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**Golf
Course
Feature**

The picturesque
High Post GC,
in Wiltshire

Inside...

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Part Two of the build-up
for the PGA Senior Tour

A LIFE CHANGING TRIP

Toro Student of the Year, Matt Perks
reveals all about his trip to the States

ALSO INSIDE... TURF PESTICIDES (PART II) : UTILITY VEHICLES



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High Post Golf Club, this month's Course Feature, taken by the winner of last year's BIGGA Photographic Competition, Paul Hope

Changes (also in the weather)

They say the British are obsessed with the weather and in my experience that is also true of the greenkeeping profession!

Last month I wrote of drought orders in the midst of about five weeks of constant rain, and this month we bring better news on the irrigation front whilst the sun absolutely 'cracks the flags'. The dramatic changes and extreme weather patterns we are experiencing make the need for highly trained, committed greenkeepers even more important, if we are to ensure that golfers have courses that are fit to play on.

The bright sunshine may be not what the water authorities are looking for but I was delighted that the European Tour's flagship event, the BMW PGA Championship was played out in stunning conditions.

It provided a glorious end to Chris Kennedy's epic career at Wentworth.

A tournament won by a British world number 1 in superb style was a fitting climax to the 52nd Tour event to be held under Chris's stewardship. Now retirement awaits, enjoy it Chris, you've certainly earned it.

Having watched Luke Donald show us all how it is done our attention turns to finding out who will be BIGGA's Champion Golfer of 2012.

I am delighted that Kubota and Charterhouse have once again chosen to support the BIGGA National Championship as title sponsors.

The event will take place on 8th and 9th October with the excellent Irvine GC on the West coast of Scotland providing the examination for all those bidding to succeed Jason Hunt to be engraved on our prestigious trophy.

The entry form is available now on page 58, and at www.bigga.org.uk

Entries are limited so don't delay.

Many of you will be aware that we have been going through a period of change at BIGGA House as we seek to ensure the Association is, to use the modern vernacular, fit for purpose.

The Board of Management and I have been working closely together to produce a Business Plan to provide direction over the next three to five years. The principles of the Plan will be made available to members on www.bigga.org.uk in the near future.

This month we welcome two new additions to the staff replacing the recently retired long standing Regional Administrators.

John Young from Gourock has taken over the reins from Peter Boyd in Scotland and Sandra Raper fills the sizable shoes of Peter Larter in the Midlands and North.

Both brought great energy and ideas to the recruitment process and will I am certain serve the needs of the membership with great diligence.



Jim Croxton
Chief Executive

JUNE 2012

FEATURES

20 Preparing Slaley Hall (Part Two)

The second of our three part feature, offering an insight in to the preparations for the ISPS Handa PGA Seniors Championship at Slaley Hall, continues this month, as Nathaniel Sylvester of the PGA, meets up with Course Manager, Steve Cram



24 A life changing trip

The Toro Student of the Year in 2011, Matt Perks, tells the tale of his trip to the US, a reward for his success

28 Protecting turf pesticides in the marketplace (Part Two)



Dr Terry Mabbett continues his look at European Threats. Once more, for Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers

34 High hopes

Jim Cook visits High Post Golf Club, in Wiltshire, the subject of the 2011 BIGGA Photographic Competition, won by it's greenkeeper, Paul Hope



40 Algae in ponds and lakes

Basis points at the ready for those of you wishing to get more on the board, thanks to Graham Paul



High hopes

Jim Cook takes a trip to Wiltshire, to meet the team at High Post GC, a club with ambition as high as the level of beauty it entails

Last year, Paul Hope, a greenkeeper at High Post Golf Club, won BIGGA's 2011 photographic competition with a stunning shot of a deer prancing over the course at first light.

After a visit to the club, one of the striking features was how much of an oasis, or even haven, this picturesque Wiltshire course offers for many other types of rare and elusive wildlife as well as deer. It was a warm day in mid-May when I met with Course Manager, Lachlan Morrison and the team at High Post. Lachlan was keen to speak about the importance of ecology to this club and said:

"We're in the process of progressively clearing scrubby areas and regenerating our grass areas. We've so planted grass in new areas and it's looking quite impressive, with new plants growing through where we cleared. We've also exposed a grass

tree next to the 6th tee which was previously covered and some holly trees." Paul Hope said: "The wildlife is abundant out there as well. Of the birds, we've had red kites over the course for the first time in several years and sparrowhawks, kestrels



34



20



24



32



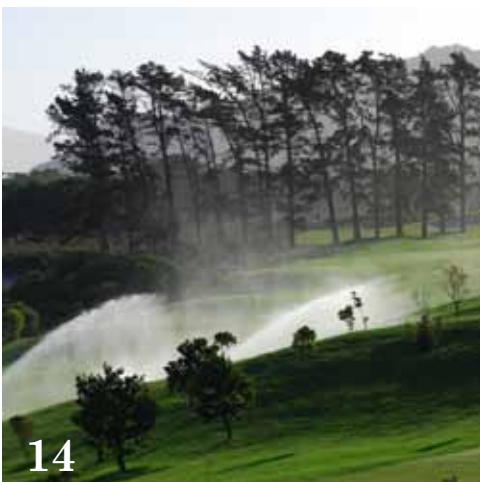
40



34-38

JOHN DEERE
175
SINCE 1837

13



14

REGULARS

- 6 Newsdesk (including...)
- 13 175 years of John Deere
- 14 Jane Leyland
- 15 Drought Update from Sophie Tolchard
- 16 L&D
- 17 Membership
- 18 Industry Update
- 48 Around the Green
- 51 Assistant Profile
- 54 Diary of Events
- 55 Sports Turf Update (New from the STRI)
- 56 The GTC
- 57 In The Shed
- 59 BIGGA National Championship 2012
- 66 **Chairman's Word**
Now on Inside Back Page...



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



Organisational Changes At BIGGA House

Following the completion of a Strategic Review of BIGGA's activity and resources the Board of Management have approved a Business Plan designed to ensure the Association is best positioned to support its members over the coming years.

The Plan has at its heart a commitment to building on the excellent work done by the Learning and Development department whilst taking steps to make sure the Association is commercially sustainable.

Both of these aspects are vital as the Association works closely with the rest of the golf industry to promote the profession of greenkeeping and to continue to raise standards.

With the sport being strongly affected by economic pressures it is important that greenkeepers have a membership association that will work at all levels to ensure the importance of course management and maintenance to the future health of golf is recognised.

BIGGA has reached a new stage in its development and with the Business Plan approved the Chief Executive has been tasked with ensuring that the Association has the necessary staff and resources to implement it and achieve its objectives.

A staff consultation period has taken place with full professional advice and two positions have been made redundant.

As a result, after all redeployment options for the individuals affected were considered, Pauline Thompson and Scott MacCallum have left the Association by mutual agreement. Both were employed by the Association for in excess of 17 years and we wish them well in their future endeavours.

Over the next few weeks we will be recruiting people to fill the following roles: Learning and Development Executive, Commercial Manager, Communications Executive and Assistant Accountant.

Board Chairman, Andrew Mellon explained, "We have

examined very closely how we operate to best serve the needs of our members. In doing so, we have spent much time consulting with all our stakeholders before formulating our plans, and of course some difficult decisions have had to be made. This new business plan will enhance our Chief Executive and his team's ability to focus on developing the delivery of vital member support services, particularly our Learning and Development programme. The Board is totally confident that they will continue to engage the membership through efficient and effective communications."



Rogue Rider Wreaks Havoc for O'Hara

Leven GC Head Greenkeeper and BIGGA Member, Andy O'Hara, was left devastated last month when a motorbike-driving vandal ripped up greens on his course. It could take months to recover.

The damage was caused to the putting surfaces on the 1st and 18th holes at Leven Links Golf Club and further damage continued at the 18th of Scoonie Golf Club.

The damage to the greens is extensive with much of the turf dug out by the motorbike's tyres. Leven Links has had to carry out repairs to make them useable for the 900 members of Leven Golfing Society and Leven Thistle Golf Club, who both play on the course.

Mr O'Hara has ruled out fencing off the course despite this being the second time it has been attacked in the space of a month, saying, "We would like to appeal to whoever is doing it to stop. If anybody has any information then get in touch with us, or the police."

"Fencing the place off is not what we'd like to do. It would cost us a fortune and take away the natural beauty of the place."

Local Community Inspector Donald Jenks said: "Additional patrols will be operating in the area to deter further offences and gather information that will help identify those responsible."

Farewell from Peter Larter, BIGGA Regional Administrator

At the end of May 2012 I retire from the post of Regional Administrator for the Midland and Northern Regions of BIGGA.

In September 1996, after 35 years in the RAF, I took over the post of Regional Administrator for the Midland Region of BIGGA and, a few years later became full-time, also looking after the Northern Region.

During my 16 years with BIGGA I have worked with many members, BIGGA HQ staff and the Trade, and I am very grateful for the support and friendship I received from all I came into contact with.

I have had the great experience of working at BTME, and in recent years I have had the honour to work with our members at The Open Championship.

As I head into retirement I will miss the friends I have made during my time with BIGGA. However, I will be fully occupied with grand children, rugby, golf and, like Peter Boyd, my wife's "to do" list.

I wish BIGGA and all I have known throughout the last 16 years success in the future.

Good Luck,
Peter J Larter



Pete Larter, in his prime, playing for Northampton Saints!

BIGGA Appoints New Regional Administrators

The Association is pleased to announce the appointment of two new Regional Administrators



John Young

Following the retirement of Peter Boyd, John Young has been appointed on a full time contract, to cover Scotland.

John is a skilled administrator with a strong track record in event organisation and has been heavily involved with the management of Gourock Golf Club, where he is a full member with a handicap of 13, John will commence his post on Monday 28th May 2012.



Sandra Raper

Due to the retirement of Peter Larter, Sandra Raper has been appointed on a full time contract, to cover Northern and Midland Regions

Sandra was previously employed by BIGGA in an administrative role and has good experience in many aspects of Association business.

During her time with the Association she developed an excellent rapport with members and suppliers alike. Sandra will commence her post on Monday 18th June 2012.

BRAEMAR EXTENDS COMMITMENT

Braemar Golf, the international golf services provider, based in the home of golf, St Andrews, Scotland is delighted to announce a new commitment to sustainability across all development and operational projects within the Braemar Golf portfolio.

Selecting the programmes and guidance provided by the Golf Environment Organization (GEO) as preferred solutions, Braemar has asked that all clients enrol in the GEO OnCourse™ programme to achieve the international ecolabel for golf, GEO Certified™. Additionally, Braemar will help new development projects integrate sustainability into planning, design and construction according to comprehensive new guidance developed by GEO in collaboration with a number of golf industry groups.

Braemar Golf has for many years been implementing environmental best practice

as part of their standard operating procedures but recognise the benefits of participating in such recognised and worthwhile programmes.

Jonathan Pendry, Golf Courses Director for Braemar Golf comments "Our project teams have driven this through their efforts and desire to manage their facilities in an environmentally sustainable manner.

"After discussions with our clients, both in development and operation, there is overwhelming support to ensure that with the guidance provided by GEO we can build and manage golf facilities to the highest environmental standards.

"We recognise not only the traditional environmental benefits but also the financial and efficiency savings that will be made and we are delighted to be involved to such an extensive level".

This commitment to GEO programmes as a practical and rewarding approach to sustainability underlines our conviction that sustainability is a valuable pursuit, for resource efficiencies, environmental and social benefits, and a strong reputation for individual clubs and the game.

GEO's Chief Executive, Jonathan Smith, added: "We are very pleased that our guidance and programming is providing a platform for Braemar Golf to re-affirm their commitment to sustainability and to support their clients efforts.

"It makes good business sense for every golf course and development to be a responsible, resource efficient business set in an ecologically rich landscape, and this leadership by Braemar Golf and the clubs and developments in their portfolio will bring tangible benefits and serve as a good example for others."

Kent take Challenge Crown at Home of The Hammers



At the ground of West Ham United, recently reinstated to the FA Premier League, Challengers, The Kent Section tasted victory at the hands of last year's winners, the Essex Section, in this challenge football match organised by Lely UK (Toro). A keenly contested match played in good spirit finished 3-2 to Kent.

On a damp but perfect pitch Essex made a bright start with Ben Scrivener firing just over the bar from long range and two minutes later had a shot well saved by Rob Holland in the Kent goal.

After some good football and missed shots by both teams Mark Todd beat the Essex offside trap on the left passing to Lee Austin to cross a great ball beating keeper Dan Crow and allowing Wayne Syres to score the first goal for Kent. Shortly after

this there was a mix up in the Essex defence allowing Kevin Morris to intervene and nod the ball on for Lee Austin put Kent two goals up. Early in the second half Kent had plenty of possession, but against the run of play and after an error by the keeper, Mark Turner scored for Essex to make it 1-2. Frequent substitutions were now being made by both sides to rest tired legs. After a succession of corners Stewart Rogers latched on to a shot from 30 yards to level the score 2-2.

Plenty of action followed with the Kent keeper tipping a shot over the bar and Adam Marrable having a good game in the Kent midfield.

The winner came from a powerful shot from just inside the box by the great 'Zaffa' to make the Score 3-2 to the Kent

Section. In the end after a hard fought and thoroughly entertaining game the Kent team held on to win the game.

Final Score Essex 2 v Kent 3. After the match players and supporters enjoyed the hospitality in the Billy Bonds Lounge where Larry Pearman of Lely presented the Trophy to the winning Kent Team and Roger Lupton from Toro Irrigation awarded the Man of the Match Trophy to Ben Adams from the London Club.

Special thanks to Larry Pearman helped by Richard Freeman for making all the arrangements and organising the day so well. All commented on the immaculate condition of the pitch, after a long hard season. Hopefully this event will take place again next year with more Sections being involved.

Calculate your savings from the Ultimate Fairway Programme

Greenkeepers and golf club managers can now find out exactly how much money they could save on their course from taking advantage of the Primo Maxx Ultimate Fairway Programme. A new interactive calculator on the GreenCast website enables them to enter their current costs and routine of fairway mowing, and gives an instant answer on the cost savings.

A recent independent survey

of fairways on a range of golf courses revealed the average area was 14 hectares - taking just under 11 hours for each cut. For courses cutting fairways three times a week, the use of Primo Maxx to eliminate one cut per week through the season would see a cost saving of over £3650 per year.

The calculation takes into account details of the individual club's costs

including mower operator and mechanic's wages, machinery repairs, fuel and depreciation, along with their replacement policy for fairway mowers. Fuel costs at the time of the survey averaged 74p/litre, but a 20% rise in the intervening time now equates to an additional £51 a year saving from Primo Maxx use on the fairways alone, reports Syngenta Business Manager, Rod Burke.

"We did notice a thicker

sward and better water utilisation during the dry periods, which I can only attribute to the Primo Maxx,"

Rod Burke believes that the turf quality enhancements that greenkeepers have seen will be equally as important as the cost savings. "Our survey identified that having their ball sit proud on a consistent fairway surface was the single most important factor that they want."



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Elmwood Go Digital

Elmwood College, Cupar, Scotland, through a licence agreement with The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC), is extending its greenkeeper training provision by embracing the latest eportfolio technology.

The college will be offering students the opportunity to use the eportfolio recording option and this will include the highly acclaimed GTC Greenkeeping Training Manual.

Rick Bond, Head of Faculty, Golf, Land & Environment at the college says, "the eportfolio provision is already available for students studying for a management qualification and we see the new additions supporting learners such as apprentices and students across the world looking to be part of the Elmwood College Sports Turf learning experience."

Carol Borthwick, Director of Golf and International Affairs at Elmwood adds, "the college has for

many years been involved with the GTC and we see this agreement as an opportunity to expand our provision beyond our traditional methods of delivering greenkeeper and groundsmanship education and training."

David Golding, of the GTC, says, "Elmwood College, as a GTC Quality Assured Centre, has for many years been a major provider of sports turf education, training provision offering the range of qualifications from work based to Higher Education. The license agreement between Elmwood College and the GTC will certainly embrace the technology now available to allow employers and students to consider if this option may be better suited to their needs, while the traditional delivery of courses will still be available".

Elmwood College can be contacted via email: mclark@elmwood.ac.uk or phone: 01334 658969

BIGGA EVENT UPDATE

This year's BIGGA Midland and Northern Region Golf Management events, sponsored by Tacit Golf UK for the second year, will take place at the venues below:

MIDLAND REGION

North of the Region: Gay Hill Golf Club on Thursday 12th July; South of the Region: Verulam Golf Club on Thursday 9th August.

NORTHERN REGION

East of the Region: Bingley St Ives Golf Club on Wednesday 25th July; West of the Region: Birchwood Golf Club on Wednesday 22nd August 2012.

This 4-man team event must include a member of the Green Staff, who must be a member of BIGGA. The other team members may be chosen from the Golf Club Secretary or Manager, Club Captain or Vice-Captain, Chairman of Green or Golf Club Committee Member. Entry forms will be sent to golf clubs in the appropriate part of each Region.

If you wish to enter a team please contact: Until 31 May 2012 - the BIGGA Midland/Northern Regional Administrator Peter Larter on 01476 550115; 07866 366966 or email petelarter972@aol.com.

Thereafter, contact Rachael Duffy on 01347 833800 ext 522 or email rachael@bigga.co.uk

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There are exciting times ahead for London Golf Club as it announced recently, that, together with its joint venture partner, The European Tour, has submitted plans to local authorities for the construction of a new European Tour Performance Institute (ETPI) complete with driving range and an innovative 9-hole Academy course.

Alongside the existing 36-holes of championship golf and 130-bedroom 5-star hotel and spa, for which planning permission has already been granted, these significant developments encapsulate the club's vision of becoming a world-class destination primed for hosting major golfing events.

The state-of-the-art European Tour Performance Institute (ETPI) complete with a fully-covered driving range and inventive short-game facility, will be the first of its kind in the UK and promises to raise the bar in golf coaching and sports science.

Commenting on the significant developments on the horizon, London Golf Club's General Manger, Austen Gravestock said, "I firmly believe the new ETPI, Academy and 9-hole golf course will elevate our status on the International golfing arena."

David MacLaren, Director of Property and Venue Development at The European Tour, added: "I am confident that the

creation of a state of the art practice and learning facility at London Golf Club will be of great benefit to club members, visitors and the wider community."

Designed to complement the club's Heritage and International courses, that have both hosted high-profile professional tournaments and events, including The European Open in 2008 & 2009 and Golf LIVE, the new 9-hole academy golf course will be located alongside the ETPI on the eastern side of South Ash Road.

With the plans now submitted to the local authority for their consideration, Jeremy Slessor, European Golf Design's Managing Director, said: "It's been a

fascinating start to the project - combining the evolutionary approach to performance and training of the ETPI with an Academy facility that will support, without replicating, the two existing courses at The London Club. Trying to marry the requirements of the European Tour with the need to provide a bespoke training course, concentrating on game improvement, has been challenging - but we feel confident that this is what we've achieved. Added to this has been the desire to restore the terrain from an open agricultural field to one with a diverse environment, supporting diverse habitats resulting in a richer ecological landscape."





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Charterhouse and Kubota return to sponsor the 2012 BIGGA National Championship



We are delighted to announce that once again the 2012 BIGGA National Championship will be sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota. This year, the event takes place at The Irvine Golf Club, Bogside, Ayrshire, on October 8-9, 2012. Please see page 58 for details on how to apply.

UKGCOA Publish Golf Facility Report

The UK Golf Course Owners Association (UKGCOA) has released its first Golf Facility Benchmarking Report, which shows member clubs have seen a dramatic rise in rounds played throughout 2011.

The report – conducted by Sports Marketing Surveys Inc – shows that UKGCOA members have seen a 20% increase in rounds played compared to the national average of just 8%. To download the report, please visit www.ukgcoa.com

SPORTS MARKETING SURVEYS INC.



UKGCOA GOLF FACILITY BENCHMARKING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 2012



JOHN DEERE
175
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175 Years of Progress

From the world's first self-scouring steel plough in 1837 to the world's largest manufacturer of agricultural and forestry equipment, and a leading manufacturer of turf and construction machinery – John Deere the company celebrates 175 years of progress worldwide in 2012.

John Deere, the man, moved from his home in Vermont to set up a small blacksmith shop in Grand Detour, Illinois; his invention revolutionised agriculture and made farming in the tough soil of the US Midwest a productive and profitable venture.

A decade later he moved the enterprise to Moline, where the company that bears his name still has its worldwide headquarters today.

Close by 'The Rusty Palace', as the headquarters is known because of its innovative steel frame design, is TPC Deere Run, an award-winning championship golf course that is open to the public. The John Deere Classic tournament has been held here annually since 2000, the week before our Open Championship.

