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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

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Sami Collins
sami@bigga.co.uk

Contact Us
BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York,
YO61 1UF
info@bigga.co.uk
www.bigga.org.uk
Tel – 01347 833800 | Fax – 01347 833801

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Production
Design & Brand
Executive
Tom Campbell

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 513
tom@bigga.co.uk



Editorial
Communications
Executive
Steve Castle

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 510
steve.castle
@bigga.co.uk



Advertising
Business
Development
Executive
Jill Rodham

Tel – 01347 833800
Fax – 01347 833802
jill@bigga.co.uk
ext 519

Printing
Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor
Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
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Muirfield Clubhouse courtesy of Alastair Brown

Great Scott triggers Open countdown

Browsing social media on the Monday after Adam Scott's magnificent Masters win it was clear that a lot of Greenkeeper International readers had been glued to the TV coverage and were going to be a bit bleary eyed as they prepared their courses that morning.

For as long as I can remember I have considered it compulsory to watch the year's first major unfold on television and whilst the early hours conclusion does not combine well with greenkeeper hours it is clear I'm not alone in this industry with that view. Once again the Augusta National golf course provided a fantastic examination for the best players on the planet and whilst it was unfortunate that a couple of rules incidents threatened to overshadow the play, the thrilling finish giving Scott his first major was a great advert for the sport. The immaculate conditioning once again showcased course management to a worldwide audience - whether it creates unrealistic expectations amongst our own golfers or not it is clearly a great shop window for the profession.

Augusta weekend marks the traditional start to the golfing season and, with due deference to the intervening US Open, also whets the appetite for the upcoming Open Championship which this year is to be held at the wonderful Muirfield. I vividly remember the last time the tournament was held there when strong winds on the Saturday blew some of the world's finest off course with Tiger Woods registering the worst round of his career. The current champion Ernie Els then came through a four man playoff to claim his first Claret Jug. Els is in the unusual position of being both the defending champion and the last man to win at this year's venue. In this month's magazine (page 20) we take a look at the preparation work that the Course Manager Colin Irvine has put in as he builds up to what is in my view the world's greatest golf tournament.

The BIGGA Open Support Team are also gearing up to the event and I am looking

forward to getting to know this year's successful group as they play their part in ensuring the success of the Championship.

Last month I was privileged to attend the inaugural Future Turf Managers Initiative made possible by Jacobsen.

Held at Ransomes Jacobsen's impressive Ipswich headquarters the Initiative offered an intense management training and mentoring experience for the twenty BIGGA members who had been selected to attend. The event was both inspiring and informative and it was fantastic to see the young, aspirant Future Turf Managers interact with each other and their mentors who had given up their time to participate. In depth sessions on communication skills, budgeting, organisational politics and managing different personalities were all hugely relevant to the skills needed by the modern course manager, or any manager for that matter. I would like to publicly take this opportunity to thank Jacobsen for their superb support of the Initiative and the five mentors for their generous commitment to the event itself and to their role as group mentors.

These pages contain a review of the event and also the first part of an excellent two-part article by Kevin Munt who explores the '18 holes' to a successful career as a course manager. The front nine commences on page 30 with the homeward stretch to follow in June.



Enjoy the read
Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

MAY 2013

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Dan McGrath MG recently won Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year, a coveted STRI Environment Award. BIGGA are part of this and Greenkeeper International is a media partner, so Dan agreed to tell us about his prize – a trip to Portugal to explore how they're dealing with environmental challenges on the Iberian Peninsula

2012 Golf Environment Awards, supported by BIGGA STRI

Following my appointment as Course Manager at North Foreland Golf Club on the Kent coastline seven years ago, many challenges confronted me. A truly spectacular chalkland cliff top course built on the shores of traditional golf needed tweaking in several work programmes – one being the ecology and environmental work. First there was to draw up an environmental policy and plan, which then there is no device. This was completed and the whole written into and into it. I was introduced to the Kent Wildlife Trust by a professional employee as the next logical step was to make North Foreland a corporate member. Having the expertise and local knowledge of such an organisation is invaluable and one I would recommend to anyone wishing to pursue any environmental project. The main concentration of the first phase of the work was the Chalkland Regeneration Programme. Large areas had previously been unmanaged and seen as one of the most beautiful green spaces in the south. A programme of restoration was a massive task commenced and is still carried out to this day. The results have been immense. Non-ferrous have returned, orchids have appeared with numbers growing every year, the rough is thin and happy giving fantastic decoration and improve

Conservation goes European



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



Chairman's Word

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

A glimpse of the future

The only place to start this month's column is Ipswich – or more precisely the HQ of Ransomes Jacobsen which proved to be a marvellous venue for the first ever Future Turf Managers' Initiative.

It turned out to be a wonderful couple of days that I can honestly say surpassed all my expectations.

I'm 64 now but still came away having learnt all manner of new things. All the presentations were superb, but if I had to pick a highlight it would be Lorna Sheldon's seminars on interview techniques, writing CVs and effective communication strategies.

I enjoyed Lorna's seminar at the Turf Managers' Conference this year and was delighted to see her return and pass on her years of expertise.

You can have all the greenkeeping knowledge in the world, but without a well-written, professional CV you won't get past first base for the next position you're aiming for.

Once you've got to interview stage, you really need to stand out and Lorna showed everyone how. In today's highly competitive job market these are critical skills being passed on.

Well done to all the candidates, who without exception were engaging, enthusiastic and eager, and I've a feeling we will be hearing much more about them and their career successes in the future.

Also, my heartfelt thanks to the presenters, and the BIGGA mentors, who gave up their valuable time to assist the next generation.

Finally, congratulations to everyone at Jacobsen who were so helpful and welcoming.

When I started in greenkeeping all those years ago there was little to no formal training available and it was a frustrating time to be an ambitious young (or relatively young!) greenkeeper. I fondly remember the first ever supervisory management course organised by BIGGA which took place at Aldwark Manor in the early nineties.

The seminars, presentations and mentors we had gave us so much to work on and many of us went on to become Course Managers at all manner of courses.



I'm 64 now but still came away having learnt all manner of new things

It was also a great chance to meet other greenkeepers from across the country, tap into their knowledge and get to know them personally.

It was a novelty at that time to take part in formal training, now there are so many opportunities for all members and you must take these opportunities.

As I mentioned at the start of this column, it doesn't matter if you're a little older and nearing the end of your career, you will definitely learn something.

I don't want to jinx it, but it seems the weather has turned and spring has finally arrived after one of the longest and coldest spells I can remember.

March was particularly cold which I'm sure may have thrown a spanner in the works for your plans ahead of the start of the season. I enjoyed watching a superb Masters tournament on TV, but as we all know, Augusta is a long way from the day

to day reality of life preparing a golf course in the UK.

In fact, I'm sure many of you had a wry smile on your faces as you watched the final holes take place in torrential rain and gloom looking more like a drab day on Teesside – they've now had a taste of what we had to put up with for most of last year!

With the Masters out of the way it really feels like summer is approaching, let's hope it's a good one. I've got a busy few months coming up, as I'm sure you all have, and I hope to visit as many Sections and Regions as possible.

As always I'd be happy to discuss anything with BIGGA members, my contact details are below.

Contact details

Tony Smith / 07988 838956 / tony.smith48@ntlworld.com

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SHINING BEACON BILL RETIRES

A BIGGA stalwart, and great friend to many in the industry, Bill Paterson has retired after 50 years in greenkeeping. Bill has spent 28 years at Beaconsfield Golf Club in Buckinghamshire. Here Billy McMillan pays tribute to his friend...

Starting at Old Ranfurly golf club in the early sixties as an apprentice Billy was soon hooked on greenkeeping. He was number 27 on the register of young greenkeepers taking up a formal education in Scotland at that time. Once qualified he soon took on the role of Deputy at Old Ranfurly then Paisley.

In the early seventies he became Head Greenkeeper at the Randpark Golf Club in South Africa - not only was this a big move for him personally but also a massive learning curve in the management of warm season grasses.

Creeping bent grass was on his agenda, and with great initiative he managed to get his hands on some seed, introducing it into his greens during dormant conditions to give his membership quality surfaces year round.

This was not a simple thing to achieve with sanctions going on at that time. He actually managed to have this grass seed smuggled in on the back of his then club captain's business of importing American cars with a trunk full of bent grass seed stashed away for a timely door to door delivery.

In the mid to late seventies home beckoned - maybe he missed the charm of wet feet and a cold wind - and after a short spell as Head Greenkeeper at the Vale of Leven Golf Club he was off to the acclaimed Royal Dornoch Golf Club. During his time there he enjoyed presenting the course for many fine



Bill has been succeeded by Stuart Langhorn who spent eight years as Course Manager at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club.

Stuart commented: "I've been seeking a new challenge and this is a great opportunity at a stunning golf course - their ambitions match mine. I've spent six weeks working alongside Bob. When you join somewhere new you always wonder whether it's going to be a little awkward working with the person you're replacing, but it couldn't be further from that here. Bill is a top bloke.

"His job here has been his life. He's been much more than a greenkeeper. He's arranged Christmas parties, he puts the Christmas trees up, he's done so much work with the Artisan section... you name it, he's been involved in it.

"I intend to continue the terrific work Bill has done here. I'll be continuing the woodland management project he started and also the layout of the new paths. Then it's likely to be working on the greens, bringing up the putting speed, and reviewing and investing in our machinery fleet."



amateur tournaments such as the Scottish Ladies, Home Internationals and the British Amateur.

In 1985 he decided to see what England had to offer and took up his role as Head Greenkeeper at Beaconsfield.

An avid reader, Billy boasts at home a collection of books that would be the envy of many, with publications from Kipling, Dickens, and Robert Service as well as greenkeeping to choose from.

He not only has a marvellous ability to recall information but can recite it in such a way you are hooked and entertained, ensuring it will be an experience to remember for anyone that has had the pleasure to be in his company.

I remember lying in bed at many a BTME with the silence being broken with a rendition of some Scottish ballad drifting through the night as Billy returned to his room.

Now you may think a greenkeeping career was all that he aspired to - but you would be way off the mark. He has lived a well-rounded life and for many years has taken part in local church events and runs a youth club for all the local children in his village.

Serving time on greenkeeping committees he has been hugely instrumental in the establishment and development of the BB&O Section in recent years. With a spell as chairman of this section he has always been quietly working away to better the role of the modern day greenkeeper in the area.

A wonderful career is at an end, so from all your greenkeeping friends we wish you Billy, your wife Eileen, your children Fiona and Billy and all your grandchildren a happy retirement filled with many adventures yet to come.

GOVERNMENT ARRANGES ASH GRANTS (BUT NOT FOR GOLF COURSES)

The recent Chalara Management Plan released by DEFRA lacks any uniform and equitable assistance for landowners and organisations affected by the disease.

Grants will be given for removal, destruction and disposal of recently planted common ash and replanting with alternative tree species, but this only applies to a selective swathe of counties (Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire and up through the Midlands). The aim is to slow down east to west disease spread and help create a 'chalara free' zone in westernmost England. The Royal Forestry Society describes the plan as a 'postcode lottery' but worse still it excludes the amenity and landscape sector and therefore golf courses.

Simon Ellis, marketing director at Crowders Nurseries in Horncastle Lincolnshire, which currently holds 250,000 healthy ash trees, told Greenkeeper International:

"We are about to destroy the entire stock. They are unsalable and difficult to manage. Many are

up to ten years old which means a decade of investment down the drain with no compensation from government.

"This plan is selective, divisive, inequitable and unfair. Grant aid will only be available to forestry sector landowners with planted ash sites funded under the Rural Development Programme for England. It excludes the amenity and landscape sectors but it is they who buy our larger trees. I don't see why grants should only be given to the 'landed gentry' and withheld from entrepreneurs building and maintaining leisure complexes, golf courses and other sporting facilities."

Small trees planted by big forestry landowners are typically purchased at around 20 pence 'a throw'.

Simon and others in the nursery trade met with Defra and put forward specific plans to assist the amenity and landscape sectors, including golf courses, but this has clearly been ignored.

Dr Terry Mabbett



Grant aid for recently planted ash sites in high priority areas but none at all for golf courses. Courtesy of the Forestry Commission



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BRAVE ASA'S MARATHON MISHAP

Unlucky Asa English endured a torrid time at the recent Brighton Marathon after suffering an injury halfway through – but still managed to finish after limping 12 miles to the finishing line with a torn thigh muscle.

Asa and pal Greg Skinner ran the Brighton Marathon for charity last month, the fourth time Asa – Greenkeeper at Rothley Park Golf Club – has run the 26-mile course.

But disaster struck after 14 miles when he suddenly felt a searing pain in his left leg. However, determined not to let his chosen charity down, he insisted on finishing, and managed to drag himself across the finishing line in 3 hours 52 minutes. A scan later revealed a Grade Two muscle tear with doctors amazed he had managed to complete the course.

He said: "It was all going well and I thought I was on track to beat my personal best of 3 hours 23 minutes when I felt this really sharp pain out of nowhere. I've never suffered any injuries before so I thought I could just keep going.

"But it did become very hard work. I think the spectators must have thought I was suffering from Tourette's because I was swearing constantly due to the pain!"

Asa had been training for months up to the big day, which was watched by crowds of up to 150,000 people on the South Coast. He will now be restricted to certain less intensive tasks at his club until the injury heals.

He added: "It's frustrating, but these things happen. I won't be able to exercise for a month but I'll be back. There's life in the old dog yet!"

Asa was running for 'Miracles To Believe In' – a charity for autistic children. To donate to this worthwhile cause please visit www.miraclestobelievein.moonfruit.com or contact Asa on 07790 574075.

We're always on the lookout for stories involving BIGGA members. So if you've won a sporting trophy, achieved a qualification or have a humorous story to tell contact Steve Castle at BIGGA HQ on steve.castle@bigga.co.uk and you may be featured in GI!

JANE JONES TO DEPART BIGGA

Sadly we are announcing the resignation of Jane Jones from her post as Regional Administrator for the South West/South Wales Region.

Jane has worked dedicatedly for BIGGA for eight and a half years, joining us in November 2004. She has been a hugely valuable employee and we are sad to lose her.

Jane still intends to work within the golf industry on a more local level. Jane's last day will be 31 May 2013 and we would like to wish her all the best in her new ventures.



GI SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who completed our recent Greenkeeper International survey – we had a fantastic response with over 200 members letting us know what they would like to see in the mag. You will notice changes to the magazine as a result from this edition onwards, hopefully reflecting some of the feedback we have had. If you have any further comments or suggestions on anything regarding GI, please contact steve.castle@bigga.co.uk

The most widely read sections of the magazine proved to be technical greenkeeping articles, recruitment and course features/case studies. Some of the least popular sections included the Learning & Development and Membership pages which have led us to revamp these areas with further changes coming in future months. Again, technical detail was the greatest attraction when deciding whether to read an article, followed by human interest, and location in the magazine.

We received a wide range of feedback and suggestions to some of the other questions on how to improve aspects of the magazine – and you will start to see these reflected in Greenkeeper International over the coming months. As always, the magazine is for members – so if you have any suggestions, comments or constructive (!) criticisms contact Steve Castle at BIGGA HQ.

SANDY'S BLOG AT GRANGE-OVER-SANDS

We're continuing to receive details of blogs greenkeepers have started across the UK – proving furthermore that blogging can be a very useful tool for communicating with golf club members, visitors and even committees.

This month we focus on Cumbria – specifically Grange-over-Sands Golf Club. Head Greenkeeper Rob Sandilands started his blog just a couple of months ago and has already noticed some significant benefits – such as the site initiating conversations with interested members. The blog is also well promoted on the club's website, something which would be welcomed at other clubs! Rob said:

"The blog was started in February, mainly because I know how much more support and understanding you get as a greenkeeper when you keep people informed of what you are doing and why you are doing it. It's a 21st century version of a noticeboard or newsletter. As



a club, we are in a process of change in many departments, among them greenkeeping and marketing, so setting up the blog was something I felt would better connect us with

the membership and also act as a good marketing tool for the club. We are also stepping up our efforts to maintain a presence on social networking sites such as Twitter and

Facebook for daily updates on course condition.

"People react very positively to being kept informed - not only what and why you have done certain things but what you plan to do and why. You can also include before and after pictures of projects and links to other articles on things such as winter greens and flooding which have been very topical lately!

"Members have been constantly stopping me and commenting on how much they enjoy the blog, many of whom I've never properly spoken to before. Other friends within the industry have commented on how they find similar benefits from their own blogs and had good things to say about ours."

You can check out Rob's blog for yourself at www.gosggreenkeeping.blogspot.co.uk. Keep the blog suggestions coming in - email steve.castle@bigga.co.uk with details of yours and we may feature you in the magazine!

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Membership News

The latest news from BIGGA

Following the Greenkeeper International survey, we've revamped the Membership pages – and we want you to get involved.

