

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.