



## MY FTMI 2014

Kevin Glazier, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club, was one of the delegates on the Future Turf Managers' Initiative 2014 at Ransomes Jacobsen's Ipswich HQ. Here's his report on a "fantastic" week...

On 25 March, the candidates made their journeys from England and Scotland and descended on Ipswich. A tour of the factory was first on the agenda which was a real eye opener for all.

The majority of us take machines for granted when we start work at 6am in the morning, however the attention to detail when a machine is being built is incredible to see from a nut to a cylinder. Jacobsen have a three hole golf course on site which is kept to a high standard by Jamie Hughes – the greens are immaculate. We had the opportunity to play the par three course, and the winner was Gregor Mackintosh from Turnberry with a score of one under par. The day concluded with each delegate completing an 'ice breaker' task, dinner and an insight from Dr Frank Rossi focusing on our futures in the industry.

We had an early start on the Wednesday, with Lorna Sheldon giving a detailed presentation on writing a CV which made us all realise how important CVs really are. Lorna then spoke about all aspects of interview techniques. Effective communication strategies followed later in the morning which was put into practice as we split into small groups to complete a presentation on 'your dream job'. The winner was Sam Evans from Oakland Park Golf Club who spoke about replacing Sam Allardyce at West Ham United. Dr Frank Rossi then returned to present on 'Maximising Performance and Minimising Stress' which we were all lucky

to listen to before he flew back to the States. Frank clearly feels passionately about the subject and was able to present evidence to support his beliefs.

Later in the afternoon, we enjoyed a seminar from one of the mentors, Steve Chappell. Steve is the Head Greenkeeper of the PGA Course at Gleneagles which will be hosting the 2014 Ryder Cup. Steve discussed his career to date and spoke about the volunteering opportunities at tournaments. The evening was completed by dinner and an open forum with Mike Sawicki.

After two intense days the pace continued on the final morning with 'Building a Budget.' This was presented by Lee Strutt MG. Candidates were introduced to budgeting, how to formulate a budget and costings to create their own budgets using Excel. The week was brought to an end by David Bancroft-Turner, who gave a presentation on dealing with club politics. This helped to identify politics in the workplace, how to manage them more effectively, provided tips and suggestions to improve performance and also introduce us to the four different political 'animals'.

For me, being selected for the FTMI was an honour and one that I would strongly recommend to any greenkeeper to apply for. Everyone on the course shares the dream of becoming a Course Manager and the FTMI showed many aspects which you don't think about necessarily when doing the day job.

As one mentor said, being a Course Manager is 10%

greenkeeping and 90% managing. All the seminars were beneficial and highly interesting, but if I had to pick highlights I would go for Lee Strutt's, David Bancroft-Turner's and Steve Chappell's.

Throughout my career I have been told that networking is a great way to learn, meet fellow greenkeepers and get yourself known around the industry.

To speak to 20 other candidates and five mentors was fascinating as you can

discuss aspects of the job you wouldn't normally discuss. The FTMI has made me focus more on what I want from greenkeeping - become a Course Manager.

The skills I have taken away will improve the knowledge and experience I've taken from Gavin Kinsella MG at Royal Mid Surrey.

To conclude this was a fantastic opportunity and one I would like to thank BIGGA and Jacobsen for hosting.



# WALTER HELPS GRADUATES CELEBRATE TURF DIPLOMAS

**BIGGA Life Member Walter Woods helped a dozen graduates celebrate their diplomas in turf maintenance at the home of golf.**

Walter served as Superintendent for the St Andrews Links Trust for 21 years, and was on hand as the 12 graduates from WINSTONuniversity passed their six-month course.

The trip to St Andrews topped off six months of a unique education for golf course and club managers at the university, which is based in Germany and focuses on teaching all manner of disciplines in the turf industry.

During the trip to Scotland the group gained new insights in the maintenance of world class courses like the Duke's Course and the links of Kingsbarns.

On the way to Scotland the group visited the headquarters of Ransomes Jacobsen in Ipswich where they received first hand information on the turf care equipment of one of the world's leading manufacturers.

One of the graduates, Frank Ahern, said: "We not only learnt about turf and resource management but also gained a solid background in the economics and strategic marketing of golf courses."