As before, this section will highlight the many benefits BIGGA membership gives you, but will feature you, the members.

We want to hear your stories and experiences – so whether you've

found a new job through BIGGA, got help through our Legal Helpline or Lifestyle Counselling, worked at a high-profile tournament or even won a golf competition we want to hear from you!



Contact Details

Tracey Maddison
traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Elaine Jones
elaine@bigga.co.uk

Tel: 01347 833800
(option 1 for Membership)



You can follow BIGGA on Twitter @BIGGALtd



Steve (green cap) at The Open 2012

OPEN Q&A

Last month we featured a Q&A on the Open Support Team. This month we've spoken to a member of last year's team and an excited first timer to find out their views on the showpiece event in July.

Steve Hopkins, Greenkeeper at Burghley Park Golf Club, took time out from being tormented by badgers on the course (see the bulletin board!) to fill us in...

What's being on the Support Team like?

It's fantastic. You're never going to get that close to professional golfers in any other situation, and it's awesome to see them in action. You also get to spend a good length of time with greenkeepers from all sorts of different courses from around the world.

Can you pick out a highlight?

All of it! It's extremely well organised and planned. You really

are a part of the tournament, and it's an honour to get 'inside the ropes' and watch the world's best players at the closest proximity you can get.

What advice would you give?

Go and enjoy it! Also, ask questions. You've got a hell of a lot of experience there in the BIGGA Support Team and beyond so you can learn a lot from them, and also seeing how things are done at one of the world's top courses.

Meanwhile Jaey Goodchild, Head Greenkeeper at Bowood Golf & Country Club, is gearing up for his first taste of the world's most famous golf competition.

What was your reaction when you found out you had selected for The Open Support Team?

I've played a part on support teams at the BMW PGA Championships in the past, and

got so much from it, but The Open is the ultimate really and I can't wait for July to come round.

What are you hoping to gain from the week?

I'm looking to get an insight into tournament preparation, the presentation and the operational side of things.

We do hold some quite high profile tournaments at Bowood – but obviously these are nowhere near as prestigious as The Open! I'm sure I'll learn a lot from the week and maybe even bring some knowledge back which I can use on my own course.

What are you most looking forward to?

I've never attended The Open even as a spectator so I'm looking forward to experiencing the buzz of the whole event. I know it's going to be an intense few days but I'm looking forward to the adrenaline rush when I'm there.

BIGGA Regional Offices

Scotland & Northern Ireland

John Young
Mobile: 07776 242120
johnyoung@bigga.co.uk

Northern & Midland

Sandra Raper
Mobile: 07866 366966
sandra@bigga.co.uk

South East

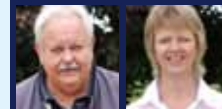
Clive Osgood
Tel: 01737 819343
Mobile: 07841 948410
cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk

South West & Wales

Jane Jones
Tel: 01454 270850
Mobile: 07841 948110
jane@bigga.co.uk



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BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scotland

Keiran Gibson, SRUC (Elmwood), Student, Central Section
 Charles Lee, Scoonie Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Central Section
 Adam Lindsay, Peterculter Golf Club, Greenkeeper, North Section
 Shaun Balfour, Auchterdederran Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Central Section
 Morris Rodgers, Fraserburgh Golf Club, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, North Section
 Grahame Taylor, The Gleneagles Hotel & Golf Courses, Greenkeeper, Central Section

Northern Region

Clinton Hare, Crookhill Park Golf Club, Greenkeeper, Sheffield Section
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 Robert Doyle, Withington Golf Club, Greenkeeper, North West Section
 Adam Hutchinson, Heysham Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, North West Section
 Warrick O'Brien, St Idloes Golf Club, Greenkeeper, North Wales Section
 Cefyn Owen, Henllys Hall Golf Club, Greenkeeper, North Wales Section
 Matthew Walmsley, Nelson Golf Club, Greenkeeper, North West Section

Midland Region

Neil Adams, Toro Commercial Products/Lely UK, Midland Section
 Nigel Stacey, Toro Commercial Products/Lely UK, Midland - Andrew Smith
 Shaun Bullin, Stanton-on-the-Wolds, Asst Greenkeeper, East Midlands Section
 Lee Carratt, Belton Park Golf Club, Head Greenkeeper, East of England Section
 Harry Jones, Wrekin Golf Club, Head Greenkeeper, Midlands Section
 Niall Rose, Wrekin Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Midlands Section
 Ben Waters, Shrewsbury Golf Club, Greenkeeper, Midlands Section
 Ryan Hursey, Brickendon Grange Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Mid Anglia Section

South East Region

Daniel Gibb, West Sussex Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Sussex Section
 Lee Clary, Impulse Leisure, Affiliate member, Essex Section
 Bradleigh Porter, Worplesdon Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Surrey Section
 Zak Gittins, Queenwood Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Surrey Section

South West/South Wales Region

James Whittick, Greenbest Ltd, Affiliate Member, South West Section
 Michael Burke, Painswick Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, South West Section
 Alex Graham-Brown, Trevoze Golf Club, Greenkeeper, Devon & Cornwall Section
 Shaun Cuffin, Falmouth Golf Club, Asst Greenkeeper, Devon & Cornwall Section
 Toby Goodyear, Blacknest Golf & Country Club, Student, South Coast Section
 International
 Michael Carlson, Virginia Country Club, International Member, USA
 Sajid Shah, DA Country & Golf Club, International Member, Pakistan
 Robert Brooks, J-Spray (TriEst Ag Group Inc), Affiliate Member, USA
 Olafur Por Agustsson, Golfklubburrinn Kellir, Iceland

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

www.bigga.org.uk

Assistant Profile

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

Name: Jamie Robertson
Age: 23
Club: Meldrum House Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
Nickname: Cakes



How long have you been greenkeeping? Four years

What was it about the career that attracted you? I love playing golf, and being on a golf course all day making it look and play great is really enjoyable for me

If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be? I worked as an assistant professional in a golf shop for two years, so probably would have turned pro.

Which task do you most enjoy doing and why? Rolling the greens, I like getting the green speed up, which I hope the members appreciate

Which task do you least enjoy doing and why? Clearing the snow, which is normally six months of the year up here

What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot? Greenkeepers getting the recognition they deserve for their work

Hobbies? Golf, rugby, five a side football

Favourite Band? Linkin Park

Which team do you support (football or otherwise)? Turriff United

What is your claim to fame? In the last three years I've been to T in the Park and been on TV a few times in the crowd

ALFA MALE GREG BACK ON THE ROAD THANKS TO BIGGA

In future editions we're hoping to feature examples of how BIGGA members have taken advantage of the various ways BIGGA membership has helped out in difficult times. Whether it's personal accident guidance, legal assistance, debt counselling or general support we want you to get in touch and let us know how we helped you.

First up is Greg Skinner, Head Greenkeeper at Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, who contacted our dedicated (and free!) Legal Assistance line on 0800 177 7891 after having a series of problems with his car.

Greg takes up the story...

"Those of you that know me will have heard me curse my car over the last year for its desire to be pampered in the garage. I have learnt two really important things during my ownership of my Alfa GT. Firstly, never buy an Alfa Romeo and secondly the BIGGA Greenkeepers Legal Assistance phone line is

absolutely fantastic in terms of giving quality legal advice free to full members.

"I bought it on finance and had endured numerous problems with it, yet the garage insisted I had to pay £1,400 despite it still being under warranty. I knew they were in the wrong but what I needed was the legal ammunition to respond to them.

"The Legal Assistance team advised me exactly where I stood with the garage and the correct terminology and Acts of Parliament to quote. I was then confident enough to relay this to the garage. They immediately backed down and agreed to repair it, and as a result I've been able to exit the finance agreement due to the issues I've had with it.

"Making that one phone call made such a difference to me and for an annual subscription of £140 I would suggest incredible value for money. BIGGA membership has many valuable benefits - use them to your advantage."



L&D News

The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

This month in the new look L&D section we have a comprehensive review of the hugely successful first FTMI, news on higher education scholarships and a library update.

Over the next few months, in response to some of

your feedback in the recent Greenkeeper International survey, we'll also be bringing you educational articles from some of the biggest names in the industry.

The first is a two-part article by consultant Kevin Munt, who presents the 'Front Nine' of his

'18 Hole' guide to becoming a Golf Course Manager on page 30. Also, BIGGA's Learning & Development Executive (Technical) Stuart Green fills you in on everything you wanted to know about CPD, but may have been too afraid to ask... that's next up on page 16.



Future Turf Managers Take The Initiative

The Jacobsen Future Turf Managers Initiative got off to a flying start early last month with delegates and mentors returning delighted by the two day course held at Ransomes Jacobsen's Ipswich HQ.

Twenty Deputy and Assistant Greenkeepers travelled from various courses across the UK to attend several professional seminars designed to equip them for a future in management. It proved to be an intense yet hugely successful event!

The FTMI kicked off with an ice breaker session, led by BIGGA's Learning & Development Technical Executive Stuart Green, where the mentors and delegates got to know each other, and this was followed by dinner and introductions from

Jim Croxton and David Withers, Jacobsen President.

The mentors were Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper at the PGA Centenary Course at Gleneagles, Matt Plested, Course Manager at Muswell Hill GC, Michael Sawicki, Club Manager at Dulwich and Sydenham Hill GC, Lee Strutt MG, Golf Course Manager at gWest and Stuart Yarwood MG, Course Manager at Lymm GC.

The first morning saw Lorna Sheldon present 'Interview Techniques and Writing a CV'. Lorna, who proved a very popular presenter at BTME 2013's Turf Managers' Conference, tasked the attendees with putting a CV and cover letter together with the help of five mentors. Next on the agenda was a

session on 'Alternative Career Paths' before Lorna returned with 'Effective Communication Strategies' and 'Interview Experience'. Six of the delegates were selected to be interviewed by the mentors plus several other group based tasks. This was followed by Steve Chappell advising the candidates on how they can enhance their careers by taking advantage of volunteering opportunities at major tournaments.

The day was rounded off by an informal evening session led by Stuart Yarwood entitled 'The Challenges of Team Management.' Stuart explored various genuine situations which had arisen when managing a team, as well as the pressures, challenges and occasional loneliness of being a




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.

Contact Details

 Sami Strutt
L&D Manager
sami@bigga.co.uk

 Rachael Duffy
L&D Executive
rachael@bigga.co.uk

 Stuart Green
L&D Executive
stuart@bigga.co.uk

01347 833800 (option 3)
www.bigga.org.uk

Course Manager. It proved to be very much an open session for the candidates to ask all manner of questions.

Day two kicked off with 'Building a Budget' – Lee Strutt's presentation on how to formulate a budget, monitor it using Excel, sell a budget and deal with cutbacks. The mentors took on the role of a committee to whom Stuart Yarwood demonstrated how to negotiate a budget to enable them to buy a piece of machinery – a terrific taster for life as a Manager.

After lunch David Bancroft-Turner took to the stage with his 'Dealing with Club Politics' seminar. Another favourite from the Turf Managers' Conference, David outlined how the delegates can identify politics in the workplace, how to manage them and introducing the four different political 'animals' that exist. Again, mentors discussed real-life situations with the attendees.

The final presentation was from the BIGGA HQ duo of Stuart Green and Sami Strutt – Learning & Development Manager – looking at the numerous opportunities BIGGA offers for personal development such as CPD and the MG certificate.

So how did the delegates and mentors feel it all went? Here's just some of their feedback...

"It's given me such a boost and like many others I went into work with a spring in my step the next morning. The training we received was superb and far outweighed my expectations, I feel a lot more comfortable about applying for jobs and attending interviews than I ever have before."

Tom Evans, First Assistant Greenkeeper, Harleford GC

"This course has provided me with priceless information to guide me through what I hope is going to be a busy couple of years. The speakers were fantastic and very helpful. The skills and experience the mentors passed on will only improve us all and move us on to where we want to be with our careers. Who knows - it could be us doing the mentoring one day!"

Dan Scott, Greenkeeper, Woburn Golf & Country Club

"From the minute I walked through the door and started meeting everyone it gave me a huge buzz, the passion and desire everyone has is amazing! I can see a few mentors of the



future emerging from this great bunch of guys." **Scott Davidson, Greenkeeper, Newmachar GC**

"The content of the course from start to finish was first class. The skills learnt in a few short days are going to last me a lifetime and hopefully help me reach my goal of managing a course of my own. The industry I love keeps on giving back to me. My only complaint I have is that the other 19 guys on the course - all of whom were both great people and ambassadors to our industry - now have the skills I also acquired. Oh well, the competition for that Course Manager's job I was after just got a bit tougher!"

Robin Cheney, Deputy Course Manager, Farleigh GC

"It opened my eyes to some new ideas and made me appreciate what aspects I need to work on to take the next step. Meeting so many greenkeepers who are passionate about the industry was also very refreshing.

"I am sure you would all agree that all of us can at times feel low at work particularly when you may be surrounded by individuals who are not as motivated as yourself or who are not actively involved with BIGGA.

"Opportunities like this are vital in keeping you motivated."

James Parker, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Close House Golf Club.

.Michael Sawicki, Club Manager, Dulwich & Sydenham Hill GC, was one of the mentors and he commented: "I would like to thank everyone who made this happen, huge credit to Ransomes Jacobsen for allowing us to use their excellent facilities and to all their team for making us all feel so welcome and keeping us refreshed. As for the BIGGA team responsible for the education, you should feel very proud of your work, inspired choices of subject matter and fantastic speakers.

"And finally to the delegates, you guys were amazing and it is very clear that the future of the industry is very bright. It was a pleasure to work with you all. My message to all delegates would be to keep working hard and to show the same passion you showed over the two days, you will get there in the end."

Let's leave the final word to Stuart Green, BIGGA's L&D Executive (Technical), who said:

"The level of training was excellent and the participation outstanding. It was inspirational to see all the delegates and mentors learning and growing as time went on.

"Learning comes from experience, using that experience and then reflecting on how that experience can be built on. That way we grow as individuals, not just in a work sense but as human beings."

LENDING LIBRARY REVAMPED

If you're looking for a publication from our huge range of books in our Lending Library, there's no need to call BIGGA HQ. Simply click on the 'Lending Library' tab in the Members' section of our website, and we'll send it to you. It will also enable us to keep a better record of when books are borrowed and which books are currently unavailable.

We have hundreds of books and a selection of DVDs available – and it's all free, yet another benefit to BIGGA membership thanks to the generous sponsorship of John Deere. Our titles include Architecture, BTME, Computing, Environment, History of Golf, Irrigation, Machinery, Pesticides, and Turf Management, plus DVDs.

BIGGA HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS SUPPORTED BY RANSOMES JACOBSEN



Congratulations to Sebastian Cavilla who has been awarded a £1,000 scholarship to study an FdSc (online) in Sportsturf at Myerscough College. Sebastian is Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Chippenham Golf Club in Wiltshire. He told GI: "I was elated to hear that my application had been successful. It really is encouraging to know that there is so much support out there from the likes of BIGGA and Ransomes.

"I moved clubs in September last year to make the step up from First Assistant to Deputy Course Manager. In doing so, the club I was leaving informed me that due to small print of my contract, I was required to pay them back the previous years' college fees - £700. As you can imagine this had quite an impact on my monthly wage! This scholarship has therefore allowed me to recoup this money, and be able to buy some much needed textbooks and other equipment I need to complete my studies.

"Thanks to the support of my partner Elizabeth, my current employers, and of course, BIGGA and Ransomes, and I'm on the way to achieving my goal of completing the course."



What is CPD?

...and how can it benefit your career? BIGGA's Learning and Development Executive (Technical) Stuart Green explains how CPD will transform your personal and professional development

C - CONTINUING P - PROFESSIONAL D - DEVELOPMENT

Right, now that's been established let's discuss what it really means. When you enter the industry, you may have little knowledge of grass or how it's maintained. So you attend college, learn how to maintain turf and will be assessed as being competent to use the equipment.

However, it doesn't stop there. You are then put on a spraying or chainsaw course. Then the following year you may go to BTME, attend seminars and/or go to a Regional Conference. You get your copy of Greenkeeper International each month and read articles on subjects, such as, aeration and disease identification.

That's a small example of what CPD may be. You are updating your

skills and knowledge, boosting your confidence, strengthening your professional credibility and ensuring your employer has a competent and well-motivated employee. However, CPD is not only for your employer, it is about YOU. It is a strategy to help you succeed and go succeeding.

Let's look at CPD and what it means to you, your employer and to the industry. The profession of greenkeeper has greatly improved in the last 40 years, with the introduction of formal education specifically designed for the turf professional, the establishment of a professional body to act as a voice for its members and the commitment of its members to continuing self improvement to drive up standards of turf care. This ultimately has led to a greater respect for the profession from all corners of the industry. Perhaps the most significant part of this journey has been for BIGGA members and their desire to be recognised by their clubs and members as a professional.

