

GI

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

£5.50 APRIL 2016

Published by the
British and International
Golf Greenkeepers Association

Featured Inside

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Northumbrian course*

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is battling against the tide



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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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



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WELCOME FROM BIGGA



April heralds Augusta Syndrome

April always heralds the start of the golf season, bringing with it the greenkeepers curse: Augusta Syndrome.

The verdant perfection we are likely to witness as Rory, Jordan, Jason et al compete for the coveted Green Jacket inspires two things in the nation's golfers – a desire to get out and play some golf, coupled with often unrealistic expectations for turf quality in the UK.

These expectations could be even more out of kilter with reality this year following the terrible winter experienced in many parts of the UK. A recent picture I saw of Augusta National's 12th green benefitting from the use of growing lights we would normally associate with Premiership football stadia just served to highlight the enormous difference between the resources available for the season's first major and most courses our members are responsible for.

But a recent report released by the R&A, which tells us that the UK's golfers spend £4.3bn on their sport, equating to 14% of all consumer spending on sport in the country, suggests that high expectations are here to stay. And arguably, with greenkeepers having access to better education, machinery and technology than ever before, they are right to be so. Just perhaps not in early April!

So how do we manage those expectations? The answer, as always, is through education and communication. For nearly 30 years BIGGA has focused on driving standards of education and in recent times this focus has very much shifted towards management topics rather than actual agronomy. As an example, nearly two thirds of this year's Continue to Learn programme of workshops and seminars were on management topics with communication skills high on the agenda. We firmly believe that the ability to communicate effectively with golfers, employers and committee members is one of the key tools a modern greenkeeper has to have in their armoury to succeed.

Furthermore, through our recent work on the strategic direction of the association, the Board of Management has reaffirmed the need for BIGGA to focus on its activity to inform golfers of greenkeepers' skills and professionalism and to explain why you implement the practices you do, when you do.

This project is not new, but the scale is going to increase dramatically and we are going to allocate substantial resources to do so. In recent years we have worked extremely hard to build relationships with the rest of the golf industry and this work is undoubtedly paying off. We are now represented at just about every golf industry gathering and leadership forum, ensuring that the role of course management is appreciated and our voice is heard. The golf industry at a national level is working collaboratively like never before and BIGGA sits at the heart of that.

Alongside this project we will continue to provide training for our members and develop the skills to communicate and exert influence within their places of work.

In this magazine we review the recent Future Turf Managers Initiative in which communication skills and leadership played a large part. These areas can and will be rolled out at Region and Section level also.

The next step is to provide resources to make the logistics of communicating easier for you, another project that the board has determined we should accelerate.

On the subject of communications I am delighted that Karl Hansell has joined our team in the role of communications executive, he brings with him an award winning portfolio in journalism and significant experience in the golf industry, I know he will be a valuable addition to our team and is already enjoying getting to know the membership and promoting the excellent work you do, day in and day out.

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton
Chief Executive

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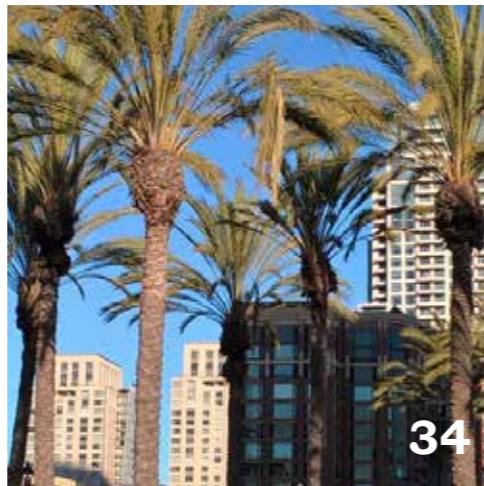
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Published by the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Ltd



Chairman's Word

BIGGA National Chairman, Les Howkins MG, gives his thoughts for the month

Standing at a crossroads

Well it's been three months since my last column and I have enjoyed reading our President's reports in the interim, no doubt it has made a nice change for all the members as well. So, this will be my first quarterly update of 2016 and the aim is to keep the membership up to date with what has been going on in the association.

Firstly, the biennial meeting of International Greenkeeping/Superintendents Associations was held in Toronto the week before BTME started. It was a great opportunity to meet up with the other associations from around the world and share ideas, problems and solutions. Interestingly, all the associations have similar challenges and the golf industry economy here in the UK is definitely mirrored all around the globe. The key learning outcome was from the Americans who shared the development of their advocacy programme with their national government.

BTME was, once again, a great success, with good numbers and quality of attendees at the show and the best attendance ever at Continue to Learn. The Welcome Celebration was an excellent event hosted by Naga Munchetty. For 2017 the board has decided, after receiving some very positive feedback from the regions, to promote the celebration more and work with our corporate partners and exhibitors to ensure more people attend. Our dream would be to have 1,000 greenkeepers and affiliate members join together and make the event the most talked about evening of the week.

The only slightly negative feedback from BTME as a whole was that some of the free seminars were felt to be too much of a sales pitch, with not enough genuine educational value. This has been looked at during the BTME review process and plans are being put in place to ensure this does not happen again. At the very core of our association is education and we will continue to strive to put on the very best.

Our position in Europe was further cemented at the annual FEGGA Conference in Zandvoort, The Netherlands. A packed few days saw many presentations from associations located all over Europe and further afield. Sharing best practice and offering advice to each other was the key part of the event as all the European associations continue to strengthen and grow.



BBC Naga Munchetty hosted the BTME Welcome Celebration

March saw the first full board meeting of 2016, which was quickly followed by a trip to St Andrews to take up our place for the first time at the Golf Forum, alongside the R&A, PGA, GCMA, Home Unions and other bodies involved in running the game at national and international level.

As I have stated before, we are at an interesting point in the association's history and there will be many new initiatives over the next year or so. One of the first things you will see is communication from us to golf clubs up and down the country as a starting point to help inform the wider golfing public of what it is we do.

We will be producing documentation that our members can use to help themselves inform and educate golfers, the website is getting a full and overdue revamp and it is our intention to have a resource library available on line as the "go to" place for all matters linked to greenkeeping.

In the next few weeks you will be receiving a copy of a letter from the board to every golf club in the country. The letter will inform and highlight what BIGGA does and how it can help clubs and the greenkeepers they employ. When the letter arrives, please talk about it with your GM, greens chairman, captain or any other officer of the club that

you feel it has relevance to.

As a members association your board and staff are here to serve the members, but for us to really succeed in improving the life of greenkeepers we will need the help of the membership.

The R&A has just released a report on the economic impact of golf as an industry on the UK. With golfers spending £4.3 billion annually on the sport, it accounts for 14 per cent of all consumer spending on sport. The golf industry employs over 74,000 people and pays £990 million in taxes. With these headline figures it's clear to see golf is a serious sport, with a serious impact on the UK economy. We, as greenkeepers play a massive part in keeping that industry's wheels turning and the entire report can be downloaded from our website.

Lets hope the rest of the spring is kind to greenkeepers and the annual infection of Augusta Syndrome is not too severe this year.

All the best
Les

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Funding your future

The funding and assistance provided by BIGGA Partners and BIGGA Education Supporters underpins the Association's considerable investment in Continuing Professional Development and all our educational activity. They are investing in the future of BIGGA members, we are hugely grateful and urge you to show them your support



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Individual Contributors: Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS, Espen Bergmann, Nick Gray, Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn, Jaey Goodchild, Michael Beaton, Greg Evans, Frank Newberry



A new communications executive has joined the staff at BIGGA



Karl Hansell (pictured on the right) has taken up the role vacated by Steve Castle and joins the team after a short stint at South Lakeland District Council, where he was communications officer for the local authority.

Prior to that, Karl was staff writer at National Club Golfer and Lady Golfer, which are owned by Sports Publications Ltd and based in Leeds, near Moor Allerton GC.

This experience allowed Karl to build a great reputation and forge some friendships within the golfing industry, which will enable him to further develop BIGGA's reputation within the wider golfing industry and the media as a whole.

BIGGA chief executive Jim Croxton said: "We would like to welcome Karl into his new role as we share the same ambitions of building BIGGA's reputation within the wider industry. Through Karl's expertise in magazines and media relations, we hope he will allow us to make sure the achievements of our members are celebrated, and their concerns are heard and respected within the golf industry."

"I'd like to thank Steve for his hard work during his time at BIGGA. Steve was a valued colleague and will be missed by all and we wish him all the best in his new endeavor."

Karl began his career with a short stint editing the John Lewis Chronicle magazine in Newcastle, before becoming a news reporter on the Whitby Gazette, based close to his home town of Scarborough. While in Whitby he achieved his senior journalism qualifications and won a number of awards, including the O2 Media Young Journalist of the Year award and the O2 Media Feature Writer of the Year awards.

Carnegie calling for Scottish Conference

The 19th edition of the BIGGA Scottish Regional Greenkeeping Conference attracted over 190 delegates on Tuesday 8 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

The annual conference saw a range of delegates speaking throughout the day, with Gordon McKie, Course Manager of the Old Course, St Andrews, up first.

Iain Barr of Largs attended the conference and said: "It was a good, enjoyable day produced to the usual high standard, so well done to everyone involved in the organisation."

Gordon provided a presentation on the work that was required to stage the 2015 Open Championship, making special mention of the media requirements around the event. He finished his talk by speaking very highly of the team effort from the staff at St Andrews to make the championship a success,

particularly in respect of dealing with bad weather and coping with a fifth day.

He was followed by Dr David Greenshields, from Barenbrug UK, who talked through 'The Story of Grass – from a greenhouse to the Open Championship'. This talk discussed the science of developing grass that would meet the requirements of a golf course.

The Scottish Region created a new feature at the conference with Stewart Duff, Course Manager at Gullane Golf Club, teaming up with Paul Miller, SRUC, to discuss the 2015 Scottish Open. This presentation was well-received by the audience, who enjoyed hearing about various aspects such as the creation of a composite course using holes on Number 1 and Number 2 courses at Gullane. The presentation ended with a video flyover of the venue.

After lunch, chairman Jim Paton took to the stage to provide a review of the year.



Jim made special mention of the Benevolent Fund and how this can help greenkeepers facing hardship and asked delegates to consider all options for raising funds. He then presented a cheque to Iain MacLeod, BIGGA President, with funds raised by the region over the last year.

Jim then formally introduced Iain, who gave a talk on his hopes for the association. Iain paid particular attention to the role of BIGGA in providing education to members and challenged those present to encourage fellow greenkeepers to join the association to aid in their personal development and professionalism.

The afternoon session then kicked into full gear

with Henry Bechelet from ICL providing a presentation titled 'Getting your greens going in Spring'. Henry had carried out a variety of research on the best method for treating greens so they are ready for the start of the golfing season.

The final speaker was Dave Langheim MG, Course Manager at Wimbledon Park Golf Club, who flew into Scotland to talk through the work undertaken at his course around the Wimbledon Tennis Championship. Dave explained the work his team undertake during the five weeks when the course is closed to members and spoke about the lease arrangements and on going negotiations with the All England Club.



Pat to keep a close eye on Nefyn despite retirement

Nefyn head greenkeeper Pat McAteer has retired from his role after more than four decades at the club.

In a career at Nefyn spanning 42 years, with a two-year gap in the middle, Pat began his career behind the bar, before heading out on to the course and spending 30 years as course manager.

Whether for its famous halfway house, the Ty Coch Inn, the enormous sinkhole that splits the 12th fairway, or the eight holes that jut out into the sea on a peninsula known as 'The Point', Nefyn is a dramatic location to ply your trade.

Pat said: "In April and September the sun sets over the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland. They stand out so proud that it's like being in Ireland some days as we are only 58 miles away and the course is elevated so we can see a long way."

The most difficult time in his career came two years ago, when storms caused £200,000 worth of damage to the course.

Four greens and four sets of tees

were irrevocably damaged and needed rebuilding to USGA criteria.

"It was devastating to the course," said Pat. "But it was a case of, you have got to put your head down and carry on and rectify the situation."

Pat led the way when it came to education and was among the first to graduate with the Higher National Diploma qualifications.

He sits on the Club Services committee of the Golf Union of Wales and worked with Deeside College to develop their training scheme.

Pat has been replaced by Richard Lloyd-Jones, his deputy of 30 years.

In his retirement, Pat will be keeping a close eye on the club as he is volunteering as a shuttle bus driver, taking hikers to the coastal path, which surrounds the course.

He will also continue his association with the club, first as vice captain, before becoming club captain next year.

Once 'youngest' Valentine opts for retirement

Forty years after becoming the youngest head greenkeeper in the country, Brian Valentine will this month retire from Goring and Streatley GC.

Brian took up employment at the Berkshire club on 25 March 1975 and within a year was appointed head greenkeeper. Aged just 22, this almost certainly made him the youngest head greenkeeper in the country.

Brian was born in Dumbarton, Scotland, and was a graduate of the famous Woodburn House College in Glasgow, where he gained his City and Guilds qualifications, alongside many illustrious greenkeepers. He also spent a short time studying at the STRI in Bingley.

During this period, Brian was greenkeeper at the Vale of Leven, before he made the move south to England to take up a position at Reading and then finding 'home' at Goring and Streatley.

Brian is renowned for his traditional style of greenkeeping, which suited Harry Colt's design and kept the course well-regarded in the area and he is looking forward to actually being able to play a bit of golf in his retirement, which begins on 30 April.

Turf club members earn their 'Spurs'

The first South Coast Section Turf Club of the year saw members make a visit to Premier League high-fliers Tottenham Hotspur's training facility.

Head groundsman Paul Jones gave the group a tour of the building and got to view some unexpected sights, such as a vegetable garden, memorial garden and even saw the first team during an outdoor training session.

Section committee member, Stephen Thorne said: "The day began with section members greeted by an imposing entrance and driveway so impressive that they were in no doubt they were about to experience something special."

An introduction to the complex explained how it was constructed to focus on 'old fashioned' team values and an aspirational

theme.

During the tour, the group saw the first team restaurant, looked at the gym and watched a training session. It then continued with a look at all 15 pitches and outside areas for the facility, which included a vegetable garden that provides produce for the team restaurants and a peaceful memorial garden.

Steve added: "The section and members who attended would like to thank Tottenham Hotspur FC, Darren Baldwin and Paul Jones for making this truly unique visit possible and for taking time out of their busy schedules to accommodate the group. The South Coast Section would also like to thank Lely UK for their contribution towards travel costs of the event."



Ecology News

By James Hutchinson

BIGGA's Sustainability Executive

Greenkeepers up and down the UK have sent in some wonderful sightings this past month including siskins, chiffchaffs, stonechats, blackcaps, skylarks, treecreepers, great-crested grebes, tufted ducks, red squirrels and muntjac deers. Other sightings include a small tortoiseshell butterfly, suggesting spring is here. This is about time as the winter of 2015/16 was the wettest on record in Scotland, with 2.5ft of water falling according to the Met Office.

Other clues to warmer weather arriving are this photo taken at Gainsborough GC of a thrush with nesting material. Send your sightings to either: @ecology1BIGGA on Twitter or james.hutchinson@bigga.co.uk

In terms of sustainability, now's

the time to clear out your grass bins ready for the forthcoming growing season. Clippings, along with cores and brown waste such as potato peelings and leaves make smashing compost, which can be sold on or used on the club's gardens. I've written a feature on the benefits of composting, which you can find on page 38.

Keep those feeders topped up as now is the time birds need the free food the most. Birds require more food during the spring months as they are feeding both themselves and their young, which, depending on their whereabouts in the UK, could be hatching in April. On the advice from the RSPB, use only flaked maize, sunflowers seeds, peanuts (not salted or dry

roasted), wheat and barley grains, nyjer seeds, bird cakes (dried fat) and meal worms. Believe it or not, but tinned dog and cat food is also good, although I would avoid that one if you have a moggy prowling about your course.



