieved enviable performance metrics in numerous operational areas.

"In the face of challenging economic conditions, E-Z-GO has maintained a lean corporate culture and has relentlessly pursued improvement and progress

toward key company goals," said David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen.

E-Z-GO was evaluated by a panel of IndustryWeek editors, who also solicited independent evaluations from manufacturing experts and other industry specialists.

Sole Rights for Etesia

An agreement has been signed giving Etesia UK Ltd sole rights for the UK and Eire distribution of Pellenc's patented professional ranges of Selion chainsaws and polesaws; plus the Helion hedgecutter and Treelion powered secateurs. It is the first time that the parent company of Etesia has allowed its UK subsidiary sole discretion in trading in a brand outside Etesia's own product range.

Etesia is looking for new specialist dealers for its Pellenc business, which will also be offered to selected existing Etesia sales outlets.

Etesia's managing director, Patrick Vives, is very enthusiastic about the positive contribution this initiative will make to the industry.

"From both an environmental and operational point of view, these no-emission products offer an enormous number of benefits and are the way forward for end users," he said.

Ernest Doe takes on Case IH Franchise in Esher



The Ernest Doe Power sales team at Esher. From left; Grant Buckingham, sales representative, Robin Martin, sales representative, David Watson, branch manager, and Steve Alabaster, sales representative.

Following the awarding of the Case IH franchise to its Esher location, the Doe Group has re-branded the branch under its Ernest Doe Power banner. In East Anglia, the Doe Group markets Case IH products through outlets branded Ernest Doe Power, so the name change at Esher brings the branch in line with other parts of the Group.

Colin E Doe, Managing Director said, "The company and staff remain the same, so it's business as usual with the extra benefits of the Case IH franchise, but with a change of trading name. We will still be supplying the parts and services for any tractor previously supplied. Our vehicles

and showrooms however will be brought in line with the Ernest Doe Power branding.

Commenting on the awarding of the new franchise, Branch Manager David Watson said, "We are really pleased to have gained the Case IH tractor franchise because they have such a large, strong product range from 65hp. These tractors are favourites with local authorities as well as organisations operating in the sports and leisure market. They will complement perfectly the tractor range from Iseki, and the groundcare products from Ransomes Jacobsen, with which we have had a lot of success."

East Ayrshire Council adds to Zero-turn Fleet

East Ayrshire Council has just taken delivery of 12 new John Deere 997 Z-Trak zero-turn mowers equipped with 60in rear discharge decks from Glasgow dealer Nairn Brown Ltd, which brings the fleet size to 20 models in all.

The council was the first in Scotland to buy the 997 mowers shortly after their launch in 2005, and was immediately impressed by their road speed, general productivity and reliability compared with previous front rotary mowers.



PESTICIDE GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

Whether you grow fruit or crops, trees or sports turf or are faced with controlling insect or rodent pests, you know that to spray within the law you need to have access to the most up-to-date information on pesticide use.

With a 23 year history of providing comprehensive and valuable information about approved pesticides, plant growth regulators and adjuvants, that can be legally obtained in the UK, The UK Pesticide Guide 2010 is a 'must have' publication. The 2010 data are also available through the online subscription resource plantprotection.co.uk.

Featuring over 1,300 products The UK Pesticide Guide 2010 includes three new actives: *Bacillus subtilis*, cinidon ethyl and spirotetramat, as well as several novel mixtures of existing actives. However, 11 actives and mixtures have been lost since the 2009 edition including isoproturon and trifluralin.

For further information contact BCPC Publications Sales: Tel: +44 (0) 1420 593 200 Email: publications@bcpc.org.

Shropshire Groundcare Dealer Scoops Top Award



The groundcare division of Shrewsbury-based Oakley's Ltd has been named Allett Mower's Dealer of the Year for 2009.

The award was made during Harrogate Week by Allett's parent company, Turfmech, in recognition of the sales achievements and high level of service provided by Oakley's in 2009 to owners and users of Allett pedestrian mowers and turf maintenance equipment.

Presenting the award to Oakley's staff, Turfmech and Allett sales director, Leigh Bowers, said that Oakley's had produced consistently strong results over many years as an Allett dealer. However, 2009 had proved exceptional for the business, culminating in the firm securing the Allett Dealer of the Year award.

PHOTO ABOVE: Turfmech/Allett sales director, Leigh Bowers (centre), presents the 2009 Allett Dealer of the Year to Richard Jones, sales director of Oakley's groundcare division. Also pictured is Paul Bennett, professional sales representative with Oakley's.



New Role for Alan

Alan Sharp has joined Symbio as its Regional Technical Manager for Kent, Essex, East Anglia and Cambridgeshire.

Alan has 25 years experience as a Course Manager latterly at Scotsraig and Chigwell.

"I have great belief in more natural plant management and I am committed to reducing applications of inorganic fertilisers and fungicides on golf courses and sports grounds," said Alan.

Symbio's Managing Director, Martin Ward, said, "We see key industry professionals like Alan with their wealth of experience as crucial to the service and support we want to offer our customers."

Alan can be contacted on 07973712275

or alan@symbio.co.uk



Phoenix from the Ashes

Muswell Hill Golf Club suffered a horrendous arson attack just before Matt Plested took over as Course Manager. Since then, as Scott MacCallum found out, things have got a lot better...

There can be few more stressful experiences in life than changing job or getting married so spare a thought for Matt Plested who combined those two activities in the space of a couple of weeks two and a half years ago.

While I soldier on the certain knowledge that a wave of “So what’s!” will be the response of many who have been in a similar position, let me give you more information which might just make you a little more sympathetic to Matt.

While he was serving his notice at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, in north London, and about to march down the aisle with his beautiful bride, Matt got a phone call from the Chairman of Green at Muswell Hill Golf Club to say that the Maintenance Facility had burnt down.

“It was a real shock. When I asked him what had survived he told me, ‘a shovel,’” said Matt, as we sat in his fantastic new facility, a clue to the fact that the harrowing start to his career at Muswell Hill was not to last too long into his married life.

“As well as every machine, all the paperwork – drainage and irrigation records – went, and we did indeed have nothing but a shovel.”

The fire, in June of 2007, was truly horrific. A total of 55 fire fighters from all over London attended and with a 5,000 litre delivery of diesel that day, and a school just a few yards from the scene frantic efforts were made to ensure that it didn’t spread beyond the boundaries of the golf club.

The culprit, of this deliberate act of arson, was found to be a 14 year



MAIN PHOTO: The 11th hole at Muswell Hill looking splendid.

INSET ABOVE AND LEFT PAGE: Damage caused by the fire



old boy who was caught after he boasted of his “achievement” to a friend on the bus home from school the next day and was overheard by the Course Manager of another local golf club. He contacted the police who apprehended the boy when he got off the bus.

“He got a caution, and a year later burnt down the cricket club,” said Matt, ruefully.

So, with his wedding imminent, Matt took stock of the situation. No maintenance facility; no machinery; no staff – the two green staff who Matt was due to inherit when he started work left a short time after

the fire, and, perhaps the biggest worry of all, no water.

“The fire melted the irrigation tank, even though it was full of water at the time, and the pumps had burnt inside out and melted to the floor.”

Having hit rock bottom there was only one way to go for Muswell Hill Golf Club and thanks to a sound policy by the club itself; a welcome turn around in fortune and Matt’s success in recruiting a team, that’s exactly where the club headed.

“The club was very well insured, with a new for old policy on the machinery, while we prayed for,

and were rewarded with, one of the wettest summers in years. That meant that, without any means of irrigating the course for that first few months, we survived!

“We couldn’t even hand water as we had absolutely nothing and that was the biggest stress for me because had I lost the greens it would have been disastrous. That winter we put in a temporary irrigation tank and a temporary pump house while the new facility was being built.

The stunning new compound is the result of numerous meetings between Matt, who had a real vision



INSET ABOVE: Damage caused by the fire to a triple



LEFT: Beautiful, diamond cut fairway on the 15th at Muswell Hill



ABOVE: The new facility with its new fleet of Toro machinery



of what he wanted, and architects who attempted to incorporate those ideas but also add some of their own.

“The first quote was for £750,000 and including things like Dyson Hand dryers and sun tubes but we didn’t need that. I’ve never been in as many meetings in my life while I also took the architects to see facilities at other golf clubs including Walton Heath, Old Fold Manor, Finchley and Hendon.”

The end result demonstrates that those meetings were hours well spent. There is a drive-in storage area which removes the need for

any manual handling – an idea taken from Walton Heath; a Mezzanine floor for additional storage and a superb workshop area.

Having taken advice from a security advisor, as well as the demands of the insurance companies, the site is now surrounded by 10 foot high fencing with iron gates, cameras, a security system linked to the local police station and bollards. Machinery and equipment is kept in separate locked rooms with high security doors.

“I requested that we put grills on the windows which we close at the end of each day. The facility is

large but I said that we’d only have one chance to get it right as we had no more land and that we would certainly grow into it.”

It all came in at a fraction of that initial quote but still much more than the existing building had been insured for, a shortfall which was covered by the club’s contingency fund and a levy which the members are currently paying.

To compound matters further the building was delayed, however, the consequence of another complication, which would go on to have repercussions for the club and course as a whole.



INSET AND ABOVE: Matt Plested, Course Manager.

ABOVE: The greenkeeping team during the recent snow.

“There were extended talks with the local authority about where the new facility would be sited.

“This caused a delay of a year before work could get underway and all this time we were living out of 18 containers which sat in the club car park, much to the consternation of the membership.”

The final decision placed the maintenance facility on the existing putting green which, in turn, meant that it had to be moved to a new location which impacted on the 17th hole, which then meant that the 17th tee had to be moved which meant that the entire hole had to be realigned.

As you can see, Muswell Hill Golf Club had a mountain to climb.

But back to the near beginnings of this saga, when Matt was still young, free and single, he started his recruitment drive with nothing but promises to offer prospective staff.

He struck gold straight away however, in the shape of Kevin O'Neill.

“Kevin originally came as an Assistant, but I met him before my wedding and we walked around the course.

“He'd worked at Gleneagles and was clearly very clued up.

“I spoke with people he'd been with who told me what a good worker he was and it turned into the easiest Deputy interview in history.”

Kevin, as it turned out, started three weeks before Matt went on honeymoon and, using just a greens mower and a fairway mower lent to the club by other clubs, he started the long process of recovery before being joined by his newly-married boss.

“I must admit I did have a few sneaky phone calls to Kev while I was away. I'd go for a walk and ring him to see how he was getting on,” revealed Matt, who had completed the new £350,000 machinery deal with Toro two days before he left.

On his return Matt became a key part of an Extraordinary General Meeting called by the members unhappy with the state of the golf course with around 100 threatening to resign.

Muswell Hill Golf Club has a rich history. Bobby Locke and Ted Ray regularly played challenge matches over the course and Frank Sinatra

often played there while staying at the Savoy. Among the current members is John Paramor, The European Tour's Chief Referee.

“I didn't know I would be so heavily involved until I got there, but I stood up at the meeting and asked them to give me a year and that I would guarantee that those who did decide to leave would kick themselves. I told them it was not going to take rocket science to get the course back on track but just a bit of hard work.”

Two and a half years on Matt, Kev, First Assistant, Lee Brady, and the rest of the hand picked team, have been as good as their word.

“Just by cutting the course well - diamond cutting the fairways and adding definition -and setting it up properly the members thought we were heroes,” recalled Kevin.

“Our first priority was to improve grass coverage and work on increasing the amount of light so we removed a large number of poplars. John Nicholson, of John Nicholson Associates, visited and told the committee that they club was at a cross roads and that if they didn't do something about it they would lose the course.



INSET ABOVE: Carnage caused by the fire, and a barely recognisable Kubota tractor.

Turf disease protection that

after cut... - after cut... - after cut... - after cut... - after cut...



"We put together presentation for annual Forums and thanks to the techy expert on our team, Kris Shale-Martin, we produced computer models of how the course would look minus the trees we proposed to take out. The first year we showed them what we would do and the second year we were able to show them what we'd done and the benefits that could be seen in the depth of roots.

"We do these in the last week of the financial year in September then a week later the diggers go in and we start the projects we've told them about so they can see where their membership money is going."

It also means the main work is done by the end of November and the remainder of the winter programme can be carried out before the start of the next season.

One of Muswell Hill's real problems is drainage with several holes regularly out of play each year because of waterlogging.

"The course had no outlets so we went back to the basics, mole ploughed and put in trench drains as well as reinstating a burn on the 12th hole which has helped to dry out the golf course.

Listening to Matt and Kevin the amount of work they have got through in the last two and a half years is mind boggling, but the enthusiasm that ouses from them, and the rest of the team, is genuine and you believe Matt when he says that he often has to tell the guys to go home at the end of the day.

"It is great that we all started around the same time and I was keen to get the right team. None of us are hung up by how things have been done here in the past and we are free to put our own practices in place. The best thing is that I've got greenkeepers who think and that is a huge plus.

"I want to make Muswell Hill an academy for greenkeeper and will be thrilled when they leave to become Course Managers in their own right move on to climb the career ladder. We are well looked after here, we eat in the clubhouse every day and we have a great relationship with the Club Manager, Adrian Hobbs, and the rest of the staff," said Matt, who has also taken on the role of BIGGA's London Section Secretary.

While much of the work to reinstate the course has now been completed – and he general feeling

is that the new putting green and altered holes have improved rather than merely altered the course Matt is clear that there is still much work to do.

"There is still a lot to be done to take this club to the level I want to take it.

"We need to build our own reservoir as water, particularly in London, is going to become a real issue, while the bunker renovation programme is going to be massive.

"There is plenty of things to get our teeth into."

Those members who decided to remain with the club will be patting themselves on their back.

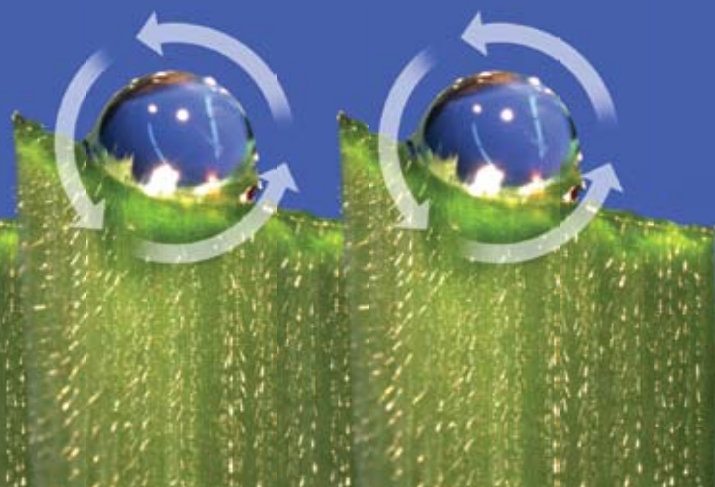
Not only them, however, as the club has added 100 to its membership within the last 12 months and seen record green fee and society takings.

It may be, although it didn't feel so at the time, that the great fire of 2007 was a wonderful opportunity for Matt and Muswell Hill Golf Club to move forward at a much faster rate than would have been possible had a new job and new wife been the extent of activity in the June of that month!



INSET ABOVE: More damage caused by the fire.

stays cut...
after cut... after cut...



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The second of a new series in which James de Havilland takes a closer look at the intricacies of current machinery

The anatomy of... a Top Dresser

New livery, new owner but same trusted design...



