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Talent in abundance as we approach a big year

The talent within the BIGGA membership is ably showcased in this month's issue of Greenkeeper International. Not only do we feature the winners of this year's BIGGA Photographic Competition, but also show what you can achieve with hard work, a lot of study, and a scholarship courtesy of Ransomes Jacobsen.

Paul Hope's stunning picture of a four legged visitor to High Post Golf Club demonstrates everything that is good about golf and greenkeeping – golf and nature operating in perfect harmony. It is a wonderful photograph and one which would grace the portfolio of any professional photographer. It just goes to highlight the skills that are inherent within the BIGGA membership. And in Paul's case it's not a one off because he was runner-up in last year's Photographic Competition.

He is just one of a number of BIGGA members who take their hobby seriously and use the wonderful opportunities afforded to them thanks to working early mornings in photogenic surroundings. Congratulations to Paul, to runner-up Adam Grieve and third placed Gareth Anwell, and to all the other entrants.

I am sure that you will be impressed by the quality of the 2012 BIGGA Calendar.

James Hutchinson, of Fairhaven Golf Club, caught the education bug a few years ago and what he has achieved since has been quite remarkable.

He has balanced his home and professional life at Fairhaven, with the considerable demands of studying for a Foundation Degree at Myerscough College as well as becoming the Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year for 2010, in the STRI Golf Environment Awards.

James is first to admit that he would not

have been able to move forward with his education if it had not been for the help he received from the R&A, BIGGA and Ransomes Jacobsen, through the Scholarship Scheme which has seen over £125,000 in grants given to BIGGA members to pay course fees. That financial support, from within the industry itself, is absolutely tremendous and certainly not something you would find in many other

When people ask what they get for their BIGGA membership perhaps the opportunity to have a quick word with James would make it a little clearer. You can read James' story this month.

It seems quite remarkable that yet another year has whizzed by and that we are about to enter 2012. When London was awarded the Olympics it did seem a long, long way away, but here we are on the threshold of what should be a momentous year for sport in Britain. That said, a look in the mirror should be more than enough to confirm that nearly six and a half years has passed since that Olympic announcement in July, 2005.

Hopefully, the feel good factor generated by a home Olympics will be infectious and golf, not an Olympic sport for another four years, will benefit from increased participation and clubs will get a much needed boost to their coffers.

I hope you all have a relaxing and enjoyable break over the holiday period.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Scott MacCallum
Editor