If you have any unusual on course wildlife sightings, then please let me know. My email: james.hutchinson@bigga.co.uk



Tree fan Terry wins prestigious forestry prize

Regular Greenkeeper International contributor Terry Mabbett is celebrating after winning a prestigious prize.

Mabbett has won the Royal Forestry Society's James Cup for a second time after an article on the restoration of hazel coppice woodlands in urban areas was voted as the year's best by a panel of members.

Terry said: "I regard urban and peri-urban woodlands as perhaps the most important woodland resource we have. These woodlands are the nearest and most accessible to the vast majority of the country's population, but by the same token are under the most pressure and threat. The real excitement of these woodlands for me is finding something that rural dwellers may take for granted within their woodland resources, but which in urban and peri-urban woodlands is now a rarity."

Terry previously won the James Cup for an article on bleeding canker in horse chestnut trees which appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Forestry in 2009.

With an expertise in pest, disease and weed management in tropical tree crops, Terry possesses a PhD in tropical plant pathology and agriculture from The University of the West Indies.

You can read his latest feature for Greenkeeper International on page 48.

Sharpshooter Chenery claims national title



Woodbury Park golf course manager Ian Chenery reaffirmed his status as a greenkeeper not to be messed with after defended his national rifle shooting title during March.

Ian retained his Great Britain F Class Association short range championship despite a cold northerly wind at Diggle, in the Pennines.

Using a new barrel fitted last season, Ian shot two 96/100 on the first day to give him a gold and silver medal.

He said: "I knew it was mine to lose, so I just concentrated

on every shot on day two. It was extremely difficult shooting as the wind was fishtailing from shot to shot, so you really had to concentrate on the wind."

Shooting a target no larger than a snooker ball from 500 yards, there was no room for error.

Ian added: "I managed to keep the nerves under control and I knew it was tough for everyone. A 91 out of 100 and then 67 out of 75 gave me the win by five points, which is quite a lot at this level, so I am very happy."



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The latest news from BIGGA

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You can also save money with our BIGGA Xtra Benefits scheme. More information can be found in the Members' Area of the BIGGA website.




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A 'thank you' from the membership team...

...since launching a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system it's been all 'go' and a learning curve for the team in the membership department.

We would like to thank all members who are renewing and new members who are joining BIGGA and have sent in paperwork for their patience in allowing us time to process these on the new system. Traditionally, January - March is the busiest time of year for the department and when most renewals are processed, so it's been a real team effort to get ourselves up to date and the team continue to earn CPD at the same time. We're almost back to our usual efficient selves, so thank you everybody we appreciate your support.

If any member has changed their personal details including email and mobile telephone number, please let us know. All members will soon be able to see these details in the mem-

bers area of the BIGGA website, but until then just drop us a line in the following ways:
Telephone: 01347 833800
select option 1
Email: membership@bigga.co.uk



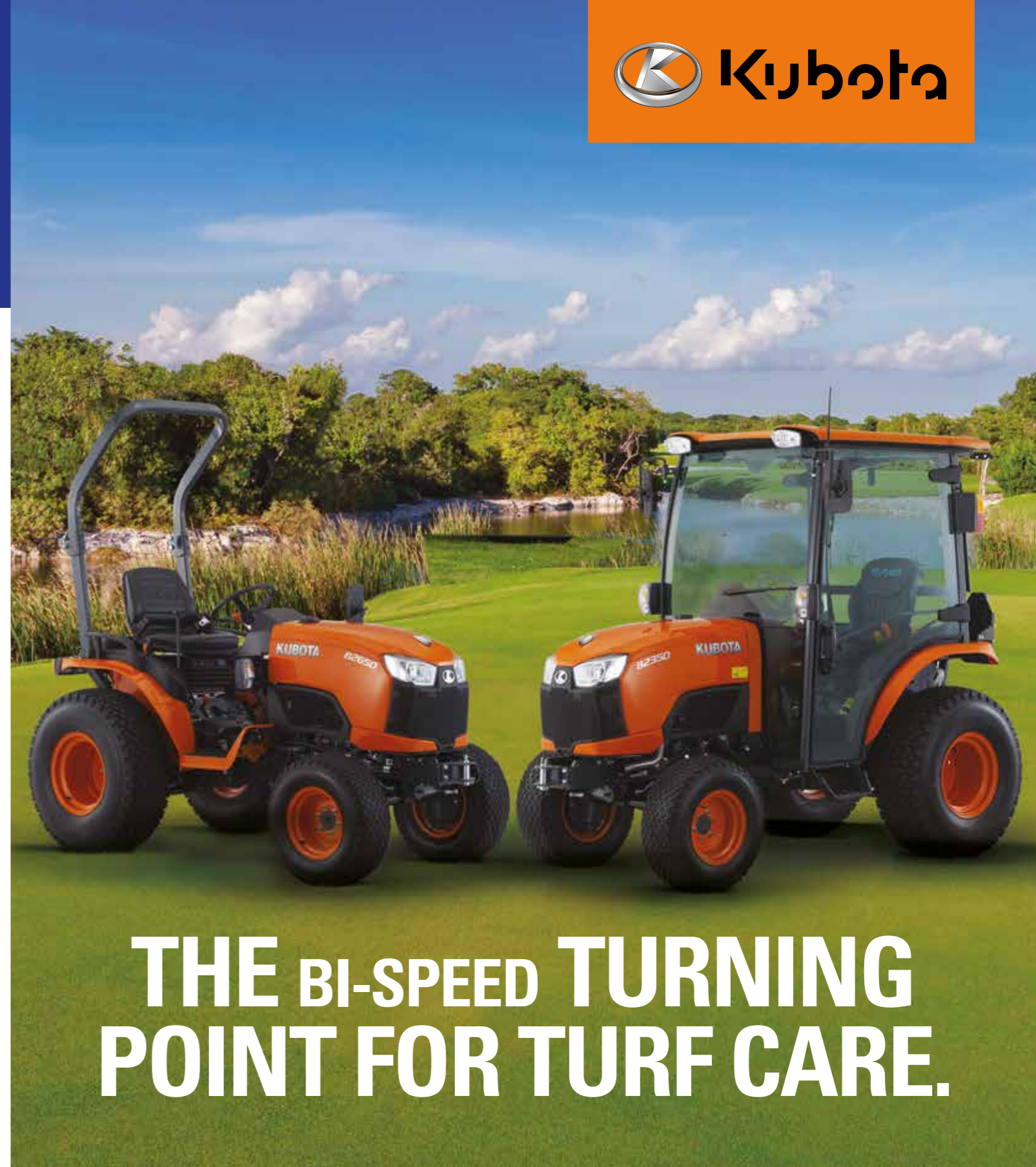
BIGGA Members can now save up to 40% on Cinema tickets*

Through BIGGA Xtra Benefits, members can now receive up to 40%* discount on the box office price for over 200 cinemas throughout the UK and Ireland including Cineworld, Empire, IC Cinema, Picturehouse, Reel Cinemas, Showcase and VUE. We're pleased to advise that Filmology have made their cinema site much

easier to use and much more user friendly. If you created an account on the old website, or if you visit for the first time on Cinema Benefits, you'll need to register for a new account, but it's very easy, quick and simple. Remember to log in to the BIGGA Members area first, click on the BIGGA Xtra Benefits icon on the right hand side, choose 'Lifestyle' and 'Cinema benefits'.
*Discounts vary depending on the cinema you visit and the day and time you choose to go.



If you haven't visited the BIGGA Xtra Benefits site yet or haven't visited recently, it's well worth spending a few minutes having a look at all the ways BIGGA members can save money.



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L&D News

The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

Learning & Development News has the latest updates on CPD and everything related to greenkeeper education

and training, supported by our BIGGA Partners, BIGGA Education Supporters and Individual Contributors –



Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards

Two Awards in One

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards have undergone a transformation to enhance their already successful formula.

What's it all About?

Being part of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards allows you to meet and compete with the best greenkeeping students in the UK.

Those invited to interview will be tested on their knowledge, not only of greenkeeping tasks, skills and health and safety, but it also incorporates understanding of the job role; personal development; industry awareness; the Toro company; BIGGA and career aspirations.

The highly-coveted awards will enable you to drive your ambition for a successful career in the greenkeeping industry.

Put yourself in the position to succeed by applying for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards.

What's New?

Two awards in one:

1) Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award – available to all greenkeeping

students studying for eligible qualifications.

2) Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award – specifically for greenkeeping students aged 20 years and under.

Greenkeeping students can put themselves forward for the awards
College tutor, assessor or employer can endorse applications
Online application process

What Can You Win?

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year winner will receive:

The Toro Scholarship, including a six-week residential turf management study course at the University of Massachusetts, a trip to the Golf Industry Show and a visit to the Toro factory.

Endorser of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year will receive:

A trip to the Golf Industry Show in the USA, including flights, hotel, education and show accreditation

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year runner up will receive:

A trip to Continue to Learn at BTME including four days of education, five

funding your future.

Contact the Learning & Development team at BIGGA House for more information.

nights' hotel accommodation, travel and spending money, plus a Toro Training voucher

Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award winner will receive:

A trip to Continue to Learn at BTME – five night package including hotel, four days of education, travel and £125 expenses, plus a gift voucher for Toro Training

Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year runner up will receive:

A trip to Continue to Learn at BTME – three night package including hotel, education, travel and £75 expenses plus a gift voucher for Toro training

Who Can Apply?

Any greenkeeping student who is undertaking one of the listed qualifications (at the time of application):

- Level 2 Work-based Diploma - Greenkeeper / SVQ Level 2 Sports Turf
- Level 3 Work-based Diploma - Greenkeeper / SVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Management
- Level 2 Diploma / National Certificate (NC)
- Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma (SD)

Why Apply?

Acknowledged as the highlight of the student greenkeeper's year, the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards provides you with the opportunity to expand your experience by meeting and competing with the best:

You could win an eight-week scholarship to the USA in January/February 2017 (including a six-week residential turf management study course at the University of Massachusetts, a trip to the Golf Industry Show and a visit to the Toro factory)

You could win a trip to Continue to Learn at BTME (including four days of education, hotel, travel and spending money)

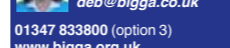
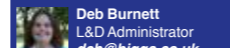
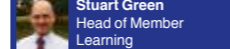
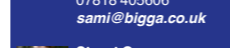
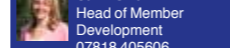
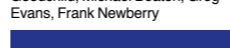
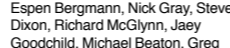
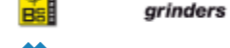
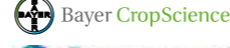
All awards finalists will be given BIGGA membership for one year (following on from the expiry date of their current memberships)

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How to Apply

1) Complete the online application form (insert QR code and web address)



2) Provide the name of the individual who will endorse your application

Who can endorse your application?

- College tutor
- College assessor
- Head Greenkeeper / Course Manager
- Golf Club Manager

Terms and Conditions for Application

- Applications are welcomed from all student greenkeeper candidates actively working towards their qualification at the time of application. Eligible qualifications are:
 - Level 2 Work-based Diploma - Greenkeeper / SVQ Level 2 Sports Turf
 - Level 3 Work-based Diploma - Greenkeeper / SVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Management
 - Level 2 Diploma / National Certificate (NC)
 - Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma (SD)
- All applications must be made through the

online application facility

- All applicants must provide contact details of their nominated person endorsing their application
- Applicants must be student greenkeepers either working as, or intending to work as, a golf greenkeeper
- Applicants must be employed or resident in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland
- If you are 20 years or younger at the time of application, you may be considered for the Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year
- Any applicant who was a national finalist in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2015 is not eligible to enter the 2016 Awards
- Any applicant who has entered the award for two consecutive years and has not been selected for the national final is not eligible to enter the 2016 Awards
- The deadline for entries is 20 May 2016

- Each application will be judged on its own merits, regardless of membership status, position or place of work. All candidates have an equal chance of success
- A shortlist will be drawn and those applicants will be invited to attend a local interview during the weeks beginning 4 and 11 July 2016
- Applicants invited to attend a local interview will receive a £30 contribution from the sponsors towards travel expenses
- Applicants invited to attend a local interview will receive a memento from the sponsors at the interview
- Selected finalists will be invited to attend the national final to be held on 19 and 20 September 2016, at BIGGA House, with all expenses met by the sponsors
- One winner and one runner-up will be selected for each of the Toro Student Greenkeeper Awards

CPD Approved & Milestone Members March 2016



Congratulations to the following members who achieved Approved status this month:

Eddie Ainsworth – Avro GC; Phillip Hind – St Andrews Links Trust; Gary Salisbury – Burghley Park GC; Sidney Arrowsmith MG – Frilford Heath GC; Ryan McCulloch – Berwick upon Tweed GC; Richard Jenkinson – Ochil Developments (GWest); Sam Sweetzer – West Hill GC; Derek Grendowicz – Raevo Golf Developments; Gavin Moore – Launceston GC; Mark Fry – Worpleston GC; Iain Macleod – Tain GC; Andrew Hatcher – Coed-Y-Mwstwr GC; Andrew Kerr – West Malling GC; David Daw – Staddon Heights GC; Edward Campbell – Royal Wimbledon GC; David Langheim –

Wimbledon Park GC; Luke Elgie – Rushmore GC; Lee Strutt – RAC (Royal Automobile Club); Les Howkins – Richmond GC; Graeme MacDonald – Newark GC; Ross Cook – Windlesham GC; Jason Brooks – Torquay GC; Jamie Martin – Gifford GC; Derrick Johnstone – Malden GC; Liam Irons – Mid Herts GC; Robert Sandilands – Formby Ladies' GC; Chris Mullett – The Belfry GC; Rob Welford – Waltham Windmill GC; Spencer Adam Dunston – Thorndon Park GC; Simon Ashford – Upton by Chester GC; Simon Connah – St Andrews Links Trust

Congratulations to the following members who achieved Approved status and their Milestone this month:

Paul Armour – St Andrews Links Trust
Sean Brocklehurst – Harpenden Common Golf Club
Leigh Powell – Hockley Golf Club
Gavin Neill – St Andrews Links Trust



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John Deere opens first ever training facility



The British agriculture and turf industry's only purpose-built apprentice training facility has been opened by John Deere at Radcliffe-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire.

Designed specifically for John Deere dealer apprentices enrolled on the company's award-winning Ag Tech, Parts Tech and Turf Tech training programmes, the centre is close to the company's headquarters at Langar.

John Deere appointed ProVQ last year to deliver

its apprentice training programmes. Training centre manager Richard Halsall said: "The company's investment in the Apprentice Training Centre reinforces our continuing aim to provide industry-leading training programmes for our agricultural and turf dealers."

The company's three-year Ag and Turf Tech apprenticeships lead to the IMI Level 2 and 3 Diplomas in Landbased Engineering. Each year group trains at the centre for eight weeks a year, with some days at Lang-

ar spent working with larger machines such as combines and self-propelled forage harvesters.

The two-year Parts Tech apprenticeship, leading to a Level 3 Diploma in Vehicle Parts Competence, is mostly work-based, with four weeks of training at Radcliffe.

ProVQ trains over 600 apprentices and hundreds of adult learners. Full-time ProVQ staff based at the centre include programme manager Ian Crowder, learner support manager Christine Coxon and group

trainers Richard Jenkins, Sebastian Gillbard and Benjamin Hobster.

ProVQ managing director Julian Lloyd said: "We have jointly developed a very high quality training environment in which John Deere apprentices can learn to master the technology that underpins the comprehensive John Deere product range. We look forward to seeing many young people come through our doors in the future at the start of what is a very exciting and rewarding career."