Back in October 2009, Toro acquired the golf and turf business operated by the Canadian TY-CROP company. Here we take a look at the first Toro top dresser produced since the acquisition, the utility mounted ProPass 200. This will be available through Toro dealers early this year.

Step-by-step Analysis...

Toro ProPass 200

The Toro ProPass 200 may not be different from its TY-CROP predecessor but that is no bad thing. The ProPass top dresser is well proven, rugged and not known for problems.

Why change a proven formula?



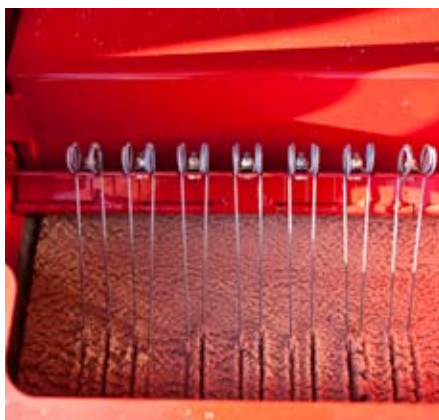
The rate of discharge from the hopper to the conveyor is controlled via an adjustable flap. Base application rate settings are provided by Toro, ease of set-up remaining a ProPass plus.



Twin carry handles make it easier to remove the spreading discs either for service or the fitting of a cross conveyor.



With the optional Wireless Controller, it is possible to fine tune the application rate as the unit is working. This can be useful when the top dressing material moisture levels have changed from when the machine was first set up.



Sprung steel fingers run over material exiting the hopper. They will help to break up any clods which can cause fluctuations in the application rates.



The hopper conveyor tension adjusters are easy to get at and are securely mounted. Note grease point and heavy-duty bearing. HSE regulations mean some of the lube points can only be accessed once a bolted on cover has been removed.

TY-CROP top dressers are a well established brand in the UK. Initially imported by Stafford based Turfmech, the TY-CROP top dresser series was more recently taken on by The Grass Group.

Toro now owns all the manufacturing right to the TY-CROP top dressers, but at least for the moment current Toro ProPass models are pretty much the same as their TY-CROP predecessors.

Introduced by TY-CROP in 2008, the mounted ProPass 200 we look at here is a development of the now discontinued TY-CROP ProPass 180.

The latter was listed as offering the same rated capacity of the current 200 model at 289kg. In fact the two top dressers are pretty much the same, the ProPass 200 having revised hopper extensions designed to ease loading.

The key change between a TY-CROP 200 and a new Toro version is pretty much down to branding.

So, Toro have just left the ProPass design as is? In a word yes. There was little wrong with the TY-CROP ProPass 200. The fact the 200 is a development of the established ProPass 180 model is also clear.

Apart from the hopper extension changes, there were a few other features incorporated into the 200 before its manufacture passed to Toro. Among these is the option of a Wireless Controller.

All ProPass models continue to be designed to allow a wide range of application rates, based around seven base settings. These essentially allow the selection of a light dusting through to a much heavier application rate; with the latter selected, the hopper will be emptied from full in around a minute.

With the Wireless Controller, application settings can be stored



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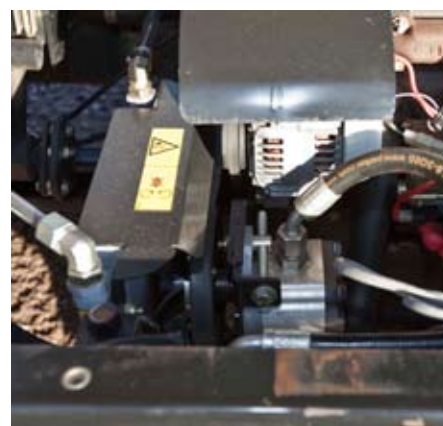
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The rear disc carrier adjusts to allow the drop position to be adjusted according to the dressing being applied and the desired spread width. In position 1, this 'Sliding Drop Zone' provides the widest spread width of 9.1m, setting 4 the narrowest at 3.0m.



The hopper has smooth sides to help ensure the body empties fully. Existing ProPass users often fit a mesh grid over the hopper body to help break up any clumps as the unit is loaded.



The ProPass 200 needs an oil flow of 21 litres/min. This should not be a problem for more recent utility vehicles, but check if fitting a top dresser to an old machine.



An electronic control box is standard, and makes setting the conveyor and spinner speeds straightforward. The Wireless Controller does the same job, but can be operated remotely.



The TY-CROP ProPass 180 forms the template for the latest Toro ProPass 200. Existing TY-CROP users will have Toro parts support for earlier machines.

in a handset. When it comes to applying material, these settings can then be sent to the spreader, the settings adjusting to suit. If this seems something of a gimmick, stop and think how you apply materials.

Typically, you will take a look at how the dressing spreads out of the back of the machine, making sure the spread is what you want.

With the Wireless Control, it is easier to fine tune some key settings as the machine is working. So if the dressing is a bit damp, you can alter the conveyor or discs speeds to get the spread pattern you are after without having to stop the machine, changing a setting, and looking to see what happens. You can also store the settings you want to keep. The Controller has a claimed range of over 130m.

Basic machine

In broad outline, the ProPass 200 follows established top dresser design practice. The 0.54m³ hopper

(0.71m³ with a heaped load) has a hydraulically driven conveyor floor. This feeds dressing via an adjustable outlet to a pair of contra rotating spreading discs.

Spread width is dependent upon the speed of the discs, the settings of the vanes and the material being spread.

In the case of the utility mounted machine, the unit is supplied with a fitting kit to suit a broad range of vehicles. These allow the unit to slide on without the need for fitting tools.

An optional 11hp hydraulic power pack is available for use with vehicles that do not have a separate hydraulic outlet.

Other options include a 180 degree Cross Conveyor. This allows the hopper to be used as a bulk transport to fill smaller top dressers or to carry sand out to bunkers or for other work.

As an aside, the ProPass 200 is offered in a trailed version with a capacity of just over 905kg. This runs on a four wheel walking beam

axle that runs across the 1.7m width of the machine.

Existing TY-CROP ProPass 180 users will note a few other detail changes that came in with the 200 when it was introduced.

These include better colour coding for the setting decals and a revised wash out grid that is claimed to make the unit easier to clean out.

"We're delighted to add Toro ProPass material-handlers to our existing line of turf cultivation and application equipment" says Jeff Anguige, Lely UK's Toro UK sales manager.

"The products were previously branded TY-CROP and have a proven track record in global markets for many years.

"The range is the perfect complement to products such as the Topdresser 2500 and our ProCore aerators.

"We are now even better placed to provide a comprehensive offering to meet customers' turf maintenance needs."

Golf clubs and in particular, the golf course maintenance, is a varied and complicated place, while greenkeeping is a complex occupation, and many of the operations can be unpopular and misunderstood. In the first of a new series, Paul Lowe helps to bridge the gap between member and greenkeeper...



New Beginning: Communication and Managing Difficult Members

The golfing member will always have high expectations, placing ever-increasing pressure on the greenkeeper and committee member. During the year we conduct certain operations. Aeration, sand dressing, and removing trees, are just some of the contentious issues we do. So why do we do it?

Over a series of articles we will explain the 'Whys and Wherefores' of our operations. We will explain

the benefits and hopefully a greater understanding and appreciation of our work will arise.

So it's early in the New Year, many of us are trying to lose those extra pounds that we have gained during the festivities. We make New Year resolutions and a new beginning is ahead. Many of our golf club members are voting on new Committee Members, the New Captain is announced and the committee are looking forward to the new challenge with trepidation.

It's true to say that today's committee member requires skin like a rhinoceros. You need the communication skills and the diplomacy of the very best mediator.

We are all prone to the odd adverse comment or difficult request. Whether that's the usual 'Cut the greens lower', 'Cut the rough lower', 'Stop putting holes in our lovely greens' and, even, 'Why can't we look like Augusta?'

Greenkeeping is complex and to expect members to comprehend the complexities of greenkeeping

is unfair. They have gardens and watch The Masters at home. This creates, the osmo-greenkeeper, everyone's an expert. Expectations are unrealistic and demands are ever increasing.

So how do we handle the difficult member, the member who is irrational and unreasonable, the member who is vocal about his grievance and will share his opinion to all and sundry?

We can communicate as much as possible, but what if this person does not want to listen? As we all know, for communication to work our message must be heard.

Do we just ignore them? Well, the problem with this is that negativity breeds negativity!

It's no coincidence that groups of difficult members form. They tend to play together and have a few pints in the clubhouse together expressing their views together. I call this the 'Pull up a chair mentality'.

The Human is a pack animal; we prefer groups and we crave acceptance in that group.

One of the easiest ways to become accepted is to agree with the negative views of others. Thus group mindsets forms.

In any business there is the 80/20 rule, this also applies to customer satisfaction. 80% of our customers are normally happy and content, but 20% are not. This 20% are, on average, misinformed or have a lack of understanding.

With good communication techniques we should be able eradicate most complaints and concerns... However there is a hidden 5%.

This 5% are never happy; in fact, they are only happy when they are complaining. It doesn't matter what you say or do they will find something to complain about. It's not personal its just the way they are.

Why should we make them unhappy by giving them nothing to complain about?

Pleasing this minority is impossible and trying to please the unappeasable will ultimately have a detrimental affect on the course and the work your greenkeeper needs to do in order to maintain the course.

The skill is determining who is a compulsive moaner and who has a genuine complaint.

If we get this wrong then you could be wasting your time - time that ought to be best spent on more important matters.

Don't let them get to you - Stay out of it emotionally and concentrate on listening non-defensively and actively.

A person may make disparaging or irrational comments- don't rise to the bait. If necessary stop the conversation. Your happiness and health is more important than your point of view.

Or simply remind them that they are a member of a golf club and as such should act accordingly. You welcome constructive comments but will not tolerate projected insults.

Listen - listen - listen! Look and sound like you're listening. The member cares about the course; he wants to know that you care and that you're interested in their problem. Even if you're not!

If you are genuinely interested use empathy but only if it is genu-

“If they have a complaint and it's genuine, then continue empathizing and tell the members what you'll do about the situation.”

ine. “I can understand that your saying” or “I see what you mean”. Again, these responses need to be genuine.

Build rapport - Sometimes it's useful to add another phrase to the empathy response, including yourself in the picture. - “I can understand how you feel, I don't like it either but we are on a long road of improvements, or we are on the case”.

This has the effect of getting on the members side and builds rapport. It shows that you and your greenkeeping team care, you're aware of the problem and a solution is underway.

If they have a complaint and it's genuine, then continue empathizing and tell the members what you'll do about the situation. Thank them for bringing this to your attention and make sure the situation is fixed as soon as possible.

Stupid people & comments- the fact is you can't argue with stupidity, more importantly you should never argue.

Angry People

Angry people are usually power struggling, or they may be intimidators/ bullies, people who use anger to throw others off guard. Angry people are usually rewarded for their behaviour by people who'd do anything to avoid confrontation.

You probably can't deflate their anger but you can stop taking it

personally. And remember that angry people generally have self-esteem issues that underlie their hostility.

When faced with anger, simply stop the conversation and tell them to get in touch when they have calmed down. When calm, we can then have a rational & hopefully constructive conversation.

Compulsive Complainers

Complainers that will never be happy, unless of course they are complaining. Again these people have self-esteem issues.

Stop letting complainers get away with it. In the case of a complaining member, you can turn the com-

plaint around by saying, “What do you think the answer is?” then ask them a question to their solution before you know it, complainers will be solving their own problems and agreeing with you.

Committee role- It's simply wrong for members of a golf club to approach employees and pass negative comments or judgment to the staff, no matter how frivolous.

This sort of conduct is non productive - it not only encourages communication breakdown, lowers morale and poor relations with the members, it is also stopping the staff from working.

Ultimately the members pay the wages, but no more so than any shareholder of any organisation. Like any business, channelled communication procedures need to be in place to eradicate this sort of culture.

In some cases this is tantamount to bullying. All clubs have a responsibility to protect the staff and have a duty of care. Bullying problems is the responsibility of the employer not the employee.

To summarise, difficult people are a fact of golf course life.

Communicate with openness, produce clear facts, policies and procedures.

Make decisions as a team and the integral part of the team must be the experts you employ.

Protect those employees and never ever make someone a scapegoat.



ABOVE: Paul Lowe is Course Manager at Bromborough Golf Club, in Cheshire

Growing-in

New, Winter Sports Pitches

Steve Gingell, STRI Southern Area Manager,
on the growing-in of newly constructed pitches

Introduction

We frequently advise local authorities, schools and clubs on the growing-in of newly constructed pitches. In many cases, the maintenance requirements are not understood or have not been specified to a high enough level. This article examines the problems commonly found and discusses a number of solutions. However, it is important to seek specific advice as each site will be different.

Sward health

Invariably new pitches are fertilised at seeding and then left. This can result in weak grasses, poor density and a significant risk of developing weed species.

The soils on new pitches can sometimes be poorly structured and young grass can often tend to be surface rooted if the soils do not allow roots to develop fully. Until the roots fully establish from the adventitious to fibrous stage and to a suitable depth, the volume of soil from which nutrients are taken up is limited. There is therefore often a need to increase the nutrients to a level that gives good growth but not so excessively to generate organic matter or only stimulate

surface rooting. The nutrient level will naturally differ from soil type to soil type but typically is around 90-180 kg/ha nitrogen per annum, although more may be needed in very sandy free draining constructions. The aim is to promote good levels of growth without creating a soft, weak sward. Dark green may be too much!

The effect of fertiliser is often seen where rabbit urine creates a flush of growth. Whilst such a localised level is probably much too high, its effect clearly demonstrates the need to slightly increase fertiliser needs.

The benefit of appropriate levels of fertiliser is to speed up establishment though good health and tillering. This will hopefully allow the sown grasses to out-compete



annual meadow-grass, clover and other weed invasion. Of course, if there are any particularly weak or bare area, overseeding with the originally sown mixture should take place.

Sometimes newly turfed pitches can be very thatchy and so there is a need to undertake scarification. Too much thatch can result in the surface being slow and divot badly.

Drainage potential

Newly moved and replaced soils typically have little structure and this takes time to return. A combination of root exploration, worm activity and physical processes gradually create fissures and pore space. The net result is that drainage gradually improves as long as there is no significant compaction present. However, playing too soon and in wet conditions will often liquefy the top 50 mm of the soil profile and this can result in high wear and loss of grass cover. Ultimately, a pitch rich in annual meadow-grass often results.

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE:
A weak sward with areas of
fertilisation from rabbits



The solution to the above is to firstly allow sufficient time for a pitch to establish. This should be at least a year but some light play can sometimes be allowed, particularly during the summer months when the soils are dry.

The next most important activity is aeration. I often recommend some form of aeration on a monthly basis. On heavily compacted sites, Verti-Draining could occur 2 - 3 times in the first year, with solid tining in the remaining months. Sometimes the use of a linear aerator can be of benefit, with or without sand injection. Care must be taken with this form of aeration – undertaking the operation at the right soil moisture content to prevent cracking. Use in some wet, heavy soils should be avoided. Slit tining could also be carried out

Sand dressing, either locally or over a whole pitch, is particularly important on heavier soils. The sand (in combination with aeration) helps promote surface drainage if sufficient is applied. The sand type is critical – it must be a medium-fine sand with little or no fines and, ideally, sub-angular in shape.

