



GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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BENEATH THE SURFACE OF AERATION

How one of greenkeeping's most
common practices is also one of its
most complex

Featured Inside

Launching BIGGA National | FTMI 2019 | Scott Reeves
Daniel Ashelby | Maintaining machinery



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Welcome



Look out for the latest edition of Your Course arriving in your clubhouse this month.
Picture by Darren Skinner, Castle Stuart Golf Links



Chief Executive Jim Croxton

With April comes the Easter break, lighter evenings and The Masters at Augusta, so it's traditionally the time when the nation's golfers dust off their clubs and head out on to the fairways.

This year, many will not even have put their clubs into storage due to the extremely mild winter we experienced. For many the conditions were such that golf could be played throughout the year and as such it feels like last year's golfing season never really ended.

How will that impact our members and the golf courses they maintain? I suppose that depends upon many factors and you may have found that the warmer temperatures enabled the turf to recover after last year's drought and you were able to compete your winter programmes free from the disruption that severe weather causes. On the other hand, did increased golfer numbers during the winter mean you had to concentrate on keeping the course in a playable condition, to the detriment of your

planned off-season activities?

I was talking to a course manager recently who told me there had been over 3,000 rounds on his 18-hole course in January alone. This was a pretty typical, private members club so I imagine this high usage was replicated around the country. That's a significant amount of additional turf stress, not to mention increased divots, pitchmarks etc.

I've been lucky enough to visit a few courses all over the country during the last month and many — including some very high profile venues — still have significant areas of poor turf cover following the hot summer of 2018. It's clear that at many courses the damage will take a substantial period of time and effort to recover and we are continuing our efforts to educate golfers about what our members are up against.

With an increase in golfers heading to the clubhouse, now is an ideal opportunity for us to grab their attention and that's why you'll soon find the latest edition of Your Course magazine lying around.

Please give us any feedback you may have on the magazine and let us know if you don't receive it. You'll be able to download a digital version of the magazine from our website and we'll also be periodically posting features online in an attempt to reach a wider audience.

During March I was delighted to once again attend the Future Turf Managers' Initiative at Jacobsen's factory in Ipswich. This event never fails to inspire the delegates who are selected to be a part of it but I know that the mentors who take part are equally inspired by the incredible talent coming through this industry. Big thanks to Jacobsen for their continued support.

We also saw BIGGA members helping to prepare the course at TPC Sawgrass for The Players Championship courtesy of the John Deere Initiative.

I couldn't be prouder of how well each of these represented the association. We will do our part to spread the good word, but ultimately it is passionate and ambitious greenkeepers that will drive the industry forwards, so keep up the good work.

Enjoy the read.



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From the Editor

Up from the ashes



An overview of this month's edition of Greenkeeper International, with your editor, Karl Hansell

I'm fortunate that in this role I don't often have to call members when something tragic or shocking has happened.

It's something that I don't miss from my days as a news reporter and I'm pleased that these days I'm usually reporting on the incredible achievements of BIGGA members.

Throughout my career I've had some difficult phone calls to make and I've had some serious conversations, so I thought I knew what to expect when I picked up the phone to call Stuart Imeson at Dunstanburgh Castle.

You may have seen on social media and we've also got an article about it in this magazine, but the Northumberland club was the latest to fall victim to a serious fire last month, with the entire greenkeeping facility and all the equipment and personal items stored within lost to the blaze.

It's enough to break anyone's heart and yet when I spoke to Stuart, he was surprisingly upbeat about the situation. There was an acceptance that nobody was at fault for the fire — investigation teams have determined the cause — and that since nobody was hurt, the only sensible use of their energy was to focus on rebuilding for the future.

Stuart was also incredibly grateful for all the support that he had received from other members from across the association and all over the country. It's at times like these that you realise just what an incredible fraternity you join as a member of BIGGA.

Things don't always go the way we'd hoped and we all face trials and tribulations

throughout our lives, both in a personal and a professional capacity.

I'm delighted, therefore, that within this magazine we are able to announce that this year's BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund Golf Day will be taking place at Chesterfield in August this year.