Double decade celebrations for ETL

European Turfgrass Laboratories is this year celebrating the company's 20th anniversary.

Formed in 1996 by six of the UK's leading agronomists, ETL provides an independent testing laboratory for the sportsturf industry and counts itself among just 10 USGA-approved facilities around the world.

The company is managed by Sharon Singleton-Bruce who has overseen a large amount of growth since she joined in 1997. She said: "It's amazing to think of the prestigious venues that we have provided testing for, the origin and types of materials that we have been sent are from all over the world. This industry is a fantastic environment to



be a part of and here we are in Stirling, with a super client base, going strong after 20 years."

ETL was established in Scotland by George Shiels, Jack McMillan, John Souter, Eddie Connaughton, Mike Harbridge and John Hacker. In 1997 it became the first A2LA-accredited laboratory outside of the USA.

The independent company remains at the forefront of testing for the sportsturf industry, and is renowned for its speed of service, reliability and accuracy of results.

Up-Graden the greens at West Sussex

Charterhouse
TURF MACHINERY



The greenkeepers at West Sussex have enlisted the help of Graden to suit the course's scarification needs.

The club is considered among the best in its county and five years ago course manager Ian Streeter invested in a Graden Swing Wing and a Contour Sand Injector to help with the removal of thatch, which was affecting the greens.

Ian said: "The Graden machinery has been one of the best purchases I've made. It has completely turned around our greens and I now would never use anything else."

"I've been familiar with the Graden machinery for a number of years. After trying other methods of thatch removal, we just weren't getting the results we desired on our greens and couldn't believe the results we were achieving with the CSI."

Supported by Charterhouse Turf Machinery, Ian has continued the Graden work on the South Downs course's greens a couple of times each year, as well as moving on to the tees and approaches.

Ian said: "Due to the level of thatch on our greens, we started scarifying with the CSI at a depth of 25mm, but this has gradually come up to 15mm as the thatch level has decreased. I would estimate the overall thatch content has reduced by 70% and continues to reduce with every pass."

The CSI can scarify to any depth between 1mm-40mm, while simultaneously backfilling the grooves with either sand or a combination of sand and seed. Its ability to do both jobs in one pass reduces play downtime without causing any detrimental effect to the firmness of the ground.

As the thatch level has reduced, it has enabled the greens team to undertake a species exchange. Before the Graden work, the greens at West Sussex were approximately 80% poa. Now able to overseed with bent grasses, they are roughly 70% bent, which offers a more sustainable surface in terms of required water and chemical input.

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Overseeding transforms bare greens at Scottish club

A course manager has praised a brand of Rigby Taylor ryegrass after seeing his bare greens transformed over the course of one Scottish winter.

Richard Mullen joined Banchory GC, Aberdeenshire, in June last year and said he immediately knew the solution to the course's turf coverage problems.

He overseeded with Rigby Taylor's R9 perennial ryegrass, and said the product responded "magnificently". He added: "I'd used R9 before and knew about the seed's leaf quality and ability to recover quickly. But I also needed a very speedy growth response to overcome a disastrous situation."

Sowed between August and September during a period of settled temperatures, and completed by a thorough irrigation programme, Richard said the growth was

easy to see within a week and they never looked back.

R9 is a 100 per cent fine ryegrass and part of the 'iCON' programme of seeds from Rigby Taylor, which supplies innovative products for the management and maintenance of turf surfaces.

With 25 years' greenkeeping experience, most recently 10 years as head greenkeeper at Meldrum House near Aberdeen, 41-year-old Richard joined Banchory, an 18-hole par 69 course sited alongside Aberdeenshire's River Dee, in June last year.

Following the success of R9, Richard plans to regularly overseed with the perennial ryegrass, to gradually replace the existing Highland bents and poa and achieve immaculate greens that are playable in any weather and at all times of the year.



Independent trials show benefits of common seaweed to sports turf

A seaweed product, which claims to enhance turf quality, colour and root growth all year round, has been launched by ICL.

SeaMax utilises *Ascophyllum nodosum*, commonly known as rockweed, with independent trials showing the product helps plants produce longer roots, greater root mass and helped improve the quality of growth.

Dr Andy Owen, ICL international technical manager, said: "The mode of action of seaweed extracts within the turfgrass system is fascinating. Certain seaweeds can generate a hormone response in the plant and contain compounds, which affect both the plasticity and elasticity of cells. This triggers the plant to respond and control water more efficiently through its stomata, which in turn improves root growth and plant vigour, which is probably why turf treated with seaweed extract is better able to resist stresses in periods of drought and extremes of weather."

Formulated for use on golf course greens, tees, fairways and sports fields, SeaMax is a water-soluble powder that can be used as a tank mix partner for liquid and foliar nu-



trition or to complement a granular fertiliser programme.

SeaMax is the latest addition in the Sportsmaster WSP range and contains 75% active, high quality, high density seaweed extract. It is also harvested from sustainable, renewable sources.

Seaweed extract for turf is a complicated product containing a range of plant available micronutrients, amino acids, carbohydrates and bioactive molecules. How these interact within the turf plant is a complex process at a cellular level and one that is slowly being uncovered through in-depth and focused research.

Rockweed is a marine plant of the northern Atlantic ocean and is common on the north-western coast of Europe, including east Greenland and the north-eastern coast of North America. Growing in cold, clean intertidal zone conditions, it is a plant that survives demanding conditions. At high tide it is immersed in cold, salty water, while at low tide it suffers dehydration and exposure in freezing temperatures. These qualities make seaweed an effective conditioning product for turf.

Barnaby appointed to STRI role

STRI has announced the appointment of senior agronomist Simon Barnaby to support business growth and development across the south of the UK.

An accomplished figure with more than 30 years' experience within the turfgrass industry, Simon has held a number of senior positions, including turf business technical manager for Syngenta and international technical manager at Scotts Professional.

Simon said: "I am very excited to be joining STRI as part of the agronomy team. I have always had the utmost respect for STRI and the work they do within the turf industry. I am particularly pleased about joining them at this exciting time of growth and development within the UK and around the world."

The STRI has been undergoing an intense period of growth, including the development of an office and research facility in Queensland, Australia and the strategic partnership with the Aspire Zone Foundation in Qatar to establish a centre of excellence for natural sportsturf research and

development.

Alistair Beggs, head of agronomy and ecology at STRI, said: "Simon is an accomplished manager, communicator and technical specialist and I am absolutely delighted to be welcoming him to the agronomy team on behalf of STRI. I have known Simon for many years and he has fulfilled a number of important roles in our industry throughout this period. His arrival further strengthens our technical base and will help keep STRI at the pinnacle of turf consultancy delivery in the UK and further afield."

STRI was established in the UK in 1929 and operates globally out of its three research and design hubs in Europe, Middle East and Asia-Pacific, servicing over 2,000 clients annually, including some of the world's most iconic sports venues and events.



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Open invitation



An Irishman who plies his trade in the mountains of Switzerland has been among those chosen to represent BIGGA at the 145th Open Championship.

A number of new faces, coupled with some more experienced heads, have been selected to join the home greenkeeping team at Royal Troon in July.

One of the newcomers will be travelling further than most. Seamus Gaughan plies his trade at the Golf Park Oberkirch, near Luzern in Switzerland and said he was surprised to be selected as it was the first time he applied to join the Open Support Team.

"I was very shocked to get it," said Seamus. "I have done a few pro events and I caddied on the LET for Sam Head in the early 90s, so I know the feeling of excitement of being inside the ropes and I am really looking forward to it."

The R&A will provide the support team accommodation, food and uniform in exchange for raking bunkers during the tournament and helping with early morning preparation work and evening divot duties.

Seamus said: "I am expecting it to be early starts and late



finishes. There will probably not be a lot of sleep, but I expect a fantastic experience."

However, should the weather take a turn for the worse, as it did at St Andrews last year, the greenkeepers will be called up to do additional tasks to keep the course in a playable condition.

The BIGGA Open Support Team: Darren Abbs, Royal Norwich; Spencer Adams-Dunstan, Thorndon Park; Peter Allam, Berkhamsted; Ben Archer, Kedleston Park; Paul Armour, St Andrews Links Trust; Kevin Armstrong, John O'Gaunt; Adam Baldwin, Lilley Brook; Tony Bartram, The Richmond; James Braithwaite, Long Ashton; Jason Brooks, Torquay; Stuart Broom, Honiton; Steven Carmichael, Dumfries & Galloway; Joseph Cartwright, Hever Castle; Andrew Clark, Broadstone; Andrew Dalton, Allen Park; Allan Donlevy, Ashton-in-Makerfield; Josh Dunn, The Belfry; Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Parks; Jamie Finch, Sheringham; Seamus Gaughan, MIGROS; Kevan Glass, Brokenhurst Manor; Phillip Graham, Bishop Auckland; Iain Hardaker, Buckinghamshire; Martin Hickling, Rothley Park; Richard Holmes, Crosland Heath; Richard Jenkinson, G West; Richard Johnstone, Nairn Dunbar; Chris Jones, St

Annes Old Links; John Keenaghan, Chipping Sodbury; Scott Lea, Wentworth Club; Timothy Leat, Rich Rivers; Graeme Main, Porters Park; Jamie Martin, Gifford; Jim Paton, West Kilbride; Robert Patrick, Stoneham; Leigh Powell, Hockley; Richard Saunders, Mowsbury; Chris Sealey, Chippenham; Phillip Snellin, Donaghadee; Dave Stewart, Walmley; Anthony Sunney, Wimbledon Park; Derek Thomson, The Wynyard; Miles Todd, Llandudno; Marcus Tolmie, Longridge; Andrew Wale, Golf National; Simon White, The Chase; Paul Willoughby, Pyrford; Ryan Wilson, Dyrham Park

PGA support team announced

BIGGA is pleased to announce the members who have been chosen to represent the organisation at the BMW PGA Championship from 24-29 May.

The event is held at The Wentworth Club in Surrey and is the European Tour's flagship event.

Last year's event was won by Korean An Byeong-hun and the BIGGA members will once again get chance to get close to the action.

BMW PGA Support Team: Peter Allam, Berkhamstead; Dan Allsworth, Drayton; Ben



Archer, Kedleston Park; Andy Baker, Ely City; Adam Baldwin, Lilley Brook; Tony Bartram, The Richmond; Lewis Birch, Sunningdale; Sean Borett, Ellesborough; Rob Boyce, Links Newmarket; Tim Brewster, Betchworth Park; Russell Carr, Golf at Goodwood; Joseph Cartwright, Hever Castle; Adam Clark, Muswell Hill; Charlie Cripps, Rowlands Castle; Oliver Davenport, Hockley; Stephen Davey, The Wisley; Andrew Doig, Tynemouth; Jeffrey Drake, Newbury & Crookham; Glenn Dyer, North Oxford; Josh Dunn, The Belfry; Luke Elgie, Rushmore; Daniel Evans, Llandudno; Dean Franks, Littlehampton; Tobey Giles, Hockley; Arnie Haskell, Farnham; Thomas Heaney, New Malden; Kevin Hensman, Rowlands Castle; Jack Hetherington, Ponteland; Steven Hirons, Kirtlington; Stephen Hopkins, Burghley Park, Mitchell Jordan, Lingdale; Craig Kilgour, Ponteland; Ollie Kirk, Links Newmarket; David Springham, The Burstead; David Stewart, Walmley; Anthony Sunny, Wimbledon Park; Andy Unwin, Birley Wood; Andrew Wale, Golf National; Ewen Westwater, Moria's Castle; Bradley White, Copthorne; Ryan Wilson, Dyrham Park; Jackson Woolley, Sand Martins

For more information contact Rachael@bigga.co.uk



'Mair sand Honeyman, mair sand'

Dr Paul Miller, lecturer in greenkeeping and golf course management at SRUC discusses the important topic of topdressing including a nod to the past

When Old Tom Morris returned from Prestwick to St Andrews in 1864, he set about improving the condition of the links with "his barrow, his spade and his shovel".

Through his hard work, Old Tom brought about improvements to the putting greens which, "instead of being in their natural state as formerly, are now carefully rolled with a heavy roller, mowed with a machine, and watered in dry weather from a well that has been sunk near each of them. The putting is made smoother



and better, and much truer."

In the same year as James Balfour wrote those words, there were reports from Gullane, which hosted the 2015 Scottish Open that, "the putting greens are smooth as velvet and perfect in every respect".

Expectations had changed by the late 19th Century, such that natural conditions for putting surfaces were no longer considered acceptable, and the pioneers of greenkeeping, perhaps noting that the smoothest and finest parts of the links were the ones which

naturally received a regular, light covering of sand, established and developed practices intended to bring about improvement. Smoothness and 'fairness' in putting became a primary concern and it was during this period that the practice of topdressing greens came into being, immortalised in the mantra attributed to Tom Morris as he barked orders to his side-kick, "Mair sand Honeyman, mair sand".

But we could go further back than the late 1800's in this story and consider the nature of the old places for golf. All

the old links are composed of sand, deposited by the action of the tides and winds, and a visit to a sandy beach on a windy day will demonstrate that the removal and deposition of sand remains a dynamic process. So it would be a fair conclusion that sand topdressing of seaside turf is a natural phenomenon and one that led to the conditions in which golf underwent its early development. The grass species native to these wind-blown sandy places had adapted to cope with the frequent covering of the crown with sand and the need to continually produce tillers, stolons and rhizomes to regenerate new growth was a requirement.

The fact topdressing is applied to greens of all sward compositions, and that they all cope, implies all grasses have a capacity for regeneration through tillering, but I suspect there are differences of tolerance between various species. The sand also served to smooth out the surfaces and dilute the tough lignin of the fescues, allowing sufficient air and microbial activity to allow its decomposition.

Our modern topdressing practices mimic that natural process and lead to the same outcome – firm and smooth greens on which the golfer can feel confident of being rewarded for a well-stroked putt.

Topdressing may have been a natural process and an instinctive practice for the pioneers of greenkeeping, but for us in the 21st Century the scientific basis is vital as we seek to learn and understand what is 'right'. Of course, what is right for one circumstance may not be right for another.

Firstly, we need to consider the reasons for topdressing, and in my view there are a couple of distinct yet overlapping objectives. Firstly, we are seeking to maintain or improve the growing medium. Secondly, topdressing is intended to contribute to smoothness and trueness.

In discussing the growing medium, there is a body of evidence gathered from studies such as the STRI Programme that indicates fine turf grasses require a soil which at field capacity has a pore space distribution of 20-25% air and 20-25% water. This pore space

distribution is a consequence of the particle size distribution (PSD) within the soil, percentage of organic matter, and the degree of compaction. This is the natural situation in the sandy soils of the old links, and is effectively mimicked in the modern recommendation for the USGA specification rootzone.

Accumulation of organic matter is a significant factor as it holds water at the expense of air, meaning the growing medium is not balanced – extra water leads to softer surfaces that are more difficult to keep smooth. So, with regards to growing medium, topdressing serves to maintain PSD and regulate organic matter content by dilution and by facilitating microbial breakdown through maintaining oxygen levels.

For those on naturally sandy, soils the maintenance of this 'ideal' growing medium is through topdressing with



a material that matches the natural rootzone in terms of its PSD. I remember up until about a decade ago, many clubs had a dune or sand pit on the course, which they used for the purpose of topdressing. This is the ideal situation – the natural sand from site is a match for properties including particle size, pH and salinity, and the local site is adapted ecologically to that material. My understanding is this practice has all but stopped, with sands brought in, leading to concerns about the closeness of the 'match'.

