



BILLY MCMILLAN LAUNCHES COURSE CONSULTANCY

Former BIGGA National Chairman Billy McMillan has formed an independent golf course management consultancy, with services ranging from project management, staff training and development, and locum greenkeeping support.

With over 38 years' experience in the golf industry, he is offering help and support to any club that has ambitions to fully realise its potential in a competitive market.

Having spent many years at the forefront of greenkeeping and having also run golf clubs as a General Manager, Billy aims to bring a balance to the aspirations of Course Managers and clubs, helping to make a difference out on the golf course.

"I'm bringing something different to the table", Billy explains. "Looking at the club from both perspectives, I'm adept to change and meeting the demands of members, guests and visitors."

"Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes, constructive

feedback, and delivering practical solutions to overcome issues can make a huge difference.

"I hope to help clubs achieve a quality product tailored to most levels of available budget."

Having worked at many fine clubs, Billy has an extensive knowledge of many different course types, from clay-based to sandy heathland and everything in between, each coming with their own and sometimes very demanding issues.

He can evaluate current golf course condition and work alongside the club's greenkeeping team to help with planning for future success.

Billy is keen to take a hands-on approach and never shies away from getting involved at the grass roots to help others develop their personal skills.

Billy McMillan Associates Limited can be contacted on 07774 632747 or by email at contact@billymcmillanassociates.co.uk.



NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RETURNS

This year's BIGGA National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota will be held at the superb Frilford Heath Golf Club on October 7-8, with a fantastic first prize of £500 worth of vouchers.

The two-day event will be held on the Red course, a classic heathland test. This was designed by five-times Open Champion JH Taylor, and hosts European Tour final qualifying the week before our visit. It's an authentic challenge at 6,912 yards, with fast and true greens and fairways that demand accurate drives. The stretch between holes five and nine is particularly notable, featuring a memorable par three hitting over a pond.

We've also cut the entry fee to just £90 which includes a round of golf on each day, plus lunch on both days and dinner on the Monday evening. Please note there is no accommodation provided.

To enter please fill in the application form on page 24 of this magazine, or email your details to rachael@bigga.co.uk - ensure you receive confirmation of entry by return email.

COURSE WORK STARTS AT CHERKLEY COURT

A historic site near Leatherhead has been given the go-ahead for an exclusive golf course. Plans for a golf course, luxury hotel and spa were held up by campaigners

who are objecting to the development. But after a hearing at the High Court last week a judge permitted the removal of topsoil and other works to begin.

The par 71, 7000 yard course has been designed by David McLay Kidd, creator of Queenwood, The Castle Course at St. Andrews and Machrihanish Dunes.

HISTORIC CHANGE AT BRORA



Head Greenkeeper James Macbeath (second left) watches course record holder Jim Miller tee off at the 11th with Jim Casey from Clyneish Distillery and Club President Alistair Risk

A Head Greenkeeper's desire to modernise a historic course has led to a significant and historic change of yardage at Brora Golf Club.

James MacBeath, Head Greenkeeper at the club – which is situated some 50 miles north of Inverness - recognised that the back nine was more difficult than the front nine so recommended it be extended by 50 yards, to ensure it became a par five.

James said: "I play off quite a low handicap and I found that in the prevailing wind, the back nine and front nine were not balanced. Also, there are not many par 69s around these days. We get many American visitors who are looking for a par 70, so I really felt it was time to modernise.

"I brought my idea to our greens committee and it all went from there. Inevitably there were some objections at first, particularly as there have been very few changes since the course was laid out in 1924, but when it eventually went to a vote the members were in favour."

Over the winter James and his team worked to build the new tee on the James Braid designed course, and also extended the fairways to allow for the extra yardage.

To mark the occasion the club and Clynelish Distillery, the sponsor of the 11th hole, invited course record holder Jim Miller to hit the first drive from the new tee.



Chris Thomas, Mike Mayer, Alex Matthews, Craig Campbell

100-HOLE CHARITY CHALLENGE

BIGGA member Craig Campbell is joining forces with four pals this month to attempt the incredible charity challenge of playing 100 holes in a single day.

Former Celtic Manor greenkeeper Craig will head to Ridgeway Golf Club in Caerphilly on 21 June with club members Chris Thomas, Mike Mayer and Alex Matthews, and have worked out they have around 16 hours of daylight to succeed – all in aid of Cancer Research Wales.

Craig is now a groundsman at Cardiff's magnificent Millennium Stadium, but golf is very much in his blood.

He worked at several clubs including South Winchester and Stratford Oaks before

moving on to Celtic Manor. He has retained his BIGGA membership as he explains: "Everyone can benefit from what other turf guys are doing. The Millennium Stadium provides a unique working environment, which means we are always looking for ways to improve and take on board ideas from all areas of turf management.

"Regarding the challenge, if we can go round in 998 minutes and play to our handicaps for the whole day this would equate to a shot every 34 seconds!

"We're looking forward to raising significant funds for Cancer Research Wales."

Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/RidgewayGolf2013-100HoleChallenge

Aerial spraying against OPM first forecast in April's GI got underway in early May. Within hours it was headline news in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. Micron Sprayers confirmed aerial application would be carried out by a Robinson Helicopter equipped with Micronair AU 7000 atomisers.

