

# FUTURE TURF MANAGERS - DELEGATES ANNOUNCED

The successful applicants for the inaugural Jacobsen Future Turf Managers' Initiative have been announced by BIGGA.

Twenty greenkeepers from across the UK are now looking forward to an intensive two days of seminars and workshops covering a range of subjects designed to equip them for success in their future careers. These include in-depth courses on communications, budgeting, organisational politics, CV writing and interview techniques plus breakout sessions looking at other key subjects.

BIGGA and Jacobsen faced a tough decision selecting 20 names from all the candidates who completed an application form designed to find out more about them and their aspirations. They are



now preparing to head to Jacobsen's Ipswich headquarters for two days in April for the sessions which complement BIGGA's Assistants Development Programme that Jacobsen kindly agrees to sponsor.

One of the successful candidates was James Bledge (shown inset), Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Kent.

He said: "I was delighted when I found out I'd got a place. I always try and further my education as much as possible, whether that be at BTME or at other BIGGA events, and these sessions cover exactly the sort of areas I'm looking to increase my knowledge in.

"I've got a plan to hopefully make the next step in my career in two or three years, and modules such as budgeting and CV writing will really help me so I'm looking forward to it."

Lorna Sheldon (below right) and David Bancroft-Turner – who gave hugely successful presentations at the Turf

Managers' Conference at BTME – will be again passing on their extensive knowledge of professional communication techniques and dealing with golf club politics respectively.

Delegates will also be given budget guidance by Lee Strutt MG - Course Manager at gWest – plus advice on further educational opportunities within BIGGA.

BIGGA's Learning & Development Executive (Technical) Stuart Green added: "There has been an excellent response to the initiative, with 45 applications received. This made the process of selection all the more difficult as we felt that all the applicants would have benefited. However, this is not the end of the journey for the successful applicants but the beginning of the next phase in their future turf manager careers."

Many thanks to all who applied, and look out for coverage of the event in next month's Greenkeeper International. For the full list of successful candidates please turn to page 14.



## NEIL BAKER APPOINTED COURSE MANAGER AT LITTLE ASTON

Neil Baker has been appointed the new Course Manager at Little Aston Golf Club in Staffordshire.

He's been Course Manager at Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey for the last seven years and takes up his new post after

working to bring Tandridge back to its original Harry Colt design roots.

He said: "My new position fulfils a career goal, and my main aim now is to help the club further enhance a very special golfing environment.

With its history and private feel I couldn't turn down the chance to join this esteemed venue."

A spokesman for the Club said: "We were very impressed with the professionalism of all the Course Managers we

interviewed, however Neil was the clear choice.

"We are sure he will lead the greenkeeping team so that we continue to have an outstanding golf course enjoyed by members and visitors alike."

## KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES AT WOODSIDE



David Jones has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Woodside Golf Club in Cheshire – after a

chance encounter in the Club's Pro Shop.

Three handicapper David, who previously worked at Vale Royal Abbey Golf Club, turned up at nearby Woodside for a round, and ended up chatting to some of the family who own the course.

He then found out they were on the lookout for an Assistant Course Manager so he sent in an application. David takes up the story:

"I was keen to make the next step up in my career and make my own mark somewhere. I was chatting to them and thought I'd send in my CV for the Assistant's role, but unbeknown to me the Head Greenkeeper had actually left so they interviewed me for that position.

"I was really pleased when they offered me my first Head Greenkeeper role here and it just goes to show where a conversation can lead you."

The pay and play in Cranage offers a 5900 yard par 69 course, as well as a short par three course and driving range, and employs just two other greenkeepers as well as David.

He added: "I've been so busy I haven't had a lunch break all my first week! There's a lot to do, mainly presentation issues, and the par three course has been neglected so that needs an overhaul.

"There are only three of us, we've obviously got limited kit and a limited budget but I'm determined to really make an impression here."

Everyone at BIGGA wishes David all the best in his new role.

# FULL HOUSE AT BIGGA SCOTTISH CONFERENCE



## BIGGA's Scottish Regional Administrator John Young reports from a packed Scottish Regional Conference

Was it good planning or good luck? Neither, it was the quality of the speakers that drew a fantastic 210 delegates to the Scottish Conference on 5 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

Iain MacLeod, Conference Chair, welcomed delegates by promising an excellent array of speakers and providing details of the format for the day. He then introduced the first speaker, Ronnie Malcolm, who presented 'The Role of the Modern Head Greenkeeper', concentrating on the methods of management available to course managers and head greenkeepers to cope with current work pressures.