In heavier soils, air content is compromised due to mixed particle size distribution and a higher moisture content, and topdressing practices in those situations can be different to those on sand. If we were to topdress with sand directly onto a heavy-soil 'push-up' green, an abrupt interface would occur between the topdressing material and the native soil. In order to bring about any improvement we must incorporate the topdressing material into the soil profile. The well-established practice is to hollow core to remove less desirable material and topdress to fill the holes, incorporating the new material into the profile and minimising the abrupt change and layering within the profile. Not all of the applied material goes down the holes, so the surface gradually becomes drier, firmer and more sandy.

In the two scenarios described above I have assumed sand alone is the material of choice. Certainly, the shift in recent years has been to top dress with sand only, but there are instances where something with a little more 'body' is required, by which I mean something more water retentive and with the ability to hold and release nutrients. Organic matter also plays a vital role in the functioning of soil as a growing medium.

Selections of the right material for topdressing, and quality control of it, are crucial parts of the story, and support is available from suppliers.

Other important aspects include timing, frequency and rates of application, so in preparation for writing this article I posted a question on the BIGGA Facebook page about



how members approach this. In my experience, over the last 30 years there has been a move away from making a couple of heavy dressings – one at either end of the season – towards a 'little but often' approach of monthly dressings. I got a great response and appreciate everyone who took the time to post a reply. Given the number of replies and the expertise within our industry, it shouldn't have been a surprise to me that the responses varied.

In terms of general practice, 'little and often' is the preferred approach, but only by about 2 to 1, and a number of 'hybrid' solutions were described. One is to make a large dressing in the spring, with lighter and more frequent ones complementing that through the season. Those making heavier spring and autumn dressings are doing so as part of a coring, deep aeration and topdressing programme, incorporating the material into the holes and following a 'soil amelioration' process. In these circumstances there were then lighter dressings throughout the season which maintained smoothness and diluted organic matter. In other situations, those where the soils are naturally sandier, then the programme was 'little and often', ensuring smoothness and diluting the organic matter as it develops.

Heavy dressing amount to up to 50 tonnes across the entire greens area, while 'little and often' is a fortnightly application of up to 12 tonnes.

A most valid consideration around topdressing programmes is technology and the mechanisation of the process. Hand-mixing of topdressing, hand spreading and use of mats dragged by greenkeepers on foot is something I haven't personally seen in a long time. Instead, mechanised process-



es have largely replaced the manually laborious nature of the job and there is now an expectation the job will be done this way, and therefore more frequently. A downside of 'little and often' is the additional wear to cylinders and bedknives from the constant presence of abrasive sand particles. Mentioned more than once in the Facebook responses was this implication for additional wear to machines and the requirement for on-site grinders if the 'little and often' approach was to be adopted and followed. So I'm suggesting that a general move over the last 20 years or so to 'little and often' topdressing has occurred in tandem with clubs taking their cylinder maintenance in-house, the two things being closely connected.

I hope this article has provided a brief overview and summary of where we currently are as an industry with topdressing, and it would be great to hear from readers about your own practices. I am sure there are advocates among you of the 'little and often' and the 'heavy spring and summer' approaches – please drop us a line and tell us how it is for you.

I opened this article talking of Old Tom Morris and referring to the changing expectations of golfers over a century ago in relation to the surfaces upon which they were putting. It might be an appropriate place to finish as we approach another Masters from Augusta – changing expectations from our golfers, from ourselves, technological change and greater scientific awareness continue to drive us towards improvement.

I wonder what Old Tom would make of it all, and I wonder also what our topdressing practices will be a century from now?

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The class of 2016



Turf managers of the future graduate from development course

The fourth BIGGA Future Turf Managers' Initiative made possible by Jacobsen saw 21 delegates visit the turf maintenance company's European headquarters in Ipswich for three days of intensive training.

The latest course means over 80 up-and-coming greenkeepers have now graduated from the FTMI programme, which is aimed at those who are intent on making the career leap to head greenkeeper and course manager.

The FTMI focuses on personal and professional development and utilizes the expertise of respected course managers, cross-industry training specialists and industry experts to mentor and educate the next generation of industry leaders.

Sami Strutt is head of member development at BIGGA and said: "We are immensely proud to play a key role in the

Above: The class of 2016

development of our members, through the FTMI. The course is made possible by our partner, Jacobsen, and provides BIGGA members with the opportunity to immerse themselves in an intensive, inspiring and memorable learning experience."

Working alongside other hungry greenkeepers reinforces the competitive nature of a career within the industry and Sami added: "Being part of the FTMI experience equips BIGGA members with the skills and knowledge for success. It has already shaped the careers of many of its graduates who are now golf course managers, so congratulations to the 21 candidates who are now recognised as the FTMI Class of 2016."

While the initiative's first day saw a tour of the factory and three-hole golf competition and dinner, the hard work

began on the second day. Renowned golf consultant Eddie Bullock, former PGA captain and non-executive director of Golf at Goodwood, began with a presentation on what it takes to become an effective leader.

After lunch, Lorna Sheldon, a respected personal communication and presentation skills trainer, provided valuable insights into writing a CV, preparing for an interview and the techniques required when in front of an interview panel.

Returning to the hotel for dinner, Steve Chappell, head greenkeeper at Gleneagles' PGA Centenary Course, gave a presentation on the benefits of volunteering opportunities at major tournaments.

The final day began with an intensive and interactive presentation by Lee Strutt MG, golf course manager at Royal Automobile Club in Surrey. He provided an introduction to golf

course maintenance budgets and how to sell these to stakeholders.

The mentors then took part in a humorous role play session, in which Matt Plested, course manager at Stoneham GC, requested funds to purchase a soil temperature meter from a belligerent greens committee. His knowledge of the budget and persuasive arguments about the benefits this new tool could bring allowed him to finally win the day.

If delegates were expecting an easy end to the event after lunch, they were greatly mistaken. Always the graveyard spot for any presenter, the final educator, Michael Astrop, ensured no one could relax as he launched into an energetic presentation on Crucial Conversations, at one time even enlisting the help of a puppet monkey. This highly-interactive session provided an op-

portunity for the team to first identify the need for a crucial conversation and provided the tools they would require to conduct themselves when faced with awkward situations in a managerial role.

Class of 2016 delegate Stuart Adams, Haverfordwest GC, said: "FTMI is without doubt the single most important turning point in my career. With over 20 years of experience within the industry, this has been my first opportunity to get a real feel for the leadership role. Not only was the whole process inspiring, it was also thought-provoking and confidence-building. The networking with similar, like-minded professionals within the industry has created a group of friends for life. The mentors, apart from being professionals to aspire to emulate, were also incredibly modest and had the patience to an-

"FTMI is without doubt the single most important point of my career"

swer all the questions asked of them. They were all a credit to our industry."

The final task of the course fell to Will Carr, Ransomes Jacobsen's UK&I golf sales manager, who handed out certificates to delegates and closed the event. He thanked everyone for their time and contribution to what was a hugely-successful and worthwhile three days of first-class education.



**Chris Trimble,
The Royal Liverpool Golf Club**

"You cannot emphasise enough the importance of networking and learning from like-minded turf professionals in career progression."

**Stuart Adams,
Haverfordwest Golf Club**

"FTMI is without doubt the single most important turning point in my career. The networking with similar professionals within the industry has created a group of friends for life. Once more I say an incredible job well done and finally Thank you."

**Aaron Watkinson,
Bolton Old Links**

"FTMI has given me some experiences I probably would never have experienced until I became a course manager. This will make the step up a whole lot easier, as I know what to expect and can now prepare for when that job comes along."

**Kyle Cruickshank,
The Roxburghe Golf Course**

"To be selected for FTMI 2016 was a huge honour, but the knowledge and experience gained

from it are invaluable. I wouldn't hesitate in recommending the initiative to people to help further their career. All credit to BIGGA and Ransomes Jacobsen."

**Josh Dunn,
The Belfry**

"I would recommend FTMI to anyone who wants to become a manager, you can learn vital skills to progress."

**Andrew Gibbs,
Sunningdale Golf Club**

"To anyone who takes their career seriously, you should all apply for the FTMI programme. It isn't just about what you learn, which is a lot, but the people you meet; and this is what makes our industry so great. You shouldn't feel you need to be in a management position to apply as the learning will help you reach your goals, not only in greenkeeping, but in day to day life."

**Tom Smith,
Cams Hall Golf Club**

"This programme provides you with knowledge, skills and support that money cannot buy. In three days I have learned more than I ever expected, given me

clarity for future goals and made some great new friends."

**Stefan Carter,
Wentworth Golf Club**

"The FTMI has been running for a number of years now, and having been selected for this year's class I can see why it gets so much praise from the people who attend it. You not only learn a great deal about golf course management, but you also learn a lot about yourself and what you want to achieve in your own life and how to get there."

**Richard Whittaker,
St Annes Old Links Golf Club**

"I would highly recommend applying for the FTMI scheme as it provided me with the confidence and knowledge I feel I need to make the jump to a management role. The highly experienced mentors are very reassuring and really try to get the most out of you as individuals. One thing is for certain, you will leave FTMI with a new focus and drive for a future in sports turf management."

**Jack Hetherington,
Ponteland Golf Club**

"FTMI is perfectly tailored towards advancing careers. Industry leaders helping to create their future replacement is a trait that runs deep in our profession that we should be proud of. I would highly recommend FTMI to anyone looking to improve themselves."

**James Dudley,
Warrington Golf Club**

"FTMI is a fantastic opportunity for keen up and coming greenkeepers who want to succeed in their profession. The mentoring that you receive is invaluable and nothing is too much trouble for them. I met some really enthusiastic like-minded people that were a pleasure to spend three days with."

**David Cooper,
Downfield Golf Club**

"The networking is brilliant; you will make so many new friends and you will also get to meet some very experienced mentors, who will share their experiences with you. So come on, why have you not applied yet!"



Top: Eddie Bullock
Above: Michael Astrop

**Ben Croft,
Mid-Herts Golf Club**

"I was hesitant at first because I knew it would push me out of my comfort zone, but as soon as the education started I knew I had made the right decision. I realised that all the candidates are in the same boat, so friendships and bonds were soon formed. You use skills you don't know you have and are shown by the speakers and mentors what it takes to get your dream job in the future."

**Jack Sims,
Oakland Park Golf Club**

"Stop waiting around for someone to hand you a career on a plate. Stand up straight, take a deep breath, and take the next step on your path to golf course management!"

**Ian Nichols,
Orsett Golf Club**

"A fabulous education opportunity to learn skills that help you become more effective leader and manager. What the presenters bring to candidates are skills and tips that you would never learn in a turf maintenance facility; it's about being a manager."



Short ears and a vanishing golf course

James Hutchinson, BIGGA's Sustainability Executive, travelled to the world's fifth oldest golf course to see the environmental management projects which have encouraged spectacular wildlife and to take a look at the coastal erosion issues facing the course

Montrose Golf Links has a heck of a story to tell. I've worked in the golf course industry for over a quarter of a century and I thought that fusarium, pest attacks and the like were enough to cause us greenkeepers sleepless nights. These are mere setbacks remedied over the course of a small amount of time in comparison to the nuisance Montrose is faced with. In spite of the coastal erosion which blights a section of the links, the team is building a reputation within the environmental world through its pro-active approach to managing the courses.

I travelled to Angus, Scotland, to meet Les Rae, whose passion for protecting the wildlife on Montrose Golf Links is nothing short of remarkable. Les kindly took the time to show me around the links and the various projects they have, including wetland ecology, grassland management and wildlife conservation.



Above: The team at Montrose Golf Links

Left: Les Rae

One of those projects finds the team in the process of developing wildflower areas. Les is keen to point out the flowers chosen are of the native kind. In fact, you couldn't get more native, as the seeds were taken from St Cyrus nature reserve, a stone's throw away from the far end of the courses. The coastal mix, from Scotia seeds, is the chosen combination and I look forward to the forthcoming seasons when the flowers will be in bloom. This is a fantastic community outreach project and the nectar-loving bugs will be grateful.

An area the team has chosen to be a wildflower habitat is adjacent to the local nursery school. Les plans to invite



the school's pupils on to the course to collect, identify and eventually press the flowers, so as to inform the next generation of budding conservationists that golf courses are not bad for the environment.

The two links courses on-site are the Medal and Broomfield, although the latter has many trees. While purists believe there is no place for these organisms on a true links course, they are a welcome sight from an environmental point of view. Lichens, liverworts and fungi dominate the willow trees within the low-lying slacks, suggesting the air in Montrose is as pure as it can be. Another reason they are welcome here is the courses have open sea on one side and a grassland nature reserve on another, whereas the other two sides are dominated by

housing or industry.

Where else would smaller bird species such as members of the tit family or sparrows live and feed? The team are aware of this and have developed nest boxes, which will be erected prior to the breeding season. The boys have also built two for owls or kestrels.

The team has undertaken a large amount of gorse management from a plan drawn up by the Sports Turf Research Institute's Ecology Department. The idea is not to remove the gorse but manage it to the desired level so golf and wildlife can live together. Yellowhammers, linnets and other small birds are regularly seen on this spiny plant, which suggests the gorse is managed correctly and to a high standard. These birds will not tolerate unmanaged gorse stands, which are





leggy and thin as they require dense foliage before they even think of building a nest.

Other projects which the team have undertaken include:
Produce an integrated management plan
Heather trials
Installed a reed bed wash-down system
Remove non-native pines and replant with suitable native types
Develop a successful wildlife blog entitled 'A Walk on the Wild Side'
Further increase the long rough throughout the site

Another of Montrose's nature conservation projects has seen the burn, which runs across the courses, left unmown, therefore creating a corridor for aquatic wildlife. There would be a potential risk to safety if the area was left completely unmown, so the team simply manage the sides of the burn on a rotational basis. This is a great way of conserving the mammals and invertebrates, which require the area to survive.

ed by the sheer size of the erosion issue faced by the course. We walked a pathway, which Les said could be swept away in one night. I had my doubts, but during January exactly that happened and Mother Nature relocated tens of thousands of tons of coastline in a matter of hours, taking away metres of this historic course.

Rerouting the course helps minimise the impact of storms, but this is only a temporary solution. A permanent option could be to create a rock formation break that acts to reduce the wave energy. However, this is estimated to cost around £5 million and so it is not an option within the foreseeable future. Other plans are already in place which could eventually see a reduction in the erosion issue. A long term project is seeing the adjacent river, the South Esk, being dredged, with the sediment dropped just off the coast of the golf course. The hope is this will reduce wave energy before it hits the coastline.

January's storms claimed



We had seen the bird earlier, around 300m away, but it was too fast to photograph and we gave up, contenting ourselves with viewing peregrines, black-birds and starlings.

A few hours had passed and I had said my thanks and goodbyes to Les when, out of the blue and straight towards us, glided the owl. Both of us stood completely still and it landed on an out-of-bounds post about 10 metres away – neither could believe this surreal moment and the owl allowed us to take many photographs before gracefully leaving – a moment I shall not forget and will probably never get the chance to repeat.

The owl and many other raptors use the course for hunting grounds as the team have extended the amount of uncut rough areas on both courses. This has allowed a healthy population of mice, voles, invertebrates and wildflowers to flourish.

With all the environmental management in place, and with Les' excellent monthly blog updating us on any new sightings or erosions, Montrose Golf Links always has a story to tell. Weather patterns, along with mobile dune systems, often change, so with this in mind we hope Mother Nature decides to naturally restore the tall coastline along which the wonderful golf courses of Montrose stand.



There's also the issue of coastal erosion, which is chomping away at the second hole of the golf course. Approximately 52 metres have vanished since 1990, with no signs of slowing down anytime soon. In November last year I accompanied a team of greenkeepers from St Andrews Links to Montrose and we were greet-

victims of another sort, in the form of auks – strong little birds that spend most of their lives at sea. But one resident of the links survived the bad weather and made a remarkable appearance. Les mentioned a day-flying short-eared owl was often seen on the course, but he had never photographed it – this was soon to change.