Drains

Many drainage installations will settle as part of the maturing of the construction. It should be expected and could occur annually for the first several years dependent on soil type, the weather conditions, irrigation availability, not to say anything about the standard of drainage installation. With clay soils prone to shrinkage, the process involved with settlement results from the drain line acting as a plane of weakness along which the clays crack. This allows some aggregate to fall into the widened crack and hence settlement at the surface. The remedy is to top up the drains as

settlement occurs with the same material as the backfill or the same sand as above. An item to top dress sunken drain lines in the first year should be included in the construction specification

When sand banding or sand slitting is installed there is an absolute requirement for sand dressing to be applied to help prevent the slit capping over in usage. I have seen systems capped over within a couple of years and become ineffective. The sand dressing helps to dilute any native soil and assists in retaining the integrity of the slit.

Stone

Unfortunately, it is common to find a newly developed pitch with a significant stone content visible in the surface. This could come from the parent soil or careless use of drainage aggregate.. Such stone is unacceptable in today’s health and safety society (not to say anything about litigious aspects).

It is a misheld belief that stone moves up in a profile. The normal occurrence is that fines wash off stone in the surface or the surface is eroded through play. In either event, the possibility of injury is high.

In heavier soils, stone can settle into the profile over time, particularly if the soils become waterlogged. The process is possibly similar to the effect of puddling concrete to bring liquid to the surface. However, this can take a few years.

The most common remedy is to cover the stone with either sand or top dressing. Ideally, a layer of around 40 mm should be built up over time but this is costly and has distinct risks of erosion, particularly in goalmouths. Turfing with deep turf can help as long as the soil can be matched.

Larger stone should be hand

picked off as soon as germination occurs and this includes any sharp materials. The development of a dense sward can create a good cushion but could be worn away to re-expose the problem.

However, the specification of work should include items to prevent a stone problem, e.g soil screening or good working practices when introducing aggregate.

Height of cut

The height of cut should be carefully managed. Allowing the sward to grow to 100 mm and then cut to 25 mm, as sometimes happens, will weaken new grass and open up the sward to weed invasion. My preference is to allow growth to around 60 mm and then cut to 45 mm and then maintain no more than 15 mm of growth between cuts. This encourages tillering and prevents significant stress.

There may be a need initially to carefully roll to smooth the surface for the first cut. Any significant level discrepancies should be addressed although this may be covered by a defects item in the Contract works.

Leaving masses of clippings on the surface should be avoided at all costs as this can easily smother new grass, leaving patches and organic debris. If this occurs then reseeding may be required, after harrowing or scarifying.

Conclusions

The majority of the problems mentioned above can be resolved through a good specification of works for the construction and an understanding of the need to intensively maintain a new pitch.

It is vitally important to consider the early maintenance cost in the overall project as rarely is there sufficient budget if not included.

ABOVE RIGHT: A pitch surface with excess stone in surface
ABOVE LEFT: A heavy soil profile with poor surface structure



This article comes to you courtesy of the BIGGA Learning and Development Fund.
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Harrogate Week 2010 Review



Cover Photography by Steve Anstey except BOTTOM CENTRE (by Helen Farnham)

Harrogate Week Never Fails to Deliver

It takes more than a global recession and arctic like conditions to stop Harrogate Week from being a success. Many would crawl over broken glass to get to Harrogate each year and with an attendance of 5883 over the three days - only marginally down on the previous year and well up on pre-show expectations - that was proven to be the case yet again and exhibitors were rewarded with an enthusiastic and committed audience.



A Timely Boost to the Industry

Scott MacCallum takes you through a *Harrogate Week* which defied the odds and gave the industry a genuine lift

It was with considerable relief that I drove to Harrogate on the morning of Monday, January 18. It had only been a couple of days since the snow and ice had departed after the longest cold snap in over 30 years and it was good to see that roads were clear.

Had the conditions remained the same for another few days it might have had a considerable impact on the attendance levels

As it turned out a number of Course Managers had to remain back to steer their courses through the thawing period but Harrogate Week 2010 did enjoy fine weather over the course on the five days with road, rail and air all being well utilised by the exhibitors and visitors to get there.

BIGGA's advance party, in the shape of Pauline Thompson, had been on site since Friday working with Harrogate International Centre and early-arriving contractors. Chief Executive, John Pemberton, and the Learning & Development Department, with Sami Collins and Rachael Duffy, arrived on Saturday to prepare for the start of the Workshops, which were to begin the following day. Over the course of the day trainers, and delegates arrived and Harrogate Week 2010 began to take shape.

So, by the time I arrived, everything was pretty much under control and I was able to check on the build progress of the Media Centre, underneath Hall A, and prepare for the afternoon's International Summit. This was in The Old Swan

Hotel and included representatives from Associations as far afield as Australia, USA, Canada, Ireland, Sweden and Slovenia, as well as BIGGA, FEGGA and the GTC.

The meeting, chaired by Past BIGGA Chairman, Andy Campbell MG, CGCS was a great success with the aim of sharing the incredible expertise available within the bodies and tackling problems that are universal to all countries. BIGGA was represented by incoming BIGGA Vice Chairman, Andrew Mellon, John Pemberton, Sami Collins and me.

Monday evening and the BIGGA staff were joined by BIGGA President, Sir Michael Bonallack OBE, who always makes sure Harrogate Week is on his schedule. Sir Michael was in good form and recovering



ABOVE: Andy Campbell is thanked for chairing the International Summit



well from having a hip replaced earlier last year.

Tuesday morning and the official opening of BTME & ClubHouse 2010.

Chairman Peter Todd, was the man in charge of the BIGGA sheers and cut the green ribbon to declare the Show open.

Back in the Media Centre any thought of a "soft start" to the week was blown out of the water by the arrival of European Solheim Cup Captain, Alison Nicholas, and the famous crystal Cup, which had been flown in from the States specially for the occasion.

The reason for Alison's visit to Harrogate was to help announce that John Deere would be an official industry partner of the 2011 Solheim Cup and would be renew-

ing its patron agreement with the Ladies European Tour.

The match will be held at Killeen Castle in Ireland and legendary Irish Walker Cup player, Roddy Carr, who works for Killeen Castle, had also flown in for the press conference.

Roddy was absolutely delighted to have a brief reunion with Sir Michael, who had been his Walker Cup Captain in 1971.

The Cup was then taken onto the John Deere stand where it was displayed for a few hours for the benefit of the visitors.

Early Tuesday morning was also an opportunity for John to present a BIGGA Learning and Development Fund Silver Key supporter plaque to Vitax, the latest company to join.

With the Show well and truly

underway and the Halls filling up I returned to the Media Centre for the next press conference, this time from Bernhard's, and it was great to catch up with Stephen Bernhard, who has recently decided to take less of a hands-on role with the company with Bob Buckingham, formerly of Toro, being brought in to share the running of Bernhard's along with Chief Operating Officer, Peter Wood.

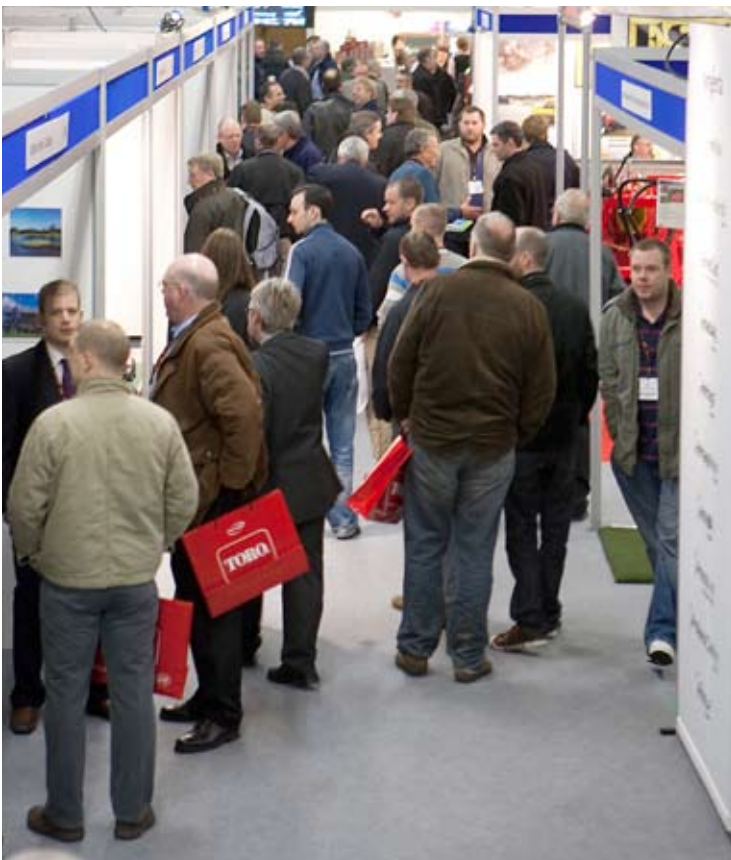
Stephen took time to explain the thought process behind bringing Bob to the company and Bob, who has yet to be fitted for the distinctive Bernhard's blazer, outline his hopes for the future.

The press are usually pretty well fed and this year lunch was provided by Ransomes Jacobsen, who launched the Eclipse 322 hybrid

(Continued on Page 36)



INSET ABOVE: The Vitax Presentation
 INSET ABOVE LEFT: European Solheim Cup Captain, Alison Nicholas.
 INSET ABOVE CENTRE: Stephen Bernhard and Bob Buckingham
 INSET ABOVE RIGHT: Signing into the Show.



THIS PAGE (34):
ABOVE: The Famous Ribbon Cutting by Chairman, Peter Todd, with Vice Chairman, Paul Worster.

ABOVE LEFT and LEFT: A guest arrives at the show, and the busy halls (Photography by Steve Ansty)

BELOW RIGHT and RIGHT: An interesting model display. (Photography by Helen Fannan)





Harrogate week

Selection of images depicting Harrogate Week 2010

THIS PAGE (35): All photography, showing the Exhibiton and the Media Centre (SECOND TOP RIGHT) by Helen Fannan, except TOP RIGHT: Continue to Learn Workshop and BOTTOM LEFT: A Visitor strolls through the halls (by Steve Anstey).



(Continued from Page 33)



ABOVE TOP: Dave Withers at RJ Press Conference. ABOVE : BIGGA Chief Executive John Pemberton arrives the BIGGA Social Night in style, before being 'Held to Ransome' (BELOW RIGHT). FOUR PHOTOS FROM TOP RIGHT: Presentations at the Show.

greens mower and a new E-Z-GO golf car.

The afternoon press conferences also included contributions from British Seed Houses and Charterhouse, who announced a collaboration with Blec.

All over Harrogate International Centre events were being held and it was great to hear the traditional "Harrogate Buzz" at full volume.

The Queens Suite hosted a presentation by STRI on the new service it was offering golf clubs, featuring its new smoothness gauge while the afternoon Presentation of Awards was the perfect occasion to celebrate and congratulate the achievements of BIGGA members, including the 50th and 51st Master Greenkeepers, John Ross MG, of Laleham GC, and Eric Foerster CGCS from Ironbridge Golf Club, in Colorado, USA; those who had gained their CPD certificate and the winner and runner-up in this year's BIGGA Photographic Competition, sponsored by Syngenta, Stuart Broom, of Lyme Regis GC, and Brian Consitt, of Linden Hall

GC. The winners of the Golf Course Environment Award and the winners of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year were also recognised.

The annual Unsung Heroes Awards, sponsored by Terrain Aeration, are always a lovely occasion and are exactly what they say on the tin. This year's winners were Keri Jarman, Deputy Head Groundsman at Moor Park and Hugh Murray, Head Greenkeeper at Bridgewater College. Each received a cheque for £200 as well as a framed certificate and a further cheque from Terrain Aeration.

Tuesday evening was one of the highlights of the week for those who attended. The Wild West themed BIGGA Social Night, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen and in the Old Swan Hotel.

With roulette, poker and blackjack tables - prizes to those people who won the most chips - quick draw and shooting competitions, coconut shys, and



THIS PAGE: Variety of photos showing the 2 Mil Debate and Education Workshops



the ever-popular bucking bronco bull the evening had something for everyone as well as a Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton, tribute act.

It was made all the more memorable by the number of people who entered into the spirit and came in fancy dress – including BIGGA's John Pemberton and Steve Wragg.

Wednesday morning was an early start for quite a few with the much anticipated 2mm debate taking place in the Holiday Inn, having been moved there to accommodate the number of people who wished to take part but even then the room included standing room at the back and a total gathering of around 220.

Chaired by David Croxton, of the EGU, the illustrious top table panel included some of the finest green-keeping brains in the UK with views as diverse as the country itself.

As expected the Debate didn't uncover a definitive answer but

a number of people were pleased to have had the opportunity to be heard.

Back in the Halls I was pleased to meet up with Chris Minton and Stuart Hall, mechanics at The Belfry and John O'Gaunt Golf Clubs respectively, who had recently been appointed the British-based Directors of the IGCEMA, the Mechanics' Association.

The day, confirming its reputation of the busiest of the week, continued in its frantic manner with press events in the Media Centre and on stands and information being exchanged and sales being agreed. The activity seemed to fly in the face of the financial downturn.

It was a pleasure to meet Jeremy Parkman, Course Manager of Dale Hill GC, who in conjunction with MJ Abbott, developed a new bunker draining device, which drains bunkers which are particularly prone to flooding. It is through meeting

people like Jeremy that you appreciate the range of skills, not to mention, ingenuity that many Course Managers have at their fingertips.

At the close of the Show the BIGGA AGM took place in the Queens Suite with Peter Todd conducting his final piece of business as National Chairman. Cecil George made a plea for members to support the Golf Course Fund, which had been launched at the same meeting two years before.

Peter handed over the Chairmanship to Paul Worster, Course Manager of Minchinhampton GC, who, in turn, introduced his Vice Chairman, Andrew Mellon, Director of Golf at Elmwood College GC. The meeting also saw Jeff Mills, of Taunton and Pickeridge GC, and the South West and South Wales Board of Directors representative, stand down after five years in the role, to be replaced by Chris Sealey, Course Manager of Chippenham GC.



ABOVE: Chris Minton and Stuart Hall, of the IGCEMA, the Mechanics' Association



ABOVE: The Unsung Heroes



LEFT: GI Magazine provides alternate uses as shown in The Media Centre (photograph by Helen Fannan).
 BELOW: The Golf Ball Toilet; BOTTOM LEFT: The Casino at the Social Night; BOTTOM RIGHT: The BIGGA Stand Team (Photography by Steve Ansty)



After a turn around of no more than 20 minutes I was off to the Vitax Dinner in the Majestic Hotel, where Ire-presented their Silver Key plaque in front of their customers and friends within the industry.

The enjoyable evening was made more so by a presentation by Colin Burns, General Manager of Winged Foot GC, in New York. Colin described the huge work involved in hosting the 2006 US Open, won by Geoff Ogilvy, but so nearly won by Colin Montgomerie and Phil Mickelson, and preparations for 2015 when the club will host it again.

Returning to the Old Swan Hotel I bumped into a number of BIGGA's Past Chairmen – including George Brown, Jack and Billy McMillan, Andy Campbell and Elliott Small – who had been at the Past Chairman's Dinner and it was good to pass a few minutes with some Pillars of the Association, who had also become good friends.

Thursday morning is always a frantic start to the day as BIGGA

staff all have to check out of the hotel before making our way down to the Exhibition Centre. Packing becomes less than an exact science but need's must and as long everything finds its way home then no damage is done.