It made its debut on the PGA Tour as the Quad Cities Open in 1971, since when the event has contributed \$43 million to charity. John Deere is the official golf course equipment, leasing and landscaping supplier to the PGA Tour.

In addition to its 175th anniversary, John Deere can look back upon almost 50 years of history as a supplier of turf equipment. Production of the company's first lawn and garden tractor began at Horicon, Wisconsin in 1963, when John Deere built 1000 units of the 110 model, while John Deere's golf business started in the US just 25 years ago, in 1987.

The company now offers the broadest range of lawn & garden, commercial and golf equipment in the world.



An original 110 lawn tractor, pictured here working in the grounds of the Deere & Company worldwide headquarters at Moline in the early 1960s, can be seen at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC; a fully restored, working example of this pioneering lawn tractor is also on display in the foyer of John Deere's UK headquarters at Langar in Nottinghamshire.



The 'virtual reality' test lab for turf and utility equipment at John Deere's turf care factory in Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina



John Deere's 8000 E-Cut hybrid electric fairway mower comes off the production line at Fuquay-Varina

John Deere's five millionth lawn tractor, from the X700 Ultimate diesel range, rolled off the assembly line at Horicon in 2010, when the factory also manufactured its 500,000th Gator utility vehicle, following this popular machine's introduction in 1993.

The same factory produced a line of snowmobiles from 1971 to 1983; these were promoted with the new slogan 'Nothing runs like a Deere', which has lasted a lot longer than that product line!

In 2011, John Deere invested more than US\$1.2 billion in its worldwide research and development programmes, equivalent to nearly \$5 million dollars every working day.

As part of this ongoing new product investment, John Deere pioneered the use of hybrid electric technology on golf course mowers with the introduction of its 2500E greens mower in 2004, and then its fairway mower range in 2009.

A full range of walk-behind and ride-on greens and fairway mowers, including the

industry's broadest single brand range of hybrid machines, are now built at the company's turf care factory at Fuquay-Varina in North Carolina.

This factory also uses a state of the art 'virtual reality' test lab, designed to reduce the high costs of constant prototype building and subsequent field testing.

This advanced electronic tool also uses customer feedback during the 3D digital modelling process, to ensure the design is going to be practical, easily serviceable and user friendly when new machines eventually go into full production.

"John Deere instilled four core values in his company," says Samuel R Allen, chairman and chief executive officer of Deere & Company – only the company's ninth CEO in its 175 year history.

"Today John Deere employees and dealers still deliver on these important values of integrity, quality, commitment and innovation, and we believe these values have been the key to the longevity of our enterprise."

Sowing the seeds



Jayne Leyland recently joined Rigby Taylor as Seed Research and Development Manager. Jim Cook took the opportunity to be the first to throw a few questions her way

What attracted you to Rigby Taylor?

It is a very exciting opportunity to take trialling systems and development of mixtures to another level.

What will the trials involve?

The trials will be sowing out grasses and then treating them with identified management programmes and products to find solutions to whatever the constraints of that site or maintenance regime is. Each trial will be different according to the location.

Where is the first trial you will be involved with since joining Rigby Taylor?

It will be at Furness Golf Club, in Cumbria, and is an environmental stress trial. This is the first sowing of this particular programme.

How are new seeds bred?

Mainly through crossings of existing cultivars with new grasses which are gathered in the wild by the plant breeders. These are then cross-bred to search for the best characteristics.

You start off with maybe 15,000 crossings and going through the process to end up with just one new variety. This process takes between 12 and 15 years. You're always looking forward to improve in terms of characteristics.

What makes a good quality grass seed?

Several things. The characteristics of individual cultivars, the synergy of the mixture, the quality of purity and germination of seed mixture and most importantly choosing the right mixture for the intended purpose. There are some amazing developments now

in grasses and with Rigby Taylor there is the ESP treatment on the seed. What is very important to many greenkeepers is speed of establishment, so you need good quality seed with high viability and fast establishment capability.

What should a greenkeeper think about when buying grass seed?

They should think about individual characteristics that they might require, for example specific disease tolerance or cold weather or drought tolerance.

What is as important as individual cultivar characteristics is actually how the seed mixture has been formulated and put together, so there isn't too much competition between the cultivars in there and one doesn't dominate the other.

So the actual mixture synergy is extremely important.

Is there a correct way to store grass seed?

It should be stored in a cool, dry place and also be in a secure container to avoid attack from vermin.

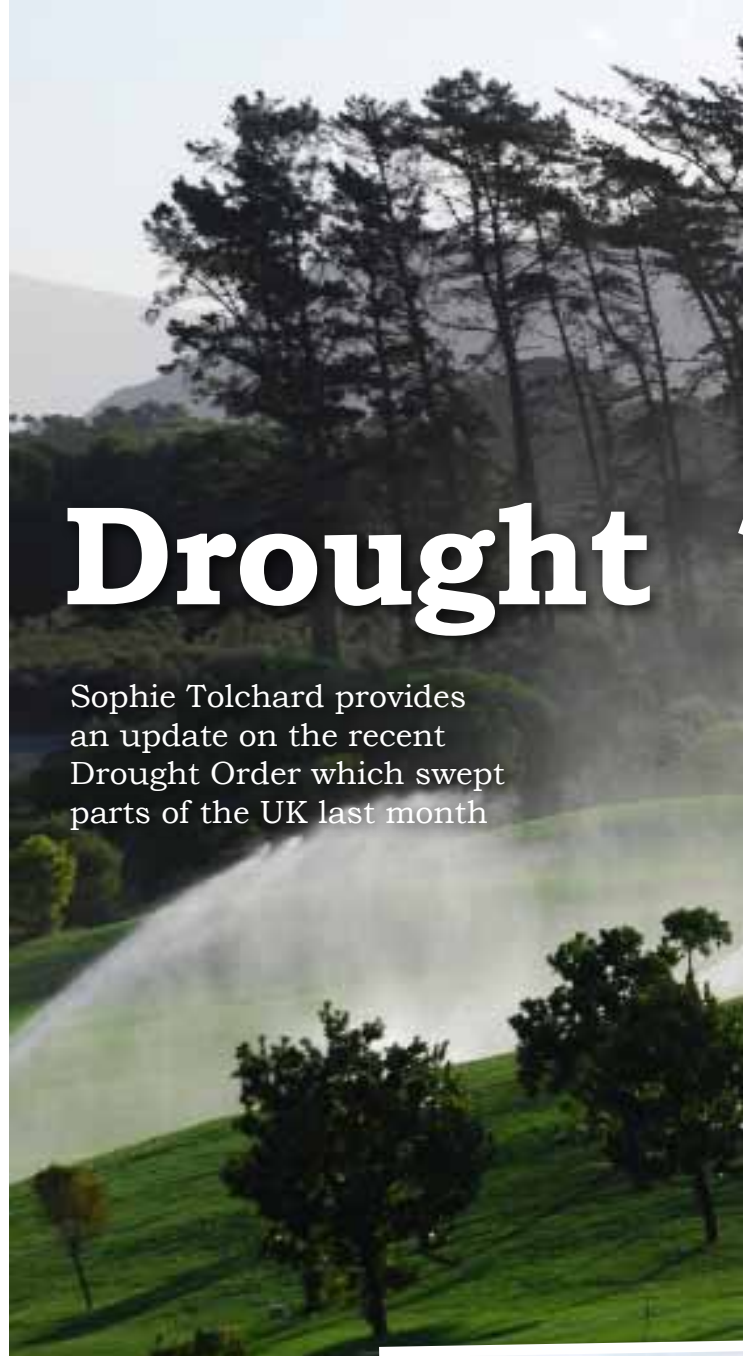
What is the future with regards grass seed?

The future is a combination of new cultivars which are coming through breeding programmes with improved characteristics. New sub-species or species which have got significantly different characteristics from cultivars within that same species.

Also adaptations of species with unique characteristics, for example, temperature tolerance or creeping growth habit. It's a combination of the breeding programmes producing the right material and then the good work of greenkeepers being able to have the product in their armoury to get the maximum out of it.

Drought

Sophie Tolchard provides an update on the recent Drought Order which swept parts of the UK last month



On 5 April a Temporary Use Ban (Hosepipe Ban) came into force in parts of the country covered by seven water companies in the south of England and East Anglia.

When two and a half times the normal amount of rain fell in April and frequent showers continued throughout May, many were left wondering why we are still in a drought.

After the driest two years since records began, groundwater, which feeds the flows of rivers throughout the year and is our most important source of water, remains exceptionally low.

On 29 April, Thames Water announced that it was to exempt golf clubs under its jurisdiction from two major aspects of the hosepipe ban. Golf clubs that have water supplied by Thames Water can now use permanent sprinkler systems underneath their greens.

"The announcement, which is



The initial cost of a reservoir can be recouped over a period of time and they provide an additional protective measure against drought orders
Courtesy of MJ Abbott Limited

The Situation Now

similar to one made recently by Anglian Water... should clear up some of the confusion surrounding conflicting advice given to clubs over the past few weeks," writes Thames Water.

Nonetheless, some clubs were left confused by the conflicting advice that they received from their water board.

"For example, some GCMA members report that their supplier has determined a total ban for the use of sprinkler systems. Others have received less penal reactions when they have approached them, including a scale of allowances for special events and a fixed number of cubic meters to be used per day. And some have been told 'you're a business, so carry on as normal,'" said Keith Lloyd, CEO of the GCMA.

Some relief followed Caroline Spelman's announcement on 11 May that the Environment Agency had decided to move 19 counties out of drought status, including

South Yorkshire, East Yorkshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, parts of Gloucestershire, parts of Hampshire, most of Wiltshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Warwickshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

Although this indicates that there's no threat to the public water supply in these areas this summer, clubs are still subject to some environmental pressures and could move back in to drought if there is another prolonged dry period. DEFRA is working closely with the Environment Agency to continuously monitor and review the situation.

There was better news for other users of turf this month when all seven water companies announced a 28-day exemption for the establishment of newly laid turf, when laid by a landscaper or gardening business, from the 21 May 2012.

Landscaping, turf and gardening businesses were made exempt from the 'hosepipe ban' after it was confirmed that record rainfall had reduced the severity of the on-going water shortage.

There are agreed Codes of Practice with the Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA), the Association of Professional Landscapers (APL) and other landscape trade bodies to ensure that the minimum amount of water is used, and as wisely as possible. The TGA's Code of Practice for the watering of newly laid turf is now available on its website at www.turfgrass.co.uk

While gardening businesses are now exempt, the hosepipe ban remains in force in all seven water company areas, those being Thames Water, Anglian Water, South East Water, Southern Water in Kent and Sussex, Veolia Central and South East, which covers much of London and the home-counties, and Sutton and East Surrey Water.

Main image supplied by Revaho UK. Please see Page 63 for more drought news



Some clubs have found the Environment Agency more receptive to borehole applications where an investment is being made in winter storage
Courtesy of MJ Abott Limited



Learning & Development

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

June has arrived and hopefully the sunshine will finally appear after what can only be described as a monsoon May! I know how you greenkeepers like the rain – but even you must have had enough of it by now!

The Open Support Team

Rachael is working hard on the organisation of The Open Support Team. Coordinating a team of 65 greenkeepers and additional support staff is no mean feat, but she's taking it all in her stride as usual.

The BIGGA staff will be on site at Royal Lytham & St Annes from Monday 16 July, with the support team beginning to arrive on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 in preparation for the tournament getting underway on Thursday 19 July.



Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2012

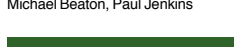
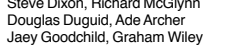
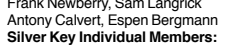
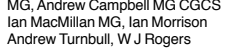
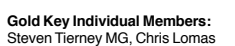
The nominations are in for the 24th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award with local interviews commencing on Wednesday 27 June in St Albans.

We have 29 candidates for this year's Award and from that we will be selecting six to go forward to the National Final at BIGGA House in September.

BIGGA Seminars at SALTEX

BIGGA have once again been invited by the IOG to present a series of seminar sessions during the SALTEX exhibition being held at Windsor Racecourse from 4 – 6 September. The three seminars will take place on Wednesday 5 September and will feature presentations by Paul Lowe from Symbio and David Cole from Loch Lomond Golf Club (the third session is yet to be confirmed).

If you are heading to SALTEX, be sure to attend these seminars and claim CPD credits for attending. BIGGA representatives will also be



The funding provided by Gold 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.



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BIGGA Open Support Team 2011

on hand on Stand E33 to answer any questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you there!



Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week 2013

Planning is almost complete for the Turf Managers' Conference 2013. Part of the Continue to Learn education programme, the Turf Managers' Conference will take place on Monday 21 January 2013 in Harrogate. To date, several speakers have been confirmed including Dr Thomas Nikolai 'The Doctor of Green Speed' from Michigan State University, David Bancroft-Turner from 3D Training and Development, a specialist in organisational politics, Dr Kate Entwistle, Turf Pathologist from the Turf Disease Centre and Lorna Sheldon from CWI International a specialist in communication and presentation skills.

The Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week education programme will feature four packed days of education and will run from Sunday 20 January to Wednesday 23 January 2013. Further details on the Turf Managers' Conference,

workshops and seminars will be available soon – watch this space and the BIGGA website for further information.



BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

Funding is still available for those BIGGA members who are considering undertaking a higher education qualification. The BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships are supported by Ransomes Jacobsen and offers up to £1000 towards to cost of your studies. For further information, visit the BIGGA website or contact the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 (option 3).



Master Greenkeeper Certificate

I am delighted to announce that we have a new Master Greenkeeper. David Langheim from Wimbledon Park Golf Club is the 61st BIGGA member to achieve the Certificate. Congratulations David!



Membership

Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update

Membership of BIGGA will provide you with membership at Student, Affiliate, Associate or Member level.

As a BIGGA member you will receive a wide range of benefits. A typical membership package may include:

- Copies of Greenkeeper International and other publications.
- Full access to the BIGGA website.
- Membership of a local section/networking.
- The opportunity to attend events nationwide.
- Access to a variety of advice on greenkeeping issues.
- The opportunity to access a large library of greenkeeping books and journals and extensive online information resources through The Turfgrass Information Center.
- Access to a 24/7 legal helpline.
- A personal accident insurance cover.

Membership packages may vary according to the grade of membership held.

As the largest greenkeeping Association in Europe committed to providing standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession, being or becoming a member of BIGGA says something about you: -

1. You're making a statement



about your standards and determination to continue to develop your greenkeeping skills;

2. You're committed to your career and development;

3. Being involved shows you are wanting to keep yourself up to date with industry changes;

Being a Member of BIGGA provides a way in which members can contribute to the success of their Association and communities by working together for the benefit of all.

Your involvement as a Member can be as active as you want it to be – you choose a level of involvement that suits you.

- You might just want to be kept up to date with what's going on, receive a copy of Greenkeeper International, members' emails and take advantage of the vast range of Member benefits.

- You may just wish to attend section golf events and network with fellow members/greenkeepers.

- You can choose to be more involved by volunteering for section committee providing you with the opportunity to attend regular meetings, have your say and vote at section level

- You might want to be involved in helping to develop a package of Member benefits or specific activities or initiatives.

It's your Membership so remember if you want to make a difference then you need to get yourself more involved.

Membership pays for itself many times over, not only in monetary terms but also in the incalculable effect it has in helping you develop into a more skilled greenkeeper or manager capable of making a greater impact within your golf club.

Join today,

renew your membership today or encourage a colleague to do the same.

Contact us in the membership department at membership@bigga.co.uk or by telephone 01347 833800 option 1. →



'more sand Honeyman.... more sand' memoirs of a greenkeeper! In his own words by Walter Woods

Walter Woods BEM is the most recognised greenkeeper in the world and his memoir is an opportunity to recount his reminiscences and thoughts to the profession both young and old. The book touches on Walter's experiences of four Opens and the myriad of other tournaments that he prepared the course for, the book also includes much of his own greenkeeping philosophy and many of his own anecdotes covering the period.

The book is available online via the BIGGA website - Members Price - £2.50 to cover post and packing

(To get your copy at Members Price you must first log in to the Members Area of the BIGGA Website).

- Non-Members Price - £7.50 to include post and packing (For all enquiries outside of the UK please contact the Membership Department directly for costs).

Go to www.bigga.org.uk/events/event729/ for full details, remember to sign to get your copy at members price.

BIGGA Scottish National Tournament

20th June 2012 at Ratho Park Golf Club, Edinburgh

Good luck to all who are taking part. If you would still like to book your place, please contact Rachael Duffy at BIGGA House on 01347 833800.

Entry fee £25/Apprentice fee £12 which includes coffee/tea, filled roll on arrival, plus evening meal, sweep and prizes.



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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



ASKHAM BRYAN TEAM UP WITH RJ

Ipswich, Suffolk (May 1, 2012) Askham Bryan College, the centre of educational excellence for land-based careers, has signed a rolling 12-month preferred supplier agreement with Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd, the Ipswich-based turf maintenance equipment manufacturer.

Askham Bryan has been at the forefront of training in sports turf maintenance for over thirty years, offering various routes of learning from Level 2 and 3 Apprenticeships

through to Foundation Degree. From September 2012, this will be enhanced with a full time Level 2 course in sports turf maintenance.

Ransomes Jacobsen and their local dealer, Golf and Turf Machinery, have formally signed this agreement to enable the college's full time and work-based sports turf apprentices to have access to modern and innovative turf maintenance equipment.

The agreement will see Ransomes Jacobsen providing

demonstration equipment to the college, through Golf and Turf Machinery, coupled with regular lectures on a range of turf maintenance subjects. The college will also provide Ransomes Jacobsen with lecturers for road shows and demo days.

As part of the agreement the Level 2 and Level 3 Sports Turf Apprenticeship programs will be sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen; with a trophy awarded to the best apprentice each year.



Costa Fleet

Lumine Golf Club, a Troon Golf-managed resort, has invested in a new fleet of 70 Club Car vehicles to help its members, customers and staff manoeuvre its expansive 45-hole complex that covers 170 acres.

Costa Dorada's newest golf course, which opened in Southern Catalonia in June 2008, undertook careful market analysis of the leading golf car providers before selecting Club Car as its chosen supplier.

Lumine Golf Club anticipates investing in the innovative Visage system later this year and adding further utility vehicles to its new Club Car fleet.

Mega Deal for Aixam Mega, France

Ransomes Jacobsen has also been appointed the sole UK importer for the Mega Professional range of road homologated eco-friendly compact utility vehicles.

The agreement, signed recently between Aixam Mega, based in southern France, and RJ, will see them marketing the new range, which includes the Mega e-Worker electric truck and Multitruck 600 low emission diesel truck.

Mega multi-purpose utility vehicles can be easily adapted for a multitude of applications including green spaces.

The Mega e-Worker is an electric vehicle with a tight turning circle and compact external dimensions, making it highly maneuverable. Robustly constructed with

excellent carrying capacity, an ability to tow and dynamic performance, it meets the needs of the most demanding users. Like all Mega vehicles, the e-Worker is available in several versions and with a large and varied range of equipment.

At the recent signing of the agreement, Rupert Price, sales director at RJ said, "We are delighted to be signing this agreement with Aixam Mega. We have taken on the existing Mega dealer network will be actively looking to establish more touch points across the UK."

Gilles Géry, signatory to the agreement for Aixam Mega added, "RJ has an excellent understanding of the light industrial vehicle sector and extensive knowledge of electric vehicles through



their E-Z-GO and Cushman brands, and latterly with their all-electric ride-on greens mower in the golf sector. I'm convinced they will be the perfect partners for promoting the brand in the UK. Aixam Mega looks forward to a long and mutually beneficial partnership as we increase the level of business, going forward."

Lee Sayers Picks a Terra Spike



Mid Kent GC has chosen a Wiedenmann Terra Spike for the third successive time to carry out all its aeration requirements at the Gravesend course. Course Manager, Lee Sayers, a BIGGA member, said he had no hesitation in choosing a Terra Spike; his only dilemma was which model to select for the club's free draining chalk-based turf.

The team at Mid Kent had to weigh up whether to opt for a slightly faster XD machine that went down to 275 mm or whether they needed the capacity to spike to 400 mm.

"Our Massey Ferguson 3615 tractor has particularly wide rear tyres and in fairness without those, there are some locations where it would be quite restrictive to work. I'm really happy with the Wiedenmann. The fact that we've bought our third machine says more than anything else. If we'd had any concerns or problems then you might have bought a second one but you wouldn't have bought a third one!"

LOWER COST ROTARY MOWER FOR LOWER HORSEPOWER TRACTORS



Manufacturer of precision, flail and rotary turf mowers, Trimax Mowing Systems, has launched a budget-priced rotary mower, suitable for use with compact tractors from 20hp to 60hp.

