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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



A special month for greenkeeping

The freakish weather at the Ryder Cup last year was regarded as pretty much a one-off, or at the very least a once in a century occurrence. But then, less than a year later, along came the Barclays Scottish Open, at Castle Stuart, in Inverness.

Rain, of such ferocity that it caused landslips on areas of the course which hadn't been touched by man in thousands of years, just happened to hit the biggest sporting event ever organised in the Highlands.

In the magazine this month the Course Manager, Chris Haspell, describes how they had 97mm of rain in a matter of hours, with very little warning. That the tournament reached a successful conclusion - albeit over 54 holes - with the World No 1, Luke Donald, lifting the brand new trophy, is a credit to a huge number of people. Chris and his incredible team, were assisted by some of the top Course Managers in the country who happened to be at the event enjoying hospitality. They were more than happy to roll up their sleeves, pick up a shovel and shift some mud.

Remarkably, despite it all, Castle Stuart emerged from the week with its reputation if anything enhanced and there will be a whole host of the world's top golfers keen to return next year, or add it onto their schedules ahead of the Royal Lytham and St Annes Open.

Royal St George's, at the opposite end of the country, was a superb venue for this year's Open and, as you will read in our Review, it was the scene of another greenkeeping triumph. Graham Royden had only been confirmed as permanent Head Greenkeeper a couple of weeks before the Championship, but he

handled everything that was thrown at him with all the calm assurance of a seasoned veteran. The weather wasn't perfect but the golf course was and it was a credit to the work that Graham and his wonderful team had done in the months and weeks running up to the start.

Come the week itself the BIGGA Open Support Team arrived in force to assist with the day-to-day work during the Championship itself. And it worked superbly, to the extent that by the weekend Graham had asked two Support Team members each day to double cut the 17th and 18th greens. What great faith to show in the Support Team, and what an experience for those young greenkeepers. Whenever footage of Darren Clarke's march to victory is shown on TV they will be able to watch the final two holes and say, "I cut those greens."

So July was a special month for greenkeeping. There was hard work, often in desperate conditions, but in both cases, at Castle Stuart and Royal St George's, they succeeded in producing great tournament venues. That much of the work was carried out in front of soaking wet galleries and television cameras meant that it was a perfect showcase for quality greenkeeping - just the sort of greenkeeping that is carried out, away from the spotlight, up and down the country week in and week out.

Scott MacCallum
Editor