Thursday was a fine day. With fewer commitments it is good to walk the halls – almost for the first time in the week – and I can catch up with exhibitors.

It was particularly pleasing to speak with Maarten de Vroom, of Green Toi UK, who, by early Thursday afternoon, had sold 50 golf ball shaped toilets at £13,800 each.

"I am absolutely delighted. I'd been a visitor at the Show before but not exhibited so to have such success is fantastic. We'll certainly be coming back, and bringing our green colour toilet with us as well, next year," said Maarten, as we stood in front of the show's closest example of "hot cakes".

Another welcome exhibitor was In Turf who hadn't known whether

they would be able to attend or not as a result of all their turf being under snow for much of the previous month.

Another company who enjoyed a fine BTME debut was Powakaddy, who introduced the new winter wheels, developed in collaboration with BIGGA.

"We have had a great deal of interest and will certainly be coming back next year and may take a bigger stand," explained Lee Manvell.

As 4pm approached and the Show began to wind down it was time to strip down the Media Centre, which in recent years has been regarded as one of the best on the Exhibiton.

Thanks go to FTAV, the audio visual support company, who provided the laptops and audio visual equipment in the Media Centre.

I would also like to thank the press and public relations specialists who attend and support Harrogate Week through their coverage and company support.





Safety Management System



RJ International Golf Course

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

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

Why do you need a Safety Management System?

Because:

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

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

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

sponsored by





Presenting Paul Worster

The new BIGGA Chairman has taken the time to write his own profile outlining his hopes and aspirations for the year ahead.

Some people lead – and in a volunteer-driven organisation such as BIGGA, leadership is crucial. Paul Worster is the latest in a line of twenty-three volunteer Chairmen since 1987 to slip on the blazer and take the reins.

Paul is in his own words – “a modest person” who never thought that his name would be mentioned in the same breath as some of the BIGGA “greenkeeping greats” such as ‘Jack’, ‘Walter’, ‘Elliott’, and a host of others in the intervening period.

Acutely aware of the traditions in greenkeeping and the fine work done by his predecessors Paul does not subscribe to the notion that blazers and badges are outdated and should have been consigned to the scrapheap or charity shop long ago.

I would not recommend trying to separate Paul from this item of his apparel. It represents, to him, one of the traditions worth preserving.

The growth of the Association

“Volunteering for BIGGA in 1983 as South West Section Secretary was the best thing I ever did” reminisces Paul. “Back in those days, the South West Section had only 56 members. When the position of Section Secretary was handed over to Adam Matthews this year, membership stood at some 280. This shows how far the organisation has come”.

When pushed – Paul recalls his early days as a greenkeeper – “One of the first facilities I worked in during the 1970’s was comprised of

two wooden Nissen huts which had been salvaged from a World War 2 Polish Refugee Camp which had been in the local area.

The huts were completely isolated in the middle of the course with no services whatsoever – no toilet, no telephone, no electricity, and no potable running water”.

“Can you imagine that in this day and age?” No – probably not. Paul is of the strong opinion that if it hadn’t been for the efforts of the previous volunteers throughout the history of greenkeeping, a good proportion of us might still be spending our working lives in marginally upgraded versions of that type of facility. That alone is why this year is so important to him.

The footprint greenkeepers leave in the sands of time

Paul is a Gloucestershire man through and through. “The Cotswolds are not designated an area of outstanding natural beauty for nothing, and golf in the county has become a part of that in the most natural way”.

Paul’s latest club, Minchinhampton, which some of you may feel you know quite well through the pages of this magazine, has been heavily involved in raising environmental awareness in the area, and as he puts it: “if anyone is still of the opinion that the environment is an issue that only affects others, then think again”.

“The Environment affects us all, and we all leave our footprint in the sands of time on our golf courses.

INSET ABOVE: Paul at his beloved Minchinhampton Golf Club

RIGHT: The annual portrait photograph of the Chairman

The environment is increasingly a huge selling point for golf – we at Minch have almost come full circle from being ‘polluters’ to ‘preservers’, and in greenkeeping we will eventually become ‘custodians’ of our own patches of the environment.”

Paul believes strongly that greenkeepers are uniquely placed to exert a positive influence on the thousands of people who visit golf clubs around the country every day.

The feelings of a life-long greenkeeper

Paul has spent the past 35 years of his life working as a greenkeeper. He has never actually done any other job and his two sons are also greenkeepers.

Paul has seen bad times in the profession as well as good and he understands the difficulties and frustrations, and the highs and the lows of a career in greenkeeping.

A positive individual with a serious side to him, Paul feels strongly that all greenkeepers should have the support they need to do their jobs well and be able to advance in their careers.

“For me, with two sons in the industry, this is particularly important.”

Paul feels that BIGGA through its own efforts and alliances can raise the profile of the profession even further so that greenkeepers can take even more pride in telling others about the work they do.





“BIGGA has over the years developed a terrific infrastructure. The organisation is well-placed to weather this particular economic storm and emerge the other side, stronger, leaner, and fitter than before”.

LEFT: Past Chairman, Peter Todd, hands over the reins to Paul Worster

Driving the turfcare profession forward

Paul is resolute about building on the efforts of his predecessors. “BIGGA has over the years developed a terrific infrastructure. The organisation is well-placed to weather this particular economic storm and emerge the other side, stronger, leaner, and fitter than before”.

“I believe the BIGGA HQ team and the four Regional Administrators (RA’s) have the experience, the drive and the professional determination to help us move our profession forwards. To succeed in this endeavour they will always need the committed support of volunteers and the desire of the members to take up what is on offer, particularly:

- 1) Management training
- 2) Skills training
- 3) Opportunities to grow through volunteer work

In the coming year - and beyond - Paul wants (amongst other things) to focus on the work of the BIGGA volunteers with particular reference to improving the take up of training and raising standards in the profession.

“I will be asking the Chief Executive to do all that he can to ensure that all departments at BIGGA HQ, and the four RA’s, focus in 2010 on supporting our volunteers”.

Volunteer work builds confidence and character

“It is training and development and the unselfish efforts of local volunteers that build confidence

and character in the individual and take the profession forward”.

Paul feels that because knowledge and influence can be applied so quickly and widely through modern communications, BIGGA has never been in a better position to impact the way that the industry regards the greenkeeper.

“However, BIGGA cannot do that if the greenkeeper is not aware, or does not understand, how he can help himself/herself. In this and other respects the profession can benefit particularly from the support, advice and assistance of the retired greenkeeper in a voluntary role”.

Retired greenkeepers and their legacy

As National Chairman Paul will seek to make sure that all retired greenkeepers have the opportunity to pass on a positive legacy to the younger generation in the profession.

“When we are disappointed and dejected, as sometimes we are, it can be very uplifting to listen to a generation of greenkeepers who have survived recessions and crises and still want to see members of the profession striving to be the best and are still keen for the association to go from strength to strength”.

Paul thinks that despite the recession there are huge opportunities in the industry and these will increase as we develop our relationships and alliances with other organisations in the golf and leisure sectors, both here in the UK and abroad.

The perils of avoiding challenges and being cynical

“We need to understand that as an association we, as members, have a responsibility for our profession. When mistakes are made, or when opportunities are missed, it is sometimes hard not to criticise and be cynical. However, in times like these, we have to be as professional as possible. We have to take the opportunities that are presented to us and not avoid the challenges that confront us by hiding behind a veil of negativity.”

Paul is of the view that constructive criticism is always welcome and member engagement through participation is vital.

“If BIGGA members have a valid complaint or criticism it is vital to our Association that BIGGA officials hear about the problems being experienced.

“This is perhaps best done through the nearest local, regional or national level volunteer. It would be great if concerned members could also continue to offer practical suggestions for improving both the services and opportunities the association provides to members”.

BIGGA to become the best membership organisation anywhere

Paul continues to be full of praise and admiration for the work and sacrifice of all his predecessors in the role. He particularly values the more recent ‘behind the scenes’ efforts of Kenny MacKay and Peter Todd who have both used their business acumen to bring greater commercialism to the business of BIGGA.

“Despite the current uncertainty and insecurity in the workplace it is important that BIGGA members feel they are part of the best membership organisation anywhere.

“As National Chairman it will be an honour for me to work towards this aim with the BIGGA HQ team and with our many fine volunteers at all levels.

“I want people to know that I am fully committed in 2010 to focus the efforts of BIGGA HQ and the Association as a whole onto:

1. Achieving much greater engagement of members at local levels
2. Providing positive leadership and support for our volunteers
3. Our association becoming the best membership organisation anywhere.”

Unlock the potential of greenkeepers

Become a key sponsor

The funding provided by Golden and Silver Key supporters means that BIGGA can continue to produce training and career aids including DVDs, CD Roms, field-guides, as well as refunds for training fees, subsidised learning and development courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

To find out more, contact BIGGA HOUSE on 01347 833800



“ I really wanted to develop my education but had to fund my own training, so I contacted BIGGA to ask for financial support. A refund of my course fees has enabled me to complete my chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting, felling of small trees and my PA6 spraying certificates. I really do appreciate what BIGGA, with the support of the Golden and Silver Key Companies, has done for my career. ”

Murray Mannall, Greenkeeper



“ The support for this fund has enabled BIGGA to enhance the value of being a member, and it has previously given many greenkeepers the opportunity to further develop their careers. As an association we owe our Golden and Silver Key sponsors a huge vote of thanks. ”

John Pemberton, Chief Executive



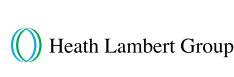
Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors



JOHN DEERE



syngenta



Golden Key Individual Members: WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.

Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Iain Barr; Hamish Campbell; Steve Dixon; Paul Jenkins; Robert Maibusch MG; Richard McGlynn; Stephen Pope; Jason Sarna; Steven Tierney; Neil Whitaker; Graham Wylie, Michael Beaton

G

NEW PRODUCTS

The latest products from Harrogate Week reviewed

Brushcutting in the Bushes



Toro showcased a number of new machines including the Workman HD Series of heavy duty utility vehicles and range of Solo brushcutters. Comprising two-wheel and four-wheel drive diesel options, the Workman HDX-D boasts a superb total carrying load together with a towing capacity of up to 1,588kg.

Replacing the Workman 3300 and 4300, key features of the HD Series include the i-beam-shaped DeDion rear axle, an innovative automotive technology that isolates the engine, transmission and main frame from all load forces; a truss-like front space frame, integrated wheel bearings and hydraulic disc brakes on all four wheels for greater stopping power.

The 142 and 154 Series Brushcutters are on show alongside other bestsellers from SOLO. The German manufacturer specialises in producing professional equipment that also includes hand-held and knapsack sprayers, hedge trimmers, blowers, forestry chainsaws and accessories to the highest of standards.

Commenting on this latest launch, Lely's Kim Macfie concludes: "Lely is highly regarded and best-known for bringing Toro mowing and irrigation products to the golfing industry. Now we are able to widen our range of equipment to golf courses by offering the superb SOLO range of complementary premium-quality outdoor equipment to our golf partners."

www.toro.co.uk



No More Oil Leaks

Ransomes Jacobsen, unveiled its latest generation riding greens mower, the Jacobsen Eclipse™ 322. Featuring a unique hybrid drive system, this latest mower is a radical departure from the hydraulically driven machines of the past 40 years and is like nothing else in its class.

Designed to reduce operating costs and increase productivity, the Eclipse 322 provides cutting consistency on all types of greens, irrespective of the operator.

The machine is totally free of hydraulic oil and, because of electronic control, it can be customised to meet the specific requirements of any golf course.

Using electric motor technology totally negates the use of hydraulic oil and that means no leak points, and no hydraulic maintenance costs.

The 'steer by wire' steering system eliminates the need for mechanical links, cables and hydraulic hoses, but still provides dynamic feedback to the operator, which mimics the feel of a hydraulic or cable-operated steering system.

The all-electric joystick-controlled Lift/Lower system allows the reels to be operated independently, with any combination of reels in use. With the centre unit raised it is possible to cut in one direction, return in the other direction and give the striping effect of a walking greens mower. With all three cutting reels in use, a 1.6 metre cutting width is achieved.

 www.textron.com



New from The Grass Group

The Grass Group presented the Trilo.VCU 120 which has a working width of 1.2m – ideal for greens and tees – and weighs in at just 225kg, teaming up ideally with compact tractors. A slightly offset design allows working right up to the edge of the green or tee without risking damage by the tyres.

Spacing for the rugged tungsten tipped blades is 50mm as standard, but can be swapped to 25mm for greater intensity and working depth is to a maximum of 50mm, for effective, clean scarification that will be an asset on any golf course.

 www.thegrassgroup.com





John Deere Hybrid Technology on Show

John Deere's hybrid technology was featured on three different machines on the company's stand.

The E-Cut hybrid machines include the new 220e walk-behind greens mower, 2500e triplex greens mower and 8000e three-wheeled, ultra-light fairway mower, all fitted with the Quick Adjust cutting units.

The 220e's design reduces weight on the cutting head and allows it to follow ground

contours even more closely, as only an electric cable is required to transmit power to the cutting head

The 8000e combines low noise and engine emission levels with reduced fuel consumption, and this machine's lower ground pressure and three-wheel configuration leave a minimal 'footprint'.

www.deere.co.uk

New from Syngenta



New Syngenta Turf Nozzles, launched at the Show, have been specifically designed to improve the targeting of spray applications in turf and achieve better results for sprayer operators. Syngenta has initially designed two nozzles – one for foliar applications along with a high impact soil nozzle.

Also, a new Syngenta fungicide with five-way action which targets seven turf diseases in the leaf and protect turf quality is available for treatments starting in the spring. Heritage Maxx features active recycling of its powerful fungicidal properties, providing disease protection that goes on cut after cut.

Heritage Maxx has been developed as a new liquid formulation specifically for turf, utilising the Syngenta Maxx formulation technology. Heritage Maxx particles are typically 10,000x smaller than conventional fungicide formulations, so over 1,000 particles can fit across the width of a single leaf stomata.

The faster uptake means that 30% of the fungicide active gets into the plant leaf within 24 hours after application, compared to 5% with the previous granular Heritage formulation. After 72 hours there is double the amount of active in the leaf. Root uptake is also faster and, overall, trials have shown 100% uptake of active into the leaf.

It has been approved for the broadest spectrum of turf diseases, with seven diseases on the label, including the most prevalent foliar disease, Fusarium Patch, the increasingly difficult to control Anthracnose, Leaf Spots common on winter sports pitches and Rusts that occur in wet warm periods on under fertilised turf. It is also approved for the Take-All Patch and Type 2 Fairy Rings. There is no LERAP restriction, making the product simpler and easier to use.

www.greencast.co.uk

New Fertilisers from Scotts

Scotts introduced two new fertiliser ranges during Harrogate. The Sportsmaster WSF range will replace the existing Sierrasol products and consists of three premium water soluble fertilisers - High N, High P and High K – which cover all turf feeding requirements and seasons. They contain the TMax additive for enhanced foliar and root nutrient uptake and to give turf consistent colour with no rapid tail-off plus chelated trace elements to boost growing performance.