Fitted with full-width rollers front and rear for an attractive striped finish without scalping, the Trimax Striker rotary mower comes in cutting widths of 1.46m and 1.94m, known as Model 150 and Model 190 respectively.

The Trimax Striker is purpose-

designed for non-contract owner-operators such as schools and colleges, golf courses, smallholdings, estates and residential properties with larger areas of regularly cut grass to maintain by compact tractor. The use of multiple cutting spindles helps ensure a cleaner cut with even grass distribution across the machine's entire width, enhanced by the fitting as standard of Trimax's LazerBladez™ cutting blade system.

What's your number?

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

Name: Craig Nickless

Company: ERS Developments Ltd

Position: Business Development Manager

How long have you been in the industry?

I have been in the industry since 1997



How did you get into it?

Even as a youngster I have always had an interest in wildlife, so it was a natural progression for me to enter into this industry. The Japanese Knotweed treatments came to us through a friend, who is a chemist. He had developed a unique treatment to eradicate Japanese Knotweed, in one growing season, instead of the usual 4-7 year method, and was too good an opportunity to miss.

What other jobs have you done?

I have worked for other pest control and wildlife management companies and also spent a number of years in sales working for a company in Sweden.

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

I have seen a number of changes since I began in the industry, from various European directorates, taking away some of our best known products for safety issues or so we are told, to advances in technology which is a major bonus for us.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I help run a youth cafe which takes a lot of my time up and something I have committed to for the next few years. It's essential we communicate with the youth in our areas - we live in a village in Buckinghamshire which has exactly the same issues as any town or city.

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

Firstly our clients, who quite rightly so demand the best service possible. Secondly, our suppliers - their technical backup make us one of the leading wildlife management and Japanese knotweed eradication companies in the UK.

What do you consider to be your lucky number?

I don't really believe in lucky numbers but since 2009 we have been blessed with some amazing work so I suppose it must be 2009-10-11-12-onwards

Pick a number

12!

Craig has picked Andrew Pickup of Stourton Forestry

The second of our three part feature, offering an insight in to the preparations for the ISPS Handa PGA Seniors Championship at Slaley Hall, continues this month, as

Nathaniel Sylvester of the PGA, meets up with Course Manager, Steve Cram

**Part
Two**

Preparing Slaley Hall

If Steve Cram ever hits the karaoke machine he could be forgiven for belting out the hit, 'Why Does it Always Rain on me?' by Scottish band Travis.

But the ever-cheerful course manager at De Vere Slaley Hall is not the kind to let the elements cloud his sunny disposition – even if torrential rain, the odd snow flurry and frost have conspired to disrupt preparations for June's ISPS Handa PGA Seniors Championship.

Dealing with the micro-climate that periodically engulfs the Northumberland resort is all part of the job for Cram who has been employed for a total of 22 years at the European Senior Tour venue, with a four year stint at Close House sandwiched in between.

Like most of the UK, heavy rain through April and May has been an unwelcome guest, Cram describes it as simply 'unbelievable' with bouts of snow and frost complicating matters further.

"In April we had 186mm and from May 1 to May 17 we've had 100 mm," says Cram in a rare quiet moment in his hectic schedule.

"The net result is that growth

is slower than usual – the cool rain and temperatures keeps the ground cold, which has slowed the growth down.

"As a result of the rain, the focus is on trying to pick a gap in the weather where feed and fertiliser has time to get under the plant and not get washed away.

"We have had so much rain that it's a case of dodging the showers and trying to get a two or three hour window to get as many fairways done, sprayed and coloured up as possible."

With the 72-hole tournament, which features an array of golfing stalwarts, such as Ryder Cup captains Sam Torrance and Mark James, set to tee off on June 7, Cram and his team begin ramping up operations in May with the verti-cutting of greens followed by the top dressing of greens and sanding twice every two weeks.

"The verti-cutting helps take out the lateral growth and helps the sand bed into the grass sward," explains Cram.

"It is the equivalent of using a scarifier that rakes out the dead grass – only a lighter version."

The logistics of the top sand dressings of the Hunting Course's



18 greens and one practice green sees more than 50 tonnes laid down – 30 tonnes the first time round and 22 tonnes at the next sanding.

Despite the rain, Slaley Hall's greens drain quite well, however it is the cool temperatures that can be an issue for Cram when top dressing is being undertaken.

"It takes a lot of time for the sand to disappear so you can still see it. You also have to be careful that you don't smother the green.

"Last year we were top dressing



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to outperform all competition.

www.eagle.uk.com 01883 344244

every week, but this year we have to do it every other week.”

Like any master of his art, Cram has an array of tools at his disposal and Primo Maxx is a firm favourite. For the technically minded, its active ingredient is Trinexapacetyl, which inhibits gibberellic acid biosynthesis, resulting in decreased cellular elongation and internode length.

In short, vertical growth is slowed and energy is redirected to lateral stems and below ground plant parts.

The redirected energy is used to produce increased food reserves, bigger root systems, and increased lateral stem development for thicker healthier turf. Because the grass absorbs Primo Maxx quickly, it is rain-fast in 3 hours.

It all helps avoid growth during the tournament which is the big no-go.

“The last thing you want is greens to be stimping at 10 feet in the morning and seven feet in the evening, so it is very much a balanced approach with fertilisers to avoid too much upward growth.”

Cram manages his team with a combination of military precision, expert knowledge and unerring

instincts built up over his long career.

“I’m not that technical, but there are a few tricks around that help you out and Primo Maxx is one of those,” is his modest self-assessment.

One of his undoubted strengths is the team spirit and camaraderie he engineers among his staff of 10 full timers, which bumps up to 12 with summer casuals and a further four to six greenkeepers from other De Vere venues who join Slaley in the build-up to the PGA Seniors.

A key approach is giving his team ownership of a particular part of the course – be it fairways or greens.

“From May they will all be on the job they are doing during the tournament.

“There are a couple of reasons, firstly I give them ownership, it is their little bit of the course and that is their responsibility.

“If someone has got the job of doing lines, creating that diamond effect, then it’s his responsibility. I purposely do it because it gives them ownership.

“If I am not happy they will know it, but invariably they will get it right through pride. The team really



responds and I think they appreciate it and get into it.

“This is not just my golf course, it’s theirs too, and by doing it this way they feel part of the tournament, so when the tournament starts they can go out and tell family and friends - I did that, or I look after that.”

Another reason for job allocation is that Cram has to know down to the last minute how long it is going to take to carry out the various tasks of fairway and green cutting during the event itself.

“On Thursday and Friday there are two tee starts, so we have to be in and out without disturbing the players. For example, you can’t cut the 18th when they are teeing off the 10th, which is so close.

“We know exactly how long it takes as we time it in the build-up and know how long it is going to take to get them away before the players arrive.

“But the biggest challenge is the eve of the tournament pro-ams on Wednesday with shotgun start at 8 and then in the afternoon. We have to have all the course cut by 8 in the morning then go back out and cut the greens and do the divots after the afternoon.

“Wednesday is a long day – probably a 4.30am start and 10pm finish.”

By mid-May they are a couple of weeks behind schedule in terms of growth, but Cram is not panicking.

“With two or three days of warm weather we should be back to where we want although ideally I would rather be a couple of weeks ahead.

“The greens are okay but the fairways are just a little bit behind.

“You get used to the climate and we factor that in with our fertiliser regimes, using preferred suppliers, Sherriff Amenity and Everris, liquid feeds and fertilisers.”

If dodging the elements isn’t enough of a challenge, Cram also has to juggle the commercial demands of a busy course that is open to the public up until the Saturday before the tournament.

“The course is not closed until 4pm on Saturday and practice starts on Sunday so we have to work around that,” says Cram.

“We go in ahead of general play. The biggest problem is divots, and four times before the tournament we have a team of 25 volunteers that divot the fairways as we build up to the tournament. At 4pm on the Saturday before the tournament we will divot and rake all the bunkers.”

The ultimate test for Cram and



his team though will be the players’ reaction and they can be pretty demanding taskmasters in their expectations.

“The greens are the most important thing to the guys, particularly the speed. The guys expect it stimping at least 10 feet. They expect it to run smoothly, but not snakey where there is movement.

“In terms of the fairways we cut to 10mm, a lot tighter than for regular play and the same for the tee boxes.

“For bunkers tour players want a maximum of two-and-a-half inches





“The greens are most important, particularly the speed. The guys expect it stimping at least 10 feet. They expect it to run smoothly, but not snakey where there is movement”



Slaley Hall, in all its splendour, on a glorious day is an ideal setting for golf course photography
Images supplied by Professional Sports and The PGA

which is quite firm. They don't like it to plug, so want a firm lie.

“We also have to work with the PGA tournament staff for course set up as they mark-up the golf courses. This involves a lot of strimming because we have a lot of ditches and water.”

It's only when the final putt is drained on the Sunday that Cram and his team can finally relax and enjoy a well-deserved beer and reflect on their efforts.

“It's great to sit down and enjoy a beer because a great camaraderie

has built up between the staff and hopefully everybody has had a good tournament.

“The only downside is the Monday and Tuesday when you feel a bit down because you have been running flat out on adrenaline and the atmosphere of the tournament.

“But there is not too much time to dwell on that because there are still the regular customers to prepare for and you have to pick up and get on with it, hopefully though, without any rain!”



Toro Student of The Year, Matt Perks, reveals all about his trip to the States, the prize for scooping the top accolade in the annual BIGGA competition

A life changing trip

The day after I had won the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year award I was sat on the train on the way home with a big smile on my face.

I felt a huge sense of achievement that all the hard work had paid off and that a personal dream had come true. It hadn't dawned on me that all the hard work was going to be eclipsed by the level of education I was about to receive at the University of Massachusetts (Umass).

The next few months passed like a blur. In order to obtain my Visa there was a never-ending stream of form filling followed by an interview with the US Embassy in London. As well as this there was Christmas and New Year to think about besides a busy few months working on the golf course.

However, on January 3, I found myself sat in Heathrow Airport on my own ready to go. I knew partially what awaited me, but no one can really prepare you for the USA and how full on things were going to be at university. After 22 hours of travelling without any sleep I finally

arrived at the Comfort Inn, which would be my home for the next 7 weeks. I set my alarm for early next morning so that I could meet up with some fellow students on the turf management course before going straight to sleep. I wasn't disappointed as I got chatting to everyone straight away over coffee and doughnuts and managed to get a lift to the university.

The first thing that hit me was how big the campus was, it was like a small town with its own basketball and ice hockey arena, bars, restaurants and numerous high rise flats to accommodate all of the students. The place was so big it even had its own Power Station!

We were all expecting a nice and easy first day but had no such luck. After the first hour of orientation we went straight into lectures. There was so much to cover in a short amount of time that every available minute was used. There were the "core" subjects such as Entomology, Disease Pathology, Turf Grass Physiology, Turf Grass Management, Turf Grass Identification,

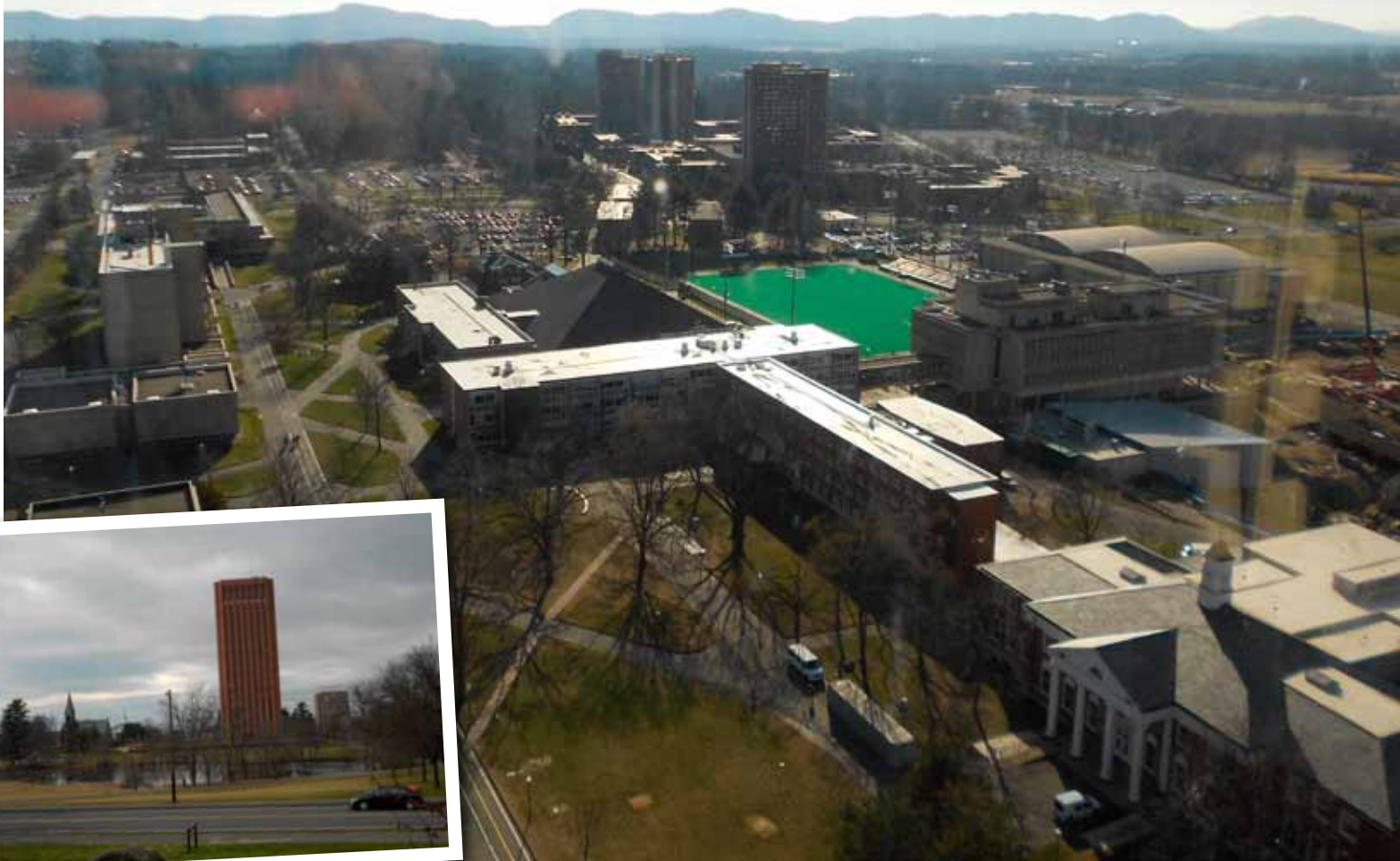
Weed Management, Fertiliser and Chemical Calculations, Soil Physics, Soil Chemistry and Agronomy; these were then interspersed with other smaller, but no less important, lectures on Irrigation, Arbo-riculture, Staff management, Golf Course Design and Architecture. There were also some guest lecturers from the world of golf including Bill Spence from the Brookline Country Club and a USGA agronomist Jim Skorulski.

Of course it wasn't all work, there were plenty of nights when we all went out for food and drinks, to watch Hockey matches and play Ten Pin Bowling. I quite fancied my chances at bowling but quickly realised that I had no chance, as this was one of their many national sports. So, I decided to play some of the locals at Pool, something I fared a lot better at. One night I went for three hours unbeaten before being asked to kindly step aside in order to let the others have a go.

Going to Boston for the weekend was a memorable part of the trip. Chris Swider, one of the guys on

ABOVE: Matt with the graduates outside the Toro offices
BELOW: Matt in a snowy Boston
INSET RIGHT: Umass library, the tallest in the U.S at 26 floors
MAIN RIGHT: View from the top of Umass library





“The campus was like a small town with its own basketball and ice hockey arena, bars and restaurants. It even had its own Power Station!”



the course, was going home for the weekend, so a few of us booked a hotel and he gave us a lift. During the day we went to the New England Aquarium and did the tourist trail and at night we ventured into China town for food and drinks. It was a great weekend but before we knew it we were driving back to the Comfort Inn and Umass for another week of lectures. It felt like the course was never going to end but eventually we were in our final week and counting down the hours until we graduated. All together there were 117 2 hour lectures, plus homework and 32 exams! It was as exhausting as it sounds. The course pushed each and every one of us, including myself, to the limit of what could be achieved,

but achieve we did as every one of the 42 students passed with flying colours. We graduated on a Friday afternoon which gave us chance to say our goodbyes to those who had to travel home, and gave everyone else a chance to get ready for one last night out together.

I had another few days to kill before I travelled to Minneapolis, so I went to stay with a fellow student and hotel resident, Roger Beaulieu, at his place in Connecticut. We played golf and went for some food and a few drinks at his local bar. I met some great people that weekend and was treated like one of the locals. I've got say a big thanks to Roger as he was my taxi almost everywhere while at Umass and he treated me like one of his family and I would gladly call him a friend for life.

Monday morning came and it was time to leave New England behind and head for Minneapolis to see the Toro facilities and factories. I met up with the two Australian winners and the Canadian winner from Umass and we were shown

every inch of Toro's three main sites from the Headquarters, Research and Design and Manufacturing and Assembly. It was great to see how the products were initially conceived, designed and tested before being assembled into the machines we use every day. It was eye opening to see the work that goes into it and how all the staff take pride in what they do; it's no wonder we end up using products with such a good build quality.

Edric Funk was our guide while we were in Minneapolis. He made sure that we had everything we needed and he arranged our evenings out for food and entertainment, the best of which was on the Wednesday when we headed out into Minneapolis city centre. We went to the finest steak house to start off with and had an amazing meal, this was followed by a VIP trip to watch the local basketball team, Minneapolis Timberwolves, play Utah Jazz. We had court-side seats and at half time we went to the backstage bar and met all of the players as they came out for

the 3rd period. It truly was amazing, but that wasn't all, as after the 3rd period had ended Edric had arranged for the TV crew to come and film us and put us up on the big screen in the centre of the court! It was a close game that was won in the final second by Wolves. The arena went completely mad and it was a great end to an amazing night.

Friday soon rolled around and it was time to leave for the final leg of my trip; the Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas. To be honest it really crept up on me as I had been so busy over the previous seven weeks I hadn't even had time to think about going there, but soon I had landed at McCarran airport and was in a taxi on the way to the hotel.

I arrived at night so it was an amazing view driving down the strip with the hotels and shops all lit up. The next day I ventured out and wandered around the endless hotels, casinos and shops and in the evening I met up with Sami, Jim and Andrew from BIGGA. We went out for dinner and chatted about the trip so far and how everything had gone, it was great to see them again.

The next few days were spent at the show looking around the thousands of stands and exhibits. The place was truly gigantic and you definitely needed the map to find your way around. I ran into so many people from the UK while I

was out there and spent hours talking to all of them about the industry and where it is headed. I got a really positive feel from everyone and it was great to see that none of the passion has been lost over the difficult last three years, in fact I think it's made some people even more passionate and determined to succeed in their particular area, whether that be a greenkeeper, machinery supplier, or any one of the many aspects that come from managing golf courses.

Then, before I knew it, Friday had come and it was time to return home, so, I packed my bags and headed for the airport. While I was sat waiting for the plane I had a few hours to reflect on the trip, how much I had learned and how much the experience had changed my life for the better. I can honestly say it was the trip of a lifetime and something I wish I could go back and repeat all over again. I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved with the Toro award, particularly Sami Collins and all of the staff at BIGGA, as well as Pete Mansfield and his secretary Christine Wilson from Lely UK who not only sponsored the award but also made sure that I had everything I needed every step of the way.

This just leaves me to say good luck to this year's nominees and to the eventual winner: get ready for the trip of a lifetime!

New York Hotel, Las Vegas



The Strip in Las Vegas



Umass class photo

TORO

Protecting turfpesticides in the marketplace

A series of articles aimed at a varying readership.
Advanced Level
If you're a Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper, read on...

By Dr Terry Mabbett returns with part two of his high-level analysis of European Turf Threats

Turf pesticides are designed to protect fine grasses from insect pests, plant pathogens and weeds, but could now be in need of protection from themselves and the clutches of increasingly 'dynamic' EU directives issued by Brussels.

Given the short time frame in which apparently safe turf pesticides with long pedigrees of effective use are being withdrawn from the market, or having their wings severely clipped, the greenkeeper might well ask exactly what pesticides are 'safe' and secure in the marketplace.

The short straight answer is that no single chemical pesticide is absolutely secure with an assured future use in professional turf because those issuing the directives are the ones making (or making up) the rules.

As such they decide on the nature and height of the hurdles and position of the goal posts presented to pesticides running the gauntlet of their directives. With sufficiently high hurdles and widely spaced goal posts it is not difficult to find a

chink in the armour of most active ingredients, so contemporary pesticides must present a drum-skin tight profile in every respect from environmental integrity to operator and public safety.

