

GI

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

£5.20 JANUARY 2010

Inside...

A Rookie's Guide to Harrogate Week

FIRST-TIME GOERS GET THE LOWDOWN
ON THIS MONTH'S EXHIBITION

Featured Inside

MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Finca Cortesin is
this month's Golf
Course Feature



Make 2010 a Good Year

We look to the year ahead with
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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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

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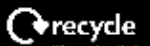
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ISSN: 0961-6977

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20/20 Vision

As we enter a brand new decade – yes, I'm aware of the old argument about how technically it begins in the year ending in one, but our Millennium celebrations started on the evening of Dec 31, 1999, not Dec 31, 2000, didn't they? – and as well as wondering what we have done with the last 10 years of our lives, it makes you wonder just where we will all be in January 2020.

On one hand the last 10 have gone in the blink of an eye but really it's remarkable just how much has happened since Jan 1, 2000.

A mere 10 years ago we hadn't even heard of the iPhone or Facebook, or Usain Bolt or Barack Obama, while Tiger Woods was known only for his golfing exploits.

In the big wide world, 9/11 and the subsequent military conflicts; the tsunami; the death of Michael Jackson and the demise of Woolies were all still ahead of us.

No-one could have predicted the volatility of the world economy two years ago, never mind 10 years ago, and there can be no disguising the impact that has had on golf.

However, the game will survive and those clubs which get their priorities right and continue to invest in their greatest asset will be successful, while sport in general - with the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and, possibly, the World Cup all gracing these shores in the next decade - will gain a genuine boost over the next 10 years.

It's just a case of finding a way through this particularly difficult spell and this month we include an article with contributions from Les Howkins MG and Ian Henderson which is designed to offer advice on how to make a lot out of a little both in the club and on the golf course.

Some of the information may be things you are already doing, or not relevant to your place of work, but even if there is one thing that can help you it will make life that little bit easier.

Don't discount advice from any source. But back to the year 2020.

I certainly don't have 20/20 vision, but I do know that some of what will be commonplace in 10 years' time will seem truly mind boggling now.

Progress doesn't slow down as we move forward – it gathers pace and I suspect we'll all be travelling to work on environmentally-friendly jet powered hover boards; have entire cities housed under glass domes to protect us from damaging rays, and be hitting the golf ball shorter distances to preserve the relevance of our top golf courses.

You guys may not have your current armoury of chemicals to fight disease but new versions will come on board, while grass breeders will be closer to the Holy Grail of slow growing, disease resistant, shade resistant, thin leafed swards.

Nostradamus I am not, but, you never know, I might just have got something right. I'm excited about the thought that it might be the bit about environmentally-friendly jet powered hover boards. You never know!

I hope you find a way through any difficulties you may be experiencing and go on to have a prosperous 2010.

Best wishes.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

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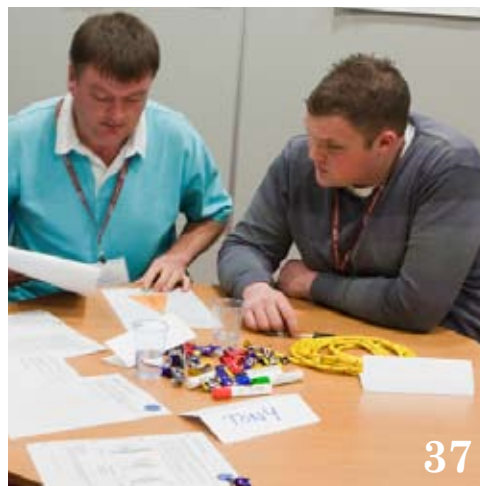
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Cover Photograph of Hankley Common,
taken by Course Manager, Gareth Roberts



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

“There it goes..!”



Don Wales, the nephew of multiple world speed record holder, Donald Campbell, will be at the controls of the attempt which aims to propel a lawnmower at speeds in excess of 100mph.

Project Runningblade aims to smash the current record set by Bob Cleveland from the United States of 80.792mph at Bonneville Salt Flats in 2006.

The attempt is planned to take

place at this Pendine Sands in Wales early next year and was announced at the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu.

At 100mph, the machine would cover 147ft per second, covering the target mile in less than 36 seconds.

The Runningblade team has worked with Countax and is hoping to raise funds and awareness for Great Ormond Street Hospital and Wessex Heartbeat.



Apprenticeship Framework For Horticultural Businesses Approved

Lantra, has announced that a new Level 2 and a revised Level 3 Modern Apprenticeship framework for horticultural businesses have been approved by the Modern Apprenticeship Group (MAG) and are now available to use in Scotland.

Over the past year, Lantra has undertaken an extensive consultation with horticultural businesses, other industry professionals and training providers to review industry's requirements for Modern Apprenticeships and ensure they are kept relevant and

up-to-date to meet the changing needs of industry professionals. Following this review, a new Level 2 Modern Apprenticeship (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level 5) in horticulture has been developed and the Level 3 framework (SCQF Level 6) revised.

The new Level 2 Modern Apprenticeship (SCQF Level 5) in horticulture is the first framework at this level to be made available in the environmental and land-based sector in Scotland. The new frameworks have been widely welcomed

by the horticultural industry as they meet the need identified by the industry for a Level 2 Modern Apprenticeship.

To view or download the new modern apprenticeship frameworks in horticulture, please visit <http://www.lantra.co.uk/apprenticeship-framework-documents/>. To find out more about the modern apprenticeship programme or to see the upcoming schedule of framework reviews, please visit:

www.lantra.co.uk/apprenticeships or call 0845 707 8007.



Architects Appointed by Emirates

Thomson Perrett & Lobb, the golf course architecture practice founded by five-times Open Champion, Peter Thomson, has been appointed by Emirates Golf Club to modernise its flagship Majlis Course, home of the Dubai Desert Classic.

TPL will carry out an audit of the course's bunkering as part of a wider modernisation programme, overseeing the repositioning and reconstruction of bunkers to upgrade the course for professional events, including the Dubai Desert Classic and Dubai Ladies Masters, and day-to-day club and visitor play.

Rod Bogg, Special Advisor

to Dubai Golf, who oversaw construction of Emirates Golf Club 22 years ago, said: "We selected TPL to oversee the modernisation of the Majlis Course because of its experience in designing prestige golf courses in the Middle East and its expertise in bunkering.

"Our bunkers are out of date and, due to modern equipment, out of play. Some of the players are hitting the ball 60 or 70 yards past the fairway bunkers during the Dubai Desert Classic. While that is only one week of the year, we need to ensure that the course remains the enjoyable challenge that it is for professionals and amateurs all year round."

Rod added: "We are not redesigning the course and not adding additional bunkers to the course, but we are looking at relocating, reshaping and reconstructing the bunkers we do have to bring the course up to the highest modern standards, as well as making some improvements to the aesthetics of the course." The new look course will be in play for the Dubai Desert Classic in 2011.

Pictured (from left): Andrew Goosen (TPL), Rod Bogg (Dubai Golf), Tim Lobb (TPL), Craig Haldane (Golf Course Superintendent), Chris May (General Manager, Dubai Golf)

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

From last April the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievances procedures applies to the workplace dispute resolution framework.

The ACAS statutory Code of Practice on discipline and grievance provides basic practical guidance to employers, employees and their representatives and sets out principles for handling disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace.

The Code is issued under section 199 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

A failure to follow the Code does not, in itself, make a person or organisation liable to proceedings. However, employment tribunals will take the Code into account when considering relevant cases.

For full details of the Acas Code of Practice and to download a free copy, go to: www.acas.org.uk/drr

Scottish Region Conference

The 2010 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Carnegie College, Dunfermline on Tuesday, March 2.

Speakers include Richard Windows and Henry Bechelet, from the STRI, and Greg Evans, Course Manager, at Ealing Golf Club.

Other speakers include Gordon McKie, Course Manager, Old Course, St. Andrews Links; Lee Strutt, Course Manager, GWest, Gleneagles, and finally, Paul Kimber, Golf Course Architect.

Tickets cost £35, which includes tea/coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

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

New Appointment

SISIS has appointment of Ewen Wilson as Export Sales Manager to replace David Harrison.

Ewen has worked for the Company for 26 years as demonstrator in Scotland and Northern Ireland and, in addition, has undertaken many demonstration trips overseas.



Please email your news items to the editor, Scott MacCallum: scott@bigga.co.uk

Keep on Running



Sunningdale's staff showed that they were a fit bunch by running in support of Children in Need 2009.

The run took place over two routes on the Old and New courses, starting at the clubhouse, with all runners going at the same time when a rocket was set off!

"The idea was to complete a marathon distance with all

runners doing a leg which consisted of 2.7 miles! The initially idea was to have ten runners to cover the distance but the response was so good we covered a lot more miles!" said Course Manager, Murray Long.

Runners consisted of all members of staff from the Secretary, Courses Manager, Head Greenkeepers, Assistant

Greenkeepers, General Manager and Food and Beverage servers.

"Members provided the sponsorship and the total is well above £500.

"It went so well that maybe next time we will look at expanding it to include other clubs to raise more money for this worthy cause," said Murray.

Trump Appoints Golf Course Superintendent



After more than 18 years at Carnoustie, Assistant Superintendent, Paul O'Connor, has been appointed Links Superintendent for the new Trump International Golf Links.

"Paul is highly respected and is known to be one of the best in his field. His years of training and experience at Carnoustie made him an obvious choice for this appointment. He is a very important addition to my team," said Donald Trump.

Paul was delighted by his new role.

"I enjoyed 18 years at Carnoustie and understand the high standards required of a leading championship course. I am extremely proud to be involved in the construction and development of what will be the finest links course ever built - it is a privilege to work for Mr Trump on this spectacular terrain."

Studying greenkeeping at Elmwood College in the early 90s, while working as an apprentice greenkeeper at Carnoustie, Paul quickly rose to the position of Head Greenkeeper under John Philip.

"During The 2007 Open Championship he led the greenkeeping team to prepare what was widely regarded as the best conditioned Open Venue of all time. His attention to detail, passion for the job and knowledge of links golf sets him apart; he will be a significant asset to the management team at Balmedie," said Ian McClements, of the STRI.

Paul has also advised on other international championship courses overseas, and has a golf handicap of 3.

Sheer Lunacy...

Daily Mail, Wednesday, November 25, 2009

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Now that's what you call a Flymo...



HEEARS! They'd take far too long. A ladder? No fun at all. In New Zealand, there is only one way to trim a 10ft hedge - with a crane and a ride-on lawnmower. The driver of the mower, who did not want to be named, admitted it was not the safest method of clipping off the winter growth

Mall Foreign Service from his private hedge in Cambridge, on the North Island. But he said it was all done as a bit of a joke, as he wanted to film the stunt and put it on the internet. In the end, he couldn't find a video camera

- but went ahead anyway with a crane and a mower that belonged to his friend. His wife arrived home during the operation, and was surprisingly pleased to see her husband perched over the hedge in mid-air. "I saw the crane first and thought 'great, the hedge is getting trimmed', but I didn't

realise this was what they were planning," she said. Luckily, it took her husband just 20 minutes to tidy the hedge. And his verdict: "The mower was doing an alright job, but I reckon it would work better on a hedge that's not so spiky." Unfortunately, he also broke his hand in the process, after falling off the crane.

This man would have fallen foul of the Health and Safety executive if it had been in this country. The Daily Mail featured this unusual attempt to cut a hedge.



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CAMPEY MAN

Campey Turfcare Systems has appointed David Harrison as Export Sales Manager. David is already very well known in the industry through his long career with SISIS and brings a wealth of experience and global industry knowledge to his new post.

David will be responsible for developing further growth in sales throughout the European and world markets where Campey Turfcare Systems are currently operating, as well as introducing a whole range of products into new markets in the Middle East and Asia. His appointment is also an integral part of the extension of the Imants distributorship.

“We are at a very exciting stage in the expansion plans of the company and David will play a central part in that future strategy. There is a huge challenge ahead; one that he is extremely well qualified to take on,” said Richard Campey, Managing Director of Campey.

“His expertise, professionalism and dedication to the industry have been demonstrated throughout his association with the groundscare industry. We are extremely pleased that he has accepted this position and consider him a valuable and important asset to the team.”

David commented on his appointment “I am very excited to be joining the company at this time, and looking forward to the challenge of expanding the business in the export markets and establishing Campey Turfcare as a global name in the industry”.

London to Paris via Bicycle All for a Good Cause!



Mandy Caton, Sales Administrator at Campey Turf Care Systems, will face the biggest challenge of her life next Spring when she attempts to cycle from London to Paris to raise money for the Breast Cancer Campaign.

In just four days in May, she'll cover 300 miles in the company of 70 other riders.

“I'm terrified, but excited at

the same time, I know it'll be an unforgettable experience,” said Mandy, who has been with Campeys for seven years.

“It's a long way and I've never done anything like this before, but I'm determined to raise as much money as I can for the charity.

“I'm doing lots of preparation by cycling locally, going to spinning classes at the gym

and buying every sort of garment I can with gel in it!

“One of my good friends had breast cancer two years ago and is now in remission thankfully. It seems that most people you speak to know someone who has been affected by it in some way.”

To sponsor Mandy visit: www.justgiving.com/mandy-caton.



New Man for Aitkens

Aitkens Sportsturf has appointed Paul Emmanuel as an additional new technical representative for the Yorkshire area. Australian Paul has been a greenkeeper at Harrogate Golf Club for over six years and before that was a groundsman at two cricket clubs in the Harrogate area. He has been a regional finalist in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and has also won four titles in the Nidderdale Cricket League for best ground.

Paul's responsibilities will include extending Aitken's coverage to golf and sports clubs around Yorkshire.

“Paul will be a welcomed addition to our existing representatives to further improve our coverage and service to our customers,” said Richard Aitken, Commercial Director.

South East Seminar

The South East Regional Seminar held at the Reigate Hill Golf Club, in November, was hosted by the Surrey Section of BIGGA.

The theme for the day was The Decade Ahead. What does the next decade hold for Golf Management and Greenkeepers?

Over 90 delegates enjoyed excellent presentations given by Tracey Maddison, Head of BIGGA Membership Services; Tim Lobb, Course Architect from Thomson Perrit & Lobb; Martin Ward, Symbio; Mark Hunt, Headland Amenity; Lee Penrose, STRI Ecologist, and Laurence Pithie MG From Turf MasterOne.

The day finished with some interesting thoughts for the future during discussions in the question and answer session.

The Sussex Section is due to host the Regional Seminar in November 2010.

Head for the Sun

The CMAE is moving its AGM into Europe for the first time in its history, and partnering with Club Managers Spain, will be jointly staging the International Club Management Congress at the Villaitana Wellness Golf & Business Resort, Benidorm, Spain from 14-17 April.

This move reflects the growing number of CMAE members outside the UK and Ireland, and following feedback received from members asking the Association to consider staging business conferences in attractive tourism destinations.

The CMAE's aim is to encourage club managers, suppliers, owners and operators to gather in Benidorm two weeks after Easter to discuss issues affecting our industry and share solutions and ideas to allow clubs to grow and prosper.

The conference theme is "Lead your Club into the Future."

For full details of the event and to register, please visit the International Congress website: www.gheisagolfconsulting.es/es/infogeneral2

All Sorts of Sports



Speedcut Contractors has been busy with a wide variety of sportsturf projects – including many in the world of golf . . . but also football, rugby, cricket and racecourses.

Among the more recent golf projects have included Foxhills Golf Club and Resort in Surrey where Speedcut has been using its new BLEC laser grader to transform old tees.

And at Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey, under Contracts Manager Barry

Pace, Speedcut has reshaped and reconstructed green surrounds, tees and bunkers, following last year's major woodland clearance and construction of three water storage tanks

Also in Surrey at Lingfield Park Golf Club Speedcut has completed drainage on the 17th fairway, while at Sandmartins Golf Club, Wokingham, bunkers have been reshaped for lining with Sportcrete.

The company also carried out work at Wincanton and Market Rasen Racecourses with their new Gwazae deep probe aerator, decompacting areas of high impact around jumps. Last year Wood Bend at Market Rasen was completely remodelled to overcome an adverse camber.

At King's College School in Surrey, major pitch renovation on three football pitches was carried out and a cricket square relocated.

Directorship for Steve



Golf and Turf Machinery, the Ransomes Jacobsen dealer for Yorkshire, has appointed a well known figure from the turf industry as Sales Director.

Steve Nixon, the former Sales Manager at Bernhard & Co, joins Glen Sawyer and John Passfield on the board at the Mexborough-based company.

He will be responsible for the sales operation across the company's recently expanded territory, with particular focus on new business generation in the golf sector.

During his career at Bernhard's he spent three years at the company's facility in southern Florida and six years as UK and Ireland Sales Manager. Prior to this he spent seven years in the golf industry as greenkeeper/mechanic at golf clubs in South Yorkshire. "Steve has a great understanding of the golf market, both here in the UK and across the Atlantic in the USA. He is able to communicate at all levels and his people skills will certainly be an advantage in his new role. He will be a great asset to the business, especially as we develop in our extended territory in North Yorkshire," said Glen Sawyer.

Steve lives in Barnsley, South Yorkshire with his wife Michelle and their two children, Matthew and Emma-Louise.

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Chairman's Word

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

Over the past 12 months we have seen many factors at play that affect golf and ultimately our livelihoods.

The end of the booming economy did not come as a complete surprise to me having seen a similar pattern in the early 1990's recession when many new clubs suffered. This time round the downturn in the economy has affected a much broader range of clubs. Household disposable income to spend on leisure is bound to come under pressure during these hardened times and corporate spending on golf is unlikely to return to previous levels until balance sheets are rebuilt.

The Association is affected by the change in the state of the economy and has already had to face up to some harsh realities that resulted in the loss of three positions at HQ in 2009. Many clubs are no different in having to review their operations and shed jobs to try and make ends meet including

the economy will drive everyone to adopt a healthier approach and before making decisions ask themselves - is that really necessary? To my mind this is no bad thing for the golf industry and its future.

Helping members to work through the current difficulties by improving their skills that are needed to tackle some of these challenges is a cornerstone of learning and development. There are numerous opportunities at Harrogate and up and down the country throughout the year to brush up your skills and network with others to discuss these common issues - sharing problems is a much easier way to find the best solution. Professional, up to date, experienced greenkeepers will always be in demand from clubs that continue to need the best people available to help their businesses develop - so make sure you are one of them.

I have often heard the word apathy



Learning and Development for All

some greenkeeping staff. While the politicians would have us believe that recovery is just round the corner we all know that the ongoing impact of the recession is far from over. All businesses will have to continue to adapt and make changes to remain viable, working through the difficulties, meeting the challenges head on and finding ways to progress.

Organisations will emerge leaner, fitter businesses having stripped out wastage and the unaffordable to place themselves in a stronger position going forward. Many new clubs built in the boom period of the late 1980's including my own, went through a change in ownership and adapted their business model following the previous recession. The result was much more focus on marketing to target golfers, making course improvements a regular continual process and finding ways to maintain high standards at a lower cost. Having played my part in this sometimes painful process of transforming an unsuccessful business into one that now thrives, the learning experience has proved invaluable.

Much more emphasis on both financial and environmental sustainability is resulting in lowered inputs to operate golf courses with the return to previous levels looking increasingly unlikely. This correction in

mentioned when we ask why some members don't attend seminars, golf days and Harrogate Week. This is far too general and simplistic an answer. Time is undoubtedly a factor, travelling distances, subject matter/content of training etc. Thank you to all who returned the recent learning and development survey - your replies will help us to understand and tune courses that meet your needs.

If you didn't receive the survey by e-mail then please make sure your e-mail address is up to date. E-mail is the most environmentally friendly way of communicating with members, reliable and cost effective.

Getting back to Learning and Development opportunities it is particularly important that we engage with assistant greenkeeper members, they are the future Course Managers. Many seminars regionally and at Harrogate are well attended by senior staff but considering that assistant greenkeepers make up the larger part of the membership they are under represented on these days. My own thoughts are that we should ensure that there are sufficient regional training days that are specifically aimed towards assistant greenkeepers held regularly but only during the winter months from November to February to ensure good attendance levels.