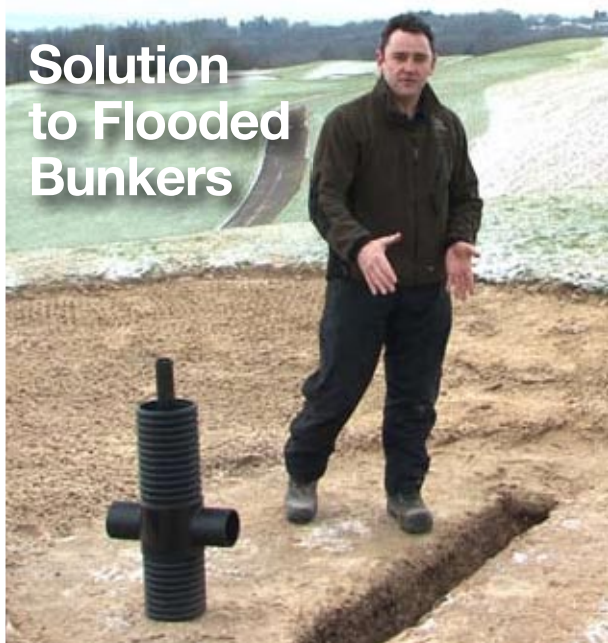
Sportsmaster OrganiCRF is a blend of both organic fertiliser and Scotts' patented Poly-S controlled release fertilisers to ensure more consistent performance versus conventional organic products. Ideal for use during the main growth periods, high nitrogen

levels allow for appropriate top growth and recovery during periods of heavy use. The organic content is manufactured from HACCP-accredited material to ensure it is free from pathogens whilst organic sources of phosphorus and potassium encourage a strong, resilient sward. Sportsmaster OrganiCRF's mini granules disperse easily ensuring even distribution.

Sportsmaster WSF contains TMax nutrient uptake activator to ensure efficient nutrient delivery while using very low rates. Both products will complement each other when used in a programmed approach."

www.scottspprofessional.co.uk

More New Products from Harrogate Week Next Month



Solution to Flooded Bunkers

When Course Manager, Jeremy Parkman, experienced repeated flooding of the bunkers at Dale Hill Golf Club, he decided to put his 20 years of estate and water management experience to the test in finding a solution.

The first prototype produced was a unit connected to existing drainage runs however the sand soon became contaminated after heavy rainfall and the efficiency of the unit was adversely affected. The 'Eureka' moment came when he decided to extend the unit to the surface of the sand. Jeremy realised this was a radical step, so after initial checks with the R&A, that it conformed to their rules, he pushed forward with the developments.

The amendments to the design also created additional benefits, such as providing a flushing point, reducing sand migration and providing a datum point of sand depth in the bunker.

Jeremy has teamed up with MJ Abbott who will manufacture and market the Bunker Plug.

www.mjabbott.co.uk / www.bunkerplug.com

Vitax OARS Re-launched

Bert Brace, Vice President/Formulator of Aqua-Aid USA was on hand during Harrogate Week to re-launch Vitax OARS Curative and dispel any lingering confusion surrounding the product.

Having established that legal proceedings with former distributors Tower Chemicals have reached an amicable conclusion, that Tower Chemical's 'correct OARS' product was not and never has been manufactured by Aqua Aid, and Vitax are, and always have been sole UK distributors of Aqua-Aid's OARS Curative, he paved the way for Joe Crawley, head of Vitax Amenity to explain what this unique product is, how it works and the benefits it bestows.

According to Joe, Vitax OARS Curative is an Organic Acid Removal System, which when used in a wetting agent programme removes the organic waxy coatings that attach to soil particles and cause water repellency. "The removal of these organic coatings removes the cause of Dry Patch Disease/Localised Dry Patch on golf, bowling greens and other fine turf surfaces," he explains.

[Tel: 01530 510060](tel:01530510060)
www.vitax.co.uk



New Alliance

The Redexim Group and Blec (Global) Ltd have entered into an agreement under which the two companies are working together on the design and development of new machines for the Redexim turf maintenance business.

As part of the agreement Redexim have bought the exclusive rights to the Sandmaster machine, the sand injector system, and the Uniseeder from the Blec range that will be manufactured and marketed by Redexim on an

exclusive basis around the world.

The Sandmaster is the only machine of its type that can inject damp materials, into the ground up to 20cm deep,

As a result of this agreement between the Redexim and Blec Charterhouse Turf Machinery will market the Sandmaster range of sports turf renovation machines and Uniseeders in the UK and Ireland.

www.redexim.com



New Multihog Model

Multihog were first time exhibitors at the show, using the event to launch the latest 4WD 90 Multihog model.

The ability of the Multihog to work on gradients is of particular interest to those needing to cope with steep slopes – its tilting driver station, wide wheel base and low centre of gravity put it in a class of its own for demanding terrain.

"As well as talking to many visitors from not only the UK but also Holland and Germany, we welcomed the opportunity to make contact with representatives from companies interested in becoming dealers for our product," says Director Ruth McAdam. "So all in all we had three very worthwhile days in Harrogate and will be back!"

www.multihog.com

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Official Microsoft Training

Available at low cost
to BIGGA Members

- Each course takes only 4-6 hours to complete
- There is no limit to how many times you complete the course
- You have 12 months access to the programme
- All your learning takes place online and can be taken at a place and time to suit you
- A certificate can be given upon 100% completion

Fancy improving your IT skills?

BIGGA members can access an official Microsoft® Office 2003 Training Library that includes programs such as Excel, Word, PowerPoint and Outlook.

BIGGA are able to offer these practical and effective online courses at a discounted cost of £15 (+ VAT) (usually £20 + VAT) to BIGGA Members, and £30 (+ VAT) to non-members, thanks to support from the Learning and Development Fund. For further information contact the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 option 3.

Microsoft Office 2007 training is also available on request.



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A QUICK GUIDE TO...

GOLF COURSE DRAINAGE



Melvyn Taylor,
Managing Director
of Turfdry Limited,
with this month's
edition of top tips...



Importance

Drainage should be an important consideration at all golf courses and, especially for those situated on impermeable clay soil, a properly designed, correctly installed, accurately recorded, and well maintained drainage system can be the key to a successful golf club.

Topographical Survey

A typical 18-hole course may cover around fifty hectares and to properly understand actual or potential waterlogging problems it is necessary to appreciate how water moves onto, across, and off the entire course.

Knowledge of surface contours is essential and a professional topographical survey will provide this data; and a range of other information to aid general management of the course.

All existing water courses (streams, ditches, ponds, main carrier pipes, etc.) should be plotted to enable an assessment of the existing arterial drainage system.

Arterial Drainage Improvements

Using the survey results in conjunction with physical site investigations a competent designer may suggest improvements to the arterial drainage system which can either be features within the course itself (new ponds, open ditches, etc.), or can be implemented less obtrusively using large diameter buried pipes and hidden water storage, from which drainage water could be re-used for irrigation.

Fairway Drainage

Each individual hole can then be assessed in terms of drainage requirements. The main factor determining the overall cost

and effectiveness of a golf course drainage system will be the spacing of the lateral drains on the fairways.

On clay soil five metre spacing is fairly typical.

The most commonly installed lateral drains are 60mm or 80mm perforated plastic pipes though modern alternatives such as geotextile-wrapped fin drains are increasingly popular.

Lateral drains connect to 100mm and 150mm plastic carrier pipes which, in turn, feed into the arterial drainage system.

All drains must be laid to correct falls (minimum 1 in 200) and the use of modern laser-guided trenching equipment can greatly assist in achieving this.

Fairway drainage does not generally need to be deep, with 450mm being typical for plastic pipe laterals.

The use of quality drainage aggregate above the laterals is vital: clean 6mm gravel is ideal and widely available.

It should be brought to within 100mm of the surface, and be topped with an appropriately matched sand or rootzone (see STRI grading curves).

Greens and Tees

Many UK courses have clay-based greens and tees which can be prone to severe waterlogging.

Whilst some, like Wentworth recently, have resorted to a complete greens rebuilding programme, most clubs do not have the necessary finance available.

Fortunately, good quality professionally installed greens drainage systems are available for around £5k per green which, whilst not matching the performance of a USGA green, will transform the playability of greens during winter.

Bunkers

Bunker drainage can sometimes suffer because some course designers fail to realise the difficulty of finding suitable outfall points for deep bunkers.

The installation of bunker drainage is one area where 'in-house' installation can be cost effective compared to using outside contractors but, as with all drainage, it is essential that pipes are laid to correct falls.

Miscellaneous

- Once designed, a new golf course drainage plan can be implemented over several years to spread the cost.
- Greenkeepers' machinery access routes should be included within the areas to be drained.
- Pathways from tees on some holes can be considered to reduce the overall area where drainage is required.
- Trees should not be planted within six metres of drains and species with far-spreading fibrous root systems, such as Poplar and Willow should be avoided altogether.
- Irrigation pipework and other underground services should not be installed without considering if existing drainage could be damaged as a result.
- The maintenance of accurate drainage plans is crucial.
- A comprehensive programme of aeration and decompaction is essential to maintain

For further advice contact Turfdry Ltd:
Tel. 01283 551417
Email: enquiries@turfdry.com
Web: www.turfdry.com

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

What a winter! As I sit here writing this I still hope to see many old friends at BTME in the middle of January but given the amount of snow and ice currently covering the St Andrews Courses at the moment, I have reservations about being away for a number of days when (or if) the thaw starts. Speaking to many of the more experienced members of staff and people in the industry you have to go back to the winter of '82 to have seen these conditions before on the coastal courses in this area. It's at times like these you appreciate the friends and contacts you have built up over the years that you can ask for advice.

On the educational front, the CMAE and BIGGA held a one day training seminar on Jan 29, at Ladybank GC, on managing staff and appraisal training. This was hopefully the first of many joint ventures and I hope to be able to report on it more fully in the next report. The Section is planning to run an evening seminar in early April when Stan Zontek, of the USGA, and a couple of friends will be in the area. Again, more details to follow or on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk If anyone would like Stan to talk on a specific subject then please contact myself or Gordon McKie. The spring outing is on the Eden Course on Tuesday 6 April (if the snow has gone!).

Gordon Moir



East

Well, what a winter with all the snow that has fallen since mid December. No golf for months the living room carpets must have taken a hammering? Well we should have no problems in sinking these six footers this year on the greens.

Hopefully, we will have a good summer now, with The Open back at the Home of Golf at St. Andrews, with possibly no Tiger Woods, but, hopefully, Seve making an appearance at St. Andrews. We wish Gordon Moir, and all the staff at St. Andrews, a successful Open.

I hope all who went to Harrogate in January enjoyed the experience and I'm sure there will be plenty tales to tell. Our Section Patrons' award winners hopefully have something to tell us about their visit to Harrogate. We look forward to hearing their views in March's report of G.I.

Our Section events kick-off with the re-scheduled visit to Barenbrug seed factory and Falkirk football stadium on February 17. Hope to see a good turn out for this one. Thank you to Greentech for sponsoring the day.

Our Section Secretary as always has put together the golf outings for the year and will add to events as we confirm dates and venues for these events. Please look on the BIGGA website for dates and venues for your diaries.

To all the Section members, who made the time to come along and support all the events that our Section committee organised in 2009, a thank you to them from our committee. Let's see if we can encourage more members this year to support these events.

Tom Murray



North

I start off this month with an apology. I did send last month's news in but obviously it got lost at HQ. I, like yourself always look to the Section news pretty much straight away and was disappointed there was no news. It was the first time since I took over the role of Section news writer that the news hasn't been published so I apologise. Sorry.

Well, hopefully you all enjoyed BTME in Harrogate this year. Whether you flew down or took the train I'm sure it was a memorable experience. Our Deputy at Murcar, Mikey Fullerton, was a Harrogate virgin before this year. Bless him he doesn't get out very often, so I'm sure he would've enjoyed the sites of the town, especially as he was accompanied by Brian Anderson, his boss. Brian would've taken good care of him and had him tucked up in bed every night for 10 o'clock. Somehow I don't think that would have happened!

Hopefully the snow down South didn't spoil the show too much, that's if there was any left. Just a dusting of snow down in Englandshire and the whole place comes to a complete standstill. The snow up here has been pretty heavy and the temperatures have been hitting minus 20. That's cold!

I'm sure that the winter programmes will have been put back a wee while so hopefully by the time you read this we'll be snow free and well on our way. The thing is, once the snow has all melted, a lot of courses have to deal with flooding so realistically we might not get on the courses until mid February/March. That I would imagine would be a major stumbling block if you

do have big Winter schedule. Let me know what you think?

I have recently got back into education through Elmwood College and am doing my HNC in Golf Course Management. I have had to fund this myself and with it being quite expensive I began to look about places where I could get part or all of it subsidised. I was lucky enough to gain a scholarship grant through BIGGA itself. Ransomes Jacobsens sponsor the scholarship scheme and I was fortunate to be partly subsidised for the course. May I take this opportunity to thank David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsens for their continued support with this scheme. Without them I may not of been able to register on the course. It goes to show that if you are thinking of higher education and your club can't contribute towards it, there is help out there, so don't be put off.

Dale Robertson has asked me to mention that he is constantly updating the North Section's website. To access this you have to go on to the BIGGA main website and follow the links. Any probs please give Dale a shout at Newmachar and he'll be only too happy to help you out.

That's all I can muster up for this month. If you do have any stories or news for me then please give me shout on 07813889374. Thank you.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links

Northern Region



North Wales

I'm sitting in front of the computer writing this and outside the world looks like a scene out

of that film "THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW" what an arctic blast the winter has brought us this year!

The bus to Harrogate ran last month not a full bus but enough passengers to make it a success (just). I hope all who ventured over the Pennines with us enjoyed their day at

BTME.

The Inter-Section spring seminar takes place this month on February 23, at Eaton Golf Club, the topics on offer are Greenkeeping practices past and present, the present and future of chemical use within Greenkeeping and a special feature on drug awareness in the workplace, enough topics to please hopefully even the most seminar cynical Greenkeeper there.

Terry Adamson is hoping to hold another of his successful talunex/phostoxin pest control courses in the north and west coastal region of our Section soon and anyone in that area interested please contact Terry, his number is on the reverse of the Section fixture sheet, or you may already have his number if he serves your club.

In local news, I'm sorry I don't seem to have any! If you have any news, matters of interest or anniversaries you wish to pass on please don't hesitate to contact me. That's about it for this time so...

All the best until next month.

Pete Maybury

petemayb66@aol.com

or 0775600187



North East

Well, not a lot of news to report this month but at least it will be more than last month. As all members would see in a recent magazine that Course Manager Brian Consitt, of Linden Hall, had two photos for the BIGGA calendar 2010. Well congratulations, Brian, and sorry it is a bit late but as the saying goes better late than never, No doubt you will have been out again recently with the way the weather has been over Christmas holidays.

Once again thanks to Terry Charlton, of TSL, on providing transport, entertainment and food for the annual visit to BTME, other news is that the Autumn Comp. is booked and

will be played at Gosforth GC [Bridle Path, as it's otherwise known] on Wednesday October 6, tee-off 12noon to 1pm. At this moment in time I am waiting for confirmation for the Spring comp. If all goes well it will be held at City of Newcastle GC. Let's hope I receive good news shortly.

Right, that's all the news I have at the moment. Just to remind everyone, all news will be helpful as all Section Secretaries are getting ear-ache from HQ to have regular monthly reports in the magazine.

Jimmy Richardson



Sheffield

Hello everyone,

My apologies for the lack of news in January issue. I'm sure you will all forgive me.

