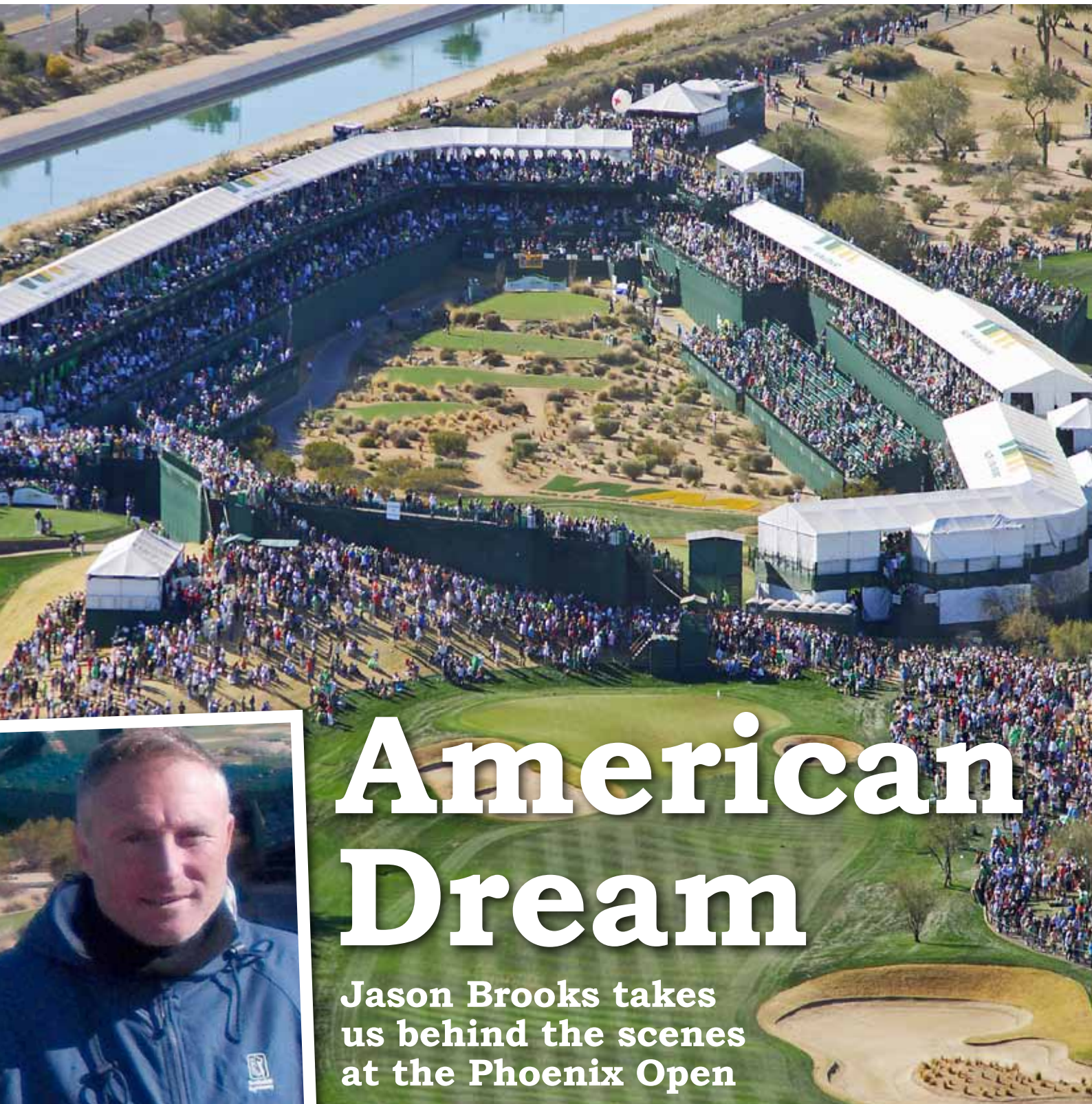


GI

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

Published by the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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American Dream

Jason Brooks takes
us behind the scenes
at the Phoenix Open

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Recently the results of a major study into the Economic Impact of golf in Great Britain & Ireland and across Europe were released (see page eight and the BIGGA website).

Sports Marketing Surveys carried out the study at the instigation of the PGA and with the support of many British and European bodies including both BIGGA and FEGGA. The conclusions show just how big an impact the sport of golf has on the economy producing a turnover of 15.1 billion euros across Europe and over £5 billion in GB&I alone.

The report encompasses all elements of golf-related revenue. It would be inappropriate to try and estimate just how big a proportion of the overall impact can be attributed to golf course maintenance but what is true is that golfers place huge value on the quality of playing conditions they are presented with. They are far more likely to play regularly when their course is well maintained and therefore more likely to add to the sport's revenue. Equally, improvements in course management over the years have served to make golf in GB&I a 12 months of the year affair, which undoubtedly adds to the revenue it now generates.

The report demonstrates that golf is indeed big business and needs to be run accordingly, with due recognition of all the elements that go into making it successful.

In this month's edition we carry an article from Today's Golfer magazine (page 46) that attempts to give the general public some understanding of the work greenkeepers do. This is a really important area of work for the Association as it is clear that there are clubs out there where the relationship between golfer and greenkeeper is not ideal. Thanks to all the members who responded to the Today's Golfer survey.

During the last month BIGGA has been represented at both the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show in San Diego and FEGGA's Annual Conference in Zurich.

It is fascinating to compare notes with the many other Greenkeeper Associations around the world and discover that all face similar challenges. Delivering good value to members,

effective member communication, building relationships with other golfing bodies and working with regulators, particularly with regard to chemical and water use, are all high on the agendas in boardrooms worldwide. BIGGA certainly has a role to play in supporting some of the smaller and emerging Associations but can also learn from them as they tackle similar problems in different ways.

It was again a great pleasure to spend some time with the ten BIGGA members who made up the annual delegation to the Golf Industry Show through the generous sponsorship of Bernhard and Company (see page 30).

As usual they were a varied bunch in terms of age and greenkeeping experience but they gelled extremely well and were a credit to themselves, their employers and the Association. I'd like to take this opportunity to formally thank Stephen Bernhard and his company for his long-term support of this fantastic member opportunity.

The ten delegates picked up contacts, expertise and knowledge from their trip to America which will help them significantly in their future careers.

The same can definitely be said for Jason Brooks of Torquay Golf Club who describes in detail in these pages the fantastic opportunity he had this winter to spend time at TPC Scottsdale preparing for the world's highest attended golf tournament – the Phoenix Open. Jason's decision to take time out from his career in Devon to gain such an experience should be commended and will, I am sure, have a very positive impact on his career in greenkeeping.



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

MARCH 2013

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The best products and sound advice for pruning troublesome branches

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How BIGGA members responded in the Today's Golfer greenkeeper survey

American dream

How did TPC Scottsdale prepare for the biggest spectator golf event in the world last month? BIGGA member Jason Brooks sent off his CV and found himself on the support team for the Phoenix Open in Arizona – here he describes a fascinating few months on both a personal and professional level



TPC SCOTTSDALE

I've been Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Torquay Golf Club for eight years, and through BIGGA I have met great friends from across the UK and overseas who share my passion for the profession.

I've been on the support team at The Open Championship and the PGA Championship – and these occasions left me wanting more, to experience an extended period of tournament preparation somewhere special. I decided I was going to make a real effort to secure a position somewhere that would add to my professional skills and open new doors for me in my career.

The Dream Begins

My Greens Chairman was very supportive, so I sent my CV to a host of people including Golf Clubs, Senior Vice President of Agronomy for the PGA Tour. He got me in touch with Jeff Plett, Director of Golf Course Maintenance at TPC Scottsdale. We had a great chat, he understood he would like me to spend five months of the winter there and the dream of joining the team at the Waste Management Phoenix Open was becoming real.

The waste management consultant Mike O'Keefe who told me all about the Ohio State University (OSU) programme, and me joining this world-famous programme would allow him to complete my move to Scottsdale as an intern. Besides helping me out with the highly complex visa application process, he explained other aspects such as safety and taxes.

Good Morning Scottsdale

There are two courses at TPC Scottsdale, the Stadium course (which has held the Phoenix Open since 1987) and the Champions course. Both have an incredible 4,000 rounds played annually. The summer temperatures are brutal, with average highs of over 100.

The entire course is Bermuda grass until the start of October when the huge over seeding process begins to turn the course from warm season grasses to cool season grasses for the winter. It is a huge undertaking – the course is closed for two weeks during which the Bermuda will be verticut, swarded then the debris collected before the over seeding can begin. Apart from the greens a perennial ryegrass/ fine fescue mixture is used for all the other

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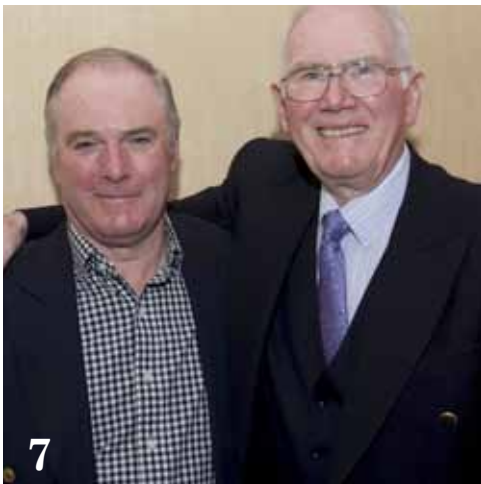
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WHAT BRITAIN'S GREENKEEPERS



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Cover image of The Phoenix Open at TPC Scottsdale, 16th aerial shot, courtesy of Jeff Plotts of the PGA Tour



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

BILLY'S HALF CENTURY OF SERVICE RECOGNISED AT BTME 2013

In December's GI (shown inset) we featured Alan Kite, Head Greenkeeper at Sutton Coldfield GC, who had marked 50 years of service at the club. Remarkably he's not alone, as another terrific servant to the industry was honoured at BTME.



Billy's good friend Brian Summers added: "I have known him for a good many years and we have grown old together, I wish him all the luck for the future."

Billy Mitchell has worked at Perranporth Golf Club in Cornwall for half a century and this achievement was a highlight of the South West and South Wales 'get-together' in Harrogate. He's been a key member of the BIGGA Devon and Cornwall section since its inception in 1977, and has been happy to remain in the background working away to help the section run smoothly.

He is well known in the BIGGA family and has made lots of friends through his many trips to Harrogate to visit BTME. He and his brother John, who has now retired from green keeping, were given Life Membership of the association for all the work they have done to promote BIGGA and the Devon and Cornwall section.

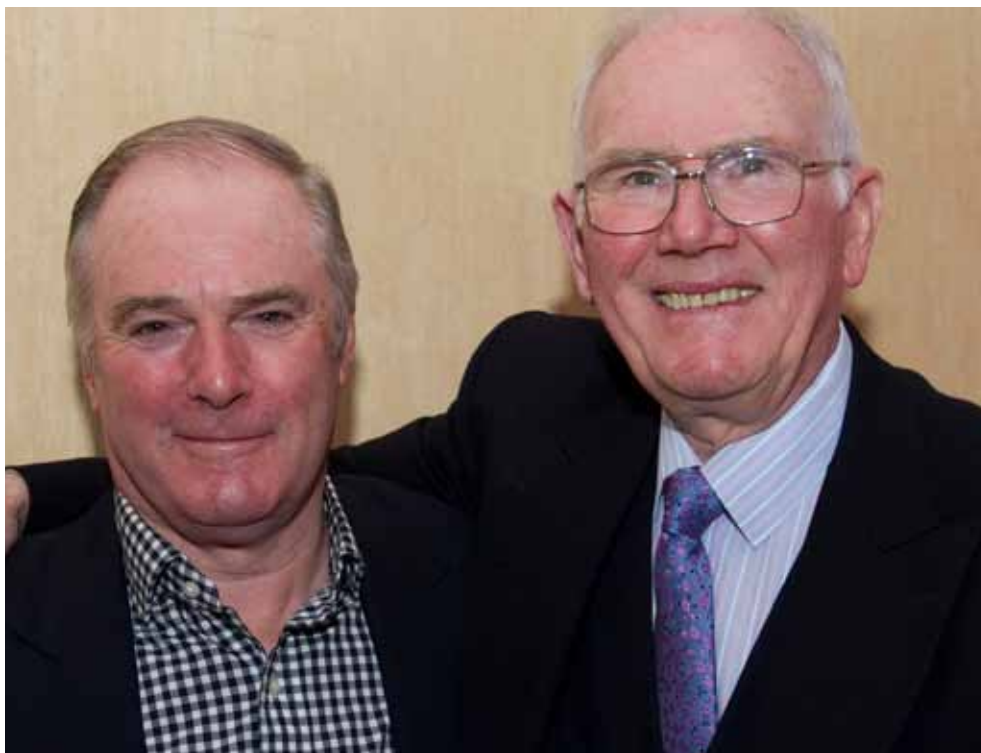
They have also been on the Open Support teams throughout the country and hugely enjoyed themselves assisting with the smooth running of the world famous tournament and also mingling with top professional golfers.

Billy is an assessor and helped set up the Duchy College training programme and remains very much involved with the assessing and education of trainees.

He's also involved with the Links Forum for South Wales and the South West. The promoting of pure links golf is Billy's passion and he will talk to anyone who is interested on the subject, giving them his knowledge he has gained after 50 years at one of the most unusual links golf courses in the country at Perranporth. He has no immediate plans to retire.



Billy is presented with a bottle of whisky by Richard Whyman, Course Manager at Burnham & Berrow Golf Club



GREENKEEPING LEGENDS AWARDED LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Two hugely prominent members of the greenkeeping fraternity became the latest recipients of the coveted BIGGA Life Membership at the recent BTME show.

John Philp MBE (right) and Chris Kennedy (above left, with Walter Woods) were unanimously awarded the accolade - which less than 50 greenkeepers have ever received - at BIGGA's AGM, joining an illustrious list.

John will forever be associated with his work at Carnoustie, where his tireless work brought The Open Championship back to the famous links. He even had the 11th hole on the Championship course named after him after 27 years of service.

Despite retiring last year he remains highly active in the industry and gave a fascinating presentation focusing on the history of the Open Championship and modern course performance guidelines during BIGGA's educational programme at BTME.

Commenting on joining the

likes of Walter Woods and Jack McMillan MBE on the roll call of BIGGA Life Members, John said: "It's a fantastic honour to receive such an accolade from your peers. I didn't know anything about it until it happened at the AGM so it was quite unexpected. I'm sure a few people knew about it but they managed to keep it quiet!"

Chris Kennedy spent 22 years as Golf Courses Manager at Wentworth Club until his retirement last summer. During his tenure he was responsible for presenting the courses for a staggering 52 professional events, and renovated the West Course in partnership with Ernie Els.

He was also presented with Life Membership at BTME and is now looking to pass on half a century of industry knowledge to younger greenkeepers in an advisory capacity.

He said: "I'm delighted that BIGGA feel I deserve this accolade. It was a very nice moment for both John and I to be awarded Life Membership and it means an awful lot to both of us."

BIGGA Chairman Tony



Smith said: "Both John and Chris have done wonders to raise the profile of greenkeeping through sheer excellence throughout their careers.

"They've also helped to inspire many young greenkeepers, many of whom have gone on to enjoy terrific careers themselves.

"The accolade of BIGGA Life Membership is only awarded to a select few, they are both hugely deserving of it and I congratulate them warmly."

MERVIN DOWNING

We were saddened to hear of the death of Mervin Downing, former Head Greenkeeper at Aldenham Golf & Country Club, earlier this year. Here's Peter Hopkinson, branch manager at George Browns in Chesham, with a tribute to his great friend.

"Greenkeeping recently lost one of the good guys. I first met Mervin Downing 20 plus years ago one evening at Aldenham for a meeting of the BIGGA London section.

"I remember we attended various educational seminars at the club - one by a young Jim McKenzie with a slideshow of improvements carried out at Wentworth Golf Club. Afterwards we would of course retire to the bar and the company was always convivial, with Brian Anderson, Martin Smith, John Edwards, Norman Exley, Jeremy Hill, Michael Peters, David Low, Don Wilson, Derek Mason, Alex Low, Mervin, Alan Moffat of Parkers, Dennis Smith of Rigby Taylor and many others. By the end of the evening I always seemed to be chatting happily with Mervin. I was always comfortable in his company - a capable, hardworking man who understood the countryside, liked a pint and a cigarette and a chat. Mervin joined Aldenham in 1987 and worked with Dave Knight and Graham Pooley under the direction of Head Greenkeeper Alec Low. Always cheerful, Mervin was good company.

"Mervin loved all aspects of shooting, vermin control on the golf course, pigeon shooting on neighbouring farmland and on the pheasant shoot he set up.

"When Alec Low retired in 1995 Mervin was promoted to Head Greenkeeper. In 2009 after 14 years in charge Mervin stepped down, and he continued as course mechanic.

"He was now able to spend more time with his wife Jenny, daughters Samantha and Melissa and grandchildren John, Molly and Fern. Sadly illness was to strike but Mervin endured the treatment with great stoicism. He passed away on 1 January 2013, and will be missed by all who knew him."



MARRIOTT HOLLINS SIGN AGREEMENT WITH SHERRIFF

Sherriff Amenity is delighted to announce that an agreement has been reached with Ian Pullan (shown right), the Course Manager of Marriott Hollins Hall, to become the preferred supplier of chemical, fertiliser, seed and other golf course maintenance requirements.

Marriott provide some of the most immaculate golf courses across the UK. Mark Pyrah (left), Sherriff Amenity Director said "We are delighted that Ian has chosen Sherriff Amenity to be their preferred supplier.

The agreement that has been reached will ensure that Marriott Hollins Hall benefit from our extensive product portfolio. However this is only one aspect of the agreement. We firmly that IT will play an increasingly important role in our industry and Ian will be able to benefit from the latest technology that Sherriff Amenity are able to provide to group customers. This, along with bespoke technical and product training for Ian's staff makes this an exciting and innovative package for our group customers.



PRODUCT MANAGEMENT ROLE AT RJ FOR LEE

Lee Kristensen has been promoted to the role of Product Manager at Ransomes Jacobsen, one of the leading manufacturers of commercial mowers, turf maintenance equipment and compact utility and industrial vehicles, based at Ipswich in Suffolk, UK.