The answer to pesticide protection is in product 'stewardship', an ethic and concept embodying the responsible planning and management of pesticide resources in relation to the environment and public health.

Product stewardship operates at two levels, first with the manufacturer who develops and markets the pesticide product and secondly the greenkeeper who applies the pesticide product according to label recommendations and within a broader best practice turf management programme.

Bio-inspired pesticides

Manufacturers are designing and developing 'new-age' active ingredients based on naturally occurring bio-chemicals produced and deployed by soil based micro-organisms. There is an obvious environmental bonus when using a

pesticide derived from a substance that is naturally occurring and operational in the soil and clearly presenting much less of a risk.

This is the logical place to look for the up and coming generations of bio-founded and bio-foundation pesticides.

For instance, the antagonistic fungus *Trichoderma* with an ability to suppress or kill pathogenic microbes, and used commercially as a bio-control agent, does so not by magic, but through an integrated process of competitive invasion, direct control by synthesis of fungicidal and fungi-static chemicals and the induction of anti-fungal responses in host plants.

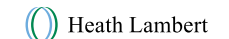
A classic example of a contemporary turf fungicide with microbial origins is azoxystrobin discovered during research on *Oudemansiella mucida* and *Strobilurus tenacellus*.

These small white or brown coloured mushrooms commonly found in Czech forests first attracted scientists' attention due to their remarkable ability to defend themselves by releasing two substances – strobilurin A

ABOVE: New-age bio-inspired fungicides are being used to control Fusarium Patch (Photograph courtesy Syngenta)

TOP RIGHT and INSIDE RIGHT: Golf courses with water courses require extra care and attention when it comes to the pesticide application process. Protecting the many lakes and ponds from pesticide drift and run off is top priority





This article comes to you courtesy of the BIGGA Learning and Development Fund.
Thank you to all our key sponsors



Wild plants at the water margin are another top priority for environmental protection



The Water Framework Directive is proving a pitfall for some herbicides



and oudemansin A – which kept competitor fungi at bay and even destroyed them when in range.

This pioneering work paved the way for the development of a whole range of new fungicides now called the strobilurins, several of which are at the forefront of turf management for control of Fusarium patch and other diseases of turf grasses.

A much more recent entry into the turf fungicide market from this avenue of research is fludioxonil, which Syngenta describes as bio-inspired.

Fludioxonil is a fungicide from the phenylpyrrole group of chemicals derived from the natural antifungal substance pyrrolnitrin produced by *Pseudomonas pyrocinia* soil bacteria.

Greenkeepers will recognise fludioxonil as the active ingredient of Syngenta's Medallion TL, a brand new contact turf fungicide providing targeted control of pathogens responsible for key diseases of turf such as Fusarium patch, anthracnose and leaf spot. Among its many novel and innovative features fludioxonil takes effect not only on the green leaf but also on the thatch and soil surface to pre-emptively hit the fungus *Microdochium nivale* (Fusarium patch) when in saprophytic mode and before it has a chance to infect living grass leaves and damage the turf with symptoms of Fusarium patch disease.

Opportunity for the discovery, design and development of new age pesticides along these avenues and pathways is limitless.

Pesticide profiles

Fast disappearing are the days when mind-sets were focussed on 'dosage' as the amount of active ingredient expressed on a per hectare basis and required to control the target pest, pathogen or weed. Manufacturer's now talk about 'loading' with the environment, now uppermost in mind and consideration. Of related focus and concern following the flood of restrictions and regulations in the 'Water Framework Directive' is the need for new active ingredients to stay where they are placed in the uppermost soil profile, to exert the desired control effect and degrade before any significant leaching of chemical down through the soil profile and into the ground-water can occur.



On-going research into pesticide application involves low drift hydraulic spray nozzles like the Syngenta Turf Nozzles shown in operation here (Photograph courtesy Syngenta)



Bio-inspired, bio-based active ingredients are more likely to automatically fulfil these requirements compared with traditional chemical pesticides created in the crucible. The original natural biochemical having evolved in natural soil-dwelling microbes will, by its very nature, be highly potent and targeted and, therefore active at a comparatively low [?] loading against a narrow range of competitors.

Similarly it must be inherently resistant to leaching in order to carry out its defensive function in the uppermost soil profile including on the thatch. The eventual active ingredient is not the original natural biochemical, but having the same basic chemistry the foundations for these benefits are in place.

Stewardship on the golf course

Greenkeepers have their role to play by adhering to the instructions and recommendations on the product label and by following best practice around the entire pesticide application process and also in its wider context.

This will include avoidance of drift by not spraying in windy conditions and not placing spray closer than stipulated to water courses, lakes and ponds and by increasingly adopting low drift hydraulic spray nozzles and controlled droplet application (CDA) sprayers that use shielded rotary atomiser nozzles to virtually eliminate spray drift.

However, in these times of increasing official scrutiny, that

might not be enough, meaning that the course manager should always be thinking laterally and one step ahead. Soil compaction is a fact of life on golf courses and its effect on grass growth and general turf condition is well known. However, there are additional dimensions with strong implications for pesticide use and environmental protection. For instance, compacted turf is prone to 'puddling' and run-off of surface water is thus created. Timely aeration may, therefore, become an important, albeit more tenuous, factor in pesticide product stewardship.

Thinking ahead means casting a watchful eye beyond the sports and amenity turf 'box' and into other dimensions of pesticide use such as agriculture and horticulture. A classic case in point is the current concern expressed by apiarists (beekeepers) and some environmentalists who claim that the use of neonicotinoid insecticides on arable crops, including oilseed rape, is harming bee populations.

At first glance such concerns are completely inapplicable to golf courses carpeted with wild flowers, but always in non-treated areas. However, closer examination shows that the greenkeeper needs to be on guard because successful broad-leaf weeds of turf are, by their very nature, extremely prostrate plants with growing points at soil level that miss the mower blades.

Weeds such as white clover that flower on greens and tees are an extremely rare event, but fairways

are a different matter. In mid-summer as the turf starts to dry out and drought resistant white clover starts to get the edge on turf grasses it is not unusual to find large patches of white clover in full flower and acting as the proverbial honey pot for bees. White clover is one of the most important honey plants in the United Kingdom and mowing regime can clearly play a part in product stewardship.

What's in the spotlight?

Speculating on pesticides which could be at risk is generally not a good idea and probably a case of tempting fate. However, there are several important pesticides sufficiently in the spotlight and known to be at risk to a greater or lesser extent.

Asulam

Greenkeepers might not even be aware of this highly specialist herbicide unless they have a problem with bracken on their course. If they do they will undoubtedly be concerned because as the situation currently stands asulam could be on the way out forever as asulam can no longer be purchased and all stocks must be used by 31 December, 2012.

Asulam is highly selective against bracken and if this herbicide cannot be saved the only other herbicide for bracken control is glyphosate, a total systemically acting herbicide which cannot be used safely in the same way as asulam.

Greenkeepers with a bracken problem who are unable, or not

INSIDE TOP: Wildlife and especially aquatic animals like these spawning common frogs now receive top priority when it comes to all aspects of pesticide safety

INSIDE SECOND TOP: Chlorpyrifos the only sprayable insecticide to control leatherjackets in turf (shown here) is in the spotlight over much heavier and widespread use in agriculture (Photograph courtesy Syngenta).



INSET ABOVE: Good turf management practice including aeration and mowing regimes may play a more tenuous though still important part in pesticide product stewardship. Shown here is white clover in flower on a fairway and proving attractive to bees.

INSET BELOW: What gets into water courses from spraying in agriculture may impact heavily on future pesticide use in turf



wanting to use glyphosate will be left with heavy horses and manual methods to flay, flail, roll, beat and bruise bracken into submission.

Asulam is available for use in 2012 under use-up provisions and moves are underway for re-registration to secure its future for the long term. This may take five years but there is now the possibility of obtaining a series of Emergency Authorisations for 2013, 2014, 2015 and probably 2016.

Carbendazim

Carbendazim is the last in a long line of chemicals used by greenkeepers to control surface casting earthworms and the mess they make on greens and tees.

The situation with carbendazim is becoming something of a saga and many are claiming that the pesticide will go sooner or later, although nobody seems to know when.

If it does go, and there is no certainty that it will, carbendazim will essentially have been 'hoisted by its own petard' as a highly effective, and essential lumbricide (wormicide). You couldn't make this one up if you tried because if carbendazim does fall it will be at the hurdle erected to trap pesticides which have negative effects on earthworms.

You can almost imagine the farcical situation some years down the line when the custodian of carbendazim is up in front of the 'beaks' in Brussels and the question is asked, "Does your candidate wormicide have any effect on earthworms?" The real irony is that if carbendazim goes and has nothing chemical to replace it, then any benefit seen by the 'burghers in Brussels' will almost certainly be lost in the fall-out.

They will see withdrawal of carbendazim as further reduction in pesticide loading on the environment, but this will be more than made up for by herbicide applications to control the broadleaf weeds getting a quick and easy start and secure foothold on worm casts deposited all over greens and tees.

Furthermore, it can only add to mole activity and require greenkeepers to call in specialists to do more unspeakable things to these wild mammals which are protected in some other European countries.

Chlorpyrifos

Chlorpyrifos, the only sprayable insecticide for control of leatherjackets in turf, is the latest pesticide to stand in the spotlight,



The Spraydome 5000 from Micron Sprayers designed with shielded rotary atomisers to virtually eliminate spray drift (Photograph courtesy Micron Sprayers)



If carbendazim 'the last lumbricide' is eventually lost any gain in reduced pesticide loading will be more than compensated for by the extra herbicide required to control a much larger and wider weed population on greens and tees.

although current scrutiny is on its role in agriculture where the tonnage used is large and the application is much more broadly based than on turf.

Use and application as a spray on managed turf is vital but miniscule compared to what goes on with chlorpyrifos in agriculture where it is used on vast areas for leatherjackets and to control other important pests such as orange wheat blossom midge.

Agriculture is fighting back with

a programme of enhanced product stewardship and a new set of guidelines under the banner 'Say NO to DRIFT'.

This includes adhering to an extended no-spray buffer zone of 20 metres adjacent to water courses and the use of LERAP three star rated low-drift nozzles for all chlorpyrifos applications. Any loss of chlorpyrifos for use on turf would almost certainly be collateral to its situation and status at the time in agriculture.



Greenkeepers may not even be aware that the herbicide asulam appears to be on its way out unless they traditionally have a bracken control problem



Defining the boundaries



Boundary lining



WORKING FOR GOLF

Quite understandably, greenkeepers tend to be entirely focussed on the condition of their courses and, with time always being of the essence, keeping the course accurately “marked” from a Rules of Golf perspective can be difficult. However, ensuring that the course is defined should not be considered an optional extra but rather as an essential part of maintaining the course. Grant Moir, Director of Rules, at The R&A, writes...

When a course is not defined accurately it can lead to confusion on the part of players, and this can lead to breaches of the Rules, such as:

- **Playing the ball from an out of bounds area**
- **Moving loose impediments in a water hazard, or**
- **Taking relief from an area that has ceased to have the status of ground under repair.**

When a course has clearly marked boundaries, water hazards and ground under repair it shows a high level of professionalism, and reflects well on the greenstaff and the Club.

Boundaries

If it is a while since you turned your attention to the Rules of Golf in relation to your course, then the first place to start is with the boundaries. Ideally, the entire perimeter of the course should have an accurate boundary.

If you are fortunate, much of the course boundary will be defined by fences or walls, but most courses have some areas of the boundary that need to be supplemented by white stakes to “join” the permanent features and create the complete boundary.

The difficulty with using stakes is that they can be moved. Greenkeepers with courses by the beach will know that wooden stakes are

often used for sizzling sausages on a Saturday night, so it is important to keep a check that the stakes are still in place.

As the Rules provide that boundary stakes are deemed to be fixed, there is no disadvantage to the player if boundary stakes are made permanent.

This can be done by using metal poles sunk into concrete, which are given a lick of paint every so often. This can solve the problem of stakes being removed.

Of course, it is not only the perimeter of a course that can be defined as out of bounds. Many courses have internal boundaries, for example, around maintenance areas or between two holes to prevent players playing down the ‘wrong’ fairway. Internal out of bounds is entirely acceptable, but again it is important to ensure that these boundaries are well defined at all times.

Water Hazards

Perhaps the most common failing when it comes to course marking is in relation to water hazards. Some water hazards have very clearly defined edges, so there is no doubting whether a ball lies in or outside the hazard.

However, many rivers, burns, ponds, ditches and the like do not have distinct margins, and in such cases it is necessary to define the margins using stakes or painted lines.



Such definition enables the player to know whether a ball is in or out of the hazard. This is important for the following reasons:

- If the player wants to play the ball as it lies, he knows whether the restrictions that apply to a ball in a hazard apply (e.g. not grounding the club, not moving loose impediments), and
- If the ball is in the hazard, the player knows that the relief options provided under the Rules for water hazards are available.

In addition, as the point where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard is often the relevant reference point for taking relief, the fact that the margin is clearly defined will enable the player to proceed correctly under the Rule.

It can be costly and time consuming to define water hazard margins with painted lines, so the use of stakes tends to be the method of choice for daily play.

When positioning stakes, it is important to bear in mind that the margin will be a straight line from stake to stake, so you need to ensure that this provides an appropriate margin for the hazard that is being marked out.

Another important element to defining water hazards is the distinction between ordinary water hazards (defined by yellow stakes or lines) and lateral water hazards (defined by red stakes or lines).

The simple explanation of the distinction between the two types of hazard is that, where it is impossible or not practical for a player to drop back on a direct line to the

sultation with the Club Committee, County Union or National Union may be appropriate.

Ground Under Repair

We always advise referees to review the entire course before marking any ground under repair (GUR). It is easy to get trigger happy with the paint on the 1st hole and then find that the type of area that you have marked as GUR on the 1st is prevalent on many holes and is far from abnormal to that particular course. The advice, therefore, is not to overdo it with GUR. Golf courses are not perfect, despite the best efforts of greenkeepers. Players should have to deal with bad lies, bare ground and the like, and coping with such challenges is a test of a player's skill and mental fortitude.

Also, the farther a damaged area is from the line that the player should be on, the less compelled you should feel to make it as GUR. In other words, while you might want to define a muddy area on the fairway as GUR, it is entirely reasonable to expect the player to play from such an area when it is situated 10 yards off the fairway in the rough.

When areas are to be defined as GUR, they need to be clearly marked. Simply putting a notice in the ground does not help the player. The player needs to know the extent of the area that is GUR so that relief can be taken correctly, so again stakes or lines need to be used for definition. There is no strict colour

“Internal out of bounds is entirely acceptable, though it is important to ensure that these boundaries are well defined at all times”

hole when taking relief, the hazard should be defined at a lateral water hazard, which then allows a player additional relief options. Take, for example, the beach running along holes 4 to 8 at Turnberry - going back on a direct line to the hole would probably mean dropping a ball on Ireland, so the beach on these holes is defined as a lateral water hazard. This allows for a drop two club-lengths to the side of where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard.

There can be occasions where the decision on whether to define a water hazard as yellow or red is a tricky one, and that is when con-

for marking GUR; white is common but can be confused with boundaries so blue is quite a popular alternative. The Local Rules should make it clear how GUR is defined.

Unlike, boundaries and water hazards, the hope with GUR is that it will only have to be defined as such for a limited period of time. When an area ceases to be GUR it is important that this is obvious. Don't leave a faded line that players could think is still defining the GUR. If necessary, apply some green paint to make it clear that the area is no longer GUR or put a very visible sign at the area stating that it is no longer GUR.



The Rules give the player the option of playing from GUR, but the Committee also has the option, by Local Rule, of prohibiting play from areas of GUR. It is fine to prohibit play, and often sensible when attempts are being made to allow an area to recover.

However, if a player is being forced to take a drop, it is important to assess where the Rules require relief to be taken. If the nearest point of relief is in the middle of a bush, you might receive legitimate complaints. It may be that a dropping zone is required in such circumstances.

To Finish...

Course marking is not a huge task if you keep on top of it. Sometimes it is best approached by allocating the responsibility to a specific member of your staff, perhaps one with a good golfing background who understands the relevance of the various stakes and lines.

And, if your Club has any doubts about course marking issues, there is always help at hand from the county and national bodies, or from The R&A.



High hopes

Jim Cook takes a trip to Wiltshire, to meet the team at High Post GC, a club with ambition as high as the level of beauty it entails

Last year, Paul Hope, a greenkeeper at High Post Golf Club, won BIGGA's 2011 photographic competition with a stunning shot of a deer prancing over the course at first light.

After a visit to the club, one of the striking features was how much of an oasis, or even haven, this picturesque Wiltshire course offers for many other types of rare and elusive wildlife as well as deer.

It was a warm day in mid-May when I met with Course Manager, Lachlan Morrison and the team at High Post. Lachlan was keen to speak about the importance of ecology to this club and said:

"We're in the process of sympathetically clearing scrub areas and regenerating our gorse areas. We've re-planted gorse in new areas and it's looking quite impressive, with new plants sprouting through where we cleared. We've also exposed a pine

tree next to the 6th tee which was previously covered and some holly trees."

Paul Hope said: "The wildlife is abundant out there as well. Of the birds, we've had red kites over the course for the first time in several years and sparrowhawks, kestrels



Winning shot for BIGGA's 2011 photographic competition



and short-eared and tawny owls have been seen. Two years ago kestrels raised two young from a box on 18. That's one of the things I love about the job because we manage that bit of land out there and still co-exist with the fauna."

The club's logo shows a hare running beneath a tree and every day these animals are seen on the course along with others such as foxes, owls and all manner of birds of prey.

Lachlan said reasons why the 110 acre downland course sees so much wildlife are because of ecology work, environmental grasses and also that it is surrounded by arable farming land.

It is interesting to note that greenkeeping runs in the family for Lachlan, who is originally from Renfrew, Scotland, and he is part of four generations taking up the profession, with his grandfather, father, two brothers, three uncles and their sons all working at various courses.

He spoke about his chemical usage: "We don't use a lot of fertiliser and try to be as green as we can by keeping spraying of fungicides to an absolute minimum.

"We were fungicide-free up until the winter before last when an attack of snow mould meant we had to use them. Since then we've changed our policy and sometimes use fungicides as a preventative.

"We use lot of seaweed products

Jim Cook had a chat with Paul Hope about his photography

What is the story behind your picture of the deer on the course?

"Through the summer I often come in at first light with my camera. I love photography, always have done, and I was out at silly o'clock chasing the sunlight, catching the sunrise off to the side of the second green. I rattled a load of shots off and was stood off to one side leaning against the pine tree smoking a cigarette. The deer wandered out from the trees on my left and stood right in front of me. I got some shots of it walking across the green, one of which was the one I won the competition with and then it came and stood about 15ft in front of me, posed for a minute, then off it went. Usually they run as soon as they see you and I'd been after a picture for ages. Last year there were three of them; a mother and two little ones."

What other wildlife have you enjoyed taking photographs of?

"I'd not seen a short eared owl on the course before and it was brilliant to get a picture of one of them. All kinds of birds of prey and the red kite is probably my favourite. I love seeing the wildlife here. I'm out with my camera for hours trying to get good shots of them. I haven't seen a snake yet though and would love to get a shot of one of them."

Do you do much photography away from the course?

"Yes lots. I do portraits, weddings and studio work and I would like to set up my own business."

Where did you learn the skill?

"I'm self taught. I've always been into it and most of the cameras I've owned up until about five years ago were point and shoot ones. I always thought photography was too difficult to learn, but the basics are so simple. From there it's just practice."

What other photographic awards have you won?

"I was runner up in a Salisbury Journal competition last year, won the last two competitions in the Stonehenge Trader and won a Visit Wiltshire one."

Last year Paul used some of his pictures taken out on the course to create a calendar, for sale in the clubhouse, with proceeds going to charity. This year he was planning to do the same again.





and are finding Sustane organic fertiliser gives a great response.”

Sometimes the simplest solutions to problems are most effective and this was certainly the case when Lachlan and his team were faced with chafer grubs a few years ago. Initially, badly affected areas were re-turfed, but finding this to be costly, time-consuming and short-lived, they tried using pheromone traps with great success.

Lachlan said: “We spent a fortune on turf but then tried the pheromone traps, which look like Chinese lanterns and they are just wonderful. You hang them about 2ft off the ground and it attracts then contains the adult chafer beetles. The first year we put them in we had to empty them weekly because we were catching so many.

Last year they weren't quite so successful, maybe because it was windy at the time and we caught a lot less, but each year when we've used the traps we've had much less damage the following year. It's a cost effective way of dealing with the problem.”

Of the 71 bunkers on the course, the par-five 2nd boasts 17 of them! The five-strong team hand rake them every day to keep them in good shape.