Hopefully as you read this all the snow has disappeared and you are all continuing with your Winter programmes. It can become a little tedious being inside all the time but I'm sure everyone will be able to look around their maintenance facilities and take great pride in them and all machinery and course furniture will be in tip top shape for the new season.

I would like to thank everyone at Rotherham GC for hosting our Christmas comp. Everyone I spoke to had a great day. A big thanks goes to Dave and his team for getting the golf on as, for some time, it looked as though it wouldn't go ahead. Congratulations to Andy Unwin the overall winner with 52 points (great pin positions Andy). The trade prize went to Mike Brear congratulations Mike. Thanks must go to Mike, and Rigby Taylor, for once again sponsoring the event. Everyone I spoke with really enjoyed the new format of golf that Mike introduced and thought it added a bit of fun to the day. I must also once again thank all our other sponsors over the past year for their continued support.

Once again the AGM passed without any major hiccups. Our committee is as follows:- President. G. Brammah; Chairman. R. Needham; Vice Chairman. I. Whitehead; Treasurer. A. Sampson; Secretary. J. Stevens, and Comp Sec - A. Unwin.

Once again, the committee of your Section will strive to improve on last year and make 2010 a successful year for the Sheffield Section. If anyone wishes to contact me at anytime please feel free, it is nice to hear from you.

James Stevens

jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com

07738719614



North West

It's early January and cabin fever has begun to set in here at Hesketh. Not the best start to the new golfing year, but things can only get better.

We, as a committee, are working hard trying to raise the profile of the North West region this includes playing some of the best courses in the district, along with various non-golfing activities. A website is also under construction and will hopefully be up and running very soon.

Once again, as Chris always says, turf managers of the North West this is your Section, help us to help you, we can set up training courses, hold seminars, have visits to football grounds, almost anything you want.

We are very fortunate in the North West to have not only some of the best golf courses but also some of the best football stadia, racing tracks, cricket grounds etc etc, we should be utilising this to learn from our peers across the spectrum of sports turf management.

We are also looking for anyone else willing to join the committee, you don't have to be a Course Manager or work on a golf course.

As Chris mentioned in the last report, Adie Holt has taken over as Chairman, from Allan Donlevy, without doubt Adie will do a great job and be a fine ambassador for our region, I can't finish these notes without mentioning the amount of work Alan, Chris (Sheehan) and Billy (Merritt) have carried out over the past few years and continue to do so. They must be applauded for all their efforts.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the very best for the coming season and hope the snow soon melts, if you have any information you would like to share please e-mail it to me

at the address below, otherwise I might have to start talking about Scottish football, and that depresses me even more than the current weather.

Cheers.

Peter McVicar

pdmv@hotmail.co.uk.

Midland Region



East Midlands

As you sit down and read this, your golf course should have recovered from the inches of snow that we had in December. I am sure many of you found it a nice reprieve from your daily duties. When I wrote this Harrogate was on the horizon and by the time you read it Harrogate has gone. So I am going to predict that you all met up with old friends and had a great time and hopefully the March column will be full of stories from Harrogate.

As we go into 2010, we can all but wait for the year to unfold. This year The Open returns to St Andrews and who knows what surprises will unfold, also The Ryder Cup returns to our shores at Celtic Manor, a competition that I am sure everyone eagerly awaits. I would like to wish Toro Student of the Year, Rhys Norville all the best over in America, studying at Umass and I hope he adapts to the cold weather and long study hours.

On matters a bit closer to home I would like to encourage new faces to come to the East Midlands golf days. They are always good days out with good food and good company. It is also a great chance to meet and talk to new people and found out more about the industry that you work in.

The Section held their Christmas competition on December 8 at Wollaton Park. A fantastic day was had by all on a superb course, with great weather. The day was finished by an entertaining after dinner speech by Tim Stimpson, ex Leicester Tigers, England and British Lions Rugby Union player. The winning team on the day was Nigel Colley, Greg Skinner and Mark Chamberlain with 81 pts from a modified team Stableford. Our thanks go to our sponsors of the day - Platts Harris, Rigby Taylor, Colliers Turfcare, Enviropro

H20 and Tacit.

Our thanks also go to all of our sponsors throughout the whole of 2009.

If anyone has anything that they think is worth mentioning, it can be anything, anything at all then please e-mail: Andy de Wet at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com.

Matt Wormald

South West and South Wales Region



Devon and Cornwall

Hello all. I'll start by talking about our favourite subject, the weather! We have had two extremes in the last couple of months, very wet or extremely cold, both being very frustrating, with courses having to close for many days in a row. Little we can do as Course Managers and Greenkeepers about the weather, apart from making sure that we communicate why we need to protect and rest the course during these periods. Many courses will have varying degrees of tolerance to frost conditions and allowing play and this has to be judged individually. What I find is more important is that members and guests are fully aware of why these decisions have been made. Let's hope that the Weather Gods will be shining down this spring in what is going to be a very important period, financially, for many clubs this year.

The Christmas meeting was held on December 9 at St Enodoc, in Cornwall and was a huge success. Those Weather Gods were certainly shining down on the 82 attendees who enjoyed golf or a course walk around one of the most stunning Golf Courses in the British Isles. The day was sponsored by MST and Irritech who provided the prizes for the day and special thanks to MST and Ransomes for providing a "Half-way House", stocked generously with cornish pasties, tea, coffee, soft drinks and some hard-stuff too! Scott Gibson, Course Manager, led the course walk and talked us through the

club's history, changes made and changes to be made, finishing off with a tour of their very impressive facilities. The Golf format for the day was Green-somes and the prizes for the day went to: "Holywell Course" 1. Roy Dow and Rob Millman, Chumleigh, 46 pts; 2. James Sheehan, Truro, and Richard Japes, Sports Metals, 46 pts; 3. Andrew Prouse and David Daw, Porthpean, 45 pts. "Church Course" 1. David Moulding and Des Bickle, Bigbury, 36 pts; 2. Simon Clarke and Adrian West, St Mellion, 35 pts, 3. Jason Brooks, Torquay, and Gavin Moore, Launceston, 34 pts.

The day was topped off by a wonderful Christmas meal and entertainment by "Chris James" a very talented magician and mind-reader who had everyone spell bound!! A huge thank you to Tuck Clagett, General Manager, and all the staff at St Enodoc for a great day and special thanks to Scott Gibson and his Greenkeeping team for presenting two wonderful courses.

One event for you diary in February: Spring Educational Seminar, Wednesday, February 17. Three speakers, Steve Giggell, STRI, - Disturbance Theory

Mark Atkins, Soil Harmony, - Life beneath your feet

Andrew Turnbull, Allturf Management, - Carbohydrates "The Brix of life"

Contact Duchy College on 01579 372220

Please contact me if you would like me to include any stories, events, happenings within the Section. Thank you for supporting your section.

George Pitts,
Devon and Cornwall Section
Secretary
07929 754401
gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com



South Wales

As I write this column it is -5 and snowing outside, but my little Rhondda home is nice and warm having allowed the wife to put some more coal on the fire. The local shop is out of bread and milk and travelling along the side streets requires a mixture of dodgy driving skills

and recklessness (so no change for me there then!) All of this is good news for greenkeepers though. We haven't had a good deep prolonged frost like this for a long time (maybe 1986) and organisations like the STRI (other agronomists are available) have said that due to a lack of these prolonged frosts, there has been an increase in Leather Jackets, Chafer Grubs and arguably Nematodes. So we shall see!

Anyway, back to the section and an apology for not bringing you the result of the RT Match-play final at Tenby in last month's edition of GI. In a keenly fought contest the team of Paul Handy and Rhys Norville, of Newport GC, beat Daryl Bray and Leigh Davies, of Morriston. The match started early to beat the promised rain and was played on a well presented Tenby links. Well done to Chris Jenkins and his staff. Both teams were treated to a typical RT night out in town the previous evening with both teams suitably fed and watered! Thanks guys! I'm sure either Rodger Bowles or Steve Blake-man will be casting a close eye over those receipts! I also think that Roy Barker needs to work on his people skills as not only did he proclaim his love for Margaret Thatcher (not advisable in South Wales) but he also told one local lady that she reminded him of Jo Brand! Seriously though guys, to Dave Carvey, Peter Griffiths and Roy Barker, thank you from the Section for sponsoring this great event in 2009. Also thanks to Steve Chappell for the unenviable task of sorting out the draws and to Chris Jenkins and his staff and everyone at Tenby Golf Club for hosting the event, and finally a big well done to Paul and Rhys for their hard fought victory.

Education now and the winter series of evening lectures (sponsored by Countrywide Turf and Amenity) began with Keith Exton, Head Groundsman at The Swalec Stadium (you know, Sophia Gardens) with a talk entitled 'In At The Deep End' at Taffs Well RFC. Keith told us about his experiences in preparing the pitch for the Ashes test match. The 5 days were a triumph and one in the eye for all those people (mostly our dear next door neighbours) who thought that it should not have been held there. Thanks to Keith for his excellent talk, to the South

Wales Branch of the IOG for their organisation and of course to 4.04 Martin Townshend and Peter Holstrom, of Countrywide, for agreeing to sponsor these events again this year.

The next talk will be given by my mate Paul Clifton, of Bayer, at Pencoed College, on February 17, at 7pm. Subject of the talk is on recent developments in chemicals for use on sports turf.

Still on the subject of Education, the annual Avoncrop Amenity Education Seminar takes place at Ashburnham Golf Club on Wednesday March 3. Among those speaking will be representatives from Scotts, Barenbrug, Syngenta, Aquadyne and Farmura. The day is free to attend and includes Coffee and a bacon roll on arrival plus buffet lunch. Invites will be with you shortly or you can contact me to reserve a place/places.

That's it for now, I'm off to find some tennis racquets to tie to my feet in order to get to you, my dear and valued customer, only to find you've gone home and are cwtched up in front of a fire!

Ceri Richards
celticceri@aol.com
07831 168645



South Coast

Hi every one

As I sit at my computer wondering what to write, I had the great idea of looking back to see what my previous would-be journalists had written. What a bad idea that was, all it did was to scare the hell out of me.

Any way here goes. Firstly, I must thank the previous writers as they have done a wonderful job and to the next people don't leave to the last minute and very late at night to write as this as it may make life very difficult. You too could end up with writer's block and rambling beginnings!

The seminar this year is once again at Canford Magna Golf Club on March 4, which is a Thursday. The whole day is being devoted to the Disturbance Theory. Under the title of "Forward Thinking/Forward Planning". The speakers will all be from the STRI. We will be the first people to hear this new and

up to date version of their talk. They will have just released it at Harrogate but we will be the first of the Sections. Hopefully you will have had the flyer for the day already and this is just a reminder. As with any thing that you need to ask contact me at chrisbitten@btinternet.com or by phone 07796887633

The fixtures are out for this year and no doubt Kev will tell you about them when it's his turn to write this piece. You will have had your fixture cards by now but if not, they will be on your door mats very soon.

I hope everyone who went to Harrogate Week got something worthwhile out of it and made new friends and met up with old ones

I look forward to seeing you at Canford

Chris Bitten



South West

Hi everyone, I realise 2010 is in full swing now however allow me to wish you all the very best for the year ahead and I hope the ball runs smoothly for everyone, whatever it is you have going! As I write this I guess you're all getting ready for Harrogate, however by the time you read this Harrogate will all be over. So, I hope everyone had a great time and I'm sure your all agree with me by saying what a fantastic week it was.

I would like to congratulate Paul Farragut, from Chipping Sodbury. Paul won this year's Section competition and with that had the opportunity to attend Harrogate this year completely free. This was made possible because of our patronage partners, a huge thank you to them for making this possible. If you would like this to opportunity next year, please hold fire and wait for the details to fellow.

What a great Christmas golf day we had. Firstly, thanks to Nobby for getting the weather just right again! Also hands up if you thought that was one of the best raffles we've had, I think so! We played this year's event at Taunton & Pickering, and the course (and club house) was in super condition. It was brilliant

to have a great number attend and even better that we had 10 or so turn out for the course walk. Jeff, many thanks to you for giving us the opportunity of the course walk and also to you and your guys for presenting a wonderful golf course!!

Now for the winners, in third place Paul Garland, Lansdown, with 36pts. In second place Richard Louisson, Cirencester, with 37pts and in first place Stuart Broom, Lyme Regis, with 38pts. Well done guys.

We all know that these last couple of weeks have been just a complete nightmare weather wise. Hard frosts and snow makes doing anything far from easy. For example, getting into your car on the way to work on a Wednesday morning..... as Chris Sealey recently found out. Chris started his day like any other winter's morning, opened the car, set the heating on full, de-iced the windscreen and then had his cup of coffee to help him start the day! To his surprise, when Chris went back to his car, the doors were locked, keys in the ignition and the engine still going....."OH DEAR" comes to mind. At least the full tank of diesel he had wasn't going to waste. After phoning to the AA, they weren't a great deal of help as the car was still sat on the driveway. Unfortunately there was no spare key either, the only thing left is to smash a window....."OH DEAR" comes to mind again!!! Chris did make it to work that morning, everyone who saw the window had to ask the question, "What happened there Chris??" Fortunately a quick phone call to Auto Glass and the matter was solved.

While I write I have to tell you that I've just watched my first Cadburys cream egg advert, this wouldn't normally be a problem, however I do still have the Christmas tree in the corner, ummmm interesting.....

A quick plea to everyone, please make every effort to attend as many things as possible this year, both education and golf days, I for one look forward to seeing you all at some point during 2010. If you have any news/stories that you would like to share please do so. You all have my e-mail address and my phones always on. Look forward to hearing from you.

Adam Matthews,
adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

What a month January turned out to be - the worst period of snow and frost for many years and on the upside, arguably the best event in Harrogate that we have ever produced.

We came back after the Christmas break somewhat concerned that the weather would prevent a great many people from attending. As the snow disappeared, almost to order, the worry then was that time off work would not be allowed as greenkeepers and groundsmen attempted to get their facilities back into play. We need not have lost any sleep, demand for education was unprecedented and the visitors came in their thousands. Many exhibitors reported a record show and those who attended the Social Night were treated to an evening of fun, friendship and good food.

Thanks are due to Ransomes Jacobsen for its sponsorship of both the Social Night and the International Summit that took place earlier in the week. It was BIGGA's turn this year to host this annual event that brings together representatives from greenkeeping associations from around the world to discuss matters of common interest.

Sadly, not all trade companies played by the book and since the exhibition I have had reports of representatives doing business while walking about without being a bone fide exhibitor. Unfortunately I do not have any hard evidence of such rogue trading and would be interested to hear from any member who can substantiate these claims. I have a list of companies that are suspected of such dealings and rest assured they will be closely monitored if they turn up at Harrogate in 2011 and are not an exhibitor.

Plans are already under way for next year's Harrogate although at this stage we are lead to believe that the large machinery manufactures will not be in attendance. It's a great pity because with a change to how they spend their budget they could all make a valuable contribution towards the week's success and raise their own profile at the same time.

As we move into 2010 then the sights at BIGGA HOUSE are clearly set on three main areas: (1) Developing the value of being a member, (2) increasing the provision and take-up of education and (3) improving the positioning of the Association in the sports turf industry. The coming year will present many challenges and although the country has been declared as officially having come out of recession nevertheless it will take some time for this to filter through into the sports and leisure industry. Will the golf industry in particular ever be the same again? I, and many others, think not however the Board and Staff will be looking to the future and will make every effort to meet members' needs while working in close partnership with other allied bodies to develop the Association.