Ian Butcher, the English director of WINSTONuniversity added: "Proof of how much our graduates are sought after is demonstrated by the fact that all the graduates are now working in



the industry. At present the application process is open for the second course at WINSTONuniversity starting in October. Hubertus von Treuenfels, CEO of WINSTONuniversity, said:

"The demand is already very high. Since we only can accept 20 students per course

we are in a very comfortable situation where we can choose the best applicants. This being said I like to stress that we do not want to deter anyone to apply for the new semester which will start in October 2014 and run until the end of March 2015."

## BIGGA AND EVERRIS PARTNERSHIP

BIGGA are delighted to announce further details of our latest Partnership as we join forces with Everris.

As we announced last month, we've created a series of new packages designed improve the recognition given to our supporters.

We've enjoyed strong links with Everris for many years, who are well-known across the turf industry for developing technologically advanced fertilisers, nutritional programmes, turf seed and plant protection products.

This Partnership will build on our existing relationship while promoting greenkeeper education and promoting new initiatives and events, more details of which will be revealed over the coming months – including the exciting Turf

Rewards initiative.

BIGGA's Business Development Manager Jill Rodham said:

"We're very excited about this partnership which consolidates our relationship with Everris, and will allow us to join forces more effectively.

"It's been a pleasure working with them over the last few years and their status as BIGGA Partner reinforces how much we value their support."

Richard Walton (shown with Jim Croxton), Business Manager at Everris, said:

"As a company, we believe everyone benefits from working and learning together, and we're delighted to have become a BIGGA Partner.

"As new research is carried out and turf management



products and practices develop and evolve, our partnership and the launch of Turf Rewards offers all

greenkeepers the opportunity to develop their own knowledge and expertise both on and off the golf course."





## ON A ROLL IN SWITZERLAND

By using the technique of Koroing, Course Manager Richie McGlynn of Blumisberg Golf Can Country Club, Fribourg, Switzerland, has kept the course fully open during extensive changes.

BIGGA member Richie joined the club in 2011. He found that the fairways in particular had severe problems relating to compaction, excessive thatch and a dominant poa sward, resulting in issues such as dry patch, dieback and chafer grub infestation. So he began the first stage of an ambitious ten-year project to renovate all the fairways without closing any holes. Various renovation practices were considered to achieve this, culminating in the decision to strip the existing turf off the worst areas, decompact the ground and reseed with a new grass mixture.

Richie looked to other sports for inspiration. Knowing how professional groundsmen in other sports achieved rapid pitch renovation, he wanted to know if the same method could be applied to golf fairways.

The Koro Field Top Maker is a heavy-duty fraise mower and is a primary tool in the pitch renovation process. It removes unwanted surface matter such as poa-annua, thatch, weeds or the entire surface to a depth of 50mm.

Richie bought a Koro Field TopMaker 1500 complete with digging rotor, an Imants Shockwave 220 and a Dakota 550 trailer.

In October 2012, after using the Shockwave 220 to decompact the fairways down to a maximum of 38cm, the worst part of a fairway was stripped with the Koro. The area was then overseeded with a Vredo Compact seeder, using a mix of 60% Fescue, 20% Ryegrass & 20% Kentucky bluegrass.

Some growth and regeneration was evident before the course went into winter dormancy, but by the time the course reopened in the spring, the results were outstanding.

Richie said: "We are now into the second stage of our ten year fairway renovation project, and I believe we made the right decision not to close any of the holes during the renovations."

"We are taking out sections of fairways one by one. When we tackled the third fairway last July, we removed a third of the section in question and the golfers could play towards the left of the hole.

"We then made three dropping zones for those that were just that bit too far right. Within five weeks we had it open again, first teeing up their shots, and a few weeks later they were able to play normally."

There was some initial opposition from members, but the difference between the untreated fairways and the newly renovated areas soon became very apparent during July and August.

Richie added: "The difference was so striking, that when we came to work on the other side of the fairway, there was far more support this time. In fact two members actually took the trouble to go to the office and remark at the huge difference it had made. So thankfully we seem to be winning the support of the players – which is half the battle!"

The effectiveness of Koroing and the fast recovery period is the secret of Richie's approach.

Over time he will completely renovate the whole course with minimum disruption and maximum improvement for the future quality of golf played at Blumisberg.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POSTER

A reminder to BIGGA members that the old Health and Safety poster became illegal on 1 April and has been replaced by a new, legal version. For more details visit [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)



## David Blackmur

We are saddened to hear that Plumpton College's David Blackmur has died after a short illness. David Golding, Education Director at The GTC, has paid this tribute.