A quirky feature of High Post is the vast number of grass-filled hollows throughout the course next to greens and on fairways. From afar they do appear like bunkers, but closer inspection reveals them to contain no sand.

Some have been formed where earth has been taken to build a green, but for others, no-one quite knows what they are. Lachlan's theory that they are there to improve aesthetics and break up otherwise flat terrain is the most likely.

The hollows may look good, but in growing season especially, they can be a pain to maintain. Lachlan said: “A lot of our maintenance time is taken up with strimming these hollows but they are worth it as they add a lot.”

The course is on chalk and therefore drainage is never an issue. Previous to my visit it had seen almost constant rain for about six weeks but it appeared as none had fallen at all. This time last year the club had used about 1,500 cubic metres of water, a third of its allocation, this year the irrigation system had not even been turned on.

During summer the course is usually extremely dry and Lachlan said: “It burns to a crisp, but



because it's bent and fescue on the fairways it goes brown and then a bit of rain and it's back to life again. It does cause me to worry because green, stripy fairways are ideal, but regular communication with members helps to explain the issue."

There are 600 members at High Post Golf Club.

The club's greens have an organic content of around 6% and are mostly fescue, with some Highland bent and a little of the inevitable meadow grass.

Lachlan spoke about the sun being a cultural method of ridding greens of meadow grass, though warned: "Since fescue is more drought resistant, two months into the summer most of the meadow grass is gone. We've got to be careful though and get the balance right, because we could end up with patchy areas on the greens if the meadow grass is completely killed off."

A number of projects, large and small, have been undertaken over the past few years.

In 2008, the facilities for the greenkeepers were improved immensely. Where there used to be a single room, there is now a self-contained building with drying and washing facilities, a canteen and office.

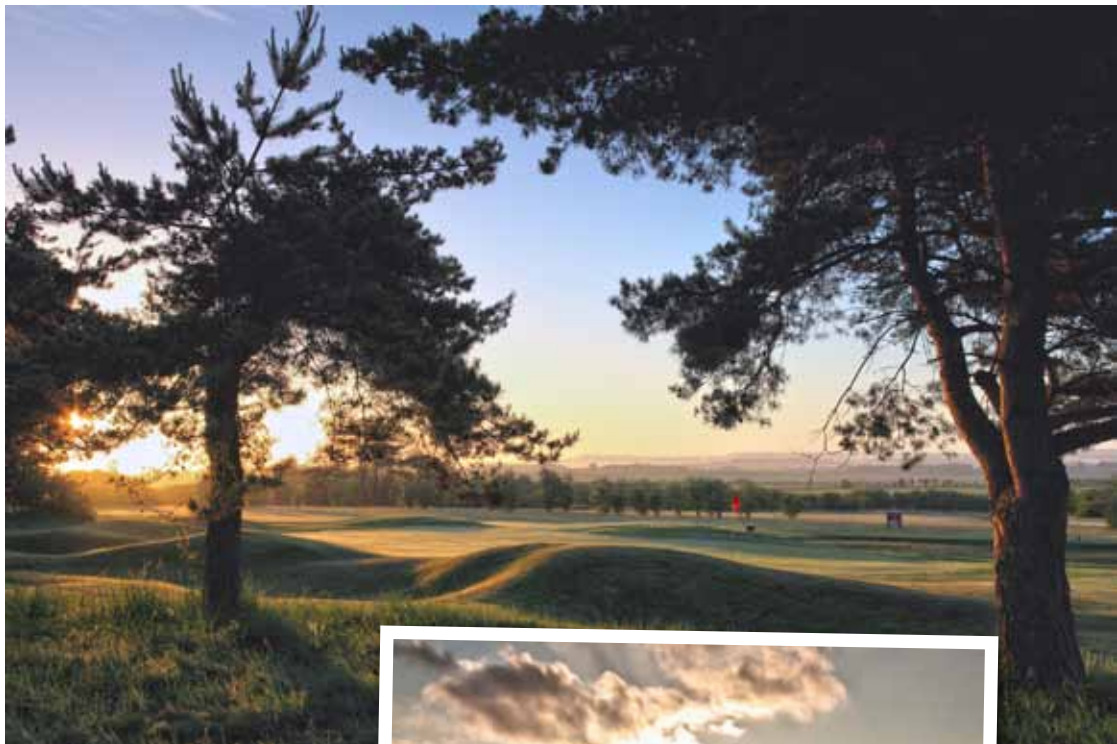
Other recent projects have been the building of two aggregate bays, one for sand and one for top-dressing, completed by a contractor last winter and also the building of sleeper-lined paths on parts of the course which was done in-house.

At 6,305 yards High Post Golf Club's course is not the longest, but challenging it certainly is.

Tournaments including the McGregor Cup, the Carris Trophy, South West Amateur and English Boys Open have been played here and the weekend after my visit two tournaments including the Wiltshire County Championships were due to be hosted by the club.

Peter Alliss, who once held the course record, has rated High Post's 9th hole in his choice of the best 18 holes in Great Britain. This deceptively tricky hole dog-legs to the right and unless a drive is placed to the left of the fairway, a hazardous blind approach awaits.

Just before I left the club, Lachlan and I stood by the 18th green watching a variety of military aircraft buzzing about the nearby MoD Boscombe Down aircraft testing base. Planes often pass low and directly over the 3rd green and a few years ago a Harrier even crashed near the course after the pilot ejected.



Our attention was soon turned to a bird hovering in thermals above the course; a kestrel preying for food. Then another at a higher altitude, which appeared to be a buzzard and then darting swallows that make the same journey from Africa every spring.

This swarm of activity brought it home how vibrant a place High Post Golf Club is.

2022 will be the club's centenary year and in preparation they were looking at bringing in architects to assess what improvements could potentially be made out on the course. Clearly the future holds a lot in store for this busy and unique golf club.



HPGC Equipment Inventory

- 2 Toro 3250 greens mowers
- John Deere 2500 greens mower
- 2 Toro 3100-D sidewinders
- Toro 5510 fairway mower
- John Deere 3245C rough mower
- Hardy tractor
- 2 John Deere Pro Gators
- 4 John Deere 220A hand mowers
- John Deere 4610
- John Deere 1070 with front loader
- John Deere 166 lawn mower



Are you a Photographer?

BIGGA's Golf Photographic Competition is back for 2012, so if you're a member with an eye for a shot, read on...



By Paul Hope. "I was out taking photos of the sunrise one morning when this young stag just wandered right into the shot," at High Post Golf Club



By Adam Gilvye. Early morning strimming creates mist in the sunlight, to beautiful effect, on the 3rd green bank (Devonshire Course) at The Royal Eastbourne GC



By Gareth Anwell. Spectacular cloud formations compliment the surface shadows and bunker layout on the 15th at Bon Oak Golf SS, Palacio Palma de Mallorca

The BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition, back for its sixth year, creates an opportunity for members to display their artistic flair, while also earning some publicity for their club.

The winner will receive a full course profile in GI and a special prize, while the 12 best pictures will be selected for the 2012 BIGGA Calendar.

Digital pictures need to be high resolution, at the largest size capable by the camera, as it may ultimately be scaled up to A3 print size (42cm wide x 29.7cm high).

Please label your entries with captions - the name of the course plus a brief description (around 10 words). It would be great if you could also tell us the spec of camera it was taken on too.

Please try to avoid reducing the file size to fit on email as this will reduce the quality of the image.

If the file size is too large to send, we recommend using a compression facility such as winzip or a website such as:

www.mailbigfile.com.

Please note, cropping may occur if photos are to appear in the magazine or calendar. Also ensure digital photos do not show the time/date display!

Anyone wishing to enter should email them to: tom@bigga.co.uk, entering 'BIGGA PHOTO COMP 2012' as the email subject header.

All entries need to be received by July 31, 2012, and only BIGGA members are eligible to enter.





Algae in ponds and lakes

Graham Paul returns with another opportunity for you to earn more BASIS points

The term 'Algae' translates as 'seaweed' in Latin and describes a large group of organisms that can be found in saltwater, freshwater, in soils and in a wide variety of other habitats.

Algae exist as single celled or multicellular organisms that vary in size from microscopic to macroscopic – marine seaweeds are actually complex forms of macroscopic algae and some can grow to 50m in length. Most algae are able to trap the sun's energy by photosynthesis.

The classification of algae is too complex for the scope of this article and like many academic topics is subject to frequent changes. For example, detailed study of the so-called 'Blue-green algae' has resulted in them being re-classified as Cyanobacteria – a phylum of bacteria-like organisms that are photosynthetic.

For the purpose of this article we shall concentrate on those types of algae that cause problems in amenity situations, factors encouraging their development and methods of control.

Algae can cause a variety of problems in water with appearance being high on the list in amenity situations, where water bodies,

such as ponds and lakes, are an important part of our natural attractive landscape. Filamentous algae produce a thick mat that floats on the surface of ponds and lakes. These mats, which are sometimes referred to as 'blanket-weed' or 'cott', are particularly unsightly and will also cause problems in blocking outlets, pumps and sluice gates where water is used in irrigation or processed for drinking.

They make navigation difficult for waterfowl on static water and on slow moving waters in canal systems and can restrict gaseous exchange at the surface with consequent reduction in water oxygen levels that can harm fish and other aquatic creatures.

A group of macroscopic algae known as the Stoneworts (*Chara* spp. and *Nitella* spp.) are often mistaken for varieties of rooted, submerged aquatic weeds. Stoneworts are highly developed forms of algae that have branches arranged in whorls and can grow to 1m in length.

They will often form large masses, floating below the surface of the water. The plant can become encrusted with salts extracted from the water and when handled has a 'brittle' feel – hence the name.

Cyanobacteria are unicellular organisms that can grow in large numbers under the right conditions, producing an algal bloom that some people refer to as 'pea soup'. In a static body of water this will cause the dissolved oxygen to become depleted, with consequent harm to any vulnerable aquatic life.

Although Cyanobacteria are no longer classified as 'true algae' there is a group we refer to as the 'Green water algae' that includes many single celled species with the ability to produce a green algal bloom in slow moving or static water.

Causes of algae problems in water

The main cause of algal development in a body of water is an excess of dissolved nutrients (nitrates and phosphates) usually leached from nearby land. Like higher plants, algae need the same growth stimulants; a supply of nutrients, warmth and light.

Strategies to Control Algae.

There are no longer any chemicals available to control algae in water in Europe. However, dealing with the problem is a simple matter



MAIN ABOVE AND INSET ABOVE: Filamentous algae – known as 'blanket-weed' or 'cott'



of taking steps to deny the algae one or more of these growth stimuli.

Logically the first step is to consider ways of removing excess nutrients from the water. In the long term we should try to identify the source of nutrients leaching in to the pond or lake and attempt to correct this.

This will be simpler if the source of pollution is under the same ownership as the pond or lake.

There are many golf courses where the water features are polluted by fertiliser applied to other parts of the course. It may be possible to reduce the amount of fertiliser applied to the land nearby and so minimise the nutrients leaching into the water.

Alternatively, conventional fertilisers could be replaced by products with controlled release characteristics.

Over the years fertiliser manufacturers have developed a variety of techniques for extending the release period of their products to achieve a reduction in clipping yields as well as cutting down on nutrient leaching.

Some products employ a nitrification inhibitor to increase the period of nitrogen availability while others use organic nutrition sources that cause a delay in nutrient release while microbial degradation takes place to unlock the plant foods and make them available to the plant.

In principle, the use of controlled release fertilisers aims to put much lower amounts of nutrient onto the ground, since there will be less wastage through leaching.

Probably the best type of controlled release mechanisms for reducing leaching are the products employing a polymer coating where the nutrients are released in response to temperature alone (e.g. 'Multigreen' from Headland Amenity).

In periods of prolonged rainfall the micro-pores on the surface of the coated granules will react to the cold rain by closing up, preventing further release from the nutrient core.

After the rain, surface temperature on the granule will rise and re-open the pores allowing nutrient release to resume.

Controlled release fertilisers are more expensive than conventional feeds but they do have other benefits that can reduce labour and machinery maintenance costs, which may help to balance the case for using them to improve the quality of a water features nearby.

The next strategy to consider is the removal of nutrient from water



Bloom caused by Cyanobacteria – photograph by kind permission of Mike Hopwood - wightfishing.co.uk

using specially selected species of bacteria that thrive in nutrient-rich water.

There are several manufacturers that can supply bacterial cultures in freeze dried forms (e.g. 'Lake-Pak' from Becker Underwood and 'Pro-Crystal' from Everris).

They are usually packaged as measured doses in water soluble sachets to make application very simple.

These products can only be used from late spring onwards, when the water temperature is sufficient to sustain the growth and proliferation of the bacteria they contain.

A minimum temperature of 10°C and water pH within the range of 6 to 8 will provide ideal conditions for these bacterial based products to work.

Refer to product manufacturer's literature for rates of use and re-treatment recommendations, as these can vary with the product.

It will be necessary to measure the approximate volume of the water requiring treatment to determine how much product is needed.

Aeration of the water is beneficial for the development of bacteria so, if possible, use an aerating fountain to enhance the effectiveness of these products.



Measure the volume of water body

The traditional method of removing nutrients from water involves the placement of barley straw bales or 'sausage shaped' bunds (made by netting barley straw with the type of machine they use to wrap real Christmas tree at the garden centre) - at strategic points in the pond or lake. Barley straw rots in the water, releasing substances that inhibit the growth of algae. It doesn't actually destroy algae already growing in the pond; instead, it prevents the reproduction and spread. The breakdown and decomposition of barley straw in the water is thought to release a number of chemicals that react together in the presence of sunlight

Multigreen 20-0-32 – coated prill magnified





ABOVE: Pond treated with 'Lake-Pak' and 'Blackout' 2hrs after application
 RIGHT: The same pond 2 weeks after application.



to produce hydrogen peroxide – a chemical known to inhibit most species of algae. This is a gradual process that is very temperature dependent; accelerating as the water warms. Once the barley straw treatment becomes effective, it will inhibit algae growth until the straw is almost completely decomposed. As a general rule, the effect of barley straw treatment lasts for about six months.

This method probably works out cheaper than using bacterial treatments but the lake or pond will suffer from an untidy mess left by fragments of rotting straw.

The next method at our disposal is the use of water colorants that filter out the wavelengths of light that are essential to algae for photosynthesis.

There is a choice of either blue or black – both produce effective results. They are available in

liquid or water soluble sachets. The liquid products are applied from the water's edge whilst water soluble packs can be thrown out to the middle of a large pond or small lake. The colorants will disperse evenly after a few hours. The use of colorants will also reduce light availability for the growth of submerged weeds as well as algae. Only products that have been developed specifically for algal control in water should be used, as these will have been tested for safety to fish and waterfowl.

Water colorants will work earlier in the season than freeze dried bacteria and their use will tend to cause a slight increase in water temperature as a result of the coloured material absorbing some of the sun's energy. It therefore makes sense to use colorants in combination with bacterial products as an integrated programme.

CLAIM YOUR BASIS POINTS

SELF ASSESSMENT

Use the questions below to check your understanding of this topic. Readers can claim Two BASIS points if the questions are answered correctly, by filling in the form at: www.sherriff-amenity.com/technical.asp?newsid=21

Circle the correct answer(s)

- 1) Which group of Algae were re-classified as Cyanobacteria?
 - a) Filamentous Algae
 - b) Blue-green Algae
 - c) Stoneworts
 - d) Unicellular Algae

- 2) What is the main cause of Algal problems in ponds and lakes?
 - a) Insufficient sunlight getting into the water.
 - b) An excess of dissolved nutrients in the water(nitrates and phosphates)
 - c) High mineral deposits in the water
 - d) The lack of chemicals used for their control

- 3) What is the minimum water temperature recommended when using bacteria to remove excess water nutrients?
 - a) 10°C
 - b) 15 °C
 - c) 8 °C
 - d) 18.8°C

- 4) When using the traditional barley straw method of removing algae in water, how long may we expect the effect to last?
 - a) 6 years
 - b) 18 days
 - c) 6 months
 - d) 18 months

- 5) What chemical is thought to be responsible for controlling Algae using the barley straw method?
 - a) carbon dioxide
 - b) methane
 - c) ethanol
 - d) Hydrogen peroxide

Raising the stakes in marking golf course hazard lines

Introducing an innovative linemarking partnership that is an environmentally acceptable alternative to aerosol markers

The Paint

Aeroline is the most advanced, ready to use, line marking paint formulation specifically developed for use on the golf course. No added water, no mixing, measuring or dilution of the paint is required, and there are no expensive waste disposal costs. Just pour into the applicator pack and apply direct to the target surface. 1 litre of paint will apply a 500 metre* linear line.

The paint offers a high level of rainfastness that is durable under a wide range of climatic and ground conditions. It contains no hazardous material and has a low carbon footprint with minimal negative impact on the environment.

Three colour formulations white, red and yellow, are supplied in 5 litre plastic containers

* Will vary depending on walking speed.



The Painter

FreeLance is the perfect way to mark hazard lines on golf courses offering speed, ease of use and flexibility of application.

Designed with simplicity and speed in mind, an ECO hand pressurised spray bottle is connected to the lance and carried using a shoulder harness. The spray bottle is filled with the paint and pumped to the required pressure. Flow is controlled by a trigger assembly on the lance handle.

Economical and environmentally responsible, one 5 litre pack of **Aeroline** can mark a 2,500 linear metre line without refilling (equivalent to 25 aerosol cans!) To clean, simply change the paint bottle for one holding water and flush the pipes through.



Quick...clean...easy!

Maximise your utility budget



Golf courses have really taken to utility vehicles. From Gators to Cushmans and Mules to Workhorses, you see them all over the place. If you have not looked at what is on offer more recently, however, you may not appreciate that the choice of kit on offer has widened. James De Havilland writes...

As is so often the case these days, there is a bewildering array of utility vehicles to choose from. Put together a few basic requirements, however, and that wide choice narrows.

First up, you have the established Cushman Turf-Truckster from Ransomes Jacobsen, the Pro Gator from John Deere and the Workman HDX models from Toro.

These models are so familiar it is common for them all to be called the same regardless of who makes them; hands up those of you that call a Workman a Truckster, a Gator a Workman and well, you get the point. A key feature of these 'heavy duty' machines is that they are designed to do a lot more than

provide a load platform and a passenger seat.

These key models have pretty similar capacities as well; the diesel-powered line-up that comprises the 24hp Pro Gator 2030A rated at 1,182kg, the 26.5hp Workman HDX-D-4WD offering a 1,289kg payload and the 23hp Cushman Turf Truckster offering a 1,293kg capacity. In the real world their overall specifications are broadly similar, with mechanical transmissions and a choice of hydraulic packages to suit specific attachments.

It is important, however, to remember that you need to look at these vehicles in the wider context of what you want them to do. The chances are you will want

BELOW: Heavy-duty utility vehicles really come into their own when matched to their own when matched to demount kit such as a sprayer or top dresser. When costing vehicles it pays to also price up kit to go with the vehicle too.





Simple, light and petrol powered. There are an increasing number of 'entry level' utilities to choose from but factor in running costs if they are going to cover a lot of ground. A more expensive diesel may make better long-term financial sense for some, but by no means all, courses.

to consider a range of demount kit that will also fit, such as a sprayer, and it is the easy integration and complete package price of the latter that can have a big influence upon your final buying choices.

It is entirely feasible to specify an 'off-the-peg' vehicle based around a utility 'skid' that will subsequently undertake key spraying, top dressing and even core collecting requirements. The total equipment package could be more cost effective than an array of trailed and tractor mounted alternatives.

This is an important point as heavy-duty utilities are relatively expensive bits of kit; a price tag north of £20K will make any accountant sit up and take notice, but it is the ability of these tools to work with purpose built attachments that can make them a viable buy. Build quality is good too, so expect a long life from well-proven models.

Kitting out a machine with a sprayer is a good example. All the listed models will take a sprayer of

around 750 litres, with boom widths of around 6 to 7m dependant upon model. The sprayer will sit low on the machine, to improve stability, with the weight more evenly spread between the wheels than perhaps would be the case with a trailed unit. The same will apply to a top dresser. When these attachments are not in use, they demount easily and free the vehicle for other work.

The caveat is that there are now keenly priced dedicated sprayers available as alternatives; these we looked at in the May issue. The trick is to work out how much work you will do with a sprayer on a utility. If the unit spends more time fitted to the vehicle than sitting in the shed on its stands you may find it more cost effective to buy a dedicated sprayer. Conversely, if you need to rebuild a bunker and ferry turf and sand around, a utility can often do the job better than a tractor and trailer; you do not have that option if you have gone for a dedicated sprayer.

Alternatively, you could also go



The cold spring of 2012 will perhaps be forgotten as temperatures climb, but an enclosed cab can make life a great deal easier for the operator. When choosing a utility, price in various options when making price comparisons.