Reporting to Richard Comely, Director of Marketing and Product Management, Lee will manage the development and enhancement of all Ipswich designed and built Ransomes and Jacobsen branded products and liaise with colleagues at the Charlotte facility in North Carolina, USA with regard to the Jacobsen product line.

Commenting on the appointment Richard Comely said, "Lee has an excellent technical background in a related industry and will bring further expertise to the Product Management team here in Ipswich. We have some exciting product developments in the pipeline and he will be a great asset to the business."

GOLF'S BILLION POUND IMPACT REVEALED

A new report supported by BIGGA has revealed that golf is worth over £5.1 billion annually to the economy of Great Britain and Ireland – and a staggering €15.1 billion throughout Europe.

It also reveals the sport is responsible for nearly 80,000 jobs in Great Britain and Ireland and generates employee wages in excess of £1.5 billion.

The report, commissioned by The Professional Golfers Association and supported by leading British and European bodies including BIGGA and FEGGA was produced by Sports Marketing Surveys Inc and highlights the importance of the golf industry across the continent.

Key economic findings across the 27 European Union nations plus Norway and Switzerland, which represent a combined population of 510 million, show the sport is responsible for a minimum of 180,000 full time jobs and employee wages of €4.4 billion.

And based on models employed by the Australian Golf Industry Council (2010) and Golf2020 in the USA (2011), the results show total expenditure per golfer throughout Europe of €1,911 which is in line with Australia (€1,917) and America (€2,007) golfing counterparts.

While the well-documented economic downturn has hit popular European golf destinations such as Spain and Portugal, golf tourism still

contributes €1.5 billion of the annual impact.

On the course, the strength of the game matches the economic impact with eight men in the top 20 end of year world rankings and nine women in the top 50 of the Asian dominated standings. International team success is exemplified with the Ryder Cup, Solheim Cup, Walker Cup and Curtis Cup all residing this side of the Atlantic.

PGA chief executive Sandy Jones commented: "Golf plays a significant role both in its economic impact and also in delivering social, behavioural and sporting benefits with the PGA professional firmly at the centre of the golf industry.

"In addition golf is also a

huge contributor to charitable causes in Europe and last year generated more than €85 million supporting a range of good causes."

BIGGA chief executive Jim Croxton added: "Such a comprehensive report is of great value to all stakeholders in the golf industry. The largely unsung work of BIGGA members in maintaining and managing the nation's golf courses contributes hugely to a sport that is enjoyed by several million people and provides nearly 80,000 jobs in Great Britain and Ireland alone. We are grateful to the PGA for leading on this project and all the other stakeholders whose contribution has helped produce this important study."



SHOCKWAVE HERALDS A BREAKTHROUGH AT LANCASTER GOLF CLUB

There is no doubt that we have had an awful lot of rain recently but Warren Bevan, Course Manager of the historic Lancaster Golf Club is not a man to let the elements get the better of him. Following one of the wettest years on record, Warren has had a real challenge to keep the course looking and performing at its best.

He has met this challenge head on by tackling flooding on the greens with a grim determination. "We had to combat the sheer volume of rainfall that threatened to overwhelm the greens," said Warren.

To complement his existing maintenance armoury, he requested delivery of an Imants Shockwave 155 from Campey Turf Care Product Specialist Ian Campbell. "I wanted to source a machine to tackle some deep seated compaction problems and encourage rapid dispersion of water in extremely adverse conditions."

"The worst case scenario would be to close the greens until the water subsides, but that's not how we do things round here. When the course is closed it affects everything; loss of play, cancelled events,

lost revenue. We want play to remain unaffected by the weather conditions for as long as possible."

The Imants Shockwave is a linear decompactor, designed to revitalise heavy wear areas by relieving soil compaction, improving aeration and removing surface water. The important feature for Warren is the working depth – up to 250mm. This is deep enough to penetrate the sub soil layer and allow the water to flow more effectively into existing drainage lines and slits.

Six of the greens have been treated with the Imants Shockwave as have a large number of the traffic routes as well. The effect on the 18th green has been dramatic.

"I'm very impressed", says Warren. "Following a sudden downpour we had standing water on the 18th green and to my surprise Ian agreed to operate the Shockwave in these extremely wet conditions."

"Within 20 minutes of completing a single pass over the entire green, the puddles had gone. The green was playable within 10 - 15 minutes. On less effected greens play was back on within 5 minutes."



COURSE TRACKER WINNER

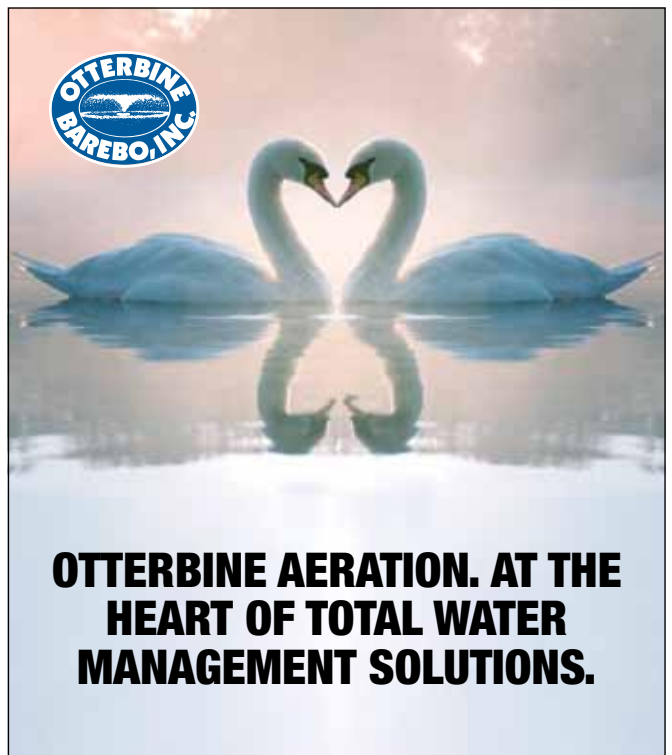
Steve Isaac, Director of Golf Course Management at The R&A (left), presents David with the iPad

David Braid, greenkeeper at St Michaels Golf Club near St Andrews, was the lucky winner of the iPad offered by The R&A at BTME, as they launched CourseTracker.

David joined Head Greenkeeper Adam Turner four years ago after deciding on a career change from his position of bank manager. Born and bred in St Michaels,

David joined the club at the age of 12.

David couldn't believe he his name had been drawn, describing it as "the perfect end to a fantastic week". He added: "BTME is a great place for us to do business and network". St Michaels registered to CourseTracker within days of its launch at BTME.



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WHERE DO YOU READ GI?

Jack Davies, Greenkeeper at Five Lakes Hotel Golf & Country Club in Essex, posted this terrific picture on the BIGGA Message Board, showing him reading February's GI on a boat!

Jack said: "After a spell of prolonged wet weather we now have a sixth lake lying on the fifth carry. I thought I could read February's magazine on the flood while we pumped it out – my boss was a bit sceptical of the plan though! February's magazine made a great read while I was on the water".

In what unusual locations have you read GI? Send a picture to steve.castle@bigga.co.uk and we'll print the best...



BOB'S BLOG

We're continuing to receive some excellent suggestions for blogs penned by greenkeepers across the land. The featured blog this month is Bob Meikle's at Craill Golfing Society in Fife, Scotland.

Course Manager Bob has used the blog for three years, and it features regular updates, pictures of Bob and his team working on what is one of the oldest clubs in the world.

Encouragingly, it also features on the main website meaning members and visitors alike are able to discover exactly what the team are up to – and why they're doing it.

Bob said: "I started it mainly to make our BIGGA section website more relevant and up to date. Barely a day goes by without a member mentioning to me that they've been looking at it, and a lot of the complaints we used to get have stopped because people know what's happening. It helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed on what's going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

"Visitors to the blog also find it informative because

The screenshot shows the Craill Greenkeepers blog interface. At the top, it says 'Craill Greenkeepers blog' and 'MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2013'. There is a 'Followers' section with a 'Join this site' button and a 'Members (62)' section with a grid of profile pictures. The 'Blog Archive' section is expanded for February 2013, listing several posts with dates and titles. Below the archive is an 'About Me' section with a profile picture and a 'View my complete profile' link. The main content area shows a post about the Balmorie course with a photo of a golf course and a caption: 'The Balmorie course is on it's last winter work closure before the season starts so we are continuing with the new 17th path down to the fairway'. Another photo shows a golf course with a caption: 'Carrying on with the 17th revision project which will continue for the next couple of weeks'.

we have particular issues at Craill, such as high tides damaging the course in spring and autumn depending on wind direction. It also helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping

them informed on what's going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

Check the blog out for yourself at www.craillgreenkeepersblog.blogspot.co.uk

MARATHON MAN PLANS TO SKIN COMPETITION

On April 14 Greg Skinner, Head Greenkeeper at Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, is running the Brighton Marathon.

He's running in aid of Leukemia & Lymphoma Research in memory of a good friend named Paul Glennon who died in 2012 aged 56.

Greg would welcome any donations to this extremely worthwhile cause large or small – to donate and for further information please visit www.JustGiving.com/Greg-Skinner1



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

A frantic and fruitful February

It's been a whirlwind few weeks for me – as soon as I returned from BTME I was making preparations to attend the Golf Industry Show in San Diego.

As well as the exhibition itself, which impressed me greatly with its size, scale and the range of exhibitors on display, I dipped into a few of the educational seminars.

If there was a time when we were playing catch-up with American education, I believe that time has passed and we're now on an equal footing with them.

Education is taken extremely seriously on both sides of the Atlantic – it's great to see, and it's about time.

The International Briefing I attended during the Show was valuable, particularly as I'm now lucky enough to look at it from a Chairman's perspective.

I quickly got the impression that we're not alone with our problems in the UK - various Associations from all corners of the world share similar challenges relating to the economy and also retaining and increasing membership.

We made plans to host an international gathering during BTME 2014, which is a really exciting opportunity.

I also attended meetings with the American and Australian Associations and also with GEO over environmental issues – in particular we focused on sustainability.

We will hopefully see real long-term progress as a result of these meetings.

I also spent a lot of time with the BIGGA Delegation sponsored by Bernhard and Company, and they were equally enthusiastic about the week.

They represented a really good cross-section of our membership with a diverse mix of Course Man-

agers, Deputies and Assistants and I know they got a lot from the week.

There was a particularly good mix of ages and characters and I know this experience will stand them in good stead as they progress in their careers.

The delegation were taken round the fabulous Torrey Pines and La Costa courses and said it was unbelievable – another world.

One major difference was, of course, the weather – their winter is similar to our summer! I was also fortunate enough to see these courses and they were truly stunning.

If there was a time when we were playing catch-up with American education, I believe that time has now passed and we're on an equal footing with them

I also spoke to the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Tom Flavelle who's clearly learning a huge amount from his time in the States.

He's there for a little while longer and I know he'll be appearing in a future edition of Greenkeeper International informing the membership about his experiences.

One thing he said which stuck in my mind was "I wish I could bottle all this up and dish it out to all the young greenkeepers in the UK".

Another highlight was the BIGGA Reception we held on the Monday evening which was a gathering of our members who had travelled to San Diego, and it was so successful we're looking at making it a regular fixture.

On my return from America the Board of Management met which gave us a timely opportunity to review BTME 2013 and put plans in place for 2014 and beyond.

Feedback from visitors and

exhibitors alike has generally been really positive and momentum is already gathering for January 2014.

Towards the end of February the Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations (FEGGA) held its Annual Conference in the picturesque but snowy city of Zurich.

It was fascinating to listen to the challenges faced by the many other Greenkeeper Associations across the continent and realise that they are so similar to those that we face in the UK.

Economic pressure, lack of awareness and appreciation of the profession, legislative/regulatory

issues and environmental challenges were the repeated themes, clearly all Associations need to stand together to help the whole profession overcome them.

During the conference Paul Worster, BIGGA's 2010 Chairman, was elected to the FEGGA Board of Directors, Paul has recently completed a four-year term of office on the BIGGA Board and has excellent credentials and experience to assist FEGGA in their goal to properly represent the profession of greenkeeping at a European level.

Congratulations Paul, you certainly have my support in your new role.

I'm well aware that it's been far from an ideal start to 2013 weather wise.

However, spring is finally just around the corner so let's hope it improves, there's no more snow and we get the dry spell we so badly need.

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Learning & Development

Sami Strutt, BIGGA Learning & Development Manager, with an update on education issues

Every year I wonder where the first two months of the year go, when my feet finally touch the ground I realise that it's March already. This year it has been especially busy as Lee Strutt and I got married the day after returning from the Golf Industry Show in San Diego! After almost 20 years in the industry as Sami Collins, I'll now be known as Sami Strutt so don't go ignoring my emails and phone calls thinking "I have no idea who that is!"

Golf Industry Show

The Golf Industry Show made a welcome return to San Diego in February. BIGGA were represented by Jim Croxton, Tony Smith (Chairman) and myself along with the BIGGA Delegation in association with Bernhard & Co. Although the weather was not what was expected in Southern California, the show delivered a vast array of education and exhibitors.

Many familiar faces visited the BIGGA stand and with the able assistance of the ten 'boys' from the delegation we handled enquiries about the services that BIGGA offers as well as selling a couple of memberships in the process.

For the delegation it is a full-on week with almost every minute filled. We did however manage to fit in a couple of birthday celebrations one evening for Messrs Norsworthy and Parker, with the able assistance of some Hooters Girls (young and slightly older versions – no comments please boys!!).

The annual meeting with GCSAA's education team was as informative as ever with discussions taking place regarding the education offered at our shows and how this can be enhanced, administration matters (boring for most but invaluable for us!) and exchanges of ideas to improve what we do. A big thanks to the BIGGA delegation for your company and I hope you have now all recovered!



Gold Key Individual Members:
Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS
Ian MacMillan MG, Ian Morrison
Andrew Turnbull, W J Rogers
Sam Langrick, Espen Bergmann,
Nick Gray

Silver Key Individual Members:
Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn
Douglas Duguid, Jaey Goodchild,
Graham Wiley, Michael Beaton,
Paul Jenkins, Justin Cheung

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 Delegation at the Golf Industry Show

Future Turf Managers Initiative



Applications for the inaugural Future Turf Managers Conference are now closed with 45 applicants vying for 20 places. The selection process will have taken place by the time you read this and next month I will report on who's been successful.



Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2013

This year we celebrate 25 years of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award. With past winners including Euan Grant from Turnberry and Murray Long from Sunningdale as well as our most recent winner, Thomas Flavelle, this prestigious award is highly sought after.

Applications for the 2013 Award have been sent out to all colleges and training providers offering Sportsturf qualifications. If you are studying for a Diploma in Greenkeeping; Diploma in Golf Course

Supervision; SVQ Level 2 or 3; National Certificate or National Diploma courses and are a resident in the UK or the Republic of Ireland, you are eligible.

To be entered for the amazing opportunity of winning the eight-week Toro Scholarship to study at the University of Massachusetts, visit Toro headquarters and travel to Orlando for the Golf Industry Show, you must be nominated by your greenkeeping tutor. If you believe that you could be the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2013, talk to your tutor today about applying.





BIGGA Membership

The membership team reflect on current news and affairs affecting you, the BIGGA member

Membership of BIGGA equips members with the resources and connections to progress their career. Thanks to BIGGA's Gold and Silver Key Fund contributors BIGGA are able to allocate funding to enhance professional development by offering financial support, training aids and a CPD scheme to members.

- Save money by receiving your own monthly copy of Greenkeeper International (GI) as part of your membership, a monthly round up of the latest news, views and technical articles from the turf industry.

- Gain access to enhanced member-only content by logging into the members area on the BIGGA website.

- Take advantage of education funding through

- Refund of fees
- Subsidies

- Higher education scholarship

- Take advantage of Assistants Development Seminars – 'So You Want to be Promoted – Essential Skills for your Career Development' is being delivered by experienced Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers across BIGGA's 26 sections. Look out on the Events Section on the BIGGA website for dates and information.

- Register for CPD – by planning and reflecting on your learning experiences you can enhance your development and advance your career.

The benefits of membership are not just there when you are looking to further your career, members also have personal benefits including access to -

- **Legal helpline – access to legal help and advice 24/7.**

When you have a legal problem it can often be a highly stressful time of your life. It is often difficult to know who you can talk to and the cost of getting the advice that you need can often be expensive. As a benefit of BIGGA Membership members have access to the Legal Assistance insurance package



The BIGGA stand at BTME 2013

arranged by Gallagher Heath, access to a comprehensive legal helpline that offers advice on a wide range of legal services.

The legal helpline is provided by Irwin Mitchell, one of the top 10 UK law firms. The helpline is operated by a team of dedicated advisers, all legally qualified to give you the legal advice that you require. The typical areas of law that the legal helpline can give advice on are:

- Family law
- Employment law
- Property law
- Consumers

- **Full Members Personal Accident Insurance**

This insurance provides cover for accidental bodily injury which occurs during the operative time of cover which results in death, loss of limbs or sight, hearing and speech, permanent disability or temporary disability. There are additional payments for medical expenses, funeral expenses, hospitalisation, bodily injury resulting in a coma, retraining and relatives travel travel expenses.

- **Lifestyle Counselling Helpline and Online Support is available to all BIGGA Members and their families**

This upgraded service for all BIGGA Members and members



of their immediate family living at the same address can help with a range of problems from practical everyday matters to sensitive or emotional issues. Specialists will help members deal with personal relationship problems, problems with colleagues in the workplace and other issues affecting their general wellbeing.

Counsellors and information specialists are also trained to help members with practical problems like debt.

The helpline is complemented by a comprehensive online information and support service, through which members can access information and advice on a range of issues and problems which often impact on everyday life. Topics are diverse and include relationships, childcare issues, consumer issues, stress and health and fitness. Information is updated regularly by a team of experienced counsellors and information specialists.

The Lifestyle Counselling Helpline and online information support service can be contacted 24/7. Log in to the members area for details.

With almost 6,000 greenkeeping members can you afford not to be a part of Europe's largest greenkeeping organisation.





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WIEDENMANN UK'S PLATINUM CHARITY TERRA SPIKE KEEPS OMBERSLEY GC OPEN

What a difference a year makes when you've taken delivery of a Wiedenmann Terra Spike GXi8 HD.

Ombersley Golf Club purchased Wiedenmann UK's charity platinum-painted deep aerator last January, and coincidentally was also celebrating 20 years of operation. In truth, the Kidderminster club would have purchased the Terra Spike a year previously but too many weather-enforced course closures meant they had to delay their investment.