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U.S. diary of a greenkeeper



Steve Thorne, Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year

Downtown San Diego



Rushmore's deputy course manager Steve Thorne, 43, spent seven weeks in America this winter as part of his prize for winning last year's Student Greenkeeper of the Year award.

The massive scale of the University of Massachusetts was a far cry from the Dorset farm where Steve grew up and in this diary, he documents his experience of life on campus.

5 January 2016

My day began in Ringwood, Hants, getting on the National Express coach to Heathrow Terminal 4. From there it was an 11.30am flight to Detroit, Michigan, lasting 8hr48min and covering 3,753 miles.

After clearing customs, the task was to catch a 547 mile connecting flight to Hartford, Connecticut, before the final leg on a minibus to my accommodation in Hadley, Massachusetts, just off the UMass campus.

There is a light covering of snow



just about everywhere and yes, it's proper cold. With little time to settle in, I tumbled into bed to get ready for Turf School the next day.

6 Jan

I really can't begin to explain how vast the Amherst campus is. It's absolutely massive, but the place is a bit of a ghost town as most of the students are still on holiday. But when all 25,000 of them return, this place is going to be buzzing.

The day started with a lecture on turfgrass entomology by Dr Pat Vittum, getting to grips with the 'critters' that can cause damage to our beloved turf.

After lunch in the food court, which again is on a scale that beggar's belief, we kicked off the afternoon with a session discussing fertilisers and fertility programmes



with Dr Scott Ebden.

With a trip to Walmart on the way home to stock up on a few essentials, I'm back at 'home', looking forward to seven 30-hour weeks of education ahead.



9 Jan

What a week it's been. There has been so much going on that I have to remind myself that I have only been here since Monday night.

Winter Turf School has been intense and lived up to all my expectations so far.

It's really interesting to see and hear the difference between what's available to turf managers here and the problems they come up against, compared to our experiences in Britain.

The facilities available to the students here really are mind-blowing and the other students seem like a good bunch. There are 30 students on the course, with four

of us being internationals. There is Ambrogio from Milan and Ethan and Alex from Australia, where daily on course duties can include dealing with deadly snakes and 6-foot long Goanna lizards.

17 Jan

It's been another busy week with the teaching continuing at an unbelievable pace.

This week saw our first lecture with Dr Jung, who is unbelievably passionate and knowledgeable about his specialist subject. His fast-paced, high intensity sessions are balanced with periodic stories of his journey as a young man from Korea, to his position today, carrying out research into turf diseases and disease management practices. He is magic.

The assessments have been coming thick and fast, with three tests carried out on Wednesday alone. So, once class had finished on Wednesday, several of us headed into Amherst to wind down, where we ended up having a few beers and playing pool.

On Friday night we checked out the UMass hockey team in a home game on campus, and Ambrogio, the Italian student, tried his first UMass pizza and announced that it was 'acceptable'.

26 Jan

This week we met Bill Spence, superintendent at Brookline Country Club, MA, the venue for the 1999 Ryder Cup.

He has been involved in our industry for most of his life and can lay claim to career highlights such as being a superintendent at Pebble Beach at the age of 23 and having Tom Watson as a close friend. It was great to hear such passion, knowledge and common sense beliefs from a guy who in such a distinguished career has really seen it all before.

The other 25,000 students have now returned to campus. This has given the place a different feel with more of a buzz everywhere you go.

3 Feb

Turf school continues at the same pace as we started, but now I am acclimatized to the level of information you have to absorb on a daily basis, it just feels normal.

One of our projects is turfgrass establishment and identification. From a sample of seed that groups of three were assigned at the start of Turf School, we have had to establish the plants and identify them and produce a report by the end of our time here. At our halfway point, things are coming on nicely.

In other news, four of us headed off for the weekend to Portland, Maine. Relative local Ryan, Australian delegates Ethan and Alex and myself hit the road on Friday for the three-hour journey north of Amherst. Portland is a city based around a fishing port and as such is famed for its fantastic seafood.

This coming weekend sees the Superbowl taking place, so I look forward to seeing how the locals celebrate this massive sporting event.



14 Feb

It's been a busy time since I last updated the blog. We've had the continued on-going assessments, but also several larger take-home assignments for Turf Management and also Entomology. This

has led to a couple of busy weekends in front of the computer, trawling through notes to put things together.

Last week saw the Golf Industry Show in San Diego take place. So, on Tuesday morning after the first lecture, I packed a few things and jumped on the shuttle bus to catch a flight to San Diego. Well, what an amazing contrast this place was. I had left Massachusetts earlier that day with the previous night's snowfall frozen on the ground and now here I was, approximately eight hours of flying later, in California.

Here we were greeted with a huge trade show, approximately five times bigger than BTME, with many exhibitors and some truly magnificent trade stands.

After a busy but enjoyable couple of days, it was back on a plane to make the trip home to Massachusetts. On a final note, today is the coldest so far, with the temperature at -24 degrees.

19 Feb

The last week of Turf School went by in a blur, followed quickly by four nights in Minneapolis to tour the headquarters of Toro.

Having missed a few days due to the trip to San Diego, there was a bit of catching up to do. This meant things were busy, right up until the last moments, which is just the way I like it.

The final Friday was a relaxed de-brief session, followed by a presentation ceremony in the campus centre hotel, where we found out who made the grade and who didn't... I'm pleased to say I made it.

With the celebrations over, Winter Turf School 2016 was completed. Most of the class headed home that afternoon and so it was at that moment we said goodbye to some of the people who made the last seven weeks such a great experience.

21 Feb

Since getting home, my time has been spent catching up with family and friends and work colleagues and adjusting back to the life I left behind two months earlier. It has been easy to use so many clichés to sum up my time away, but it really was 'the adventure of a lifetime' and a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity. The whole process has been one that I feel truly privileged to have been a part of and it is an experience I shall never forget.



Q&A with Stephen Thorne

How valuable was the trip for your personal development?

The trip really was amazing. It was a great opportunity to visit the US and really get a feel for a particular region. It was a totally different experience to travelling as a tourist. It was good to discover the differences between the greenkeeping profession on either side of the Atlantic. The experience of being involved in the award process as a whole has made me more confident.

How did you find the experience of studying?

I really enjoyed being in a full time educational environment again. The course was intense, with 30 hours a week in the classroom for all seven weeks. The amount of information we needed to absorb on a daily basis was mind boggling at first. However, after a couple of weeks, we settled into a rhythm and the amount of information coupled with regular assessments became the norm.

What was the most important thing you learned?

That one size does not fit all. What works for one greenkeeping team in one location may not work on another site, even if it is a neighbouring course just down the road. I think that's what makes our industry so interesting. There are so many variables on any site that you really have to get in tune with your specific circumstances.

What is the biggest difference between being a greenkeeper in America and the USA?

In the north east of the USA, the most striking difference is the seasonality of the job. They have a short, intense season, potentially followed with four months of the course being shut due to snowfall. This means greenkeepers have to diversify into other areas such as ski instruction and snow clearing. They are then at the mercy of Mother Nature over the winter regarding what condition their course is in when they return in the spring.

How did the other greenkeepers around the world differ in their approaches?

Other greenkeepers I met had a very similar approach to their work. I believe as an industry we are generally hard working individuals who enjoy presenting sports turf to

the highest level we can with the resources available to us. From what I have experienced, that attitude is the same the world over.

Away from studying, what was your favourite bit of the trip?

Immersing myself in an area that was not traditionally 'touristy'. It really gave me an opportunity to see the real America.

How was the trip to Toro?

The two day tour of Toro's facilities really was an eye opener. Once you've seen what goes into building a Toro machine, such as the research and development and the pride of the people who work there, you will never sit on Toro equipment and take for granted the effort that goes into making that machine such a pleasure to use.

Since you returned home, have you made advantage of the things you learnt?

Since I have been back, the Rushmore team have been as busy as ever, completing our winter projects and preparing the course for the upcoming season. I believe, over time, the education I received in the USA will filter through the team and benefit us all as we move forward.



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Making a mulch: the benefits of composting

James Hutchinson, BIGGA's sustainability executive, explains why you should compost the organic waste from your course

Did you know that in certain countries – Germany springs to mind – you can't throw your grass clippings into the woods or grasslands?

The UK has similar laws regarding the whereabouts of disposing clippings. Near a water course, which could contaminate the aquatic wildlife, is one mentioned in the Water Framework Directive of 2000.

The more golf courses I visit, the more I see grass clippings and cores in the woods or in the rough. I understand time and manpower are limited, but there are ways you can recycle your course waste with the minimum of effort.

What is compost? Well to cut a long story short, it is organic matter which has been decaying and decomposing for a period of time and as a result can now be used as a fertiliser or growing amendment. The difficult part is creating a good grade of compost, which can be sold, used on the clubhouse gardens or on the course itself.

How do we make it? All that is required is a reasonably

small area large enough to turn a front-loading tractor around, organic matter such as grass clippings, woodchip or leaves and plenty of patience.

In an ideal world, you would collect your grass clippings and place them straight onto the back of a run-around vehicle, but this is not always possible. Many places have built grass bins on their course, which are collected on a weekly basis. Any longer than this and the clippings start to congeal and give off that strong and pungent anaerobic odour.

There are various ways you can lay the composting areas out, including stacking a minimum of three, two-metre-high piles. There is the windrow method, which takes up a larger area, or the in-vessel composter (IVC) method.

The basic stacking method requires you to stack organic waste in a pile while turning over on a monthly basis. After three months, move this pile to a different location and let it rot down naturally while turning over occasionally. Repeat this with a newly-created pile



“The aim of sustainable composting is to keep costs minimal with holistic practices”



Please feel free to contact me regarding this article or any other environmental or wildlife issues that you may have at: james.hutchinson@bigga.co.uk or on 07767242863

over the course of about three months and when this pile is ready, move it to the same location as, but not on top of, the first pile. Repeat with a third pile. After around 9-10 months, depending on environmental conditions, the first pile will be ready to use and is now classed as humus, which is the desired end product of composting.

Another way is the windrow method of composting. This requires a far larger area and is more suited to industrial companies or large scale recycling, although there are golf courses which utilise this method - St Andrews Links springs to mind.

Windrowing has a far quicker turnaround from organic matter to useable humus and should be used where time is limited but space is less so. Windrows should be laid out in two to three metre widths and a minimum of 10 metres long. Length is not particularly an issue as the important part is getting the width correct so as to keep heat in but air movement to a maximum. Too short and the heat escapes or is not generated to the correct minimum temperature of



around 50°C.

IVC is another method, but this way of composting requires machinery. This can stretch even the greatest of budgets and the aim of sustainable greenkeeping is surely to keep costs minimal with holistic practices. Therefore, I suggest that you concentrate your efforts on recycling your waste via the two aforementioned methods.

Why turn over the compost? The procedures mentioned above, other than the IVC, are all aerobic, which means they require oxygen, and to get air into the pile you must turn it over occasionally. Fungi and worms break down the material until bacteria, which require oxygen to function, further manage the process by converting the inputs into heat, carbon dioxide and ammonium. This is the straight forward explanation, however I wrote a dissertation on humus which stretched to 11,000 words and only covered a small



part, so let's not get too bogged down with big words today.

What do you do with the compost? We know adding compost to plants makes them grow better, but why? The addition of compost to soil and sand has many benefits to the growing medium's physical, chemical and nutrient properties. It also improves soil structure, retains moisture, provides plant nutrients and reduces disease, which are all imperative to maintaining and improving soil conditions for grass growth. A number of clubs I visit have added compost to sand and made winter teeing grounds. Indeed, Fairhaven won the STRI's Outstanding Project of the Year Award for this very practice. They added humus to sand at a ratio of three to one, sand being the dominant particle, and built 10 winter tees.

Other areas of use on a golf course are to the tops of bunkers, where water run-off and retention are issues, as humus

can hold 90 per cent of its own weight in water. If you are not comfortable adding humus to your course, allow members to take it away for their gardens for a small donation, thus raising revenue for further ecology projects.

We have to take in to account that all this nutrient in the soil can attract the fatter grass types, such as Yorkshire fog. However, while this grass has its own benefits to the environment, including being a food stuff for the speckled wood butterfly, you wouldn't want it to grow on your course.

Therefore, with this in mind, be selective where you use your newly-made humus.

So, while not the most attractive feature you will find on a course, the benefits of composting are many, including sustainability, recycling waste, environmental awareness and, most importantly, the reduction in chances of breaking the law.

Five easy steps to windrow composting

1. Ensure you have a hard standing base such as concrete. If this is not possible, dig up and replace the material each time a new pile is started, otherwise leaching will occur.
2. Lay first collection of waste material in a 2-3 metre wide pile over 10 metres long.
3. Wait a few weeks and use a front-loaded digger to push the pile a few metres. This will agitate the material and introduce enough oxygen to keep the temperature up.
4. Place second collection of waste where initial pile was and to the same specification.
5. Repeat the previous steps over a period of months until there are six piles. At this point, the first pile should be humus and ready to go.

One of Fairhaven GC's award-winning winter teeing grounds



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Man and boy: A life spent on the Northumberland coast



Karl Hansell meets George Thompson, who has dedicated his life to Goswick Golf Club

George Thompson was born to be a greenkeeper.

This month he retired from his role as head greenkeeper at Goswick, in Berwick-upon-Tweed, exactly 50 years to the day after he took up employment at the club.

George wasn't born in the clubhouse, but he might as well have been. Born in 1951, his father, John, was assistant and then head greenkeeper at Goswick.

His mother, Barbara, was steward at the course and so George spent his childhood roaming the fairways.

"It was a big playground," he said. "Once I went to school, all my school holidays would be spent helping my dad on the course, or mum in the kitchen.

"Golfers were different in those days, and everybody knew you. If mum was busy, they used to take me out with them to caddy and then drop me back in after nine holes."

Ranked among the top courses in Northumberland – Lee Westwood played a round in February – George fell in love with the landscape. By the age of three he was playing golf, and before reaching his teens he would be earning money by caddying.

By 14, he was earning 12 shillings and sixpence a round – a large amount of money for a youngster at the time.

But it was not as inevitable as it may seem that George would follow his father into the greenkeeping profession.

By the age of 15, George played to a handicap of three and was offered the opportunity to become an assistant golf professional. George said: "I had the chance to go for an assistant pro job, but my father wouldn't let me and in those days you listened to your father.

"He said there was no money in being a professional golfer, that I should become a greenkeeper"



“He said there was no money in being a professional golfer, you are better getting a trade as a greenkeeper.”

So, in 1966 he became employed as an apprentice at Goswick, under the tutelage of his father.

“The biggest thing Dad taught me was to work hard,” he said. “He taught me everything, from the basics all the way down to laying bunkers. In those days it was all hand tools, so the profession has come a long way, and it’s for the best.”

John Thompson was renowned as a man who required perfection from his team, as George recalled: “If you took a machine out, it had to be washed and oiled and put back straight. Do not park a machine sideways, it has to be straight. He was a very particular man.

“I guess that rubbed off on me, because I was always having a go at my staff if they hadn’t parked a machine straight.”

In 1977 George took up the role he would fulfill for the rest of his working life.

He continued to play golf, winning county competitions and the club championship at

Goswick from 1979-81.

There were offers of employment elsewhere, such as roles in Austria and Germany, but a young family and a love for the landscape kept him from leaving Northumberland.

“I could never leave the place,” he said. “It was nice to be offered these jobs, but I could never see myself going. My heart was at Goswick and by then the club was getting bigger and there were a lot of projects I wanted to be part of.”

Among those projects was upgrading the course in a bid to secure status as regional qualifying venue for the Open, which Goswick achieved in 2008.

In 2000 George and his team began altering holes, shifting four greens and putting in tiger tees. The course needed extending and such was his knowledge of the work, the committee trusted George to do this in-house.