Grant Frogley from The Roxburgh Hotel and Golf Club then told his story 'Taking the Next Step', the journey he has taken over the last 12 months from being in a Deputy's position to that of Course Manager.

Our final speaker of the morning was Chris Haspell, Head Greenkeeper at Castle Stuart Golf Links. The audience were enthralled as they listened to the landslide problems experienced during the 2011 Scottish Open and the fantastic effort of the greenkeepers to get the course

available for play on the final day - then to hear of the great success that was 2012.

After lunch Andy O'Hara, Scottish Regional Chairman, stated his ambition of improving education opportunities for all and to make BIGGA a must join association. He then presented the Harry Diamond Award to the Scottish Student of the Year, Chris Watson.

The afternoon session provided technical presentations for the audience. Firstly Bill Lawlor from the Xact Group hosted a Q&A session on the importance of Health and Safety for greenkeepers.

This was followed by Dr Christian Spring from the STRI presenting an excellent seminar on 'Earthworm Control and Developments in Turfgrass Pesticides'.

Next up was John Bambury, Links Superintendent at Trump International Golf Links in Aberdeenshire. It was a very detailed presentation on the creation of the championship course and his team.

John also provided insight into the workings of the Trump Empire and how he enjoys being part of this organisation. One highlight was when John

explained the requirement to 'strim' 35 acres of rough each fortnight - which drew an audible gasp from the audience.

Andy O'Hara closed proceedings by thanking our speakers and indeed the delegates for making the day extremely successful.

A special thanks was extended to Peter Boyd, former RA for Scotland for interrupting his retirement to provide support throughout the day.

Elsbeth Coutts from Greens Progress said: "I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and I felt that all presentations flowed together very nicely". Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust, added:

"I haven't been to all the conferences over the past five years but I thought this was one of the best I've attended.

"There was a great variety of seminars and presentations - something for everyone".

Looking forward to 2014, an exceptional line-up is already being put together for the conference on Tuesday 4 March with Steve Chappell of Gleneagles booked to provide a presentation on the run up to the 2014 Ryder Cup. I look forward to seeing you there.



## SOUTH EAST GOLF DAY

Play unfortunately had to be abandoned due to incessant rain on the Old Course at Walton Heath – but the terrible weather did not dampen spirits at the South East Golf Day.

Despite the great efforts and hard work by Alan Strachan and his team to prepare the Old Course, heavy overnight rain followed by more rain during the day forced members and guests off the course. They took refuge from the elements and enjoyed the refreshments kindly provided by Johnny Beck and James Watson of Sherriff Amenity at the 11th hole.

Competitors were able to enjoy the warm hospitality of the Clubhouse before over a hundred sat down to an early meal in the Holderness Dining Room. Chairman Tom Smith introduced BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton who thanked the Club for, as always, making us so welcome on the day before proposing the toast to Walton Heath Golf Club and their guests. This was followed by Captain Michael Vaines who welcomed everyone to the club.

This year's guest speaker John Paramor, Chief Referee of the European Tour then entertained us with some fascinating and humorous stories experienced during his duties around the world.

The South East Region of BIGGA is most grateful to the following companies for their very generous sponsorship and help with this event: Avoncrop Amenity Products, Blade Amenity, BSM Golf, CMW, Ernest Doe Power, Everris, Golf Mats UK, Grass Roots/Dryject UK, JSM, P Tuckwell Ltd, Rigby Taylor, Sherriff Amenity and Speedcut Contractors Ltd.

Clive Osgood

# BTME TO BE EVEN BIGGA FOR 2014

Following the success of last year's show BIGGA are gearing up for a huge BTME 2014, as it returns to a four hall exhibition with the world's major machinery manufacturers preparing to head to Harrogate.

The Harrogate International Centre is sure to be bustling next January with the likes of John Deere, Toro and Ransomes Jacobsen joining Kubota, RECO and New Holland at BTME 2014.