It is far easier for Course Managers to send their assistant greenkeepers to regional days in winter and while some assistants may be afforded the opportunity to go to Harrogate Week it is beyond the pocket of many clubs and often they can't send multiple members of their teams all on the same day. Assistant greenkeepers rely on their managers to send them on these days and I ask you all to consider whether your guys are getting the right opportunities to learn.

My year as Chairman draws to a close this month - it has been a honour to represent BIGGA both at home and abroad and I look forward to offering my full support to Paul Worster, as Chairman in 2010, working with him and the rest of the board to benefit all the membership. In Paul, I know we have someone with drive, energy and enthusiasm and who is equally keen to see learning and development as the cornerstone of BIGGA.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the BIGGA staff for their hard work and wish everyone a Happy New Year.

**Peter Todd
National Chairman**



Greenkeepers Training Committee



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

Happy New Year – Is it?

Never has this term been spoken with so much hope rather than just a passing annual obligatory greeting!

So what shall we do? Wait and see if something happens to make it a happy new year or actually think positively and contribute to making it a happy new year!

At the time of writing this article pre the festive season, the GTC has no official presence at Harrogate Week, no sponsorship of the Continue to Learn programme, no exhibition stand; all decisions made by the Board, following a savage reduction in funding support from various sources.

Cuts have been made to the GTC's budget and only a few are mentioned above, however, the GTC's work to have a range of nationally recognised qualifications including an apprenticeship scheme, which has benefited many golf clubs and greenkeepers over many years continues and hopefully "new income" is at last on the horizon.

The GTC, since the R&A's decision to phase out its core funding to the GTC over a three-year period from 2005, has explored many avenues to make up over £100,000 per annum in lost income.

We all read John Pemberton's Editorial in the December magazine regarding the golfing industry having to realise that more funding is required for greenkeeping and John, Donald Steel, the GTC Chairman, and fellow GTC Directors (representatives from the Home Unions) are also asking the same question, how do we raise more funds especially from the increasing number of nomad golfers to help provide a better service to golf club employers, employees and give golfers, the customer, better conditions to enjoy their game of golf?

It has taken years for the GTC to establish the structure for greenkeeper education and training in the UK with a set of qualifications, which are the envy of many coun-

tries. However, it wouldn't take it long for it all to collapse.

So, at last a breakthrough for the GTC! All formal education and training courses and the various schemes leading to a recognised qualification attract government funding and this is where employers as well as greenkeepers really benefit from the routine core work of the GTC.

It is Further Education Colleges and private training Centres who access government funding to provide courses relating to the various approved formal qualifications and schemes at a much reduced cost.

The GTC is involved at every stage of qualification development and review from the new 14-19 Environmental and Land based Diploma, through the changes in NVQ's to Work Based Diplomas and Higher Education college based courses/qualifications.

We have to ensure we continue to attract youngsters into the career of greenkeeping and continue to maintain and improve access to the various qualifications including the apprenticeship scheme.

Confused?

I am pleased to report that despite the ongoing changes the Government keeps proposing for qualifications the GTC has, with the support of individuals working in colleges and Centres, maintained the national occupational standards for apprentices to Degree students.

The three skill sets are also maintained for greenkeeper, golf course supervisor and golf course manager.

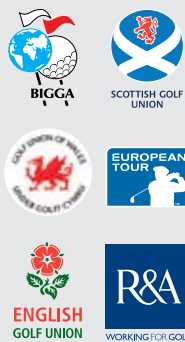
Now for the breaking news:

City & Guilds – NPTC, as the traditional leading Awarding Body for the Land base sector in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will during 2010 be including the GTC logo on all its Work Based Diplomas for greenkeepers and part of every registration fee will be paid to the GTC.

In Brief

Awarding body agreement gives industry due reward after many years of developing greenkeeping standards - David explains this landmark partnership.

The GTC is funded by:



This fee, to be paid annually, is "new money" for the GTC and while very welcome this proposal has greater benefits to the education and training system.

The GTC training manual will be the only document that approved centres will use and the learning materials will be made available to every learner on the greenkeeper and golf course supervisor training courses.

This is "new income" for the GTC, but I certainly hope readers see this as recognition for the sector after nearly 50 years of determination to establish the sector's own branded qualifications, not only as a financial reward but it also confirms it is in control of its own standards.

There are other Awarding Bodies that will be looking to offer similar Diplomas but the C&G - NPTC - GTC partnership will be the only Diploma that has the industry's full endorsement.

Discussions are also underway with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to mirror the C&G-NPTC - GTC agreement. In principle the branding of the SVQ's has been agreed but a further meeting is planned to finalise the detail of an agreement.

Having attended so many meetings in recent years fighting the greenkeeping sectors corner and finally gaining recognition at the highest level for the standards we all seek, I can finally start to believe in Father Christmas and just hope that 2010 is a very HAPPY NEW YEAR for all of us!

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BREAKING NEWS:

The GTC's Training Manual and Learning Materials to be adapted for use by Groundsmen and women at all NPTC Centres offering the new Work Based Diplomas in Groundsmanship! More to follow...

Learning & Development

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



I trust that you have all had an enjoyable festive period and are raring to go for 2010! Rachael and I are now trying to stick to our New Year resolutions – easier said than done!

For our industry, the year kicks off in grand style with Harrogate Week incorporating Continue to Learn and the BTME & ClubHouse Exhibition providing us all with a much needed pick me up to lead us into the new season.

Delivering an event such as Continue to Learn is a time consuming and costly exercise to ensure that the standard of education is up to scratch and relevant, as well as affordable.

The Continue to Learn 2010 Education Programme is being partially supported by our Gold and Silver Key members, who contribute a great deal of money to the Learning and Development Fund.

The Learning and Development Fund is a ring-fenced fund that supports all of the activities that are undertaken by the Learning and Development Department.

Without this support BIGGA would not be able to offer many of the benefits and services that are available to our Members today.

In 2009 the Gold and Silver Key companies and individuals have supported a number of initiatives:

- Sponsorship of the Continue to Learn article in Greenkeeper International

- Purchase 22 new books for the BIGGA Library
 - Supported the cost of education for 28 members through the Refund of Fees Scheme
 - Subsidised the cost of Section and Region education events
 - Provided new Field Guide folders and dividers
 - Produced an updated Pest and Disease Field Guide
 - Subsidised Microsoft Online Learning packages
- The cost of these activities alone is almost £35,000.

The Gold and Silver Key companies and individuals who contributed to the Learning and Development Fund in 2009 are:



Gold Key Companies



John Deere
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Ransomes Jacobsen
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Syngenta
Toro

Individual Gold Key contributors

WJ Rogers
Andy Campbell MG, GCGS
Iain A Macleod
Tom Smith
Frank Newberry
Christopher Lomas MG
Lee Strutt MG



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.

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Robert Maibusch MG
Richard McGlynn
Stephen Pope
Jason Sarna
Steven Tierney
Neil Whitaker
Graham Wylie

Learning and Development lies at the very core of BIGGA's culture and with many projects in mind for 2010 the continued support of our Gold and Silver Key contributors is vital to allow the Association to keep moving forward and continue to enhance the reputation of its members by promoting best practice in sports turf management.

If you are interested in contributing to the Learning and Development fund as a Gold and Silver Key member, individuals should contact the Membership Department and companies should contact John Pemberton, Chief Executive.



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Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors



Golden Key Individual Members: WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, GCGS; 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



Launceston Chooses Massey

Graeme Gallimore, Course Manager at Launceston Golf Club, in Cornwall has selected an MF 1540A compact tractor as being the ideal power unit for the club's demanding course maintenance requirements.

"Our ageing loader tractor had seen better days and the time had come to pension it off and give its loading duties to

another tractor," he explained.

"We decided to fit a front-end loader to an existing model and buy a new tractor of around 40hp that could work comfortably on all parts of our hilly course in all weathers."

As the incoming power unit was to be used on tasks such as deep tine aeration, mole drainage, top dressing, trailer work and spraying, Graeme

and his greenkeeping team wanted a versatile tractor that was able also to satisfy a number of key points.

"It had to have good stability, a high power-to-weight ratio, decent rear lift capacity and be fitted with wide flotation tyres so it could work effectively without compacting our clay-loam greens," explained Graeme.



Honorary Award

The IOG has announced two Award schemes in honour of its late chairman, Alex Millar: The Alex R Millar Award for Pitch of the Year; and the 2012 Fund's Alex R Millar Bursary Fund. Both schemes reflect aspects of the industry that Alex was deeply passionate about.

Alex was IOG National Chairman from 2002 up to his death last year. He also held the post from 1991-1993 and was the IOG representative on football's Playing Surfaces Committee, helping to establish the Football Groundsman of the Year awards. Alex also served as IOG Board member as well as being a former Treasurer of the IOG.

IOG Chief Executive, Geoff Webb, said the Alex R Millar Award for Pitch of the Year would be an annual award open to all professional football clubs throughout Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland.

"The difference with this award will be that it will be groundsman themselves that will vote, in much the same way that the Professional Footballers' Association votes for its player of the year."

He also announced that the bursary aspect of the IOG's 2012 Fund will be renamed. Alex was a fervent supporter of the bursaries, which offer financial help towards students' costs of tuition, fees and materials incurred as part of turf science and grounds management studies.

Tracmaster Goes to Oxford

Oxford University Parks have purchased two Tracmaster BCS Commander Flail Mowers through Bicester-based dealer, Turney Groundforce.

The University Parks consist of about 70 acres of parkland on the west bank of the River Cherwell. Walter Sawyer, Park Superintendent, and his 34-strong team are responsible for this park on South Parks Road, as well as the grounds of 21 colleges across Oxford.

"We needed to replace our Saxon flail mowers so we contacted our local dealer,

Turney Groundforce, who recommended BCS from Tracmaster," said Walter.

"We opted for the BCS Commander with the 80cm flail mower as the best machine for the job."

The BCS Commander is a professional grass management system designed for those who need adaptable machines. It is capable of operating a number of implements including a flail mower, scythe, rotary mower, hay rake and mini baler. There is also a bank version of the machine for use on slopes up to 40 degrees.



To the Manor Combe...

The Manor House Golf, at Castle Combe, has purchased a fleet of 46 electric E-Z-GO RXV golf cars from local distributor, TH White.

Charlie Gaisford, the Club's Course Equipment Maintenance Technician, was instrumental in the decision making process together with Estates Manager, Paul Bishop.

"We were operating a mixed fleet of petrol and electric golf cars supplied by another of the major manufacturers," said Charlie.

"When it came time to change we had a good look at what was

on offer across the industry. We undertook some detailed evaluation of the major brands and the operating costs of petrol versus electric.

"I particularly like the durability of the RXV; its robust and well put together. The onboard chargers kept the cost of installing the additional charging points in our covered buggy park to a sensible level. The automatic battery fill system not only ensures that the batteries are maintained easily, but that they are topped up to the correct level and not over-filled.

"TH White's loaned us a

demonstration vehicle for a week on two separate occasions so that the management and members could evaluate them extensively. The members have really taken to them and particularly like the regenerative braking system, which combined with the automatic parking brake, provide excellent downhill control and safety.

"The major attraction of these buggies is that they are very cost-effective to run and generate significant revenue for the club. Almost as important, they are certainly a hit with members and visitors."



Chairman Elected

John Deere has elected Samuel R Allen as Chairman of the board, effective from February 24. He will continue as Deere & Company President and Chief Executive Officer.

The decision is another step in the company's systematic process of leadership transition that was announced last June.

Samuel will become Chairman immediately following expiration of Robert W Lane's current term as Chairman and member of the Deere Board of Directors. The board also voted to reduce the size of the board to 11 members, effective at the same time.

In June, Deere & Company announced that it had elected Samuel to become President and Chief Operating Officer

The new Chairman is a 34-year veteran of Deere with a broad range of leadership experience. He has served as a Senior Officer since 2001, was President of the Worldwide Construction & Forestry Division and also led the Deere Power Systems Group, John Deere Credit's global operations and Deere's global human resources and labour relations.

He also had responsibility for Deere's intelligent mobile equipment technologies and for Deere's advanced technology and innovation.

Torrential rain has highlighted compaction and drainage problems on golf courses throughout the UK, sending Terrain Aeration from Hampshire to Birmingham and Hertfordshire to Eastern Scotland.

At Copt Heath and Basingstoke golf course, Terrain Aeration treated all 18 greens with the Airforce Scamper terrallift machine, relieving compaction panning by injecting compressed air. Terrain got to Kirkcaldy GC and treated nine of Head Greenkeeper Mike Ewan's traditional greens while the weather held.

David Green remembers rock hard ground conditions.



Terrain Drains Fore Golf

Make 2010 a Good Year

Those within the golf industry are under no illusion that 2010 is going to be a difficult year... but not impossible. As the year gets under way financial expert, Ian Henderson, and Master Greenkeeper, Les Howkins, give some excellent advice that might help golf clubs through this sticky period.



Photograph of Hankley Common, taken by Gareth Roberts



Keep it Simple

What can be done on the golf course to ensure standards are maintained during a period when budgets are being cut and finance is at a premium. Les Howkins MG, Course Manager at The Richmond Golf Club, in Surrey, offers some advice on how to make a difference without raiding the piggy bank.

It is an accepted truism that the golf course is a golf club's greatest asset, but it will only remain so if it is maintained to the best standard the budget will allow and does not deteriorate.

Master Greenkeeper Les Howkins is well aware of the need to keep quality high but also knows that the need to do so cost effectively is of paramount importance.

"I'm pretty lucky here, we are increasing membership and are bringing in more green fees but I also remember where I've come from, working at golf clubs where budgets were tight and life was a bit more of a struggle," he explained.

With that in mind, and being a northerner, he has a keen appreciation of the value of money and employs many low or no cost techniques which make a real difference.

"Top of the list is to keep things clean and tidy. For example, it doesn't cost money to take a bucket of water and a sponge and wash down the flag pins. It's dead simple. Also for the cost of a can of paint and a little bit of effort you can have the tee markers and the hazard posts looking fresh."

It does sound simple. So simple,

in fact, that you do wonder why you ever seen neglected flag sticks or scruffy furniture on any golf course, but Les has a theory on that.

"I believe that a lot of greenkeepers think about tees, fairways and greens, first, second and last. I remember when I went to college it was all about turf quality and never once was I told of the importance of keeping the golf course neat and tidy. Keeping markers painted and paths weeded etc is still not part of the NVQ system.

"People tend to focus on the element that they spend a lot of money on – fungicide, fertiliser, top dressing, aeration, cutting and put all their effort into that. However, they could have the best greens in the world but if nothing else is up to scratch people won't go and play it," said Les.

"They are all things that don't necessarily stand out when they are done well, but they certainly do stand out if they are not right."

Another area where resources can be shepherded more effectively is cutting regimes.

"There is no point in diamond cutting a fairway that takes however many hours when you can get just as good a quality of surface by block cutting half and half in a frac-

tion of the time which then frees up manpower to weed paths and edge bunkers.

"It's also fantastic if you can hand mow greens but if you have had to make a member of staff redundant if you have a ride-one use it as it saves a lot of time and manpower which can be used elsewhere on the course."

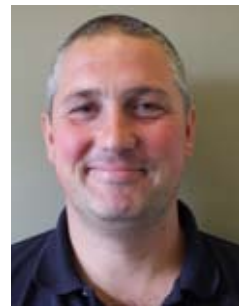
However, Les is quick to put something else into the equation if changes to course management procedures are to take place.

"Communication is the key. If you are making changes to the way you cut, or have decided to rake the bunkers three times a week instead of four, it is important that you inform the members and explain the reason to them."

And ideally this doesn't just mean sticking a notice up in the locker room.

"Emails are great. Most clubs have a database of email addresses and it takes seconds to send a message to all the members and costs nothing. If it's chucking it down and the course is wet, we'll inform them. If it's frosty, we tell them. It's a really good way of communicating and makes the member feel he or she is being considered."

Les is also an advocate of having



Les Howkins MG, Course Manager



A marker post in need of a coat of paint



the set of standards the greenkeeping team works to written down.

“Everyone should know the standards that you work to – General Managers, Committees, staff etc, and if any changes are made these should be made known. It’s like the Policy Document and would include things like the number of times you rake the bunkers, cut the fairways etc.”

Working out how many hours are spent doing various tasks through the week also makes it much easier to identify what jobs would have to be dispensed with should the man hours available to the Course Manager be reduced through a reduction in overtime or redundancy.

It says much for the skills of the country’s Course Managers that even with cut backs at many golf clubs over the last 18 months standards have been maintained or even raised.

“You have to be adaptable, roll with the punches and move with the times. You can’t be stuck in your ways.

“There is nothing in our job that we can’t do. There is always an answer and a way of making something work but when it comes to the longer term those with bents and fescues greens will probably

cope better financially. They will have fewer inputs, less disease, less fungicide so money and time spent maintaining them is always going to be less, but you can’t change to a more sustainable approach overnight so it’s a long term project.

“People can work towards this though because the next recession is only 10-15 years away. It’s one of those facts of life. It goes round in circles,” warned Les.

Off the course Les is also a great advocate of personal development and has some advice that can keep that on track without costing a penny.

“Training can be quite expensive, particularly if money is tight but it is important to keep it up and it can be done even if you have virtually no budget at all.

With the BIGGA Library you can be sitting at home in an evening adding to your knowledge for just the cost of return postage.

Section Training events can also be very useful and can be for a little as £15-£20 a day. Not a lot of money and something you can always pay out of your own pocket if the club has no money in the training budget.

The Government fund some NVQ training for the younger greenkeep-

ers and is a good way of motivating if no pay rise is available.”

Les is very much of the view that the way to succeed is to be the best club of your type in the area.

“You want to be the best club full stop but if you can’t be that you’ve got to be the best you can be in your target market. If you are at a lower end pay-and-play you make sure you are better than the next nearest lower end play-and-play.

“It’s a case of doing the right things, keeping it simple and not making it over frilly.”

ABOVE: Manor House GC at Castle Coombe, taken by Gian Povey, and showing how good a course can look.

BELOW: Example of a well raked bunker



Loads of Money

Ian Henderson gives some sound advice for ensuring your club's financial survival

As recently as two years ago, funding for golf clubs was easy. Golf was considered a very good risk, and while some of the more recently established proprietary clubs were scrutinised more closely than a 100 year old members club, the business was generally arranged without too much difficulty.

How things have changed. With golf clubs considered part of the leisure industry, the clearing banks and finance houses have lost most of their appetite for our business.

Without doubt life has become more difficult for many golf clubs.

There have been casualties, and there will be more. Golf clubs however, are resilient beasts, and the well established members' golf clubs will continue to survive, and indeed some will thrive albeit at the expense of others.

What the lenders fail to address is that golf clubs which have graced our land for 100 years and more have witnessed several crisis. Two world wars, depressions, fashion swings and they are still here to tell the tale.

As you would expect at a time like this, there has been a downturn in machinery replacement, with many clubs making do for another year or two. The quality of the machines





ABOVE: Photography by Dean McMenemy

available today, combined with regular maintenance means, in many cases a fairway mower scheduled for replacement after five years will last seven or eight years. The only thing a club must be aware of is the cost of hanging onto a machine for too long.

Where a five year old mower may be worth £5,000, if it requires a major repair, which could cost between £3,000 and £6,000 it will still only be worth £5,000. So it is true to say there will come a point where you can start throwing good money after bad.

The repair costs would go along way to covering the annual lease cost for a new replacement mower.

Machinery finance is generally still readily available, and while fixed interest rates do not reflect the current bank base rate of 0.5%, rates are generally favourable and finance offers great flexibility.

For larger projects such as clubhouse renovation or course improvements, the rules have changed dramatically. In years gone by projects under a cost of £50,000 were regularly funded simply with an unsecured loan.

In today's market any project where we are looking at longer term, large value funding, without doubt the funder will look for tan-

gible security, normally by way of a first charge over the course and clubhouse.

According to a respected golf club specialist, values of golf clubs have fallen between 5% and 15% over the last two years.

Once the project has been agreed and costed, there is no certainty funding will be available. Over the past two years the funders have become very adept at finding reasons not to agree facilities.

It is true to say there will come a point where you can start throwing good money after bad.

In addition to making funding difficult, most of the lending houses have taken advantage of the lack of funding to significantly increase their margins and fees.