Finally, I would like to wish Neil Hayward, of the English Golf Union, a long and happy retirement. Neil retires after many years of serving the golf industry having specialised of late in giving advice on aspects of child protection as applicable to golf clubs. Good Luck Neil and I look forward to meeting up with you on a golf course somewhere.

South East Region



Kent

It would be very easy to theme this month's column around the recent weather issues being experienced by one and all. However, I shall resist the temptation as I'm sure none of you need reminding how cold and bleak conditions have been of late. I always find that this time of year is ideal for developing teams. Much of the work being carried out during cold snaps is done with multiple numbers of staff and encouraging team relationships during these periods is ideal for staff bonding and trust which, in turn, pays dividends by helping to ensure the playing quality and condition of the course in future months. Morale in teams can be quite low at these times of year so I think it is important to, where practical, encourage as much staff interaction as possible to get us through the winter months.

Individual appraisals and team meetings are also often enlightening experiences for managers and staff alike. And all educational opportunities should be exploited to the max until the frozen tundra starts to defrost itself. Staff development is something many of us struggle to find time for when the season is in full swing so it is important to make the most of quieter times of the year when more attention can be given to each individual.

One person who won't be worrying too much about the freezing conditions of late is Andrew Wood, of Avoncrop Amenity. "Why ever not?", I hear you ask. Well, the reason is simple. Andrew has bravely entered into the inaugural Brighton Marathon in April and is, therefore, constantly pounding the streets in serious preparation for the big event. Andrew is raising money and awareness for "WaterAid" who concern themselves with drought issues worldwide. Please go to our website for more details on Andrew's progress and the charity and there is also a link to a sponsorship page if you feel so inclined.

Our first event of the year still

seems an age away but, by the time you read this, will only be a month away. Yes folks, it's time for our springtime National Qualifier at Prince's Golf Club. March 10, is the date for one of the most eagerly anticipated events in our Section's recent history. Please make sure you confirm your attendance early for what promises to be a very popular day and a fantastic start to our year of events.

I would like to sign off by thanking the sponsors who have already pledged allegiance to the Kent Section for the coming year. They being:

Grass Roots Trading, MAB Groundscare and Scotts UK.

Meantime keep those thermals on and your tree prunings burning.

Best of British
Rob Holland
07843 410755
www.kentgreenkeepers.com



London

Hello to all,

As I sit in my office writing this month's 'Around the Green' I'm looking out over the golf course and its still covered in snow, it is still January. Don't think we are in our own climate! We have been shut for what feels like weeks! It has only been one week but it feels like longer. At first the excitement of the snow and having a snowball fight with the lads was great but now I just want to get on with things. The sheds are sparking, the machines all serviced, greased and the car park has been cleared of snow again. At least we will never run out of tree work at Muswell Hill G.C. Enough of my ramblings.

Like I informed you last month the Turkey Trot was played at Sandy Lodge GC, in December, but I had no results to share with you, so here it goes. The course was in great condition as normal. There was a lot of work being carried out around the course in preparation for there centenary this year and it all looked very impressive. I would like to thank Rob Phillips and his team for all their hard work it what had been a difficult time. The course just keeps improving every time I go back. I would also

like to thank the catering and bar staff who kept us fed and watered superbly.

The results were:- 1. Sandy Lodge, (Sam Stabler, Simon Walley, Stuart Playle, Pat Johnson) 57pts; 2. Ealing, (Greg Evans, Warren Clements, Stan Harrison, Jack Sims), 56pts; 3. Robbed on countback. Muswell Hill (Kevin O'Neill, Martin Gaffney, Jack Hockings), 56pts

Longest drive: Simon Grand, Hadley Wood with a 350 yard drive down the snow!

A special word of congratulations for Peter Phillips who had a hole-in-one at the 8th which was also the nearest the pin hole! Peter then bought a large bottle of whisky to warm us up and share the moment with him.

Education – The 3 P's- Progress, Peril and Presentation, on Feb 18.

Andy Wight, from Oakland's College, has organised a great day for the London section. To be held at Oakland's College. See Diary of Events (next page) for details.

Seminar Programme

10.00am – 10.30pm: Arrival and Welcome. Greg Evans (Course Manager Ealing GC) will give an overview of greenkeeping practices at Ealing GC. Dr. Ruth Mann, STRI, 'Disease Update'. 12.30pm – 1.30pm: Lunch

Jane Leyland, UK Research and Development Manager Barenbrug UK Ltd. Frank Newberry, Golden Key Sponsor, 'How to be a Powerful Persuader'

Cost: £10 (inc VAT). Cost includes all course materials and lunch.

To book your place contact andy.wight@oaklands.ac.uk or call 01727 737735

2010 Fixtures: The Spring tournament, May 20, at Ealing GC I know we have had the 2mm or above debate at Harrogate last month. This is your chance to see what Greg Evans has been doing with his greens! Also this is the National qualifier. The first and second place winners will get their expenses paid trip to the National Championship, which this year is at The Berkshire.

The Summer Tournament will be held on July 21, at Muswell Hill Golf Club. This will give you chance to look how we have changed the course after the fire in 2007. We will have a BBQ after the golf with golf dress welcome all day, so need for your shirt and tie!

The Turkey Trot will be held at Wyke Green Golf Club in December. This should be another great day and hopefully Tony won't get the rain he had hosting his last BIGGA day!

Please if you have any questions or suggestions on the section please contact us.

You can call or use the web site www.biggalondonsection.co.uk.

Matt Pledsted
07818410333



Essex

As you will all be aware we have not had anything on over the past month or so, so on that front I have nothing to report.

Your new committee had its first meeting on January 14 at Regiment Way, so by the time you read this we will have made some plans for the season ahead.

We will have put yet another Harrogate Week under our belts and for those of you that attended I'm sure you all got a lot out of it.

Though while I write this article, the snow is falling quite heavily and with weather reports, that it's here for some time. I for one am wondering if I'm going to be able to make the trip, which will be the first time I have missed the week for many a year.

I am in the process of writing and working on a new website. I know the old saying, "of if it's not broken don't repair it", but after a year of the site, I feel its looking a bit stale, so I have spent the Christmas period looking and thinking of at new ideas for the site. A more user-friendly approach is what I have come up with.

So you may have found that we have been off line for a few days, or that the site is under construction during February, don't worry we will be back in time for the new season.

More news next month plus a report from the committee meeting and the venues and dates for this seasons golf matches.

If you have any news for this magazine or the website please contact me by email:

essexbigga@talktalk.net
Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer.



Diary of Events

Details of your section's forthcoming events in 2010 can now be found here...

February

Wednesday 17th February

The Devon and Cornwall Section Spring Workshop entitled "The Life Beneath Your Feet", to be held at Duchy College. Contact George Pitts at gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com or 07929 754401.

Recent developments in chemicals for use on sports turf. Paul Clifton of Bayer Environmental will be giving a presentation covering recent developments in chemicals for the use on sports turf (I suppose you could say he does exactly what it says on the tin!). Venue is Pencoed College (Bridgend) and starts at 7:00pm. Arranged by the South Wales Section in conjunction with the IOG South Wales Branch and is sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity.

Contact Steve Chappell at: chappell124@hotmail.co.uk.

The East Section of Scotland is pleased to announce an all areas site visit to the Barenbrug Factory in Falkirk. This event is free to all wishing to attend. Contact Stuart Ferguson at stufereg@btinternet.com or 07961 630553.

Thursday 18th February.

The London Section presents its 2010 Seminar The 3 P's' - Progress, Peril and Presentation. 10.00am - 3.30pm at Oaklands College, Smallford Campus, St Albans. Speakers to include, Greg Evans - Is 2mm possible for all of us?, Dr Ruth Mann will provide a disease update and Jane Leyland UK Research and Development Manager Barenbrug Ltd and Frank Newberry, Trainer will complete the afternoon session.

Contact Andrew Wight at andy.wight@oaklands.ac.uk.

Tuesday 23rd February.

The North Wales and North West Sections are holding a joint seminar at Eaton Golf Club. Details to be confirmed. Contact Jeremy Hughes at jezpro69@aol.com.

Thursday 25th February.

The Cleveland Section is holding Baz and

Ally's Annual Quiz at Teesside Golf Club starting at 7.30pm. There is a free supper and prizes to be won. Members, friends and family are welcome. Contact Ian Pemberton (Pembo) on 07791 695768.

February 2010 - Date to be advised.

The South West Section are organizing an Excavator Training Course (novice driving course). Contact Adam Matthews at adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

March

Tuesday 2nd March.

Scottish BIGGA Conference, Carnegie Conference Centre, Carnegie College, Dunfermline. Speakers include; Henry Bechelet, STRI, Richard Windows, STRI, Greg Evans, Ealing GC, Gordon McKie, Course Manager, Old Course, St Andrews Links, Lee Strutt, Course Manager GWest, Gleneagles, Paul Kimber, Golf Course Architect. Contact Peter Boyd at pj.boyd@btinternet.com

Thursday 4th March.

The South Coast Section has arranged an education section seminar to be held at Canford Magna Golf Club. Contact Chris Bitten at chrisbitten@btinternet.com

Friday 5th March.

South East Region Annual Gentleman's Dinner to be held at Walton Heath Golf Club. Contact Clive Osgood at cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk

Wednesday 10th March.

The Kent Section has arranged a golf event to be held at Princes Golf Club. Contact Rob Holland at grassyears@hotmail.com

Wednesday 17th March.

The Devon and Cornwall Section has arranged a golf event to be held at Mullion Golf Club. Contact George Pitts at gpitts.yelverton@googlemail.com

Site visit to Ffos Las Racecourse, Carmarthenshire. A chance to have a look

around only the 3rd racecourse to be built in the UK in 80 years in the company of Clerk of the Course Mr Tim Long and managing director David Thursfield. Ffos Las is located near Kidwelly and the visit starts at 5:30pm.

Arranged by the South Wales Section in conjunction with the IOG South Wales Branch and is sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity. Contact Steve Chappell at chappell124@hotmail.co.uk

Tuesday 23rd March.

The Cleveland Section's Spring Tournament will be held at Seaton Carew Golf Club from 10am. Contact Ian Pemberton (Pembo) on 07791 695768.]

April

Tuesday 13th April.

The East Section of Scotland's Golf Spring Meeting hosted by Kilsplindie Golf Club. Contact Stuart Ferguson at stufereg@btinternet.com or 07961 630553.

Wednesday 14th April.

Site visit to 2010 Ryder Cup Course at the Celtic Manor Resort. Director of Golf Courses & Estates Management Jim McKenzie will be showing us around the first golf course to be purpose built to host the Ryder Cup. following the tour there will be a presentation when Jim will be joined by Chris Sealy to discuss the Ryder cup at Valhalla in 2008.

Arranged by the South Wales Section in conjunction with the IOG South Wales Branch and is sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity. Contact Steve Chappell at chappell124@hotmail.co.uk.

The East Midlands Section has arranged a golf event to be held at Erewash Valley Golf Club. Contact Andy de Wet at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com

Wednesday 21st April.

The Cleveland Section has arranged an evening event on Correct Blade Setting and Maintenance of your machines.

Contact Ian Pemberton (Pembo) on 07791 695768.



Membership

Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update

Harrogate Week 2010

It would be remiss of me not to mention Harrogate Week 2010 in this month's membership update because it is a vital component of the membership services and benefits that BIGGA offers.

The show welcomes all visitors regardless of whether they are a member of BIGGA or not, but the benefit from being a member comes when you want to attend one of the many workshops at Continue to Learn.

This year BIGGA members made massive savings of:

38% when booking a two day workshop, a 50% saving when booking a one-day workshop and a huge 55% saving when booking a half-day workshop.

The savings made at Harrogate Week alone will either pay or go a long way to cover your membership subscription for a year. If you didn't get the opportunity to attend this year there is always next year!

Fresh back from the success of Harrogate Week 2010 we are already planning Harrogate Week 2011, for more information visit www.harrogateweek.org.uk.

Whether you attend the exhibition on its own or alongside Continue to Learn there is something of interest for everybody and well worth a visit. Next year why not bring your Chairman of Green, Golf Club Committee Member or Line Manager along to be part of the Harrogate Experience 2011?

Membership Benefits and Services

These days we find ourselves being members of all sorts of associations, groups, clubs and societies, from our professional body to members of a gym, sports club, football team, darts team to the National Trust, whatever it is we are members of means that at some time we have made a conscious decision to become part of a group.

Members of BIGGA are an essential part of the Association; members form the community that exists within BIGGA.

The Section and regional events and Harrogate Week show how strong that community is with members attending benefiting from discussions and debates on topical issues, exchanging ideas and generally meeting and mixing with like-minded people.

Choosing to be a member of an association or club etc usually means that membership offers a number of benefits and services to each individual person.

We may not take advantage of every benefit or service that is available to us and because of that we may not always remember all the benefits and services that are offered to us, so it's good to remind ourselves every so often what we, as members, can take advantage of.

Visit the Members' area of the BIGGA website to remind yourself of all the benefits and services that are available to you, www.bigga.org.uk and log in to the members area.

Stress and Debt Helplines

A membership benefit you may not be aware of is the stress and debt helplines.

During the last six months the BIGGA website page for stress advice has taken, on average, 135 hits a month and the debt helpline page has averaged 100 visits a month.

The impact of the economic climate has been well documented in the media and there is no doubt that, unfortunately, the golf sector has not escaped from the restrictions on lending and the downturn in consumer spending.

If you are experiencing increasing pressures in your daily life and want to talk to an expert in complete confidence, then ring the Stress or Debt Helpline on 0800 174 319 where a trained advisor is on hand to discuss any issue.



Contact Details

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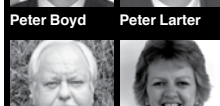
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Welcome to New Members

For more information on new members log in to the Members Area of the BIGGA website:

www.bigga.org.uk

...and select 'Welcome New Members' from the Menu on the left hand side.

This month BIGGA welcomes the following new members...

Scottish Region

John Kelly, East
Robert Mackay, North
Lewis Thomson, East

Northern Region

Ross Butterworth, North West

Midland Region

Sean Brocklehurst, Mid Anglia
Thomas Calder, Midland
George Mackie, Midland
David Sutherland, Berks/Bucks & Oxon

South East Region

William Coles, Kent
David Cracknell, East Anglia
Paul Craske, East Anglia
Michael Edmunds, Essex
Martyn German, Surrey
Richard Pennell, Surrey
Stewart Rogers, Essex
Nick Staff, East Anglia
Darren Thomas, London

South West & South Wales Region

Lance Evans, South Wales
Alex Pike, South West
Rhys Williams, South Wales

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

Legal Assistance 0800 177 7891
Personal Accident Insurance 0207 560 3013
Stress Helpline 0800 174 319
Debt Helpline 0800 174 319

Assistant Profile

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

Robbie "Rab" Murdoch, a Raith Rovers fan, is into Rock band, Oasis and was a star guest on Chris Evans' Radio Show!

Name: Robbie Murdoch

Age: 29

Club: Dundas Park GC

Position: First Assistant

Nickname: Rab, Bob, Bobski.



1. How long have you been greenkeeping?

9 years.

2. What was it about the career that attracted you?

My big brother David is the CM at Liphook GC, I worked six summer seasons at Liphook before I started full time and really enjoyed it!

3. If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be?

I studied design at College and University, so probably something along that line.

4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?

I enjoy all aspects of my job, especially when the sun is shining!