So, in truth, greenkeepers have been carrying out CPD for years but didn't know it and also didn't know they could be recognised for it.

CPD Commitment

A commitment to CPD is really a frame of mind rather than a process. You are probably doing all the right things - CPD is the way of formalising this frame of mind and being recognised for your commitment. By committing to CPD it identifies you as a competent professional. Your commitment to your own development, both personal and professional, is up to you. It could take five minutes or five hours - it depends on how much time you are willing to invest.

Learning

I have taught many sports turf students, over the years, who have varied hugely in age, yet apart from turf care, they have all learnt some-

Registration forms can be found at:
www.bigga.org.uk/education/continuing-professional-development

thing about themselves. It may have been how they learn best, they may have improved their reading or writing or how to ask the right question. It should be remembered that learning is deeper than just knowledge; it is a fundamental part of our evolution. Without it, I may have been chiselling this article out of stone! CPD provides the opportunity to explore and develop not only our professional skills but to discover who we are, what makes us tick or how we can challenge ourselves.

CPD -A Cunning Plan...

So where should you start? Firstly, join the BIGGA CPD Scheme. This will help and it should be the first step on your development plan. The next step is to sit down with a piece of paper and think about where you are NOW. What skills do you have, what are your strengths and weaknesses and what are your goals? At this point, be really honest with yourself. Now take another piece of paper and draw a line across it. Start at the far end, with what you would like to achieve. It could be Course Manager, Club Manager, Stockbroker or Film Director. Then work backwards along it putting down what steps you need to reach your desired goal. This is where you may need to do some research or take some advice, because you will need to decide what skills you need to develop to achieve this goal.

For example, completing a course in management or undertaking an evening class in French.

At this point, you can begin to break this down into years or months and schedule them. This is called 'chunking'.

Breaking down your plan into manageable chunks makes the end goal more attainable, as you will be completing steps towards it. If your goal is to be a Deputy in five years and a Course Manager in ten, break that down by achieving your Level 3 by year two and then even further by achieving a unit by July.

That's just an example, but research has shown by achieving smaller goals on the way to a bigger goal, you are more likely to achieve it. Fig.1. shows an example of this timeline.

So everything you do to achieve this goal will be classed as CPD. Also, it is now compulsory in all Level Two, Three and Four qualifications to complete a Personal Development Plan, so by compiling one now you will have the evidence already in place. It can also be good to include personal goals in this process, such as starting a family or saving for a car.

One of the most fundamental tasks is REVIEW it on a regular basis. Your goals and lives are not cast in tablets of stone and need to be flexible, especially in the current economic climate.

"CPD is about YOU taking responsibility for your career and personal development and aspiring to the highest standards"

Fig 1

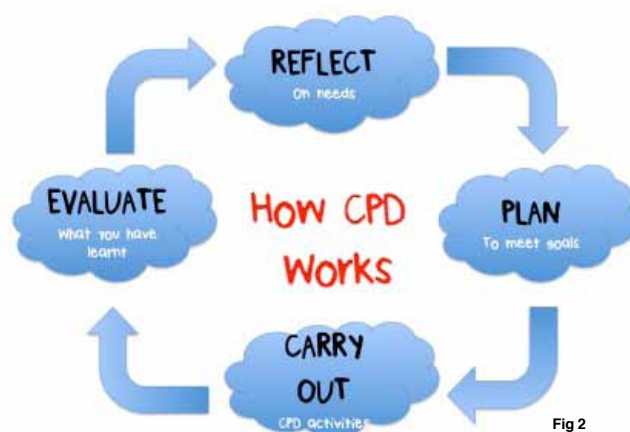
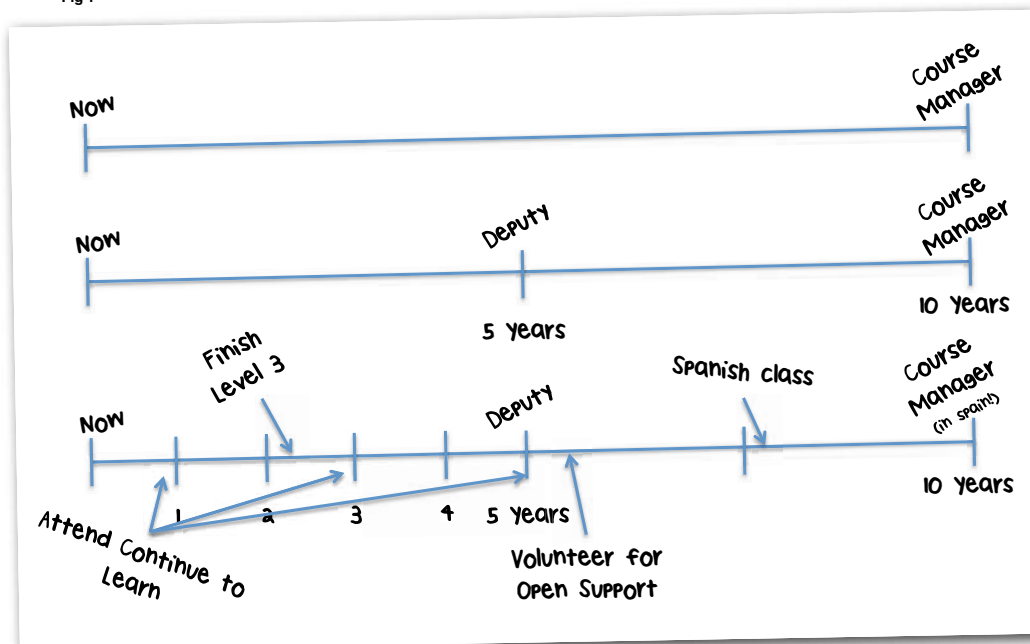


Fig 2

Review

You have your plan and are undertaking CPD activities. How do you ensure that the activities are of benefit and how could you use what you have learnt? This is something called REFLECTION. Fig 2 shows the CPD cycle. It is very easy to confuse evaluation and reflection, so what's the difference? Simply put, your Personal Development Plan is a reflection on what you FEEL your needs are. Evaluation is a CRITICAL and OBJECTIVE review of a course, such as filling in the feedback forms after a seminar. As Fig 2 highlights, reflection comes after the evaluation.

Reflection is a very personal thing and is a great benefit to your personal development. During my own teacher training course I had to maintain a Reflective Learning Journal for two years. It took me three years to actually work out how to use it! However, by using reflection in a formal structure, it greatly improves learning and the depth it takes place.

So, after two years of struggling to fill in the journal, the penny finally dropped and I still maintain one now. Depending on my circumstances, I may put entries in on a daily/weekly basis or after a seminar.

However, I find it refreshing to take my feelings out of my head and put them on paper. It makes them easy to refer back to and I needn't worry about forgetting what I felt. My best piece of advice is to try it. I was sceptical until I started doing it.

In summary, CPD is a state of mind, it is the basis to a lifelong journey of learning and a commitment to your personal and professional development. By embracing change it will ensure our profession grows and strengthens.

Next month - New changes to CPD and what constitutes CPD



VERSATILE WIEDENMANN SUPER 500 TACKLES GLENEAGLES' ROUGH

As you would expect, a clear focus and a precise plan underpins course preparations at Gleneagles ahead of the 2014 Ryder Cup.

A Wiedenmann Super 500 was purchased in June last year by Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper at the PGA Centenary Course, with a very specific role in mind.

The Perthshire team chose the Super 500 CHD which comes with a high dump feature as standard. Flail mowing, collecting, verti-cutting and scarifying make this a truly multitasking machine. The container lifts via a parallel system to a height of 2.1m while rotating the hopper to completely discharge collected material. Additional scarifying blades and the optional golf course contour kit completed the package supplied by dealers, Fairways GM.

"Some of the roughs hadn't been cut for 20 years so there was an immediate requirement to take them right back and clean them out. The main purpose at time of purchase was its flail mowing and harvesting capabilities but its principal duties will switch to scarification and grooming of fairways and roughs," said Mike James, Wiedenmann UK's Northern Sales Manager.



CLUB CAR HELPS DRIVE UK GOLF COURSE BUSINESSES

Club Car is helping drive business at golf courses large and small thanks to its renewed partnership with the UK Golf Course Owners Association (UKGCOA).

The manufacturer may be best known for its fleets at resort courses, but it is helping UKGCOA members of all sizes.

"Golf course owners are often surprised to find out just how much additional revenue they can make from even a small fleet of just five to ten golf cars," said Kevin Hart, Club Car Sales Director Golf for Europe, Middle East, India and Africa.

"At a time when clubs and courses are having to work really hard to add value to both their member and visitor experience, a small fleet of high quality vehicles can help differentiate a facility and bring in valuable additional revenue.

"It requires an investment on the part of the golf course, but it's an investment that delivers a return and positions the course as a leader in quality and experience."

Club Car is the world's largest manufacturer of small-wheel, zero emissions electric vehicles, making its world renowned Precedent golf cars and utility vehicles at its factory at Augusta, Georgia, USA.

Colin Mayes, Chairman of the UKGCOA, a growing organisation with nearly 200 members, said: "The UKGCOA is focused on driving the golf course industry forward through collaboration, and that includes working with partners that can make a difference to our members' businesses.

"Our members include public pay-and-play courses, private members' clubs and multi-venue groups and resorts."

CLEARWATER CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

ClearWater, the leading washpad water recycling system, is celebrating ten years of sales with 10th Anniversary Special Offers.

The much acclaimed full biological, below ground system was introduced ten years ago by Highspeed Group Ltd. and now has an enviable reputation for performance and reliability.

Highspeed Group Ltd has developed

the system and installation package since the launch and has worked hard to ensure it is the most affordable system of its type. The special offers include a free upgrade to two hose washing, free special ClearWater barrow and free year's supply of micro-organisms.

Highspeed Group's MD David Mears said: "We've introduced more powerful

pumps, added extra filtration, improved access and ease of operation. One thing we have not done is to compromise our original concept of producing an uncomplicated system that is very effective, reliable and real value for money. To mark ten years of supplying ClearWater, we thought we'd celebrate and make choosing ClearWater that bit easier."

QUALIBRA BATTLES THE ELEMENTS

Last year's climate proved a testing time to cope with the huge variability in British weather conditions. James Braithwaite, Course Manager at Long Ashton GC in Somerset, tested the attributes of Qualibra for his greens and club members

Keeping putting surfaces firm

The original soil-based greens of Long Ashton Golf Club have always posed a challenge for Course Manager, James Braithwaite, to keep the course open and avoid the use of temporary greens as much as possible.

So James (bottom right) carried out a trial with Ray Hunt of ALS by using Qualibra on nine greens, and another market leading wetting agent on his other nine. He applied both on a monthly basis, at exactly the same time and according to their recommended application rates.

James reported that, despite using Qualibra on the more difficult greens, the results were that they were firmer and drier at the surface than his other nine holes, resulting in faster, more consistent, putting surfaces.

Ray added that having the penetrant and polymer qualities together in one wetting agent had clearly worked well in moving water away from the surface to achieve firmer conditions, whilst holding moisture at a lower level in the soil profile.

Water conservation

Ray also recommends the dual action of Qualibra can help greenkeepers make better use of irrigation scheduling, and conserve of water resources in a dry season.

He said: "Applying more water less frequently helps to rehydrate the soil more effectively to depth, and significantly reduces the effect of evaporation from the soil surface in hot summer conditions."

Ray advocates the dual action of Qualibra for eliminating the risks of creating soft surfaces after a heavy rain or irrigation and help alleviate Dry Patch or hydrophobic soils more effectively.

"Creating a dry surface, whilst holding greater soil moisture reserves deep and evenly in the root zone, gives more efficient utilisation of water and encourages root development further down into the soil profile, which can further aid plant health," he said.

Water warning

Golf courses and other sports facilities are going to have to stop using mains water for irrigation within the next five years, according to latest reports, warns Roger Davey of Somerset-based Irritech.

He said: "Golf courses will have to prove they have an efficient and sustainable policy for their use of irrigation water, if they want to get and keep an abstraction licence."

Whilst the cost of borehole water can be as low as five pence per m3 and could pay for the investment in just three years, greenkeepers and clubs have to be aware of the potential risks of water quality.

Other sources for stored water, including rainwater harvesting and treated grey water or sewage effluent from a hotel complex, for example, could also provide valuable alternatives.



Qualibra

Deeper thinking

New wetting and water conservation technology that moves water from the surface AND holds it deeper and more evenly in the root zone.

Visit www.greencast.co.uk for more information



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Profile

.....
Name: Colin Irvine
Born: Haddington, East Lothian, 13
January 1965.....
Handicap: 10.....
Hobbies: Golf, clay pigeon shooting...



Double take at Muirfield

How is Colin Irvine preparing for staging the greatest golfing show on earth – 11 years after his last experience of The Open? How have expectations changed, and what are the technical challenges? Steve Castle found out



The last time Colin Irvine took charge of preparing a course for The Open Championship in 2002, Ernie Els scooped the Claret Jug. So there's a pleasing symmetry to The Big Easy returning to Muirfield to defend the title this summer.

The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers – to give Muirfield its official title – is one of just 15 courses in the world to receive maximum marks in Rolex's recent top 1,000 Golf Courses book. I arrived on a perfect sunny winter's morning, with golfers – some clad

in traditional plus fours – strolling round the course which has tested legends of the sport since hosting its first Open in 1892. The tournament's first tee shot was still months away, and it was hard to see exactly where tens of thousands of spectators plus media – and the BIGGA Open Support Team – will be housed.

I asked Colin what he's most looking forward to and he replied, tongue firmly in cheek, "Sunday night". He added: "We reopen on the Monday morning for the R&A's official guests' day with the holes

12th green courtesy of Alastair Brown

in the same position as The Open. We then cut the greens, rake the bunkers, then send the guys home because everybody's very tired."

After studying at Elmwood College Colin was offered a summer job at Muirfield in 1981, and after catching the greenkeeping bug was promoted to second in charge before leaving for Germany after the 1992 Open.

"I fancied travelling and doing something different, and I like a challenge, so I spent two years at Dusseldorfer Golf Club. It was an inland course with a completely different setup so I knew it would broaden my education."

He admitted he spoke no German on arrival – but soon picked up the language after studying at night school. After a valuable two years he returned and became Course Manager in 1994. So how has his role changed since Els' last triumph in 2002?

"If anything you're less hands-on. There are more meetings and you rely more on your deputy and green staff. We don't have a greens chairman here. I speak to the Secretary three times a week. We also have five committee meetings a year, from budgeting to maintenance work – anything really.



A map with plans for the stands and the tented village



“We topdress the greens with pure sand every three weeks, then they’ll get an application of lawn sand in April and an organic fertiliser in late May”

“If they have a question they can put it straight to me so it works well.”

Colin is relaxed despite me bombarding him with questions, eager to discover the technical secrets of preparing a course for an event of this magnitude. There’s already a map on his office wall showing the planned locations of the spectator stands and also the tented village.

He said: “We topdress the greens with pure sand every three weeks, then they’ll get an application of lawn sand in April and an organic fertiliser in late May – although this is dependent on weather. We use a lot of wetting agents to let the irrigation water through as evenly as possible so the rootzone is evenly moist.

“The greens are fescue dominant. More bent comes in if you get wet summers, you can’t help that. Last spring the fescue was beautiful on them because it was 23C in March.

“Then the weather deteriorated from there. Of course, the weather’s totally out of your hands – you just have to adapt to it and work round it. Sunlight was a big factor last year – we barely had any! But if you think we’ve got it tough, you should speak to the guys on other courses...”

The contrast in rainfall figures between the East and West of Scotland is truly remarkable. Last month’s GI featured The Carrick on Loch Lomond that had a staggering 1800mm of rainfall last year, following on from 2200mm in 2011.

This dwarfs Muirfield’s rainfall in 2012 which was 782mm – although that was their highest for ten years. Unfortunately the team did have to battle poor conditions prior to their last Open.

“It was very wet in 2002. There were no flooded bunkers or anything, but of course you prefer a links course to have a drier, browner look about it.

“We sand the fairways and the surrounds a lot more now trying to compensate if it’s wet – although we do that every year, not just because it’s The Open.

“July is an unpredictable month here. Over the last ten years we get 71mm in July on average. The wettest was 112mm in 2007 and the driest was 18mm in 2004. There’s generally a westerly wind but on the Saturday of the last Open we had a north-easterly storm and there were a lot of high scores.

“The drainage is good but if you’re using a lot of heavy machinery things get compacted.

“The core full-time team numbers the same as 2002 – we have myself, one mechanic, one trainee and nine full-time greenkeepers, five of whom were here last time. It may seem a big staff to some people, but we look after a 220 acre golf course plus 300 acres of dune land and woodland. We also hand mow greens, tees and aprons so it’s very labour intensive.