In 2005 it would be reasonable to assume a facility of say, £500,000 could be secured at around bank base rate + 1.5% - 2% but in today's market you could be nearer bank base rate + 3.5% - 4%

The fee structure has also increased with arrangement fees of 2% quite common.

We are in fairly difficult times,

which have seen huge changes in attitudes toward money. Many golf clubs who considered themselves cash purchasers, are now looking to utilise machinery finance and spread their cost.

The current situation has also spurred many clubs to look at the way they conduct their business. It is always difficult to carry out major changes, but because it has always been done this way, does not mean it is right.

Traditional systems and methods are no longer suitable in today's marketplace and more efficient management is being implemented in many golf clubs.

More than ever careful planning is required for all aspects of the golf club business.

- Machinery Finance
- Long term projects
- Overhead controls
- Staffing costs

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Disease Control

A new way of thinking

Background

Sherriff Amenity, working with independent research organisations such as the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) and with chemical manufacturers, have carried out extensive trials on the efficacy and compatibility of fungicide tank-mixes. This work was commissioned in order to provide new and innovative solutions to the turf disease problems experienced by our customers.

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no reason why all golf clubs cannot ride out this difficult period, and come out the other end stronger than ever.

It is vital that golf clubs have a long hard look at the way they do business. It is no longer enough to look at the bottom line when the annual accounts are lodged at the AGM. Each department must be isolated and assessed on its own merits. It is all very well having a fantastic bar turnover, but what do you do if the catering is dragging it down? It is all very well having a waiting list and good members' income, what do you do if visitors are turned away and made to feel less than welcome.

A few clubs are in the envious position where money is of secondary importance, for the rest of us we need to make sure all parts of the jigsaw fit together to give a complete picture.

Hard decisions may need to be taken; many of them will prove unpopular, but not as unpopular as standing up at an EGM to explain the need for £150 levy per member for the next five years!

Successful clubs are now looking at ways of generating income from alternative sources. If you have 500 members and 5,000 visitor rounds per year that is how much revenue you will generate in 12 months.

If you have the facilities to accommodate members' functions, such as weddings, anniversaries, birthday etc exponential additional income can be raised without altering the basic golf income streams available.

Simple things like offering 10% discount for visitors if they book lunch or dinner at the same time as booking golf or reduced buggy fees if the buggy is reserved at the time of booking can make a big difference to the overall profit at the end of the year.

If your club charge £25 per person per round. You only need one fourball per day, Monday to Friday, April to October and you will generate an additional £16,000 income per year!

The demographics of golf clubs are changing significantly. We are seeing the average age of existing members increasing and a huge number of junior members leaving clubs as the turn 18 and transfer to the adult section. This coupled with the general exodus from many clubs, means there are several important issues needing addressed.

Senior discounts: Many clubs operate schemes where senior members, with a specific number

of year continuous membership are entitled to up to 50% reduction in their annual subs.

The problem is the number who qualify for this has increased dramatically to almost 35% of the entire membership in some cases. In truth many of these members have taken early retirement, play at least five times a week, and have more expendable income than a 40 year old man, with a large mortgage, and a family to support. It is vital clubs redefine the rules. While there is mammoth resistance to any sort of increase aimed at the seniors, and bearing in mind they make up the majority of members and turn out en masse at any AGM or EGM,

Family Inclusion: With your average medal round taking just over four hours, an hour's travel time to and from the golf course, and diet coke and a sandwich with your playing partners, it's not just a Saturday morning.

It is important that golf clubs today offer more than just golf. If there are activities where the whole family can become involved, the entire day becomes much more inclusive and less contentious. Mixed competitions including Gents, Ladies, Seniors and Juniors, with a buffet and prize giving at the end can be very successful and rewarding. It is also worth considering awarding the spouse of a full member automatic

Successful clubs are now looking at ways of generating income from alternative sources.

it important new rules are set going forward. It may be possible, for example to restrict the reduced fee seniors to five day memberships, which would free up valuable tee times at weekends.

Junior retention: Years ago, 75% - 80% of boys and girls turning 18 found a job within 10 miles of where they were brought up. Today 80% plus will leave their home town and travel all over the world to universities and colleges to gain knowledge in their chosen subject. The chances of them returning home is fairly limited, so we need to face the fact it is nigh on impossible to keep the juniors, as their subscriptions increase to senior rate.

If it were possible to charge a nominal fee to "keep them in the fold" and allow them to play for, say a visitors' guest fee, it would be a start.

Second club membership: In the past people who were fortunate enough to belong to two clubs have made a choice of one club or the other. Geography will often dictate if they stay or go, but flexibility in fees and restricted access can often encourage them to stay, in one shape or form. To retain a member, even if that includes changing categories means there is still income potential from that person.

The dropping of joining fees has also contributed to the "Nomadic Golfer" who club hops from year to year.

By providing the best course in the area along with a welcome and good value for money catering can ensure your club is where the club hopper lays down his roots.

social membership of the club, and encourage them to make use the facilities on offer.

While money may not be as readily available as before, it is not all doom and gloom.

With a positive sustainable programme and a properly thought future, it is still possible to secure the funding required for you and club to survive and thrive.

Ian Henderson is Managing Director of Golf Finance.
www.golffinance.co.uk



Match Made



in Heaven

The relocation of the World Match Play Championship to Finca Cortesin was an incredible coup for the relatively new course. But as Mark Alexander finds out, bringing one of the richest tournaments in golf to Spain wasn't all plain sailing



Finca Cortesin is a new, luxury resort located an hour's drive south of Malaga.

The course itself slipped under the radar when it opened in 2006 which is surprising considering the quality of Cabell Robinson's routing through two wide ravines. Finca's fortunes changed however when it succeeded Wentworth in hosting the World Match Play Championship in October. Not surprisingly, interest in the young upstart began to pick up.

It was after all big news - opening a new course in Spain's saturated southern fringes is one thing, but opening one and then securing a European Tour event is something else. It was a move that also prized one of the richest tournaments in golf from Wentworth's steely grasp, which at a time of manic cost cutting has to be admired.

"The initial business plan included the idea of hosting a big tournament so the course has been designed to be a championship course, with its length," said Javier Reviriego, Director General of Finca Cortesin.

"It's not a course for everyone."

At 7,445 yards off the back pegs, Finca certainly has the length to challenge the very best tour players, as Ross Fisher found on his way to clinching the title against Anthony Kim; the first to be won away from Wentworth since the tournament's inception at the Surrey course in 1964.

Describing his victory as a "long, grueling week", the 28 year old admitted the course tested every part of his game.

"This course is very demanding, not only mentally but also physically," he said.

"All departments of my game were strong: the new driver seems to be going really well, my short game was pretty sharp and there were some shots out there that really paid dividends."

But Finca has far more than just length up its sleeve. The greens typically have narrow approaches flanked by deep bunkers. The 18th is a prime example with no less than nine bunkers surrounding the putting surface. Bearing in mind, this is a 567-yard, par five finishing hole that plays up hill all the way, you get some idea of the demands placed on the players.

The 15th is another stunner. This sweeping dogleg left covers 452 yards and has its apex protected by five sprawling sand traps. Played from elevated tee positions across a ravine and up an imposing slope to a green with incredible views, this hole tests players' courage as well as their brawn.

There are plenty examples of epic holes at Finca which demand accuracy and length off the tee, but the added threat of a stiff breeze off the Mediterranean makes it an intriguing place for competitive golf. In fact, the risk-and-reward strategy that permeates its way through the course began when the decision was first made to bring the match play tournament to the Med.

"It was earlier than we had expected but the opportunity to bring a very prestigious tournament to Finca was too good to miss. We couldn't say no," said Javier.

"The last year has been hectic with the golf course. We've had to do things that would have normally taken three or four years to complete but we decided to do it because it was too good an opportunity."



Being thrust into the media spotlight has certainly helped Finca gain valuable column inches and alluring TV coverage, but as Reviriego admits, there were also risks involved.

"When you host something like this, you better be prepared," he warned.

"Especially in a situation like we have where everybody will compare us to Valderrama and Wentworth. It was certainly a way of putting us on the map quickly, but it could have also worked against us if we weren't prepared. We only have one chance to make a first impression, so we wanted to make sure everything was perfect."

The man in charge of ensuring perfection on the course is Ignacio



Javier Reviriego, Director General of Finca Cortesin.



Soto, Finca's Head Greenkeeper. After 14 years plying his trade at courses like Valderrama and Soto Grande, he moved into construction and in January 2009 was employed by Finca as a consultant to oversee the course preparations. Seven months later he was offered the job as Head Greenkeeper, and he hasn't looked back since. If the truth be told, he hasn't had time.

"There was a lot to do on the golf course - until they hired me, there wasn't a Head Greenkeeper," he admits. One of his first jobs was sorting out the drainage.

"The sub soil is a 100% expanded clay - it's like plastic so it doesn't take any water. Whenever we get a lot of rain, it runs through the two top layers, so we need proper drain-

age with gravel. Unfortunately, some parts of the course weren't originally done properly."

But the course's drainage was merely an aperitif to the main bulk of work that had to be completed before the World Match Play Championship could take place. For instance, despite the gloriously undulating landscape that affords wonderful views over both the Med and an impressive mountain range that acts as a suitably dramatic backdrop, the site was blighted by electricity pylons that serviced a nearby village. If a European Tour event was to be held at Finca, the pylons had to go.

"All the wires went underground," said Ignacio.

"It was a big job and very expen-



ABOVE: The glorious greenery and mountainous surroundings of Finca Cortesin - the new, luxury resort located an hour's drive south of Malaga.



sive, costing around €8 million. But the golf course wouldn't be the same if it hadn't been done because you now have beautiful, uninterrupted views to the sea."

The work to rebuild holes 11, 12 and 13, through which the pylons crossed, was started a year after the course opened. It was essential if disruptive work, and it wasn't the only change needed to host a premier event like the World Match Play.

"We changed the grass on the green aprons," Ignacio explained.

"Originally, they were fescue. It wasn't the right type of grass because the water quality isn't suitable and it's very difficult to play out of. So we changed it to 419 Bermuda, which we use on the fairways, tees and rough."

In fact, only the greens escaped the Bermuda treatment, covered instead with L93 bentgrass. The transition from fescue to Bermuda around the fringes took eight months and was completed well ahead of the build-up to the tournament. Cutting it a little finer was the work to rebuild the 116 bunkers, 30 of which were completed in time for the World Match Play.

"More or less all of them had problems with clay bases," Ignacio explained.

"Due to the heavy rains and underground water, the clay mixes readily with the sand creating bad

playing and drainage conditions. To rectify the situation, we're using a fairly new technique where we clean the bunker by taking out all the sand, gravel and drainage, and put in a polyethylene sheet into all the contours of the bunker right up to the edge. We then put the drainage on top of the sheet and on top of that we put a plastic net which allows the bunker to drain but won't let the clay or gravel back up. On top of the net, we're depositing new, silica sand, which is different to our old sand. It's like crushed marble. It's a looser, cleaner sand which creates much better playing conditions."

At a cost of €30/m², the sheet-and-netting option isn't cheap, but it is necessary and was being implemented right up to the start of play.

"I hope to have all the bunkers done for next year," said Ignacio.

"It's a big job, but it's the worst area of the golf course right now, and the bunkers will only get even worse if we don't do anything about it. But it's not just for the tournament, it's something we want to do to improve the course generally."

What immediately strikes you about Finca Cortesin is the quality of the service that extends throughout the resort from the front-of-house staff through to the club house and finally to the welcoming smile the attendants give you as you pick up

your buggy (which is absolutely essential). The attention to detail would be unnerving if it wasn't for the considered approach taken by the staff who convince you effortlessly that their intention is to make your stay as pleasant as possible.

It seems this policy has been wholeheartedly embraced by Ignacio and his 25 greenkeepers who busy themselves preparing the course and, more importantly, undertake improvements that would send shivers down the back of many others.

"Irrigating this course is very complicated," he continued. "We have a lot of undulations so we have many different levels to water. Getting the right amount of water to the right area is very difficult. That's why we have 2,000 sprinkler heads to adjust."

Finca Cortesin is the rarest of golf resorts. It has set its standards at the highest levels and is delivering on them across all departments.

Nowhere is this more evident than on the golf course where perfection is the goal and attention to detail is the norm.

The World Match Play Championship is set to be played at Finca until 2011 with a possible three-year extension.

If the resort's first effort is anything to go by, one of the richest tournaments in golf might have found a new permanent home.

ABOVE: Ignacio Soto, Finca's Head Greenkeeper, stands proudly in front of his immaculate course.



about the author

Mark Alexander is an award-winning golf course photographer and established journalist who works for magazines, resorts and architects. Brought up in St Andrews, it seemed inevitable that he would work in the golf industry although initially his work took him to London and various roles in publishing. Since then his work has appeared in various golf publications not to mention a host of websites and corporate marketing literature. He balances his photographic work with writing and occasionally a round of golf – with a camera never too far away.

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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. ”

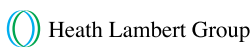
John Pemberton, Chief Executive



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

The anatomy of... a Greens Mower

The John Deere 2500 greens mowers have a great deal in common, but are very different mowers...

Built around essentially the same running gear as the established John Deere 2500B greens mower, the 'hybrid' 2500E is now a well established model in the UK. Here we take a closer look at both models, outlining what they share and where they differ.



Step-by-step Analysis...

John Deere 2500 greens mowers



Brushless reel motors are well proven and liked for their ability to deliver precise cut speeds. As with all greens mowers, Deere places great emphasis upon quality of cut. Note the roller brush; users can specify a range of cutting unit options.



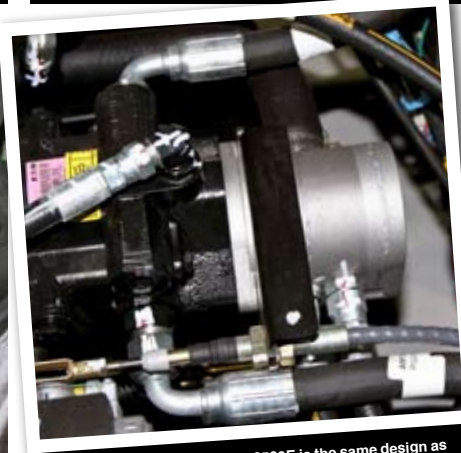
From the operator's point of view, there is little to tell the 2500B and 2500E apart from the seat. The latter mounted on a sloping rail to raise it as it is adjusted back. Steering column adjusts for reach.



At a modest 2,250 engine rpm, the powerful alternator on the 2500E will deliver enough 'juice' to power the cutting units at the desired cutting speed. In work, the engine can be throttle back, cutting noise and fuel consumption.



Below the command arm is a small cubby which can have a net cover. Greens mowers are designed to be light and compact, but a bit of storage space never goes amiss. Users can choose between smooth and tread pattern tyres.



Traction motor pump on the 2500E is the same design as used on its all-hydraulic sibling, the 25000B...

(continued on next page)

Calling the hydraulic-electric John Deere 2500E a 'hybrid' mower is somewhat misleading. Most of us associate the word 'hybrid', at least in the automotive sense, with a vehicle that has an engine with a large battery pack to power electric drive motors.

The engine provides generating power to keep these batteries topped up, chiming in when either more 'oomph' is required or when the batteries are in need of a charge.

The John Deere 2500E is different; a powerful 48 volt, 90 amp alternator directly powers the cylinder electric motors. There are no batteries involved and drive to the wheels is via conventional hydrostatic drive.

It is important to get this point established from the outset as there are still those who think the 2500E carries a heavy battery pack. In fact the 2500E and all hydraulic 2500B are pretty similar weight wise, the 'electric' models having a weight penalty of perhaps 22kg or so.

The electric advantage

Because these two greens mowers share the same cutting units, chassis and engine, John Deere is well placed to argue the case for and against electric drive. On the downside, current electric systems do add a bit of extra weight and it is fair to say there is better industry wide expertise in the understanding of hydraulic drive systems.

On the plus side, the electronics and components used on the 2500E are now well proven. If something goes wrong, swapping failed components is not difficult. There are no hydraulic fluids to deal with either. But this is not as important as the way in which the 2500E cuts grass.

"With a greens mower, the priority is quality of cut," said Henry Bredin, John Deere's UK Product Market-ing Manager - Turf Equipment.

"When we talk to customers about the 2500 series this is our starting point. The fact we offer electric cylinder drive on the 2500E

is important. We can demonstrate the system works well and can reduce operating costs. But quality of cut remains the most important issue".

So does the 2500E do a 'better' job than the hydraulic 2500B? Short answer. No. More considered answer is that the 2500E may offer some advantage. The cylinder speed can be precisely matched to the job in hand and full motor torque chimes in as soon as power is applied. This ideal for mowing as it ensures a cutting unit is up to speed pretty much as soon as power is switched on.

"Although we can argue the merits of electric over hydraulic power we tend to look at more obvious advantages," added Henry.

"A key feature of the 2500E is that it can be operated with the engine running at a reduced speed. This cuts noise and vibration and, of equal importance, can reduce fuel use too".

It is always difficult to say by just how much any given 2500E will save on diesel, but Deere suggest



... the 2500B having three independent pumps to power the cutting units, the raise lower function and steering respectively.
(continued from previous page)



Both 2500 models have Command Arm diagnostic and more advanced 'under hood' diagnostic system. Light pulses will flash in a set sequence to identify key faults, such as a faulty engine glow plug.



A common control theme is part of Deere's design, the command arm retaining a yellow colour for throttle controls and orange for engaging drive. General ergonomics of Deere mowers is well liked by operators.



Separate travel pedals feature on both the 2500B and 2500E. As with any item of kit it can take a while to get used to different control types, particularly is you are used to a 'heel and toe' pedal design.



As with most manufacturers, John Deere makes subtle design tweaks to its mowers year on year, the catcher mounts...



... of 2010 model year 2500 mowers having been refined to ensure even less weight is passed back to the units when the catcher is full.

fuel use can be cut by up to 30% when compared to the 'B' model. In practice, the 2500B hydraulic motors need the engine to spin at rated speed of 3,000rpm for the hydraulic pump to deliver the right flow.

On the 2500E the alternator generates enough juice to spin the cylinders at the right speeds with just 2,250rpm engine speed. The only time the operator will want to apply full throttle on an 'E' is when travelling between the greens, the traction motors demanding full flow if the top travel speed is to be achieved.

So what else is different?

The back lapping procedure differs slightly between the 2500B and 2500E. In broad outline, the hydraulics on the 'B' relies upon a micro valve to prevent the cylinders stalling when the back lapping paste is applied. No extra intervention is required on the 'E'.

Is that it? Well pretty much, yes. The 'E' does not need any special tools to look after and can be treated pretty much the same as a

'B'. The only caveat is when it comes to pressure washing. Electronic systems of any type are not over fond of moisture.

Summary

John Deere charges a premium of around 6% for its 2500E. In practice, most operators suggest this is worth paying not just for the 'E' offering potential savings in operating costs but also for the way in which the mower operates.

Downsides to 'E' ownership? Deere is candid enough to admit that they have learned a great deal since they introduced the 2500E into Europe in 2004, early issues causing dealers and Deere, at Langar, more than a few headaches. But the 2500E is now a well refined product, and an ideal alternative to the 2500B.

"We offer end users a choice. The 2500E may not suit some golf courses. But where these mowers have been in use for a number of years, feedback has been positive. Those that have an 'E' are unlikely to buy a 'B' at replacement time," said Henry.

To back lap or not to back lap

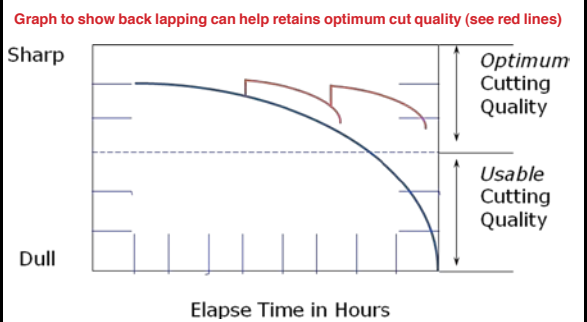
There are those who suggest back lapping is a shortcut to destroying the relief grind on a fine turf mower and, as such, something to be avoided at all costs.