Chesterfield, in Derbyshire, is within reach of the majority of the country and the golf day is a fantastic opportunity to have a lot of fun, while at the same time helping to raise funds for fellow members who do encounter hard times. I'd encourage as many of you as can make the journey and get involved, to do your part in supporting this fantastic charity.

Then, when you're warmed up, it'll be time to take part in the BIGGA National Championship, being held this year at both Formby and Formby Ladies across two days. This is a fantastic opportunity to play at two world famous and very different challenges of links golf. You can find out more about the championship within this edition.

Elsewhere within this magazine you've got a feature from Daniel Ashelby about his time as Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year, there's an introduction to BIGGA's new chairman, Scott Reeves, there's a look at the importance of effective and ongoing machinery maintenance and there's also a bumper look at aeration.

Technology is developing and practices are changing and the only way to stay ahead of the game is to keep yourself informed and continue your own professional development. To that end, I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the magazine.

In this Issue

Our contributors

30 Scott Reeves

BIGGA's chairman took up his new role at BTME back in January, but we thought we'd take a closer look at Scott's career at Leyland, where he is course manager. We spoke to Scott about the lessons he'd learnt throughout his time in greenkeeping and his hopes for the future of the association and the wider industry.



34 Daniel Ashelby

When Daniel won the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year final back in September last year, those who knew him best weren't surprised. Daniel, now employed at The Mere, has proved himself a talented student and he continued this during his time at the University of Massachusetts Winter Turf School.



40 Ian Sumpter

Co-owner of Mow-Sure consultants, Ian has been involved in the turf care industry since the early 1980s. Since 2002 he has had key service and training manager roles within the industry. This month Ian looks at how effective maintenance of your equipment will improve the quality of cut when all eyes are on your course.



46 Paul Miller

An experienced lecturer in golf course management based at SRUC (Elmwood), Paul is a regular contributor to Greenkeeper International and the Continue to Learn programme. In this month's feature, Paul looks at aeration and how it continues to be a vital but often misunderstood aspect of course maintenance.



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Can you do your bit to support those in need?



BIGGA was delighted to hear that two golf clubs have selected the Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund as their captain's charities for 2019.

Mal Mitchell, who hosted the first-ever charity golf day in support of the fund in 2017, will continue his fundraising efforts in his role as captain at Patshull Park.

Ben Cartwright has also chosen to support BIGGA's charity during his year as captain at Wilmslow, which hosted the English Women's Amateur Championship in 2018.

Ben spoke of his admiration and desire to support greenkeepers when he said: "Given the lasting effects for many clubs of last year's blistering summer, Wilmslow's greens, tees and fairways have, due to our fantastic greenstaff, remained in fabulous condition. And if you don't believe me, just ask Tommy Fleetwood after he played here in December!"

To mark the incredible gesture by Ben, BIGGA member Sean Sullivan CGCS of The Briarwood in Montana has donated a custom-made ball washer for use at Wilmslow during 2019.

BIGGA's annual charity day returns for 2019, with all the proceeds from the fun day of golf helping support association members who encounter hardships.

Chesterfield Golf Club in Derbyshire will be hosting the BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund Charity Golf Tournament on Wednesday 21 August.

BIGGA Golf Partners Rigby Taylor will be sponsoring the event and Chesterfield Course Manager Nick Miles said he was inspired to get involved after taking part in the 2018 event, held at Penn.

Nick said: "The Benevolent Fund has the potential to be so important for members of our association and it can provide much-needed assistance if things do go wrong in your personal and professional life and so I wanted to do my part to support the charity.

"I played at Penn in 2018 and it was such a fantastic day that I offered to host this year's event immediately afterwards.

"Chesterfield is a beautiful course with great views and I'm certain that anyone who plays will have a fantastic day, in addition to doing their bit to support

this incredibly-important charity that supports those in need in our profession."

The charity golf tournament is a fun day where things aren't taken too seriously. With a single tee start from 10am, there will be a long putt competition and a two-course meal following play. The cost is just £160 per team of four and there will also be a raffle, with all the proceeds going to the BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund.