“Of course we have extra support staff during the Championship. Rather than cutting fairways or tees at night the R&A want everything done on the mornings, heightening the presentation.

“Obviously this requires more staff so we’re very grateful to the local courses at Gullane, Archerfield, Luffness and the Renaissance Club who have all agreed to allow one of their greenkeepers to work here during The Open. We also have a greenkeeper from each of the other Open venues, a few on scholarships from the R&A and of course the BIGGA Support Team.”

This support network offers divoting assistance as well as bunker raking and help with any other tasks. As Colin said: “If we’re not divoting or raking bunkers in the morning it frees us up for other tasks. We double cut greens with 18



inch hand mowers with groomers to refine things. This is time consuming work so we do need support.

"The R&A will decide on the green speed, they normally say about 10.5. Through the summer they run between 9.5 and 11 anyway.

"We close the course a fortnight before it all starts, and as any greenkeeper will tell you, it's a lot easier to work without golfers! We don't actually make any changes to our procedures, it's more that everything intensifies.

"The Sunday before The Open is a test day where we do everything that we would do before the Thursday of the tournament, and then another dummy run on the Tuesday before.

"A couple of years ago MJ Abbott installed a new RainBird irrigation system to make things more controllable in the run-up to a tournament. If you have to slow the greens down or add a bit of moisture you've got that facility rather than going out with a hose."

It turns out that the major change in 11 years is in the design of the course, which officially opened in 1891. Over the winters of 2010 and 2011, renowned golf course architect Dr Martin Hawtree carried out a review of Muirfield, mainly to ensure it remained a true challenge for the world's best golfers. In summary the changes were:

- The introduction of new bunkers in selected drive areas
- The relocation of greenside bunkers to tighten the entrances to certain greens

- The extension of certain greens to provide more championship pin positions

- The introduction of six new championship tees, extending the course to 7245 yards

Colin says: "This hasn't changed the characteristics of the course. The most noticeable difference is at the 9th which is now a longer par five into the prevailing wind."

The team have also completed intense work on the rough. Colin adds: "Muirfield is famed for its fast growing rough. It's hard to judge because of the uncertainty over the weather. You obviously want it long enough to cater for a mishit shot but not so long the ball is lost."

I accept the unmissable opportunity to walk parts of the course with Colin and stand on the 18th tee gazing towards the distant green and the famous clubhouse. The prospect of having to get par from here to secure the Claret Jug would surely fill even the most experienced golfer with dread. Over to you Tiger, Rory, Justin and Ernie.

AERATION PROGRAMME

- 8mm or 12mm solid tining of the greens, aprons and tees
- Fairways vertidrain – 19mm carries and fairways, 12mm fairway approaches
- Greens tined once or twice a year, either in November or February depending on the weather
- Fairways tined once a year or once every two years

HEIGHT OF CUT (SUMMER)

- 4mm minimum on greens, generally 4.5mm
- Aprons and tees 8mm
- Fairways and surrounds 11mm

ABOVE: A view towards the famous clubhouse

RIGHT: 18th fairway courtesy of Alastair Brown

MACHINERY LIST

TRACTORS

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John Deere 4600 with loader
John Deere 4410 with loader
John Deere 2326

FAIRWAYS

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John Deere 8000E

GREENS

John Deere 2500E x 2
John Deere 180 SL x 8

TEES

John Deere 220C x 4

APRONS

John Deere 180C x 5

GEN MACHINERY

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John Deere E Gators x 3
John Deere 1565 with Laztec deck
John Deere 2653 B
John Deere 365 Gang Mower
John Deere Aercore
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Wiedenmann Super 600 Flail Mower
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St. Mellion
Course Manager

Getting to **know** ...what your **members** want

In a bid to answer this fundamental question, Mike Bush MG – Course Manager at St Mellion International Golf Club - quizzed hundreds of the club's members, and the results are helping to shape his future strategy

St Mellion's Player Survey has highlighted that course condition is a key priority for members – and it's also provided some key pointers regarding turf management practices and priorities in the future for Mike.

Presenting the results at BIGGA's Devon & Cornwall Spring Seminar, held at the Club, Mike identified that the condition of greens was consistently the most important factor for members across the Club's two 18-hole courses - the Kernow - designed primarily as a resort golf course - and the original championship Nicklaus Signature Course.

The condition of fairways and tees were also of very high importance, although tees were of slightly less importance to lower handicap players on the Nicklaus Course.

Design and aesthetics of the playing environment were also ranked as highly important.

"Pleasingly for the greenkeeping team, the satisfaction with the condition of most aspects of the playing surfaces was high, especially the greens and fairways," reported Mike. "However, the slightly lower satisfaction of the tee conditions has indicated we will need to focus more on those areas to bring them up to the same high level as the rest of the course."

He added that the price of membership was listed as the second most important factor on both courses. "It is a factor that had to be acknowledged in the current economic climate. We have to manage our costs more effectively to ensure our membership price remains competitive, and to recognise that we don't have a blank cheque to

spend on areas that won't give members a valued return."

The Survey was developed and tailored to the Club's specific needs by Syngenta, based on a previous survey which looked at general trends and demands among the golfing public across more than 300 courses in 2011/12.

Managing to players' demands

The survey did throw up some fascinating differences between the Club's two courses and the golfers that play them. Mike says the results could now help the team tailor management of the two courses more effectively to cater for the different players' average abilities and meet required criteria of levels of importance.

On the Kernow course, which is predominantly played by golfers with relatively high handicaps, the

key factor for fairway playability was to have the ball sitting proudly on the turf surface, with tight mown turf far less important. On the Nicklaus Course, however, where the majority of players surveyed had a handicap of less than 15, tightly mown fairways were rated as far more crucial. "That has implications for height and frequency of cut and other practices that we can use to help present the sort of playing surfaces that better meet the different demands of players," he added.

Ironically, all the players rated a dense fairway sward of low importance, yet that is the very feature that delivers the ball sitting proudly as they wanted. Mike believes this highlighted the need to phrase any survey questions in a way that players would understand and around the features they are looking for.

Smooth greens

Another fascinating finding for Mike and the team was the fact responses to questions about the greens identified overwhelming demand for smooth and even paced greens, with fast ball roll lower than the ranking for greens conditions.

"That goes against the typical car park comments and the frequent calls we hear for the need for speed. This now gives us evidence to discuss with members what they really want, and explain what we are doing to deliver it.

"It doesn't mean that we will slow greens down - since smooth consistent surfaces will almost always be quick - but does change the emphasis of what we are looking to achieve with cutting heights and management for dense, smooth surfaces."

Rough challenge

Across the courses there were adverse comments about the density of the rough, which the team are going to work to address over coming seasons.

Mike says: "It may be that we have made the rough just too challenging for players, to the point that it's spoiling their game.

"With relatively low scores for satisfaction in aspects such as finding their ball and the ability to play out of the rough, we clearly need to look at ways to open out the rough and encourage a higher proportion of finer, wispy grasses.

It shifts the balance between what we see as providing a golfing challenge and defining aesthetically pleasing hole designs using the rough, with the need to maintain playability and enjoyment."

If you would be interested in running a similar Player Survey on your course, please log on to GreenCast - www.greencast.co.uk - and follow the link to send an email to register your interest.

BELOW: Delegates at BIGGA's Devon and Cornwall Spring Seminar



The St Mellion Player Survey was developed and tailored to the Club's specific needs by Syngenta, based on the company's original Golf Player Survey, which looked at general trends and demands among the golfing public across more than 300 courses in 2011/12.

The findings from the 260 St Mellion members who took part in the on-line questionnaire over the early part of 2013 were remarkably consistent, but added a level of detail to enable Mike Bush to consider future actions. Read the full report on the GreenCast website.

syngenta
www.greencast.co.uk
www.greencast.ie



Mike and his team had already been trialling the use of Rescue to remove coarse grasses in the rough and leave desirable finer fescue species, in an effort to reduce time players spend looking for balls and to speed up play – which was a key area of dissatisfaction for some players.

Mowing matters

The beautifully presented courses at St Mellion come at a cost of time and effort to hand cut greens, tees and approaches. The fairways are carefully striped and clippings boxed throughout the playing season.

It's an attention to detail that gives Mike and the greenkeeping team immense pride, but the survey revealed this is largely overlooked by players. More surprisingly, players seemed totally unconcerned about striped and well defined fairways.

"That raises questions about how we manage mowing in the future, which might possibly release time and budget to spend in other areas." However, he will raise these questions with members before introducing changes and may repeat the survey to check responses.

"It would also appear that they are unconcerned that the greens are cut with pedestrian mowers – it came bottom in importance among the Kernow respondents and very low for players on the Nicklaus. However, they both rated smooth ball roll and even pace as crucial – which are both enhanced by the accuracy of pedestrian cutting. That mean we possibly need to better explain the link between our greenkeeping activities and the resulting playing quality, so I feel the question's terminology may have been misunderstood."

Ageing golfers

Mike acknowledged that the survey highlighted the issue of an ageing of golf population, especially in the South West region where there is a higher proportion of retired players. More than 70% of respondents on both courses were over 50 years old, with around 45% more than 66.

"We know that we need to be doing more to attract a new, younger generation of golfers to the game; having greater feedback from them would possibly enable us to do more to meet their demands – whether that be in specific playing conditions, or a game format they would want to participate in more."

The survey did positively identify that an internet-based questionnaire could reach the older genera-

tion, but it may be that a survey for younger players needs to feature fewer, shorter questions directly related to topics that may interest them, which they could answer quickly. It could also be placed on Twitter or Facebook to encourage greater participation.

Attractive proposition

The survey also looked at what specific factors attracted players to a different course – providing a valuable insight into what might tempt members away, as well as elements that could be enhanced to bring in new players.

The design of the golf course unanimously came out as the top factor that attracted them to a course, followed by the aesthetics of the course and the quality of greens. Turf quality on the rest of the course, along with a friendly atmosphere in the club, ranked lower.

Mike believed these results demonstrated that investment in new features on the course and improving the quality of playing surfaces was always going to prove a key factor in attracting new players, as well as maintaining the interest and satisfaction of existing members.

Justifying investment

Mike added the results could prove valuable in helping to justify investment and expenditure in key areas of the course where they now know that members will welcome improvements.

"We have been looking to do further work on the drainage across the course to improve year-round playability, which was really put to the test last year.

"The fact that members have identified this as an area of low satisfaction adds weight to the need for action. I am keen to do more to further improve the tees, which again we know is an area to prioritise with a re-leveling and drainage programme.

"General Managers and Directors all love data and make their business decisions based on stats. We now have a wealth of valid information to influence what we do and why.

"It also gives us greater opportunity to discuss issues with members and to demonstrate what we are doing for their benefit.

"We now have a benchmark on players' needs and satisfaction with the Club and the courses, which we could refine and repeat in the future to ensure we are preempting changing demands and meeting what the players want."

How do you make the step up from Assistant to Course Manager? In the first of a two-part special, consultant Kevin Munt gives you a potential roadmap to success



18 steps to becoming a Golf Course Manager

Part one - The front nine

1. Ambition

Without this you cannot begin your journey so, if you haven't already, get some!

How do you become ambitious? Well it may be something that was sparked during your childhood or teenage years or you acquired throughout your career. Ambition can be gained out of either a positive or a negative situation. For example, you may have enjoyed playing golf and wanted to make a career out of it.

Alternatively you may not have achieved at school and, as a late developer, have now discovered your niche.

This was certainly my experience when, aged sixteen, my dad read out a job description for Apprentice Greenkeeper in the local paper and said "do this job, then build me a golf course". So by all means be as ambitious as you like, but don't let ambition dictate your pace, and don't ram that ambition down people's throats.

2. Support

You are not going to make it on your own, you are going to need the support of your family, friends, peers, colleagues, educators and employers, to name an important few.

Let people you trust know of your career plans and they will help you with advice, experience, knowledge and introductions. You will also need their support when you up sticks and move to the next role along your career path.

3. Learning

Before you can take that first step to being the boss there are a large number of course maintenance related topics that you will have to obtain a good understanding of.

This knowledge will be learnt by practical 'on-the-job' application, formal college education, and your continued professional development through BIGGA and other management workshops and courses.

The great news is that learning has never been so in depth, available and accessible to greenkeepers. You should be aiming for a well-rounded knowledge of the many practical and technical aspects of the role. But, for all your advance preparation you will gain the most learning once you have obtained your first Course Manager position.

4. Communication

I could easily have listed this as step 1, as you have to start sharing what you want to achieve straight away. We do not all start out as good communicators; indeed many of us enter greenkeeping because we don't want to spend all day communicating. We are not natural sales people or marketers, it is something we develop as we grow in our professional lives. In my experience all the awkward, difficult and stressful situations I have found myself in have been caused by miscommunication or non-communication. Remember that good communicators are 'influencers', your main aim as a manager will be to bring your influence to the decision making process and ultimately a satisfactory end result. Some may call this getting your own way but it's better to get your own way than get in the way! Just be aware of your 'two-way' communication skill levels and make sure you improve both enough so that your message is clearly received and understood without harm or offence.

Successful influencers have a strong vision that they support with measurable, achievable delivery targets that form the basis for well-constructed business/operational plans. So do you see yourself as an influencer? If not, you will have to be content with being a passive doer.

5. Golf Skills

This may surprise a few but in my opinion you must be able to play the game to a handicap. Do you think you are going to persuade your employers of your aims for their playing surfaces and course set-up if you don't understand the skills and nuances of the game? So if you don't play get some lessons and get out there now, or be prepared to be behind the gain line at interview, if you are lucky enough to get one!

6. Career Path

You may think that this should be listed earlier in these steps. There are (I hope) young greenkeepers out there who already have their hearts (and heads) set on running a championship course. It may be your plan is to stay at your first course and devote your entire working life to its success, or you may be on the first rung to St Wentingdale G&CC. I don't believe you can truly set your course management career path in place until you make that first



step into the role. Ambition and your career path are closely linked, however do not allow ambition to dominate your career direction totally.

Aged 26 I had ambitions to become the Links Superintendent on an Open Championship course, to ensure I gained the necessary skills and contacts I made my career moves in line with this aim.

At 29 I got distracted by a role that proved to me that all that glitters is not gold so mid-career moved into golf course construction and design, and then into club management.

So your career climb needs to be flexible because there are many branches to this particular tree. Things change in a career, you, employers, family and general life, so make sure you have a flexible path that still satisfies you and don't let that path run into a dead end.

7. Organisational Skills

These are vital, as simple as that. I presume you are reading this because you are already on a career path, maybe you are already a First Assistant or Deputy supervising a team. If so it is most likely that you are doing this because it has been recognised that you are organised.

So keep going, stay organised and plan, use day-to-day organ-

isational tools such as diaries and project notebooks, as well as learning IT software packages and mobile technology skills that help you plan, record and report.

8. Course Policy

Now we are getting into the nitty gritty of the job role. This is one of the subjects that all the Deputies on our workshop want to know about and get their hands on.

This document encapsulates the golf course manager's role and more or less writes their job description/specification.

To make the move up you should know what is in a golf course management policy document, if you don't get your Course Manager to show you one. When you have read it ask lots of questions about how it's formed and why it's there.

They should be telling you its main purpose is to identify the strategy needed to achieve the quality objectives set out in the club/business mission statement, and then identify the processes needed to achieve these aims.

Your golf course management policy document should be the foundation on which the management of your course is built.

If your course doesn't have one then ask around or look at the Model Document in the Member Resources section of the BIGGA website.

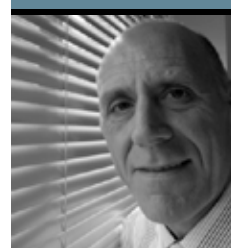
Kevin and Peter hosting their 'So You Want To Be a Golf Course Manager' workshop at Continue to Learn 2013

9. Resource Management

If these 18 steps were golf holes this would be stroke index 1. This one topic covers everything a manager is ever asked to control. Manpower, machinery and materials all require the fourth 'M' - money. Get this right and you will succeed as a Course Manager. Contained within the four 'Ms' your operational management will include health and safety, environmental management, power, water, irrigation and, in case you forget, the provision of a golf course that provides customer satisfaction. To control the delivery of these resource elements within the constraints of the fourth requires good management skills above all else. Of course you have to know when and why you are applying all of this resource, but if you don't have the structure, systems and controls in place your agronomic knowledge and skill will be rendered useless, and you will be neither efficient or attain your objectives.