Exactly a year on, Ombersley happily reports that they've had no closures what so ever and that drainage on the course has never been better despite the last 12 months been almost the wettest on record.

Andrew Halfpenny, Course Manager, said: "We've set up a programme to aerate eight days a month on tees greens and aprons. We've pretty much stuck to that in the spring, autumn and winter but got a little bit caught up with other tasks during the summer. From October onwards, when the days became shorter, we really started to reap the benefits of sustained frequent aeration. The transformation in the quality of the turf was evident to everybody.

"We've remained open when others around have had to shut bringing in additional business so our Terra Spike is a machine that's truly earning its keep. I've even been fortunate to take on another member of greenkeeping staff, so from our perspective aeration is truly working and is our key critical task."

BRITISH SUGAR TOPSOIL GUIDE LAUNCHED

British Sugar Topsoil – who recently exhibited at BTME for the first time and have already agreed to return next year – have launched a free booklet outlining how topsoil can be used on golf courses.

They've teamed up with Peter Jones Associates Ltd to produce the eight-page technical 'Essential Guide' which is a must for those involved in the golf course industry. It's freely available as a download from British Sugar TOPSOIL's web site www.bsttopsoil.co.uk or by calling 08702 402314.

KUBOTA ADD PRECISION TO POWER WITH NEW 100-INCH MOWER DECK



Tractor and groundcare specialists Kubota has introduced a new Lastec 100-inch flex mower deck available exclusively on its high performance and market leading F3680 Out Front Mower.

The F3680 is the most powerful out front mower in the Kubota range. With a 36hp engine and Auto-Assist 4WD as standard, it is designed to offer maximum manoeuvrability and versatility whilst being able to tackle the most demanding commercial mowing operations. The F3680 also includes a host of features to increase operator comfort and reduce fatigue, such as hydrostatic power steering, adjustable seat and conveniently positioned operator levers.

Dave Roberts, Kubota's General Manager, commented: "The introduction of this new mower deck is part of Kubota's ongoing commitment to add value to the product and the service we provide our customers to ensure they can complete their work efficiently and effectively.

"The patented Lastec design integrates five 21-inch mower pans, uniquely pinned together and belt driven, giving a 100-inch wide cut with the precision of a 21-inch walk-behind mower. For turf professionals, this means a larger area can be cut in a shorter space of time, saving them valuable time and money."

The 100-inch mower deck, called the 100 EFK, is only available on Kubota's F3680 as this model has the ideal horsepower requirements for a 100-inch cut width. The solution has been designed so all the deck pans articulate independently 15 degrees up and down to follow the ground contour with walk-mower precision which reduces the possibilities of scalping.

Other features include hydraulically fold up outer pans to minimize width for transport and an adjustable deck height ranging from 1-inch to 4 ¾ inches with ¼ inch increments with no tooling requirement. Adjustable internal baffling also allows for standard rear discharge or mulch to optimise performance in a variety of positions.

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Wayne Ganning (inset left)

MOOR HALL GC ROLLS OUT THE RED IRON

Moor Hall Golf Club in the West Midlands has become one of the first in the UK to put Toro's new GreensPro 1200 greens roller through its paces.

Course manager and BIGGA member Wayne Ganning (shown inset above) included the machine in his replacement Toro fleet package after the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) recommended greens ironing to help improve the smoothness and trueness of the Sutton Coldfield course's greens.

As he explains: "We didn't get a great deal of use out of the iron last summer because of all the rain, but when we did use it the results confirm that smoothness and trueness improved. Also surface performance achieved near-tournament levels with a significant increase in green speed by two feet, which STRI confirmed in a test. The committee and players also started to notice the difference towards the back end of the summer, so we're looking forward to getting the full benefit

this summer. It's much better than the vibrating rollers we used to use. We're hoping it will help us cut back on mowing, too, which should help improve sward health."

The GreensPro is just one of several new arrivals at the 18-hole parkland course, after the club replaced an eight-year-old Toro fleet reaching the end of its useful life.

Wayne's other new mowers include a Groundsmaster 3500-D and 4500-D, and a Reelmaster 6700-D. "I've particularly noticed that the 4500-D rotary mower has a much quicker grounds speed, which makes us more productive," he adds.

A machine Wayne did get plenty of use out of during the washout summer was the SandPro 3040 bunker raker. "We bought a front plough as an optional extra and it pushed all the sand up despite the rain and really helped us to get the bunkers back into play more quickly after a downpour."

BSH PRODUCES NEW COMBINED CATALOGUE

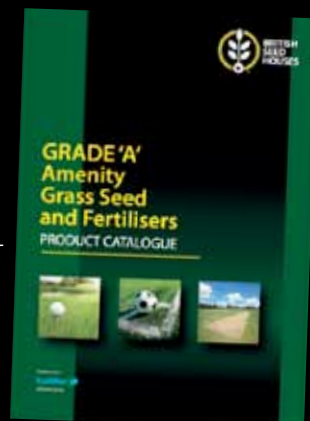
British Seed Houses has produced a new product catalogue which combines its Grade 'A' amenity grass seed and fertilisers in one booklet.

The new-look catalogue details the comprehensive range of products available from the UK's largest privately-owned grass seed company and has been well received by customers.

Amenity sales manager Richard Brown said: "We look to improve the catalogue year on year to ensure it is a well-laid out, informative guide. It was a natural progression for us to combine the seed and fertiliser catalogues together, rather than having separate ones, as it was felt more appropriate for our customers.

"Our products are closely interlinked and our technical sales representatives advise on both seed and fertilisers. They have specialist knowledge and experience to help professionals in the golf, sports and landscaping sectors to find the correct grass seeds and fertilisers to benefit and improve their facilities."

The representatives operate throughout the UK and are also FACTS qualified (Fertiliser Advisers Certification Training scheme). The British Seed Houses product catalogue is available to download at www.bshamenity.com



MOVE FOR MACGREGOR



MacGregor Forest & Groundcare have recently been appointed as the authorised dealer for the Redexim Charterhouse professional Golf and Turf Management machinery range, in the North West Scotland area.

As a well-established business with regional branches in Elgin, Portree and Stornoway, MacGregor Forest & Groundcare work with a host of national names and have an excellent market share in the areas they serve.

Commenting on the agreement with MacGregor Forest & Groundcare Depot Manager Callum Sim said, "the decision to work with Redexim Charterhouse was customer driven as we had noticed an increase in demand from our clients for Aeration, Overseeding, Top Dressing and both natural and synthetic turf maintenance equipment.

Our subsequent market research confirmed the quality and established reputation of the Redexim Charterhouse product range and we have also found the dealer support and back-up to be excellent."

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Of course, its superior cutting technology delivers the finest putting surface and playing experience you would expect from Toro; but added to this, the mower is clean, environmentally friendly and, crucially, incredibly quiet. All this, and more, make the eFlex the perfect choice for golf clubs looking for a green solution, especially those with hotels and guest accommodation.

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PROFILE

Name: Gordon Kerr
Born: 17 July 1959
Handicap: Nine
Hobbies: Watching football,
playing golf
Favourite sports team:
Dunfermline Athletic FC

It's bonnie by the Clyde

How have Gordon Kerr and his team brought PGA EuroPro Tour events to a course which only opened less than three years ago? And what are the technical challenges associated with such a young course? Steve Castle travelled to Scotland to find out

The “opportunity of a lifetime” is what Course Manager Gordon Kerr calls Mar Hall. For those who have had the privilege to have set foot on the new £4million layout situated on the banks of the River Clyde beneath the striking silhouette of the Kilpatrick Hills, it's easy to see why.

In 2007 Gordon was approached to oversee the creation of an 18-hole golf course within the grounds of the five-star Mar Hall Resort.

With a provisional opening date of 2010 in mind, the challenge was on – and he accepted.

Gordon, who lives just four miles from the course and is an avid golfer himself, recalls:

“It was a dream to be involved in

constructing a course from scratch.”

Gordon and his five-strong team, who moved to Mar Hall from nearby Gleddoch House Hotel and Golf Club, immediately went to work on the plans devised by renowned architect Dave Thomas and his son, Paul, who he says he relished working closely with.

However, though Mar Hall represented a timely opportunity,

construction coincided with the onset of the economic recession. With funds limited, the Course Manager had to rely on ingenuity, local knowledge and, more than anything, the adaptability and effort of his team to deliver on the owner's chief objective - a course that would allow golf all year round.

Unperturbed, ground was broken and Gordon turned to tried and tested local contractors and asked colleagues to take on the roles of dumper truck-drivers and excavators. Together they moved an almighty 160,000 cubic meters of sub soil - mostly stony shingle - and were ready to start building proper.

"We do get a fair bit of rain, but 80 per cent of the course is built on the riverbank's shingle ground. It was a good starting point as far as drainage is concerned.

"We're not permitted to drain water straight into the Clyde so we created an irrigation reservoir and four wetlands as catchments areas. The water regained from the 11th, 12th and 13th holes ensures the course is self sufficient for irrigation water."

The sub-soil was redistributed by the Mar Hall team on their convoy of dumper trucks and then moulded by skilled shapers into greens, surrounds and bunker complexes. Ironically, it was those sand traps that would prove to be Gordon's next 'hazard'.

The original plan was to turf all the bunker faces and install pipe and gravel for drainage. He intended to embark on the painstaking and costly job until, at the last minute, he was introduced to two techniques he'd never seen before - hydroseeding and Aquadyne. They proved to be shrewd alternatives.

"Aquadyne is a sustainable drainage product that removes water as efficiently as pipe and gravel," he explains. "I was a bit sceptical at first but I spoke to a couple of greenkeep-

ers who reassured me it was the best long-term option."

The Aquadyne was soon inserted and connected to the existing fairway drainage during winter without damage to the shaping of the bunkers or what would be the fairways or green surrounds. This meant that all 54 bunkers could be shaped. They were then hydroseeded in just two days, saving a massive amount of manpower, machinery and materials.

"These techniques saved us both money and time without compromising the condition of the bunkers. Can you imagine how time-consuming and expensive turfing would have been in comparison? It also meant we completed all of the required work in just two days."

However, he says that ultimately it took the hard graft of his team to realise the full benefits of the switch to Aquadyne.

"In the winter our guys would dig trenches by hand and connect the Aquadyne to the fairway drainage we'd already put in. It means that you now hardly ever see a bunker with water in it. Both those techniques saved us a lot of money, as did using our own guys on occasions we could have used outside contractors."

With the drainage installed, Gordon turned to a contractor he knew he could trust to carry out the final shaping, Greentech of Stirling. Their experts delivered the finishing touches using vital root-zone prior to seeding. That left the Mar Hall greens staff with another steep learning curve - seeding the greens. He admits the seeding process was the most stressful stage of the whole construction.

"I'd never seeded greens before, and when I spoke to other greenkeepers they told me all sorts of horror stories about the seed blowing away or root-zone being washed out."





**“The greens are fescue bent,
and we’ve got dwarf ryegrass
on the tees and fairways to
make them hard-wearing”**



As it turned out, it would take a huge effort from Kerr and his crew to see the project through. “I remember we had seeded the first nine greens, but the wind really got up one evening so I was here at 11pm watering the greens to try and stop the seed blowing away. I’m sure some guys who’ve done this sort of thing before don’t think it’s a big deal, but to me it was because I was doing it for the first time.

“By June 2009 the greens and tees were all seeded and grown in by ourselves.

The greens are fescue bent and we’ve got dwarf ryegrass on the tees and fairways to make them hard-wearing which seems to have worked very well.”

This left just the fairways to be seeded, but as so often is the case in the West of Scotland, the weather intervened. With a short window between July and September of 2009 to get the seed down, Gordon said the task grew increasingly demanding with each passing day.

“From July onwards it never stopped raining and the pressure was on to get the seed down. Even on sunny days the ground conditions just weren’t dry enough, and we didn’t want to compromise on quality.”

Luckily, with ten good days of

weather forecast around mid-September, and with the contractors on standby, it was suddenly all systems go. Fairways and rough were ploughed, harrowed, and stone buried before the seed could finally be drilled in. Though the elements had conspired against them, Kerr says the job was achieved with long hours, good weather and a few fish suppers along the way.

“We were working shifts between 6am and 9pm. Looking back it was an amazing feat.”

Mar Hall opened in May 2010 and, since then, the 6,507-yard course has steadily been gaining popularity among a mixture of members, pay-and-play visitors and hotel guests.

“We now have over 100 members, but we need to ensure we accommodate everyone who wants to play here.”

The first chance to show off his and his team’s hard work to a wider audience came one week last August.

“We applied to hold the Mar Hall, com Scottish Classic PGA EuroPro Tour event because we wanted to put Mar Hall on the map, and we were confident it was up to the standard required,” he says. “Everyone was very proud when we were awarded it. It was probably the best week of weather all year. It was brilliant.

ABOVE: PGA EuroPro Tour, Scottish Classic, courtesy of the PGA



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- Kubota 50 – 40 Tractor + Loader
- Kubota 30 – 30 Kubota Tractor
- Greens – Iron 3900
- Hardi Sprayer

“Obviously the course is still young and you always want to improve, so I’m delighted to say the EuroPro will be returning this August. This time around we want it to be better still.”

Reflecting on the experience as a whole, Gordon is delighted at the achievement of bringing a course to championship standards from a piece of paper.

“It’s been a great adrenaline rush. At times, of course it was stressful but it’s still been a dream for me to see a course through from an architect’s drawings to a major televised tournament.”





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COVERING THE WORLDS GREATEST STAGES



Beetles, bacteria and Acute Oak Decline

Hot on the heels of his exclusive article focusing on chalara ash dieback, Dr Terry Mabbett returns warning of another threat, this time to the UK's oak trees

Great Britain lacks an official national tree emblem. Moves are afoot to adopt *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine) as Scotland's 'national tree', while our two native oaks (*Quercus robur* and *Quercus petraea*) are obvious choices for England and Wales as 'English Oak' and 'Welsh Oak'.

Over the years a number of leading figures have intimated that Britain should have a 'National Tree'. The Mayor of London Boris Johnson chose an English oak. But don't get too carried away because a fast moving lethal syndrome dubbed 'Acute Oak Decline' (AOD) could wipe these iconic native oak trees from our landscape.

First reaction from many green-keepers might well be "what's AOD?". Sadly it's been killing trees in the UK for at least seven years but the problem has received relatively little publicity. There are several reasons for this. Initially AOD was regional and largely confined to Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. It's now epidemic throughout East Anglia and spreading rapidly across the Midlands and into southern England. Affected trees are being found in Wales and as far north as Nottinghamshire.

Secondly AOD is not a classic disease (like Chalara ash dieback) and therefore not caused by just one plant pathogen in its own right. Acute oak decline appears to be

MAIN LEFT: Close up on trunk bleeds that strongly suggest acute oak decline

RIGHT: Profuse bleeding of dark coloured fluid from between the bark plates is one of the two classic symptoms of acute oak decline

(Both pictures are courtesy of Forestry Commission)



This article comes to you courtesy of the BIGGA Learning and Development Fund.
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caused by the interacting activities of a bark boring beetle (*Agrilus biguttatus*) and at least one bacterium. Many of the bacteria associated with AOD are completely new to science. *Agrilus biguttatus* has been known in the UK since the nineteenth century but until now as a relatively rare insect associated with dead or naturally declining oaks. This complicated association is why AOD is classified as a 'decline' rather than a disease. The word decline usually infers gradual but there is nothing gradual about AOD which can kill a mature oak in less than five years.

Two eye-catching external symptoms of AOD are profuse bleeding of dark coloured fluid from between the bark plates and tell-tale 'D' shaped exit holes on the trunk left by adult beetles after hatching from the pupae inside the tree.

Internal symptoms are tissue necrosis (thought to be caused by the pathogenic bacteria) and extended galleries near the necrosis and created by beetle larvae tunnelling in and around the phloem (food conducting tissue) and cambium. Cambium is the lateral meristem composed of dividing cells and responsible for growth in girth of the tree. This is the damage which

appears to deliver the death blow to AOD affected oak trees.

AOD is particularly cruel because it only appears in oak trees over 50 years old. Government scientists at Forest Research appear to be a long way away from unravelling the exact mechanics of AOD and until they do there is no hope of any control measures.

An added problem not yet widely appreciated is the interacting effect of oak processionary moth (OPM), a serious insect pest of oak trees featured by Greenkeeper International (Beware of OPM on the Golf Course) in January 2012. Experience in Germany, where the insect pest (OPM) is rife, shows infested oaks with additional extensive damage caused by *Agrilus biguttatus*.

OPM is currently confined to London with a small satellite infestation in Berkshire and yet to spread into areas of the UK where oak trees are suffering from acute oak decline.

Indications are that if these two separate problems (OPM and AOD) came together on a wide scale the combined implications for oak trees in damage and death could far outweigh what they are capable of individually.

about the author



Dr Terry Mabbett

Dr Terry Mabbett is a disease, pest and weed control specialist with forty years international experience covering research, advisory and journalism. His current fields of focus are professional turf and alien insect pests and pathogens of Britain's native and naturalised trees.

ABOVE: Characteristic 'D' shaped exit holes of the adult *Agrilus biguttatus* beetle which invariably accompany bleeding from the bark

BELOW: Larvae of *Agrilus biguttatus* excavate long galleries in and around the phloem and cambium tissue (Picture courtesy of Forestry Commission)

BOTTOM: Adult *Agrilus biguttatus* beetle (Picture courtesy of Forestry Commission)



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JACOBSEN

English oaks on the golf course

English oaks are not widely planted on golf courses, especially near to greens, and for good reason. The English oak tree's root system is far reaching and able to undermine greens from a distance, and therefore years of investment in professional sports turf. Nevertheless mature English oaks are common features on many golf courses, mostly as 'relics' from farmland, woodland and country estates on which the courses were built – and also due to their sheer longevity.

Many courses have oak trees of 100 to 200 years old and it is not uncommon to find some with specimens of 400 to 500 years

at Forest Research is completely overwhelmed. The vast majority of sites on the Forestry Commission's AOD Distribution Map are reported by landowners and will not have been visited by Forest Research Scientists or had samples taken for testing and confirmation.

Despite the seriousness of AOD at this very moment the government has provided relatively little funding for research.

This has been left to the goodwill and generosity of charities like Woodland Heritage.