When it comes to personnel transport, the key is to look to a lighter utility that can also carry a modest load. Space for essential tools, replacement greens flags, rakes or whatever will soon be exploited, so a large load platform is a help.



It really is worth taking the trouble to have a demonstration of alternative vehicles; Deere Gator and Toro Workman controls, for example, have essential features in common but the designs are more different than the spec sheet suggest.



left field and buy a dedicated sprayer and a more general-purpose utility vehicle.

The latter need not have the heavy-duty capacity or fixed forward speed ability of a big Toro, Cushman or Deere, but if your need is to help move personnel and kit around, an entry-level petrol model may be the way to go. Take Kawasaki Mule 610 and Polaris Ranger 400.

These machines have a relatively low initial purchase price and are reasonably cheap to run, despite the need to run on petrol.

There are also diesel powered models to consider, such as the evergreen Kawasaki Diesel Mule, together with alternatives from companies such as Club Car, Bobcat, Kubota, JCB to name a few.

The key is to establish the difference between basic utility units designed to have a light footprint and modest load capacity and machines that have a bigger payload and the ability to power attachments.

Often overlooked are battery powered electric vehicles. These tend to go in and out of fashion, but there is no denying these tools do have a future.

Polaris, for example are selling increasingly large numbers of its Ranger E, essentially sharing the same chassis as its Ranger 400 sibling with the result of it delivering good performance in more extreme conditions.

However, there are other electric models to consider. These include vehicles that can be specified in road legal form, with Ransomes Jacobsen having recently taken over the importation from France of the Mega electric truck range.

This is quite a significant move as Ransomes Jacobsen will no doubt help promote the greater use of this type of vehicle on golf courses. In terms of cost, a road ready electric truck will cost a similar amount of money as a heavy-duty 'turf truck'; well worth a look.

Regardless of what is on offer, the key to selecting the right utility vehicle is to work out what it has to do.

Heavy-duty models fit the bill perfectly when used as 'self-propelled' sprayers and top dressers, but they may not be the most economical choice as a general carrier.

If you can take the time to shop around and try several vehicles for a few days, you stand a much better chance of choosing the right tool.



ABOVE: Battery powered utilities are not new, but the concept of road legal models has yet to gain as wide acceptance in the UK as it has on the Continent. The Mega range imported by Ransomes Jacobsen could change that.

LEFT: More serious off-road ability may not be necessary, so check how well a vehicle on turf-friendly tyres performs on fine turf by doing the odd tight turn. All-wheel drive has its pros and cons, even when a proper differential with locking diff lock comes as part of the package.

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Section Notes

Please email your notes to
scott@bigga.co.uk
by the 15th
of the month

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



Scotland



Central

The Section had an enjoyable day at Crail for their spring outing with over 50 players participating on a course that was in excellent condition. Although the overnight and early morning weather was grim, by the time golf started it was a pretty decent day. The full list of winners are on the website, but by the principal the winners on the day were as follows:

Best Scratch, Gordon Moir, St Andrews Links, beating Stuart Robertson, Strathmore Golf Centre by a shot. Best overall nett, Kenny Mitchell, St Andrews Links. Paul Murphy of Fife Golf Trust won the 1st section and Shaun Anderson, Piperdam, won the 2nd. Kevin Brunton from Greentech won the trade prize. Our thanks go to Crail Golfing Society their staff and our Patrons for making the day such a success. The 2012 Pairs competition is well underway and again results are on the website.

Congratulations to Sandy Reid who will be succeeding John Philp at Carnoustie Golf Links after John retires at the end of June.

There are a couple of dates for educational events. Eric Lyons of Guelph Uni in Canada will give a talk at Elmwood at the beginning of June while John Kaminski and Rick Latin from Penn State and Purdue Universities respectively will give one on 12 July, also at Elmwood.

The results of the survey carried out recently will be analysed, this along with more information on the talks will be on the website. Thanks to all

who took part.

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk or join us on Facebook,
Regards,
Gordon Moir



East

Well gents, we had our spring outing at the Glen last Tuesday and the weather was perfectly acceptable this time in comparison to the stormy day we had originally planned. Thirty-three attended and here is a list of all the winners:

Scratch winner 68 gross Philip Butler, Murrayfield Golf Club

1st class winner Keith Burgon, Hirsell Golf Club

Runner up, Grant Moran Mortonhall Golf Club

2nd class winner Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Park Golf Club

Runner up, Ryan McCulloch, Goswick Golf Club

3rd class winner Kenneth Mason, Longniddry Golf Club

Veterans winner Aalister Holmes, Seahouses Golf Club

Best Nett winner Scott Corrigan, Greenburn Golf Club

Apprentice prize James Balmbrro, Hirsell Golf Club

Trade winner, Stewart Clayton, Greensman limited

Novelty prizes nearest the pin at the 13th hole, Pat Allan, Symbio

Longest drive at the 18th hole, James Johnston, Greenburn Golf Club

The Glen was very hospitable and Des Kerr, Course Manager, and his staff had the course in top condition. I played with the Captain Mr. Mike Curry, who was very impressed with the way we, as a section, went about our business, so well done to all of you for attending and I hope you all enjoyed your day. Well

done to George Stavert again for making it on the day, but next time bring your clubs George. A big thanks again to Stuart Ferguson for all the administration and planning on the day. Hopefully we will see the sun soon and get some heat from it to help the links grow as this last month has been too cold, fingers crossed.

Stewart Crawford
s.crawford@live.co.uk



West

Just a couple of things to mention for the section news, the main item being the recent retirement of Peter Boyd as regional administrator after 14 years of service. Peter finished on the 20 April and the west section committee had a small get together of all those people who had been involved with him over the years through committee work. A dinner was arranged at the citation restaurant in town and 12 people from the west turned up along with 4 from the Ayrshire section, all in attendance appeared to enjoy themselves and were delighted to be part of the evening. The section would like to wish Peter an enjoyable retirement and hope we that he can enjoy some more time with his wife Eleanor and the family.

I attended the annual match against the secretaries on Luffness New course on 8 May. The course was absolutely superb for the time of year and David Coull explained all the different projects he had completed over the last few years to help improve the course. I thoroughly enjoyed the course and the company and even better, the greenkeepers won. I would like to express my thanks to all those

involved in the day which helped make it such a success: Stuart Greenwood, Peter Boyd, Tony Yates, Brian and Julie Denholm and the house staff.

The next big event to consider is the Scottish National Tournament over Ratho Park golf club on the 20 June; entries have to be submitted to the head office at Aldwark Manor.

I will report on the spring outing results in the next issue and once again if anybody has any information for me could they please get in contact on stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com or by mobile on 07790823914 or 0141 94 5554.

Hope you have a good season,
Stuart Taylor



Ayrshire

The spring outing of the Ayrshire section, which includes Dumfries and Galloway, was held on arguably the best municipal golf course in the UK, Belleisle in Ayr, on Tuesday 1, May.

The course was in excellent condition thanks to the efforts of Billy, Kevin and the rest of the greenkeeping team, and the weather was kind for a wee change, especially after the rigours of Turnberry in the autumn.

The scoring reflected this as four players beat their handicap on the day. The prize winners were: First class winner - William Mcmeikan 38 points, 2nd - David Nelson 37 points, 3rd - Ian McDonald 35 points, 4th - Ian Barr 34 points. Second class winner - David Wason 40 points, 2nd - Gregor Wilson 33 points, 3rd - Martin Lothian 30 points, 4th - Barry Crate 24 points. Stewart Clayton won the trade prize with a score that suggests

he spends plenty of time on the golf course!

The Section would like to extend their thanks to South Ayrshire Council for allowing us the use of the Belleisle golf course, always an enjoyable experience. As there are only limited catering facilities at Belleisle we retired to the Abbotsford hotel, where we enjoyed an excellent two-course meal in a private room, so thanks to all the staff in the hotel for looking after us. I'm sure it will be recommended as a good venue by everyone in attendance.

The only other news I have is that George Morrison is doing a bit of bird watching, looking out for that elusive stork arriving, hopefully with a soft landing George.

The BIGGA national tournament is at Bogside this year on the 8 and 9 of October, so get it in your diary and let's have a good turn out from the section.

If there is anything happening on your course, or with our members in Ayrshire, or anything else that may be of interest, please get in touch with me by e-mail on duncan@lawnsforyou.com.

All the best for the season.

Northern Region



North East

I shall remember April 18, 2012, at South Shields G. C. for a long time, and it's not just me, but also other members of the Committee of the North East Section, as it was the worst turn out ever for a Competition. I don't know what the answer is; we have tried changing the day of the week and teeing off time, yet still we struggle. Wouldn't it be nice if we could get just one person from a golf club where they have more than one member of the Association, What a difference that would make.

Now getting back to Competition; what a pleasure it was to play the course, which is kept in excellent condition by Phil Hargave and his staff. The greens were superb and I reckon you wont see any better than them this year despite having the driest March on record and the wettest April. Lucky for us it only rained for the first hour,

but another ten minutes and we would have walked off it was that bad, but we carried on and enjoyed the rest of the course. Thank you to the catering staff for the great meal.

Now for the scores: Best Gross - J. Gibson 79, Northumberland GC, Best Nett R. Reid 72 on count back. J.S.Richardson 72, R. Black 87.

Thank you to Glen Baxter of Rigby Taylor and Alan Morton of T.S.L. and Wearside GC for donating prizes on the day.

I have received news from Tommy Harrison, Gosforth GC, of movement from his place; Andy Jeffries has left and become a self-employed landscaper, Chris Walker been promoted to first assistant and Connor Bush has been taken on as an apprentice; good luck to you all

That's it for another month; let's hope that we start getting some sunshine and not as much rain.

Jimmy Richardson



Northern

Well here we go folks, the section golf days are under-way. The forecast for the first event at Easingwold was pretty poor, but 30 of us mad golfers made the effort. A huge thanks and my respect to you guys who made it, we got a little wet, but eh we are used to it!

Even bigger thanks go to Easingwold golf club for allowing us to play and of course Andre and the boys for working so hard to present a great course in testing conditions. We had a fantastic prize table provided by John Hughes the pro, which was kindly sponsored by Sherriff Amenity and the lovely Rebecca, thank you very much indeed.

Congratulations to Dave Collins who cleaned up by winning the Division one trophy and the Scratch trophy...

Div one: 1st Dave Collins, 2nd Stu Mason, 3rd A baxter

Div two: 1st R. Smith, 2nd N Booth, 3rd F Stewart

Div three: 1st G Street, 2nd J Baxter, 3rd J Rowbottom

Nearest pins: Stu Mason & A Scaman; Trade prize winner: I Collitt. The next event will be The Presidents day at Scarcroft golf club on the 27 June with a 1.30 tee off, so come on guys

put a shift in and come and support the section. We will be having a brisk EGM regarding the Treasurers position, we have a candidate who has come forward, but if anybody else fancies the role please let me know.

On the fixture list you all have we noticed a wee error, the Sheffield match up will be played at Howley Hall and not Meltham as stated. Whoops. Anybody wishing to play in this please let me no asap, or I will be pestering you lot at the next event.

And finally I end with some lovely news about our committee member Richard Smith, he and Elizebeth are expecting there 2nd child in October! Congratulations big fellow, you never know we might have a whip round and get you some new golf shoes! He plays and works in his white golf shoes; I think they were white.

Last but not least, it was great to see Ben and Steve from Scarborough make it to Easingwold, fantastic effort boys.

Any goss, news, please let me know... Any of you guys successful in getting on to the open support team?

Andy Slingsby, 07506407867
Slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com ; Facebook Andy Slingsby (spiderman)



North West

Hi all,

Well the golf season is certainly up and running and we've had the spring tournament, which was held at Leasowe GC. A turn out of about 30 played in good conditions on this seaside links. First of all let me thank Leasowe GC for the courtesy of the course, the catering staff for the meal and the Head greenkeeper Chris Peddie and his staff for the presentation, which made it such an enjoyable day.

The winner was Craig Morris with a score of 36points, which was a three-way tie. Triumphant with a back 9 count back with two other competitors who were John Mcgloughlin and Chris Gibson.

The longest drive and nearest pin prizes were picked up by Billy Merritt and John Mcloughlin. Well done to everybody on the day.

There are a couple of people moving this month; Neil olferey is moving out of our area and down to Exeter, so good luck

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Around The Green

Worzel with the new life down south. With any luck his able deputy Damian will get the promotion he deserves, but hey we are in the golf industry.

Matt Shimwell is leaving Hopwood GC to work under deputy manager, Gwynn Davies, at The Mere GC, so good luck Matt.

Mere GC has had a busy month they also held a GTC H&S day, which was very well attended.

The next golf event will be played in June at Lymm GC for its North West v North Wales Team match. By this time you will all have your fixture lists as they have been sent out, but if anybody would like more information please contact Chris Sheehan.

On a lighter note, I had a chat with Paul Smith, Course Manager at Royal Lytham, this week and me, being on a Parkland, bemoaning the constant rain we seem to be getting in the North West, well Paul being on a links thinks it great apart from the fact that the ROUGH is getting a little thick and very penal, something for the pro's to think about as the Open Championship closes in.

Spencer Lloyd-Pye
spencer@lloyd-pye.freeserve.co.uk



North Wales

Let's all hope that, now mid-summer is here, we can finally have some summer, because April and the beginning of May were hardly anything to get excited about. The spring tournament at Llangollen was a complete washout; thankfully everyone took the day and disappointment in their stride and stayed for a drink and meal in the clubhouse. Although no meaningful golf was played on the day, I know we all enjoyed the meal, had a good chin-wag and a laugh. The golf has been rearranged to the 19 June. Anyone who paid to be on the original day will play free of charge, on a play only basis, food will not be included on the day. Anyone who would like to fill spots left vacant by replay drop outs will only have to pay towards the prize fund and ball sweep and

organise your own refreshment options with the catering staff.

A big thank you goes to Phil, Gaynor and the rest of the hospitality staff for their hard work and patience in feeding us all at once with some rather excellent food when they were organised on a completely different format.

Thank you also to Bob Hardy who came up with alternate dates as soon as we had to cancel.

In other news we welcome Jason Moody back from the dark side to greenkeeping as he has taken a position at The Plassey Leisure Park, welcome back Jason!

I think that's about it for now, but I would like to hear from you all, please feel free to text, call or e-mail your news. All the best until next month,

Pete Maybury, e-mail, petemayb66@aol.com Mobile 07756001187 Facebook group North Wales B.I.G.G.A

Midland Region



East Midlands

As the hose pipe ban got into full swing and the rivers and reservoirs started rapidly filling up following the coldest, wettest April for over twenty years the East Midlands Section played our Spring Tournament at Scraftoft Golf Club on Thursday 26 April. Many courses around the area had been closed due to the extreme weather conditions but Nigel White and his team, through lots of hard work, produced an excellent golf course for the day. A well supported day, although there is always room for more people, saw Russell Allen claim the Category 1 prize with Rob 'local knowledge' Duval and Adi Porter finishing second and third respectfully. In Category 2 Andy Marsh took first place, with Adrian Henshaw and James McShane also in the prizes. An East Midlands golf competition wouldn't be complete without Garry Thurman picking up a prize in the Trade/Associates category. Garry has continued to support this section for many years and his consistency is beginning to

gain legendary status, especially in the raffle!

Tacit sponsored the Nearest the Pin and Longest Drives for which the section is extremely grateful and was won by Russell Allen (again!)(NTP) and Adrian Henshaw (LD) for the greenkeepers and Mick Marvel won Longest Drive for the Trade/Associates. Unfortunately no one from Trade/Associates managed to hit the green on their respective Nearest the Pin hole. The committee are also extremely grateful to the sponsors of the day for their generosity, Sherriff Amenity, Campey, Platts Harris and Henton & Chattell and also to Scraftoft Golf Club who produced a first class meal and were also excellent hosts. It was noted that the menu didn't include brussel sprouts this year... you know who you are!

So the Jubilee Bank Holiday has past us by now, all the bunting and ill fitting Union Jack hats are packed away, until Prince Harry gets spliced at least, and we can hopefully look forward to a good summer with happy golfers on our courses. The April wet weather, although inconvenient, was very welcome, and with temperatures slowly starting to rise there is definitely the prospect of the country experiencing proper seasonal weather for the first time in many years.

On a final note invites to Nailcote Hall for our Rigby Taylor sponsored Par 3 Competition will be out in the not too distant future, we are trying more and more to email invites because of the cost of postage so please make sure that we have your correct email address on file. You can easily update us by emailing your details to big-gaeastmid@gmail.com and we can keep you informed of events/matters within your section. That's about it for now, the next issue will be my last... before the Olympics!

Thank you for calling,
Greg Skinner
07970 095264



Midland

Well after the unseasonably dry and hot March/April, the old prophecy of "it won't know when to stop raining when it comes" has finely come true. There is nothing quite as rewarding as raking sodden wet sand day after day, I don't think! Such wet weather reminds me of an old boy from Harborne, George Noyce/Formby son. When sent out to mow banking's etc. on his Tri-king in the rain, under great sufferance and complaint I might add, he would take an umbrella with him. Who did he think he was, Mary Poppins? It was so funny though.

I hope that by the time our summer event is here on 11 July at Oxley Park G.C. that we have had some sunshine to warm our backs. I should be able to report the spring results in next month's notes.

This month's calendar sponsor is ALS. They offer a multitude of services including Course Equipment, Contract Works, Turf Care Products and Machinery Servicing etc. For their full range please visit: www.amenity.co.uk or Tel: 01952 641 949.

Sean McDade.



BB&O

As summer approaches and the golfing season kicks into full swing hopefully many of you will have managed to get your courses in to shape and completed all renovation/maintenance work in what must be the wettest start to any drought on record! That said those of you impacted by the hosepipe ban will be enjoying the respite and are no doubt breathing a sigh of relief. As ever we have little control over the biggest influencing factor - the weather! We wait to see what summer brings.

Kirtlington GC played host to this year's BB&O Section Spring Cup. The day was well supported

with yet another fantastic turn-out. A special mention must go to Brett Moggridge and his team at Kirtlington who produced superb playing surfaces and a cracking course, which presented a great test and golfing challenge. After some strong scoring throughout the field and despite recent shoulder surgery, Adam King was crowned the winner (on count back) with 36 points, second was Dan Lightfoot, and third place going to Phil Beeny. The nearest the pin on the 4th went to Graham Gardener, nearest the pin on the 16th went to Paul Young and the longest drive on the 18th went to Phil Beeny. A big thank you must go to the John Deere dealerships of Godfreys Golf and Turf and Farel's who jointly sponsored the entire day. Their support is greatly appreciated and without them the golf days could not happen. Full results can be viewed on the section website: www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk In other news from around the section, Peter Larter is retiring at the end of the month and so steps down from his post as Northern and Midland Regional Officer.

We would like to wish him well and thank him for all his work and effort over the years supporting BIGGA and in particular the BB&O Section. The BIGGA Midland Regional Educational Conference had to be postponed, however it is to be rearranged for a date later in the year. The Buckinghamshire Golf Club is hosting The Ladies British Masters 15-18 August and is looking for volunteers to help with the support team. Anyone who is interested please contact the Course Manager: andy.ewence@buckinghamshiregc.co.uk

The next Section golf day is to be held at Temple Golf Club. Dates, entry forms, including the Rigby Taylor pairs knock-out competition, jobs and information can be found at the BB&O website.

If anyone has any news, views or ideas for the BB&O section then please don't hesitate to get in touch: bbo-scribe@gmail.com or contact the committee/Matt Nutter: bbosecretray@gmail.com

Or keep up to date with the BB&O section by following us on Twitter, Facebook and the website: www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk

South East Region



East Anglia

Here we go again then. Our rather small, but perfectly formed band braved the wind and the rain and all had a very good day at Waldringfield. My personal memories of Waldringfield were three portacabins and a course in its infancy. An absolutely terrific clubhouse has replaced the portacabins and the course has developed into a good test of golf, which is maturing nicely – (just like me some say, others tell the truth!) Thanks in no small part to Keith Tishall and his crew.

Some managed to stay out of the gorse, unlike me who is still pulling thorns from my backside. They are as follows:

0-9 Handicap: 1st Jonathan Smart, 36 Points, 2nd Nick Brewster, 35 Points. 10-18 Handicap: 1st Chris Davies, 37 Points, 2nd Toni Thacker, 33 Points. 19-28 Handicap – Real Golfers: 1st Andy Baker, 40 Points, 2nd Keith Tishall, 37 Points. Trade & Guests: 1st Trevor Hurn, 40 Points, 2nd, Steve Creasey, 39 Points. Nearest Pin: Nick Brewster. Longest Drive: Chris Davies. Loo Seat – Mike Virley: While practising thinned one and nearly destroyed the Pro shop. Nice one!