“Getting the Open qualifying was just tremendous,” said George. “Actually getting selected and seeing that first day, when the tournament was on, was just unbelievable.”

Regional opening qualifying was held at Goswick from 2008 until 2012 and will re-

turn in 2018, when George’s replacement, Ryan McCulloch, will oversee the course.

“When we have big competitions, that’s the best part of the job,” said George. “The week before and the buzz of getting everything ready, then the final mow first thing in the morning, we have all got our jobs and seeing the people play and everybody enjoying it. That’s the biggest thing I am going to miss.”



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There's more than one way of 'killing' a worm

Dr Terry Mabbett

What's being visited on UK greenkeepers by the EU in the name of safe and sustainable pesticide use reminds me of the old adage – 'There's more than one way of killing a cat than by choking it'.

But this article is about anelids – ringed or segmented worms – and the only chemical pesticide available to greenkeepers to ensure fast and effective control of surface casting earthworms, to ensure putting surfaces remain pristine and green and not smeared with unsightly and

'game changing' worm casts.

Chemical pesticides are already depleted in number but are still essential to control pests, diseases and weeds in professional sports turf. Banishment of long-standing pesticide products from the turf and amenity fraternity is craftily achieved by a multi-tier approach, comprising a deep chest of directives drawn up by standing committees who frankly ought to go into a dark room, lie down and think carefully about what they are doing.

Carbendazim is sold in delivery systems (formulations) that mix easily with water for spraying over the turf surface (Picture courtesy Syngenta)

If a pesticide falls through holes in the first directive net then there are others to sweep up the pesticide and remove it from the sector.

In 2016 we said goodbye to the last remaining chemical insecticides for real and realistic management of chafer grubs and leatherjackets. Chlorpyrifos sprays and imidacloprid granular formulations both went without warning.

Hopefully it will only be 'au revoir' for imidacloprid, but I foresee a coming year when badgers, foxes and birds run

riot, ripping up professional sports turf to get at the chafer grubs and leatherjackets already eating grass roots and killing turf.

So much for insect pests of turf, but the irony is if you had asked greenkeepers which pesticide was most at risk of withdrawal, most would probably have said carbendazim, which has been the subject of much speculation for many years. Once standard fare as a fungicide for both the control of Fusarium patch and the control of surface-casting earthworms, carbendazim lives on as a dedicated, effective wormicide. Regarding its effects on wider worm biodiversity, carbendazim acts at the turf surface and therefore should have minimal effect on earthworm species deeper in the soil profile.

Channel Tunnel Vision

It would be naïve to think standing committees do not have carbendazim in their sights, but rather they suffer from 'Channel Tunnel Vision'.

Dedicated UK turf professionals will have little or no knowledge about the use of turf pesticides in other sectors like agriculture, horticulture, forestry and public health, both here and elsewhere in the world. But pesticide professionals are left speechless by EU inconsistency and hypocri-

sy in banning pesticides from use in turf and amenity while accepting continued use on food crops.

Carbendazim is widely-used around the world on a whole range of food crops, from cereals to beans, strawberries to citrus and bananas to sugarcane. The EU doesn't ban the import of food crops treated with carbendazim, instead imposing a Maximum Residue Level (MRL). According to the European Food Information Council (EUFIC) on its website, the MRL for carbendazim in orange is set at 0.2 mg/kg or 200 parts per billion.

I am all for restrictions on pesticides for authentic safety reasons – I have witnessed enough pesticide poisoning as a tropical crops agronomist to know the dangers – but the authorities need to be consistent in what they target and do. In the unlikely event that carbendazim is withdrawn as a wormicide for use on turf, that would presumably be around the same time carbendazim became a pariah on any food crop grown in the EU or imported from non EU countries.

Wormicides are a must for fine turf

Let's return to why it is so important for greenkeepers to have at least one effective wormicide at their disposal. Out of 25 species of earthworm inhabiting UK soil only three are surface casters, but this trio of earthworms, including common earthworm,

strike at the very end game of golf by interfering with the smooth roll of the ball across the putting surface.

Ecologists will argue the case for earthworms in achieving high levels of soil fertility and aeration via feeding, burrowing and casting, but sports turf is not a natural substrate. It is a pampered primary product receiving specific and dedicated nutritional needs and aeration requirements from the greenkeeper or course manager at the right level and time.

Left to earthworms, these vital management requirements can easily be disrupted by mucous-laced casts sealing the surface to water percolation. And with a too healthy population of earthworms under turf, greenkeepers may well receive a type and magnitude of aeration they could well do without, courtesy of moles whose sole purpose is to tunnel, feed and make baby moles. And what is the main component of the mole's diet? Earthworms, of course.

Moles are not the only beasts stalking earthworms. Damage to turf from badgers is usually associated with infestations of chafer grubs and leatherjackets, with 'Brocks' busting the turf to get at a wholesome meal. However, it is easy to forget the main component of the badger diet is earthworms. And if these wild mammals are as dangerous as the



Above: The golf green is a pampered 'product' receiving dedicated nutrition and aeration provision (solid tine coring shown here) from the greenkeeper (Picture courtesy Syngenta)

government claims, in spreading the bacterium responsible for TB, do we really want badgers hanging around golf courses and contaminating greens?

Less well-appreciated is the surface-casting earthworm's contribution to turf weed establishment and growth. Contained in the casts will be weed seeds now sitting in a seed bed and germination site of soft and nutrient rich worm cast. Indeed surface worm casting may actually allow the establishment of weeds, like docks, not normally found in fine turf.

Other methods of killing worms

There are more ways of 'killing' a worm than spraying carbendazim, although the alternatives don't actually kill any worms but simply deter surface-casting earthworm activity. Control is achieved by a collection of well-worn products called 'soil conditioners' which create turf surface conditions that worms don't like.

First on the list is lawn sand. The abrasiveness of its mineral particles irritate and deter earthworms, while the ammonium sulphate and ferrous sulphate contained therein create sufficiently acidic conditions to inhibit surface activity, while providing the pH range preferred for good growth of fine turf grass species like bent and fescue – so everyone wins.

If you don't want to spread lawn sand across the green, then sprays of ferrous sulphate should do the trick while also greening up the grass. This 'hardens' the turf against low temperature and disease and controls moss growth. Products based on elemental sulphur or sulphur-containing compounds are another option. They create the same acidic soil conditions, which surface active earthworms don't like, while also improving soil structure, aeration and percolation by promoting soil particle flocculation.

Some observers say greenkeepers should not be using products labelled as soil conditioners specifically to manage age pests. But benefiting from

Left: Sole reason for moles on planet earth is to tunnel to find and feed on worms and to make baby moles. Molehills are the collateral consequences for golf courses.

Middle: Scrutiny of a surface deposited worm cast reveals the high concentration of sand typically found in the substrate of golf greens

Right: Surface worm casts will invariably aggravate weed infestation in fine turf



multi-faceted turf care products is nothing new. Some 10 years ago when carbendazim and thiophanate-methyl – an MBC precursor that degrades into carbendazim – were still approved and widely used as fungicide sprays to control Fusarium patch, it was taken as read that any potential problems with surface-active earthworms would be dealt with at the same time.

Turf pesticides on a cliff edge

Turf pesticides are on a cliff edge and would have fallen off already if it were not for the ingenuity and leading edge technologies used by multi-national chemical companies to discover, design, develop and market new and sophisticated actives that are nimble enough to stay one step ahead.

But even they have their limitations in technology and patience because the standing committee will place so many unreasonable data demands for re-registration that the manufacturing company simply withdraws the product from the marketplace and walks away to someplace else where the grass is greener. No disrespect to sports turf in the UK, but the industry is 'small change' in the greater scheme of things. These same pesticides and formulations can be used in hugely greater volumes with correspondingly bigger profits in agriculture, horticulture and public health worldwide.

When the crunch comes and a pesticide is withdrawn, the task of informing the sports turf industry is left to the UK government's Chemicals Regulation Directorate which delivers the message and takes the blame at the same time.

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Section Notes

Please email your notes to steve.castle@bigga.co.uk by the 10th of the month

All the latest news from your Section, in your notes pages...



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CENTRAL

The temperatures are rising slightly and things are starting to move, while Augusta Syndrome has been and gone.

The Spring Outing is almost upon us, so if you have not booked you still have time. This year we are at Aberdour GC on 27 April.

The first round of matches have started in this year's Pairs Competition. We are still in the midst of updating the Central Section area on the Scottish website, but are hoping to get the results up when we have received them.

On the educational front, Paul Miller gave a talk on 'Best Fit for the Environment' covering. This included grass selection for different areas of the world, soil management, pesticide usages, environment sensitivity and low inputs for turf management. It was another good turnout from our section.

Moves afoot in the last few months:

Chris Brown, Head of Greens, to Ternes GC in Belgium from Gleneagles

Stuart Greenshields has left Gleneagles to become a train driver

Ryan Winton, to Muckhart from Auchterarder

Scott Logan, to Gleneagles from Auchterarder

Martin Turna, deputy head greenkeeper, to Fraserburgh from St Andrews

Mike Riddell has left St Andrews to become a fireman

Graeme Davidson, to St Andrews from Gleneagles

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND

By the time you read this, the Masters will have been and gone and now we are truly into the golf season, so good luck to everyone and I hope you have a successful season.

Welcome to Adam Henderson, who has joined the team at Largs from Gourock GC, and to Jack Prdie who has returned for the summer season.

Iain Barr is the self-proclaimed 'hacker' of his team, with his 'poor' handicap of 10. If only we were all that rubbish. Adam and Jack play off an impressive five, George Morrison six and the remainder of the team, Iain MacDonald and Rory Acheson, play off an incredible one. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming spring outing.

Thank you to Derek Wilson for hosting the recent board meeting. Please look out for the meeting minutes on Facebook and Twitter.

The board is looking for a couple of volunteer administrators for the section's Twitter and Facebook account. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Event: Spring Golf Outing 10 May at Loudoun Gowf Club

EAST

As many of you may know, there are changes on the go at Berwick Upon Tweed GC, Goswick. Course Manager George Thompson retires on 6 April after exactly 50 years of service. George has worked his whole career at Goswick, was practically born in the clubhouse, lived there for a number of years and took over as head man from his father. He passes the torch to Ryan McCulloch, who started at Goswick as an apprentice to George. He also started on 6 April, but 32 years later.

Good luck and best wishes Ryan and enjoy your retirement George, it's well earned.

Alan Campbell has left Edinburgh Leisure and is moving to Dundas Parks GC.

We look forward to hearing more from Kyle Cruickshank and his week at the Jacobson FTMI.

Comgratulations to Jamie Martin and Stuart Ferguson on being picked for the BIGGA Support Team at The Open at Royal Troon this year.

Murrayfield GC First Assistant Graeme Davidson has been selected for the TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Initiative, sponsored by John Deere, and will be keeping us up to date with his blog and Twitter feed. Blog - www.playgreenersvolunteering2016.blogspot.com. Twitter - @kiwigreen-

keeper

Anyone wishing to have news added or who would like to write a short topic of interest for GI, please get in touch.

There is a demonstration day being hosted by Charterhouse, by kind permission of Kings Acre GC on 4 May. This event will feature products from Charterhouse, Hugh King Sands, Thomas Sherriff Groundcare and Advanced Turf Technology. There are also education events from Rigby Taylor and STRI, among others.

The spring outing is being held on 21 April at Craigielaw GC. Let's hope the weather is as good as it was for our spring meeting last year. Entry forms will be with you soon. Speaking of weather, it has looked promising as I write this, but I remember what little snow we had last year came in late March, early April, so fingers crossed.

NORTH

As I am sitting here writing this article, It has been the most glorious spring day and like you I am hoping this is the start of a good settled period of weather. The week just past, I think we had a taste of every season - from snow and frost to glorious sunshine - which does make planning executing jobs very difficult.

Just a quick reminder to everyone who has got their 200 club tickets. They must be played before our spring outing and if you have not paid when the first draw is made, you will not receive a prize if your number is drawn.

At Nairn Dunbar GC there is a change at the helm. Richard Johnstone is taking over from the retiring Derek Roy. Derek has worked at Nairn Dunbar for 49 years, so we all wish him well in his retirement. We also wish Richard the very best for the future.

I would ask all members with any news that will interest our members in the north, please pass it on and I can add it to our article.

We are planning to hold an irrigation workshop in May. The date has yet to be confirmed, as does the venue. This will be a very beneficial workshop, where there will be the chance for some practical experience and a talk from an irrigation engineer. If you are interested, contact alistermatheson@yahoo.co.uk. A flier with an exact date and location will be sent out soon.

NORTHERN IRELAND

This month Graeme Beatt, Course Manager at Royal Portrush GC, told us about his trip to the Golf Industry Show in San Diego as part of this year's Bernhards delegation.

He said: "The GIS has been something that I was always keen to experience. Having seen the groups of delegates over the years in Greenkeeper International and reading about their experiences made the trip even more appealing. We attended GIS, lectures, golf course tours with superintendents and even managed to squeeze in a round of golf. The delegates were from various types of clubs - some links and some inland. We all got on tremendously well and we are already planning the reunion later this year. I would encourage anyone to apply as, regardless of position held or the golf club you work for, if you are an aspiring greenkeeper then it is an experience which will stay with you forever."

Look out for news later this year on how to apply for BIGGA/Bernhards GIS 2017 in Orlando, Florida, USA.

The section would like to congratulate Phillip Snellin, Greenkeeper at Donaghadee GC, and Andrew Dalton, Greenkeeper at Allen Park GC, for being on the Open Support Team at Royal Troon this year.

Pictures: Bunker construction and overseeding has been taking place at Royal Portrush



Northern

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...



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NORTH EAST

Alnwick GC head greenkeeper Stuart Tait has moved on to pastures new and wishes to pass on his thanks to the section who have made him very welcome in the short time he spent in the North East. Special thanks go to Jack Friar, Percywood GC, and Stuart Imeson, Dunstanburgh Castle GC, who were very helpful to him and to Alnwick GC. We all wish him well in his new role.

Simon Oliver has taken up the position of Deputy Northern Region Representative within BIGGA.

David Simpson is this month celebrating 25 years at Tyneside GC.

Congratulations to Brian and the team at Close House for winning the 59 Club Silver Flag award for a Members Club. It's a great recognition of the standards within our area.

Please be aware that 'Burglar Bill' seems to be doing the rounds, so make sure sheds and equipment are all secure after a spate of break-ins within the region.

Any members who have news they would like to see in this section, contact me on 07717455409 or the North East Section phone on 07860373627.

The spring meeting will be held on the Goswick Links on Wednesday 20 April, with the first tee at 10am. I'm sure this event will be popular, given the location, so make sure you book either with myself or David Thomson, who's details can be found in the North East Section Facebook page.

The North East and Cleveland sections are arranging a fun paintball day this month. Continue to check social

media for details or get in touch to show your interest.

NORTH WEST

As I write this we have had three days of dry weather and the smell of spring is in the air.

Thefts from golf courses have continued in the past month. Please stay alert of suspicious persons and vehicles and if possible, keep access secure and uninviting to possible thieves. Communicate anything suspicious with staff within the clubhouse, members and other local courses.

We have a lot of movers this month, so please join me in congratulating our hard-working members:

Kris Hobson, course manager, is moving to Holyhead GC from Tytherington GC

Phil Worth, course manager, is moving to Prestbury GC from Tytherington GC

Tim Johnson, course manager, is moving to Penn GC from Wimslow GC

Chris Ainsworth, head greenkeeper, is moving to Breighmet GC from Chorley GC

Chris Gibson is leaving Dunham Forest to join his family business. He will be replaced by Dave Liappiatt.