For more information about the BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund visit www.bigga.org.uk/about/membership/greenkeepers-benevolent-fund

You can download an application form for the event from the BIGGA website.





Name: Tilly-May

Age: 5

Owner: Jamie Finch

Course: Sheringham

Breed: Labrador

Favourite treat: Dentastix

Favourite spot on the course: Cliff path

Naughtiest moment:
Running in the clubhouse,

trying to find the cleaner.

Her funniest moments are when she runs around the putting green at 5am with her LED flashing collar on for 15 minutes non-stop!

My dog is happiest when...
in the company of all the greenstaff.

Email karl@bigga.co.uk to get your dog featured.

African Turf Academy

Host venues are being sought for greenkeeping students from South Africa who are looking to gain experience of course management in the UK.

The African Turf Academy is a greenkeeping training programme that has been running for seven years and is supported by The R&A, Jacobsen and Rain Bird, using the Elmwood curriculum.

Managing Director Andrew

McKenna said: "We have 15 students on our programme who are showing great promise and it would be great to get them exposed to how a golf course is managed in the UK and northern hemisphere."

With a winter break in June and July, clubs who host the students will gain a competent member of staff for two months during summer.

For more information email andrew@silverlakes.co.za



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Special praise for Stanton course manager at awards event



The team from Stanton-on-the-Wolds celebrate their success

Stanton-on-the-Wolds in Nottinghamshire has won a major England Golf award, with Course Manager Daniel Branson being singled out for praise.

Stanton won England Golf's Championship Venue of the Year Award, having staged the English Senior Men's County Championship during 2018.

The greens were judged to be among the finest at a championship event all year, with European Tour star Tyrrell Hatton sending his own message of congratulations.

Tyrrell said: "I've got great memories of playing in England Golf championships in the past and I know the golf clubs all go above and beyond to make it a

fantastic experience for the players. So massive congratulations to Stanton for winning this award, you guys must have been fantastic!"

The other finalists for the award were Frilford Heath, Kedleston Park and Sherwood Forest.

At the same awards event, hosted by television presenter Dan Walker, Exeter Golf and Country Club was named as the winner of England Golf's Most Welcoming Club of the Year Award, sponsored by HowDidiDo.

Over recent years the club has taken positive steps to open its doors to both golfers and non-golfers, who can enjoy the swimming, spa and racquet sports.

The result is that there's a waiting list for men's golf membership and a thriving women's section, which is reaping the benefits of a recruitment campaign and a growing junior section.

Exeter was challenged for the award in the finals by Branston, Burghill Valley and Horton Park.

The England Golf Awards were sponsored by Adidas and held at the Royal Lancaster in London.

Positive outlook for Dunstanburgh team after serious blaze



The destroyed greenkeeping facility at Dunstanburgh Castle

Positivity is the new mantra at Dunstanburgh Castle after a serious fire destroyed the greenkeeping facility.

Club Manager Stuart Imeson, 27, said the shock of the fire was felt by everyone, with personal items being lost in addition to all the club's greenkeeping equipment, but the support the club has received from the industry has been heartwarming.

Stuart received a call at 3am from a

firefighter relative and arrived on site to see the shed up in flames.

He said: "The sun came up at 6am and you could see that it wasn't just the shed, everything had gone. We're a small club and it takes years to gather all that equipment, which we have now lost.

"There were also personal items and we had a large board of photos on the wall of the golf club and team over the years. That's been lost and we will never

be able to replace it."

In the aftermath of the fire, Stuart and the team received messages of support and offers of assistance from across the association. The team has been given access to a farm building about a mile away from the club for storage and they are slowly beginning to rebuild the stores of equipment.

However, the expense caused has put the popular bunker camps that Stuart hosted each year on hold.

"The money spent on that now has to be spent on rebuilding the facilities, which is sad. But hopefully we'll be able to host them again in future. I hope the new greenkeeping facility that we will build can become a centre for greenkeeper training in future, so we're certain that this isn't the end."