John Deere suggest back lapping can be a useful tool in helping to keep a cylinder sharp, and judicious back lapping can extend the period between needing to regrind.

"A relief grind is used by all the key fine turf mower manufacturers," says Henry Bredin.

"At John Deere we see back lapping as a useful tool to help keep cylinders and bottom blades sharp.

"It is not an alternative to spin grinding and maintaining a relief. In practice, a light back lap may extend the period that a cutting unit will deliver a premium quality of cut. Back lapping is not designed to restore a cutting edge to a blunt cylinder and bottom blade".





Cutting units. Set up to cut exactly level

John Deere will set the cutting units of its 2500 series greens mowers in the factory so they run exactly parallel to the ground.

This is critically important in ensuring each unit will cut at exactly the same height as its neighbour and ensure an even cut height across the working width of the mower.

In practice, it may be necessary to fine tune the units that have been in service for a while, fine parallel adjustment being built in to each unit.

It is a small detail, but Deere claim this enables a 2500 mower to deliver a top class cut even when the cutting units have been in service for several years.



ABOVE AND LEFT: John Deere 2500 greens mowers come in two variants, the 'conventional' all-hydraulic 2500B and 'hybrid' 2500E. This uses a 48 volt alternator to drive brushless electric motors to power the units. The wheels use the same hydraulic system as 2500B.



Slight unit offset from the centre line is designed to help counter the 'triplex ring'; alternating the direction when doing the clean up cut will ensure the unit's wheels do not follow the same path each time the green is mown.

**Outline specifications:
John Deere 2500B and 2500E greens mowers**

Type	JD2500B	JD2500E
ENGINE	Yanmar IDI Diesel TNV70-XJGM	Yanmar IDI Diesel TNV70-XJGM
Power	14.6 kW (19.6 hp) @ 3,000 RPM	14.6 kW (19.6 hp) @ 3,000 RPM
Number of Cylinders	3	3
Displacement	784 cc	784 cc
Fuel capacity	29.9 litres	29.9 litres
WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS		
Wheelbase	129.5 cm	129.5 cm
Tread Width	101.5 cm	101.5 cm
Turning Radius, Uncut Circle	45.7 cm	45.7 cm
Weight (less fuel and operator)	637.3 kg	659 kg
CUTTING UNITS		
Number	3, Patented offset design	3, Patented offset design
Size	56 cm (22 in)	56 cm (22 in)
Back lapping	On Board Micro with speed control	Variable adjustment
Clip Frequency	0.71 mm/kmh (0.045-in per mph) with 11 blade reel; 1.14 mm/kmh (0.072-in per mph) with 7-blade reel	0.71 mm/kmh (0.045-in per mph) with 11 blade reel; 1.14 mm/kmh (0.072-in per mph) with 7-blade reel
Front Rollers	Optional, smooth, grooved or spiral	Optional/smooth, machined grooved, or spiral
Cylinder diameter	12.7 cm (5 in)	12.7 cm (5 in)
Bottom blade adjustment	Blade-to-cylinder	Blade-to-cylinder
Height of Cut	2.0 – 19 mm (5/64 – 3/4 in) or 16 – 32 mm (5/8 – 1.25 in)	2.0 – 19 mm (5/64 – 3/4 in) or 16 – 32 mm (5/8 – 1.25 in)
Number of Blades	7 or 11	7 or 11
Cylinder speed	User preference	User preference



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Win an unforgettable 'Wimbledon Weekend' courtesy of Rigby Taylor

Rigby Taylor is serving up a fantastic double for visitors to their stand during Harrogate Week. An exciting new product launch and a fantastic competition where the prize is a pair of Centre Court tickets for the 2010 Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championship.

And, if that wasn't enough, the winner also receives overnight accommodation at a top London Hotel.

Just visit the Rigby Taylor stand C23 where staff will

be on hand to explain how to enter the competition.

It's not just reserved debenture seats that the winner will receive but a hospitality package that includes champagne reception, à la carte luncheon, afternoon tea with strawberries and cream, complimentary bar, car park pass, souvenir programme and more.

The competition will be held over the first two days of the exhibition (19-20 January) and the winner will be announced at 4.45 on the Wednesday.



Rigby Taylor Ltd
www.rigbytaylor.com

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



A Rookie's Guide to Harrogate Week

You're about to attend your first ever Harrogate Week and are understandably apprehensive about how you will get on. This Rookie's Guide to Europe's Biggest (and best) Indoor Sports Turf Week will help sooth the nerves, according to Scott MacCallum.

It can be a daunting prospect if you are facing it for the very first time. You've listened to countless stories, increasing in frequency and decreasing in believability, as January approaches and with Christmas now behind you Harrogate Week is about to start.

So how do you make the most of trip and what can you expect from your first ever visit to the "Greatest Show in Sports Turf".

To make the most of the week, you will have booked your Continue to Learn programme well in advance securing your place on

one of the popular Workshops and making sure you have a room in one of the many hotels, guest houses or B&Bs. It's always best to speak with your BIGGA Regional Officer—numbers are in the magazine – to see if any block bookings or other arrangements have been made of which you can take advantage. You will have also pre-registered for the week to prevent you from having to queue to get into the Halls on Show mornings.

Getting to Harrogate cannot be easier. Again, speak with your Regional Officer and ask what options are available. It may be that a bus has been arranged, either by

the Region or sponsored by one of the companies within the industry and you can book a place on that either free or for a charge that would beat any other method of getting to your destination.

If you drive, you can take advantage of the Park and Ride Scheme, open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, which enables you to park on the Yorkshire Show Ground on the outskirts of the town free of charge and take a free bus to the Exhibition Halls. It means you avoid having to pay parking charges in Harrogate. Even if you are staying in a Hotel it may be worth considering as some of the





Hotels now charge to leave a car in their car parks.

So you've arrived at the fabled North Yorkshire Spa town, checked into your room and are ready to start your Harrogate experience. What next?

Well, if you have arrived the evening of the night before to be in good time for the start of your Workshop you are in for a treat. A stroll into town for a bite to eat is always an experience. Chatter in the bars and restaurants has a real agronomic flavour and wherever you look you will see familiar faces – colleagues from your Section or people who you recognise from the magazine or website.

But you will be no outsider. Harrogate Week is the most inclusive of all events. No fellow turf professional is left to sit in the corner of a room alone, at least not if they don't wish to be. However, an early night is a smart move as you will wish to be on top form for the start the next day.

In the morning, after a hearty Yorkshire breakfast, you will make

your way to Harrogate International Centre and the Queen's Suite where your Workshop will take place. Once you have registered with the BIGGA staff and grabbed your first coffee you will meet your tutor and your fellow students.

If you haven't met any of them before you can be sure that by the first break you will be firm friends – such is the togetherness created by approaching a new challenge or task as a group. From that moment on Harrogate will never again be a daunting prospect but merely one which sits penned into your calendar until the final date has been ticked off and you can meet up with your friends again.

With CPD points on offer, and the quality of the trainers used at Harrogate Week top notch, the Continue to Learn programme is unrivalled in Europe and by taking advantage of the Workshops and some of the excellent Fringe Seminars which have become a part of Harrogate Week in recent years a career boost is often a consequence.

Having made new friends during



the day and met up for dinner in a local restaurant that evening you are more than ready to "Hit the Halls" the following day.

With so much to see it is best to take a little time to sit down and plan your campaign.

Another useful tool in this regard is the Harrogate Week website – harrogateweek.org.uk – where you can pre-register but where you can also take advantage of the Product Guide which will give you a guide as to what you will see in the Halls.

There is a load of useful information on the site and it is well worth logging on regularly to see what's new.

Once you have arrived you can use the map you are provided with either at the Show or in your magazine and find out in which of the Halls the companies you wish to see are located and plan the order in which you hope to visit them.

There is a good chance the person you wish to see will be involved with someone else when you get to their stand but it is still best to plan your visits. An ad hoc approach can





easily lead to you missing out a chunk of the show not going on to a stand you had originally intended visiting.

A show is the ideal opportunity to clinch a deal for a piece of machinery or product as often there are "Show Deals" available which can end up saving you quite a bit of the club's budget. Seeing representatives at Harrogate is also an ideal opportunity to set up demos at your place of work for later in the year when you will be able to see the machines operating in their natural environment.

As you will have discovered from earlier in your week much of what you take for the Week is what goes on "après show" in the bars and restaurants but it is wise to ensure that you don't burn the candle at both ends and are sharp for the following day.

More often than not your visit will have been funded or part-funded by your employer and you owe it to them to make as much of your show hours time as you possibly can.

That said it is worth considering the BIGGA Social Night on the Tuesday night which is a fun evening. This year is has a Wild West theme, featuring gaming tables with a prize to the person who accumulates the most chips, arcade games and a bucking bronco.

When you return to your place of work it would be a wise move to write a report on your Harrogate trip outlining what you learned from your Workshop and how it will benefit you in your day-to-day life and what you gleaned from your time in the Halls – new machinery or materials that may improve the product for which you are responsible.

It may be something that you can put into your budget once you've given it a successful demo.

The last thing you will see when you leave the Halls will be the dates of Harrogate Week 2011 and you will be desperate to return with all your new found experience

Tips for Harrogate Week

- *Speak with your Regional Officer when you decide to attend Harrogate to see if there are accommodation and/or travel opportunities in place.*
- *Make sure you book any Workshops you wish to attend early to avoid disappointment. Popular Workshops do book up extremely quickly.*
- *Pre-register. It will avoid you having to queue up at the Halls when the Show starts.*
- *Take advantage of the Park and Ride Scheme if you are bringing a car to Harrogate.*
- *Don't be shy. You are only the "Newbie" for a very short time and everyone is very quick to bring you into the fold.*
- *Decide upon whom you wish to see during the Show in advance and plan accordingly. Wandering around looking for a company wastes time and there is a lot to pack in during Show days.*
- *Write a report for your employer on your return identifying what you learned and have taken from your time away in Harrogate.*
- *Enjoy yourself! But always remember the reason you are in Harrogate.*

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Troublesome turf weeds in South Australia

Dr Terry Mabbutt travels to the other side of the world in his search for exciting new turf weeds.

First visit to a new country and climate on the other side of the world always provokes excitement at the prospect of hitherto unseen plants, even if they are troublesome turf weeds.

Like many plant scientists I started out as a botanist trained to appreciate plants for what they are in their natural environment, but graduated out of necessity into applied disciplines. These included managing plants growing in the wrong places such as amenity grass and fine professional turf of golfing green quality.

That apart some plant species have become so well adapted to turf that for all intents and purposes they are in their 'natural' environment. *Bellis perennis* (common daisy) in the United Kingdom immediately springs to mind. Moreover, you can appreciate such plants for their

ability to colonise turf which is not the most weed friendly of environments. With the UK behind me and still carrying some botanist's 'baggage' I arrived in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia intrigued about what weeds I might find growing in turf.

I was not to be disappointed. Turf in this relatively wet and mild southernmost area of South Australia up to 700 metres above sea level is forced to contend with many different weeds on par in range, number and frequency to the UK. This is not surprising since apart from three to four hot dry summer months (December to March) turf grass and weeds grow relatively unrestrained.

Distance and climate apart the same attributes which make for successful weeds in UK turf apply in South Australia, and in some cases to the very same species. Turf

weeds in South Australia include a high proportion of non-native species arriving as contaminants or escaping from gardens and subsequently adapting to turf. Some which originated in cool temperate climates like the UK appear to have discarded their normal perennial habit to become annuals, thereby allowing survival as seed through the long hot and dry South Australian summer.

Rosette and matt-forming weeds with creeping stems (stolons) or tap roots and fine-leaved plants (grasses and non-grasses) are clearly at the same advantage as in the UK. However, there are visibly but more Australian turf weeds with underground stems as bulbs and corms. They grow in winter, flower in spring and go dormant in summer. As such they are clearly well adapted to exploit good growing conditions in winter and spring



Cape dandelion is a classic rosette turf weed



Creeping oxalis is a serious weed of close cut



Flat weed (cat's ear) appears to be a bigger problem



Lamb's tongue (ribwort plantain) and trifoliate burr medic



One leaved Cape Tulip, pretty as a picture but a weed nevertheless



The leaves of onion grass blend in well but its pink

and subsequently survive adverse summer conditions. Moreover bulbs and corms are an ideal mode of reproduction and spread. Many like sparaxis/harlequin flower (*Sparaxis* sp) and one-leaved Cape tulip (*Moraea flaccida*) [all garden escapes] produce stunning spring flowers highly prized in UK horticultural and garden industries, but for South Australian greenkeepers and groundsman they are simply weeds.

The following account describes some of the most frequently seen weeds of turf in the Adelaide Hills area of South Australia some 20km south east of the capital Adelaide.

All were observed and photographed in amenity turf. Australia has a vibrant sports turf industry with a sophisticated arsenal of herbicides, its 'guns' apparently not yet spiked to the degree experienced in the UK courtesy EU (European Union) legislation. Weeds mentioned here can establish in amenity grass, wide area sports turf including fairways and poorly managed professional turf. However, like the UK only a minority of turf weeds are likely to be frequently seen in close-cut, well-managed professional turf.

Rosette forming weeds

Cape dandelion, Cape weed or Cape marigold (*Arctotheca calendula*) is a classic rosette-forming turf weed of the family Asteraceae (Compositae) with an extremely rapid growth rate. Deeply lobed basal leaves lay flat on the ground up to 25cm in length when fully grown, thus translating into massive rosette diameters of 50 cm. And all the more impressive because Cape dandelion unlike other related turfweeds (eg. English dandelion) is an annual herb in South Australia and clearly unable to survive the summer drought unaided.

Like many others is an alien species in this instance a native of the South African Cape with a similar Mediterranean-type climate.

Cape dandelion dies out in the summer heat and drought after shedding its high seed load. Seeds germinate in autumn and plants grow rapidly throughout the mild wet winter months. Key to survival and spread is its prolific spring and early summer flowering when poorly managed turf suddenly becomes a carpet of large bright brash daisies with light yellow ray (outer) florets and black/purple disc (inner) florets.

Seeds are covered with pale brown wool which clearly helps dispersal

by wind, animals, on clothing and most significantly by grass cutting machinery. Cape dandelion possesses a tap root but apparently not robust enough to survive the summer months.

Other 'big' rosette-forming turf weeds of the Asteraceae need no introduction to UK groundsman because Australia was 'cursed' with early introduction, by seed or through contaminated soil by *Taraxacum officinale* (British dandelion), *Hypochoeris radicata* (common cat's ear) and *H. glabra* (smooth cat's ear).

In the UK dandelion is more widespread and frequent than cat's ear but the opposite appears to be the case in South Australia where they do not appear to be as robust or free flowering as those in the UK, although the flowering period is much longer and may extend over the entire year. As in the UK *Taraxacum officinale* is a perennial with robust tap root and apparently

ful given new plants that can grow from root fragments.

A similar relationship exists for two plantain turf weeds, ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) called lamb's tongue in South Australia and common plantain (*P. major*) called broad leaf plantain. In spread, frequency and size ribwort plantain outstrips broad leaf plantain, which is opposite to the situation in the UK.

Ribwort plantain covers turf with multitudes of rosette-forming plants which block sunlight and smother grass plants beneath, it's well developed tap-root facilitates year round survival in South Australia.

Ability to maintain the same perennial 'lifestyle' exhibited in its native cool temperate (UK) environment appears to be secret of its success as a turf weed in South Australia, putting the plant at relative advantage over similar rosette weeds including other plantains.

In the UK dandelion is more widespread and frequent than cat's ear but the opposite appears to be the case in South Australia where they do not appear to be as robust or free flowering as those in the UK.

able to withstand the summer heat and drought.

Cat's ear is called 'flat weed' in Australia due to its large flat basal rosettes of leaves, and appears more widespread, frequent and larger than in its native UK turf environment. Plants spread at speed smothering and killing turf grass underneath. Its broad basal leaves form large flat rosettes that merge to cover sizable areas to leave 'dead spots' when the plants die. *H. glabra* has maintained its annual habit.

The more common *H. radicata* is predominantly perennial as in the UK, but in drier areas of South Australia adopts an 'annual habit', expiring in summer after seed set and dispersal.

Cat's ears are therefore common even in the drier areas where the tap root is unable to survive the summer drought. *H. radicata* and *H. glabra* are normally difficult to distinguish and widespread hybridization between the species makes this virtually impossible.

Limited infestations are controlled by severing tap roots 2-4 cm below soil level using dedicated hand-tools. Same procedure can be used for dandelions using similar but deeper-penetrating tools, but as in UK is generally less success-

Stems above and below ground

Creeping Oxalis (*Oxalis corniculata*) is perennial weed spreading quickly in all types of turf and particularly persistent in low cut grass due to flat stems (stolons) that creep across the soil invariably escaping the mower's blades. Trifoliate leaves of three heart shaped leaflets together with the running stem habit makes creeping oxalis look just like a clover, but it comes from a completely different plant family called the Oxalidaceae (Wood Sorrel family). The plant is additionally called yellow wood sorrel because of its yellow flowers which though small are conspicuous in close-cut turf. Seed capsules shaped like miniature cucumbers throw ripe seeds several feet in all directions further aiding dispersal and spread.

O. corniculata is a locally abundant weed in the UK called 'Sleeping Beauty' found mainly near gardens from where it migrates into turf. In Australia it is completely cosmopolitan turf weed with many sub species making its exact alien origin unclear.

Other Oxalis species found in South Australian turf include *O. purpurea* (purple or large flowered wood sorrel) native to South Africa.



Plenty of *Poa* (winter grass) and a single 'shining'



Purple flowered wood sorrel persists and spreads by corms



Soursob is one of the most difficult weeds to control



Three cornered garlic grows literally everywhere

Its stunning carmine-coloured flowers open in the sun and hardly make for a classic turf weed but this garden escape is still a plant in the wrong place at the wrong time and as such a weed of turf. It lacks the stolons of creeping oxalis but has underground stems (corms) presenting their own problems for weed persistence. Limited infestation can be removed by hand-digging because the corms are in a shallow situation just beneath the surface of the ground.

Underground stems (bulbs and corms) are clearly to the advantage of any turf weed in South Australia with three to four months of extreme heat and drought. Two bulb/corm bearing species, both non-native garden-escapes and now invasive weeds, grow literally everywhere

including woods, waste-land, gullies in gardens and in turf. Three cornered garlic (*Allium triquetum*) after its three-sided flower stalks and native in the Mediterranean and Soursob (*Oxalis pes-caprae*) with striking yellow flowers and native to South Africa, can quickly invade and take over whole areas of amenity turf. Soursob, so called because of the sour acidic taste of its leaves and flowers, has a long underground stem bearing numerous bulbs making it one of the most difficult weeds to control. Soursob thrives in infertile soil and is suppressed by sound fertiliser programmes.

Few areas of turf grass outside the tropics escape white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and South Australia is no exception. This classic

matt-forming leguminous weed is just as widespread and problematic as it is in its native UK environment. White clover adopts the same perennial habit despite shallow rooting. Spread is by stolons (runners) which root at the nodes of the ground hugging stems where they come into contact with the soil. White clover's ability to adapt to most soil types together with a relatively long winter flowering period (May to September) clearly helps ensure its success as a turf weed in South Australia.

There are other closely related matt-forming leguminous weeds such as Burr Medic (*Medicago denticulate*), a larger and more robust looking version of UK turf's black medick (*Medicago lupulina*). Like white clover this southern

European native has small trifoliate leaves, the middle top leaflet on a longer stalk than the other two. Flowers are small yellow-orange and pea-like in solitary clusters on thin axillary stems.

Burr medic lacks the stolons of white clover but compensates with an efficient annual habit including prickly seed pods possessing hooked burrs which attach themselves to virtually anything they touch.

Burr medic is becoming more problematic with high infestations slowing down mowing and increasing the volume of clippings. Successful management requires effective control before plants come into flower during spring.

Grass plant look-alikes and the real thing

Plants with grass-like growth habits and leaves have a real advantage as turf weeds, not least because they are difficult to detect and therefore manage.