Many of last year's happy exhibitors are also returning with many increasing their stand space. After a surge of early bookings over 85% of stands are already reserved with eager companies determined to showcase their latest products. BIGGA are pleased to welcome a whole host of returning exhibitors including Baroness Mowers, Campsey Turf Care Systems, Syngenta, Everris plus dozens more.

Jim Croxton, CEO of BIGGA, said: "We're delighted that the exhibition will once again feature four halls. This will allow us to both increase the number of exhibitors and attract even more visitors from all corners of the turf management industry.

"I'm particularly encouraged by the number of exhibitors who have already rebooked after last year's show. Many have also increased their stand space which is a reflection of how they see BTME as the place to meet potential customers and do business."

Discussing the success of BTME 2013,

Croxton continued: "This will be BTME's 25th year and it's becoming increasingly popular. The feedback we've received from exhibitors, buyers and guests has been extremely positive and we anticipate that returning to four halls next year will extend its appeal even further. It's a very exciting time for everybody involved."

Europe's leading turf care exhibition – which next year begins on Tuesday 21 January at the Harrogate International Centre – showcases market leaders from all sectors of the turf industry, including artificial grass, course furniture, drainage, fertilisers and top of the range machinery, to name just a few of the highlights.

BTME 2014 will also boast a terrific educational programme, with the extremely popular Turf Managers' Conference again returning to the week when the industry converges on Harrogate. There will also be more workshops and seminars through the superb 'Continue to Learn' programme with a terrific range of knowledgeable and passionate presenters – keep an eye out for the confirmed speakers over the coming months.

BIGGA is urging anyone looking to reserve a stand to call now to avoid disappointment. There is still limited space remaining and places are being taken quickly. For your opportunity to exhibit at next year's BTME, contact Jill Rodham or Matt Wignall on 01347 833812 or 01347 833 832.

## ROGUE TRADERS CASH IN ON CHALARA CONFUSION

Reports from South East England suggest unscrupulous operators masquerading as professional arborists and tree surgeons are scaring landowners into felling perfectly safe and healthy common ash trees. They are preying on already considerable fears generated by the national media storm over chalara ash dieback at the end of last year. Kent Trading Standards is the latest to warn on this development.

The national media storm appears to have abated for now, but some landowners with ash trees on their properties clearly do not require much persuasion to err on the side of caution as they see it.

Current information from DEFRA says no-one will be forced to destroy ash trees unless they are young trees which are part of a recently planted site identified with chalara ash dieback disease. In these situations the Forestry Commission or another branch of the UK plant health authority will issue a Plant Health Notice. This effectively means that all mature ash trees could (for the moment) be spared. However, this does not take into account any developing issues with public safety which landowners (tree owners) are clearly responsible for.

Such a threat to perfectly healthy fully grown ash trees

from 'cowboy' operators shows the urgent need for FC and FERA to introduce the microinjection of systemic fungicide as a means of ash tree protection, so at least landowners have the option of protecting trees rather than pre-emptively felling them.

Finding a solution should not prove too difficult. North Americans have to deal with a potentially lethal disease of oak trees called oak wilt caused by a close relative of Chalara fraxinea (chalara ash dieback). Oak wilt is caused by a fungus called Chalara quercina. Oak trees in North America have been successfully protected (and in some cases cured) of oak wilt disease by injection of the systemic fungicide propiconazole, a member of the azole (sub group triazole) fungicides, and by mode of action described as a Steroid Demethylation (ergosterol biosynthesis) Inhibitor (DMI). The fungicide is injected into the tree trunk by operators working at ground level and is subsequently transported to all aerial parts of the tree in the xylem (water conducting tissue). There are other different triazole fungicides including tebuconazole which are used in a similar way to protect against and control oak wilt disease.

*Dr Terry Mabbett*



## BLOGGING WITH ROYAL APPROVAL

This month's featured blog is from Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Kent, which will host the 2013 Amateur Championship and is one of four venues selected for Final Open Qualifying from 2014 to 2018. The blog was started by Assistant Links superintendent James Bledge shortly after joining the Club last October. It's crammed with information and high quality pictures documenting the greenkeeping team's work including rough management, tee platform renovation, bunker revetting and all manner of winter work taking place on the course.