With the club looking towards the future, Stuart added: "We have a new phrase at the golf club, 'positive attitude for everything'. That's now written in the biggest text on my office wall. We will have a better greenkeeping facility going forwards. It will take us a few years, but we'll be back and better than before."

BMW PGA Championship

BIGGA members are being reminded that time is almost up to apply for a place on the volunteer support team for the BMW PGA Championship, taking place this September.

With the tournament shifting from its May hosting to later in the year, there will be the opportunity to gain a wholly-new perspective on course preparation.

Director of Courses and

Grounds Kenny Mackay said: "It'll be really interesting for people who've done other championships to see what hosting an event is like at the back end of the year.

"In the last two years we really evolved the experience so volunteers all get chance to cut greens or fairways and become more involved as a part of the team."

For more information head to the BIGGA website.



The Green Room

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Across the Board

Scott Reeves | BIGGA Chairman | Course Manager | Leyland

As a course manager taking on a new job, your ideal scenario is that the course will be in poor condition, yet there are resources in place to improve.

You can make an instant impression and you've got something to get your teeth into. Taking over as chairman of BIGGA from Les Howkins MG, the scenario was very different. The association is arguably in its best condition for a very long time, with plans and structures in place that should ensure we continue to improve our service.

Having been part of the National Board for some time, I understand the condition of the game of golf nationally. These are challenging times, with uncertainty surrounding several underpinning factors.

My view is that BIGGA is well-placed to play its part at the highest level where we can make a difference. This influence is due in no small part to Les, as he and Jim Croxton have raised the profile of our association through their professionalism and collaborative approach. We now work closely with all the key players in the game, representing the interests of greenkeepers. One of our goals is to continue this work and seek further opportunities to make a positive difference for members.

BTME is still fresh in our minds and the debrief is well under way. Obviously, the changes were a challenge for everyone involved and I am tremendously proud of every staff member, each of whom played their part in the success of the event. We have taken on board comments from visitors and exhibitors in order to improve the show and education offering. Evolution is not without a little pain so we can always expect to be tested.

You may be aware that events at Leyland have been challenging recently and I am extremely grateful to the club's



Scott alongside the Leyland team of Jamie Dobie, Charlie Bevan and Guy Welding

management team and my staff for pulling together and making it possible to carry out my duties as BIGGA Chairman. The support from the wider greenkeeping fraternity has been humbling and the whole team appreciates your goodwill.

I'm still very much getting used to the role of chairman and every day seems to throw up a new twist. Being appointed to this position was something I would never have dreamed of happening when I entered the profession.

I am an ordinary greenkeeper at a good club and my daily routine would be the same as most of our members. There is little danger of me becoming too big for my boots when I am unblocking ditches in the rain or any of the other "glamorous" jobs of a greenkeeper!

However, since BTME I have been able to see first hand just how well-respected our association has become. At the Golf Industry Show in San Diego and the FEGGA conference in Rome, it was

abundantly clear that BIGGA enjoys respect from our counterparts all around the world.

More recently, I have chaired my first National Board meeting, which was something I was particularly apprehensive about. Your representatives on the board are all strong characters, committed to making sure the association is well run. Fortunately, they didn't give me too rough a ride for my first meeting!

Like all of you, we are in full swing preparing for the start of the season and the Masters is almost here. We know it's not to everyone's taste, but I personally love to see Augusta in all its glory. It always feels like the starting pistol has been fired!

Hopefully we will all enjoy a decent spring that helps us reach our goals.

You can learn more about Scott Reeves and Leyland Golf Club in our feature on page 30.

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Ecology Roundup

James Hutchinson | Membership Services Manager (Ecology & Sustainability)

It's nearly time! Bats are coming out of hibernation and will be on the wing in no time at all.

Were you aware the UK has 17 different types of bat, making up almost a quarter of our mammal species?

As this magazine and its online version go all over the world, let's also look at the larger picture, which is quite confusing. Bats are separated into two main types: megabats and microbats. Megabats, flying foxes and Old-World fruit bats tend to be larger than microbats although some microbats are actually larger than the smaller megabats. Got it?