The main sponsors of the day were Bartram and Ransomes Jacobson and the prizes were presented by Nigel Church.

Other sponsors were Aitkens, Tacit, Toro, Collier Turf Care, Brian Lindores and Headland.

Thanks again Waldringfield for a lovely, if a little damp day, Steve Creasey for his welcoming speech and the catering staff for the welcoming meal.

Pause for thought: I recently heard of a professional taking over the running of a course. The person telling me said: "Well he is a professional and he should know how to make good greens"! My reply was "Bobby Charlton was a great footballer, but I bet he couldn't mark the pitch out".

Mick Lathrope



Surrey

Monday May 7. Where has this month gone too? It seems only yesterday that I wrote last month's report. So, to stop me saying the same thing next month, I ought to write July's tomorrow! If that hasn't confused you, it has me. They say that no news is good news, but when one has to keep avid readers happy every month it isn't, so come on all of you lot out there give me news, news!

Anthony Freeman has been appointed course manager at Merrist Wood GC and I am sure that he will make it a successful move. Best wishes from all members of Surrey section.

Chelsea beat Liverpool in the cup final; you have only yourselves to blame when I have to resort to football results. Tony Bremer has only just recovered from deep depression after watching the game while Ian Sellers is still buying everyone drinks.

My new home in Dorking is improving daily and since no longer driving around the South East of England every day I have lost over a stone in weight. Is it a new diet? No it's since semi retirement I can't afford a decent meal!

My old 5th form class had a re-union after leaving school 50 years ago. Unlike me my class mates all looked so ancient as did our school. The building has the same floors, doors and central heating system as when we left it in 1962. The school is now all girls and several of us were interviewed by the pupils about life when we were inmates and how the capital punishment, cane, slipper and blackboard rubber were the daily norm and as our teachers said, would benefit us for future life. We even had a visit from our old history master, Brian Bunker; you can probably guess his nickname.

That's it until Blackmore GC for the next golf day and the result of which will occupy space in July's jottings.

Brian Willmott

Brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk

Assistant Profile

Our monthly look into the life of an assistant greenkeeper...

Name: James Bledge
Age: 32
Club: gWest
Position: Senior Greenkeeper
Nickname: Bledger



1. How long have you been greenkeeping? 15 years

2. What was it about the career that attracted you? Being involved in golf, working out doors and working with tractors!

3. If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be? I'd probably be a farmer, although I'd love to have been a golf course photographer or a musician!

4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why? Using excavators during course construction, I get a great deal of satisfaction and sense of achievement from seeing the finished article.

5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why? Picking stones, gWest is a new build and even though we have 97% grass cover they just keep coming to the surface! I have never seen so many stones! If I never see another stone again it will be too soon!

6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot? In our region (Perthshire, Scotland) a little bit of decent weather wouldn't go amiss!

7. Hobbies? Golf, playing guitar and writing/recording music

8. Favourite Band? Oceansize

9. Which team do you support? Queen Of The South!

10. What is your claim to fame? My band opened the Main Stage at the Wickerman Festival, playing with the Buzzcocks and Spiritualized.

BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scotland

Benjamin Hartley, Central Section
Shuai Giuo, Central Section
Mark McDougall, Central Section
Dongli Meng, Central Section
Joseph Smith, Central Section
Darren Walker, Central Section
Aaron Jack, Central Section
David Watson, East Section
Mark McLaren, North Section
Jack Craig, North Section
Craig Barr, West Section
Darren Cooper, West Section

Northern Region

Ian Graham, North West Section
Harry Ingram, North West Section
Andrew Watkin, Cleveland Section
James Smith, Sheffield Section
Mark Morgan, Sheffield Section
Simon Harley, Sheffield Section

Midland Region

Matthew Skelding, East Midlands Section
Alex Roberts, East Midlands Section
Shane Sweeting, East Midlands Section
Paul Owens, East Midlands Section
John Hall, Midlands Section
Mark Grant, Midlands Section
Kevin Stout, Mid Anglia Section
Steffan Davies, Mid Anglia Section
Luke Vincent, Mid Anglia Section
Lewis Turner, Mid Anglia Section

South East Region

Adam Tamplin, Surrey Section
Matthew Warren, Surrey Section
Neil Edwards, Kent Section
Jamie O'Connell, Kent Section
Neil Johnson, Sussex Section
David Roberts, Sussex Section
Dale Funnell, Sussex Section
Jim Rathbone, London Section
Mitchel Throughgood, London Section
Lewis Blois, East Anglia Section
James Barrett, East Anglia Section

Sth West/Sth Wales Region

Michael Llong, Kent Section
Derek Barrowman, South West Section
Andy Littleford, South West Section
Deborah Phillips, South Coast Section
Rhys Hugglestone, South Coast Section
Simon Gisby, South Coast Section
Thomas Determann, South Coast Section
Peter Laley, South Coast Section
Scott McAuley, Devon/Cornwall Section
Daniel Young, South Wales Section

Northern Ireland

David Forbes
Republic of Ireland - Colaiste Stiofain
Naofa College
Christopher Breen
Ronan Curtin
David Desmond
Gary Healy
Sean Holland
James Keane
Paul Kelly
Mark Kingston
Stephen Lawlor
James Madigan
James Maloney
Mark Mulcahy
Simon O'Brien
Ken O'Connell
Colm O'Sullivan
Johnny Ryan
Liam Tobin
John Tully
Frank Twomey

Overseas

Mark Shannon, Netherlands

For more information on new members log in to the Members' Area of the BIGGA Website.



Essex

After weeks of relentless rain we held our first golf day of the season on Wednesday 16 May. The heavy down pours of Monday and Tuesday, quickly undid the three days of fine weather we experienced over the weekend prior to our Spring Trophy pairs event at Ilford Golf Club, but as Wednesday dawned, the fine weather returned and we were greeted with warm temperatures, bright sunshine and a light breeze. Ilford's Head Man, Sam Young had laid the course out in spectacular fashion, considering the atrocious weather we have all been experiencing of late, the odd puddle on fairways and one or two in bunkers was all that remained.

Hard work had been put in to bring the course to such a standard and Sam had done most of it himself. Sam manages this south Essex course with only two members of staff. This 18-hole course, set in the centre of Ilford, is compact and would fit twice into most average 18-hole courses.

28 players showed for the start and some good scoring resulted, the first three places being split by only three points.

1st Dominic Rogers & Tommy Carr, 44 Points.

2nd Neil Peachey & Roy Spong, 43 Points.

3rd Liam Springett & Dan Simmons, 42 Points.

Nearest the Pin 6th Hole, Sean Isabella.

Nearest the Pin 11th Hole, Dan Simmons.

Our thanks go to the following, Sam Young and his team for their hard work, Ilford Golf Club for the courtesy of the course and the fine meal and hospitality put on by the staff and to Wayne Wilson of CMW Equipment Ltd for the halfway house, plus all of our sponsors, without them the day would not have been possible.

Hopefully there is news elsewhere in the magazine about our football match against the Kent section on Monday 21 May at Upton Park, home of West Ham United; Toro UK sponsored the event.

There is news at last of our planned trip to The Hurlingham Club on Tuesday 12 June. Peter Craig, who spoke at last year's Regional Seminar and Essex member, is giving us a guided tour of this extremely prestigious venue. Details are on our website and if you are lucky there may still be places available, though we are limited to a maximum of 20 places. Call Ian Wood on 07652-470.861 if you are interested. CPD points should be available for those that attend.

Our next golf day is at Rochford Hundred Golf Club, National Qualifier, 18-hole Stableford on Thursday 16 August, £20 entry fee for members and £25 for guests.

If you wish to include anything in Greenkeeper International or on the Sections Website www.essexbigga.co.uk please contact me on 07764-862.337 or at essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones



Kent

At this time of writing, the severe drought is at its height and I again find myself working my way through my wife's 'To-do' list within the confines of the house rather than face the torrential rain, which has been relentless for the last month. Most of the fair weather variety of golfers (including me) have restricted their playing to the confines of the covered driving ranges rather than risk the wettest springtime weather ever recorded. Anyway, I hope you are able to get out onto your courses and deal with the excess surface water via aeration and soil penetrants and at least give your respective clientele the option of venturing out.

Here in Kent we will just have held our early summer event at West Kent Golf Club when you read this, so a full report to come on that and a certain football match against our Essex counterparts on the hallowed turf of Upton Park in next month's column.

One last thing before I sign off from a rather brief report this month, we are collating

teams now for our Summer Pairs Knockout tournament. This was hugely popular and successful last year so please contact me or Kev asap if you have not already done so to be part of this great event. More details are on our website below.

Best of British



South Coast

Hi all,

As I write this we have just had another 22mm of rain and there is water everywhere. Kev from Brokenhurst has sent me a photo of his second hole with only the top third of the flag visible in the flood! It is quite likely that when you read this we will be in a heat wave!

The committee last met on 18 April and we have at last finalised the hand over to Alex with a new bank account that will give us an online banking facility. Those that wish to can pay for their entries to competitions online, all of which helps the organisers to keep tabs on numbers without the problem of collecting money on the day.

As always the committee could do with some new faces, this will not involve any specific tasks to begin with, just to sit in at meetings and be involved with planning events. Anyone interested should contact one of the committee members listed on the fixture card.

The spring tournament, more appropriately known as the Colin (chalky) White Trophy, was held at Dunwood Manor GC on 26 April. We were the last society to play the course before it shuts its doors as a golf course – very sad!

Considering the torrential rain leading up to the day the course was in great condition, Jason and his team certainly did us proud, well done to all of you. A choice of truly excellent food finished the day off. A big thanks to everyone involved for making it a memorable day. Also, thanks as always to Avoncrop for sponsoring the day and to Colins Mum and sister for their ongoing support.

The competition was run as a medal for the first time in years and proved difficult for some!

Winners: Gross Mark Davis Canford 69, Luke Elgie Rushmore Park 82, Dave Harfield Hockley 84, Nett Kevin Tigg Quindel 69, Colin Pardey Sherbourne 74, Beverley Blair Southwick 77. Trade prize went to John Mathis of Rigby Taylor.

Our next event is the annual match against the secretaries at Rushmore Park on 7 June, then the Management Trophy at Liphook GC on the 20 June. The summer invitation is on the 11 July at Blackmore GC, please remember to pay in full before the day. Entries to Kevan Glass glassy2003@hotmail.com.

I must get back to a little job of priming the watering system ready for when it does stop raining! Until next month keep on Greenkeeping!

Tony Gadd



South West

Rain, rain, go away... come back another day! What is this weather all about, in March they gave us a hose-pipe ban and told us to use less water and come May we have flooding throughout the whole country, interesting! I'm sure that come August it'll be in the high 20s and we'll be asking for more rain, but until then... STOP RAINING.

Thursday 19 April, the section visited Thornbury golf centre for its annual AMAM. 46 turned out to play golf and 50 for the meal, to me that equals a great day, and that it was. Thornbury made us feel very welcome and with everyone teeing off during the clear spell in the weather, only one group made it round before the heavens opened with the course flooded in no time at all, it was as though the river Severn wanted to take on a new direction (or that's how it looked from the clubhouse). So after all this, we had to make it a 9-hole competition.

The competition winners were: 3rd place, Jamie Acton and his partner Steve Acton with 23 points, 2nd place, Ian Reed and his partner Jason Norman with 24 points and this year's winners for the south west section AMAM were Roger Neale and his partner Robin Herbert with 25 points.

Roger, I have to mention this, because after all the hard work and effort you have put in over the last 12 months (maybe longer) it really has been worthwhile! A new man stands before us, good work mate, good work!

PLEASE NOTE, section matches... Vs secretaries, 30 May at Clevedon G.C. Vs Welsh section, Friday 10 August at Royal Porthcawl G.C. Vs south coast, 20 September at Salisbury G.C. Please contact Wayne Vincent, section captain, to show your interest in playing in any match.

Below is a few important words from Tim Needham at Hartpury College:

Hartpury will be running Sports Turf Apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds starting in September this year. These apprenticeships will be fully funded, employers only pay the wages, and include a Level 2 Diploma, First Aid course, Pa1 and Pa6 and Functional Skills. If you are looking to take on or train an apprentice then give us a call, we may also be able to help match you up with someone suitable. Funding is also still available for 19-24 year olds right up to a fully funded Level 2 or Level 3 depending on your previous qualifications. For an information pack about any of the Sports Turf courses call Tim Needham on 07788148352 or 01452702376.

We would also like to thank our patronage partners for 2012, Farmura, Countrywide, Headland, Eco-solve, TH White, Irrtech Ltd and Avoncrop.

We also have a Facebook page for the southwest section, one that will make it much more convenient for you all to use, you don't have to do anything, just enjoy this amazing feature you have at your finger tips.

See you all very soon,
adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

07732503855



Devon and Cornwall

Hello all,

Quiet time of the year for us in terms of events, but we have got two summer events coming up; Wednesday 30 May, Boringdon

Park GC, Section Championships and Wednesday 4 July, Launceston GC, Devon V Cornwall Match. The Section Championships at Boringdon will be the qualifier for the National Tournament at Irvine Golf Club in October.

We have also arranged an evening Course walk and talk at Trevoze GC on Wednesday 11 July at 6.30pm, meet in the Club Car Park. Jon Wood, Course Manager, will be giving our members the opportunity to walk the course and ask questions during the preparation and prior to the McGregor Trophy, English Boys Under 16 Open Amateur Stroke Play Championship.

The Committee will be holding a meeting at the Boringdon Event if anyone is interested in getting more involved with the Section, or if any of you would like to stage an event then please contact me asap.

A big thank you to Farmura, Ransomes Jacobsen and Huxley Southwest for their help towards sponsoring the Minibuses and fuel for the member's trip to Harrogate this year. The Section really appreciates this level of support to encourage and enable our members to make the trip. It also gave the opportunity for some of our Duchy Students to experience Harrogate too.

If any of the members have any news or stories they would like to share with the rest of the membership then please do not hesitate to contact me on the number and email below.

George Pitts
07929 754401
gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com



South Wales

"I feel it in my fingers I feel it in my toes" the opening line to a famous WET, WET, WET song and my god have we been wet. Over 35mm in 12 hours in West Wales and over 5 inches in the month of April for the boys in East Wales. Forecasters have stated that it was the wettest April since records began! Who knows what we're going to get next?

Our Regional Spring Seminar,

in association with Farmura Environmental, was at The Royal Porthcawl GC. Nearly 50 delegates undertook educational seminars from John Philip MBE Links Superintendent Carnoustie Links, Richard Windows STRI, Johnathan Harmer MD Farmura Environmental, and Demie Moore of Aquatrols. Topics included the history of the golf ball and how course management has had to change to combat this. Water management the history of soil surfactants and where they are now with new technologies. We also had an update from Richard Windows on the STRI programmes and their data analysis.

A huge thank you must go out to Farmura Environmental for again supporting the event, Royal Porthcawl GC for hosting the event, all of the speakers for giving their time to come down and talk with us and lastly the greenkeepers, without your attendance to these events it is very difficult to organise and select speakers to come to talk to us so please keep coming back for years to come. Thanks all.

By The time most of us get to read this another Wales Open would have gone and passed I would just like to wish Jim and all his staff a very successful Handa Wales Open and maybe even a Welsh winner? All the best guys.

Our 2012 Fixtures: Spring Meeting, May 16, Greenmeadow GC, 1.30pm Tee Off. Rigby Taylor Qualifier, June 14, St Mellons GC, 1.00pm Tee Off. Tacit Golf Management, June 28, Newport GC, 10.00am Tee Off. Summer Meeting, July 11, Creigau GC, 1.00pm Tee Off. North v South, July 27, Aberdovey GC, 2.00pm Tee Off. Rigby Taylor Final, Sept 14, Glynneath GC 9.30am Tee Off.

Autumn AGM&Meeting, Oct 11, Clyne GC, 11.00am AGM starts. Winter Meeting, Dec 14, Southerndown GC, 10.00am Tee Off.

That's it from me; praying for some sunshine, who knows??

Regards,

Peter Holmstrom





Diary of Events

Details of your Section's forthcoming events in 2012 can be found here...

Date	Event	Venue	Contact
JUNE 2012			
June 11th	Rigby Taylor Qualifier South Wales Section	St Mellons Golf Club	Gareth Knight Tel mobile: 07595 988512
June 20th	South West Section Event	Cumberwell Park Golf Club	Adam Matthews email: adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk
June 20th	BIGGA Scottish National Tournament	Ratho Park Golf Club	Rachael Duffy Tel: 01347 833800 or email: rrachael@bigga.co.uk
June 21st	East Anglia Section Event	Haverhill Golf Club	Ian Willett email: info@thorpeness.co.uk
June 21st	South Coast Section v's Wessex Secretaries	Rushmore Golf Club	Alex McCombie email: southcoastsecretary@gmail.com
June 27th	Northern Section Event	Scarcroft Golf Club	Andrew Slingsby email: slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com
June 28th	Tacit Golf Management Trophy – South Wales Section	Newport Golf Club (Gwent)	Gareth Knight Tel mobile: 07595 988512
JULY 2012			
July 4th	Devon & Cornwall Section Event	Launceston Golf Club	George Pitts email: gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com
July 4th	North West Section Event	Stand Golf Club	Chris Sheehan email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk
July 11th	Summer Meeting – South Wales Section	Creigau Golf Club	Gareth Knight Tel mobile: 07595 988512
July 11th	North West Section Event	Ashley Cricket Club near Tatton Park	Chris Sheehan email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk
July 11th	Midland Section Event	Oxley Park Golf Club	Andrew Smith email: andysmithace@hotmail.co.uk
July 11th	South Coast Section Event	Blackmoor Golf Club	Alex McCombie email: southcoastsecretary@gmail.com
July 11th	Evening Course Walk – Devon & Cornwall Section	Trevose Golf & Country Club	George Pitts Tel Mobile: 07929 754401 or email: gpitts@yelvertongolf.co.uk
July 12th	Northern Section Event	Meltham Golf Club	Andrew Slingsby email: slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com
July 27th	North v South Match – South Wales Section	Aberdovey Golf Club	Gareth Knight Tel mobile: 07595 988512



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Sports Turf Update

A new column providing the latest news from STRI's Research Team

Soil organic matter ...friend or foe?

Welcome to STRI's Research column. My objective with this column is to highlight current research issues and to stimulate discussion on a wide variety of scientific topics relating to the management of the playing surfaces around the golf course.

I thought I'd open with an old chestnut, yet still a very current and problematic issue; soil organic matter accumulation in golf greens. This is still one of the top three issues commonly encountered when visiting golf courses and discussing the playing qualities of putting surfaces.

As a soil scientist, I can appreciate the importance of organic matter within the soil profile. It is a key component of a soil and plays a vital role in the recycling of nutrients. Organic matter provides an important habitat for a huge variety of the soil micro-flora and fauna. A large number of these little bugs and beasties are involved with breaking down the organic matter, thereby releasing nutrients that can be taken up by plants. As a result, organic matter plays a very important role in promoting a healthy soil and therefore a healthy growing environment.

However, from a putting surface performance point of view we know that organic matter tends to hold onto water and, if present in too great a concentration, can lead to soft and spongy greens. Conversely, when these same greens dry out they tend to become too firm and run the risk of becoming hydrophobic. Rehydrating dry organic matter can be very difficult indeed! Consequently, greens that contain excessive organic matter will tend to be less consistent through the year, particularly under changeable weather conditions. If this

wasn't bad enough, there is a correlation between greens with excessive organic matter content and incidence of turfgrass diseases.

Coming back to my title, is organic matter a friend or enemy? Well it looks like it can be a bit of both (a bit of a cop out I know!). We need to maintain a certain amount of organic matter to stimulate soil microorganisms and thereby maintain soil health. Where it is present in too great a concentration there can be significant detrimental impacts on the playability of putting surfaces.

How do we know where the optimum organic matter balance lies? Well, perhaps we need to visit how we measure it. The most common method employed by soil laboratories is to measure the total amount of organic material by loss on ignition. This may sound complicated but it is relatively straight forward. You take a known weight of dry soil, burn off the organic matter and the loss in weight gives you the proportion of your soil that was organic. These data, when measured at different depths down a soil profile, can provide a potent tool to establish not only if you have a problem, but also where it is located. If we can measure the amount of organic matter in golf greens, we can then evaluate how effective our maintenance programme is at controlling its decomposition or accumulation.

As is often the way with science, when you answer one question others pop up that challenge our current understanding. A lot of effort has been focussed on understanding how much organic matter is too much, but as we start to understand more about the relationship between organic matter and surface performance it is becoming clear that we need to know more about the nature of



organic matter itself. What are the key types of organic matter? Do they all behave in the same way and have similar effects? To give one example, it is becoming increasingly clear that there are differences in the composition of organic matter formed under different grass types and that these differences might directly affect the degree to which organic matter influences surface performance. We need a better scientific understanding of the characteristics of different types of organic matter (cellulose dominant, lignin dominant or well humified material). It is imperative that we have scientific evidence on how these different forms of organic matter directly and indirectly affect, not only surface performance, but also soil and turf health.