One such weed is onion grass or Guildford grass (*Romulea rosea*), another South African native and so called because its leaves look like those on onion or chive seedlings. This monocotyledonous species with bulbs (corms) is from the plant family Iridaceae, and therefore not

too distant from the Allicaceae (onion family). Onion grass is a small erect perennial herb bearing extremely fine linear leaves with thickened edges and a prominent midrib. You would not know it was there until spring when turf starts to sparkle with numerous tiny 'star-shaped' (6 petals) pink or rosy purple flowers.

South Australian turf facing hot dry summers and wet but essentially frost free winters offers the ideal 'meeting point' for grasses of both temperate and tropical origins. As such it has become overburdened with alien grass species from almost every part of the world, with rough grass weeds in turf generally divided 'winter' grass or 'summer' grass depending on when they grow and reproduce.

Main 'winter grass' requires no introduction. *Poa annua* (called 'winter grass in Australia) crops up everywhere in South Australia where it behaves as a winter annual as opposed to a summer annual in the UK. It flowers in winter and dies out in summer, although some perennial sub species are reported on golfing greens.

As in the UK controversy continues over its value as a constituent of golf greens. Winter grass germinates in the autumn and grows quickly

and flowers profusely throughout winter, finally seeding in spring when heads can cause an uneven playing surface on the fine turf such as golf greens. Perennial types of winter grass can become established in some fine turf situations. Winter grass continues to thwart those greenkeepers striving for 100% bent-grass playing surfaces. It remains widely present on greens (average golf green throughout Australia has been variously estimated to comprise 40-80% *Poa annua*) and is common on fairways.

'Summer grass' infestation is mainly by *Paspalum dilatatum* a tufted perennial tropical grass originating in South America. It is nominally frost sensitive but since South Australian winter temperatures rarely fall below freezing it can survive winter in a dormant state.

Moreover it is relatively drought tolerant and a combination of watering and high nitrogen during summer sees growth and infestation take off. Seed is sticky and spread easily on shoes clothing and grass cutting machinery. Strict hygiene with machinery and footwear scrupulously cleaned after working in *Paspalum*-infested areas of turf is essential to minimise seed dispersal and weed spread.



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Getting Back to the Cutting Edge

Former greenkeeper and current lecturer, Jonathan Knowles, raises an old question: Is greenkeeping horticulture, agriculture or ecology?

Is greenkeeping horticulture, agriculture or ecology? Not my question, but a consideration that was raised around 20 years ago. It was suggested in a paper at the Proceedings of the World Scientific Congress of Golf 1990 that greenkeeping management has much in common with functional approach of ecology.

It's an interesting point isn't it? Canaway (1990), additionally offered a succinct golf greenkeeping management plan that centred on playing quality. The playing quality was defined as a study of the ball roll, ball impact behaviour (spin),

and green hardness.

Not long after, Canaway & Baker (1992) tested five common turfgrass species and tested which grasses provided the 'fastest' paced greens. A sward of *Festuca rubra* ssp. *Litoralis* was the fastest surface, while *Poa annua* consistently was the slowest in the trials.

A few years later, a large study was carried out (Baker et al., 1995); in part they investigated what grass species inhabit UK golf greens. More than half the greens were dominated by *P. annua*. The *Festuca* spp. was found on the Links and Heathland. *Agrostis* spp. had around a third coverage on more than half the greens. Young estab-

lishing greens were also included, and this, for me, is where the study is very interesting. The largest proportion of *Festuca* spp. was found in greens less than 5 years old, and the dominance diminished over the age of the greens with the ingress of *P. annua*. Moreover, a later study (Hagley et al., 2002) found that older greens greater than 70 years were populated with the perennial *P. annua* var. *reptans*.

I believe most greenkeepers will agree and will have experience in seeing a newly established green whether turf or seeded go from high a content of *Festuca* spp. to an apparently very low representation. Why is there a diminishing of the



ABOVE: The TORO Turf Evaluator for measuring the effective height of cut

Festuca over the time, while weeds ingress? Should this be a question of greenkeeping practices and is this related to a holistic management principle, as suggested?

While I accept that greenkeeping and the condition of a golf green is subject to many, many variables, the aims of my research was to evaluate whether cutting heights can have a negative effect on the sward, viz. encouraging *P.annua*, disease, and slow putting speeds etc.

In the research, more than two-thousand grass identifications were made across twelve different golf courses of England and Scotland. An understanding of the mowing practices was needed from each site, this involved looking at the bench setting and the effective height of cut.

The bench setting is the set up by adjustment of the mowers rollers to the bottom blade and the effective height cut is simply the height at which the grass stands following a mow a TORO Turf Evaluator was used for this, see Plate 1.

It was then important to compare and test the two methods, especially as they were found to be different. The effective height of cut was generally greater by 1 mm. How is this important? Well, we all read texts and research on recommended

heights of cut for the golf green. However, it is not usual for authors to state whether it is an effective height or a bench setting measurement. If it is a bench setting being recommended then the variables of soil moisture content, grass coverage, grass type, and machine type/weight need to be equated so that the resulting effective height is optimum for health and play.

The species composition of the green was then measured using an Optical Point Quadrat, with the species being recorded at a random hundred per green, see Plate 2. This also allowed an opportunity to delve into the head greenkeeper's mind, and compare their perception of the composition with the findings of the Optical Quadrat. A third of the head greenkeepers considered *P.annua* to be less than 65% coverage, however most perceived it to have high ground coverage.

The observations did show that there were cases of very high *P.annua* content greater than 93% coverage, but *Agrostis tenuis* is well represented with a third of the greens making up more than a half of the counts. During the study, most head greenkeepers were surprised by the counts of the *Agrostis* spp. species and, likewise, the lower counts of *P.annua*. It was apparent that there was an

inaccurate perception of the sward composition by an inspection of a 'walk over' compared with the Optical Quadrat.

How does this matter? Well, in consideration, how can the effectiveness of an over-seeding program be measured, without an accurate starting point or a measure for the present coverage? Then, the natural progression is to be able to value the maintenance regime that is implemented, for example, is the regime causing a positive or negative effect on the establishment of the desired species?

These findings were consistent with Baker et al., (1995) where a significant proportion of the head greenkeepers distinguished a poor green from a quality one by the number of bare areas, and not the species composition or playing quality.

Stimpmeter readings were taken at each green, again this was to affirm any trends and compare with the earlier studies of grass species and ball roll. The readings were calibrated to the USGA recommendations for regular play.

With the effective heights of cut categorised as low (2-3 mm), medium (4-5 mm) and high (>6 mm) it was possible to analyse the data of the three most common species (*P. annua*, *Agrostis* spp. and



about the author

Jonathan Knowles has been involved in Greenkeeping for 17 years, first as a greenkeeper and latterly at Myerscough College. Recently he has been working on a research project that discusses the effects of cutting height on the grass species in golf greens and the associated trends for adapted ecological methods for greenkeeping.

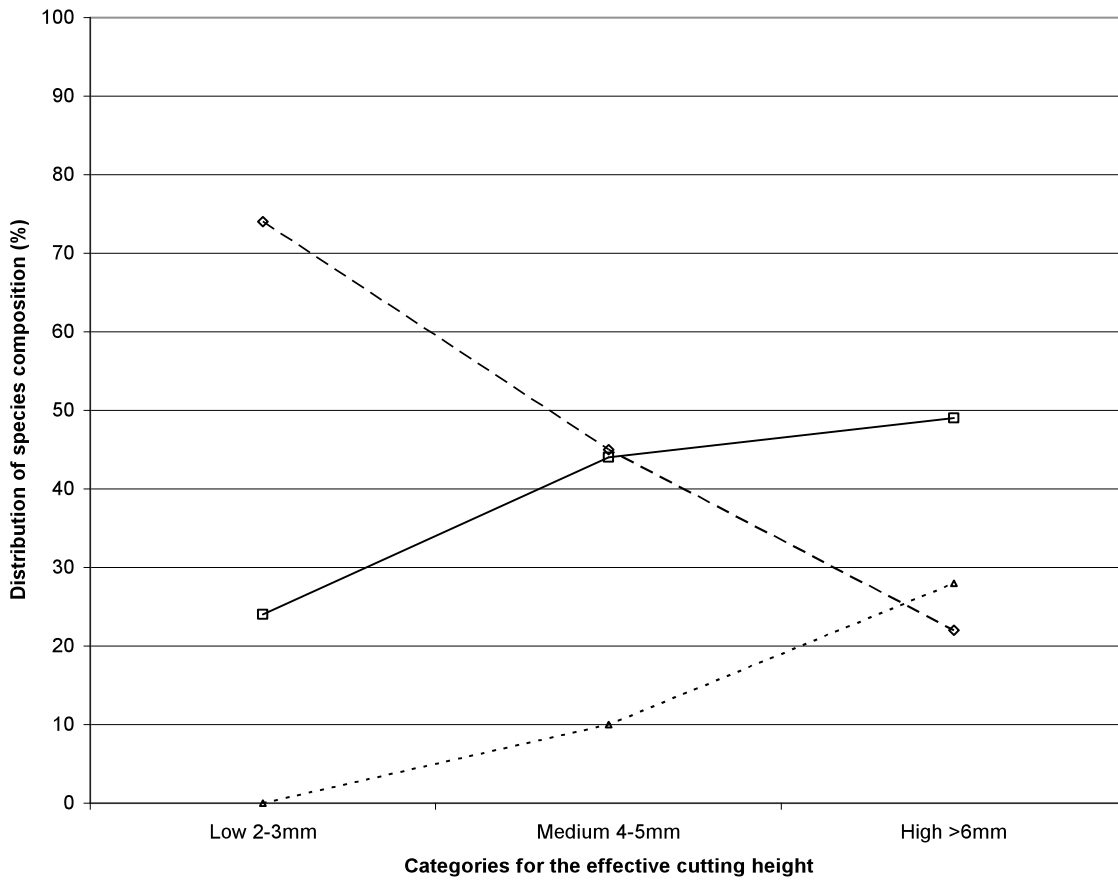


Figure 1. Linear trends in the species decline and ingress over the changes in the categories for the effective height of cut.

- ◆— Poa annua
- Agrostis tenuis
- ▲— Festuca rubra

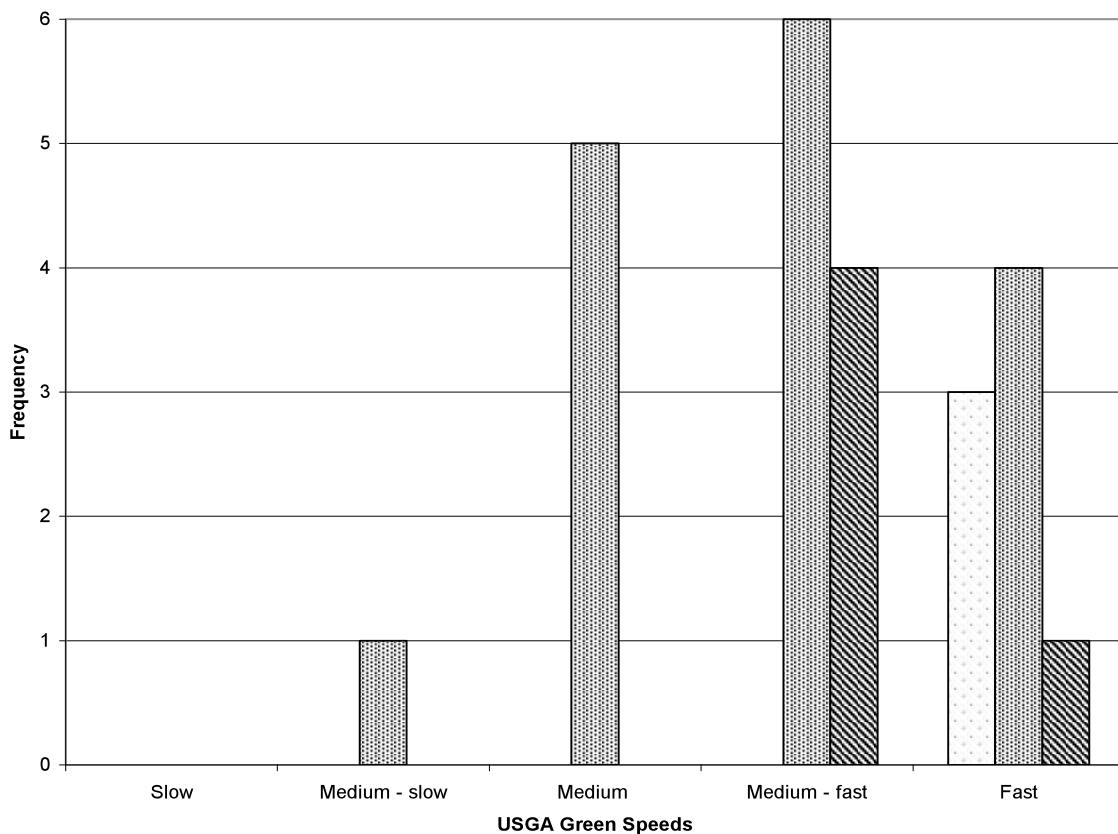


Figure 2. Green speeds and the frequency of occurrence for the different heights of cut. The green speeds have been calibrated for 'regular play'. The highest heights of >6 mm has provided the fastest surfaces, cutting at a range of 4-5 mm has occurred in most speed categories, while cutting at a 2-3 mm has only provided fast surfaces.

- Low 2-3mm
- ▨ Medium 4-5mm
- ▩ High >6mm

Festuca spp.) and the composition within each category and overall, see Figure 1.

It was found that there was a significant relationship between the effective height and the sward composition. In the low category, *P.annua* had the greatest population, and *Festuca* had nil.

In the high category, *P.annua* was comparatively diminished against the *Agrostis* and *Festuca* spp.

The medium category was very interesting, especially as it was the most popular category. This could be defined as the transitional zone for *Festuca* ingress and *P.annua* egress. *Agrostis* was shown to be in equal population between the low and medium height. However, in the high category, *Agrostis* out-competed the *P.annua* by 3:1. Indeed, in the high category, the combined *Festuca* and *Agrostis* out-competed *P.annua* by almost 4:1. Whereas, in the low category *P.annua* was out-competing *Agrostis* by 3:1.

This not only showed that the most popular effective height of cut was 4-5 mm, it also showed that *Festuca* inhabits where *P.annua* does not and vice versa. It also showed that *Agrostis* almost maintains a consistent status through the changing heights, although it's very difficult to conclude that raising the height of cut will lead to greens with higher proportions of *Festuca* and *Agrostis* and much of this possibly relates to the multivariate practices of greenkeeping and geological location etc.

Importantly, however, it has been possible to prove that a lowered effective height of cut will have a *P.annua* composition, as shown in Figure 1.

Again, it's worth noting the intersection of *P.annua* and *Agrostis* at the medium category and the opposite values of *Festuca* and *P.annua* in the low category.

The greens cut at an effective height of cut between 2-3 mm had proven to provide Stimpmeter readings for a fast putting surface see Figure 2. Again, this reflects a very large study that was carried out in the U.S (Throssell, 1981) indicating that low cut greens provide a fast surface. Greens cut at between 4-5 mm varied greatest in speeds between medium-slow, medium, medium-fast and fast. Greens cut at >6 mm, varied between medium-fast and fast see Figure 2. This reflects the findings of the Canaway & Baker (1992) as we know that the turfgrass genii they concluded as fastest are in this category, the 1992 study also details the height of



cut used as 5 mm (more than likely bench set, so the effective height would be around 6 mm).

So then, what is it to be: horticulture, agriculture or ecology? Well, in conclusion there is a trend for adapted holistic and functional ecological principles in turf management. For example, as greenkeepers we recognise the Power Rule or Self-Thinning (Danneberger, 1993 cited in Lush, 1990). In turf culture, this can be interpreted as an increase in the cutting height increases the leaf area and as the height of cut is reduced, the density of the biomass increases. Again, a recent example is the Disturbance Theory (Bechelet & Windows, 2007), which originates from an ecological study of British Species (Grime et al, 1988), whereby the intensity of a stress is multiplied by the intensity of the disturbing environment, leading to vegetation that is governed by the environmental stresses. Specifically mentioned is mowing pressures, these are identified as one of the variable disturbance pressures governed by the mowing height, quality and frequency. Indeed, a raised height of cut is identified as a less intensive pressure on the turf (Bechelet, 2008).

The confirmation here is that changing the height of cut has a relationship with the species composition of the sward. Of course, there is a relationship with cutting very low and having fast greens, however, this research suggests this will be a predominance or even

a monoculture of *P.annua* and the associated problems with the troublesome weed are well documented (Adams & Gibbs, 1994 and Hagley et al., 2002). But, fast greens are achievable with perennial sustainable species. The cost of reaching the objective of the fast putting perennial surface is to provide the turf environment for *Festuca* to thrive, in turn causing *P.annua* to egress, and the *Agrostis* spp. can play nurse. Remember, by cutting at an effective height in the region of 6 mm is one of the multivariate maintenance practices. The overseeding of *Festuca rubra* spp. with *Agrostis* spp. preferable tenuis at the optimum time with the general renovation program should also be considered. As identified (and it could go without saying), there are many variables to affect the golf greens' composition, so adjustments to nutrient input and the management of the precipitation and infiltration rate will also need consideration. Nevertheless, I do realise how important these factors are; the research revealed these were seemingly less influential on the sward composition than the cutting height.

Finally, remember to monitor the sward composition and ingress as accurately and as practically as possible, at least randomly sample the species composition of the greens. It is at this point that true management of sward composition is borne, and remember, a 'walk over inspection' will not cut it!

ABOVE: Plate2: The Optical Point Quadrat

A QUICK GUIDE TO...

LINE MARKING

When selecting a linemarking system, the first question to ask is: 'Does the system suit my specific needs and budget?' Peter Bridgewater discusses.

It is vital that the correct choice is made and, after careful assessment, the final selection is the one that suits your needs and circumstances.

Which system to choose, spray or transfer wheel?

A system that applies paint as a spray through a spray-marking machine, is generally used in a multi pitch situation where speed and the number of pitches marked is preferred to quality of line.

However, with a spray marker, the line usually only has to be marked one way as the spray covers both side of the leaf blade.

Transfer Wheel markers

Transfer Wheel markers are probably used more often within the professional sporting ranks where there is more time to mark out a pitch and on which there is a consistent growth of grass to produce a line.

It is also important to achieve a highly visual effect, especially if the game is televised.

Transfer wheel application only coats one side of the leaf blade so a return pass is often required, a practice that take twice the time.

Paint selection

When it comes to paint selection, a massive selection is available.

These range from powders that are mixed with water, pre-mixed ready to use liquids and dilutable concentrates.

In addition there is the bag-in-the-box option, which has made such an impact since its launch.

There is also the option of putting down an initial line using a white marking paint containing a dilute amount of glyphosate.

There is only one MAPP approved product Preamble, recommended for this purpose.



All the various options have their supporters but there is a cost that must be justified and in this aspect 'You get what you pay for'.

Cost per pitch

When it comes to paint selection it is important to consider the cost per pitch of the operation NOT the unit cost of the container.

There will be a paint to suit every need and budget but ask questions, trial the paint and see if it does 'What it says on the tin!' Don't just purchase products because that's what you have always purchased.

Do the maths

'Do the maths': Paint with a low unit cost of say 0.39p/litre used neat in a transfer wheel marker on wet muddy pitch will use around 10 litres at a cost of £3.90.

This however is not the true cost as by using a lower quality paint the pitch will probably have to be marked twice doubling the costs.

Economical Option

A paint with better quality ingredients, which will obviously have a higher unit cost of £1.60/litre diluted in water at, say, 4 part water to 1 paint mix (5 litres in total) will be just as economical as when applying 10 litres the actual cost of marking the pitch would be just £3.20.

Presentation:

From the professional turf professional to an enthusiastic amateur volunteer, pitch presentation is everything. The linemarking operation should produce the whitest, straightest lines that budget and time will allow.

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UK Launch at Harrogate Week



A new Turbine Blower marks another chapter in AgriMetal's history of turf care product development and gets its UK launch during BTME at Harrogate Week.

The new heavy duty blower is powered by a Kohler 23HP petrol engine and features a wireless remote control unit that provides control of the engine/turbine RPM and directional control of the air chute. Each remote control works on a unique frequency, so multiple units can be operated in the same area without suffering interference.