Now we have that out of the way, what use are they to golf courses? Well for a start, a healthy adult can consume up to 3,000 insects per night (depending on the type of bat), such as beetles, mosquitos and those midges that plague greenkeepers when you have a sweat-on.

Bats are also an indicator as to whether your course is in healthy condition regarding water management, habitat fragmentation and hedgerow management, as bats frequent these areas regularly.

Bats will not use habitats that are unhealthy and low on foodstuffs. Once fragmentation happens, bat genetic diversity becomes an issue, for the obvious reasons.

It is worth mentioning that all bats are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, so unless

you are 100% positive that there is not a bat roost in that tree you are about to cut down, I'd advise you hire a registered bat handler!

According to the Bat Conservation Trust, if you're interested in encouraging bats to roost around your course, it may be an idea to erect bat boxes. These are artificial roosts designed to encourage bats into areas where they wouldn't otherwise roost.

You can get ideas for designs or purchase ready-made boxes online and then it's a case of where to put them. Place them in different directions to provide a range of conditions. They should also be put as high as possible — at least 4m high — in sheltered, sunny places.

Bats need time to find and explore new homes and it may be several months or even years before boxes have residents, so be patient and keep an ear open for chittering noises from inside the box on warm evenings.

Look up to the skies tonight and you may be lucky enough to see one of these magnificent critters outside your house or golf course. Don't forget you can see the latest eco sightings in the Ecology section of our website.



Bat boxes at Avro



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Young Greenkeepers' Committee

Alex Brougham | Trentham Park

Understanding personalities and building good working relationships plays an important role in helping you to become a key player in your team.

Having the ability to understand the vast differences in personalities and the skills to adapt yourself can really help you succeed, not only at work but also in everyday life. For some people this doesn't come naturally, but learning these skills is vital.

Looking back on my early days in the industry, I realise my attention was focused on ensuring that the highest standards were hit through hard work, good timekeeping and attention to detail. Although meeting these high standards is certainly important in greenkeeping, one thing that I didn't understand at the time was the importance of building good working relationships with other members of the team.

After speaking to my managers about how I was perceived by my fellow team mates, I discovered that, at times, I could rub people up the wrong way and also appear arrogant. I found that even when suggesting some good ideas, they often went unheard. This wasn't because of what I had said but in fact how I had said it.

I soon began to realise that managers

don't just look for great greenkeeping skills but also someone who can network, communicate and motivate the team.

I realised that I needed to change the way I communicated with others. With my desire to learn and enhance my skills, I attended events such as Continue to Learn and the FTMI. I also developed my skills through watching YouTube videos and gaining advice from my managers based on their own experiences. The education and understanding you can gain from these types of experiences is truly invaluable and can certainly play a huge role in your greenkeeping career.

Having gained an understanding of these essential skills, I came to realise there are certain attributes that can really help you become a key player in the greenkeeping team.

Firstly, communication plays a huge part in creating strong relationships. Having the ability to listen and process information is a key skill enabling you to respond in a way that promotes positivity and motivates the people around you. Asking open questions instead of polar, yes-no, questions is more likely to give you the detailed information that you require and prevent confusion and miscommunication within the team.

Secondly, your body language

plays a very important role when it comes to communication. Humans can subconsciously show how they are feeling through facial expressions and posture. It is important to remember that smiling and having a positive appearance, through using open body language, can not only show your self-motivation but also promote motivation and positivity in the team around you.

Gaining an understanding of other people's life experiences, feelings and personalities will also influence your decision-making during conversations.

An example of making a calculated adjustment may be deciding when to expand on or filter information. Apprentices may appreciate your extra guidance, whereas managers may prefer for you to get straight to the point as they generally work with tight time constraints.

Lastly, in life we are naturally drawn to people with similar views, hobbies and interests. However, at work we can't always pick and choose who we work with. This means that we may have to put in more effort and adapt to their ways of thinking when it comes to working with people we don't naturally bond with. It's important to listen as their different views and opinions could potentially bring new and exciting ideas to the table.