Mike Goodhind, head greenkeeper, is leaving Stockport GC after many years of loyal service.

Tom Weston, deputy head greenkeeper, is moving to Sale GC from Marple GC. Jack Tweed will take on his role.

Rob Sinker, head greenkeeper, is moving to Asht-on-in-Makerfield GC from Altrincham GC

Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved in hosting, organizing and attending the chainsaw course at Stockport GC, the IOSH Tree Inspection course at Ringway GC and Lymm GC and the Presentation Workshop at Warrington GC.

Thank you to Campey Turfcare Team for hosting the machinery maintenance day at their headquarters. It was great to see so many machines and how they are set up and repaired.

As ever, keep updated by tuning in to our Twitter and Facebook pages.

The Spring Tournament will be at High Legh Park GC on 21 April. Bacon roll and coffee from 9.30am, first tee 11.12am, two-course meal 4.30pm. Nearest the pin and longest drive. Contact Dave Weir on 07774 999230 or email d.weir@rigbytaylor.com

CLEVELAND

Just as we were all starting to dry out and we were able to get the big mowers out and start to put some shape back into the old lady. I was even daring to think about trying to program in some early renovations on the greens, then quick as a flash the weather turns and gives me a little reminder that spring wasn't quite here. At this point I recall the old saying of 'Never cast a clowt 'til May's out'. Oh how true.

Baz and Allie's annual quiz was held at Teesside GC on Wednesday 9 March. We had another decent turn out with 25 players. I'd like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you from the section to Barry and Allie Walker for putting so much effort organising and compiling the questions and making the night so enjoyable.

Results of the quiz are: 1st. St Vitus, 101 points; 2nd, The Hunts, 97 points; 3rd Deaf aids, 93 points.

I am reliably informed that this was Ian Holloran's first ever quiz win - I hope you enjoyed your Easter egg.

Food on the night was sponsored by Brendan Brown of Northern Lubricants.

A raffle was held on the night in aid of the Green Keepers Benevolent fund and £50 was raised.

The awards just keep coming to the Cleveland Section.

This time it's the turn of Rockcliffe Hall GC for winning the 59 Club Silver Flag Award Golf Resorts. Well done to David and his team.

Thank you to David Hornby, Wynyard GC and Tyneside GC for the chainsaw courses that have been organised over the winter period.

Finally, congratulations to Phillip Graham and Derek Thompson, who have been selected to be part of the Open Support Team at Troon in July.

NORTHERN

I hope everyone is recovering from the storms and hopefully now we will be settling into some normal Spring weather. Twenty degrees would be nice, with some nice warm sunshine.

The golfing season will soon be upon us, with most clubs having their Captain's Drive-ins in the coming weeks. Soon to be followed by The Masters in Augusta, the pressure continues on our greenkeepers as local golf course standards must match Augusta.

I have some news, as I am taking up a new challenge as course manager at West Bradford GC.

Thank you to all the Northern Section sponsors

Keep an eye on the Northern Section Facebook page for our Spring Golf Day and other news items.

SHEFFIELD

Following the sad news regarding Stephen Kateley of BFS, the spraying seminar planned for 5 April has been postponed until October. Check out various media points for news of this and other educational opportunities.

This month saw Mick Gillet leave the greenkeeping industry. He worked at Hallamshire GC for 13 years and I worked with him for three. All of us at Hallamshire wish him all the best.

This will be the last section news for myself as I will be leaving Hallamshire GC too. I will be joining the team at Moor Allerton GC. Thank you to everyone at Hallamshire and in the Sheffield section.

A big thank you to Peter Fell at Aitkens for sorting out our fixture cards.

There is not long now until our first golf day of 2016. The event will be held at Wath GC. Tee off will be at 1.30pm. Price is £15 for greenkeepers and £20 for trade members. We will soon have some fixture cards and we aim to get as many out to you all as soon as possible.

NORTH WALES

Education Day at Coleg Cambria, Deeside, was well-attended. The schedule was packed and the addition of the machinery demo by Ian Campbell and Jason Lord from Campey Turfcare added a different dimension from the previous year's line up. So a big thank you needs to go to Rhys Butler, Royal St David's GC, for organising the event.

The dates for the outstanding events have been confirmed as follows:

Cricket match at Ashley CC on Sunday 12 June. Contact Nick Gray on 07973 815113 if you're interested. For the golf match against South Wales at Borth and Ynyslas GC on Friday 23 September, contact Rhys Butler on 07793 848287.

There's still time to register your interest in the Golf Knockout Competition. It's a great way to meet other members of the section you wouldn't normally come across, play golf at different courses, and with the final being at Royal Liverpool GC it's not one to miss out on. For more details contact John Mooney on 07836 794804.

Finally, the text service has taken longer than expected

to get up and running, but it will be sorted by the time you read this.

Thank you to our sponsors and patrons for the continued support: Symbio, Rigby Taylor, MG Turfcare, North Staffs Irrigation, Germinal, Bathgate, Campey Turfcare Systems, Sheriff Amenity, ICL, Turner Groundscare, David Williams Golf Design, Cheshire Turf Machinery, Farmura and Allturf.

Thursday 28 April, Spring Golf Competition at Maesdu (Llandudno) GC

Sunday 12 June, North West vs North Wales cricket match at Ashley GC

Thursday 8 September, Autumn golf Competition at Leasowe GC







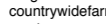

Friday 23 September, North Wales vs South Wales at Borth and Ynyslas GC

Thursday 24 November, Winter Golf Competition & AGM at Wrexham GC



South West & South Wales

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

			
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SOUTH WEST

Everyone should have their South West fixture cards for the year ahead. Get in touch if you have not received one.

We are always looking for news and happenings from our members across the section. If you have something you would like to tell everyone about, drop me an email and we will make sure the greenkeeping world hears about it.

Our section training officer Tim Needham is compiling a list of training providers. If you require advice or assistance in locating a specialist provider, please get in touch.

Our first golf event is the annual team match against South Wales and Golf Club secretaries on 29 June. Get in touch with Chris Sealey for details and team.

2016 will see south west Turf Clubs continue and we have a couple of afternoon events in the pipeline. If there are any topics that are of particular interest or you would like to host a meet, get in touch.

Many thanks to our 2016 patrons for their support: Ecosolve, SGI, TH White, Greensman, Irritech, Headland Amenity, Countrywide, Famura and H Curtis & Sons.

Support from the south west patrons allows us to organise and run section events that offer our section members the opportunity to access affordable training, join discussion groups, meet fellow greenkeepers and attend valuable networking opportunities within the greenkeeping community.

SOUTH COAST

The first Turf Club of 2016 took place at Tottenham Hotspur FC training facility on 1st March. This event, with travel and food provided at no cost to the members who attended, offered a privileged opportunity to see one of the nation's leading training facilities. See the full report in the Newsdesk section of the magazine.

Congratulations go to our section members who have been selected for this year's Open Support Team. See page 20 for details. It is great to see the section being

represented at such a prestigious event and we would like to wish everyone the bet of luck with this amazing opportunity.

Many thanks go to Andy Clark for stepping in and covering my section responsibilities during my absence and I think you'll agree he did a fantastic job.

The date for the Turf Club at Roffey Bros facility and quarry that was published in earlier publications has been revised until later this year. Keep a look out in this section of the magazine and your email inbox for further details.

DEVON & CORNWALL

Since last month, the good old British weather has gone from one extreme to another, with lovely dry easterly winds. Yet another challenge for us all.

Thirty of us recently enjoyed a trip to London, organised by Colin Webber.

We visited the very impressive Hankley Common, where we were shown around by Gareth Roberts. Gareth explained some of the continual projects that his team undertake to keep the course in wonderful condition.

From there we went to the equally impressive setting of the Royal Automobile Club and were shown around by Lee Strutt. Lee told us about the huge projects the club are undertaking to try and make the club a top 100 course in the near future. We then had an overnight stay in Wimbledon for preparation for the next day. We were welcomed to the All England lawn tennis club by head groundsman Neil Stubble. He showed us around this historic site and gave us all some interesting information about the pure scale of what he deals with on a daily basis.

Our next event is at East Devon GC on 14 April, where the golfers will be playing for the section championship, where the winner will go on to the national finals. The education talk on the day will be given by Geoff Fenn of Countrywide.

On the move in the area is Jon Day. He is leaving his role at Lanhydrock to join Scott and his team at St Enodoc. Everyone wishes on well in his new role.

SOUTH WALES

What an awful three months or so we have had with the weather conditions. With golf arranged on Tuesday 23 February at Southerndown GC, around 16 players entered our spring tournament.

We could not have asked for a better day, the course is in excellent condition with good food after the golf. Best overall score for the day with 41 points was James Rees.

Our spring seminar was held on Wednesday 2 March at the Principality Stadium. Our first guest speaker was Edward Ainsworth with his bees. I'm sure we all have a better understanding and respect for them.

Second on the floor was Simon Connah from St Andrews Trust, explaining about the Open Championship 2015, which had some unbelievable weather conditions during the tournament.

If you have ever wondered what it's like to work at a major tournament or in a different country then it's best to speak to our next speaker Graham Roberts of Camberley Heath GC. He gave a great insight into the world of volunteering.

With Royal Portrush hosting the British Open in July 2019, Graeme Beatts gave an interesting talk in regards to the change made by both courses.

After the break, the stadium's Deputy Head Groundsman Craig Campbell gave us an insight into the pitch construction and tour of the stadium. It was a very informative day had by all who attended.

AREA & NAME	POSITION	GOLF CLUB
Scotland And Northern Ireland		
Massimo Castelvechi	Student	SRUC (Elmwood)
Midland		
Gareth Risbridger	Greenkeeper	Maidenhead
Ben Watts	Assistant greenkeeper	Shirehampton
Northern		
Marcus Cordingley	Deputy head greenkeeper	Bradley Park
Martin Shaw	Greenkeeper	Bradley Park
Andrew Tomlinson	Greenkeeper	Ganton
Darren Watt	Greenkeeper	St Annes Old Links
Christopher Wood	Head greenkeeper	Garesfield
Reece Carson	Assistant greenkeeper	Blackpool North Shore
Luke Oakes	Assistant greenkeeper	Dore & Totley
Jordan Davenport	Assistant greenkeeper	Grange-over-Sands
Matthew Turnbull	Assistant greenkeeper	Malton & Norton
South West and South Wales		
Ewan Westwater	Greenkeeper	Morlais Castle
Sam Dunn	Greenkeeper	Stover
Callum Wright	Assistant greenkeeper	Shanklin & Sandown
Nicholas Gardener	Assistant greenkeeper	Broadway
South East		
Jamie Melham	First assistant	Nizels
Andrea Carella	Greenkeeper	Colne Valley
Bradley Foster	Greenkeeper	Royal Wimbledon
Reece Grover	Greenkeeper	Stowmarket
Harry Dyerson	Assistant greenkeeper	Ealing
Jack Thomson	Assistant greenkeeper	Rowlands
Oliver Crompton	Assistant greenkeeper	Ealing
International		
Saren Morgan	International member	Askersunds Golfklubb
Alan Catterson	Student	Colaiste Stiofain Naofa
Kevin Catterson	Student	Colaiste Stiofain Naofa
Byrne Thomas	Student	Colaiste Stiofain Naofa
Andrew Keane	Student	SRUC (Elmwood)



Midland

Contact your Section correspondent with news, events or anything else for Around the green...

				
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MIDLAND

What a busy month we had, with a great day at Millennium Stadium with our friends from Headland. There were very interesting talks from Mark Hunt with us all getting our heads around GDDs. There was also a great talk on the Millennium Stadium pitch build from Deputy Head Groundsman Craig Campbell. Thanks to Adrian Masters and Andy Lane for sponsoring the day.

A big shout out must go to the guys who have really suffered this last month, with the heavy rainfall. To be fair, everyone who has suffered this last winter and who are all under pressure now to produce great surfaces, you are all doing a great job and deserve a massive pat on the back.

No weddings or births this month, and the job merry-go-round seems to have slowed, although good luck to Sam Evans, course manager at Fullwell GC and Jack Simms at Oakland GC.

Thank you to Sheriff Amenity for sponsoring April in the calen-



Millennium Stadium

dar. Contact Nigel Tyler on 07989 548058.

Thanks also to Adrian Masters and Andy Lane of Headland for sponsoring the Millennium Stadium trip.

Spring Tournament at The Worcestershire GC. Thursday 12 May, start at 1.30pm, cost £25, closing date 2 May, prize sponsor Campey Turf Care Systems, format 18-hole Stableford

Team event and AGM at Patsull GC. Wednesday 14 September, start at 12noon, cost £25, closing date 5 September, prize sponsor Working Turf, format 18-hole Stableford

Christmas Tournament at Redditch GC. Wednesday 7 December, start at 10am, cost £27, closing date 23 November, prize sponsor Banks Amenity, pairs for partners to be drawn on the day

EAST OF ENGLAND

We had a fantastic turnout of 37 delegates for the Sectional Education Seminar which was held at Woodhall Spa GC on Thursday 3 March. The weather was kind and we had a short course walk in the afternoon with BIGGA sustainability executive James Hutchinson, who demonstrated his enthusiasm for all things ecology, which was infectious. Our thanks go to all of the speakers and to Woodhall Spa as the host venue. Remember to obtain the CPD code for this event to claim your credits if you have not already done so.

Our first golf day is to be held at Louth GC in May. Please see Facebook page for details or get in contact with Bruce Hicks.

The fixture booklet will soon be available and all section events will be posted on the Facebook page with plenty of notice.

EAST MIDLANDS

Nigel Colley will be stepping down as chairman, with his replacement to be duly elected.


- Spring – Radcliffe on Trent, 28 April
- Summer – Matlock, 27 July
- Par 3 – Beedles Lake, 24 August
- AGM/Autumn – Stanton on the Wolds, 27 October
- Christmas – tbc



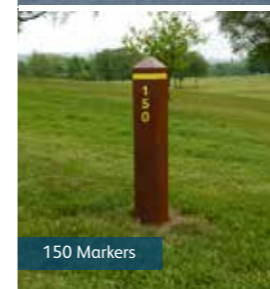
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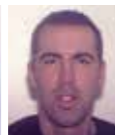
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SURREY

The 2016 South East Golf Day was held at Walton Heath this month, where Jim Croxton welcomed the 90 strong entrants to the club. Iain Macleod also gave a short speech as the incoming President of BIGGA. Congratulations were given to Michael Mann and his team, who produced a great course in tough conditions, with the greens giving an excellent roll for this time of year.

The Nearest the Pin was won by David Langheim and the Longest Drive by Michael Sharp, with the Trade Prize won by Ryan Hyder. Mark Henderson and Graham Shillings won the Ian McMillan trophy with a total of 76 points. Tony Thacker won the 11+ Handicap and Mark Henderson the 0-10 Handicap. The Scratch Event was won by Jason Hunt, who just pipped Ron Christie to be champion by a shot. I expect lots of bunker raking for Jason the next day.

Special mention should be made to Sherriff for providing

wonderful burgers and pastries at the halfway hut – they were very much appreciated by our group. Finally, thanks to Darren Burton, Tracie Madison and Andy Turbin, who I had the fortune to play with.

KENT

Sometimes we get lucky in life, and the Kent section as a whole had one eternally glorious moment yesterday when we were afforded the opportunity to play Royal Cinque Ports GC. Set in God's own stretch of golfing heaven, the course sits proudly among its illustrious neighbours. Of course, Links golf is notorious for the sort of weather that makes any semblance of the glorious game impossible. But, again, Kent section got lucky. After a week of frosts, snow, hail and storms, the sun shone down on us as we took to the fairways of Royal Cinque Ports. Yes, 46 of us were treated to a golf day to remember by one of the greatest clubs we have ever been fortunate enough to play.