5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?

Not much really. Probably mowing fairways, the machine seems to be a magnet for flying golf balls even when there is nobody playing the hole your working on!

6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot?

Better communication and understanding of our job between club officials and golfers.

7. Hobbies?

Playing golf (or should that be trying to play!), I love my PS3 (although the wife doesn't), anything that involves eating and drinking!

8. Favourite Band?

Oasis

9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?

Fife's finest, Raith Rovers

10. What is your claim to fame?

Star guest on the Chris Evans radio show, when he did his Radio Two show live from my parents' house.

What's your number?

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

David Snowden of Agronomic Services comes under the spotlight



1. What is your position within the company?

MD of Agronomic Services Ltd. and European Technical Director for Floratine Products Group.

2. How long have you been in the industry?

20 years.

3. How did you get into it?

I started as sales manager for probably the best turf production company in the UK, Lindum Turf.

4. What other jobs have you done?

The Snowden family has farmed for five generations, so pig and arable farming mainly, lumber jacked in Canada, sold John Deer tractors in Nebraska, Ski Instructor, and waiter for 50 minutes!

5. What do you like about your current job?

People in the turf industry, in many ways are like dealing with farmers, which is always entertaining, and they're full of passion!

Mother Nature makes the job interesting, as you're never quite sure what she's going to do next.

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

Pioneering companies like Floratine, successfully introducing the concept of foliar feeding.

Environmental issues, European bureaucracy, and legislation gone raving mad.

7. What do you like to do in your spare time?

Played Rugby all my life, now watch it because, I'm too old to play, skiing with the family, golf, shooting, and motor sport.

8. Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

I think we had better make it 5 years! Still here I hope. Definitely spending more time playing golf, and skiing all winter. "You are allowed to dream".

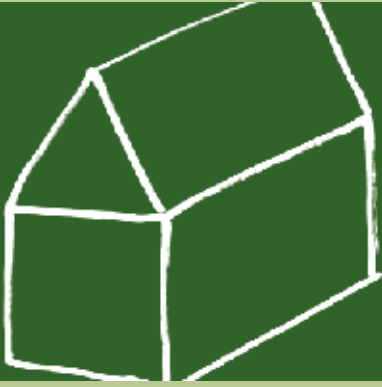
9. Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?

There are many, but I would like to mention the Cavanaugh brothers, and Stephan Breisach in Austria, who has given me great advice over the years.

10. What do you consider to be your lucky number? 13

11. Pick a number. 13

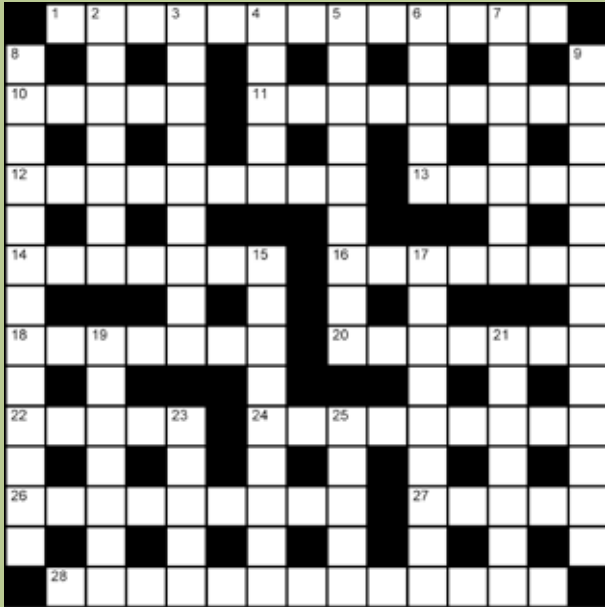
Bill has picked Bill Hawthorne of 2ic



in the shed

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

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 As Nelson did at Copenhagen (4,1,5,3)
- 10 A peeping Tom (5)
- 11 A person easily persuaded (4,5)
- 12 To come upon unexpectedly (9)
- 13 French artist, a founder of Impressionism (5)
- 14 Go back to the beginning (7)
- 16 Disease named after the Greek word for "coal" (7)
- 18 A midshipman of four years standing (7)
- 20 The world's oldest surviving motorcycle manufacturer (7)
- 22 From which greyhounds are released (5)
- 24 Doubt or delay (9)
- 26 The actions displayed by an organism in response to its environment (9)
- 27 Seven time F1 constructors champions (5)
- 28 1970's rock band, disbanded in 1977 after plane crash (6,7)

Down

- 2 Releases (7)
- 3 A care provider (9)
- 4 Attack from all sides (5)
- 5 Grass (9)
- 6 Old hat (5)
- 7 Of fewer years (7)
- 8 First line of Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy (2,2,2,3,2,2)
- 9 1999 film directed by M. Night Shyamalan (3,5,5)
- 15 Doctor Who (anag) (9)
- 17 Three stage race (9)
- 19 "Harry Potter and the _____ Hallows" (7)
- 21 South Western Irish province (7)
- 23 Common-sense and knowhow (5)
- 25 Animated ogre with a Scottish accent (5)

QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

The Sporting Year Ahead...

1. Who are the current Rugby Six Nations Champions?
2. Which horse won last year's Grand National?
3. Who scored the winning goal in the 2009 FA Cup Final?
4. Who won the 2009 Boat Race?
5. Name the winning skip at the 2002 Women's Winter Olympic Curling.
6. Who is the current BMW PGA Champion?
7. Which country is England's main Test opponent this summer?
8. Who are the current male and female US Open tennis Champions?
9. Who is the 2009 Sports Personality of the Year?

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

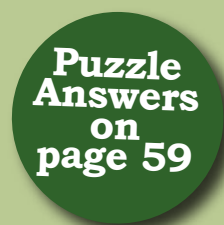
MONSTER SUDOKU

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.

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

SUDOKU

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



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22-24 January 2013

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in the shed answers

QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Ireland
2. Mon Mome
3. Frank Lampard
4. Oxford
5. Rhona Martin
6. Paul Casey
7. Pakistan
8. Juan Martin del Potro and Kim Clijsters
9. Ryan Giggs

CROSSWORD



MONSTER SUDOKO

Monster Daily Sudoku: Tue 2-Feb-2010 very hard

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

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SQUIGGLY SUDOKO

Daily Sudoku: Tue 2-Feb-2010 hard

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

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Salary range £22,776 to £28,050 per annum depending on skills, qualifications and experience

Do you have a passion for horticulture in general and sportsturf/greenkeeping in particular and working in the industry? Do you have commitment to educational values? We are looking for an assessor to advise and support candidates through the assessment process from entry point to external verification. The successful candidate will also have experience of increasing the number of students within this curriculum area. This post is a fixed term contract until 31 July 2010 with the possibility of making this permanent dependent upon the successful increase in student numbers.

Ideally you will possess Assessor's award A1 or D32/D33, have a minimum of a Level 3 Horticulture qualification with Sportsturf or greenkeeping specialism and have recent industrial experience. Ability to travel is essential.

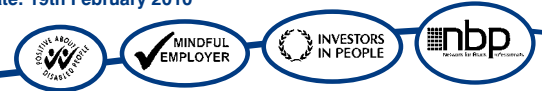
What's in it for you?

In return for your skills and expertise we will give you:

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If you want to work for a forward-thinking college with sites in St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Borehamwood then please visit our website at www.oaklands.ac.uk for an application form and more details.

Closing date: 19th February 2010




An exciting new opportunity has arisen for the role of Course Manager at one of the Midlands oldest and most prestigious clubs. The Worcestershire Golf Club is an 18 hole course with over 700 members and many repeat visitors, that celebrated its 130th anniversary last year.

The successful candidate will be responsible for carrying through the club's ambitious upgrade plans and will require the following attributes:

- Experience at the highest level at a quality golf course
- Proven ability to prepare work programmes and meet deadlines
- Experience in implementing and working to budget plans
- Knowledge of all aspects of managing a golf course including turf management, drainage, irrigation and up to date equipment
- Working knowledge of health and safety and environmental legislation
- The ability to work with and to motivate others to achieve an end goal
- Have a sound understanding of golf in order to meet the needs and interests of our members and visitors
- Experience in providing a quality golf course
- Proven ability to construct/reconstruct tees, bunkers and greens to the highest standard

This position offers a great opportunity for the right Greens Professional to make their mark and offers a negotiable salary to attract the best possible candidate.

All applications in writing, including an up to date CV to the Secretary, The Worcestershire Golf Club, Wood Farm, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire, WR14 4PP.

NORTH HANTS GOLF CLUB REQUIRES EXPERIENCED GREENKEEPERS

Founded in 1904, North Hants Golf Club is an 18 hole private member's Club.

We currently have two vacancies with an immediate start date and an April start date. Applicants should be ambitious, reliable, hard working and highly motivated.

The successful candidates will desirably have the following qualifications and skills:

- Qualified to NVQ 2 or minimum 5 years experience
- PA1.2 and 6a Spraying Certificates
- Chainsaw Certificate
- Good team players
- Knowledge of Health and Safety Regulations
- Knowledge of irrigation systems
- Ability to produce and maintain high standards of work

No accommodation available.

Closing date for immediate start no later than 28th February 2010
Closing date for April Start 31st March 2010

Please apply with current CV to:
 The Course Manager, North Hants Golf Club, Minley Road Fleet, Hampshire GU51 1RF

Email: admin@north-hants-fleetgc.co.uk

Assistant Greenkeeper



Situated on the South Wales coast between Cardiff and Swansea, Royal Porthcawl Golf Club is a regular host venue for both professional and amateur tournaments.

The club seek to recruit an enthusiastic, capable and experienced Assistant Greenkeeper to join the existing greenkeeping team in maintaining this world renowned classic links course.

Candidates should ideally possess:-

- At least three years experience in golf course maintenance
- NVQ 2 or similar qualification
- PA1, 2 and 6

Salary is negotiable based on previous experience.


Applications should be made in writing accompanied by full CV to:-

**Ian Kinley, Course Manager,
 Royal Porthcawl GC, Rest Bay, Porthcawl,
 CF36 3UW**

ian.kinley@royalporthcawl.com
www.royalporthcawl.com

Closing date: 28th February 2010

Head Greenkeeper



Due to retirement applications are invited for the position of Head Greenkeeper at Harrogate Golf Club.

This is a private members club established for over 100 years and is one of the finest parkland courses in the region.

The successful candidate must be an expert in his/her field and is expected to be a hands-on person who is capable of leading, organising, motivating and managing an experienced greenkeeping team that is committed to providing a course worthy of the name of Harrogate Golf Club.

The Head Greenkeeper will be responsible to the Chairman of Green for all operational and greenkeeping duties, which will include:-

- Managing golf course policies.
- Recommending changes to the golf course
- Costing future golf course projects
- Ensuring compliance with legislation relating to employment, health and safety and the environment.
- Attendance at Greens Committee meetings

Candidates will, ideally, possess appropriate green keeping qualifications, and have a proven history of success in a similar position. The salary for this position is negotiable.

Applications, in writing, including a full CV, must be sent to:-
The Secretary, The Harrogate Golf Club Ltd, Forest Lane Head, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 7TF
E-mail address: secretary@harrogate-gc.co.uk
Telephone No. : 01423 862999
Closing Date: 31/03/2010



On the Soapbox

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

It is my firm belief that soft spikes are not as safe as traditional metal spikes on a 'typical' British golf course, particularly during the winter months.

I also have regularly seen the accumulation of frozen mud and ice on the soles of soft spikes create a damaging imprint on soft or icy greens similar to that created by a football boot.

This poses the question, "Why are soft spikes so popular and why have traditional metal spikes taken such a back seat in the market place?"

The inception of soft spikes was American led, based on the ease of use of soft spikes on cart paths, pro shops, spike bars and changing facilities, making them 'customer friendly'. The second reason being the wear problems associated with metal spikes - particularly on creeping bent grass greens.

Golf shoe and spike manufacturers confirm this in the following statements:

"Plastic cleats reduce damage to greens, golf cars and clubhouse walkways, which save course owners money and provides golfers superior playing conditions. Plus, our plastic cleats are far more comfortable than metal spikes -- no more aching feet or legs."

"Many clubs introduced a 'soft spike only' or 'soft spike preferred' policy - such had been the volume of complaints from players following a golfer wearing metal spikes on to a green, and leaving a tell-tale trail of torn grass shoots."

It is interesting to read the same spike manufacturer go on to say the following on a (smaller) section of the website selling metal spikes:

"However, a key downside in soft spikes is that in damp conditions, they tend to clog with grass and mud - reducing their traction in the golf swing and often proving hazardous when walking on downslopes."

Metal spikes are not without their problems for the greenkeeper, and I am sure not many miss the sound and subsequent damage caused by metal spikes going through a mower cylinder, but can personally not say that damage from metal spikes to putting surfaces has caused a problem greater than those created by soft spikes during the winter.

Golf shoes are sold with soft spikes these days, and I read with interest that spike makers recommend changing soft spikes every 9-10 rounds! Nice work if you can get it. No wonder pro shops aren't quite so

keen to ban or restrict the use of soft spikes when an original set of metal spikes were effectively outlasting their shoes

Most professional golfers wear a traditional metal spike, or a combination, as they know that this gives them the best performance on the course, and proponents of metal spikes argue that soft spikes simply do not have enough grip, especially for a golfer with a high-power, high-torque swing or in wet weather. Another common reason for the golf pros dislike of soft spikes, is that with steel spikes, you can see any marks left, but with soft spikes although the damage is still there, you can't always see it. This type of problem is exacerbated by Black Widow type models with 7-9 cleat points per spike, multiplied by 9 per shoe, causing extra wear and tear.

At my own club, we have recognised the problems caused by soft spikes in the winter for several years now, and have in the past

be the golfers and the golf clubs that dictate their needs to equipment manufacturers and not the other way around, as has clearly happened. Although a shift to 'seasonal shoes' is only going to benefit the shoe and spike makers (again) call me a cynic!

Having reviewed safety records and carried out a Risk Assessment, I think it would be a brave or foolish golf club that continued to allow, and indeed encourage over a recognised safer option, the use of a piece of golfing equipment which further increases a danger to the user during 'winter' ground conditions.

The golf club and Course Managers duty of care lies with protecting both the golf course and the golfer. I would suggest a revision of existing, or the implementation of a new spikes policy, which endorses the use of steel spikes during the winter, will tick both of these boxes.

How about re-naming soft spikes as 'summer spikes' and metal spikes as 'winter spikes'?

put up advisory notices in which we recommend the use of traditional metal spikes during the winter months. We have this year, taken this one step further and banned soft spikes on the course from November to March each year. The decision is based on safety grounds as well as to protect the greens.

I would say at this point that metal spikes can also accumulate a certain amount of ice, but nothing like we see on a soft spike, and in defence of soft spikes, when ground conditions are good, they create no problems.

So what does the future hold; will there be a reversal in the trend of soft spike usage during the winter? I feel that golf clubs, led by a combination of safety considerations and a sensible view on the actual damage caused by metal spikes when compared to that caused by soft spike imprints, will have to make a decision that will eventually influence the reintroduction of metal spikes to some extent. This may mean golfers having to carry two sets of spikes or even two sets of shoes - winter and summer. How about re-naming soft spikes as 'summer spikes' and metal spikes as 'winter spikes'? It should



Andy Boyce
Course Manager
Bath Golf Club.

Andy Boyce

The views expressed within On The Soapbox are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International

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