"David's passion for greenkeeping was second to none and many of today's Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers owe so much to him, as he was not only a great turf lecturer, but one of life's true gentlemen.

"He was synonymous with Plumpton College for nearly 40 years and instrumental in producing students and finalists for the Toro Student of the Year Award.

"I have a contact in BIGGA who has a lasting memory of David dressed immaculately as ever wearing cords and strolling down the Las Vegas Strip with his sunglasses on looking around as if he was in a dream. He could not have been further away from his love of the countryside and his beloved family and Sussex home!

"The GTC's thoughts are with his family and colleagues at Plumpton College. We have lost a true turf legend."



# PHYTOPHTHORA LATERALIS DISAPPEARS FROM THE RADAR



*Phytophthora lateralis* first appeared in 2010 on Lawson's cypress which is the most widely traded and planted conifer in the UK landscape. It was initially treated with great concern by UK plant health authorities but arrival of *Chalara fraxinea* put paid to that. *P. lateralis* disappeared from the radar in 2012 when UK government 'drew a line in the sand' following the unprecedented public outcry over *Chalara* ash dieback.

*P. lateralis* now goes unreported outside the confines of obscure government reports. How it entered the UK is portrayed as a mystery but the avenues of entry are clear to me. Root cause is the British passion for importing and planting trees without proper attention paid to the integrity of the planting material.

Foliar browning symptoms in Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) at Balloch Country Park Estate in Scotland and caused by *P. lateralis* were apparent in 2009 and worsened during 2010. Forestry Commission (FC) waited until November 2010 to report finding *P. lateralis*.

Infrastructure development at Balloch Country Park Estate involving *Rhododendron* clearance, a major replanting programme using 'imported' topsoil, and financed by a £2.4 m Heritage Lottery Fund grant, had taken place in 2003-2006. Tree and shrub planting material was sourced from a number of nurseries including 10 in the Netherlands, four in Italy and two in France. *P. lateralis* had been confirmed in French nurseries in 1999 and Dutch nurseries in 2004.

Further UK outbreaks were confirmed on Lawson's cypress at Greenock Park Cemetery and on *Thuja occidentalis* (Northern white cedar) at a Scottish nursery and a Renfrewshire Park. The Northern white cedar trees had been imported from France. At least two

different genetic lineages have since been identified indicating separate UK introductions of the pathogen.

The outbreak of *P. lateralis* at Balloch Country Park Estate was followed by a flurry of more highly publicised findings in Scotland, Northern Ireland and England, including Yorkshire and Devon, in 2011. But with no public utterances from FC or Fera during the whole of 2012 and 2013 (just a website mention in passing of one outbreak in South Wales and one in Sussex) it would appear *P. lateralis* is no longer considered to be a problem.

*P. lateralis* may have disappeared from the radar screen but with a spore dissemination potential equivalent to *Phytophthora ramorum*, and a history of air-borne spore spread in France, it has certainly not gone away. What has disappeared is UK plant health authorities' earlier concern and consideration for an aggressive and lethal disease of conifer species vital to the landscape, amenity and garden sectors.

Management guidance has been effectively downgraded. FC now says suspected cases should only be reported to them if they involve a number of trees on a public site such as a park or churchyard, on the basis that large numbers of visitors will pose a higher risk of spreading the disease. For suspected cases in private gardens (and presumably golf courses) owners are told to consult a reputable arborist, leaving the arborist to decide on and organise safe disposal and

destruction of infected material (by burning or chipping and deep burial) and preferably on site.

In the absence of legal permission for burning large amounts of debris on site, or the facilities for deep burial, then the arborist is forced to take the contaminated debris away, risking spread of disease to other customers and his/her reputation as a 'reputable' arborist. There is as much if not more risk of disease spread by forcing a large number of small-scale arborists, mostly doing domestic work, to deal with this particular disease without proper intervention or at least guidance from the centre.

After all Lawson's cypress is the most widely planted conifer in the UK landscape, amenity and garden sectors and *P. lateralis* a highly infective pathogen. This is another example of UK plant health authorities not understanding the needs of the arb and amenity sectors even if they are concerned, which many the industry simply do not believe.

*Dr Terry Mabbett*