An oblong shaped air outlet provides great directional control via the unbreakable, composite material air chute and the aluminium turbine itself is electronically balanced for years of trouble free service and performance.

www.agrimetal.com

OARS/correctOARS

For the past two years, Aqua-Aid Inc. has been in dispute with its former distributors, Tower Chemicals Limited (now in liquidation) and its directors, in relation to its OARS branded product.

The parties have now settled this dispute amicably.

While correctOARS is no longer available for purchase, the former directors of Tower Chemicals Limited, David and Edward Goldstone, have issued an apology for any confusion caused and made a statement clarifying that:

- OARS was and never has been anything to do with correctOARS
- CorrectOARS was not an Aqua-Aid product and was never supplied by Aqua-Aid
- Tower Chemicals is no longer an OARS distributor and Tower Sports (Europe) Limited has never been an OARS distributor

• OARS was a different product to correctOARS; and Aqua-Aid and its distributors are fully entitled to incorporate the Milliken patented technology into its OARS product.



Water Water Everywhere

The Raycam Trunk Pump, from Campey Turfcare Systems, comes into its own during in these days where flooding is a much more regular occurrence. Fully portable and PTO driven, it can be mounted on most tractors by a three point linkage.

The pump, hoses and operator can then easily be trans-

ported to the flood site, making it a one person job. The 3-inch plastic centrifugal pump can handle salt water and chemicals, has 25 feet of suction head and can efficiently pump 1100 litres per minute.

So even when the weather throws its worst at you, the Raycam Trunk Pump gives you the facility to react quickly

and independently to remove the excess from troublesome standing pools of water, relieve the pressure from small lakes or ponds on golf courses or in parks and return the site to its designated use as soon as possible, with the minimum of fuss.

www.campeyturfcare.com

Toro get Tough with the New Workman HD Series

Built to handle even the toughest of tasks, Toro's new Workman HD Series of heavy duty utility vehicles is tougher than ever. Comprising two-wheel and four-wheel drive diesel options, the Workman HDX-D boasts the highest total carrying load in the industry together with a towing capacity of up to 1,588kg/3,500lb.

Replacing its predecessors 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, thereby eliminating potential overstress in these com-

ponents and ensuring the vehicle's trouble-free long life.

Further design benefits such as a truss-like front space frame, integrated wheel bearings and hydraulic disc brakes on all four wheels for greater stopping power ensure the Workman HD Series utility vehicles combine remarkable performance with a smooth, comfortable ride.

www.toro.com



Boom Time for New Holland

New Holland celebrates 45 years of involvement in the compact tractor sector in 2010, and will mark the occasion by launching the Boomer 3000 series, featuring the award winning EasyDrive continuously variable transmission.

The tractor allows drivers to match exact speed to every task without being fixed to a gear, thus maximising productivity.

www.newholland.com



RE-ROOT New Launch

Traditionally, rootzone mixes for intensively used sports areas have comprised of sand amended with either soil or peat to increase the water and nutrient retention characteristics. However, neither of these resources is renewable. There is significant interest in the use of green compost as an organic amendment in rootzone mixes, as it is sustainable and environmentally sound.

Accordingly, Bathgate Silica Sand developed Re-Root, which has recently completed a thorough independent evaluation by the STRI on the physical and chemical properties of the product, especially regarding water and nutrient retention, drainage, grass growth and turf quality.

The results obtained were compared with conventional blended sand/soil mixes. Re-root led to significantly quicker grass establishment than the sand/soil rootzone treatments. Although Saturated Hydraulic conductivity was measured at 213 mm/h, concentrations of the critical nutrients were nevertheless higher for Re-root than in the conventional sand/soil rootzones. In particular, Re-Root retained 40% more Nitrogen. Greater chlorophyll index values were exhibited in the Re-Root turf in comparison to the conventional sand:soil mixes.

Re-Root and its counterpart Re-Dress, a similarly amended Top Dressing, are now available as renewable products.

www.bathgatesilica.co.uk

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



I trust everyone had a good Christmas and New Year and are now looking forward to BTME. In December, the Section had an interesting evening seminar at Elmwood with Martin Ward, of Symbio, talking about Compost teas. This was hastily arranged due to the short notice of Martin's availability and we are fortunate to have good email communication along with the info on our website, www.bigga-centralsection.org.uk which allows us to contact people in this way.

To stay in the loop it is vital members keep us informed of any changes to their contact details. This took the place of the appraisal training which has now been postponed until the New Year, it is hoped that we will run this course sometime in February, in association with the CMAE, at the same venue (Old Course Hotel, St Andrews). Further details will appear on website in near future.

In early December I was fortunate to visit the Manitoba Turf Conference in Winnipeg, Canada, to give a couple of presentations. Including me there were only three speakers to cover the three days and it was fascinating to discover that although from different fields we were all advocating the practical, cultural approach and also that the Canadians face the same problems as we do in the UK.

You may think Winnipeg in December would have been a difficult (and cold) gig but I found the 100 attendees to be extremely motivated and enthusiastic which made the whole trip very enjoyable. At the time of

writing Gordon McKie is doing a similar exercise in China, along with Elmwood College, a report on that next month.

A presentation by Stan Zontek, of the USGA Green Section, sometime in April is on the cards. More details later.

Gordon Moir



West

Happy New Year all, I hope you are now dieting hectically after you're over indulgence during the festive period or you're out jogging trying to shed the few pounds around the waistline. As nobody else is willing to undertake the task of penning a few words each month and the fact that the whole of last year not a single footnote was submitted I have now been giving the opportunity to try and stir up some enthusiasm within the ranks of the West Section. Therefore if you have any information to pass on let me know about it by contacting me via phone 07790823914 or 0141-942-5554, or e mail me at st.greenkeeper@ukonline.co.uk Stuart Taylor in case you were wondering.

I hope you are all keeping well and looking forward to a good season this year. Hopefully the financial situation will change slightly in the next few months to give some optimism for the future as I'm most of us have suffered from budget restraints.

Well, let's try not to be too depressive, I look forward to seeing a few of you at Harrogate this month and would pass on my congratulations to John Brown and David McBride on receiving the Patrons' Award and will hope you enjoy the trip to the show. Thanks to our many Patrons.

A couple of items to mention which happened over the last few months

The AGM was held at East Kilbride Golf Club, on October 29, and 25 people attended, which isn't too bad as things go. Thanks must be extended to Symbio and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day and giving two excellent talks. Thanks also to Brian Bolland, and East Kilbride Golf Club, for hosting the event this is very much appreciated.

The annual Match against the Clubmasters was held at Cardross golf club on November 2 on a pretty wet day and congratulations must be expressed to John Barr and his staff for enabling this match to go ahead. Well done lads. Four teams took part with the matches finishing two a piece - the clubmasters retained the trophy as they were the previous winners. Could members who are interested in taking part in this event next year please inform a committee member as each year the clubmasters have at least 12 people available and we struggle to find numbers.

The Ingliston show this year wasn't quite as busy as previously seen but numbers appeared to be satisfactory, I hope all that attended enjoyed the experience and were able to conduct their business satisfactorily.

The Annual Dinner on November 27, held at The Loft in Ashton Lane, was attended by 23 people and all who turned up seemed to have a good time. There was some comment that people didn't know about the event and I would apologise if this was the case but, at the same time, who did you contact to find out about it, as the event is held each year at roughly the same time?

One for the future will be at football match against the Ayrshire Section some time in March/April. If there are people

interested then contact any of the committee members: Brian Hillan; Douglas MacIntosh; John Barr; Brian Bolland; David McBride; John Brown; Derek Duthie; Gordon Howatt; Gavin Jarvis; Fraser Ross and myself

I hope to hear from you in the near future and look forward to the various comments from members

Stuart Taylor

Northern Region



North Wales

January comes but once a year and thank goodness for that with new year resolutions that last if you're lucky a couple of days, cold short days and longer even colder nights but we must look on the bright side (well we are greenkeepers do we really have a choice but to look on the bright side!), new year, new start, lessons learned during the last year put to practice to make this coming year possibly the best yet.

In November, we held the Christmas tournament at Caldry Golf Club and on the what seemed like the only dry day in that month, 56 greenkeepers and guest played what can only be described as a completely blemish proof course, followed by a scrumptious meal in the club house all thanks go to Carl Crocher and his team for the exemplary course and to the clubhouse staff for the food and warm hospitality shown to us all.

The results of the golf day are: 1. Stuart Yarwood (who also did pretty at the raffle table too although I'm not bitter... not much anyway!), Ian Taylor, Andrew (Acorn) Cornes and Rob

Cooper, 84pts; 2. Phil Watson, Eifion Ellis, Will Evans and John Moody, 82pts; 3. Jez Hughes, Johnny Evans, Peter Larter and Huw Brown, 82pts

Nearest the Pin went to Jim Adamson on the 2nd and Ian Taylor on the 17th greens.

The AGM was also held after the meal and with 27 members present, various reports were given on the state of our Section and we're looking pretty healthy and the Section committee was voted back on as is.

We held a half day seminar at The Welsh College of Horticulture in Northop on December 9 on the subject of cylinder sharpening and the importance of sharp units in greenkeeping. We have to thank Bernhard's for giving the seminar and the College for hosting the event.

The bus to Harrogate is due to run again this year but will only be put on if enough seats are booked so please get your seat reservations to Jez Hughes by January 10 at the latest.

Well that seems to bring us up to date for now but if you have any news to share with the section please get in touch contact details below.

All the best until next month!

Pete Maybury petemayb66@aol.com

Johnny Evans

Johnny.Evans@tesco.net



North West

We held the AGM and Bert Cross Trophy at Wilmslow Golf Club on December 3

The day started well and then down came the rain and sleet. 41 members started but only 18 finished the full round. The winner was Tim Johnson, who works at Wilmslow Golf Club,

Tim also won Nearest the Pin with the Longest Drive going to Spencer Lloyd Pye. Many thanks to Bathgate's for their sponsorship over the years. A special thank you to Steve Oultram and the Wilmslow Golf Club for allowing us to have our AGM and golf day there every year.

While we are on the subject of thanks a mention to the North West Committee who work very hard on your behalf. We have a new Chairman this year, Adie

Holt, who is based at Birchwood Golf Club, was pleased to accept the post and our Vice Chairman is Peter McVicar, who will take over from Adie in two years time. Two new additions to the committee are Mike Davie and Alec Davis. A warm welcome to you both. These will be the last notes I will be compiling as Peter has kindly decided to take on this job next year. Thanks Peter.

Please think about attending Harrogate this year if you can bring your Green Chairman or Secretary they might be impressed at how professional we all are. I am sure they will enjoy the show.

Chris Sheehan



Northern

Hello all. Hope you've all had a good 2009 golf season. We hope to see you all at this year's golf events. A few changes to note on the Northern Section Committee. Firstly, to thank Adam for his good work over the last few years as Secretary and I'm pleased to see him carry on as Treasurer. Also a welcome to Richard Smith onto the Committee.

I hope by the time you read this report we will have news of your 2010 golf fixtures and a date for a spring seminar.

Hope to see you all at BTME at Harrogate.

Just time to wish all a belated Merry Christmas and hope you all have a Happy New Year.

Any news or gossip, please contact me.

Frank Stewart

72 West Park Grove

Roundhay

LS8 2OY

Tel: 07947 401278

Midland Region



East Midlands

Over the three years I have been greenkeeping I have always read the "Around the Green" articles and found it fascinating the different topics people write

about and the different styles of writing, having just joined the BIGGA committee for the East Midlands I now find myself thinking frantically of things to write about, hoping that it at least maybe interesting to some of you reading this.

Firstly, I would like to start by saying a few over due congratulations to David James and his wife, Biba, for the birth of their son, Connor, and to Colin Crowther and his wife, Clare, on the birth of their baby daughter, Chloe. Both babies are doing well.

Our Autumn Comp and AGM was held at Matlock GC on October 15. The damp and foggy day wasn't able to curb people's enthusiasm and a great day was had by all in attendance. The day was won by Mark Blacknell, Mick Marvell and Tim Bloodworth – putting his local knowledge to good use! Our thanks go to Tim and his team for presenting the course in such fantastic condition and also to our sponsors for the event – Boughton Loam, British Seed Houses, Henton & Chattell and Sheriff Amenity.

The AGM was largely uneventful with Asa English, Andy Marsh and Tim Allard standing down from the committee. Thanks for all your effort and input over the past few years guys. They have been replaced by Peter Smith, Greg Skinner and Matthew Wormald.

The education day that was held at Forest Hill Golf Club saw a great attendance from many golf clubs. I think everyone who attended would agree that the topics were very interesting and created great debate.

I would like to draw people's attention to the article in last month's magazine about the fund that was set up so that greenkeepers could possibly have a course to call their own. What a dream! What an inspirational idea, that if successful could change our industry for the better. Wouldn't it be nice if greenkeepers around the country pulled together and made the dream come true.

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



Midland

Well I am afraid that as usual I have left our notes to the very last moment, if indeed not too late. The reason for such being that here at Stratford we have been reconstructing a tee and laying turf that must have come from Cockermouth in Cumbria! So all I have time to report is the results of our Christmas event held at the wonderful venue of Woburn.

Thanks to Woburn Golf Club for affording us the opportunity to play such an internationally renowned and respected course, as wonderfully presented by John Clarke, Course Manager, and his expert team. You must all be very proud of the course you produce, tremendous. The famous Duke's Course was our host and what a pleasure. As two tees were employed we were blessed with two Mr Starters, our thanks to John Hammond and Mike Whitehouse. The main prize table was sponsored by Mark Chamberlain/Tacit. The results being; 1. A. Jones & A. Brougham; 2. T. Cheese & R. Beacham; 3. M. Hughes & C. Lowe. N.T.P.s were sponsored by both Tacit x2 and N. Tyler/Sheriff Amenity x2, M. Chamberlain, A. Jones x2, and J. Hughes. Our thanks to Turners Groundcare for their usual halfway house refreshment (including Blackthorn Berry Mother's ruin) with Russ and David.

It was also nice to see S. MacCallum, from H.Q, who played and gave a brief rundown of how the organisation is addressing the current climate at this difficult time.

The results of the Aggregate Trophy's were calculated as; Best Gross: Mike Hughes. Best Nett: Gary "Board Member" Cunningham. Well done to you both and thanks for supporting the Section over the whole year.

And finally, just a little hint into that to which I shall be considering for your thoughts next month, formal education and the opportunities that greenkeeping as a profession not only provides, but indeed influences and inspires even the most reluctant of us to rise to the challenge and reap the rewards

both professionally and personally. Should anyone have any thoughts on such please contact me on; sean.mcdade@homecall.co.uk. Thank you Dave, but you will have to wait until next month mate. Such requires more than a few hours of consideration, it's not a foundation mate; it's what a foundation's for!

Wishing all a happy new year,
Sean McDade



Mid-Anglia

Happy New Year to one and all, I trust you all had a restful and peaceful Christmas. Let's hope that Spring comes early this year and any troubles you encounter are minor ones. Sorry it's a little while after the event but here is the report from the Autumn Tournament held at Mid-Herts Golf Club on October 7. A field of 34 contested the event and the weather was not bad at all. 39pts was enough to secure victory for P. Compton, from Stevenage Golf Club, with Nigel Phelan, St Andrews Hospitals GC, on 37pts coming a good second and D.Hodkin, Knebworth GC, in a respectable third with 36pts. There were prizes for Nearest the Pin on all five par threes with Geoff James, Geoff Fenn, Nigel Phelan, Kevin Armstrong and Steve Mason proving to be the most deadliest eyed dicks.

Rob Catlin and Dave Murphy, from Pareto, were the generous sponsors of the day and a big thank you to you both for not only sponsoring the event but for your long and continued support over the years of the Section.

Jody Wilson and his team must also be congratulated as the golf course was in exceptional order, as it is all year round. As a fairly regular visitor to the club, I have seen the course improve and develop over the years and I know that the members are suitably proud of their course. Thanks also go to Mid-Herts Golf Club itself for their kind hospitality and making us feel most welcome.

This year's competitions are pencilled in for Aspley Guise GC, Stocks GC, Berkhamsted GC and Ashridge GC. Dates and

times are yet to be confirmed but I will keep you posted. We were going to have an extra golf day this year but we couldn't find another venue within walking distance of the others!

The Section Committee would also like to take this opportunity to thank Frank Scullion, of Dunstable Downs GC, most sincerely for his contribution to the Section. Frank is stepping down from the committee this year after many, many years of service looking after the members interests and enabling the Section to function effectively. Thanks very much Frank, it is very much appreciated and we wish you well.

I look forward to seeing those of you that are travelling to Harrogate for BTME later this month, let's hope it doesn't snow. TTFN

Craig Spooner
craig.spooner@limagrain.co.uk



B,B&O

Another year is over - Happy New Year to you all. The season of 2009 has passed and the nativity plays and panto's are now just a faded memory. Father Christmas has hammered his credit card - eaten one to many mince pies and now down to Turkey pot noodles and Sudoku puzzles to keep him occupied during tea break with a small glass of homemade pink Gin in the evenings to look forward to and soothe those memories of last years resolutions which bit the dust. Welcome to 2010.

The Christmas Turkey Trot got off to a good start! On a mild winter's morning in December the BB&O Section had the pleasure of visiting The Oxfordshire GC for this year's AGM and Turkey Trot.

The Oxfordshire, set in the rolling hills of the Chilterns, is located approximately 45 minutes drive northwest of London on the outskirts of the historical university town of Oxford.

Designed and built by the world-renowned architect Rees Jones, his first in Britain. No expense has been spared in creating this beautiful course. A tactical blend of bunkering,

strategically placed lakes, wispy rough and wind make this a real challenge. Combine that with its natural beauty and you have all the course you'll ever need, a perfect end to 2009 as the Section relished the chance to play this wonderful course.

A record turnout of 108 was recorded to battle it out for The Avoncrop Cup in Texas Scramble format, followed by a roast dinner and AGM. Barry McCluskey, from Avoncrop, presented the 1st prizes and the results were as follows:

First place went to The Magic Pencil Team who named themselves Making Up The Numbers from Maidenhead GC with 55.9; second place to the Golf and Turf mob led by James Moore and Co and third to The Angry Mob from Sonning GC.

The putting green competition run by Peter Helps, from Turner Groundcare, was won by Sean Haynes representing Bearwood Lakes GC

A big thank you goes to The Leaderboard Group and Adam King, our Secretary, for co-ordinating this excellent venue and for the courtesy of the course which providing the Section with fantastic golf and catering facilities which were enjoyed by all on the day.

A big thank you to Nigel and Shawn, and all the greenkeeping staff for preparing the course to a first class standard and ensuring we all had a great day out.

Thank you to all our sponsors throughout 2009. We have had great support from the trade which has included Sheriff, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, Golf & Turf, Browns, Amenity Land Solutions, Headland, Banks, ETT and Speedcut Contractors.

The Annual General Meeting followed and Sid Arrowsmith was re-elected as Chairman for the Section followed by Chris Lomas, Vice Chairman; Adam King, Secretary; Frank Booth, Treasurer); Alec McEndoe, Simon Marsh (Education), Matt Smith, Matt Nutter as committee helpers with yours truly as the scribe for another year.

Clive Parnell has joined forces with Amenity Land Solutions after Gem Professional ceased trading last year, its nice to see Clive up and about and we all wish him the very best in his new position.

If any member has any news or views they would like to share,

or would like more information about the section and forthcoming events in 2010 you only have to log in to brogreenkeepers.co.uk your cyberspace details and e-mail address with the Secretary Adam King who will only be pleased to keep you informed and up to date. Adam can be contacted on ajk@radley.org.uk

See you all at BTME in a few weeks time and wishing you all a great start to the New Year!

Mark Day
mark.day@taticgolf.co.uk

South East Region

This year's South East Region's Annual Gentlemen's Dinner will be held at Walton Heath Golf Club on Friday, March 5.

For details or entry forms please contact South East Regional Administrator Clive Osgood on 01737 819343 mob 07841 948410 or cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk

BMW PGA Championship

Anyone wishing to volunteer to be a part of the BMW PGA Championship Support Team for the final two days of the Championship at The Wentworth Club on Saturday May 22 and Sunday May 23, should contact Clive on the above numbers. A limited number will also be required as an emergency squad for the opening two days Thursday May 20 and Friday May 21.