Now you have walked the first nine of the Course Management Career Planner take some time out at the halfway hut to work out whether you are under or over par. Then note what you are going to do to improve on your front nine and be ready to take on the all important career back nine in next month's issue.

about the author



Kevin Munt

Kevin Munt is Principle Consultant at KMGc. Forty years ago he started his greenkeeping career during which time has been the Course Manager at the Hankley Common, Royal Dornoch and Wentworth Golf Clubs. Kevin has also project managed golf course constructions and been Operations Manager Buckinghamshire Golf Club

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Conservation

Dan McGrath MG recently won Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year, a coveted STRI Environment Award. BIGGA are part of this and Greenkeeper International is a media partner, so Dan agreed to tell us about his prize – a trip to Portugal to explore how they're dealing with environmental challenges on the Iberian Peninsula



2012 Golf Environment Awards, supported by BIGGA



Following my appointment as Course Manager at North Foreland Golf Club on the Kent coastline seven years ago, many challenges confronted me. A truly spectacular chalkland cliff top course built on the ethos of traditional golf needed tweaking in several work programmes - one being the ecology and environmental work.

First thing was to draw up an environmental policy and plan, without which there is no direction. This was completed and the wheels were then well and truly in motion. I was introduced to the Kent Wildlife Trust by a previous employer, so the next logical step was to make North Foreland a corporate member. Having the expertise and local

knowledge of such an organisation is invaluable and one I would recommend to anyone wishing to pursue any environmental project.

The main concentration of the first phase of the work was the Chalkland Regeneration Programme. Large areas had previously been unmanaged and seen as out of play areas. Scrub had taken a foothold, completely smothering the native chalkland grasses and also allowing ground ivy to populate the site. A programme of scarification on a rotational basis commenced and is still carried out to this day. The results have been immense. Native grasses have returned, orchids have appeared with numbers growing every year, the rough is thin and wispy giving fantastic definition and improv-

goes **European**

ing overall playability. This work accompanied by the construction of a reservoir and bore hole plus over 70 bird boxes, two owl boxes, log piles, recycling units and more have led us to where we are today.

It was a great honour to accept Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year on behalf of all my team during BTME. The Award is a result of programmes put in place in 2005 and followed through by some fantastically motivated, skilled members of the team.

Once we felt that we were starting to win the battle on invasive vegetation and the site's natural characteristics were flourishing we felt it time to enter into The Golf Environmental Awards. I saw it as a great way to showcase the hard work the team had put in.

The first stage was completing the application form and then sending it to ecologists Richard Stuttard and Bob Taylor.

To everyone's delight within the club we were chosen for a site visit. Notice I say visit rather than 'inspection'. I feel that many may be put off by experts visiting and judging one's practices, however you couldn't be further from the truth. Richard and Bob are two of the most realistic and understanding ecologists out there and fully appreciate the obstacles that us turf managers have to confront every day. They not only have an unbelievable passion for flora and fauna, but they are also very sincere when they say that golf courses are one of the most valuable habitats left in society today for many endangered species.

I am no eco-warrior and anyone that knows me would say I'm just a normal everyday turf manager and the STRI appreciate this in every way.

The most important thing to recognise is that we are turf managers - but more so we are all land managers.

It really does not matter whether you have a championship course or a nine hole course, the decisions are made on the work done with the resources available. This is one of many refreshing aspects of the Award and believe me there are many highlights throughout the whole process. The phone call from Richard giving me the good news was one of the highlights of my career to date. On receiving the plaque during BTME, we were informed of the date for our prize Environmental trip to Portugal.

I was to be accompanied by Ian Willett from Thorpeness Golf Club who won the Overall Award.



The trip couldn't have been timed any better as I was looking forward to swapping the unforgiving easterly winds in Kent for a little Iberian heat. Bob, Ian and myself all met up in Faro in the Algarve and were later joined by Alexandra Almeida, Sustainability Advisor to the Portuguese Golf Federation.

Onyria Palmares Golf Resort

Onyria Palmares Golf Resort was the first stop where we were greeted by Course Superintendent Joel Nunes. This recently redesigned Robert Trent Jones Jnr 27 hole complex showed us the scale of the environmental challenges faced in such a location. Like all Portuguese clubs, struggles with the scarcity of water gave us a great example of how both drainage and





“The most important thing to recognise is that we are turf managers - but more so we are all land managers”



lake design can be incorporated to serve multiple ends. Wetland areas were integrated with the drainage system and new lakes designed to increase holding capacity. Recycling of all hollow cores had also seen the recent construction of a chipping green which will be open in time for the main playing season. It was a pleasure to share ideas with Joel and his professionalism and hospitality was greatly appreciated by all.

Amendoeira Golf Resort

From there we moved onto the Faldo & O'Connor Courses in the Amendoeira Golf Resort. Located on the western Algarve, this 36 hole complex was largely built on a flood plain. Russ Wilson, Course Superintendent, explained the challenges and work carried out to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding.



San Lorenzo

Serious engineering solutions were required and employed with the stream bed being widened and redesigned with meanders added, to slow the water flow rate. The new stream accompanied by retention basins, lakes and integrated drainage has allowed them to produce two championship courses.

It has been widely recognised that the work carried out is not just from a golfing viewpoint but for the local area and residents. Villages have seen the flooding risk to their homes greatly reduced thanks to the work. It is very rare for a golf course today to actually reduce water usage and not impact more on the natural resources.

San Lorenzo

Day two saw us head to the exclusive resort of San Lorenzo – which has a joining fee of €60,000. Welcomed on site by a truly remarkable Director of Golf, Antonio Santos, nothing could have prepared us for the day that lay ahead. A stimulating tour around the course proved to us that this was justifiably awarded Golf Resort of the Year 2009 for Europe. One of the premier clubs from the 90 in the country, Antonio explained that a major issue environmentally is the residents living close to every hole. Large exclusive houses with gardens to match have seen many exotic plant species finding their way onto the course from the resident grounds.

These have increasingly become more invasive and the natural veg-

etation characteristic was starting to be lost.

San Lorenzo are now addressing these issues and have in their team a very knowledgeable greenkeeper/ environmentalist to make sure all codes of practice are followed. Large stretches of the course run along the protected area of the Ria Formosa, a wetland area of true beauty. The team are working hard to eradicate any foreign plants and produce a haven for all wildlife. To say that they are succeeding is an understatement. The bird life and plant species on show are unbelievable and the course is a shining example of how both nature and the game of golf can go hand in hand.

I could go on and on about our experiences from first entering this competition to the Portugal trip, but hopefully I have given you all a positive insight to a truly rewarding process. Please put yourselves forward for this award as all parties win, you the individual, your team, your membership, the golfing industry and the fragile flora and fauna we share this planet with.

I would like to sign off by thanking my travelling companions for making the trip one to remember and to all the sponsors without whom this would not be possible – STRI, BIGGA, County Turf, Golf Monthly, Ransomes Jacobsen, Syngenta, Greenkeeping magazine and this year's addition Farmura. Lastly, can I pay a special thanks to my team at North Foreland for their continued support and incredible work output.



ABOVE: San Lorenzo Director of Golf Antonio Santos
LEFT: Telephone masts disguised as trees at San Lorenzo

2012 Golf Environment Awards sponsors



Bob Taylor, Head of Ecology and Environment at the STRI, said: "It seems a bit of a cliché to say that the study trip provided through the Golf Environment Awards is a life changing experience but it is true. I am sure that Ian and Dan will never forget their experience to the Algarve and particularly the visit to San Lorenzo. The passion, knowledge and enthusiasm from the Director of Golf there was superb. Antonio Santos gave over five hours of his precious time; showing the group the World heritage site – The Ria Formosa - adjoining the course. His passion was infectious and perfectly aligned to the aspirations of our more informed greenkeepers. A wonderful trip."



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Where are you going with irrigation?



Sport in the UK is predominantly played on turf and it is the overall quality of that surface which dictates the excellence of play. There are several factors which help to control sward quality including grass species, maintenance practices and irrigation; and it is perhaps the latter which is least understood.

Unlike agriculture, sports turf managers do not require their turf to produce a commercial yield, they

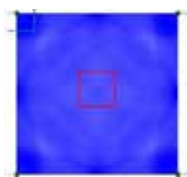
require a balanced growth, sufficient only to maintain the quality of the playing surface, and of course it's the quality of that playing surface which keeps the punters clamouring to become members, or seek out your facility as a visitor.

The past few years have provided the UK with about as many varied rainfall scenarios as there is possible to be. The autumn of 2012 was the wettest on record and we had an extremely cold spring this year. Cold winds have scoured the turf for available water leaving us

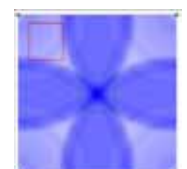
with bleached droughty conditions. But are we heading for a hot dry summer, and are you prepared?

Whatever your views on global warming weather patterns are certainly changing. Even in areas of the country where average rainfall figures suggest there has been little significant change in the past ten years, the pattern of precipitation has changed.

Moderate precipitation over a sustained period has often been replaced with shorter but heavier downpours, resulting in an even



Densograms above (good) and below (bad) coverage



With the UK continuing to suffer erratic weather, irrigation has become more important than ever. Adrian Mortram investigates water management provisions and gives advice on irrigation whether your course is large or small



greater need for irrigation as the rootzone is unable to absorb the precipitation and surface run-off wastes the precious resource.

Taking responsibility

'Taking responsibility for Water' is a document produced by the United Kingdom Water Research and Innovation Framework and looks at provisions for water until 2030. Water will be increasingly in demand in the future, it is not a finite resource and golf courses

must make provision for this. In the UK demand is set to increase. Not only will potential consumption rise but owing to urbanisation, road building and residential housing, the amount of water naturally recycled will decrease and the surface run off which lost to drainage will be greater.

The way forward has to be through better understanding of the use of our precious resource. Several golf courses in the UK, Europe and beyond have had success with continued use of potable

water and abstraction rights when they have been in a position to demonstrate they are being proactive in their effective and efficient use of water. The use of water meters to monitor and record specific water use for irrigation purposes on a daily or weekly basis is a must to protect your rights to this water as this provides factual information which can be presented as hard evidence.

An irrigation system is arguably the most expensive piece of equipment in which a golf club



Weather Station



Checking Soil Moisture for Irrigation Scheduling

can invest, but as most of it is out of sight it is frequently neglected. Many irrigation systems in the UK were installed in the eighties and nineties, the boom years for golf, and may be nearing the end of their productive life. They may no longer be fit for purpose or indeed not meet current Health and Safety standards as well as wasting considerable amounts of water. It may be the time to analyse whether it is expedient to sit back and do nothing, repair the ailing system, upgrade it or grasp the nettle and replace the existing system.

A thorough Irrigation System Audit from a competent and independent irrigation consultant will look at all aspects of the irrigation system.

So, should you repair, upgrade or replace? Repair will almost certainly be the least expensive, but will it be the most cost effective over time? Upgrading may involve looking at the whole ethos of 'what do we wish to irrigate?' and any upgrade should always be balanced with the integrity of the existing system.

If the decision is to replace then there may be no need to replace the whole irrigation system in one year, a phased approach could be adopted provided the new plan is embedded in the overall golf club management plan.

Design

The design and designer must rank high in the efficiency of any irrigation system and when coupled with a detailed knowledge and understanding of the equipment available in the marketplace, will save water.

A tees and greens only system will certainly use considerably less water than a wall to wall fairway design. Sprinkler arc settings set to 180 degrees rather than 360 degrees will also reduce water application volumes provided the sprinkler run times are adjusted accordingly.

Deciding the priorities and parameters of your irrigation requirements are a matter of individual choice. Areas can be targeted accurately for specific irrigation needs, one only needs to witness the accuracy of targeted areas demonstrated on desert courses in both America and the Middle East. Accurate design, spacing and installation of sprinklers to ensure head to head contact is vital in ensuring efficient coverage.

The use of specific design software to select the most efficient irrigation sprinkler and nozzle for

the desired spacing is extremely important to ensure efficient use of water. Modern sprinklers can also deliver the irrigation trajectory at lower angles, helping to ensure better distribution in windy conditions. Sprinkler run times and application rates need to be within the bounds of the infiltration rate using a repeat and soak cycle if necessary.

Monitoring conditions

Accurate monitoring and recording of soil moisture deficit conditions will allow the irrigation manager to balance and modify the daily application rate. After a period of natural precipitation it is not only pointless but profligate to apply irrigation which takes the soil moisture level above field capacity.

The days of ten minutes per night to all areas of the course are over. Water balance sheets have now largely been superseded by weather stations and soil moisture monitors, which can be directly linked to the irrigation central computer controller.

I might add that all too often when making a return site visit to a Golf Club where an irrigation system has been installed in the past, the initial irrigation programme has not been altered or modified. Workshops on irrigation design and maintenance are available at BTME.

The move toward improved sustainability within our industry is something which is here to stay. The advancement in irrigation design, irrigation central control and sprinkler technologies are a vital piece of the jigsaw and irrigation manufacturers are constantly striving to ensure the efficient use of water by their products. There are irrigation computer controllers which now schedule sprinkler run times in seconds rather than minutes.

One area in which advances are rarely mentioned is turf grass species. We irrigate to ensure the survival of our grasses which make up our playing surfaces and it is their requirement for water which ultimately determines how much we apply.

The use of improved cultivars of grasses which have a lower water use rate and those with deeper rooting to ensure water availability in the soil is maximised is a must.

The composition of the rootzone is also an important factor and how this is managed an even more important factor. So when we consider efficiency within our irrigation system we should also consider



the species composition and the rootzone as these have considerable bearing on the water demand for irrigation.

Undoubtedly there is going to be more pressure on our most precious resource – water - in the future.

As an industry I truly believe our practices are efficient and often more so than other industries whose use of water is far greater than ours. Perhaps our voice is sometimes least heard or maybe least recognised, even though we provide pleasure and enjoyment for so many people.

I feel we need to communicate our need for water, not as a need for yield, as in the turf industry yield is not our goal; our goal is sufficient water only to maintain growth and a quality playing surface.

Communicate with your membership and explain the principles of water management, audit your irrigation system to ensure you have an efficient system design, regularly maintain and service your irrigation system, identify your priorities for irrigation in a worst case scenario and repair, upgrade or replace as necessary, but above all be proactive in your water management policy.

“As an industry I truly believe our practices are efficient and often more so than other industries whose use of water is far greater than ours”



Spray app



...to the
manor born

lication



Dr Terry Mabbett on how EU directives on chemical pesticides are continuing to pressurise the sports turf industry

Looking at the onslaughts by the EU on chemical pesticides you could be forgiven for believing that chemical control of insect pests, diseases and weeds is 'drinking in the last chance saloon'. Brussels continues to fire bureaucratic broadsides at a whole raft of industries for which chemical pesticides are traditionally used to manage economically important and environmentally destructive biological agents.

Professional sports turf is a small part of the big pesticide picture and contributes tiny amounts to overall environment loading, but turf suffers disproportionately from what goes on in adjacent areas including arable crop spraying and hard surface applications.

Substantial overlap can occur in the use of specific active ingredients with serious implications for turf.

The consequences of broad acre insecticide treatment of cereal crops and high run off risks from total (non-selective) herbicides application to roads, pavements and industrial hard surfaces can seriously impact on golf courses.

Game changing directives

The turf industry is ahead of the game in pesticide use and regulation, but a clutch of EU directives are now pushing the sports turf industry much faster and further than could have reasonably been projected or imagined just ten years ago. Biocides are increasingly brandished as the only option for long term sustainable protection of professional turf.

However superficially attractive biocontrol products may be, they are already being outstripped and overtaken by chemical pesticides of biological origin.

Classic examples include azoxystrobin - a fungicide first discovered during research on wild mushrooms commonly found in Czech Republic forests - and fludioxonil, a fungicide inspired by a naturally occurring antifungal compound produced by some soil bacteria.

These biological fungicides are potent and highly targeted which means just a fraction of that normally used for more conventional turf fungicides can be used to manage turf diseases.

Biological origins and credentials make them less environmentally intrusive and more readily removed from the soil. With reduced dosage and less persistence comes lower environmental loading.

Enter application

Forty years ago pesticide application was simply a means of getting a dose of chemical from point A (the spray tank) to point B (the plant surface). Accuracy, wastage and contamination were generally not considered and pesticide application to turf was still very much the poor relation of agricultural spraying. Early attempts at controlled droplet application were generally regarded as unwanted assaults on sales volumes and targets.

Today's chemical companies regard sound application as a safeguard for new products, and in a wider context an important factor in sustaining chemical control. Regulators want to know exactly how much pesticide is being placed and where, and how this translates into maximum efficacy from minimum loading (dose) with negligible environmental contamination.

With regard to pesticide application, the turf industry is now 'its own man'. New application techniques are custom designed to suit golf course topography and developed to accommodate the canopy characteristics and control requirements of closely mown turf grass.

These trends are encapsulated in the evolutionary development of the XC nozzle range by Syngenta for reduced drift application to turf over undulating surfaces on golf courses.