The target is the 10-hectare Herridges and Broom Copses near Pangbourne (West Berkshire) to be sprayed twice with *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki*. Stewart Snape at Forestry Commission (FC) said "We know there could be OPM in the woodland environment because we found a nest last year."

Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive of the charity 'Butterfly Conservation' said: "Blanket aerial spraying of a designated wildlife site sets a very bad precedent and is an extremely crude control mechanism – the approach is akin to using a 'sledgehammer to crack a nut'. We believe a far better method would be to conduct a detailed survey of the conspicuous nests and spray them individually as they have done in other areas."

The charity is concerned for rare butterflies in this woodland including silver washed fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*) and white admiral (*Limenitis camilla*), as well as the purple emperor

AERIAL SPRAYING ...ON TIME (IF NOT ON TARGET)



(*Apatura iris*) known to be on sites nearby.

Early May featured strong winds and falling temperatures slowing oak re-foliation even more. Calm conditions for accurate deposition of droplets are required. And 40-60 per cent leaf expansion, to ensure sufficiently good leaf coverage and a lethal dose of Bt insecticide through larval ingestion.

Wind turbulence and insufficient tree canopy cover increase chances of droplets landing on non-target plants. Dog violet and honeysuckle both common woodland and hedgerow plants are the food plants of silver washed fritillary and white admiral, respectively.

Pangbourne appears a strange choice of place to begin aerial bombardment with insecticide. After three years of ground spraying only three nests were found last year.

One surprised observer told Greenkeeper International: "If FC wanted maximum impact against OPM they could have closed down Richmond Park for a day to treat the area's high OPM infestation."

This would clearly assist sites nearby. OPM has been successfully controlled on Richmond Golf Course (GI January 2012) but threats from female moths flying in to lay their eggs remain.

Dr Terry Mabbett

FAREWELL JANE JONES

Jane Jones, who left her position as Regional Administrator for the South West & Wales on 31 May, was presented with a series of gifts by everyone at BIGGA House to thank her for eight and a half years of sterling service. She's intending to remain in the golf and greenkeeping industry. Everyone wishes her well and hopefully she will continue to attend events within the industry and keep in touch with many of the members, particularly in her Region.



TORO/LELY MATCH

B,B&O triumphed 4-1 over Kent in the annual Toro/Lely Home Counties Football Final at Upton Park, home of West Ham United.

Kent Section secretary and part-time goalkeeper (!) Rob Holland reports: "It was truly a game of two halves. B,B&O scored four quick fire goals between the 12th and 20th minutes despite the heroic actions of the cat-like keeper.

"We scored a penalty in the second half and relentlessly pressed to narrow the scoreline. Unfortunately time ran out. Well done to Ben Adams, Russ Bain and Adam White who were superb in Kent's rearguard.

"Many thanks to B,B&O for a great game played in a very friendly spirit. Thanks especially to Larry Pearman and Toro/Lely for sponsoring - your generosity was very much appreciated. Thanks too to West Ham and particularly Head Groundsman Shane O'Brien for the quality of the pitch. Finally thanks to Kev Morris for arranging everything from organising the players, transport, sideline heckling, post match speeches and evening beverages back at Redlibbits. Thanks for the great company and another amazing day guys."

Ali Barrett with the drone



ST ANNES OLD LINKS SOARS THANKS TO DRONE

For most Golf Clubs, like most businesses, marketing has become a key component of success and longevity. So when the St Annes Old Links (SAOL) Course Manager, the Professional and a club member chatted over a beer at the Club prizegiving, none of them thought that marketing and greenkeeping at the club would take such an innovative step forward so quickly.

Positioned within yards of Lancashire's Irish Sea coastline, the club prides itself on having one of the best maintained true Links golf courses in the UK; but maintaining this standard comes at a significant cost. Two of the key individuals responsible for ensuring the viability of the Club are the Club Pro Daniel Webster and the Course Manager Stuart Hogg.

It was whilst discussing the need to market the Club to a wider audience and bringing in visiting parties that Peter Barrett, a club member, suggested an innovative idea. Peter's son Ali had been developing a helicopter drone which he had used for filming extreme sports. So why not use this same technology to film the course and allow prospective visitors to see the quality and standard of the greens and fairways before they visit?

Stuart then suggested it was not only useful for marketing, but would also enable him, as Course Manager, to gain a more holistic view of the course using the aerial perspective to track progress of the course over time and to help the development of future short and long term improvement projects.

Working with Daniel and Stuart, a plan was put together to film the course during the Easter holidays.

The whole course has now been filmed and the results can be seen at the SAOL website www.stannesoldlinks.com.

SAOL is one of the first golf clubs in the UK to have a full aerial video of the complete course available on its website.

The results speak for themselves. As Club Captain John Gallacher said:

"I am extremely impressed by the end results. Utilising this innovative

technology enables us to showcase our wonderful course, providing an enhanced service offering to our visitors and guests. Equally as important it provides valuable information to our Course Manager in terms of course maintenance and development."

Work is ongoing to refine the videoing techniques and Ali and Peter have now set up a new business - www.heliphoto.biz - to further promote the use of lightweight, high tech drones for aerial filming of golf courses and other sporting events and venues.

St Annes Old Links clubhouse