This is where I think we need to focus some of our research effort as an industry. If we can better understand the complex inter-relationships between the composition of organic matter, soil organisms and playing quality, we will be in a better position to evaluate the effectiveness of our golf green maintenance programmes. I hope this has provided a little food for thought.



Dr Christian Spring BSc (Hons),
PhD, Soil Scientist
STRI

Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director, with a monthly update



This month, David reviews the most recent GTC's "employer" focused workshops and how he witnessed how the Senior Managers within some golf clubs present, are clearly committed to ensuring the business is a success through a team effort

During 2011 the GTC introduced a pilot programme of three "Chairman of Green" workshops in England, aimed primarily at improving the relationship between the Chairman of Green and the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, by giving delegates an overview of the maintenance and management programmes, based on best practices that a club should be looking to implement.

Expertly delivered by Laurence Pithie MG, Turf Master One, the workshops certainly proved to me that the GTC had started to seriously address a problem which I am sure many clubs could learn from.

From the very first workshop it was evident that some clubs wanted their Chair of Green and/or Secretary and Course Manager to attend.

Whilst Laurence had prepared his workshop to be aimed at the "employer", he has, some 10 workshops later, expertly managed to tailor the day to ensure that it not only hugely benefits the employer but arguably also, the vitally important relationship between the employer and the Course Manager.

The workshop content is based on the highly acclaimed Scottish Golf Union's Practical Guide for Green Conveners, which can be downloaded from: http://www.scottishgolf.org/files/Green_Convener_2008.pdf

The GTC are planning more of these workshops with the Golf Union of Wales due to confirm two venues and England Golf has

fully committed to endorsing and promoting more events in the autumn.

The delegate feedback has been excellent from the workshops and this has encouraged the GTC to host more workshops, still an employer focus but introducing new subjects.

One important aspect of golf club and course management is ensuring the employer and Senior Managers have up to date information on Health & Safety legislation.

During May the GTC engaged two of its Quality Assured Training Providers to deliver a Health & Safety workshop at The Mere Golf & Spa Resort in Cheshire, with Jon Allbutt and Ian Sumpster, Toro's European Training Manager as the trainers.

Gwynn Davies, the host Course Manager and Cheshire Turf Machinery, the local Toro dealers, were in attendance and provided the facility and support to a very successful workshop.

More Health & Safety workshops are being planned also for the autumn.

Design and Renovation workshops have been delivered by Swan Golf Designs as part of the Continue to Learn programme during Harrogate Week, aimed at Course Managers and Deputies but again keeping on the employer focused "education" workshops, William and Howard Swan (SGD) in association with the GTC recently hosted a Design and Renovation workshop at Ripon City Golf Club.

Once again there were several excellent examples of employer - Course Manager "partnerships" in attendance.



There is a pattern taking shape at all of our workshops and that is more and more Chair of Green and/or Secretary/Proprietor together with their Course Manager/Head Greenkeepers.

It has been very rewarding to see clearly how Course Managers have truly benefitted from seeing their "employer" attend workshops. The workshops are all designed to improve the importance of understanding each other's roles and responsibilities in ensuring the golf course side of the business is run effectively and efficiently.

The GTC, following delegate feedback from its workshops, has also considered how best it can provide advice and guidance to golf clubs when the communication system appears to be not convivial to running a successful business.

A "communication triangle" workshop to be delivered by GTC Quality Assured Training Provider Frank Newberry, the professional management trainer has been developed to ensure the employer and senior managers are all working together and communicating effectively with their members/visitors/customers.

GTC Workshop dates and venues are all available on the GTC website or by contacting the GTC direct.



The GTC is funded by:



Contact Details

David Golding
GTC Education Director

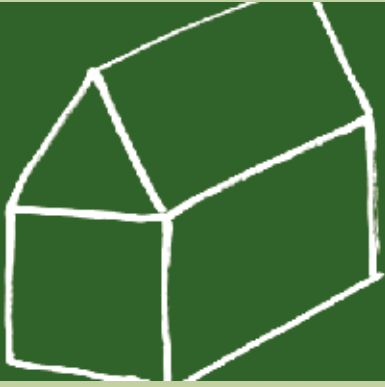
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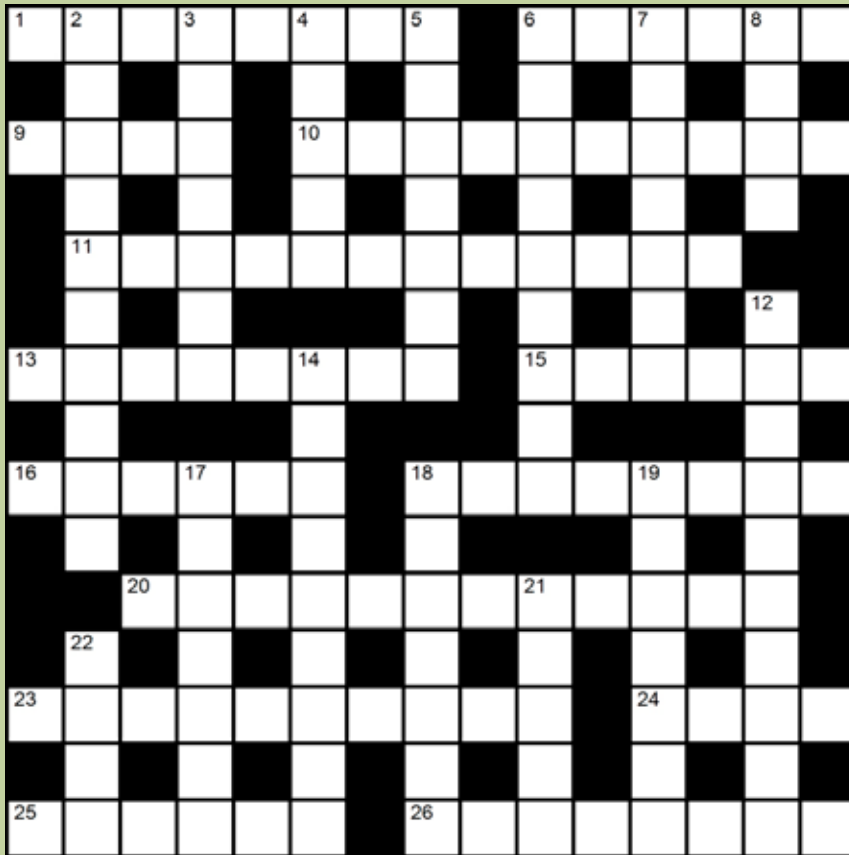
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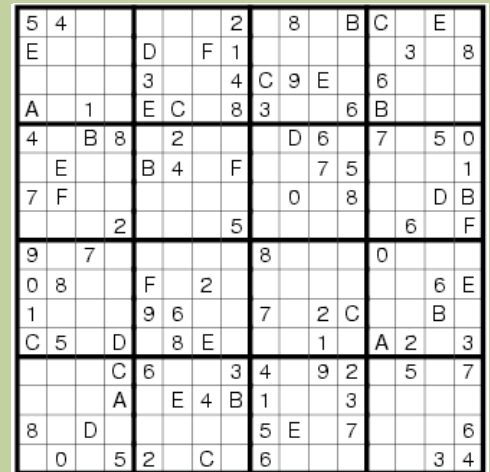
ACROSS

- 1 Servant employed to do various jobs (8)
- 6 Arrogant, resistant to persuasion (6)
- 9 Programming language used for typically small web-based applications (4)
- 10 Tragic king of Thebes, the subject of a drama by Sophocles (7,3)
- 11 1986 single by Peter Gabriel (12)
- 13 Form of dirt track motorcycle racing (8)
- 15 Crude and unsophisticated (6)
- 16 Constantly (6)
- 18/20 New Zealand comedy series starring Bret McKenzie and Jemaine Clement (6,2,3,9)
- 23 Small dog named after a region of Poland (10)
- 24 To leave out (4)
- 25 Run naked in public (6)
- 26 Island whose capital is Saint Peter Port (8)

DOWN

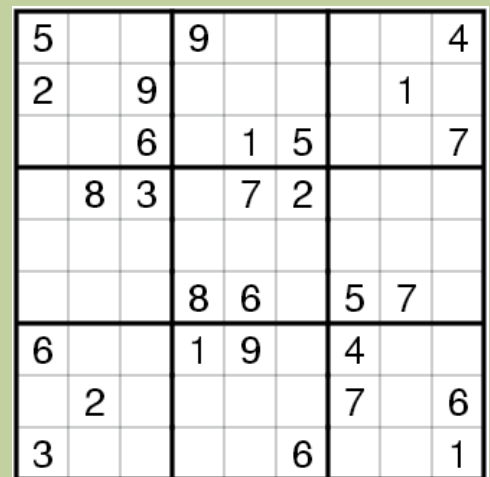
- 2 The thyroid cartilage of the larynx (5,5)
- 3 Swing used by circus acrobats (7)
- 4 Type of underwear, also a type of footwear (5)
- 5 Exploited, used to one's advantage (4,3)
- 6 Comedy series in which Frankie Howerd played the slave Lurcio (2,7)
- 7 French chemist who invented a food sterilisation process (7)
- 8 Irish band which launched the career of Van Morrison (4)
- 12 England's largest inland county (10)
- 14 Witty, often ironic, remark (9)
- 17 British group who reached #4 in 2005 with Wires (7)
- 18 The provision of finance (7)
- 19 Barb-pointed spear used for catching large fish or whales (7)
- 21 From this time (5)
- 22 Northern dialectical word meaning 'nothing' (4)

SUDOKO CHALLENGE



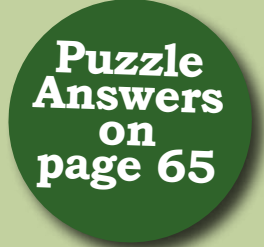
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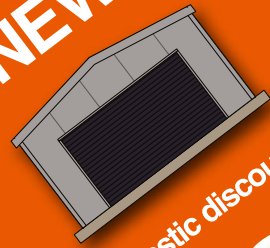
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Watering your “garden”

Graeme Francis, Sports Sales Manager, at Revaho UK, shares with us his stance over the recent Drought Order sweeping the country

“If you are hosting a national or international event you are exempt, however all other golf courses supplied by the water companies imposing the restrictions, are probably subject to the hose ban”

So here we are again. Water companies have put in place water use restrictions that include watering a “garden” using a hosepipe.

The “garden” in question includes, amongst others “an area of grass used for sports or recreation,” and the term hosepipe appears to cover a plethora of irrigation equipment that can include static and pop-up sprinklers. If you are hosting a national or international event you are exempt, however all other golf courses supplied by the water companies imposing the restrictions, are probably subject to the hose ban.

If your course is irrigated using water from the potable supply and is fed into a storage tank you cannot irrigate. And at the moment there seems little chance that this will change during the 2012 golf course irrigation season.

Already we have seen the finger pointing at the golf industry as an excessive user of water and some of the comments made about turf not needing to be watered after 28 days and recommendations to give the course a good soak while you can, demonstrate a lack of understanding by outside bodies of the role of irrigation in the long term management of golf courses.

You might be reading this and thinking that because you have a licence to abstract from a borehole or lake you could be unaffected by water shortage. Well maybe, however, at some point, restric-

tions could be placed on using any water for golf course management. Many abstraction licences contain a Hands off Flow condition which can be invoked to reduce or stop water being taken and the Environment Agency can use The Water Resources Act 1991 to restrict abstraction if required.

The use of automatic irrigation systems on golf courses in the UK goes back to the late 1960’s and for many years the turfgrass irrigation industry worked hard to raise design and installation standards by offering training courses focusing on new system provision.

This was extremely successful and many of the industry’s key personnel benefited from the training. Since that time automatic irrigation has become considered an essential management tool by Course Managers.

So is enough being done today to provide greenkeepers with the knowledge they need to use their systems to the optimum?

There are still some excellent courses being run by respected industry figures for course management personnel, however how many really understand the water use implications of poor uniformity of distribution of water, poor sprinkler spacing or worn nozzles?

Has enough been done to train course managers how to use controllers to schedule golf irrigation taking into consideration such factors as plant available water, manageable depletion and calculation

of run time multipliers? I suggest the answer to these questions is no.

Golf is, and unfortunately will continue to be, a soft target and seen as a demon when it comes to water use.

We know it’s unjustified, however perhaps we need to look at how we can demonstrate our water resource management, both for political and practical reasons. Being able to show the processes that course managers undertake to use water efficiency will bring public relations benefits.

It will also be important when discussing or negotiating with water providers whilst attempting to secure the quantities of water required to maintain the course to appropriate standards. A reasoned argument based on applied water management records and proof of having carried out other analytical water use assessments such as an irrigation audit will create a much stronger position when explaining water needs.

The water restrictions of 2012 are another wake-up call for the golf industry. There’s no doubt that the constraints placed on golf in relation to water availability will increase.

Now is the time to ensure every Course Manager and Head Greenkeeper has all the knowledge he or she needs to ensure both that they can get the water that’s required and also can optimise its use. Compliment the art of greenkeeping with the science of water management.



Recruitment



Mytime Golf - Orpington Golf Course Head Greenkeeper



£30,000 - 35,000 per annum, plus benefits, 40 plus hours a week including weekends

Orpington Golf Centre is one of the largest golf facilities in England. The centre encompasses two 18 hole golf courses - Ruxley Park & Cray Valley and a par 32 9-hole course. It also has an 8 hole academy course along with a 28 bay driving range.

Your main responsibilities will include:

- To act as support on all grounds maintenance issues for Mytime Golf working with the General Manager in the development of the estate
- To assist all grounds maintenance staff employed by Mytime Golf in their professional development and training
- To support the grounds maintenance team in all project and construction work and other works as required
- To assist the grounds maintenance team in all aspects of health & safety
- To source new equipment as required, maintain an effective equipment inventory and oversee the maintenance of all equipment
- To oversee the greenkeeping budget, assisting with the setting of budgets, sourcing quotations, placing orders and maintaining records

For further information or to apply please contact Richard Woolley, Orpington Golf Centre, Cray Ruxley, Sandy Lane, Orpington, Kent, BR5 3HY;

Tel: 01689 839 677; E-mail: richard.woolley@mytimegolf.co.uk

CLOSING DATE: 17 June 2012



Lecturer in Greenkeeping & Golf Course Management

Permanent, Full Time

£22,643 - £33,548 per annum

At Elmwood College we have more than 40 years' experience in delivering Golf and Greenkeeping Education. The College has state of the art training facilities, including an 18-hole golf course and practice facilities. Many of our former students are employed on prestigious golf courses across the world. A vacancy exists for a full time lecturer to assist in the development and delivery of Greenkeeping and Golf Course Management courses.

Applicants will demonstrate a sound knowledge of current Greenkeeping and Course Management curriculum and be in possession of industry related qualifications. A teaching qualification would be preferable as well as considerable current experience in the industry.

For further details and an application form, please contact 01334 658823 or visit the College website: www.elmwood.ac.uk

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is Friday 15 June 2012

'Board of Management of Elmwood College is a Scottish Charity, Charity No. SC021190'



Whitley Bay Golf Course Course Manager

Whitley Bay Golf Club is a private members club founded in 1890. Situated 2 miles North of the seaside town, it enjoys what many believe to be one of the best tests of golf in the North East.

Further information on www.whitleybaygolfclub.co.uk

Due to the retirement of our current Head Greenkeeper on 31st December 2012, applications are invited for the post of Course Manager from suitably qualified and highly motivated candidates who will:

- Be responsible for all aspects of Course Management
- Continue and enhance the current development programme
- Hold relevant industry qualifications
- Possess knowledge of modern machinery and maintenance
- Possess knowledge and ability in Health and Safety Legislation
- Be computer literate with the ability to provide written reports to the Club Committee on budget formulation and management
- Be able to demonstrate leadership and staff management
- Have a proven track record of a high standard of course presentation

Letter of application with CV should be made by post or email before 2nd July to:-

Mr F Elliott, Secretary/Manager,
Whitley Bay Golf Club, Claremont Road,
Whitley Bay, NE26 3UF

Or email whtglfclb@aol.com

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
KIRSTIN BLACK

ON 01347 833 832
OR EMAIL jill@bigga.co.uk

Greenkeeper Required for Private Golf Estate in France

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5 years relevant experience required

Working French beneficial

Attractive Salary and Benefits package
available to successful candidate

Applications should be sent to:

ohc@orange.fr

no later than 30 June 2012



in the shed answers

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MONSTER SUDOKU

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Monster Daily SuDoku: Mon 28-May-2012 medium

SQUIGGLY SUDOKU

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Daily SuDoku: Mon 28-May-2012 very hard

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Chairman's Word

Returning to the back page of GI, BIGGA National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, shares his thoughts

Happy days are back again

Some welcome relief has come for many regarding hosepipe bans with exemptions being made in several areas.

Thanks to everyone who contacted HQ to share their concerns and provide useful information to help us address the water issue. We are continuing to work on this, as it is not something that is going to go away. Access to this vital resource will ultimately be a significant issue for all of us.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, many in the North have seen some long awaited glorious sunshine and with it increased soil temperatures meaning we finally get some good growth and the ability to bring the greens on. Happy days!

In the last few years I have watched with some interest the developments in some regions, where "consultants" have advised golf clubs that they can replace the need for a full time Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper. I've resisted the natural urge as a Course Manager to simply decry and criticise this development, but now wish to share some views and observations that I feel are relevant.

The golf course in most instances is the most valuable asset a club has. It is usually the most influential factor in attracting and retaining membership and visitor income to that facility. There are some exceptions, but generally speaking the condition of the course, specifically the main playing areas; greens, fairways, tees, bunkers, all feature highly in the golfers mind when they evaluate their experience, how much they enjoy the game and decide where they will play again.

Most clubs employ or engage a team of people to manage the day-to-day business and to best satisfy the needs of the members and visitors. The Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, the Golf Professional, the Secretary/Manager, and Food and Beverage Managers all apply particular skills and knowledge to their areas.

The members are represented in most instances by their committees and appropriate sub-committees who seek to create the policies, strategies and general direction the club will take to best satisfy their membership.

We have all witnessed the increased expectations and standards required by golfers whilst the rise in the number of golf courses and the difficult economic climate have resulted in increased competition for custom. As clubs have struggled to create the necessary income to sustain these increased standards they have started to look closely at how they can cut costs. This has led many to consider the role of the "consultant" versus, as opposed to alongside, the dedicated Course Manager. They desire to emulate the success of those thriving golf businesses that are successfully drawing numbers and presenting excellent golfing experiences. Perhaps they should look more closely at how and by whom these facilities are managed.

It seems contradictory to me that the

product that attracts sufficient business to financially sustain the business. They have access to Group Managers, employed for their expertise, and use consultants appropriately. Yet they recognise the need to have dedicated Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers to ensure that their asset is professionally managed. They recognise the benefit an educated, professionally trained person brings to that operation in ensuring they present that asset to its full potential, making the best use of all the resources available.

They benefit hugely from sharing knowledge, skills, and resources across their facilities, and perhaps this is the area clubs should be considering when looking to become more effective, get better return on their investment, and manage their costs.

BIGGA is working hard to ensure you have the very best support, resources, education and training, and to enable you to share your achievements and difficulties with one another

ability to present the main asset at its very best should be an area that clubs consider compromising on. A "consultant" can be very useful in providing impartial and expert advice, helping to benchmark and objectively agreeing actions to maintain and improve standards at a facility. But with the best will in the world, they cannot be on site, with a close eye on the ball every day. They cannot take personal responsibility, understand the many nuances of that particular site, motivate staff and deal with matters that arise every day. Neither can they continually observe conditions as they evolve and take the most prompt and effective actions to achieve the best results.

Consider then the large commercial groups who own and manage many courses. They are very focussed on maximising income and minimising cost to satisfy the desires of their owners or shareholders to make a return on their investments. They must provide a

BIGGA is working hard to ensure that Greenkeepers have at their disposal the very best support, resources, education and training and to provide opportunities to share with one another their successful achievements and their difficulties. All this is of great benefit to golf clubs and ultimately the golfer. We receive and welcome the support of the other golfing bodies and they also recognise the significant role the Greenkeepers play in presenting the courses on which this great game is played.

I'd ask all golf clubs to consider very carefully how they can achieve their main asset's full potential and in doing so give themselves the best chance of being successful.

Remember if you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact me.

My best regards, Andrew Mellon
Chairman 2012
07780 995602,
amellon@elmwood.ac.uk

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