A day at Hanbury Manor

I didn't have to travel far to see Syngenta's new XC nozzle range in action at Hanbury Manor Golf Course in Hertfordshire. On a sunny day I met Dr Simon Watson (Technical Manager EAME Turf & Landscape) and Caroline Scott (Marketing Communications Manager EAME Turf & Landscape) from Syngenta, and Stan Power, Golf & Estate Manager at Hanbury Manor. Stan was one of many greenkeepers instrumental in bringing practical spray application problems faced by greenkeepers to Syngenta's attention.

Stan now uses XC Nozzles for the application of fungicide and soluble nutrients to his greens and fairways at Hanbury Manor. He and his team are clearly doing the right thing for their turf in Hertfordshire. Irrespective of best management practice you would expect greens in mid February - when I visited - to look at least a little jaded but these were as pristine and shining as the day itself.



NAsOR - Calling All Greenkeepers

NAsOR (National Amenity Sprayer Operators Register) is a professional register designed for spray operators in the amenity sector. It provides members with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to update their skills and to record learning. The scheme is open to anybody who holds a City & Guilds NPTC Safe use of Pesticides Certificate of Competence; a minimum of a PA1 foundation module, plus one or more of the Pesticide Application Modules (PA2-PA13).

Members are required to collect 30 or more CPD points in each three year period to qualify for membership renewal. A wide range of CPD events and courses are approved for NAsOR members and are publicised under the events section of the NAsOR website.

Members are required to:

- Ensure that any equipment is being used in accordance with current legislation.
- Have due regard to any environmental impact.
- Give priority to the health and safety of bystanders and those that use areas being treated.
- Use equipment that provides protection to operators under current health safety and legislation

The benefits of joining City & Guilds NAsOR include:

- Recognition and professional development
- Up-to-date knowledge for more efficient and effective use of pesticides
- Proven skills for professional spray application techniques
- Supporting career development through on-going CPD
- Independent recognition of good operator standards for higher business achievement

To join simply go to www.nasor.org.uk and click on "Join Now" on the banner at the top of the page. Applicants will require an e-mail address and have a qualification in the Safe Use of Pesticides.



Application hurdles on golf courses

Nozzle technology and how it affects droplet size, trajectory and impaction is not the easiest thing to understand but Simon succinctly reduced the situation to several core issues requiring resolution and engineering solutions. He said: "Syngenta was faced with resolving a number of practical spraying issues sometimes unique to the amenity sector and the golf course landscape and environment in particular."

Standard flat fan nozzles are designed to produce overlapping even coverage at 50cm from the ground, but that is not a constant option on golf courses especially around greens. "We don't have the luxury of spraying over the uniformly flat surface of a Norfolk wheat field" says Stan, adding how greenkeepers are often faced with variable gradients and undulating ground with recurring reductions in nozzle height to just 30cm from turf surfaces.

Loss of pattering means undulating turf receives spray in peaks with accompanying overdosing directly underneath nozzles and gaps with under-dosing between nozzles. "We told Syngenta how this

was a big issue for greenkeepers" said Stan. "It was always obvious, especially following the application of 'colouring up' nutrients like iron with their high visual effect. Equivalent problems in overdosing and underdosing with fungicides may not have been so obvious, but effect and consequences related to efficacy and environmental loading are even more important."

The nozzle brief

Syngenta's task was to design and develop novel nozzle technology which could maintain pattering at different nozzle heights over undulating ground while simultaneously minimising the proportion of small diameter high drift potential droplets. It all sounds relatively easy but as Simon pointed out droplet size, momentum, trajectory and overall effect on turf target impaction is very much a double edged sword requiring rationalisation before resolution.

Small droplets are retained well on narrow acute angled leaf surfaces typical of close mown turf but lack the mass and momentum to penetrate the layer of still air which surrounds all plant surfaces. Penetration and impaction problems for small droplets are accentuated

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.

on ultra-low profile turf grass surfaces because there is nowhere for the layer of air to be displaced to. Net result is poor impaction of small spray droplets already prone to drift.

Water is invariably nearby in most areas of spraying but golf courses are especially well endowed and equipped with water features. Water features – ponds, lakes, streams and ditches – have always been incorporated to maximum effect during golf course design and layout and were boosted during the mid-nineties when the 'American Design' (Jack Nicklaus course) came to the UK and Ireland in an increasingly big way. For instance, man-made lakes were placed close to greens to make courses that much harder to play. Net overall result is golf course spraying never being far away from water and all the implications related to LERAP and buffer zones. LERAP considerations must take into account dry ditches as well as all currently flowing and standing water with its integral aquatic life and water margin plants.

So the larger higher momentum droplets, with good on target trajectory and reduced susceptibility to drift, are the answer, but there is yet another 'catch-22' situation

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here. Due to correspondingly large contact angles created with leaf surfaces impacting large droplets have a tendency to roll off, while inherent high momentum means they may shatter on impact that could reduce retention on the leaf target.

However, as Simon points out these situations can be recovered to some extent when using new age protectant fungicides like fludioxonil. "Grass foliage continues to be the prime target for this protectant fungicide", he says, "but it will also destroy the spores of thatch inhabiting fungi causing turf diseases such as Fusarium patch and anthracnose, so any fungicide falling through the net is not wasted."

XC Technology uses a novel elliptical shaped nozzle orifice and wide droplet pattern to ensure effective coverage with variable nozzle height above the ground and accommodates air induction technology. As the spray liquid passes through the nozzle chamber, air is sucked in through holes to create the so called 'Venturi' effect which incorporates a tiny volume of air into each spray droplet.

Air incorporation gives more consistently sized droplets with a well maintained trajectory on target, and an air 'cushion' effect that lowers contact angle, reduces

roll off and helps to prevent these large droplets shattering on impact.

Practical benefits

Spraying water from a static boom on the car park's hard surface, and following up with spray liquid collection in measuring cylinders under each nozzle, Simon Watson demonstrated how in uniformity, accuracy and patternation the XC nozzle range does exactly what it says on the label. Stan Power then took his Toro 5700 sprayer over some of the undulating ground around the greens at Hanbury Manor so we could see the system in action.

So what are the practical benefits? Use of Syngenta's XC reduced drift nozzle technology widens the window of spray opportunity. Caroline Scott who manages Syngenta's Greencast system calculates that greenkeepers using XC Nozzles will have four extra days per month to spray.

With the enhanced droplet size distribution and superior coverage provided by the XC nozzle system Stan has reduced spray volume from 500 L/ha down to 250 L/ha (300 L/ha average). "This means I can spray 3.2 ha using the full 1100 L tank whereas before I could

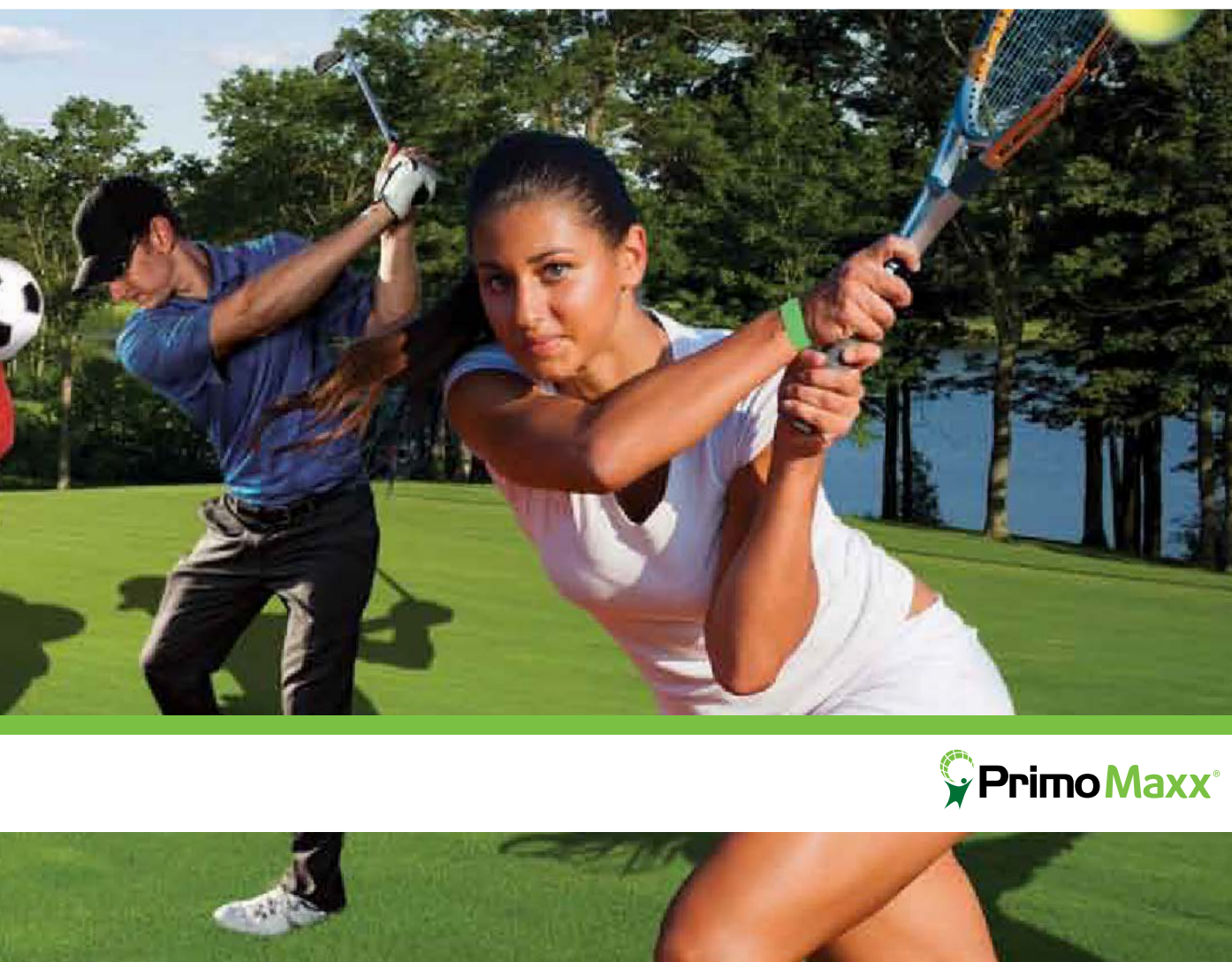
"The turf industry is ahead of the game in pesticide use and regulation, but a clutch of EU directives are now pushing the sports turf industry much faster and further than could have reasonably been projected or imagined just ten years ago"

only manage 2 ha. It provides much more flexibility and can prove critical when allowing me to carry out a task in 2 hours instead of 4.

"This might not seem a lot but is a real blessing when we are under pressure during pre-match periods."

"The flexibility afforded by XC nozzles also extends into what kind of foliar feed I can apply", said Stan, "by allowing me to spray when conditions are most favourable for fast and efficient nutrient uptake by leaf surfaces or simply because it is more convenient."

Last but not least is the LERAP consideration which allows for measures to reduce buffer zones around water courses and features. Nozzle technology is one of them.



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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

Congratulations to Paul Armour of Lochgelly GC who has recently become a dad, a good excuse for not making the spring outing as he's still trying to get caught up on his sleep. All the BIGGA members at gWest are also in for a change shortly as the course opens for play this month. It will be strange to have golfers out there after an extended grow in, welcome to the real world guys!

We have an education event planned for 7.30pm on Thursday 6 June. The venue is likely to be Elmwood College and the speaker is Mike Jouson of Clear Communications. Mike is a regular presenter at the GIS show for American Superintendents at their February events and the seminar will be suitable for all categories of members from students and people starting out in the industry to Course Managers. Full details will be emailed out to everyone nearer the time.

Finally, we had 40 members participate in the spring outing over the Carnoustie Burnside course on 17 April. 38 members braved the constant rain and principal winners were: scratch – Scott Thomson, Strathmore, best net – Richard Jenkinson, gWest, class 1 winner, Shaun McNaughton, Auchterarder GC, class 2 winner, George Pendrich, Scotsraig GC. A full list of prizewinners is on our website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk, thanks to the trade for their full support and Carnoustie Links Management and green staff for the course which was in great condition.

Gordon Moir



EAST

Good to see that spring has actually started to arrive, better late than never I say as the weather has been wreaking havoc - if it's not snow it's the wind blowing tons of sand over our courses. I received a picture recently taken at North Berwick west links after sand had blown onto their 1st fairway to create a massive new temporary bunker! Think it was a hard shift to get the area back to normal by all accounts.

I can confirm we have the opportunity to attend a get together at Mussleburgh races on May 24 for some banter and a catch up (and I have been reliably informed that our new Vice Chairman has got us two red hot tips for the night also!). The first race is at 6.15pm on the night, please contact the section if you are interested in attending.

The first spectator stands have started to go up at Muirfield and I'm pleased to say that our secretary Stuart Ferguson has been successful in his selection for the Open Support Team. By the time this report appears the spring outing will have been completed at Seahouses, report to follow next month.

Last month I was fortunate enough to write a small article for GI (sorry about the picture guys, but that's my best side!) again if anyone fancies writing a piece then please get in touch and this can be sorted out - it's good fun guys so lets give it a go. Until next month, keep your blades sharp and remember to apply lots of suncream with all the sun that's coming...

Scott Corrigan scottcorrigan4@aol.com or 07877098237



NORTH

Hope this report finds you all well and getting those greens into shape for another busy season.

Again not a lot to say at this time of the year but by the time you get this report we will have had our outing at Duff House Royal and the winners and losers will all have been sorted out and also the winners of the 200 club. All the results will follow in the next issue.

Warren Beveridge is sadly leaving Peterculter Golf Club after seven years and leaving greenkeeping so we would like to wish him all the best for the future. Paul Sharp has replaced Warren with Stevie Cocker from Inchmarlo Golf Club so we would like to wish him all the best in his new job and just in time to learn how to operate all that wonderful new machinery.

Robert Patterson was saying that his squad has started a five a side football team and is playing at Goals on a regular basis they call themselves the turf technicians but they were soundly beaten in their first match by a bunch of oil workers.

Were it not for a great goal-keeping display from Mike Braidwood the ref would have lost count by half time. I bet Barcelona are running scared. So if any other clubs want to give them a game feel free.

Hughie McLatchie is now getting over his hip operation and well into the golf again so best wishes to him. That's it for this month please call with any news big or small - call Robert Patterson on 07931639548 or Dale Robertson on 07784517534.

NORTHERN



NORTH EAST

Right we have no shortage of news this month for a change. I mentioned last month that two greenkeepers had been chosen from the section to work on the Support team for this years Open, well there's a third going which I didn't know of until recently and that's David Wilkinson from Whitley Bay GC sorry about that David.

On Thursday 11 April at Tyneside GC we had a seminar which was reasonably attended and by the feedback received it was well worth it. Greenkeepers from the following golf courses attended: Tyneside, Ponteland, Whitley Bay, Hexham, Close House, and a couple of retired ones as well, Associate member Keith Cann-Evans formerly of Hunter Grinders, Glen Baxter of Rigby Taylors. My thanks to Sandra Raper our Regional Administrator for choosing the speakers. John Nicholson did a first class talk on Woodland Management, followed by Andrew McMahon of Rigby Taylor on Recovery, when to fertilise and why - another first class speaker.

There would perhaps have been a handful more if Newcastle hadn't been playing Benfica but we have had that date booked for months - we were able to see the second half in the clubhouse, thanks to Tyneside Golf Club for that.

Ryan Blemmings has just started his level 3 and Andrew Digirolamo has recently started level 2 both with Myerscough College who I think are doing a first class job here in the North East on bringing greenkeepers through their training, credit to the assessors. On April 17th we played our Spring Competition

at Heworth GC, this been our first visit for a very long time. What a joy to play there the course was in great condition especially the greens as they were quite firm and slick - a credit to the Head Greenkeeper and his staff and not forgetting the catering staff and Bernie Craig the Club Administrator for looking after us very well, I'm sure we will go back there in the near future.

Not a bad turnout for the Spring outing numbers were up slightly with one or two regulars missing but a couple of non-members came to sample our day out and are joining next week. Now for the leading scores: Best Gross David Wilkinson, 80, Whitley Bay GC, Best Nett Steve Pope, 89-16 -73, Tyneside GC, JS Richardson 75, Hexham GC, S Olver 77, Percy Wood GC, G Lee, 79, Tyneside GC. I would like to again thank Sandra for doing the cards and looking after the section members, and to the following companies who once again donated prizes - Rigby Taylor, Rickerbys of Hexham, Greenlays and T.S.L. Michael McKenna is about to take up the position of Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at AL Badia GC in Dubai, we wish him well in his new venture. Lastly Jon Watson of Burgham Park GC has become a proud father of a baby girl, that's five greenkeepers in the section who have had babies in April.