Chalara ash dieback was the result of an alien plant pathogen allowed to enter the UK despite years of unheeded warnings and corresponding negligence by the UK plant health authorities. As such

“AOD has not received the level of attention and investment afforded to chalara ash dieback but that could change anytime now with AOD spreading quickly throughout the country”

or more. As such they are large sentinel trees occupying prime positions and in this context are essentially irreplaceable. Indeed a nationwide survey would almost certainly show UK golf courses to be important custodians of ancient and veteran trees and English oak in particular.

Not only the mature English oaks on the golf course add to the landscape, because oak trees in the woodlands, hedgerows, meadows and parklands contiguous with golf courses play an important part too.

More than any other deciduous tree the English oak adds extended colour to a golf course. Leaves in their attractive tan coloured autumn condition remain on trees right through November and well into December.

Once down on the ground English oak leaves with their high tannin content (tannin is a natural preservative) stay crisp and dry causing few problems for turf grasses beneath and are relatively easy to clear up and remove.

Greenkeepers who suspect 'acute oak decline' on their courses are advised to report their suspicions to the UK plant health authorities* but should not expect a lot of support or even a visit to confirm the report.

This is because the small team of scientists working on AOD

it has become a political pathogen with government now throwing everything at the problem to avoid further embarrassment.

The agents causing acute oak decline are entirely different. *Agrius biguttatus* is a native 'buprestid' (metallic glossy bark boring) beetle. The associated bacteria - though new to science - were probably present in the UK all along, but simply not identified.

This difference has meant AOD not receiving the level of attention and investment afforded to chalara ash dieback but that could change anytime now with AOD spreading quickly throughout the country and causing increasingly widespread and heavy lethal damage in the UK's native oak tree population.

In the not too distant future the UK government will be faced with what looks likely to be a forlorn attempt to save our two most important native trees, English oak and common ash. UK golf courses will be much the poorer if they disappear. If we did lose English oak the country could end up like Mauritius which displays the 'Dodo' on the country's coat of arms.

**Tree Health Diagnostic
Advisory Service. E-mail:
ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.
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BOTH IMAGES: UK golf courses are the custodians of many ancient and veteran English oak trees. This has its roots in farmland over which this south of England course was laid out in 1923.



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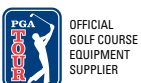
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The trip of a lifetime



Ten BIGGA Delegates - who we profiled in January's Greenkeeper International - travelled to San Diego just after BTME for the trip of a lifetime, in association with Bernhard & Company.

The trip began with the them jetting from Heathrow to San Diego, and after a Golf Day at Encinitas Ranch Golf Course they enjoyed two superb course walks. The first was at La Costa Resort & Spa.

Their first educational seminar held at San Diego Convention Centre was 'Greens Aerification and Water Management by Numbers', and over the next two days they alternately explored the Golf Industry Show and joined BIGGA's Learning and Development Manager Sami Strutt on the BIGGA Stand. Another seminar - 'Sure Ways to Increase Plant Health' followed by the famous Torrey Pines course - a PGA Tour venue.

Here's a selection of their comments and photographs from what proved to be an unforgettable week...



Torrey Pines

"It was fascinating to see how the industry is run over there, and they're just as passionate as we are. Some of the differences were surprising. One of the courses we visited had a Superintendent who'd come to the club straight from university and he had a team mostly of labourers rather than turf professionals, so that was interesting.

"The GIS was on such a large scale it took two days for me to take it all in! Some of the education took place within the main halls of the exhibition which I also thought was a good idea.

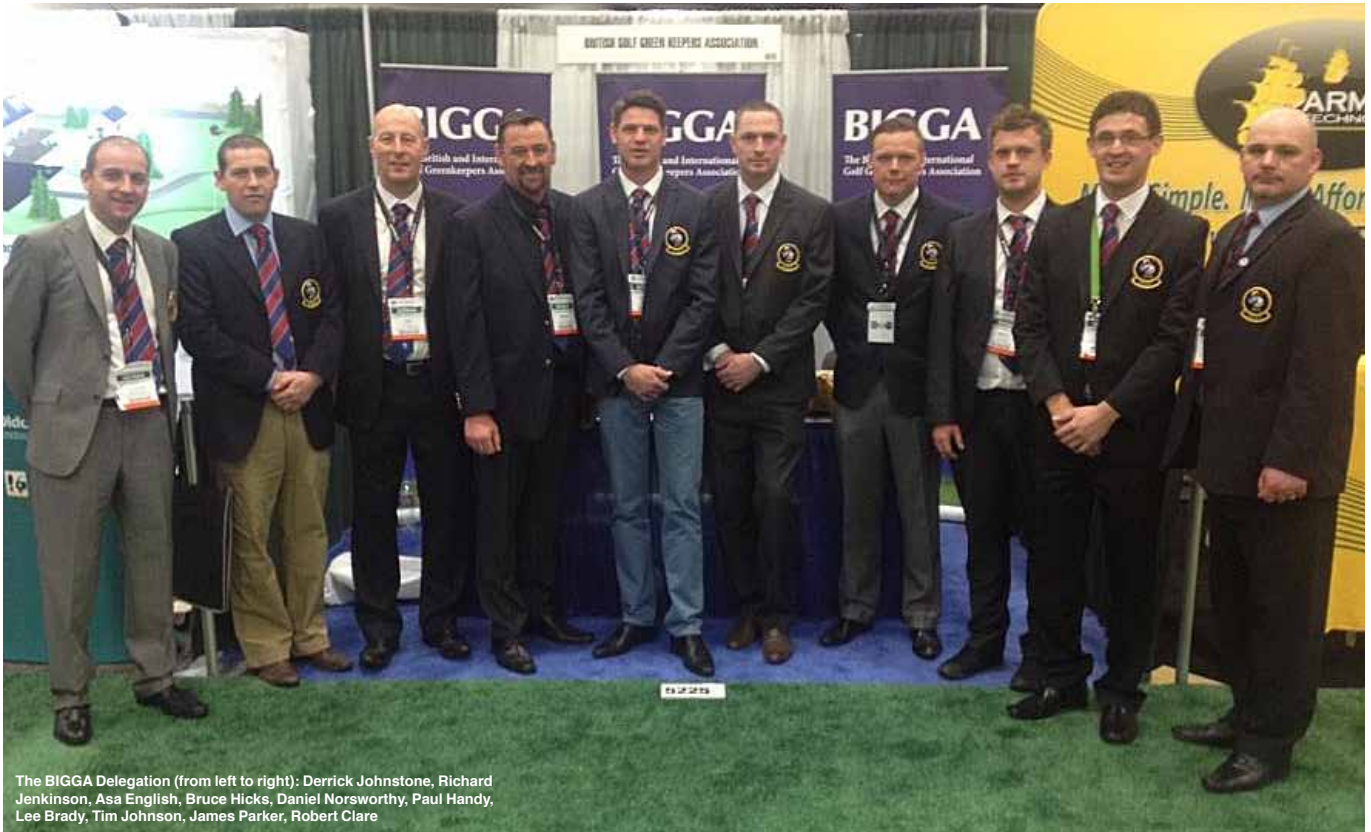
"The delegation were a really good range of ages, jobs and courses. My room mate was Derrick Johnstone from the Wentworth Club, and it was a great opportunity for us to compare the similarities and differences between his club and mine.

"I can't imagine why you wouldn't apply to be part of this. It was my first visit to America and it was superb - I'd urge you to apply for next year's delegation."

Asa English, Deputy Course Manager, Rothley Park Golf Club



Rhett Evans, CEO of GCSAA, during the education programme



The BIGGA Delegation (from left to right): Derrick Johnstone, Richard Jenkinson, Asa English, Bruce Hicks, Daniel Norworthy, Paul Handy, Lee Brady, Tim Johnson, James Parker, Robert Clare

“It truly was the most unforgettable experience I have ever had in my career”

Richard Jenkinson

– Deputy Course Manager, G West

“It truly was the most unforgettable experience I have ever had in my career to date. To have the opportunity to attend and be part of such a friendly group is really very difficult to explain.

“I can safely say that I learned plenty of things I can apply to my current place of employment and I made new friends for life.

“It’s impossible to pick out one outstanding highlight as I enjoyed every single moment of the trip and can’t quite believe that it all went so quickly! However one of the obvious highlights were our tours around Torrey Pines and La Costa. One of the fascinating things for me was the difference between them even though they are just ten minutes’ drive apart. The management style is similar but the terrain and the composition of the courses are completely different. Torrey Pines is on a cliff and La Costa is closer to the riverside meaning totally contrasting styles of course. I now have an understanding of what previous delegates were talking about when they said it is a very tough but life changing week.”

Richard Jenkinson – Deputy Course Manager, G West

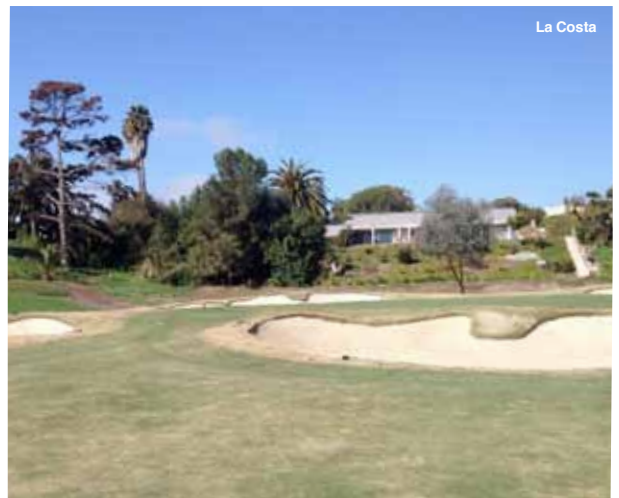
“All I can really say is thank you to Bernhard’s, BIGGA and the everyone who I went to San Diego with. I’ve made some very good friends for life, and you’ve made a normal greenkeeper who’s just starting out in the industry feel very welcome after one of the best weeks of my life!”

Tim Johnson – Assistant Greenkeeper, The Wilmslow Golf Club

“I would just like to thank Bernhard and BIGGA for the fantastic trip to GIS in San Diego. All those that attended had a career changing experience.

The way things are put together and run is a credit to both teams. The delegation successfully gave the best impression of our association. Thanks again to everyone involved. If you have not yet been part of the delegation give it some serious thought next year. This is a mind blowing opportunity. If you have applied before and missed out keep applying one day your time will come!”

James Parker – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Close House Golf & Country Club



“Torrey Pines was just world-class, I got so much out of it.

“You dream about working somewhere like that and to get the chance to bounce ideas off some of the guys over there was terrific.

“The whole trip was fantastic, San Diego was such a vibrant city, and we all got on really well.

“We’ve swapped email addresses and phone numbers so if we have a greenkeeping related issue, we can share it with each other. I’ve already urged the guys at Wentworth to go for next year’s trip because it’s unmissable.

Derrick Johnstone – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, The Wentworth Club

From the ashes

Steve Castle spoke to David Jeffrey, Head Greenkeeper at Machrie Bay Golf Club on the Isle of Arran, who recently experienced every greenkeeper's worst nightmare



Just five days into 2013, the two maintenance facilities at Machrie Bay were destroyed by a ferocious fire. David lost almost all of his equipment plus personal effects – including diaries he had kept detailing work on the course during his 13-year tenure at the picturesque course on the island off the west coast of Scotland.

But David, who has just one other member of staff, has kept the nine-hole course open thanks to sheer determination – and the terrific help he's received from a neighbouring club.

I met David for the first time at BTME 2013 – and he visibly winced as he described the worst moment of his working life.

It was 8.45am on the morning of Saturday 5 January when his wife received a frantic phone call from the Club Secretary of Shiskine Golf

Club, around four miles away from his course.

He recalls: "My wife told me the Secretary had seen smoke coming from the direction of our two sheds and they were both gone. The first thing I had to do was inform my employer of the fire, a terrible thing to have to do. I then got in my car and drove to the course which is about six miles from my house.

"When I got there I could see it was just utter devastation, it was absolutely catastrophic. The sheds were in ruins and I realised I'd basically lost 13 years of work. Everything I'd built up over that time and was proud of had all been reduced to rubble.

"I lost almost everything machinery wise. I had two John Deere machines that were away for servicing so luckily they escaped, but everything else went. It's the small things that you fine tune over the years that are the worst things

to lose. For example I'd set up the scarifier so it was almost perfect for the course.

"The intensity of the fire was incredible, it even bent my stimp-meter and pinch bar."

But the biggest blow was the loss of his collection of paper diaries. Since his arrival at the club in October 1999, he painstakingly kept notes of all work completed on the course – no matter how small – along with information on weather conditions. He updated this twice a day meaning he had created a unique record of life at Machrie Bay.

"If someone asked when we had done some particular work on the course I would be able to pinpoint what we had done almost to the hour, and why we'd done it. It was such an important resource, meant a lot to me and that can never be replaced.

"We've had to hire tractors and borrow everything else from my

“When I got there I could see it was just utter devastation. The sheds were in ruins and I realised I’d lost 13 years of work. Everything had been reduced to rubble”



David Jeffrey with the Kinloch Cup (fortunately not stored in the shed!) courtesy of Hamish Bannatyne

friend Stewart Fotheringham at Shiskine Golf Club. He has let me use all sorts of equipment from a greens mower to waterproofs.”

Stewart’s assistance is a fine example of how neighbouring golf clubs can really help each other out in difficult times. He’s been at Shiskine for 30 years and said: “David would have helped me out if I was in the same situation, and it’s a really close island community here. I saw the aftermath of the fire and it was just total devastation, but I’m here to help out any way I could.”

“Obviously he needed machines quickly and I was happy to lend him whatever he needed. Pretty much everything went in the fire, so he even needed small things like waterproofs. It’s just been a terrible time for everyone but David will pull through.”

Remarkably Machrie Bay has remained fully open throughout, and this was extremely important as it hosts competitions on an almost weekly basis throughout the year as well as attracting thousands of visitors. David’s entire green staff consists of himself and a young apprentice who was on holiday at the time of the blaze.

Police investigations are ongoing into the fire and it’s being treated as ‘suspicious’. David added: “We’re waiting on the insurance. You have to make an inventory of everything you had for the loss adjuster, and

for weeks I was waking up in the middle of the night remembering something else which I’d lost.

“It’s also going to be a frustrating wait to get the new sheds in place. The council insist we need full planning permission for a new shed which will take eight weeks, then it’s three weeks to get them here.”

David urges greenkeepers who have personal possessions on site to insure them – he was unfortunate in that he was storing items such as his motorbike on site because he was in the process of building a domestic shed at home.

“I have had to come to terms with the fact that certain things will never be replaced – of course, the diaries are the main thing.

“But we have 340 members, and we’re very busy all year round, particularly in summer where we have so many visitors to the island who want to come and play the course. There’s no way people should have to stop enjoying golf here because of what’s happened, and we were determined no rounds would be lost. It’s a beautiful setting, we call it God’s country up here and we weren’t going to let the fire wreck things.”

It’s been a terrible few months for David and the owners of the Course – Dougarie Estate - but he remains hopeful that Machrie Bay will emerge stronger from this calamitous start to the New Year.



IMAGES OF FIRE DAMAGE, courtesy of Dougarie Estate :
 TOP: remains of a tractor
 MIDDLE: two rotary mowers
 LEFT: Remains of a sprayer, rotary mower and fertiliser spreader





IMAGES ON THIS PAGE OF
MACHARIE BAY: The splendid
first 1st green (above) , 1st tee
(far left) and the 8th hole (left)
Courtesy of Hamish Bannatyne

American

How did TPC Scottsdale prepare for the biggest spectator golf event in the world last month? BIGGA member Jason Brooks sent off his CV and found himself on the support team for the Phoenix Open in Arizona – here he describes a fascinating few months on both a personal and professional level



dream

I've been Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Torquay Golf Club for eight years, and through BIGGA I have met great friends from across the UK and overseas who share my passion for the profession.

I've been on the support teams at The Open Championship and the PGA Championship - and these occasions left me wanting more, to experience an extended period of tournament preparation somewhere special. I decided I was going to make a real effort to secure a position somewhere that would add to my professional skills and open new doors for me in my career.

The Dream Begins

My Greens Chairman was very supportive, so I sent my CV to a host of people including Carl Roth, Senior Vice President of Agronomy for the PGA Tour. He got me in touch with Jeff Plotts, Director of Golf Course Maintenance at TPC Scottsdale. We had a great chat, he confirmed he would like me to spend five months of the winter there and the dream of joining the team at the Waste Management Phoenix Open was becoming reality.

Due to visa difficulties I contacted Mike O'Keeffe who told me all about the Ohio State University (OSU) programme, and me joining this world-famous programme would allow him to complete my move to Scottsdale as an intern. Besides helping me out with the highly complex visa application process, he explained other aspects such as salary and taxes.

Good Morning Scottsdale

There are two courses at TPC Scottsdale, the Stadium course (which has held the Phoenix Open since 1987) and the Champions course. Both have an incredible 45,000 rounds played annually. The summer temperatures are brutal, with average highs of over 40C.

The entire course is Bermuda grass until the start of October when the huge overseeding process begins to turn the course from warm season grasses to cool season grasses for the milder winter. It is a huge undertaking - the course is closed for two weeks during which the Bermuda will be verticut, scalped then the debris collected before the overseeding can begin. Apart from the greens a perennial rye grass/fine fescue 80/20 mix is used for all the other areas. The

greens mix is velvet bent, chewings fescue and poa trivialis.

This two week window is pretty small when you consider that the golfers will be out playing on the newly germinated grass, the same grass that has to be tournament standard just over 12 weeks later. The grass seed alone costs over £130,000. Factor in extra hours for staff, no playing revenue for a fortnight, a £350,000 per year irrigation water cost and numerous fertiliser applications and it's a massive outlay – but it should ensure top quality playing conditions all year round.

They use reclaimed water to irrigate both courses, this has a high sodium content so they apply calcite calcium regularly prior to irrigating to flush the build up of the sodium content out of the soil. The greens, tees and approaches are all handmowed. Topdressing is applied by pedestrian fertiliser spreaders as well as more overseeding on the greens on a weekly basis through December to help firm up and improve the surfaces.

The Bermuda grass areas not overseeded are sprayed with Diquat, a contact herbicide, this helps suppress any further growth and gives it a striking colour contrast against the dark green rye grass. All the tee and bunker surrounds are dormant Bermuda which stands out so well on television.

