

MARCH 2010

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Making a Mark

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COURSE FEATURE

Longcliffe Golf Club has long been regarded as one of the best in the east Midlands, and when the job of Course Manager was advertised in Greenkeeper International in 2008 it was an attractive proposition to a number of experienced greenkeepers.

The man who got the job was Peter Sands, who had been Deputy Course Manager at West Hill Golf Club in Surrey, and since taking up the reins two years ago he has brought his own stamp to what was already an excellent golf course.

Peter arrived on the crest of Walter Cole, who had been an assistant at Longcliffe for 40 years and been responsible for nurturing the careers of many young greenkeepers who went on to become Course Managers, while, at the same time, producing a fine course. It was never going to be easy for Peter to make his mark quickly.

But that's exactly what he did. Having come from the Home Counties, where courses were kept on main greens and tees wherever possible, Peter saw no reason to change his thinking just because he happened to have moved 130 miles north.

"The very first thing I did was to get all of the winter greens and winter tee mats," said Peter, who started work in February 2008.

Peter is visiting Longcliffe; the club had engaged architect, Simon

never had winter greens and not seen any real damage done by frost. If the greens were so bad that damage would be done the whole course would be shut," explained Peter.

"I will get questions from members about it now and I reassure them that it's ok to play on frosty greens. The only time there might be a problem would be the recently after the snow, and the sudden thaw with movement on top. All the same that it is hard it's not going to cause any damage that wouldn't be irreparable in the spring."

The snow has been warmly welcomed by the club, not least by the pro shop, because members, who previously not book in the winter months because they knew Longcliffe played on temporary greens and tees, are returning and there is more revenue coming in.

Peter's successful interview could be traced to having identified similar issues to those of the experts the club had commissioned.

Ex-Woodhall Spa Course Manager and consultant, Peter Wilkey, set on the interview panel and had views on a number of issues which matched those of the successful candidate, while Peter (Sands) shows no hesitating also matched to get all of the winter greens and those of another specialist, who had looked at the course.

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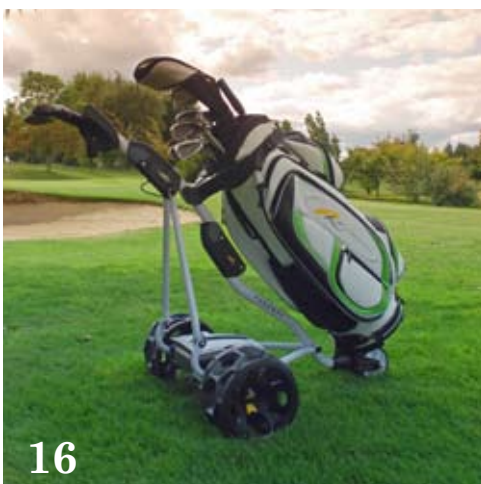
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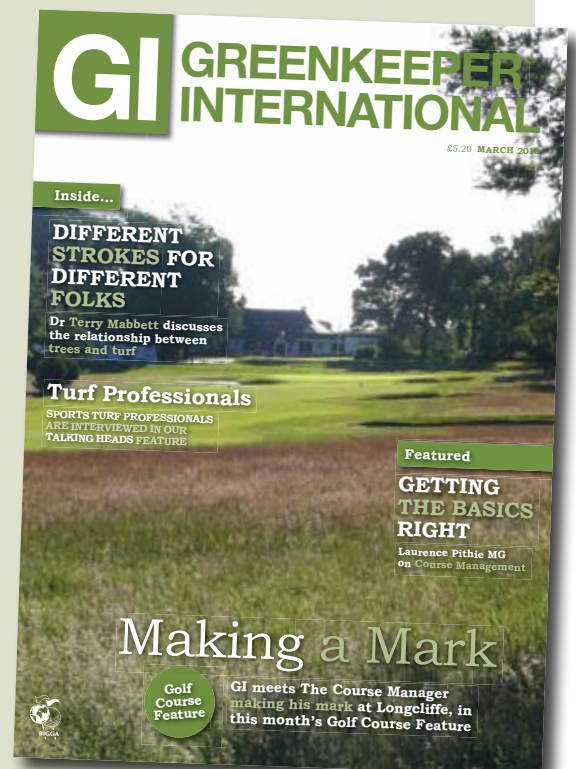
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