Jimmy



NORTH WEST

The spring tournament took place on Thursday 11 April at Lytham Green Drive Golf Club. There were only thirteen of us who sat down for the meal and only twelve played in the tournament, I can only put this down to our members fertilising or top-dressing as rain was expected that day. The golf course was fantastic and in great condition considering the sub zero temperatures we have had, many thanks to Doug Chilton and all of his green staff.

The meal was probably one of the best meals we have had at a tournament, thank you Paul and all of your staff for looking after us. The winner was Chris Gibson vets prize went to Dave Macevoy. The nearest the pin

was Paul Walker, the longest drive went to Chris Harding and last but not least the guest prize went to Dave Weir. Nick Gray met up with Steve Dunn when he was in New Zealand and Steve is doing very well working for a company called Parkland, many of you will remember Steve and we wish him well.

The next tournament is at Ormskirk Golf Club and this will be very popular so please put your name down early. After people saying they would turn up at Lytham and not doing so, it was decided that if you put your name down and don't turn up you will have to pay for your meal as we had to pay extra at Lytham. The tournament at Ormskirk is on the 1 July first tee time 1.30pm please contact Phil Dewhurst on 07768 180604 for details. The cricket match against the North Wales Section will be on 24 July please contact Nick Gray for details. I can be contacted on 07840706738 or at jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk
Chris Sheehan



NORTHERN

I'm sat aching after my first knock of the season and have finally shaken off the doom and gloom of the horrible winter weather. After watching the masters over the weekend I'm waiting for the comments from our lovely members...also really looking forward to our first golf day at Hornsea if the weather stays good. The list for Hornsea is filling up nicely and considering it's a bit of a trip for us hardcore members from the Leeds/Bradford area it's great to see. Short and sweet but I'll report the results from Hornsea next month - please get in touch with any gossip for me and get cutting!

Andy 07506407867 Andy.slingsby98@googlemail.com



SHEFFIELD

Unfortunately I start these notes with some bad news depending on how you look at it! I'm sure many of you are aware that I have taken up a

new position in the industry which means that I am not a full greenkeeper member. This means I am no longer able to serve as section secretary. I have to admit that this is a big disappointment to me as I'm happy to continue in the role and I feel as a section we are moving forward and have some good years to look forward to.

But rules are rules whether we agree with them or not, as a result of this the section is looking for someone who is willing to take on the role. I would support someone in the role as much as possible initially and it can be a very rewarding position. The section cannot run without a secretary so we need somebody to step up to the plate. If anyone is interested then please get in touch.

Right, on the section front our fixtures are complete and everyone should be receiving fixture cards or already have received them. Here is a list if them anyway: 16 May Bondhay GC; 9 July Dore & Totley GC; 25 Sept Hillsborough GC; Christmas TBC.

We are currently organising a section visit for November and it is almost finalised so we should have something to report next month. There will also be the Northern regional conference in November and we are looking at a seminar in early 2014. We are also looking to increase the prize table at our competitions and playing a two tier system to allow everyone a chance of winning a prize all of which are exciting changes.

That's as much as I have for you this month. If this is the last time I write these notes it has been a pleasure to entertain you over the last five years and I will miss you all!

James Stevens, Section Secretary (Just) 07738719614

MIDLAND



EAST MIDLAND

Wednesday 10 April saw Beedles Lake Golf Club host The East Midlands Section Spring Golf. Having just come out of the coldest March on record Tim Needham and his team produced a golf course in excellent condition with fantastic slick, firm greens. A

very big thank you to them from the committee and everyone who played. It was great to see so many faces, old and new, attending and enjoying themselves and the hospitality at the club. Overall the greenkeeping winner was Jordan Baker from Beedles Lake with 38 points. In his category second place went to James Burberry (35) and third Derek McJannet (32). In Category 2 Antony Bindley returned 36 points to win with Richard Needham (36) and Shaun Bullin (36) being placed second and third respectively on count back.

The Trade prize was won by Roger Lupton of Toro with 38 points. NTP for greenkeepers was won by Jordan Baker and for Trade and Associates by Mick Marvel. Will Slater won longest drive for greenkeepers and Carl I keep milestone birthdays a secret Chamberlain taking the prize for The Trade and Associates. Nearest The Pin and Longest Drive prizes were sponsored by Tacit and the overall day was supported by Banks Amenity, Farmura and Countrywide.

I finished the Brighton Marathon in 4hrs 6mins 34 secs, so I didn't quite break my sub 4 hour target but I know a man that did, Asa English (fellow greenkeeper and committee member) achieved 3hrs 52mins 55secs even after picking up an injury at the 12th mile.

A great achievement Asa and plenty of money raised for your chosen charity 'Miracles to Believe In' - for more on this turn to this month's newsdesk. After the Marathon we had an auction for some incredible lots donated for Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research and we raised over £4000 on the night. Thank you to everyone who donated or sponsored me, www.JustGiving.com/greg-skinner1 is still open for donations. Right, I'm off for a massage...

Greg Skinner M: 07970 095264 greg.skinner92@btinternet.com



MIDLAND

If by some miracle you are reading this month's edition of our news, then it is only by the grace of Steve Castle, GI's Editor - sorry Communications

Around The Green

Executive! As usual I'm late with my notes. Let me tell you a little story, but with a warning. I often have with me a bottle of orange squash made up in a proprietary pop bottle, at the horror of my work mates, gained from the bins.

Decadence has never been my forte, or indeed financial ability. Whilst feeding the greens I stopped for a good swig of the said juice, only to find after a good mouthful had been ingested, that it was full of petrol that had been carried to clean a pond liner for repair.

I recall going to the lav that evening, after it smelt like a petrol station, don't light that smoke Paddy (such will humour some, but not me). As we have been taught, never put pesticides (or indeed fuels) in pop bottles. By God it caused amusement though. All's well that ends well.

Now we come to our excellent calendar, this month's is the 11th at the Belfry, and is sponsored by ESD Waste 2 water. We have such a system here at Stratford and it works well. They can be contacted on: 01782 373 878. or email: info@waste2water.com .

There may just be time to get your entry in for the spring tournament at Robin Hood G.C. 14 May. You'll have to grovel to Gary though: 07780 953 764. Also don't forget the Everris Doubles first draw will be held at the spring tournament. Good luck to all.

Sean McDade



MID ANGLIA

I'm pleased that at long last Spring seems to be showing itself giving us the opportunity to get our courses back into shape and get on with some proper greenkeeping tasks. Due to the numerous snowfalls we have had over the winter I have never seen so many pristine workshops, offices and machines that are all raring to go after servicing and will now be out for the first time in months.

We are pleased to announce that the Spring Tournament and Qualifier for the National Championships will be held at Bedford & County GC on 21 May with a pm start. The cost

will be £20 so very reasonable and we hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Our thanks go to Geoff Fenn for arranging this at short notice. Frilford Heath GC is the venue for the National on 7 - 8 October 2013 after hosting a Tour Event the week prior. So it should be in great condition and is bordering our section meaning travelling to the event should be far easier for our qualifiers.

Let's hope we can produce another Champion after Oly Browning captured the trophy in 2012. Following on from this we are visiting Brookmans Park GC on August 6 and Berhamsted GC on October 16, and the Texas Scramble will be held at Stocks GC in December.

Please get your entries in early for these events and also join the BIGGA Mid Anglia Facebook page to stay in touch.

Please ensure we have everybody's up to date email addresses and contact details so you receive the information for all events.

After a recent committee meeting we're happy to organise educational courses for members. In the past we've hosted chainsaw, first aid and spraying courses amongst others. If you're interested please contact Gerald@berkhamstedgc.co.uk and he will try to set up venues and dates.

We may also have the opportunity to visit Arsenal's training ground for a tour of their facilities one afternoon after an invite from their Head Groundsman Steve Braddock so if interested please contacting either Gerald or myself asap as there will be a limited number of spaces. If you have any news for the section please get in touch.

Darren - d.mugford@rigby-taylor.com - 07843513387

SOUTH EAST



SURREY

April showers bring May flowers - or so they say. So far, it has been the odd perennial topped with frost and a dusting of snow. But at long last, welcome to spring!

Kevin Boxhall is on the move, after several years at Guildford

GC as Matt Lawrence's deputy. Old Thorns GC has a new Head Greenkeeper who takes charge of a magnificent course set in 400 beautiful acres of countryside on the border of Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex. Kevin has been match secretary for the section for a number of years and is standing down whilst young Scott Roberts from Hankley Common GC will become the new golf match organiser. Thanks Kev from all the committee who wish you well in your new post.

The draw for the Surrey Bowl has taken place, sponsored by Winchester Garden Machinery, always a very popular event. The Final will be held at Foxhills GC on 1 October.

Later in the year, we have the Wee Jocks versus England or Scotland versus the Sassenachs - a wonderful competition held at Hankley Common GC. Jim Russell with a highly polished sporrán, chewing on a dried piece of haggis and probably dressed in a brightly coloured kilt are one of the many creatures one might see amongst the heather at Hankley.

If you are interested in playing in this event, check out the surrey website and choose your tartan, don't forget your heritage or your under armour, you may need it, there may be a thistle about.

Mark Day



KENT

How good is it to see The Masters on telly again?! After our seemingly endless winter the magnificence of Augusta is just the tonic we need. At last spring has decided to limp into view. Emulating Augusta may be a pipedream to most but our own professionalism will always ensure we push ourselves to the limit to achieve the best out of the land we are charged with.

Importantly, golfers seem to have come back in their droves too. Only the hardcore members have been brave enough to play over the last couple of months but at least they have seen, and on the whole seemingly appreciate, the works we have completed whilst conditions were against us.

Let's all hope and pray now for

a decent summer to fully restore our courses, club finances and our faith in the British weather!

We have another golf day fast approaching here in Kent. As you know our first event at Royal St. Georges was, unfortunately, cancelled due to deep snow but there is no danger of that this time (we hope!).

On 16 May we shall be heading to the delightful and historic Chislehurst Golf Club. Please let us know if you are able to attend or not in order for us to give the club as much notice as possible.

An invitation to the event has already gone out via e-mail and our new Facebook page (Kent Greenkeepers) so no excuses!

After our fantastic victory against Essex section in the Toro/Lely Football competition last year at the undisputed home of football that is Upton Park it seems everyone now wants a piece of the action!

This year's Toro/Lely comp will involve all six South East sections with Kent, as cup holders, being given a bye for the qualifying round but taking on the winners of Surrey and Sussex.

Our game at Upton Park last year was probably the best day of my life and would recommend the experience to anyone. Even if you don't support West Ham!

None of us are Spring chickens any more but fitness not a key issue as long as we get enough players. It would be a massive achievement to retain the trophy we did so well to win last year. Please get involved in this. You will not regret it!

As ever keep up to date via website or slightly less formally at Facebook page (Kent Greenkeepers).

Rob Holland



ESSEX

At long last and 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 golf 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. He also 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, Billericay 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, Rain Bird, 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).

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!

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

www.essexbigga.co.uk Contact details 07764-862.337 or at essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones

SOUTH WEST & WALES



SOUTH WEST

I am writing this from a pool-side in sunny Singapore - mornings like these do wonders for the optimistic side!

Both congratulations and commiserations must be voiced following a spectacular end to this year's Six Nations. A most unexpected result and, as it turned out, the cause of a major traffic incident as a large, broken chariot was towed back down the M4 causing delays for hours. Now we all have the upcoming Lions tour in Australia to look forward to, c'mon you Wallabies!

Back to business now. Adam has been keeping the information coming for our upcoming events, next up following the ever-popular AMAM at Minchinhampton GC are Section v Secretaries and the Summer Tournament, get your entries in early to ensure you are on the start sheet. As this column goes to press the AMAM has not yet come about but we will get the results out next month as I am sure the proud winners will be happy to have their achievements recognized.

Special mention must be made of an additional patronage partner who has offered support to our section this year. Greensman Ltd offer specialist waste disposal and lubricant supply services and although this is the first time support to the South West Section has been offered, Stewart Clayton and his team have been dedicated and valued supporters of other BIGGA sections throughout the country for some time now. Continued support from our existing patrons must also be recognized, many thanks to all. Good luck with the late spring flush, let's all have a strong year and keep up the good work.

Jaey Goodchild



SOUTH COAST

At long last a few dry days and

a feeling of spring in the air!

Sadly I was unable to make it to the spring tournament because of a bug I picked up on my recent holiday to Cuba. If you ever get the chance to visit do it – it's a little bit of paradise in an unspoilt country.

Back to the tournament, a great day was had by all 47 players, from the hospitality on arrival through to evening meal a truly excellent day. Thanks go to Remedy Oak for allowing us courtesy of the course, to Robert Hogarth and his team for the great condition of the course, considering the appalling conditions they had to endure in preparation, well done to all. Thanks to our sponsors Avoncrop for their ongoing support and to the caterers for a truly memorable evening meal. Finally a special thanks to Kev who had to cope without yours truly as his right hand man.

Winners Cat 1: Colin Pardy 37pts, Sherbourne 2 James Wright 36, Romsey 3 Chris Bland 35 Ferndown, Winners Cat 2: 1 Beverley Blair 34pts Southwick Park 2 Mike Lake 29 Blackmore 3 Alan Smith 28 Crane Valley. Nearest the pin John Mathis, Longest drive Kevin Tigg.

Our next event is the annual match against the Secretaries this year to be held at Ashley Wood Golf Club on 5th June, if you are interested in playing please let either Kev or myself know well in advance of the date.

The summer competition is at the Army Golf Club, more about the fixture in next months issue, but just a reminder it is no longer an invitation day! Courtesy will only be given to BIGGA members.

Tony



DEVON & CORNWALL

Our Spring Seminar held at St Mellion on 13 March was again very successful with 55 attendees including many students from Duchy College. First up was Dr Simon Watson from Syngenta who focussed on the new XC Nozzles. Simon went through the research and development of the nozzles along with results from field trials. The attendees were then shown a practical demonstration of the

nozzles in action, showing the comparison between the new nozzles and flat fan nozzles. The results were very impressive with obvious reduced drift and more even distribution of spray pattern. After coffee, it was Roger Davey from Irritech. Roger went through the possible pitfalls regarding irrigation water sourcing and in particular the Health and Safety implications. In the afternoon, Mike Bush MG (Course Manager at St Mellion) went through the results of a recent members survey he had conducted in conjunction with Syngenta – read more about this in this month's feature.

Roger Davey followed his morning workshop with a further presentation on Irrigation practices, followed by Iain MacPherson from Rainbird Renewable Energy, who enlightened us all with how energy from wind turbines could not only reduce your energy bills, but also give a source of income to the business. Finally, Paul Lowe and Dr Su Hodgson from Symbio gave a presentation on how to manage your thatch levels by improving soil biology and encouraging natural degradation.

A massive thank you to all our speakers for the day and in particular to Iain MacPherson and Rainbird Renewable Energy for also sponsoring the day. Also a big thank you to Mike Bush MG for allowing the Section to stage the event at St Mellion once again and for his team for assisting in the organisation of the day.

Our next meeting is at "The Point at Polzeath", North Cornwall, on 22 May. The Tee is booked from 11.30am and the Course walk will commence at approx 2pm. The golf will be playing for the Section Championships and a chance to represent the Section at the National Tournament. Invites should have been received by now, so if you contact me asap to secure your place.

We have a further Summer meeting on 2 July at Teignmouth GC. This event will be the Annual Devon v Cornwall Match. There will also be a course walk for those not participating in the golf.

Here's to a great season and hopefully an improvement in the weather this year.

George Pitts MG, 07929 754401, gpitts@yelvertongolf.co.uk



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1. 'How to Cascade Goals to Teams and Individuals'

Introduction
The formation of goals that set out what a business is aiming to achieve is a key part of business planning. Teams and individuals throughout the organisation need to be briefed about what the goals are and what they should do to help achieve them. This requires a management process to be in place that cascades top-level goals down through the organisation.

Definition
A goal describes a measurable outcome or result that needs to be achieved.

1. Cascading goals
Cascading goals means breaking down the organisational goals into a series of smaller goals that describe what each unit or department needs to achieve. These goals are then broken down further until each individual in the unit has their own performance goals. In this way, progress throughout the organisation is measurable.

In some areas of the organisation, it may be enough to cascade goals down to the team level (e.g. in administration or production teams where they work together more as a team than as individuals). For some it is more appropriate to agree individual goals (see 'How to Develop an Appraisal System' and 'How to Prepare for an Appraisal'). What is important is that you get it right for your organisation.

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The 'How To...' guides are a benefit of BIGGA membership and are brought to you thanks to the continuing support of the contributors to the Learning and Development Fund.