The setting may have been created by God's fair hand, but the course is managed superbly by James Bledge and his greenkeeping team. The eye for detail and constant striving for perfection ensured that although managed, the course retains a totally natural feel. Quite simply, there wasn't a blade of grass out of place – and I did go looking in some places, believe me.

So it was the perfect scenario, with a great course, great company and great weather complemented by John Bignell of Ernest Doe & Sons who provided on course refreshments for our group. I guess I was just over-awed or something on the day because my golf simply wasn't up to the challenge. But plenty of others scored well. Results were: 1st, Duncan Kelson, 37 points; 2nd, Lee Austin, 36 points; 3rd, Darren Burdis, 36 points.

Thank you to Tacit for sponsoring some of the prizes, other trade members for their continued support, everyone who played this great venue and all the staff at Royal Cinque Ports GC for memories to cherish.

Many thanks to Anthony Stockwell and Hadlow College for organizing and hosting two recent seminars. Both were very well attended and extremely informative.

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Greenkeepers Training Committee

This month GTC Education Director David Golding explains why golf club employers benefit from 'buying into' staff development and apprenticeships.

Across Britain there are changes afoot as apprenticeships come up for review and, starting in England, much has been written about the reforms, both to the standards and funding changes.

One very important fact is industries have been put in the driving seat and greenkeeping has been able to influence the reforms and policy changes along the way.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee is a unique body within golf as it brings BIGGA and the three governing bodies for golf in Britain around the same table. The GTC represents close to 2,500 golf club employers and greenkeepers and was the first organisation from the land based sector to gain Government approval to write its own sets of standards for the various job roles in greenkeeping and golf course management.

No more having to operate within third party organisations, the GTC just has to ensure employers and greenkeepers agree on the content of each new apprenticeship standard.

While Government guidance on apprenticeship reform only applies to England, it is clear the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments are watching how the reforms operate before deciding whether to adopt the same principles.

Industries can take these reforms and control all levels of the programme, from developing the content of the standards, structure qualifications and documentation to overseeing the quality of the education, training and assessments delivered through a network of approved training providers.

Many of today's top course managers started life 'on the tools' as apprentices and it is important we work in partnership with key organisations that help design, deliver and manage all future apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships.

The greenkeeping sector has an excellent record for forming partnerships when qualifications have been developed and reviewed. Partnerships have been built with City & Guilds, Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Home Unions, BIGGA, GTC and the network of land-based colleges who have been entrusted with delivering apprenticeships and both work-based and academic qualifications.

So what will change and how will

the changes improve what is already available today?

The current apprenticeship frameworks for England, Wales and Northern Ireland include the City & Guilds work-based diplomas. These qualifications were formally the NVQ's, where the perception was that everyone passed the course. It has been contentious that those who do pass all receive the same certificate and are deemed to be equally competent. This is as true with the Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ's), which will remain, at least until the next review.

However, this will change as the grading of learners will be introduced by a new series of end point assessments. We believe both employers and learners will welcome 'pass', 'fail', 'merit' and 'distinction' grades.

When the Government first introduced the apprenticeship reforms, there was an obsession with the new '1-day' set of assessments, which it was hoped would produce world-class skilled workforces. Our sector isn't new to apprenticeships and we lobbied to ensure the new apprenticeship should include a quality programme of education and training, the end point assessments and a role for approved Centres/Training Providers.

I am pleased to say our argument was listened to and many other industries supported our defence of having a minimum term for an apprenticeship. The GTC represents many smaller golf clubs and the majority will all require support from a training provider to ensure their learners make progress. The level of support is for the employer to negotiate with providers.

The GTC, in partnership with City & Guilds, has developed a working group to design the end point graded assessments. When introduced at the end of a programme of education, training and on-the-job assessments this will add quality and rigour to the apprenticeship and qualification.

The programme of learning, leading up to the new end point assessments, will be strengthened as all City & Guilds/GTC-approved centres will have to use the GTC Training Manual to record the learner's progress. The manual, together with evidence, will form 20% of the end point assessments and will be graded along with

a knowledge test, practical assessments and a professional discussion with an independent assessor.

Employers and their course manager or head greenkeeper have crucial roles to play in apprenticeship programmes and there is much to consider, from recruiting a suitable person to choosing an approved centre to help deliver education and training. The ranges of skills in each level of apprenticeship are designed to give employers multi-skilled workers who add great benefits to the business. So it is important from the outset to discuss who will deliver which part of the programme to ensure the learner progresses and the golf course benefits from their new skills and knowledge.

The UK's various governments and Parliaments are all still allocating funding to apprenticeships and, while the funding reforms in England require the employer to 'put in' £1 for the Government's contribution of £2, there are generous incentives. For recruiting a 16-18 year old they will receive £1,800, a golf club with less than 50 employees will receive £900 and another £900 upon completion of their training.

To manage the funding, it will be interesting to see how the approved centres look to negotiate costs and support to individual employers. Giving employers choice is another aim of the Government and we look forward to seeing how the centres approach the new scheme.

The question of who will become the independent assessors is still to be answered. But if I ask, who are the best people to understand and judge whether a trainee greenkeeper is competent or not, would give a strong suggestion as to who I hope will become the final quality assurance 'judges'. Watch this space.

The Advanced Golf Greenkeeper (Level 3) and Golf Course Manager (Level 5+) standards have been approved but the new programmes of education, training and graded end point assessments will be determined by the technical working group in partnership with the assessments and awarding organisations over the next few months.

These are exciting times for greenkeepers and employers who see the benefits of investing in staff development.



The GTC is funded by:



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Recruitment

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Send CV's to: Steve Harding Head Greenkeeper, Sunbury Golf Centre, Charlton Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex, TW17 8QA
Or email sunbury-greens@crowm-golf.co.uk

Hallamshire Golf Club

Assistant Greenkeeper

A fantastic opportunity has arisen for an enthusiastic person to join our highly motivated team of Greenkeepers. The candidate would preferably have the following skills;

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- Spraying, First Aid and Chainsaw qualifications preferable but not essential

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Dunbar Golf Club



Course Manager

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- Be able to prepare, implement and monitor budgets
- Excellent communications skills including the use of social media
- Excellent I.T. skills

The successful candidate will lead a team of 7 staff and have access to excellent greenkeeping equipment which is consistently updated through regular investment.

The Club has development plans for a new clubhouse, new greenkeeping complex, 9 hole golf course, driving range and short game practice area, into which the Course Manager will have a significant input.

Applicants should apply in writing or email, enclosing a full CV, no later than Friday the 15th April 2016 to:

office@dunbargolfclub.com

OR

The Secretary, Dunbar Golf Club,
East Links, Dunbar, East Lothian EH42 1LL

Assistant Green-keeper

A fantastic opportunity has arisen to join the green keeping team at Easingwold Golf Club. We are looking for an experienced Assistant Green-keeper to help maintain our 18 hole parkland/heathland course. This private members' club, in rural Yorkshire, is highly regarded by many.

This is an excellent opportunity for the right candidate who can apply their skills to all aspects of course maintenance to ensure that our course is impeccably maintained and appropriately prepared for both daily and competition play.

We are looking for the following attributes:

- NVQ level 2 or equivalent;
- Keen attention to detail with the ability to produce a high standard of work;
- High level of competence with modern green-keeping machinery;
- Ability to work as part of a team, or alone, self-motivated;
- Clear and relevant understanding of health and safety requirements;
- Spraying and chainsaw certificates advantageous but not essential ;
- Flexible approach to work, working hours and weekend duties;
- Ideally a golfer or good knowledge and understanding of the game of golf;

In return we will provide opportunities for ongoing training, staff uniform, BIGGA membership and access to company pension scheme after qualifying period. (Please note that relocation expenses do not apply to this position.)

Please apply in writing or by email with full CV no later than 30th April, 2016 to: enquiries@easingwoldgolfclub.co.uk

The Secretary, Easingwold Golf club, Stillington Road, Easingwold, YO61 3ET

AREA SALES MANAGER



With over 30 years experience in the Fine Turf Industry we are currently looking to hear from experienced Area Sales Managers who are interested in joining a leading Sports Turf Contractor supplying turf care and amenity products throughout the North East.

This is a challenging and exciting opportunity in which you will be expected to develop and maintain business in our trading area by offering sales support and technical advice to both new and existing customers.

The successful applicant will be self motivated, able to work on their own initiative, demonstrate commercial awareness and have a flexible approach needed to be successful in our seasonal industry.

Knowledge of the fine turf industry would be advantageous as preference will be given to those with experience. However, we are will to provide professional support leading to the industry recognized BASIS qualification for the right individual.

The role offers an excellent package including, company car, contributory pension scheme as well as 28 days holiday plus Bank Holidays per year.

To apply please forward your CV, together with a covering letter to sales@tsl-ne.co.uk or alternatively contact Allan Morton on 07939 200 744 for more information.

Advertise your recruitment here ... and online

for one month
at www.bigga.co.uk/careers
from £595 +vat for an 1/8 advert
Contact Jill Rodham on
01347 833812

Links Manager - Aberdovey Golf Club, Gwynedd

Aberdovey GC seeks a Links Manager

Aberdovey Golf Club is a classic links situated on the Dyfi estuary, and is one of Wales' premier golfing tests. Golf has been played over the links since 1892 and the layout boasts design influences from Herbert Fowler, Harry Colt and James Braid. The links was a great favourite of writer and historian Bernard Darwin and the course is inextricably linked with the development of golf in Wales. It is voted regularly as one of the top three venues in the country.

A restructuring of the staff means the club is now seeking to recruit a dynamic individual who has the drive and ambition to further improve Aberdovey's sustainable excellence and deliver the best possible links experience for the club's members and their guests. The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate high levels of management skills, communication and leadership and will have the practical knowledge and expertise to motivate a greenkeeping team in a hands on role. Relevant greenkeeping qualifications to a minimum of NVQ 3 are required for this role together with relevant spaying qualifications (PA1, PA2, PA6), a working knowledge of machinery, irrigation systems and up to date knowledge of Health and Safety legislation. Links experience is preferred although not essential for application.

Interested applicants should apply in writing enclosing a full CV and covering letter with salary expectations to: gareth@aberdoveygolf.co.uk
Mr Gareth Pritchard, Manager, Aberdovey Golf Club, Aberdovey, Gwynedd, LL35 0RT
Closing Date: 29th April 2016

Turf & Amenity Technical Area Sales Manager South East England

About you

Due to the continued growth of our business, we are looking for a high-calibre individual to join our expanding turf and amenity team in this exciting role covering the South of England, primarily Essex, London, Kent, Sussex, (however specific counties are flexible and can be agreed depending on the candidates experience and location).

With exemplary technical and sales skills and a proven background within our industry, the ideal candidate will relish the opportunity to deliver first-class technical and sales support to end-users and distributors of our range of fertilizers, plant protection products and grass seeds. You will be highly-motivated and able to hit the ground running, developing the customer base in your area and driving new initiatives. You will also be IT literate and have excellent interpersonal skills, engaging confidently and professionally with people in a range of environments. Detailed knowledge of turf management practices and an industry-recognised qualification, such as BASIS/ FACTS and/or a HND/BSc in a relevant discipline, is preferable, as is a comprehensive understanding of the marketplace in your designated area. There will be a requirement for flexible working and spending time away from home on occasion.

About us

You will know our brands, but you might not realise the strength of the business behind them. ICL is part of the ICL Group that employs more than 12,000 people globally. We are world-leaders in the ornamental horticulture, turf and amenity, and specialty agricultural sectors. Our market-leading brands - including Sierrablend, Greenmaster, SierraformGT and Sportsmaster are used and trusted by turf professionals around the world. Our team is passionate about optimising plant and turf performance. We are a customer-orientated organisation and take great pride in the integrity and precision of our world-class product portfolios, and our commitment to research and development has resulted in the development of unique technologies which have transformed the way turf is managed.

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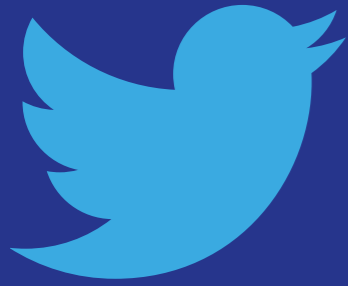
We offer a substantial benefits package including:

- Competitive salary plus bonus
- Company car
- 26 days annual leave
- Contributory pension scheme
- Subsidised private medical and dental insurance
- Excellent development and career opportunities that come with being part of a global business

To apply, please send a résumé and application letter to: Emma Marsay, HR Shared Services - Europe, ICL, Boulby Mine, Loftus, Saltburn, Cleveland, TS13 4UZ or email the same to emma.marsay@icl-group.com

Closing date: 30th April 2016





@BIGGALtd

The best Tweets and pics from the industry – don't forget to tag @BIGGALtd to give yourself a chance of being featured!

Our favourite tweets this month...

@RobSandilands

Rainbows over the greenstaff here @FormbyLadiesGC preparing for Saturday's Leveret Trophy



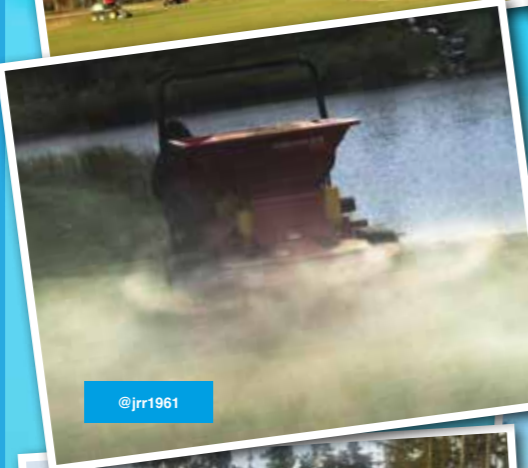
@RobSandilands



@PaisleyPro

@PaisleyPro

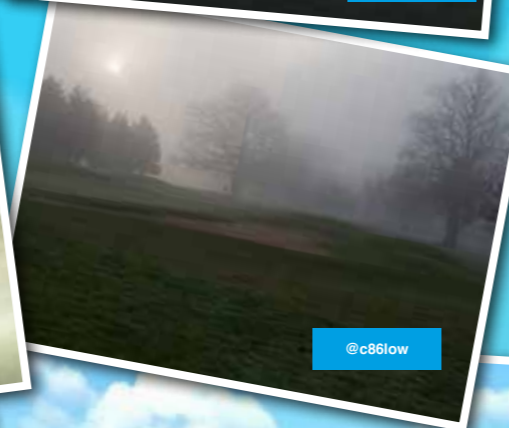
Saint Andrews, Scotland 7am morning run around the Home of Golf. #AuldGreyTown #StAndrews #Heaven



@jrr1961

@jrr1961

City of London, London As you top dress your greens and tweet your pictures remember #BIGGA #GCMA



@c86low

@c86low

@BIGGAMidlands @BIGGALtd foggy morning at @maxstokepark_gc #greenkeeping #bigga #midlands #Golf #sam-sungs7edge



@Tibbsylad

@Tibbsylad

Few stripes appearing @BentonHallgolf must be nearly summer #golf #greenkeeping #essex #bigga



@SamSweetzer

@ckgordon2002

First hand cut today since moving onto pump therapy, TBR 20% 5.1mmol/L once finished! #chuffed #ACCU-CHEK#bigga



@GarethWatkin

@SamSweetzer

Have a lovely easter everyone! #greenkeeper

@GarethWatkin

@Adi14 the tee extension on the 1st tee lakes @Greetham-Valley is absolutely gorgeous so lush #turf #greenkeeper

@CMnairndunbar

All checked into @UffordParkHotel ready for @BIGGALtd Ransomes Jacobsen FTMI 2016 Tomorrow!!



@CMnairndunbar

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