Clive Osgood



Surrey

Sunday, December 6. The following should have appeared in the December edition. I do not know why it was missed as it was emailed on time. Please read on for belated news.

Saturday, November 7. I am sure you will all be pleased to read that since my Baltic cruise I have not just been enjoying myself driving around in my van, visiting customers, I have had to endure two further short holidays. The first was a long week-end at Studland Bay,

Dorset. The weather was warm and sunny and nearly warm enough for a visit to the nudist beach. Not to participate, of course, but merely to observe and ponder the idiosyncrasies of the human psyche.

The second break, just a few days later, was a Wednesday to Sunday visit to France, in a village called Chatelleraut, between Tours and Poitiers. Plenty of food, wine and a game of golf. A visit to a chateau and on the Sunday home on empty toll motorways that only resemble the M25 at 4 o'clock in the morning. That's holidays over until Christmas and then another long sea voyage to the Isle of Wight.

Whilst I was in France, the annual England v Scotland golf clash occurred at Hankley Common GC and I understand from Tony Bremer that a grand day was had by all, especially the English team. Ronnie Christie would not answer my text enquiry from France as to the outcome and only told me to concern myself with not upsetting our European colleagues. My assumption that England were victorious proved correct and the result, I later learned, was England 4 - Scotland 2. That I was not able to play, I hope will not stop me from being selected next time, for I know Tony was particularly upset that my golfing expertise was not available this year.

Mummy of the month is Caroline Wales, who gave birth to Freddie, 6 lbs. 12 oz on October 2. Daren Wales, husband and Course Manager at Clandon Regis GC was, he informed me, a major player in the proceedings but now needs time to rest and recuperate.

Retford was the venue for the Northern six hour lawnmower race and Surrey's answer to Jenson Button, Steve (Basher) Bush and his 24 inch Atco lawnmower were 1st in his group. Steve, Head Mechanic at St. George's Hill GC, finished 12th overall, having raced 140 miles in six hours. Some say you have to be mad to race a Formula 1 vehicle - what do you have to be to race a lawnmower?

That was all, so read on once again for January 2010.

Have you heard the news? Of course you have, how can any Surrey member not be aware that we have in our midst a man whose knowledge, persistence

and for his age, reasonable good looks has at last entered the higher echelons of our greenkeeping world. I write this with the deepest respect and I know that you must all be feeling that when next you meet this aficionado of grass and everything green, including Dollar Spot, that his humorous and talkative nature will not have been affected having now earned that great honour to be called Mr John Ross MG.

Ken Cooper will retire on December 4 after 36 years at Kingswood GC. Ken previously worked at Burhill and Banstead Downs and will retire with his wife to a flat in Banstead Village. Many will know Ken's son Steve, who is deputy at Silvermere GC.

Tony Kyle, Surrey Downs GC, and his wife, Samantha, have been so busy looking after twin boys, Logan Aston and Quinn George who arrived on February 26 and 27 and their other three children that Tony forgot to tell me about the happy event. A belated congratulations to you both.

The Greenkeeper v Secretary Golfencounter was played at The Berkshire GC in November and ended in a friendly draw 3 all. Only one of our pairs appeared to play for the Secretaries by losing their match 6 and 4 and it would be ungentlemanly of me to divulge their names. Needless to say that Tony and Anthony must both practice more if they hope to be picked next year.

The Turkey Trot results will appear in February's Edition as the deadline for January is on December 5.

Brian Willmott



Kent

Happy New Year!

Now that silly season is over and hopefully all the extended families have left your respective domiciles relatively unscathed, you can start to concentrate on restoring some sanity to your daily lives. The psychological tolls taken by excessive Christmas pleasantries can leave us all emotionally drained and, I find, that there is no better cure than going out on the verti drain and punching a load of holes



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

I hope everyone has enjoyed the Christmas break and that there are not too many sore heads left over from the New Year celebrations.

The first few days of January are when many, well some, of us try to keep our New Year's resolution, but how long does it last? From personal experience whether it's a diet to counteract the excesses of turkey and treats at Christmas or work on that short game to knock a couple of shots of the handicap somehow by the end of January good intentions slowly seem to slip by the wayside. As I sit here in the middle of December writing my column to beat the rapidly approaching editorial deadline I have convinced myself that 2010 will be different. Why will it be different? I'm determined to enlist the help of family and friends.

BIGGA is in a similar exception to the rule and while all exhibition space at Harrogate 2010 is fully sold, the Association needs the support of its members and the sports turf industry if it is to prosper.

We have had donated some issues of Golf Greenkeeping, the official publication of the British Golf Greenkeepers' Association, dating back to the later part of 1982 and early 1983 and it is surprising in reading them how many articles and features are topical today. Headings such as 'BGGA reject proposed IOG merger', 'How secure is the Greenkeeper's job?', 'Greenkeepers at cross roads', and 'Head Greenkeeper sacked by Committee' could all have been written in the last 12 months let alone 26 years ago.

The following is a direct quote from an editorial from February 1983 and I hope it gives you food for thought:

"Never has there been a time in the history of golf and the greenkeeping profession for a more united front. We have seen over the past ten years a wind of change in the economics of our lives which could well develop into a hurricane.

Golf courses will no longer remain the cosy club supported by a few wealthy members who are content to keep their club exclusive and did not mind paying for it. Golf Clubs, or rather Golf Courses, are fast becoming part of the sporting leisure business and with business comes capital investment and the expectation of profit."

The article continues by pointing out the need for greenkeepers to improve their image, improve training and education and encourage management development.

It concludes with the statement: "The turf trade in general could help and in fact some of the big names in industry do make a significant contribution to the training and education of greenkeepers, but the good Lord only helps those who help themselves and all greenkeepers should give considerable thought to their own future and the direction they would like it to take." By my way of thinking that sums up the situation today very well, it seems that some things never change which perhaps reflects the general apathy that still exists in some part of this very traditional industry. We all know that the wind of change is blowing. Do yourself a favour and take advantage of the many education related opportunities that BIGGA presents, that way you can help shape your own future and perhaps that of your employer.

Will I see you in Harrogate?

John Pemberton, Chief Executive

into various parts of the course. This has the double benefit of relieving the pent up frustrations of having an over-bearing urge to throttle your nearest and dearest and restoring health to stressed areas of your courses. The vagaries of the wettest winter for a long time are playing havoc with many of our courses and anything we can do when conditions allow to shift some of the excess water has to be paramount to restore the playing surfaces.

Many thanks to the 40 or so of you who attended our AGM at the end of November. Kev and I both appreciated the vote of confidence in our respective roles and now with Glenn Kirby on board to arrange more educational events, we are confident of strengthening the Kent Section to its fullest. Details of the meeting are all on the website as is the fantastic fixture list for this year. We put a fair amount of leg work into securing these venues so please do your best to support as many as possible. We are now sourcing host courses for 2011 so if you're up for it please let us know.

The Turkey Trot that preceded the AGM was a great day as normal. A strong contingent of Kentish greenkeepers flocked to Birchwood Park for the annual extravaganza. Thanks to my guys for helping to produce a course worthy of the multitude of our peers who made the pilgrimage to Dartford. After the recent poor weather we were blessed indeed by some lovely winter sunshine and as Kev and I took up our usual positions at the back of the group after completing the days organisational duties, it was clear that high scores would be the order of the day as players competed for the Scotts Shield.

Given the role of Master of Ceremonies for the day was James Watson, of Headland Amenity, whose voice resounded far and wide as players were announced onto the 1st tee. Also at the first tee to send us on our way with a little seasonal cheer was Mark and Amanda Brown, of MAB Grounds care. After a strong front nine we were met at the 10th by MAB again but this time with a very welcome barbeque and yet more cheery beverages to revitalise the happy throng as they took to the trickier Birchwood back nine. The quality of our players prevailed on

the day, however, and as dusk fell as we played the last holes, another successful event had been added to the annals of our Section's history. Results were as follows: 1. Russ Bain 43 pts (and winner of Scotts Shield); 2. Nick Leach 42 pts; 3. Rob Holland 42 pts

Longest Drive went to Michael Wigstone.

Team Rumble competition was won with a massive 127 points by Paul Rudkin, Darren Burton, Nick Leach and Russ Bain.

Again, many thanks to all who attended and contributed to making it such a great occasion. I look forward to seeing you all at Princes Golf Club in March. Please keep tabs on all up to the minute information at our very regularly updated website www.kentgreenkeepers.com and remember if you have any news, views or pictures for it then please contact me and I shall be happy to post any items you wish to be shown.

Nothing else to add other than to sincerely wish you all the very Best of British for the coming year.

Rob Holland



Essex

We are into a new year and Essex has a slightly changed Committee, at the AGM and Winter Team event at Orsett Golf Club on Tuesday, December 1. Mark Stopps, of Bentley Golf Club, was elected as your new Chairman. Dominic Rodgers, Warley Park Golf Club, as your Secretary, plus Andy Cracknell, Orsett Golf Club, to the position of Competition and Handicap Secretary. The following stay in their former positions of Treasurer Tom Smith, Paul O'Kane, Education and Arnold Phipps-Jones as your Press Officer. All contact details are on the committee page on the website. A write up of the minutes from the AGM are available on the website.

The day started with a slight frost but soon warmed to give a pleasant day though there was a nip in the air as the day progressed. Don Clark, our former Chairman, presented the

course in an outstanding condition. With the course having been closed the day before due to flooding it was a remarkable achievement and our thanks go to him and his staff for the hard work and presentation that we all remarked on.

The winners, though I heard a few murmuring the words "bandits" at the prize presentation were as follows:-

The AGM and Winter Team Event at Orsett GC. Format: Progressive Stableford.

1. Ben Scrivener, Tom Bowens, Steve Crosdale, C Bowens. 124 pts; Jeff Taylor, Rob George, Neil Stopps, Noel Kettle. 121 pts; 3. Richard Dunmow, Kyle Smith, Malcolm Smith, Neil Tutton. 118 pts.

Longest Drive, Tom Brook. Nearest the Pin, Tom Smith.

This year's Greenkeepers Order of Merit was won by Stuart Rodgers.

The Trade Order of Merit was won by Neil Peachey.

The Essex Section wishes to thank all those at Orsett Golf Club for a fine day, the catering staff did us proud and our thanks to the Club Captain Steve Biggins for his vote of thanks and wishes before we started the AGM. Plus all those that helped to fill our raffle table for the evening.

To our sponsors of 2009:- Avoncrop Amenity Products - Bailey's of Norfolk Ltd - Banks Amenity Products Ltd - Blade Amenity Ltd - CMW Equipment Company Ltd - Collier Turf Care - Ernest Doe & Sons - Fieldfare Amenity LiquiTec - GM Amenity - Golf Mats UK - Grasshopper Horticultural - Headland Amenity Products - Limagrain UK - Prime Irrigation Ltd - Rigby Taylor Ltd - Scotts - Tey Farm Systems - P, Tuckwell Ltd - Vitax and Writtle College.

We thank you all very much for your support over the past year.

The Section also wishes to thank Clive Osgood our Regional Administrator for his support to the section over this last year.

Lastly, I must thank Martin Forrester, our long standing Secretary who has decided to stand down from the position after such a long time. Martin was an instigator in the formation of the Essex Section some 13 years ago and he has put in a lot of hard work over his years on the committee. We will miss him as Secretary and wise

man on the committee I'm sure, though he will still be joining us on our golf days over the coming months and years.

Also to Antony Kirwan, who has decided to have a year of rest from a major roll on the committee? He will be missed, as he has a big contribution to the section in the way we have progressed forward on our golf days, bringing computerisation into results and handicapping.

Thank you to both of them for what they have done for the Section.

Next year's events are also on the website, starting with our Seminar and then the first golf event, The Spring Trophy at South Essex Golf Club, Tuesday, April 27.

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

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



London

Firstly I would like to wish a Happy New Year to all of you in the Section.

I know it has been along time since the London Section has put anything in the 'Around the Green' but I am going to try and produce reminders of education days, golf days and any other news. I've got a lot to talk about for once this month.

I am writing this before the Turkey Trot which is being held at Sandy Lodge Golf Club so I will have the results in next months issue. I would like to thank Lee Cox for writing last year's notes.

There has been a slight change to the London Section. Rob Phillips, from Sandy Lodge, has stepped down as our Chairman after eight years on the committee.

We have enjoyed some wonderful golf tournaments and really good education days over the years, so I would like to thank Rob for all his time and effort to keep the Section going. Don't worry, Rob will remain as Treasurer on the new committee, he won't let the purse strings go just yet!

The new Chairman is Aaron Percival who has been Rob's

Vice this year. Aaron has just had a baby boy this year. So congratulations to him on that, hope your getting your sleep! The new look committee being headed by Aaron is as follows: Matt Plested Secretary and Around the Green notes. Lee Cox Education and Tournaments. Rob Phillips Treasurer and the Committee Members are Jamie Lomas, Phil Jones, from Supergrass, and Barry McCloskey, from Avoncrop. The trade members are out and about. They will be able to keep us in touch with what is going on and what people want from the Section.

There is a new drive from the new committee to do more education and to give you as much notice to when and where the golf days will take place.

Remember this is your section too and there is funding for education. Tell us what you want to learn and we will try to organise something for you.

So far organised for 2010, The Spring tournament, May 20, at Ealing Golf Club. I know we have the 2mm debate at Harrogate this month, which should be good but this will give you the 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 Tournament, 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.

This we hope will allow us to enjoy the sun!

We will keep you updated on Education days once we finalised them and next years Turkey Trot. We want to improve this section but we need just a little bit of help from you. So 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 Plested
07818410333

South West and South Wales Region



Devon and Cornwall

Hello all! Firstly I apologise that there hasn't been any "Around the Green" entries for our Section for the last couple of months. There has been a few changes to our Section with new personnel coming in and roles within the section changing. My name is George Pitts, Course Manager at Yelverton Golf Club, and I have taken over as Section Secretary from Abi Crosswood, who has started an internship in the States with her first placement at Augusta National. Abi has also completed her Foundation Degree with a merit, so thanks to Abi for all the hard work she has done for the Section, congratulations and good luck for the future. Someone else who has stepped down from the committee is Jeff Mills. Jeff has been very active within BIGGA over the years, both in our Section and Nationally, having stood on the National Board. We would all like to congratulate Jeff on his commitment and the enthusiasm he has shown for the industry and for our Section. Jeff will still be representing the Section on the Regional Board. New Committee members include Tony Gooch, from Great Torrington, Steve Harris, from Ashbury, and Brian Summers, from Carlyon Bay.

The last meeting held was at Great Torrington Golf Club on November 5. The day consisted of the usual format of Golf, Course walk, lunch and an educational presentation in the afternoon. The day was kindly sponsored by Devon Garden Machinery and Scotts. Many thanks to Tony Gooch, Head Greenkeeper who provided a Golf course in fantastic condition. The 30+ strong course walk was led by Tony and was extremely interesting. Towards the end of the Course walk, Steve Gingell, from the STRI, displayed some of the techniques that are being made available to quantify per-

formance of putting surfaces. In the afternoon the 55 attendees were given a presentation on "Rescue" selective herbicide by Simon Barnaby. Simon was working for Syngenta during most of the trial period and gave a very honest and comprehensive presentation on how the product can be used and on the results of all the trial work leading up to its arrival on the market. This was followed by a presentation by Steve Gingell which continued on from the display of equipment for evaluating the performance of your putting surfaces. Steve explained how by benchmarking and setting out realistic performance targets along with regular recording of performance, that this can be used to plot progress and evaluate your maintenance programme. Thank you to both speakers on the day for very interesting and thought provoking presentations. The Golf competition was won by Roy Dow, 38pts, from Chulmleigh GC, Kevin Pitts, 37pts, from Fingle Glen, was second and Andrew Dunstan, 37pts from Newquay came in third. Kevin Pitts won the longest drive with Richard Parker, from Ilfracombe, winning the Nearest to Pin. A huge thank you to Great Torrington Golf Club who made us all feel very welcome and helped to run what was a very successful and enjoyable day.

Details of the Christmas meeting at St Enodoc will be in the next "Around the Green". Our January meeting will be held at Newquay Golf Club on Wednesday, January 13. The afternoon speaker will be Mark Hunt, from "Headland Amenity", who will be talking about where the industry is heading over the next 10 years. Full details of this event and all other events for our Section will be in the events' section of the website.

At the end of November, I attended a Section Secretaries' meeting at BIGGA HOUSE. It was a great chance to meet the other Section Secretaries and to discuss the good and bad things that are happening within all the Sections. We discussed best practices and continuity of the Sections. I look forward to implementing some of the ideas discussed and working towards continually developing the Section from strength to strength.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any issues within our

section or any events or news you would like me to include in these "Around the

Green" notes. Happy New Year! George Pitts, Section Secretary.

07929 754401

gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com



South West

Hey everyone, I hope you're all well! What a great time of year this is, dark mornings... early evenings...and wet miserable days. But don't let me get you down, it's not all doom and gloom we do have something to look forward to. As I write this month's letter we have Christmas just around the corner and then New Year after that. New Year's great, it a real chance to re-write the last year and start all over again. Myself, I just want to do everything I'd done in 2009, but this time just a bit bigger and bit better, can't go wrong that way!

Many congratulations from the Section to Matt Hawker, Course Manager at Bristol & Clifton Golf Club, on successfully completing 20 years of service at this top Bristol Club. In this time, Matt, under the tutelage and guidance of the likes of John Barr and Huw Parry, has raised through the ranks from Apprentice Greenkeeper to the position of Course Manager. A real success story for both Matt, and the support received from BIGGA and the industry in general. A huge well done goes out to Matt for this, and it just goes to show for all the younger members of staff out there reading this, hard work and determination can ensure you reach the very top and your dreams can come true!

Just recently I bumped into Ali Turner, who most of you may know suffered from a horrible broken leg recently. Ali, I must say it was great to see you, and it was even better knowing that you have recovered so well from such a horrific accident. This also reminds me that I would also like to wish Roger Neale a speedy recovery, twice in one year, Roger let's just roll onto 2010 shall we...

I would like to welcome Jamie

Around The Green

Blake, Roger Ashby, Dan Taylor, Roger Roberts, John Collinson and Joe Willcocks all from Broadway GC. They have just recently transferred to our section from the Midland section. You guys will be a great addition to the section!!!!

Just recently I attend a secretaries meeting at BIGGA HOUSE, this included a one night's stay in the glamorous Aldwark Hotel. For those of you that have never had the opportunity to visit the Aldwark Hotel, well let me be the first to tell you how amazing this place is. The food was great, our rooms were fantastic and we were made very welcome by the staff. I arrived there on the Sunday evening after a terrible drive, which took me over four hours. Anyone been up the M1 recently? If you haven't don't bother! It's 20 miles of 50mph, not what I wanted on my Sunday evening. To top it off when the average speed limits did come to an end the heavens opened up and there's me driving with the wipers on full blast going even slower than I previously was. However all was forgotten when I arrived to the hotel bar to find Chelsea v Arsenal on the box, I remember thinking to myself "this is what Sundays are all about!" On the Monday morning we had our Section Secretaries' meeting. This is when it became a really worthwhile trip as it's great to say that BIGGA are always trying to move forward and get the very best for you as the members. This was also a pretty good eye opener for me, it was great to meet the people who do the work at BIGGA and to see how the generally day to day running goes. Thanks everyone at BIGGA house for this.

Could I please remind everyone that if you move house or change your phone, e-mail address or anything to please inform the HQ or even drop me an e-mail. I would hate for you guys to miss out on any information or events because of this, thank you!!! On the final note, your stories can also make some great reading. Feel free to drop me an e-mail anytime. Look forward to speaking to you soon.

One final remind... Spell check... check, Grammar... check...

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



South Wales

After a week of heavy rain we were fortunate to have a beautiful, if slightly chilly day, for the Christmas competition at Pyle and Kenfig. The course was in superb condition thanks to the efforts of Paul Johnson and his staff.

Results: 1. (Vitax Shield) Kerry Jones, Carmarthen Hedgehog Trust; 2. Andrew Roach, Haverfordwest; 3. Rhys Norville, Newport, Nearest the Pin. Jamie Probert, Pontardawe. Longest Drive. Steve Lloyd, Burghill. Best Trade/Guest. Peter Lacey. Silver Salver Award for the best aggregate score for the season, Andy Roach.