It is a difficult facility to manage as essentially each year there are two grow-in periods, and new grass is immediately in play following each transition. Add in the largest spectator golf event in the world held at the coldest point in the year when growth has slowed dramatically - it's enough to give the superintendents nightmares. Most golf facilities will have a down time at some point of the year but not TPC Scottsdale.

Winter weather is generally good - dry and warm during the day - however as it is a desert region temperatures plummet at night and frosts are very common. Strangely, in the morning the course can be free of any frost but as the sun starts to rise the warm air pushes the cold air down to create a frost. It happened a few times and we would have to stop mowing and wait until the sun burned it off.

Over half a million spectators pour through the gates during the tournament, and 20,000 each day of these will be at the famous 16th hole. It definitely beats setting up your course for the monthly stableford!



The entire course is Bermuda grass until the start of October when the huge overseeding process begins to turn the course from warm season grasses to cool season grasses for the milder winter

Wet Wet Wet

As the tournament loomed the height of cuts were gradually lowered apart from the rough which remained at three inches. The large desert areas had to be edged and more decomposed granite used where needed.

The pruning of bushes, shrubs and trees were carried out and player walkways were renovated and defined. I was part of a team checking bunker depths were consistent with four inches in the base and two inches on the slopes. It's a couple of weeks' work as there are 79 bunkers.

We gave the 16th special attention as it has so much media focus on it during the week. A local landscaping team was brought in to assist in renovating all the desert area between the tees and the green, adding new cacti and desert shrubs where needed.

Unfortunately we then saw record low temperatures and several frosts which really held back any growth. Then we had some of the hottest temperatures on record which meant hand watering was needed on fairways to treat hot spots, it was a balancing act due to the fact that Brandon Reese – the Course Superintendent - wanted the course to play firm and fast. As little water as possible was used as well as heavy rolling with a road roller to firm up the fairways, approaches and greens.

All was progressing well until we had nearly three inches of rain in two days before the tournament,



which is a lot by anyone's standards especially considering the average rainfall for the year is eight inches. We spent a 12 hour day on the Sunday repairing damage from the rain, there was debris everywhere and water was needing to be pumped away from any low lying areas. It had to be in good shape for Monday for a Pro Am.

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The Action Begins

My jobs for the week were mowing greens in the morning then cutting fairways in the evenings. In total we had about 65 staff working during tournament week, in our pre-tournament meeting we were told it can get a little crazy during the week as there will be a large crowd and most will be drunk!

The course was ready for the Monday Pro Am although very wet, but the weather forecast for the big week was good. The height of cuts were greens 2.875mm, tees, approaches and fairways 10mm,

“The coliseum on the 16th is certainly different with unbelievable crowd noise and Mexican waves”

intermediate rough 1.25 inches and rough three inches. Due to the large numbers of spectators we received a police escort to the course in the afternoons from our compound which was surreal – spectators were filming us on their mobiles.

Another frost on Thursday meant start times were put back by an hour, and some rounds could not be completed as it was too dark. This delayed us getting out on the course for the evening jobs and meant more cutting in the dark. Spotters were posted at any hole that a player had marked their ball to make sure that the marker was replaced at the same spot should any mowing need to be done. Any more frost delays could have meant the tournament continuing into Monday which would have been a real headache for everyone.

Friday fortunately had no frost and play started on time with the remaining 1st rounds completed before the 2nd round started. A new

record Friday attendance was registered of 121,901. Fantastic weather and local favourite Phil Mickelson leading the tournament then swelled numbers to a new record Saturday attendance of 179,022. Cooler weather and a clash with the Superbowl on Sunday lowered crowd numbers to 58,791 giving a massive overall total of 525,821. Mickelson won despite a late challenge from Brandt Snedeker.

We did have one brief opportunity to sit in the coliseum on the 16th for the remainder of the day; it certainly is different with unbelievable crowd noise and Mexican waves!

The experience was amazing, I wish I had considered going through the OSU programme before. I really would recommend it to greenkeepers wanting to train at a top course and add important experience to their CV. If you're interested contact Mike O'Keefe at okeeffe.1@osu.edu

I was also lucky enough to receive a scholarship from Syngenta which covered health insurance and other fees. This was a reward for my efforts, and I was very honoured to be one of the five selected for it.

I have to thank my family Anna, Callun and Katie, who let me sacrifice my time away from them in order to fulfil an ambition. Also thank you to Mik Wells, Eddie Adams, Cal Roth, Jeff Plotts, Mike O'Keefe and Torquay Golf Club and to Brandon and his team for making me so welcome at TPC Scottsdale.

It truly was the experience of a lifetime, all arising from sending a few emails.



The stand at the 16th






The Waste Management Phoenix Open is one of the PGA Tour's most popular tournaments and attracts over half a million fans – the most to attend a golf event anywhere in the world. It's been held annually at TPC Scottsdale in Arizona in the South West of the USA since 1987.

Its 16th hole has become one of the most famous in golf as a 'coliseum' of around 20,000 seats is erected around the 160-yard par three, generating a raucous atmosphere similar to a football match with spectators cheering shots that land on the green and booing those that miss. It was the location for a famous Tiger Woods hole in one in 1997. This year the tournament was won by local favourite Phil Mickelson.

16th aerial shot courtesy of Jeff Plotts of the PGA Tour

A person wearing a blue plaid shirt, black pants, an orange helmet, and safety glasses is using a long, black telescopic power pruner to trim a high branch of a large tree. The person is standing on a dirt path in a grassy area with many trees in the background. The pruner has a long, extendable shaft and a cutting head at the top. The person is holding the shaft with both hands, and the cutting head is positioned near a branch of the tree. The background shows a dense forest of green trees under a clear sky.

Telescopic power pruners, such as the pictured Stihl HT 131, enable the operator to trim branches up to 5m from the ground. These are popular tools, but care needs to be taken when cutting heavy branches. This is to protect both the operator and the tree.

Think before you prune

James de Haviland looks at how to prune troublesome low branches and explores some of the best products on offer

There are essentially two main types of dedicated petrol powered pole saw on offer; fixed length units with a reach of up to around 3.0m and telescopic designs that may extend to perhaps 4.50 to 5.00m. The saw element will be based around a 10, 12 or possibly 14in guide bar.

Combination tools, where the working element can be swapped between a brushcutter, saw head or myriad of other tools are a further alternative. These are well worth considering where a pole pruner is less likely to see anything other than occasional use.

The downside is that combination tool prices are typically higher than dedicated tools.

A pole pruner attachment on its own could cost over £300. Quality rigid pole saw prices vary a great deal, but budget around £400 as a starting point.

Some designs allow the standard shaft of rigid units to be extended to 500 or 1,000mm. These extra lengths can be bought at a later date, but if you need longer reach consider telescopic units from the outset. These will carry a premium of typically £50 to £100 but this can be less than opting for an extended non-telescopic designs.

Reach and power

For safety, a pruner needs to be operated at around 60 degrees to the branch. This is to allow pruned material to fall without hitting the operator. As such, the actual reach of a pruner is less than its total length. As a rule, it pays to buy a longer pruner than you may think you need.

Although combination tool power units are increasingly offered in two-stroke or four-stroke designs, dedicated power pruners are more likely to stick with a two-stroke of around 20 to 30cc developing 0.6 to 1.5kW in power output. But you may find more powerful units on offer. The key consideration is weight as a heavy tool can be difficult to place accurately. Vibration levels on some designs can be quite high so consider this if the tool is to be worked for extended periods.

In most cases, a body harness is supplied to help support the weight of the tool when moving it around, but a support harness may also be supplied for use in work.

Working a pole saw is straightforward for thin, lighter branches. These can be cut in one action from the top down. Thicker and heavier branches need cutting with care.

Loop handles are typically fitted to combi tool or split shaft models, the four-stroke Makita EX250LH having a choice of five different attachments. You need to do a few sums before assuming a multiple tool design is a more cost effective buy than a dedicated alternative.



Can you prune and chop as you wish?

When we last looked at power pruners, we mentioned the need to work within any Tree Preservation Orders. A TPO is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999. Typically made by the local planning authority (usually a local council), a TPO can protect either a specific tree or applied more broadly to protect trees within a specified area.

A TPO is most commonly used in urban and semi-urban settings and is aimed at protecting trees for the public's enjoyment. Generally a TPO takes into account the 'amenity' value of a tree or woodland and can include its nature conservation value or its visual 'impact'. If a tree is not visible or accessible from a public place a TPO will not usually be enforced.

On a golf course, you should never just assume everything is OK and you can treat trees as you like. A tree subject to a TPO should be listed in a way that its 'owner' or person responsible for its protection is aware of its status. But these issues can get forgotten, so it can pay to check. Hedges are not covered by TPOs, but as tree within a hedge may be.

TPOs are public documents and can be inspected at the local planning authority's office, or online.

It is best to cut back towards the trunk progressively in sections to reduce both the weight and volume of material falling. This will help protect the tree and prevent a long branch swinging back and clouting the operator.

For a clean cut at the trunk, larger branches should be undercut by a third before sawing through from the top. The aim is to produce a clean cut that allows the 'wound' to heal quickly and prevent disease entering the tree. As a guide, keep the cut close to the trunk but retaining enough branch bark at its base to grow over and heal the 'wound'.

Capacity wise, most pole pruners will tackle a 40cm diameter branch if the saw chain is sharp. That is not to say working up to this size is recommended but a good sharp chain can allow even a modest pruner to tackle quite a hefty branch.

As a rule, it is always better to prune lightly and leave a cleanly cut truncated large branch that can then be properly sawn off close to the trunk with a chainsaw. In most cases it is best to leave this to a trained arboriculturist, particularly on specimen trees.

Makes and models

Stihl and Husqvarna remain the key initial 'power tool' choice for many professional users; these two companies have the widest product offering and have strong dealer support pretty much throughout the country – although of course there are alternatives.

So what should you be looking for? Job one is to work out what you want the tool to achieve. For many a key job is to just take out the odd branch that catches when mowing.

A light pruner that can be carried on a mower at the beginning of the peak mowing season in spring could be just the tool for the job. Opt for a combi tool, and the head can be swapped to allow a line trimmer to be fitted to deal with the odd patch of difficult to reach grass too. A good option where one person would otherwise need to go back to fetch tools to finish the job after mowing.

Telescopic power pruners are pretty much the best option for most users as these tools have extra reach 'built in'.

A downside is that these pruners do not take kindly to rough handling, operators sometimes allowing the cutting head to drop to the ground when cutting and damaging the shaft. Unlike a brushcutter, the cutting element needs to



be sharpened and lubricated too. If a pruner needs to be 'forced' to cut, the shaft can get damaged, compromising the tools longevity.

With regards to power, a tool with greater capacity may get the job done faster but it may come with a weight penalty.

For occasional use this is less of an issue, but consider the type of harness on offer. A good harness can make heavier tools easier to move around and operate when not working to full reach.

There is tremendous choice when it comes to both dedicated power pruners and combination tools that can be fitted with a pruning head. The latter, such as the pictured Solo 109LG Combi system, is a versatile choice that will enable the power unit to be used for other jobs such as brushcutting



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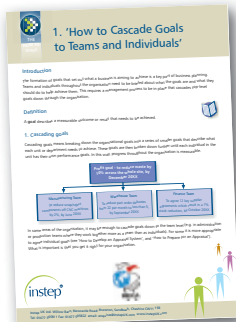


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Question time

We teamed up with Today's Golfer magazine to discover BIGGA members' opinions of golfers – the first ever such survey of the nation's greenkeepers. Read on for the thought-provoking responses

The vast majority of greenkeepers communicate with members...74% of golfers directly blame greenkeepers if the course is below expectations...almost half of golfers repair pitch marks badly.

These are just some of the fascinating findings after Today's Golfer surveyed BIGGA members recently, and published the results in their latest issue.

Today's Golfer acknowledged that golfers are quick to criticise when they feel elements of the course are unsatisfactory, but slow to praise greenkeepers when the course looks good and plays great. So they contacted us and together we came up with the survey. Its aim was to help golfers across the UK understand in more detail the skill and hard work that enables them to play on well maintained courses and show greater appreciation of the huge amount of work that goes into maintaining a golf course.

Thanks to the BIGGA members who responded – the results were very interesting – and all responses will remain anonymous. Today's Golfer enjoys a large readership and BIGGA hopes that this survey will not only raise the profile of greenkeeping but educate golfers on the intricacies of the industry.

It's clear that communication and education are the key words when it comes to increasing the respect golfers have for greenkeepers, and a lack of understanding of a greenkeepers' role is a real bugbear. On a lighter note, some of the respondents revealed some hilarious and bizarre tales of strange behaviour from golfers – turn to 'what's the funniest/weirdest thing you've seen a player do/say?' for more.

The survey is reproduced here in full with the kind permission of Today's Golfer.

EXCLUSIVE SURVEY

WHAT BRITAIN'S GREENKEEPERS REALLY THINK OF YOU

test... more than half of us don't repair the best courses on the cheap. These are the results from the first ever greenkeepers survey

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ut them and many are difficult battles as out and the British se.

ed up with the British greenkeepers A) to give chance to have their say. We sent out a 16-question survey and hundreds of greenkeepers filled it out anonymously to reveal what they really think about golfers, what their jobs actually involve and what can be done to improve our courses. The results make for interesting and thought-provoking reading...

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GREENKEEPERS HAVE THEIR SAY
'Most golfers don't look after their course'

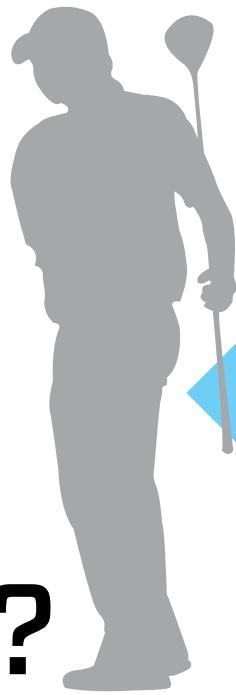
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PLUS FIVE NEW SETS OF IRONS REVEALED > PSYCHOLOGY OF WINNING WITH G-MAC > BOB VOKEY'S WEDGE ADVICE

How do you feel you are perceived by golfers?

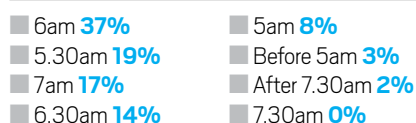


“As people who just mow grass and cut down trees, there is no understanding of what and why we do work, but I ask them: ‘What would happen to their garden if they walked up and down it 200 times a day?’”

The majority of greenkeepers feel they are respected by most of their club's members, but this can be undermined by a lack of understanding of what is required to maintain good playing qualities and a small proportion of golfers who do not respect them and question their abilities. More and more golfers have started to view greenkeepers as professionals in the last five years, but, according to the men themselves, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

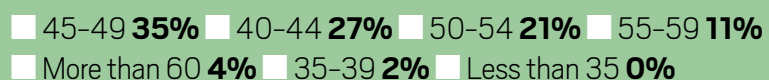
“There definitely is a mixed perception of greenkeepers by golfers. There are those who can appreciate the difficulties in maintaining year-round quality surfaces, and then there are those who expect to play a well-maintained course whenever they want, whatever the weather with no disruption to play from greenkeeping practices. The latter tend to view the greenkeeper as the enemy and see any course closures as his fault. Unfortunately, they can often be the more vocal.”

“I think they view us as very important in the overall running of the golf club. They realise that without us there would not be a course for them to play on. They also think sometimes that we do things to annoy them (aerate, top dress etc) but in reality these tasks are essential and the majority of the membership totally understand the actions we take. We have a good relationship with our members but it has to be worked at; communication at all times with them is the key to a good relationship.”



Two-thirds of greenkeepers are on the course before 6am during the season so spare a thought for them when your 6.30am alarm call shocks you awake for that 8am tee time. Every greenkeeper in the land will be well into their working day by the time you hit a ball.

HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK DO YOU WORK IN THE SUMMER?



During the summer months virtually every greenkeeper in Britain works more than the UK full-time average of 37 hours a week. For the 36 per cent that work more than 50 hours, that works out at a minimum of eight hours and 20 minutes a day, six days a week. The equivalent of working 9am-6.20pm with a one-hour lunch break from Monday to Saturday.

What level of interaction do you have with club golfers?



The vast majority of greenkeepers are attempting to interact and communicate with their members, but many feel their voice isn't always heard. This is a two-way street so look

out for ways to learn more about course maintenance and don't be afraid to ask your greenkeepers questions. They know what they're talking about and will always be willing to help. ■



WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO EDUCATE PLAYERS ABOUT COURSE CARE?

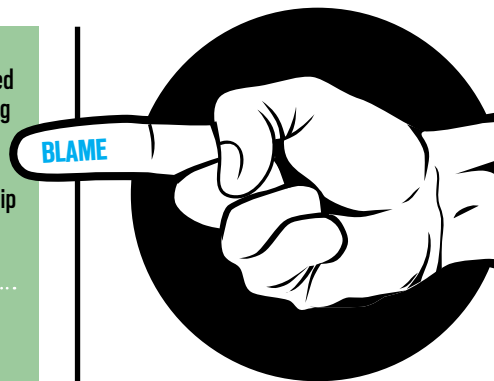
Greenkeepers feel that communication and helpful education is the key here, whether that's the introduction of a short test, more information in media golf coverage, etiquette lessons for new players or regular newsletters and meetings for existing members.

"When new members are introduced to the club they should have training on the correct ways to repair pitch marks and divots etc. Letters should be included with membership renewals reminding golfers of their duties to protect their course."

"Pros should make time in their lessons to inform golfers of course care and etiquette (which our pro does)."

"Perhaps educational nights combined with a bit of fun. It takes years to learn how to look after a golf course properly so just teaching relevant aspects would be beneficial. I've had members complaining about areas of the golf course and directly blaming green staff only for them to realise after discussions and explanation that the problems are caused by uneducated golfers."

"Each club should provide free pitch mark repair tools and educate them to respect their fellow golfers and leave each area of the course as they found it."



DO GOLFERS DIRECTLY BLAME YOU IF THEY FEEL THE COURSE HAS NOT MET THEIR EXPECTATIONS?

Yes 74% No 26%

It's right and understandable that greenkeepers are held to account for course condition, but they can't control the weather and many face decreasing budgets. These factors have to be taken into account when assessing how good a job is being done. After the wettest summer in 100 years and a horrible winter, it's likely your garden probably isn't looking its best, especially if you're spending less on it. Greenkeepers are fighting the same problems, but on a far larger scale.