Diary of Events

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

Date	Event	Venue	Contact
May 13th	BIGGA in Cumbria golf and education day	Furness Golf Club	Sandra Raper Tel: 07866 366966 or Email: sandra@bigga.co.uk
May 14th	Midland Section Spring Competition	Robin Hood Golf Club	Andrew Smith Tel: 07977 145091 or Email: andysmithace@hotmail.co.uk
May 16th	Sheffield Section Spring Tournament	Bondhay Golf Club	Andy Unwin Tel: 07929 252047
May 21st	Midl Anglia Section Spring Meeting	Beds & County Golf Club	Richard Saunders Tel: 07773 206553 or Email: richard345saunders@btinternet.com
May 22nd	Devon & Cornwall Section Event – Section Championships	The Point at Polzeath	George Pitts Tel: 07929 754404 or Email: gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com
May 22nd	East of England Spring Competition	Market Rasen Golf Club	Bruce Hicks Tel: 07931 714922 or Email: bthicks@gmail.com
June 13th	Scottish National Tournament	Largs Golf Club	John Young Tel: 07776 242120 or Email: johnyoung@bigga.co.uk
June 26th	Northern Section President's Day	Scarthingwell Golf Club	Andy Slingsby Tel: 07506 407867
June 27th	East Anglia Golf Day	Stowmarket	Ian Willett Email: info@biggaeastanglia.co.uk
July 2nd	Devon & Cornwall Section	Teignmouth Golf Club	George Pitts Tel: 07929 754401 Email: gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com
July 3rd	Midland Section Summer Education Event	Visit to Bathgate Quarry	Rhys Thomas Tel: 07774 164173
July 10th	Midland Section Summer Competition	Penn Golf Club	Rhys Thomas Tel: 07774 164173
July 25th	East of England Summer Competition	Newark Golf Club	Bruce Hicks Tel: 07931 714922 or Email: bthicks@gmail.com
August 6th	Mid Anglia Section Summer Meeting	Brookman's Park Golf Club	Richard Saunders Tel: 07773 206553 or Email: richard345saunders@btinternet.com
August 12th	Northern Section Invitation Day	Wetherby Golf Club	Andy Slingsby Tel: 07506 407867
August 15th	Norrie Whytock Inter-Section Competition	Auchterarder Golf Club	John Young Tel: 07776 242120 or Email: johnyoung@bigga.co.uk
August 21st	Willie Woods Competition	Mortonhall Golf Club	John Young Tel: 07776 242120 or Email: johnyoung@bigga.co.uk
August 22nd	East Anglia Golf Day	Kings Lynn Golf Club	Ian Willett Email: info@biggaeastanglia.co.uk

Photographic competition

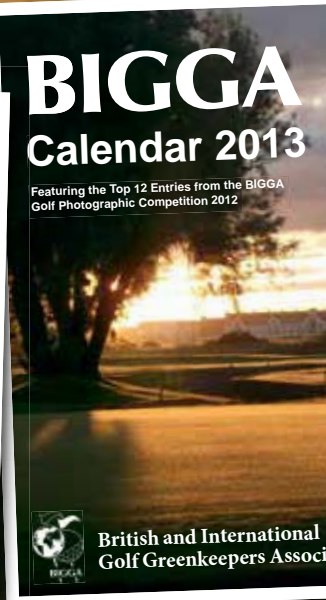
How you can win our coveted members' competition, and see your photography grace Greenkeeper International and the next BIGGA Calendar - following in the footsteps of recent winner, Craig Boath, Head Greenkeeper at Carnoustie

Do you fancy yourself as a budding photographer? The competition offers you the chance to portray your course in a variety of publications, with the winner receiving a full course feature in GI.

Our industry offers terrific opportunities for stunning photog-

raphy across the year - and now is the time to send in the images many of you have captured from the autumn and winter, and the forthcoming weeks offer another chance for great spring and summer shots.

The competition is judged by a panel of experts including profes-



sional photographers Alan Birch and Eric Hepworth – and the winner will receive a framed image of their choice from Eric's super selection of golf course photography (www.hepworthgolfphotography.com), as well as one of your own entry. Two runners-up will receive an unframed print, and the final 12 will all be featured in next year's calendar.

To enter, please send your images to comps@bigga.co.uk - the closing date is the 31st July 2013.

Please write "BIGGA PHOTO COMP 2013" is the subject header of your email, and label your entries with your name, club/college currently at, membership number and

a brief caption of the course.

Images need to be high resolution and landscape shape, suitable for an a3 calendar (approximately 30cm wide at 300dpi).

Please avoid reducing the file size as this will reduce the quality – we recommend one image per email if file size becomes an issue – or use a compression facility such as winzip or an ftp site such as www.mailbigfile.com

There is no limit to the amount of images you can send us, but please seek permission of the club before sending your entries – we are sure they will be delighted with the potential coverage.

Good to luck to all entrants.



Craig Boath's stunning early morning shot of Carnoustie's Burnside Course



Greenkeepers Training Committee



This month it's GTC Chairman Donald Steel's turn to write the column...

GTC Chairman Donald Steel examines two ways of doing the same thing. Could greenkeeping throw up anything more contrasting?

One part of a job description for a Head Greenkeeper should surely be "you do what you have to do when you have to do it".

It might even carry the rider, "if you can do it. Constant adjustment, on account of the weather, makes me wonder how often, in fact, programmes can be implemented in any year without a hitch. Either that, or important exercises don't get carried out at all. Which is worse?

It is cold comfort that, in the more predictable climate of Augusta, preparations for the Masters progressed uninterrupted with every conceivable technical aid at their disposal. On the other hand, the bigger question is whether the maintenance and presentation of the course is the right way of doing things.

Although the Masters is watched on television from Kuwait to Kathmandu via Karachi, and hailed by some as golf's colourful shop window, to other eyes it represents more what not to do.

Scott Corrigan pulled no punches in his article in last month's edition. I must be careful not to tread on his territory except to say "hooray for his thoughts". What was equally fascinating in the same edition was Laurence Pithie's interview with Chris Mitchell at Royal Ashdown Forest and the comparison it threw up between Ashdown and Augusta and the different methods of maintaining the two courses. Apart from plying the same trade, the outlook for Chris and Brad Owen, the Augusta National Superintendent, has little in common.

It made me wonder, in fact, how an exchange would work, Chris



Heathland in all its glory behind the 9th green at Royal Ashdown GC

with a bottomless purse and Brad Owen, the Augusta Superintendent, restricted by austerity.

The first peculiarity is that, while Ashdown is launching a new playing season, Augusta is shutting its doors. In the heat of summer, the Augusta greenkeeping crew have the place to themselves - most likely carrying out one of the changes to the course for which they are famous.

They may be envied that they can re-lay a green in May and have it back in full play by the fall. As we heard and saw on television, the 14th green was the latest to be re-laid although it is still a minefield of crafty slopes.

Another revelation in the Links Golf Magazine was that Augusta has started using sensing camera technology at the 13th and 17th greens. The "Hawkeye" system provides infrared temperature readings every ten minutes to detect areas of stress caused not only by temperature, but by insects, fungus, disease, and other environmental stressors. That is in addition to four iPad controlled sensors on every green to monitor soil moisture, temperature, and salinity.

As far I am aware, such extremes

of scientific assistance haven't yet infiltrated Forest Row where Royal Ashdown Forest is celebrating its 125th anniversary and, without bunkers, has claims to being the most natural of golf's settings. However, one joint aim shared by Mitchell and Owen is a preference for a fast running course to high-light strategic subtleties.

Augusta was, after all, designed for Bobby Jones by Alister Mackenzie based on the love of both for St Andrews. If it doesn't rain for The Masters and the greens are firm, chipping and putting becomes a test of nerve and judgement like no other but, if either element is slightly awry, even the best can look stupid - horribly stupid.

Some players may try to blame the insects and soil temperature readings although the caddies may not include their iPads in their golf bags. In any event, they could constitute an outside agency but they are further examples that The Masters and the Augusta National Golf Club occupy a golfing world of their own, a far cry from the days when Bobby Jones founded the Club so that he and his special chums could gather in the winter for a little, gentle golf. Now, look what's happened.



The GTC is funded by:



Contact Details

David Golding
GTC Education Director
and European Greenkeeping
Education Unit Standards
Director

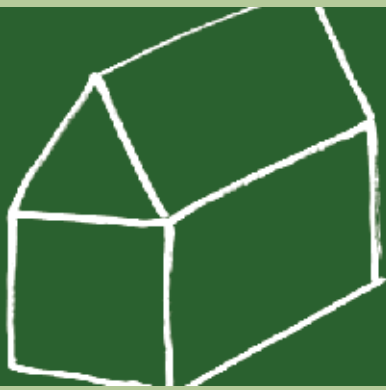
01347 838640
david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC
Aldwark Manor
Near York
YO61 1UF

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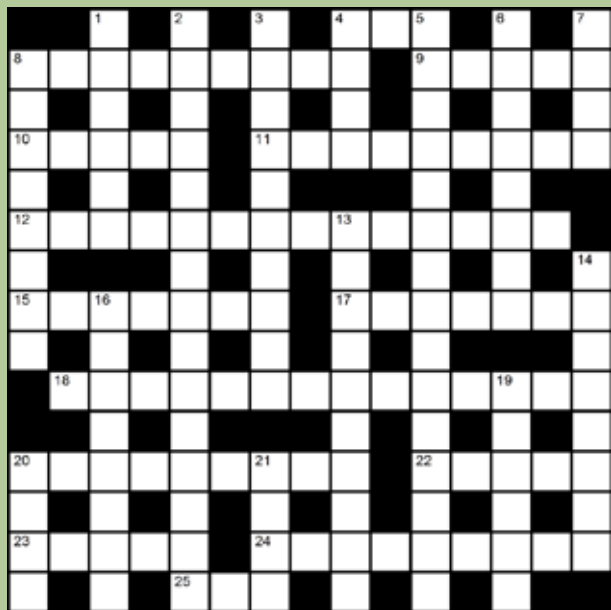
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puzzlepage

Our monthly puzzle page to keep you entertained

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 4 Expression of disapproval, or an attempt to scare (3)
- 8 Pasta form whose name means 'little strings' (9)
- 9 Drug used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease (1-4)
- 10 Glazed pottery, named after a town in Holland (5)
- 11 1983 song by Aztec Camera (9)
- 12 Known to friends as Jack and Teddie, transatlantic flight pioneers (6,3,5)
- 15 Popular toy sold as Erector Sets in the US (7)
- 17 Faithful follower (7)
- 18 South African home of fabled ghost ship The Flying Dutchman (4,2,4,4)
- 20 Inn offering food at more or less restaurant standard (9)
- 22 Sicilian criminal organisation (5)
- 23 Mild cheese of the Netherlands (5)
- 24 Class covering lobsters, shrimps etc (9)
- 25 Form of insecticide now banned in many countries (3)

DOWN

- 1 Pungent plant of the lily family (6)
- 2 One of two Monopoly properties worth (originally) £60 (11,4)
- 3 Beef dish with sauce based on sour cream (10)
- 4 Draft of proposed law (4)
- 5 Author of The Vicar of Wakefield (6,9)
- 6 Type of road used in UK since 1959 (8)
- 7 Gill ---, typeface popularised on the London Underground (4)
- 8 Instruments carried for use in loading guns (4,4)
- 13 Scottish band who had a hit with Real Gone Kid (6,4)
- 14 Light brown cane sugar (8)
- 16 Rich sauce with wine and mushrooms (8)
- 19 Formally, an act of worship (6)
- 20 French novella by Colette (4)
- 21 One of an ancient people who lived in, especially, NE Scotland (4)

QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

As the weather finally improves how closely have you been paying attention to the spring sporting action?

- 1) Spurs lost to Basel on penalties in the Europa League, and only one of their players scored in the shoot-out. Who?
- 2) Which football club's ground used to be called the KitKat Stadium after a sponsorship deal with Nestle?
- 3) Who finished runner-up to Adam Scott in the Masters?
- 4) Who was the top Brit at the end of the Masters?

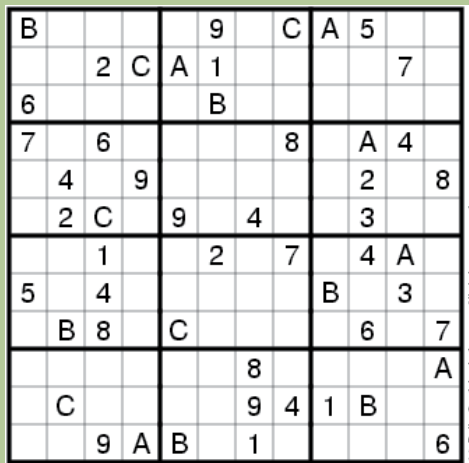
5) Who scored the goals for Manchester City as they beat Chelsea in the FA Cup Semi Final?

6) Which county cricket team were bowled out for 96 in their very first innings of the season?

7) Which cyclist announced his retirement from the sport?

8) Who won the Chinese Grand Prix?

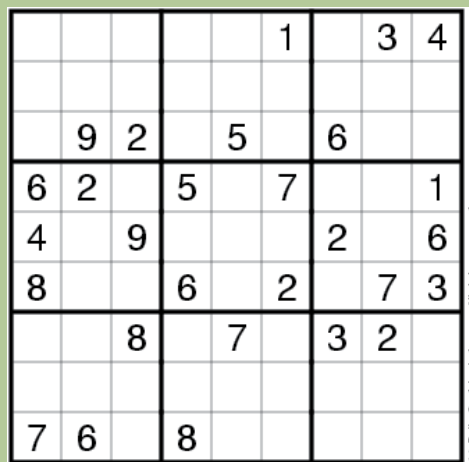
9) And which former racing driver claimed women do not have the "mental skills" to compete in Formula One?



Monster Daily SuDoku: Thu 28-Mar-2013 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.



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SUDOKU

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Daily SuDoku: Fri 26-Apr-2013 very hard

The Back Nine

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

Redundancy is one of the worst possible situations to find yourself in, and the greenkeeping industry is not immune. Here former Chairman Paul Worster explores all aspects of redundancy

Redundancy is a very stressful and difficult situation to find yourself in. Often, the potentially redundant person is one of the last people within the company structure to learn of the proposal.

Taking a wider view – in making a Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager redundant a club risks losing that entire bank of experience, site specific knowledge and skills.

Employees are of course protected by law, and in some cases redundancy is a last resort when all else has failed to keep a company financially viable.

Every employee in this position is entitled to a consultation period, and the company must demonstrate that it has examined all options, and has considered other people for redundancy within the process rather than singling out an individual. The individual has every right to a hearing and to submit a plan to show that the situation is not irretrievable.

Often redundancy is not a straightforward issue of simply paying someone off – it requires a complicated calculation taking into account other factors such as leave entitlement and length of notice periods, and hardly ever brings the immediate anticipated financial impact. So it really is, or should be, a last resort.

Experience shows, that people who 'go the extra mile', who make regular contributions over and above that which can normally be expected, are much less likely to fall victim to redundancy – although of course this is not always the case.

How then do we do this? How do we become the person to whom the club turns when it needs to save a significant amount of money, rather than the first person in the firing line – the expendable luxury that the club wishes to unload? Harsh words perhaps, but please read on.

As managers we need to under-



stand our departments. We need to understand what makes them tick, where we are spending the most money, and most importantly what the consequences of taking up those other options may be. We need to ensure our staff understand that there is no place for passengers, no place for complacency, and no place for anything less than a very visible 100% effort.

We need to be adaptable. We need to be able to vary what we are doing to meet the times and the circumstances. For example – if, in seeking to aid the recruitment of new members, we need to lay off making huge jumbo holes in the greens for even a couple of years then we should not shirk from doing that. We need to find other ways of achieving much of the same end, but not at the expense of performance.

We need to get close and stay close to the Club Management or the Ownership structure within the club. We need to be the ones feeding through the information. We need to be the ones coming up with the proposals for the course, the proposals for reducing spending, the proposals for improving the member experience. We need to be the ones ready and willing to go the extra mile, to stick our necks out and take

What can BIGGA do to help? BIGGA is not a trade union but does provide advice and personal support

about the author



Paul Worster is Course Manager at Minchinhampton Golf Club and a former BIGGA Chairman. He is now a director of FEGGA and believes in strong Greenkeeper Associations preparing and equipping their greenkeeper members for management

the hard decisions. We need to be the ones who show adaptability and a willingness to manage change.

If we are doing all that, we are much less likely to come under threat.

What can BIGGA do to help? BIGGA is not a trade union but does provide advice and personal support. The helplines will give access to legal advice – to ensure that you are being fairly treated. Your Regional Administrator would be an important port of call. Don't leave it until the day before a hearing or tribunal but at the first sign of problems get in touch.

To summarise – be proactive, know what is happening within the club and the staff, look ahead and try to predict difficult areas and find solutions.

And above all be the professional person.

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

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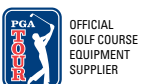
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