Thanks go out to Joe Crawley, from Vitax, for sponsoring the day and for his efforts in putting together the superb prizes; to Club Captain, Richard Hurne, for presenting the prizes.

To all the wonderful catering staff and last but not least to Paul (PJ) Johnson and his Greenkeeping team for producing a superb golf course for us to enjoy.

Joe Crawley also advised me that this year's sponsorship of the Section will be their last as they now intend to sponsor the Association nationally via the Silver Key membership.

So I would like to thank Vitax for their sponsorship of the Section which goes back to at least the early '80s, when Colin Murphy, was their Rep! Since then we had Allan Stow, myself and Adie Masters so it's a bit like the end of an era.

On the education front I believe that the winter series of evening lectures will start in January. More information soon.

In closing, I would like to thank the Section's sponsors for 2009 who were: Countrywide, CWC, Farmura, Inscapes, Keith Morgan Mowers, RT, Scotts, Tacit, Tower Europe and Vitax.!

Also thanks to Section Secretary, Steve Chappell, for all his work and congratulations on becoming Regional Chairman.

Ceri Richards
07831 168645



JOHN DEERE



BIGGA

The Bigga Training & Development Manual, sponsored by John Deere, is an invaluable tool for everyone working within the greenkeeping industry.

FREE USE FOR MEMBERS

The BIGGA Training & Development Manual

This online manual provides users with the information they need on recruitment, induction, training and career progression using video clips, written information, downloadable documents and useful web links.

A valuable membership benefit the manual can be accessed via the BIGGA website on the Education, Jobs' and Members' areas. Simply log in using your surname and BIGGA membership number on the Home page.

Designed around a theme of 18 holes users can gain access to training records, job specifications, job descriptions, sample contracts of employment, appraisal forms and details of continuing development.

How to access the BIGGA Training & Development Manual

- 1 Go to the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk
- 2 Click on the Members area, the Jobs page or the Education page and click on the BIGGA Training Manual link.
- 3 Enter your login details and select the BIGGA Training & Development Manual from the left hand menu.
- 4 The Training Manual will load and the user can click on Enter the Site to view a welcome video or can select 1-9 or 10-18 on the top menu bar. You can progress through the manual hole by hole or go straight to the hole you wish to view. You can also skip to holes 10-18.
- 6 When you select a hole you will be presented with a window that explains what that hole is about. You can then select from the bottom tabs, video or sub-text (downloadable documents and links).
- 7 When clicking on a downloadable document it will automatically open in your default word processor. This can then be amended, updated and saved to your computer's hard disk or printed and filed in your personnel files.





Diary of Events

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

January

Wednesday, January 13,

In at the deep end a presentation by Keith Exton, Head Groundsman of the Swalec Stadium Cardiff, home of Glamorgan CCC.

Venue of the event is Taff's Wells Rugby Club and will start at 7:30pm.

Arranged by the South Wales Section in conjunction with the IOG South Wales Branch and is sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity. Contact Steve Chappell steve.chappell@talktalk.net.

Wednesday, January 13

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

Tuesday, January 19

The North Wales Section will be arranging a bus to travel to Harrogate Week. This will travel from the North Wales area and can pick up in the North West Section by prior arrangements. Contact Jeremy Hughes jezpro69@aol.com

January 2010
- Date to be advised.

The South West Section are organising a Manual Handling training course. Contact Adam Matthews adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

February

Thursday, February 11

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

Wednesday, February 17

The Devon and Cornwall Section Spring Workshop entitled "The Life Beneath Your Feet", to be held at Duchy College.

Contact George Pitts gpitts.yelverton@googlemail.com

Wednesday, February 17

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. 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 steve.chappell@talktalk.net.

February 2010
- Date to be advised.

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

March

Tuesday, March 2

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 pj.boyd@btinternet.com

Thursday, March 4

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

Friday, March 5

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

Wednesday, March 10

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

Wednesday, March 17

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

Wednesday, March 17

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 steve.chappell@talktalk.net.

April

Wednesday, April 14

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 steve.chappell@talktalk.net.

Wednesday, April 14

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

More dates for your diary next month



Membership

Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update

Welcome to 2010

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to a new year and to thank all the many BIGGA members who currently volunteer in one role or another to help the team at BIGGA Headquarters. Without their valuable help, advice and countless hours of volunteer work your Association would not be what it is today.

By working closely with your Section committee the membership team are looking forward to a successful and prosperous new year.

But the best people to promote any membership professional body are the members themselves.

Please encourage your fellow greenkeepers or groundsman working on sports turf to take a look at what BIGGA can do for them.

Membership Renewals

Traditionally, BIGGA used to operate a membership year that ran from January to December, but to allow more flexibility BIGGA now operate a rolling year. This means that a new member will gain 12 months membership from the month of joining BIGGA.

However, if any member has an expiry date, for example, December 31 or January 31, which doesn't fit in with their personal circumstances and wish to change to a different month please contact the Membership Department directly so that we can discuss your options with you.

We are also finding that some teams of greenkeepers, at the same golf club, have differing expiry dates; if your golf club wishes to pay for membership of BIGGA for all the greenkeepers at the same time, again, please contact the Membership Department so that we can discuss your options.

New workplace problem-solving process

Following the Dispute Resolution Review (DRR) and since April 6,

2009, the Government has changed the way we deal with problems at work.

There is now:

- *Less emphasis on the mechanics of how to manage disciplinary issues, grievances and dismissals*
- *More flexibility to resolve problems at an early stage and in a way that suits you best.*

Encouraging better and more direct workplace communication will reduce the chance of problems going to an employment tribunal.

Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services) has produced the new Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievances procedures, which provides basic practical guidance to employers, employees and their representatives and sets out principles for handling disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace.

For full details of the Acas Code of Practice and to download a free copy, go to www.acas.org.uk/drr

BIGGA has produced a "Guide to Problems at Work" help sheet to advise members of the procedure used regarding a grievance or disciplinary at work. This can be downloaded from the Members Area of the BIGGA website.

Welcome to new members

As well as welcoming new members on this page each month, we will be reproducing this list with a bit more information, i.e. Golf Club and job (as per BIGGA categories) on the Members' Area of the BIGGA Website.

The Members' Area of the BIGGA Website holds a vast amount of useful information for BIGGA Members. As well as details of full membership benefits and education information there is access to a Bulletin Board, where, questions and queries and conversations are held regarding all sorts of useful and interesting topics.



Contact Details

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South West & Wales

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Mobile: 07841 948110
janejones1@btconnect.com



Peter Boyd Peter Larter



Clive Osgood Jane Jones

BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scottish Region

Ralph Carson, West
Anthony Farrell, West
Gavin Jones, Central
Des Kerr, East
Chen Kuang Yan, East
Ajay Malhorta, East
Callum Mathewson, Central
Naomi Newlands, East
Richard Plested, North
Phillip Snellin, Central

Northern Section

Scott Hall, Sheffield

Midland Section

Thomas Ablewhite, East of England
Matthew Clark, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Sam Davies, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Jason Gowland, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Duncan O'Connor, Berks/Bucks & Oxon

South East Section

Phillip Bannister, Essex
Andrew Darnell, Essex
Peter Driver, East Anglia
Tom Keen, East Anglia
Mark Lambert, London
Barry Mann, Essex
Tom Murray, East Anglia
Christopher Wight, Essex

S West/S Wales Section

John Critchley, South Coast
Frederick Saunders, South West
Nicholas Thomas, South Wales
Ricki Worrall, Devon & Cornwall
Christy Worthington, Devon & Cornwall

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

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



Promoting Best Practice in Sports Turf Management

Assistant Profile

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

When he's not starring in photo-shoots, promoting major brands on his headwear, Macca enjoys football and going out for a run. For relaxation he enjoys chilling out to the sounds of post-grunge-pop-rockers, The Foo Fighters!



Name: Scott McAuley

Age: 27

Club: Woodbury Park G&CC, Devon

Position: Senior Greenkeeper

Nickname: Macca

1. How long have you been greenkeeping?

10 years

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

I always liked the outdoor life and I enjoyed greenkeeping from the moment I started out

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

A Countryside Ranger or an Environmentalist

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

I was given a project to build nine artificial tees for my NVQ3 that I am doing at Duchy college and I enjoyed the planning, ordering and the building – everything from start to finish

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

Digging drainage lines by hand. We have a sand stone soil with a high clay content so it sticks to everything making it a slow job.

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

A mini digger (no more hand digging drain lines)

7. Hobbies?

Football, running

8. Favourite Band?

Foo Fighters

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

Tottenham Hotspur

10. What is your claim to fame?

1996 Ten Tors expedition I was on the news for being one of the few teams to finish in worst weather recorded

What's your number?

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

Tim Webb, of Tacit, is under the spotlight...



1. What is your position within the company?

Managing Director

2. How long have you been in the industry? 18 years.

3. How did you get into it?

As Tacit grew larger than a "one man band", actually my father and my mother, my father asked me to join the company. There're now nearly 30 of us here.

4. What other jobs have you done?

When I first left school I was a Hod Carrier, then went to Middlesex University to attend the High Level tennis Centre for Great Britain, even managed to scrape a degree while I was there! Then decided rugby was my game and went on to play for Wasps and Saracens while Marquee Erecting for a job, finally settled down to teach outdoor education in Cumbria, finished up as Deputy Headmaster at a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties while doing a Masters Degree in Special Needs.

5. What do you like about your current job?

Being involved with a side of golf that is very hidden yet crucial to the game and its development. Creating new products and thinking outside the box, being busy and being under pressure. The guys I work with.

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

The whole industry is more professional; everybody from the top down expect higher standards, courses are in better condition all year round, greenkeepers are now much more aware that is the little things that make the difference.

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

I like playing golf, Sailing, watching Wasps and Sunderland - my two teams, watching sport generally, whether at a professional level or my children at school. Keeping an eye on my small flock of Soay sheep. Having a BBQ with friends.

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

Fat and content.

9. Who are your best friends in the industry?

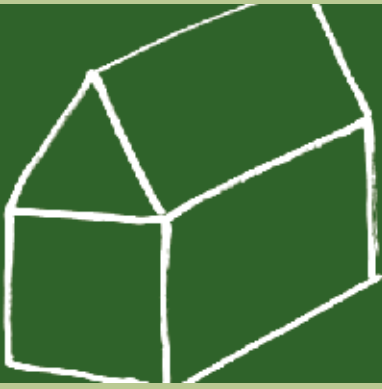
The guys that have believed in Tacit from its beginning and have stuck with us. Too many to mention but they know who they are.

11. What do you consider to be your lucky number?

9 - Once a scrum half always a scrum half.

12. Pick a number. 9

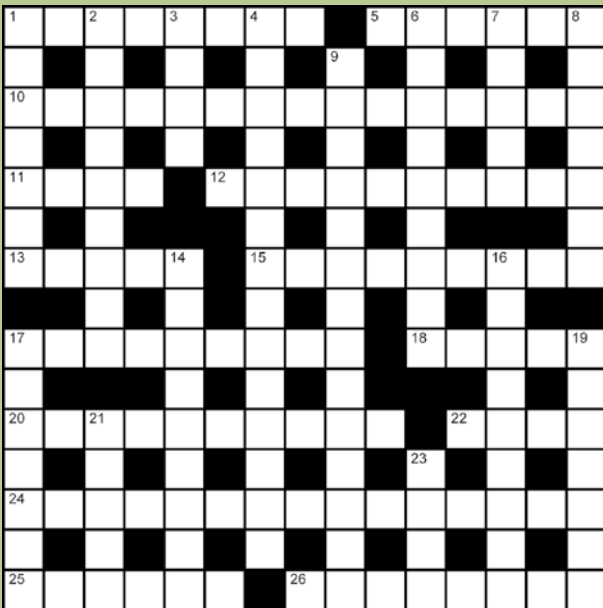
Tim has picked David Snowden, of Agronomic Services



in the shed

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

CROSSWORD



Across

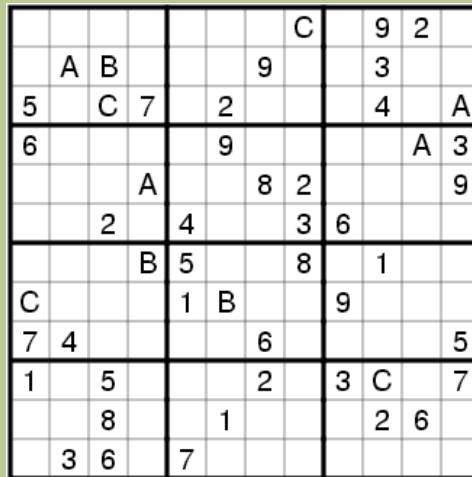
- 1 Unwilling to take risks (8)
- 5 African antelope with ridged, curved horns (6)
- 10/11 Derogatory term for mature woman attired in an attempt to appear younger (6,7,2,4)
- 12 Central character of Hugh Lofting's childrens' books (2,8)
- 13 Act resulting in false incrimination (3-2)
- 15 Excite pleausrably (9)
- 17 Bound, under obligation (9)
- 18 Giant of the sea (5)
- 20 Minimalist design motto (4,2,4)
- 22/24 Interpret that which is not explicitly stated (4,7,3,5)
- 25 Submerged (6)
- 26 Status of the comedy character Norman Stanley Fletcher (8)

Down

- 1 Cloud with rounded peaks and dark, flat base (7)
- 2 Final offer or demand (9)
- 3 Pocket-sized device for playing digital music files (4)
- 4 Meiosis, litotes (14)
- 6 Rules of religious observance beginning with the Ten Commandments (6,3)
- 7 Inspection of accounting practices (5)
- 8 Spartan, strict (7)
- 9 Compilation of romantic fables by Sir Thomas Malory - anagram of TO HALT MURDERER (2,5,7)
- 14 Exclusive right (9)
- 16 Mythological king who led Greeks against Troy (9)
- 17 Former name of the Indonesian island Sulawesi (7)
- 19 Customer (3,4)
- 21 Smooth fabric or rayon or silk (5)
- 23 Asset, useful or valuable quality (4)

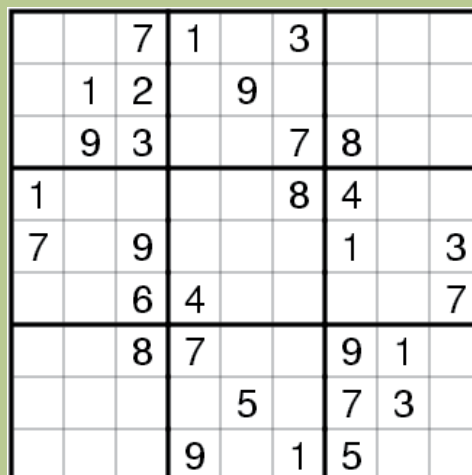
QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

1. Who won the 1910 Open Golf Championship and where was it played?
2. What famous comet was photographed for the first time in 1910?
3. Which well supported football team won the 1910 FA Cup?
4. Which of the following golf clubs is the odd one out? Hags Castle; Royal Montrose; Abergele; Old Fold Manor and Wetherby?
5. Who was the British Prime Minister in 1910?
6. Which lady, associated with Calcutta, was born in 1910?
7. Where will the US Open Championship be played in 2010?
8. What was the name of the Dudley Moore film in which he co-starred with Bo Derek?
9. Barney Oldfield set the land speed record at Daytona Beach in 1910. How fast was it: 131.7 mph; 141.7mph or 151.7mph?



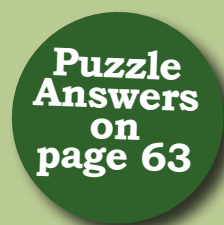
MONSTER SUDOKU

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



SUDOKU

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



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"The groundsman's surface aeration should link into our treatment," Lynda continues "and once the system is up and running the re-juvenated soil structure will sustain the grass roots during drought and provide natural drainage during wet weather."

For further information contact Terrain Aeration on Tel: 01449 673783 or visit their website at: www.terrainaeration.com

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On the Soapbox

A vehicle for people within the industry to express their viewpoint

Jonathan Smith, of The Golf Environment Group, offers some suggestions for New Year's Resolutions...

So the finer particles have just settled on another festive season.

Like me you've probably had to loosen your belt by at least a couple of millimetres ("Eh! What? Did someone say two millimetres? Bloody idiots").

The good Scottish flock among the greenkeeping congregation will no doubt have exposed themselves to far too much pleasure for their Calvinistic convictions, and will currently be found in sheds whipping themselves with switching rods.

Resolutions designed to herald a new era, announced with bravado in the wee small hours, will either have lost their initial pizzazz, or may already have been broken.

"I will read all the Disturbance Theory papers! I will establish a log of staff training

ity, enthusiasm and passion for the superb and actually very worthy and rewarding career I have chosen.

3. In doing this I will attend education events and provide constructive feedback to my Association.

4. I will strive to work even more closely with our Club Manager or Secretary. I will be a team player. As this businesses leading decision makers, we will sit down together and plan out what we would both like to see achieved. We will devise tactics that make sure the cynical, ill-informed fools (I mean customers) that populate our bar and play our course, don't dictate our businesses pace of play.

5. I will explore environmental issues and sustainability more closely, and embrace them as a way to improve my performance, my product, my profile and my golf facilities profits.

6. I will no longer view them as a hassle, as something to be negotiated around, kept at arms length or avoided. Instead I will approach the subject with positivity in the belief that I might actually be able to drive efficiencies and present a better golf experience while lightening the overall footprint of our operations;

7. I will start by evaluating just how much amenity grass I maintain. I will reflect objectively on our grassing plan and seek opportunities, even if they be small and multiple, to relax management, save time and money, increase habitat, improve course character, texture and atmosphere and improve water quality - all through one simple and carefully applied policy decision that we will not over maintain areas that don't need it.

8. I will involve people around me. I will not allow environmental management to be my sole responsibility. I will engage with colleagues in the clubhouse and the club professional to see if between us we can find ways to reduce waste and energy use, and to better communicate on course management and environmental issues with a unified voice;

9. I will use that team to help put together a simple but effective environmental plan - that summarises the environmental qualities of our site, sets out our policies for addressing priority issues and then summarises the projects and specific practical actions we will take to improve our performance.

10. I will let people know what I do and why I do it. I will be confident in my knowl-

edge and ability to manage our golf course estate. I will honestly reflect on weaknesses, seeking advice and support to address them. I will not allow misinformed people to continue to assume golf courses are sterile, artificial, synthetic landscapes with huge resource inputs. I will turn this on its head by walking the walk, and then talking the talk. Creating a course that provides a high quality golfing experience, is ecologically rich, resource efficient and a stunning golf landscape.

11. The tool I will use to streamline my environmental action, and to present our commitment and performance with credibility, is the most productive available.. GEO Certification (register free on line at www.golfenvironment.org/certification).

Now if you've just read that, then it means you've just said it - at least to yourself. So take the next logical and highly valuable step, and make it happen during 2010.

Make this year the year of low carbon; high ecosystem golf.

With best wishes for success from the Golf Environment Organisation, (whose own resolutions by the way are to support golf in improving its performance, provide practical solutions and appraise and recognise credible achievements.)

'tis the Season...

needs! I will secure a budget for a new wash-pad! I will not use a preventative! I will attain an 80/20 sward composition on the 3rd, 8th and 17th greens!"

(NOTE, if you're publicly stating these kinds of resolutions in front of friends and family then you clearly should have taken a longer vacation).

But, if you happen to be struggling for resolutions as you look forward to another year among your extended family of greenkeeping colleagues, here's a few feel good ideas you might like to consider.

Say out loud... (ideally in front of your full Board of Directors or Committee)

"This year ...

1. I will help golf lose its image problem. Golf has one, for various reasons, and unfortunately that means I have one too. Unbelievable as it may sound, people living around golf courses think of my team and I as eco-vandals that are marauding around our exclusive patch, drawing up dastardly schemes to deliberately harm wildlife and to contaminate soil, water, air and anything else we can pass a boom over.

2. I will make a stand for the greenkeeping professional - not by bemoaning others, but by demonstrating my own knowledge, abil-



Jonathan Smith is the Chief Executive of The Golf Environment Group

Jonathan Smith

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