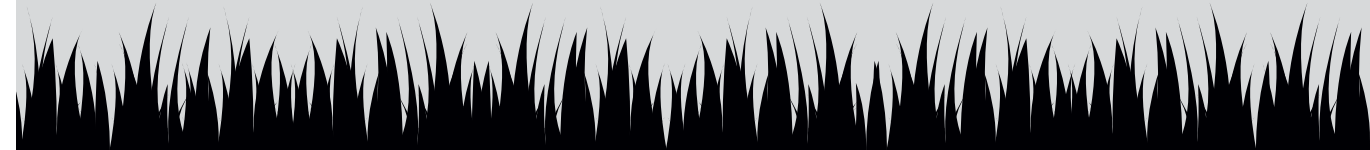
How good are golfers at putting divots back?

- Average **58%**
- Bad **25%**
- Good **12%**
- Very bad **4%**
- Very good **1%**

It seems we're a bit better at replacing divots than repairing pitch marks, but with 29 per cent of golfers still below the required standard there is plenty of room for

improvement. It only takes a few seconds to replace a divot or fill one with sand (if it has been provided). It also goes a long way to improving the look and

playability of your golf course and can save the greenkeepers valuable time that could be spent repairing or improving other areas of the course.



IN SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES GOLFERS NEED TO PASS A TEST TO BE ALLOWED TO PLAY GOLF WHICH INCLUDES A SECTION ON ETIQUETTE AND COURSE CARE. DO YOU THINK THIS WOULD BE OF BENEFIT IN THE UK?

**YES
91%**

In some countries where golf is relatively new you have to prove you have enough ability and knowledge to take care of the course and not be a danger to yourself and other golfers, but the history and tradition of golf in the UK means this knowledge is usually assumed here, even from beginners. It's clear that many golfers could benefit from brushing up etiquette and course care — you can improve your knowledge at www.randa.org.

How well do golfers repair pitch marks at your facility?

■ Badly **45%** ■ Average **39%** ■ Very badly **12%** ■ Well **4%** ■ Very well **0%**

Greenkeepers believe fewer than half golfers repair pitch marks to an adequate standard. Make sure you always have a pitch mark reparer in your pocket when on the course and ask the pro or greenkeeper if you need guidance on how to properly use it. And remember, just because your ball finished off the green, it doesn't mean it didn't land on it.



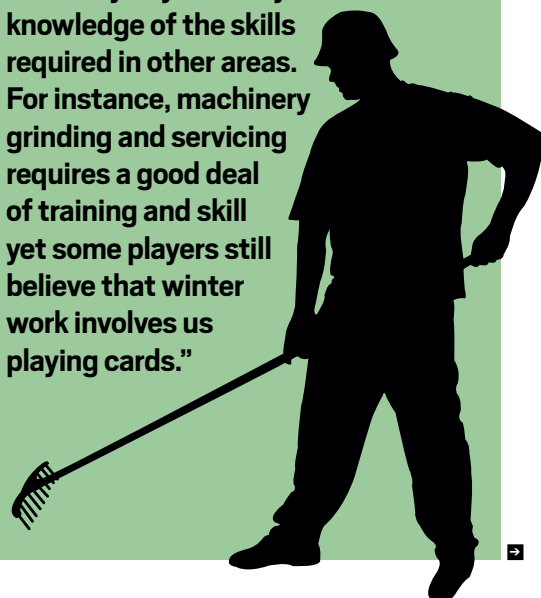
WHAT ARE THE MOST OVERLOOKED ASPECTS OF COURSE CARE?

There are a wide range of areas that greenkeepers feel are overlooked by golfers, from simple things like properly replacing divots and repairing pitch marks, to things the golfer's eye doesn't see such as drainage, machinery maintenance and biological and ecological knowledge. It's obvious that the majority of greenkeepers would be over the moon if all golfers did the simple things like replace their divots, repair their pitch marks and rake bunkers properly when leaving them.

“ Drainage. This includes installing and maintenance. When a course floods members are up in arms but when the flooding stops few committees will spend the right amount of money, the excuse being that it does not happen very often and it is a lot of money. If the committee shows no interest in drainage, staff impact and enthusiasm will be minimal as it can be a very dirty difficult job. ”

“ Pitch marks and fairway divots. After that it would be lack of care in bunker repair after use. ”

“ Members are completely unaware of the work that goes on behind the scenes to maintain a golf course. The high profile work such as mowing and top dressing they see every day but they have no knowledge of the skills required in other areas. For instance, machinery grinding and servicing requires a good deal of training and skill yet some players still believe that winter work involves us playing cards. ”



FORE!

GENERALLY, DO PEOPLE WAIT TO HIT INTO A GREEN YOU'RE WORKING ON?

Usually **78%** Rarely **14%** Always **7%** Never **1%**

The majority of golfers wait for greenkeepers to clear the green but with 15 per cent experiencing this issue on occasion some players still need to think about that. No one should have to worry about being hit by a golf ball on the course, whether working or playing. Just think about how angry you get when you're nearly hit by a ball.

“A golfer would rarely, if ever, play into a green when another golfer is on it, but a greenkeeper cutting or rolling a green or changing a pin position seems to become invisible to them.”

HOW FRIENDLY ARE GOLFERS WHEN YOU COME INTO CONTACT WITH THEM?

■ Friendly **59%** ■ Average **21%** ■ Very friendly **20%**
 ■ Very unfriendly **0%** ■ Unfriendly **0%**

Greenkeepers may not think golfers fully understand their role and do as much to help as we could, but they certainly think we're a friendly bunch. Not one greenkeeper taking the survey said golfers were unfriendly so let's maintain that by chatting with greenkeepers when we see them.

RESPECT

What could be done to increase the respect golfers have for greenkeepers?

It's clear that the key here is communication and education as this was mentioned in virtually every response. Greenkeepers believe that if golfers know more about what they are doing and why, we would understand the challenges they face and passion and pride they have for producing the best course possible. Ask your greenkeepers what they do. They'd appreciate you taking an interest and you'd benefit from the added knowledge.

"The chance to explain why we do what we do. The club has a plan based on the amount of money we have to spend every year. When golfers watch golf on TV they have no idea how much money and back up that event has had, so they want the same but don't want to pay for it."

"Keep communicating with them. Maybe a documentary on the BBC after The Open showing how they prepare the course, and put across the

fact that not all clubs have the budgets and staff that top courses do."

"Make them do a day's work on the course where they are a member."

"Greenkeepers need to be more professional. The old school approach is not one that has helped our image. We must educate members that cutting the grass is the tip of the iceberg and the skilful part of the job is often not seen or recognised."



The standard of general course care and maintenance is clearly a big annoyance for greenkeepers but there are a few other things that drive them crazy too. Taking trolleys and buggies too close to tees and too close to greens, leaving litter on the course, ignoring signs, failure to observe health and safety and general moaning all feature prominently in the survey answers.

■ "Having a moan to the green staff about a subject that is being carried out by direction of the club, which they would have received emails and notices about. When golfers try and bully greenkeepers to change what they are doing for the good of the club."

■ "Playing from the back tees when not playing in a competition."

■ "Taking trolleys and buggies too close to greens and generally not caring for the course."

■ "When golfers don't accept that the course is shut for reasons beyond our control. For example, waterlogged, frozen or snow. We do not do it for our own gratification, it is necessary. It would be far easier just to open it than to have to tell several upset golfers that it's closed, but it's about the bigger picture."

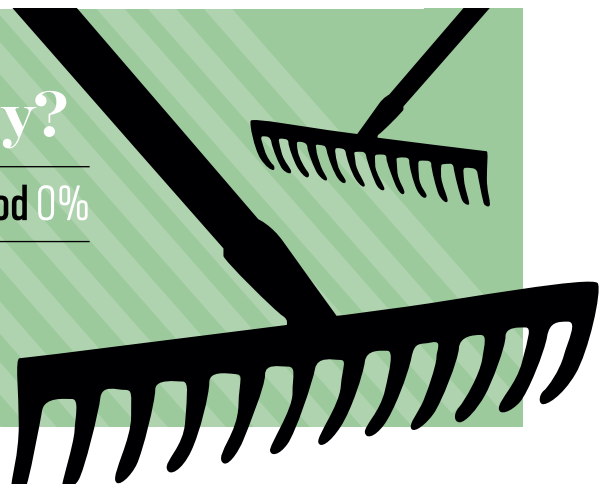
■ "Most golfers want a Rolls Royce, but only want to pay for a Skoda."

What's your pet hate about club golfers?

How good are golfers at raking bunkers at your facility?

Bad 42% Average 38% Very bad 14% Good 6% Very good 0%

More than half of us don't maintain bunkers to the required standard. Having to play from an unraked bunker is one of the most frustrating things in golf and it only takes a minute or two to rake them properly. Remember to leave the rake in an appropriate place so it doesn't affect play and can be easily found by other players, and ask your pro or greenkeepers if you're not sure about how to properly rake a bunker. ▶



What's the funniest/weirdest thing you've seen a player do/say?



■ "A golfer hit a train and then told the driver that he would not have hit it if the train was on time. And someone once mistook a mushroom for the top of his ball. It exploded into bits when he hit it."

■ "A golfer hit two balls into a pond off the 1st tee, then threw his clubs and bag into the pond in frustration. He returned 10 minutes later to retrieve his bag and collect his car keys from inside, before throwing the bag straight back into the pond!"

■ "The funniest thing I've seen was a golfer knocking his tee shot into a bin that was level with the markers. It was a highly-impressive two-yard straight right flop shot with a driver, and it went in without touching the sides."

■ "There was someone who was trying to show off with his remote control trolley and he put it in a pond."

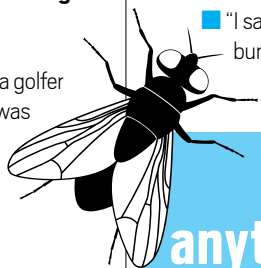
■ "A male golfer walking down a fairway with his pants down because his drive didn't make it past the ladies' tee."

■ "A golfer once asked if we spray the stripes on the green."

■ "We were once asked to remove four new signs from around the putting greens which read 'no chipping onto putting greens' because they didn't say 'please!'"

■ "A member with an injured leg playing a round of golf on a bicycle."

■ "I saw a golfer take a trolley into the bunker and then rake the footprints but not rake the wheel marks once



"Is there anything you can spray to get rid of the flies around the 2nd tee?"

he'd played his shot. He was a bit put out when I pulled him up for it but said he was sorry and played on. A few days later I saw him with his trolley in the bunkers once again. His explanation was that he thought I was upset that he didn't rake out the wheel marks, not that he had the trolley in the bunker!"

■ "A lady golfer at a local club was seen hitting her ball from the turf when fairway mats were in operation (she had been given a mat by the pro shop). The greenkeeper approached and said she must use the mat supplied. He then observed as the lady stood precariously on the mat and hit her next shot off the fairway. You couldn't make it up!"

■ "Two ladies taking their tops off and running through the sprinklers on the green on a hot day (and I have the photo to prove it)."

■ "Once when I was fertilising the tees I heard one golfer ask their playing partner what we were doing. The partner replied, 'they're feeding the birds, that's why we have robins!'"

What's the best conditioned course you've seen in the UK?



More than 40 courses were named in the survey with championship venues and links courses understandably taking the majority of the votes. It seems Scotland has the best greens with Carnoustie, Royal Aberdeen and Loch Lomond leading the standings with six votes each and Turnberry with four. The top English course was Wentworth (four votes) and The Brabazon at The Belfry, Royal Porthcawl, St Andrews, Sunningdale, The Grove and Hankley Common notching three.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO HELP EDUCATE YOUR MEMBERS ON YOUR ROLE AND THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE?

Every greenkeeper who took the survey is making efforts to communicate with their club members, improve knowledge of what they do and keep golfers updated on the course. It's our responsibility to make the most of these opportunities so we can understand their role and take better care of courses ourselves.

"We have monthly members meetings in the clubhouse, a YouTube channel and members can email us and arrange a meeting. We use the bar so it's informal."

"I tried an open day invitation at our workshop and only two people attended – me and my deputy!"

"I communicate all the time. I don't like problems left to fester. If I hear of an issue, big or small, I will resolve it as soon as I can. I talk to members and submit monthly reports."

"We've just started to do a greenkeepers blog so that I can explain any work we do. Before, it was me telling the greens convenor and hoping he understood and then properly communicated it on."

Section Notes

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

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



SCOTLAND



CENTRAL

I'd like to start this month by saying thanks to all the companies who sponsor our website as it is their continued support which allows us to run the Section and stage a variety of events at minimal cost for the members. If you go to www.biggacentralsection.org.uk you will see the different sponsors' logos on the top left of the home page. One click takes you to the sponsors page and another click on a company's logo will take you to each ones website. Also on our website you can find the results of the members survey we carried out last year.

Congratulations from everyone in the section to Lee Strutt and Sami Collins on their recent marriage. Everyone's best wishes also go to John Robertson who has just retired from Richard Aitkens. John has been a "weel kent" face to so many greenkeepers in this area and further afield and will be a hard act to replace! John, we hope you keep in touch and we continue to see you around.

Gordon



EAST

We start off this month with a look back at another successful BTME, seemed a very good steady turnout over the 2 days that I attended. The show had some fantastic educational seminars to take in. I thought

Ryder Cup presentations were first class and this was the big highlight. I also attended the 'James Bond night' and that reminds me I need to get myself some of that gold body paint for my new tee markers!

The theme went down well, we had a great meal and then the fun began with the casino and the very competitive Aston Martin simulator.

There was a slight downer on the night though – we left 20,000 chips in the careful hands of Stuart Taylor.

Unfortunately he invested them into the wrong market on the roulette table and cheerfully informed us the next day that we had lost the lot, so much for an older head.

I would like to welcome on board a couple of new patrons to our section, they are SPS Groundcare and Angus Horticulture, many thanks for your support. Other things going on in our section, European Tour player and former Open Champion Paul Lawrie is redesigning Whitekirk, should be an even better track once it done.

Still waiting on some feedback from the section on your interest in our spring meeting being played at Seahouses on 23 April, again if interested in attending please advise asap and we can sort out travel plans, we have a bus option available if required. Looking forward to the Scottish conference at Dunfermline at the beginning of March, report to follow in next month's magazine.

A final big well done to Stephen Gallacher on his win at the Emirates Golf Club on the European tour last month and good luck Stephen with your newly formed Golf Foundation, the most recent venue to host the foundation was North Berwick West Links in February. Till next month guys, take care. Scott Corrigan scottcorrigan4@aol.com or 07877098237



NORTH

By the time you get this report the Scottish Conference will have passed so hopefully there was a good turn out from the North Section. Paul has sent out the 200 club tickets so hopefully you have them all by now and will have noticed we have 2 sponsors again this year Fairways GM and Sherriff Amenity so thanks very much to them for their support.

The Spring outing is at Duff House Royal on Thursday 25 April sorry to keep mentioning it every month but it is important we have as much support as possible. Speaking about the Spring outing I should remind you that a decision was made at the last committee meeting that there would be no more guests allowed at our outings just members and trade.

There has been some movement in the section with Chris Watson leaving Peterculter Golf Club and moving to the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre and Adam Lindsay leaving Inchmarlo Golf Centre and moving to Peterculter Golf Club, Also Matthew Smith from Newmachar Golf Club is sadly leaving the industry but good luck to them all in their new positions.

Hugh McLatchie got in touch to say he has now been Head Greenkeeper at Peterhead Golf Club for 25 happy years so I am sure all the members pass on their congratulations and I am sure he could tell a few stories after all that time.

Hugh has been in hospital for an operation on his hip so best wishes on a speedy recovery but not too quick as it might give someone else a chance to win the committee trophy at Duff House. Remember to get

in touch if you have any news, no matter how small. Thanks for now Robert Patterson mob 07931639548 and Dale Robertson 07784517534.



WEST

A couple of reminders for those inclined to attend the various educational events, the scheduled conference at Dunfermline is planned for 5 March and you will have received notification about this by the time you read this article, I will report on how things went in the next issue.

The walk arranged for Loch Lomond back in December which was cancelled has been re-arranged for 22 March as a provisional date but please contact David McBride regarding this he will be contacting those people who had intimated their intentions to go previously first of all and then open up to others when spaces are available.

The spring outing is confirmed for 25 April at Buchanan Castle golf club and thanks to Ronnie Myles for arranging that I will look forward to playing it as this is a venue I've never experienced.

The Autumn outing is 19 September at Eastwood golf club, which will be interesting considering all the changes that have been made as a result of the new M77, thanks to Neil Lindsay for arranging the course.

Congratulations to John Garioch in securing the position of head greenkeeper at Elderslie golf club, I hope all goes well and you have every success for the future.

I have been approached to organise a game of football and would like to have a muck about game first to select a team

and thought it might be okay to organise the south of the river against the north so I will be looking for some candidates and will be in contact with the month for names. Finally, if anybody has some information they wish to share or you are interested in the football then please contact me on 07790823914, or stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com.

NORTHERN REGION



NORTH EAST

What a show this years BTME was, first class education and what made it special to me was the amount of greenkeepers from our Section who travelled down and attended seminars. A couple attended the workshops from Alnmouth here is a golf club that sends their staff down on a regular basis year in year out.

Myself, Craig Kilgour and Jack Hetherington from Ponteland stayed overnight and took in the seminar presented by Curtis Tyrrell MG, this was well attended and very interesting. As the week continued more greenkeepers from the section arrived this time from Tyneside GC who all attended the Syngenta seminar with ourselves to listen to Henry Bechelet and Simon Watson again another packed house.

Other news - in January 2012 Tyneside GC embarked on a programme of restoration work due to the heavy rainfall last year. In November 350metres of 9in drainage was installed running through three fairways tying in and fixing broken damaged drains.

Frank Pont the Dutch architect returned in January to oversee the re-building and installation of 5 new bunkers on the 17th, and tying them into the newly installed drain. The existing greenside bunker at the 11th has also been re-shaped, several other drains have been installed and repaired and trees have been cut back.

It's a very busy time at Tyneside but the green staff have enjoyed the work especially

restoring the Colt bunkering which gives the course a unique look in the area.

Also Michael McKenna returned from an 18 month internship in the USA at top courses such as Scioto and Lake Nono. He's now moved to New Zealand to work at The Hills - another top rated club.