The Club has already seen several clear benefits from writing the blog. James says: "Take the overseeding for example, we spent a good sum of money hiring an expensive machine to do a specific task. Many golfers were asking what we were doing and why we were doing it. They were able to view the blog and get the information they required. Weeks later we were able to post a picture of the results and we are confident that a good part of the membership now understand why we do what we do."

Links Superintendent Chris Barnard added: "I think the blog was a great idea from James, it's a very useful tool for keeping members informed about current projects on the course. It helps to answer many questions before they're asked giving us more time out on the course to get through this year's very busy winter programme.

"Our members are interested in the work we do and are proud of the course. We wanted to document and share with everyone exactly what we've been doing throughout the winter ahead of what will be a very busy season. James posted a link on the BIGGA bulletin board to see if anyone else was blogging. There were loads of positive replies and it seems a few courses have started blogs as a result. The Cruden Bay and Carnoustie blogs are particularly interesting as well as a few others. Some other blogs have inspired us to possibly try adding extras like video footage. Perhaps our blog inspires other courses to start!

"We're hosting the British Amateur Championship this year and the green staff are doing a lot of work ahead of it. 2013 will be a very exciting time for everyone at Royal Cinque Ports."

Contact Steve Castle at [steve.castle@bigga.co.uk](mailto:steve.castle@bigga.co.uk) if you think your blog deserves to be featured in GI.

Ransomes Jacobsen's three-hole golf course, located at their European headquarters on the outskirts of Ipswich, has been re-certified by the Golf Environment Organization (GEO).

With this latest accolade, the RJ National becomes the first golf course in the UK to be awarded GEO Certified™ status for excellence in environmental performance for a second time.

Following his recent assessment visit, Keith Duff, an independent verifier accredited by GEO said:

"The creation of this small golf course, built and managed to good sustainability standards, has hugely improved the environmental quality of the area. What was once covered in cement and scrub, as part of an industrial park, is now an ecological asset.

"Good areas of semi-natural habitat have been created and are developing well, and there are plans for further biodiversity initiatives.

"Record keeping is exemplary, regulatory compliance is unblemished, and there are very high quality innovative communications, including newsletters and video blogs, to show others how the work is being done and what the benefits are.

"The quality of the playing surfaces is also very high, demonstrating well how playing quality and sustainable management can go hand in hand. I have no hesitation in



# RJ NATIONAL THREE-HOLE COURSE BREAKS NEW GROUND

recommending that this course should be re-certified."

The unique three-hole golf course was the brainchild of David Withers, then managing director at Ransomes Jacobsen and now president of parent company, Jacobsen.

"With the support of some of our industry partners, our parent company Textron, and a tremendous team effort by everyone at Ipswich - spearheaded by Matt Le Brun, our former greenkeeper, the RJ National has been a great success on many levels," he said. "The course is a great asset for testing machinery, showcasing the products we manufacture and is a

facility to demonstrate our environmental leadership to distributors and customers. Hopefully our example serves as an inspiration - showing that creating and maintaining a sustainable golf course can be good for golf and good for business."

GEO's Chief executive Jonathan Smith concluded by saying:

"We are delighted that the RJ National has been re-certified, representing as it does, sustainability throughout their golf environment through a continued commitment to protect and enhance nature, while using resources efficiently and carefully.

"The reduction of waste and other pollutants benefits the surrounding community. Re-certification is a vital point of credibility for all ecolabelling, affirming the important 'continued improvement' principle that makes sustainability a mindset and a journey, rather than a static level to achieve. We are delighted to note all the new activities undertaken in the last three years.

"This also demonstrates that GEO Certified™ can celebrate the achievements of all types of courses, from RJ National's innovative short course to high-profile, internationally recognised facilities."

## GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who took the time to take the Greenkeeper International survey which was emailed to members. It's vital that the magazine continues to evolve and improve to be another real benefit of BIGGA membership, and the survey has thrown up a range of suggestions, ideas and opinions.

We're still going through your feedback and you will start to notice some changes resulting from this in future editions. There was also some particularly useful constructive criticism and observations which we've taken on board.

To take the survey, follow the link from our news pages or visit the education and training forum on the bulletin boards.

It will only take five minutes of your time, and we'll publish some of the results in next month's issue.