I've managed to enrol the following members to the section committee: Michael Gunn, James Parker and David Wilkinson the new Course Manager at Whitley Bay so expect a few things to be lined up over the next few months, further details will be in published in the magazine.

April 11th an Education event will be held at a local golf club with two top speakers on behalf of the section between 7pm - 9pm, details will be sent out to members over the next few weeks non-members are welcome as are anyone from the Cleveland Section.

Nearly forgot - a section match will be arranged against the Cleveland section around June/July which will be a eight man team or similar. Jimmy



NORTHERN

I'm sat in glowing sunshine looking out to blue skies and thinking this time last week I was knee deep in snow!

A few days of dry weather is forecast so we can get on with some much needed work on the course. Interesting times for me at the moment as we are having our sheds rebuilt so we have been busy moving the machines out and sifting through 25 years of stuff, you know that stuff the old boy as stored away and "will come in handy that will one day".

Back to the real world and we had a little committee meeting a few weeks ago to chew things over, golf past and present and any matters arising and welcome Ade Holroyd from Bob Wild to the section as trade rep.

As before with Mike Brier from Rigby Taylor it's great to get their thoughts and ideas regarding issues and I look forward to working with Ade. On our section days we strive

to get great courses to play on and give you guys a good day out and I'm delighted to say we can keep these events at £20 as last year. As always we must insist that jacket and tie are worn at all these functions. Finally as stated in last month's notes I could not attend BTME but feedback has been positive. Please get in touch if you have any news. Andy Slingsby 07506407867 andy.slingsby98@googlemail.com



CLEVELAND

News from the City of Newcastle Golf Club. Finally a little respite in the weather means Turf Care have started getting their teeth into our rainage which involves three greens and we'll be putting the dinghy back into storage for a while, but it might make a little longer to get rid of our webbed feet!

Hopefully everyone enjoyed their trip down to the BTME which I found to be informative and worthwhile. The highlight for me was the online turf management system called TurfKeeper. I've been assured that even me - a technophobe, - can work this system.

It's almost time for our Spring Tournament which will be held at Brancepeth Castle Golf Club. Always a good day; plenty of bad shots, prizes galore and good craic.

On a more serious note, a worrying trend that seems to be developing in the area to supposedly save money is the removal of Head Greenkeepers, leaving the day to day running of the golf course to an elected Committee from within the golf club.

This to me is false economy because of the reduction in staff on the course as well as the loss of expertise, leadership and guidance in all aspects of course maintenance.

We are all aware of the current financial climate, but what is forgotten is that people come to a golf course to play golf. The upkeep of the course should always be the priority for any golf club. So to all Greenkeepers - keep up the good work! Barry Walker



SHEFFIELD

Time flies for me these days as I'm sure it does for many of you. I find it quite unbelievable that having battled across the Woodhead Pass in the snow today I'm now writing notes for the March magazine. I'm sure that many of you are ready for the warmer temperatures and the possibility of a bit of growth to try and establish some signs of a golf course after all the inclement weather. When some of us are next together we could possibly try and create a weather dance, we could all take part in it so we might hopefully get a summer were we can create a golf course to be proud of - or maybe I will just practice it on my own! On the section front we are hoping to hold a lecture at the end of this month which you should have all received info on. Golf fixtures for the year and fixture cards should be reaching you soon. Thanks once to all the clubs who have given us the use of their courses in the year.

Having spent three days at BTME this year I had first-hand experience of the quality of the show and the seminars. Unfortunately I didn't see too many guys from in our section - I'm sure due in part to the weather again - but if there are any other reasons then please feel free to contact me or someone at HQ. That's all from me, have a good month and I hope the weather gets things moving for you all. James Stevens - 07738719614 - jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com



NORTH WALES

The season starts here whether you like it or not, weekend comps and weekday visiting parties now start filling our diaries. The North Wales and North West late winter seminar took place on Wednesday 13 February at Deeside college and on a suitably snowy day, we were treated to some very interesting and in some occasions quite

Around The Green

passionate talks by Alistair Beggs, Dr Su Hodgson, David Williams and Deeside college. Edward Ainsworth was unwell so not available to attend, let's hope he will be able to give his talk in next autumn/winter's seminars. We have to give a big thank you to Deeside College for hosting the seminar, a great venue.

This year's three competition forms have now been approved to be posted out, with Bull bay golf club being our first port of call 23 April and I'm sure Andy Peel will give us all a great day, please remember to post your forms and cheques to Carl Crocher ASAP. In other news Harry Barbour posted on our Facebook group that he was looking for employment and has now secured a place for the season with Huw Roberts at Henlle Golf Club. Sadly Fred Grundy parted company with Maesdu golf club after 25 years in their employment we all wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

If you have any news you wish to share please feel free to contact me. Pete Maybury petemayb66@aol.com 07756 001187 Facebook North Wales B.I.G.G.A

MIDLAND REGION



EAST MIDLAND

I was struggling for inspiration this month for my notes, what with snow laying on the ground for two weeks during BTME and the following week, then considerable rainfall melting it and washing it away when suddenly the news broke.....'Of course of course a Kingdom for my course!'

It was Richard III after all, he'd been laying undetected for over 500 years under a tarmac car park in the historic city of Leicester. Richard is now up there with some very illustrious names from the city, Daniel Lambert, Willie Thorne, Gary Lineker, Mark Selby, Dave Bartram and of course the legend that is Gok Wan. With historical figures of such stature the village of York's claim over Richard doesn't really

stand a chance, so hands off our King. I've already booked my front side seat for the ceremony in Leicester Cathedral! The section will be hosting events this year at Beedles Lake (Spring) on 10 April, Kedleston Park (Summer) on 1 August, Lutterworth (AGM) on 31 October and Kilworth Springs (Christmas) on 4 December plus of course the Par 3 competition at Nailcote Hall in July.

You will be notified in plenty of time about the details of these fixtures and can I encourage as many members as possible to update their email addresses with Nick Miles by contacting him at biggaeastmid@gmail.com This will help the flow of information from the section to its members to be as smooth and efficient as possible. On April 14 I will be running in the Brighton Marathon.

I shall be running this year for Leukemia & Lymphoma Research in memory of a friend of mine, Paul Glennon who died in 2012 aged 56. I have a Just-Giving page set up www.Just-Giving.com/Greg-Skinner1 so anyone who would like to support me can donate via the JustGiving.com page. Honestly though, anything that you feel generous enough to support this charity with will go towards an extremely worthwhile cause. 'Show me that tush girlfriend' - just a little Gokabulary to sign off with...Greg Skinner 07970 095264 greg.skinner92@btinternet.com



MIDLAND

Finally, we're the right side of winter. A year of rubbish weather is hopefully behind us all. Our first event is to be held at Robin Hood Golf Club on 14 May. Please get your entries to Gary ASAP - you never know I might come out of retirement, as Robin Hood was my grandfather's favourite club in the Midlands.

We are in the middle of arranging a trip to the new FA Academy, St. George's Park at Burton, which should be during April. The date is yet to be confirmed so please keep your eye on the section website www.biggamidlandsection.co.uk for further details. This month's calendar sponsor is Redtech. A new company, but headed and supported by old trusted friends: - Service Graham Hall: 07702 154987 - Backed by Kevin Blake in Parts: 01676 523287. They have given nothing but excellence and I do not say that lightly. Sean McDade

for their contribution to the day, and to Sandra Raper for an excellent job with the raffle. Our golf calendar for this year has been finalised and should be here next month. All the best for 2013. Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club.



EAST OF ENGLAND

Apologies for the lack of writing the last couple of months, the laptop has been playing up, probably in protest at lack of use due to the purchase of an iPad! All seems to be working again now. Another excellent show and education programme were once again put on by all BIGGA staff at BTME again this year. Despite the best efforts of the weather to put people off, it seemed like another very good turnout.

Our final golf day of 2012 took place at Rutland County Golf Club and was held jointly with the East Midlands section. At the time it was a surprise to find any course open after the weeks of constant rainfall that had been endured. Credit has to go to Jamie Goddard and his staff for presenting the course for us in the most difficult of circumstances.

Despite the wind and cold weather a good turnout arrived for the Texas Scramble competition, which gives club members a chance to interact with other greenkeepers and hopefully realise that their club's problems are not just their own! Many thanks go to the sponsors for the day, Rigby Taylor, Mansfield Sands and Barenbrug who all supplied an excellent range of prizes.

The results were: 1 Nick Miles, Nigel Colley, Lee Secker, Nick Nottingham 2 Carl Chamberlain, James Dair, Ash Bulpitt, Ian Abrahams 3 Pete Fell, Gary Salisbury, Steve Hopkins, J Lippett. Nearest the pin were Ian Collett and Alex Clarricoates. Once again thanks to all the sponsors of the day and to all at Rutland County for their hospitality. Thanks also to all from the East Midlands section

for their contribution to the day, and to Sandra Raper for an excellent job with the raffle. Our golf calendar for this year has been finalised and should be here next month. All the best for 2013. Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club.



MID ANGLIA

I hope you are all well and in good spirits, living in the eternal hope that Spring may just be around the corner. I am starting to feel like Michael Fish in these reports as all I go on about is the weather. We were hit with yet another bout of heavy snow in February leaving all courses closed again for the 3rd time in quick succession.

This really isn't ideal and having seen many of you on my travels I know that we will all be pleased to see the back of this harsh winter and praying for some warmth and sunshine soon as most of us have forgotten what the sun looks and feels like. With that in mind if you haven't already please make time to see or contact some of the wonderful sponsors of our section and see if they have any new products, machines or advise that could make that little bit of difference to your course for 2013.

As we know times are tough so it is always good to check that you aren't missing out by shopping around. Once again please let me know if you have any news or info for the section as it really helps. Darren (Michael Fish) d.mugford@rigbytaylor.com

SOUTH EAST REGION



SURREY

San Diego is well known for having the best weather in the United States and one of the best climates in the world. It rarely gets too hot, never gets

too cold, and averages only 10 inches of rain a year, or so they say. So you can imagine my delight to get away and get a bit of sun close to the Mexican border while attending the GCSAA show.

The show proved a hit, while the rain gods gave us a few hailstones and a breezy taste of British climate from home, the downtown Gaslamp quarter filled with a cosmopolitan populace of greenkeepers and industry professionals, reveling with their international partners in the abundance of dining venues of which the area had to offer. What a great city!

Torrey Pines GC perched high on the tranquil seaside bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean is one of the nation's best municipals, and one I had the pleasure of playing on a very cold and windy day. The South course was home to the 2008 US Open and recognized by many as one of the greatest championships in history.

On the day, we were treated to magnificent views of the Pacific Ocean featuring deep canyons. Enough said. On 18 April, our host Mark Harvey and Co welcome you all to a Texas Scramble format at the wonderful Epsom Downs GC, which forms a natural topography for golf. It presents a course as nature intended, full of character and challenging golfers to use a full repertoire of shots.

So get your entry forms on the website and come along for a great day out.

Next month, a full and fascinating account on the travels of Gary Ogilvy's blazer, a well worn garment that can often be seen at all the golf days, on and off the course. Finally, congratulations to Sam Bethell, Greenkeeper at The Richmond GC, whose wife Jenny gave birth to their second daughter Caleigh on 16 February. Mark Day



SUSSEX

Spring is just around the corner, honestly! Should we

be expecting another hose pipe ban? I would like to start my report with the news that Richard Webb has moved to Purley Downs Golf Club as Deputy Head Greenkeeper after more than ten years at Copthorne Golf Club where he started on work experience. Another move this month is Jon Linser who has left Seaford Head Golf Course to start his own lawn care business, Telscombe Lawn Care (TLC).

I am sure that you will all join me in wishing them both all the best in their new ventures. Pete Smith has done sterling work in securing a large number of sponsors for this year's events with local golf clubs supporting the section and he has already arranged a full programme of golf at some excellent venues. Dates as follows: Spring Competition & National Championships Qualifier Venue: The Dyke GC Date: 23rd May; Sussex Section Away Day Venue: Littlestone GC Date: 19th June; Summer Competition Venue: Piltdown GC Date: 1st August; Autumn Competition Venue: Beauport Park GC Date: 20th September; Turkey Trot Venue: Worthing GC Date: 29th November

Make sure that you get these dates in your diary. If you would like any further information, please give me a call. I would be grateful if you could contact me with any news. Thanks, Chris Humphrey. Tel: 07912 669457 or chris@collier-turf-care.co.uk



ESSEX

After a delay of two months we have managed to hold our Christmas team event and AGM. Thursday 31 January dawned to a cool and windy day, overnight rain had left a few puddles around the course but few would complain. The snows of the previous week had gone and play was underway.

The Essex Golf & Country Club was the venue and our President Martin Forrester and his team had turned the golf course out in great condition. Seventeen teams of four should have ventured out on

the course but unfortunately six teams withdrew, through work and other commitments. A Texas Scramble format was played with some interesting results, as always! 1st Stoke by Nayland – 2nd Colchester Golf Club – 3rd Frinton Golf Club – Golfer of the Year, Liam Springett – Trade Golfer of the Year, Neil Peachey.

The AGM was held, before we played and was attended by a good number of section members. Outgoing Chairman Mark Stopps gave an emotional report thanking all the section for their support over his period as Chair.

The treasurer's report and competitions report were read by Tom Smith and Antony Kirwan respectively. Mark read out the Education report on behalf of Ian Wood who was unable to attend due to work commitments. Mark thanked all our sponsors for their backing during the past season.

He stated that with the help of the following, our golf and educational days had been a great success. Amenity Technology, Baileys of Norfolk, Banks Amenity Products, Bilericay Farm Services, Blade, CMW Equipment, Collier Turf Care, Ernest Doe, Everris, Farmura Environmental, GM Amenity, Irrigation and Water, Limagrain UK, Otley College, Paynes Turf, Philip Liverton Ltd, P Tuckwell (John Deere), Premier Plan, Prime Irrigation Ltd, RainBird, Rigby Taylor, Chaingreen Ltd (Sea Nymph), Tey Farm Systems, Toro (Lely) and Writtle College.

The election of Officers to the committee resulted in Ian Wood taking over as Chairman, Martin Forrester (President), Tom Smith (Treasurer), Arnold Phipps-Jones (Secretary), Antony Kirwan (Competitions), Ben Scrivener (Education) and Richard Freeman (Toro UK, Lely) (as Sponsors Representative).

Martin Forrester thanked the outgoing Chairman and committee, for all their hard work on behalf of the section. Our thanks for the hospitality and good food we enjoyed from The Essex. It was a great day, with the rain staying away, just for once!

Last month we held a First Aid training day at Upminster Golf Club. It was filled well before the closing date, which

Assistant Profile

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

Name: Calvin Baldwin
Age: 30
Club: Gerrards Cross Golf Club
Position: Assistant



Greenkeeper Nickname: "Biggie" at work, or "Spit" at banger racing

How long have you been greenkeeping? 11 years

What was it about the career that attracted you? Working outdoors and finishing early

If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be? A car mechanic

Which task do you most enjoy doing and why? Hand cutting greens, they look great once they're finished

Which task do you least enjoy doing and why? Using the Allen Nationals, I'm always getting moaned at for going the wrong way

What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot? Better equipment, a decent pair of waterproofs and happy golfers that say hello

Hobbies? Football and Banger racing

Favourite Band? Don't really have a favourite band, listen to whatever is on Radio One

Which team do you support (football or otherwise)? The mighty Leeds United and my banger racing team "The Surrey Street Squad"

What is your claim to fame? I banger raced the ambulance that appeared in the film "Hot Fuzz"

BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scotland

John Cunningham, St. Andrews Links Trust, Central Section
 Euan Kay, SRUC (Elmwood), Central Section
 Peilun Zhong, SRUC (Elmwood), Central Section
 Danyu Li, SRUC (Elmwood), Central Section
 Charlie Shewan, Nairn Dunbar Golf Club, North Section
 Martin Smith, Nairn Golf Club, North Section

Northern Region

Paul Thornhill, Davenport Golf Club, North West Section
 Craig McKenna, Hillside Golf Club, North West Section
 Jonathan Baggley, Brough Golf Club, Sheffield Section
 Matthew Foord, Old Padeswood Golf Club, North Wales Section

Midland Region

Matthew Healey, North Worcestershire Golf Club, Midland Section
 Marcus Davies, Stratford-on-Avon Golf Club, Midland Section
 Ian Davies, Ingestre Park Golf Club, Midland Section
 Ashley Rycroft, Cleethorpes Golf Club, East of England Section
 Andrew Watts, Thamesvalley Lawn Care, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Section
 Martin Field, Harewood Downs Golf Club, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Section
 Mark Willis, Vectra Landscapes, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Section
 Simon Willis, Vectra Landscapes, Berks/Bucks & Oxon Section
 Adrian Harris, Hellidon Lakes Hotel & Country Club, Mid Anglia Section
 Scott Waddell, Harpenden Golf Club, Mid Anglia Section

South East Region

Samuel Sexton, Coulsdon Manor Golf Course, Surrey Section
 Daniel Regan, Buckinghamshire Golf Club (The), Surrey Section
 Alan Sheppard, Royal St George's Golf Club, Kent Section
 James Briggs, East Sussex National Golf Club, Sussex Section

South West/South Wales Region
 Tom Parsons, Dudsbury Golf Club, South Coast Section
 Phillip Attwood, Hampshire Constabulary, South Coast Section
 Anthony Daniels, Hampshire Constabulary, South Coast Section
 David Humphry, Hampshire Constabulary, South Coast Section
 James Weir, Hampshire Constabulary, South Coast Section
 Colby Engert, Parkstone Golf Club, South Coast Section

Overseas
 Sylvia Odihili Affiliate Member, Nigeria
 Jenz Laffert, Burgwedeler Golf-Immobilien GmbH & Co, Germany
 Juhani Koski, Arctic Nature Product Oy, Finland
 Jon White, Golf De Morfontaine, France
 Tom Malehorn, Aquatrols, USA

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

shows there is a need for such courses. More information can be gained from the website, on the training course we will be putting on in the near future.

Arnold Phipps-Jones www.essexbigga.co.uk 07764 862337 essexbigga@talktalk.net

SOUTH WEST & WALES



SOUTH WEST

The weather must be mentioned - after one of the wettest Decembers on record, a solidly frozen January and a wet, cold and dark start to February (some might call it winter!) there are glimmers of a respite on the horizon. This morning the sun is shining, temperatures are up ever so slightly and there is a touch of spring in the air, long may it continue.

On 5 March the section is hosting a brilliant event at Chippenham Golf Club. The day will involve a course walk in the morning hosted by Course Manager Chris Sealey who will give everyone a tour of the recently constructed holes and detail the trials and tribulations that challenged the club during and since construction. Following on in the afternoon there will be five presentations given by greenkeepers from across the region, most of which you will know.

As promised last month the years fixtures have been finalised and are as follows: Wed 24 April, AmAm Minchinhampton GC, Wed 29 May Section V Secretaries The Manor House, Wed 12 June Summer Tournament Kingsdown GC, Thurs 15 August Section v Welsh Chipping Sodbury, Thur 26 Sept Section v South Coast North Wilts GC, Wed 16 Oct AGM Filton GC and finally Thur 19 Dec Christmas Tournament Ogbourne Downs GC. Please note that the Summer Tournament tee times have been pushed back to 1pm with light lunch before to enable more of us to make it after a morning at work.

We will get all of these dates onto BIGGA South West Facebook and also they will be coming out via email mailing list. If anyone is not receiving Section emails please email Adam or myself and we will get your address onto the list (adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk). It was great to see such a strong contingency of South West greenkeepers in Harrogate for BTME. A great week

was had by all and some of us even found time to catch up with mates both old and new following long days in both the show and Continue to Learn. Keep up the support, see you all at the upcoming Section days and keep the news coming in. Jaey Goodchild (07984422295 j.goodchild@bowood.org)



DEVON AND CORNWALL

Our February meeting was held at Thurlestone Golf Club, South Devon. After some very wet overnight conditions including snow within a few miles away, we were very pleased to complete this event and thank you to the 50 attendees who made the journey. The golf format for the day was individual Stableford playing for the Toro trophy. Results: 1 John Welsford (Warren) 34 points, 2 Pete Newman (Wrangaton) 33pts, 3 Gordon Tamblyn (Mullion) 31 pts. Gordon also won longest drive and nearest the pin.

The remaining members were taken on a course walk led by Vic Dyer (Head Greenkeeper). Vic has been at Thurlestone for 18 years and has been Head Greenkeeper for seven years. The attendees saw all parts of the course which was in fantastic condition and a credit to Vic and the team. The walk culminated in a visit to their brand new maintenance facilities. The new complex has been extremely well designed and laid out taking into consideration visual impact and economy of space. I would strongly suggest that if anyone were considering upgrading their facilities to visit Thurlestone.

A huge thank you to our sponsors for the day, Devon Garden Machinery and Martyn Lane Golf for sponsoring the day and the prizes. Also, a big thank you to Vic, the Greenkeeping team and all the staff at Thurlestone for helping it become a very successful and enjoyable day.

Section Minibus was taken up to Harrogate again this year, sponsored by Famura and Sheriff Amenity a big thank you to both for supporting the Section. Nine members made use of this including Kevin Paterson (Tre-

vose) sponsored by the Region, Martin Cornish (Launceston) selected and sponsored by Duchy College. Special mention to Anthony "Jacko" James for driving the bus again, especially with the wintery conditions, thanks Jacko!

Our Spring Seminar this year will be at St Mellion on Wednesday 13 March, details of which should have been sent to you before now. If you have not already secured a place, please contact me asap!

Our Summer Meetings to put into your diary: The Point at Polzeath Wednesday 22 May, Section Championships. Teignmouth Golf Club, Tuesday 2 July, Devon v Cornwall match.

George Pitts 07929 754401 gpitts@yelvertongolf.co.uk



SOUTH WALES

Good Morning South Wales, I'll start by saying WOW what a fantastic BTME this year. I have never seen the show as busy as it was Tuesday and Wednesday considering some of the machinery guys were not in attendance and more importantly the horrendous driving conditions on the way up.

I've never seen so many guys from South Wales make the over 500 mile round trip (even the Cradoc team) to join and support the show. Without you guys attending and supporting the trade stands many of the things we are able to do within BIGGA wouldn't be possible.

Good old Welsh weather! With the snow finally melted the following week saw over 150mm of rain in places making what has already been a dreadful winter even worse. "Please the man upstairs can you please give us a nice, warm, sunny summer we need one please."

I can now report our first golfing fixture will take place on March 29 at Fairwood Park GC near Swansea, the event is a stableford format so hopefully we can get as many of you guys attending as possible. Please ask all members of your team to come and take part, please book your places with Gareth Knight as usual.

Kind Regards, Peter H



Diary of Events

Details of your Section's events in 2013 can be found here...

Date	Event	Venue	Contact
MARCH 2013			
March 13th	Devon & Cornwall Spring Seminar	St Mellion G&CC, Saltash	George Pitts Tel: 07929 754401 or Email: gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com
March 15th	NAsOR – Keep It Clean & Legal, City & Guilds	City & Guilds Office, Glasgow	City & Guilds, email: ltptraining@cityandguilds.com
March 21st	Woodland Management Workshop	Easingwold Golf Club	The GTC, David Golding, Tel: 01347 838640 or email: golf@the-gtc.co.uk
March 29th	South Wales Section Event	Fairwood Park Golf Club	Gareth Knight Email: garethknightuk@yahoo.co.uk
APRIL 2013			
April 16th	South Coast Section Spring Tournament	Remedy Oak Golf Club	Alex McCombie, Tel: 07561 001299 or Email: southcoastsecretary@gmail.com
April 17th	North East Section Spring Competition	Heworth Golf Club, Gateshead	Jimmy Richardson Tel: 07910 641745 or Email: jamesrichardson17@sky.com
April 23rd	Scotland, East Section Outing	Seahouses Golf Club	John Young, Tel: 07776 242120 or Email: johnyoung@bigga.co.uk
April 23rd	North Wales Section Spring Tournament	Bull Bay Golf Club	Carl Crocher, Tel: 07702 316886
April 24th	South West Section Golf Day	Minchinhampton Golf Club	Adam Matthews, Tel: 07732 503855 or Email: adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

BIGGA Regional Conferences

Midlands - 6 November 2013. Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, Leicester.

Contact Sandra Raper
- 07866 366966

North- 7 November 2013 at Phoenix Sports Club, Rotherham.

Contact Sandra Raper
- 07866 366966

South East- 2013 date and location tbc.

Contact Clive Osgood
- 01737 819343 / 07841 948410

South West & South Wales - 21 November 2013 at Oaktree Arena, Bristol.

Contact Jane Jones - 01454 270850 / 07841 948110



Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director,
with a monthly update



This month David Golding - GTC's Education Director - explains how a call to a GTC Quality Assured Centre can free up funding for training

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult for the GTC to monitor the Government's strategy for education and training.

But through our involvement with the Lantra Sector Skills Council we ensure the sector has an accredited set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) from which a range of qualifications for greenkeeping are developed. The Governments for England, Scotland and Wales all have different funding strategies and the priority groups can change with little or no warning.

We do endeavour to ensure the Greenkeeping Apprenticeship including the content of the work-based qualifications remain the same throughout Britain however funding support and cost for training courses through the GTC Quality Assured Centres can vary depending on their delivery method.

There seem to be accidental barriers created by the various Government funding agencies which prevent employers and potential apprentices from accessing the help that is repeatedly advertised relating to apprenticeships.

I strongly suggest looking at the GTC Quality Assured Centres and seek their advice on recruiting an apprentice, there is up to £1,500 of funding available plus tremendous support for the apprentices' education and training programme.

I have written many articles on the advantage of the Greenkeeper Apprentice Scheme and since my apprenticeship back in 1966 the scheme has developed and become much more detailed.

The current structure gives the employer and the apprentice a multi-skilled, knowledgeable individual well capable of maintaining a golf course and a tremendous platform to progress through a

career path to the very top of the profession.

I often call on today's top Course Managers to attend Career Fairs at schools and colleges as they are obviously the right people to promote the profession of greenkeeping to youngsters looking for a career which can take you anywhere in the world.

Sadly many careers advisors have no idea on what is involved in golf greenkeeping and course management but given the opportunity to attend events in schools your assistance as a Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper would be appreciated to spread the word.

Taster days at golf clubs would also be good. Health and Safety restricting the use of equipment and machines would have to be strictly adhered to but this all helps promote greenkeeping.

Often a new apprentice greenkeeper can be found within the Junior Section at a golf club. But it often takes a short presentation by the Course Manager so the juniors actually appreciate there is a career available in golf other than becoming the next Rory McIlroy!

The Golf Foundation, PGA and Golf Unions are all looking to promote the greenkeeping profession through their roles in promoting careers in golf which will all help. The Apprentice Scheme is available for all ages however please check with your chosen Centre for the most up to date information on funding support.

As a general rule across Britain the 16-19 year old group are the Government's priority for funding support but age is no barrier to becoming a greenkeeper.

The GTC and BIGGA regularly receive enquiries from people looking to change career and these are often keen golfers looking to work in a healthier environment.

There is a structured career path

for school leavers, career changes and the Apprenticeship Scheme is the perfect pathway to join a profession which offers global opportunities.

From the apprentice scheme there are seminars, workshops, other further education courses and access onto Higher Education Courses and qualifications all helping to get to the very top of Golf Course and Club Management. For further information on apprenticeships contact one of the GTC's Quality Assured Centres:

England:
Bridgwater College: Tel: 07912 555592 Contact: Jake Waites
Duchy College: Tel: 01579 372220 Contact: Ron Skinner
Myerscough College: Tel: 01995 642193 Contact: Lee Price
Oaklands College: Tel: 01727 737735 Contact: Andy Wight
Plumpton College: Tel: 01273 890454 Contact: David Blackmur
Reaseheath College: Tel: 01270 613236 Contact: Gareth Phillips
Scotland: GOSTA Training: Tel: 0141 556 3999, Contact: Lesley Lowrie

Elmwood College: Tel: 01334 658 800 Contact: Mike Clark
Wales: Deeside College: Tel: 01244 831531 Ext 6132, Contact: Jenny Pitts, Pencoed College: Tel: 01656 302691, Contact: John Sullivan

National
Apprenticeship
Week 11-15 March
2013
visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk

The GTC is funded by:



Contact Details

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GTC Education Director

01347 838640
david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC
Aldwark Manor
Near York
YO61 1UF

www.the-gtc.co.uk



You can follow the GTC on
Twitter @TheOfficialGTC

Finally a great supporter of the GTC and the Greenkeeping Association Mr Alan Gamble has sadly passed away at the age of 83.

Alan is probably best remembered for his time as Head Greenkeeper at Pannal Golf Club, Harrogate and the tremendous support he gave to establish a greenkeeper training system as a volunteer on the BIGGA and GTC during the 60's, 70's and 80's.

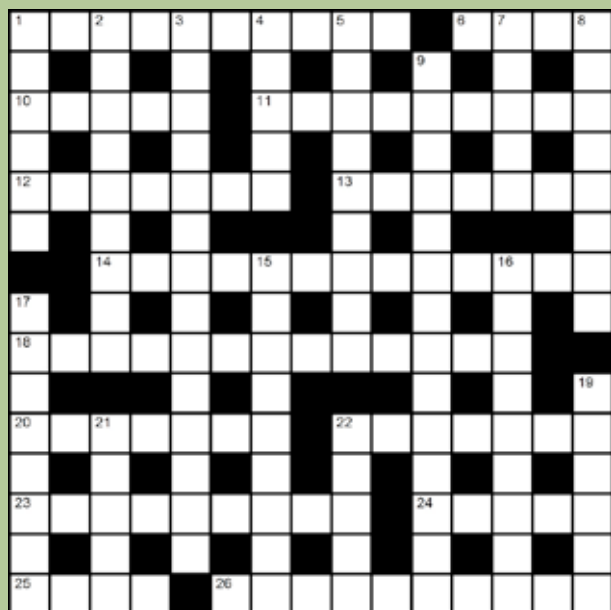
His son Richard is Head Greenkeeper here at Aldwark Manor and our thoughts are with Alan's wife and all of his family.



in the shed

Our monthly puzzle page to keep you entertained

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Handwritten or typed copy (10)
- 6 Sharpen by rubbing (4)
- 10 Lord ---, more familiar name of Richard John Bingham (5)
- 11 1986 hit for Robbie Nevil (4,2,3)
- 12 1983 hit for Tom Robinson, his first solo success (3,4)
- 13 Sweet liqueur flavoured with orange peel (7)
- 14 Gardeners' World presenter whose shows featured his own garden at Barnsdale (5,8)
- 18 Thick fillet beefsteak (13)
- 20 Crash helmet (4,3)
- 22 To strike dumb (7)
- 23 The action of attacking an enemy (9)
- 24 (Of the face) very pale (5)
- 25 Island of two main parts connected by La Coupée (4)
- 26 Lung disease associated with a particular incombustible material (10)

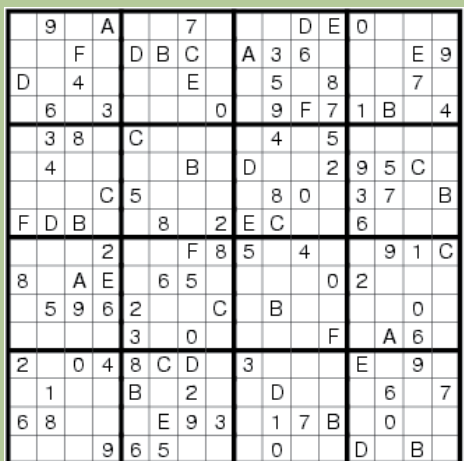
Down

- 1 African republic once called Nyasaland (6)
- 2 Country in which Daniel Ortega became president in 2007 (9)
- 3 Cocktail based on gin and cherry brandy (9,5)
- 4 Tottering, unsteady (5)
- 5 Baby buggy (9)
- 7 Word originally used as a signal cry to an attacking army (5)
- 8 Tract of upland pasture in SE England (3,5)
- 9 Character in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, played by Bill Nighy in the 2005 film (14)
- 15 Metal casting workshops (9)
- 16 Poet Laureate 1984-98 (3,6)
- 17 Technique used in the high jump (8)
- 19 Handsome young man (6)
- 21 Entail as a consequence (5)
- 22 Co-writer and performer of the James Bond theme Skyfall (5)

QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

This month's quiz has a distinct footballing flavour...

- 1) Name the six professional clubs that David Beckham has played for.
- 2) Gary Mills is manager of which football club?
- 3) Real Madrid recently drew 1-1 with Manchester United at the Bernebeu. Who were the scorers?
- 4) Which Premier League football team became the first top-flight team since 1987 to lose to a non-league club in the FA Cup?
- 5) Which club is moving from its Underhill base at the start of next season?
- 6) Which football club play at Rugby Park?
- 7) Who knocked Arsenal out of the FA Cup?
- 8) Which football club plays at Fratton Park?
- 9) Paolo di Canio recently resigned as manager from which club?



Monster Daily SuDoku: Tue 26-Feb-2013 very hard

MONSTER SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 4x4 box contains the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



Daily SuDoku: Tue 26-Feb-2013 easy

SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 9 box shape contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Puzzle Answers on page 65

BUYERS' GUIDE



Are you teed off...

...with the constant problem of short lived slip resistant solutions to comply with Health & Safety at your course ?

Gripclad Ltd have developed an affordable very long term solution which instantly eliminates slip hazards on railway sleepers and all types of timber steps and decking using GRP Composite CLEATS.

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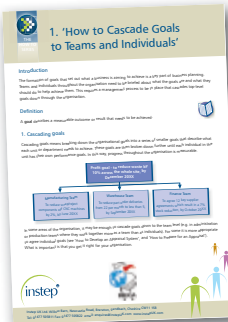


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The Back Nine

A column for writers and members to air and share their views on golf greenkeeping topics

Twins Alex and Stephen Edwards are joint managing directors of Inturf, a small family company that has supplied professional sports turf for 25 years. Here they reflect on the enormous potential behind the relationship between greenkeeper and turf supplier

The recent revelations about large-scale drug taking in all kinds of sports, the horse meat in our beef lasagne, and the seemingly endless supply of bankers on the make might create the impression that nothing in today's world is as it should be.

But a sense of proportion is important here.

First, whilst food purity is important for us we should count ourselves lucky that, as citizens in a developed nation, we have clean drinking water on tap and – for most of us – enough to eat.

Second, the fact is that most of the people we meet in the course of our turf growing business are as honest as the day is long – there just aren't many wrong 'uns in the world of golf.

Reflecting on this led us to think about the importance of relationships and the power of partnerships.

For a greenkeeper anywhere in Europe today there is an almost bewildering choice of turf suppliers of which Inturf is one.

Whittle that choice down to suppliers who – like us - belong to the Turfgrass Growers Association and subscribe to their aim of advancement of quality turf production and you are still left with a good choice of businesses – any one of which could probably meet your requirements.

So, if the turf is grown to the same standards, how does a greenkeeper choose between them?

This brings us back to the importance of relationships and the power of partnerships and a plea to greenkeepers which might surprise you, coming as it does from two fiercely competitive animals.

Stick with your supplier through thick and thin because doing so will unlock the enormous power of real partnership between grower and greenkeeper.

Of course your grower will make



mistakes (as everyone does!) but the trick, having chosen the turf and chosen the people, is to stick with the people so that you all have a stake in getting the turf right and keeping it right.

Theodore Levitt was a professor at the Harvard Business School who observed that when a man walks into a hardware shop to buy a quarter inch drill he doesn't really want a drill he wants a hole in the wall (and he'd probably rather be playing golf).

He isn't interested in the technical features of the drill just whether it will create that hole he needs.

In our opinion golf is similar to this analogy.

When your members tee off they are not interested in the turf (unless it's not playing well) what they're after is a round of golf with

“Working together, grower and greenkeeper can make sure that golfers get the best experience possible”

about the authors

Twins Alex and Stephen Edwards are joint Managing Directors of Inturf, which was started by their father Derek in 1985, assisted by their mother June. They have exhibited at every BTME and the whole family attended BTME 2013. Alex and Stephen have both worked in 'hands on' roles as members of site installation crews and have moved on to senior management level. Alex's main focus is business development while Stephen is responsible for every aspect of production.

all its connotations of competition, companionship and so on.

Working together, grower and greenkeeper can make sure that golfers get the best experience possible and that the best use is made of everyone's resources.

Long-term partnerships bring tangible benefits through better planning, benefits which – although they remain unseen, mean that golfers, unlike some consumers and sports fans at present, get exactly what they are paying for.

The views expressed within this column are not necessarily those of Greenkeeper International

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