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BIGGA National 2019

WELCOME TO FORMBY

BIGGA National
Championship 2019

BIGGA members who sign up to play at the BIGGA National Championship will have the opportunity to play two of the world's top links golf courses as the association takes over Formby and Formby Ladies from 30 September to 1 October 2019.

BIGGA is delighted to welcome its members to two of the premier courses on England's famous golf coast, just a few miles from three Open Championship venues.

On the opening day of the tournament, golfers will be challenged by the intricate and tight layout of Formby Ladies. Despite its demure 5,374

yards, the fairways are narrow and the greens well-guarded, meaning the course will be a true test of skills.

Course Manager Rob Sandilands said: "The professionals are a big fan of Formby Ladies because you can't overpower it, you really have to think your way around. It's a fun golf course, it's really picturesque, but it's by no means a pushover."

Formby Golf Club runs around the outside of Formby Ladies in an anti-clockwise direction and, measuring 6,469 yards, the undulating fairways and revetted pot bunkers will provide an incredible challenge for the final day of

BIGGA's National Championship.

Course Manager Paul Swift said he's excited about welcoming BIGGA members to the course, saying: "It's brilliant and it's our most important tournament of the year!"

"I'm really looking forward to the BIGGA National as I think greenkeepers all understand the challenges we share and it's the best group of men and women that you can possibly wish to have playing your course.

"I've enjoyed every tournament we've had here and I think I'll really enjoy this too."

BIGGA members will contest the



BIGGA Challenge Trophy, the best gross score over 36 holes. David Simpson of Crieff won the trophy for a record third time in 2018.

Also up for grabs are the BIGGA Challenge Cup, Stableford over 36 holes, and the BIGGA Challenge Plate, Stableford over 18 holes. Various other prizes are also up for grabs, ensuring everyone has a chance of coming away with a prize, no matter what their handicap is.

The BIGGA National Championship 2019 will be held at Formby Golf Club and Formby Ladies Golf Club on 30 September to 1 October.



1. The first plus handicap recorded at Formby was actually by Miss M.I. Bushby, prior to the establishment of Formby Ladies in 1896.
2. The hippo's head that sits in the Formby clubhouse was a prize from a trip to Africa by two of the club's earliest members. During World War II the hunting trophy was commandeered by the crew of the ship 'Veteran' and was strapped to the ship's searchlight, surviving a mission through the Norwegian fjords.
3. The Formby pines that adorn the crests of both clubs are home to one of the last surviving populations of red squirrels in England.
4. Jose Maria Olazabal beat Colin Montgomerie to win The Amateur Championship at Formby in 1984, the club's centenary year.
5. Formby hosted the Arnold Palmer Cup in 2016, a match that Europe won and the final one hosted before the great man's passing in September that year.

Richard Fry of BIGGA Golf Partner and event sponsor Rigby Taylor

"For, many years Rigby Taylor has been associated with the golf industry - this year we celebrate our 100-year anniversary and we've been involved with golf that whole time. We've a very long relationship with the association and becoming official Golf Partner of BIGGA is our chance to give something back to the golf greenkeepers who are our major customers.

"May I wish all the members who take part in the qualifying events and the finals of the tournament the very best of luck. This is a spectacular trophy and the opportunity to have your name etched on it alongside these other great golfers is something you won't want to miss."



Working with



as Golf **Partners**

Dundonald Links sale



Dundonald Links hosted the 2017 Mens and Ladies Scottish Opens

Dundonald Links in Irvine has been purchased for £4.5m by Welsh company Darwin Escapes.

The 2017 host of both the Mens and Ladies Scottish Opens was acquired from previous owners Loch Lomond Golf Club.

Lindsey Esse, managing director of Darwin Escapes, said: "We are delighted to have acquired our first resort in Scotland and for it to be the prestigious Dundonald Links, which is much loved by golfers around the world."

"We plan to make a significant investment to ensure the clubhouse facilities are worthy of this wonderful course."

Under the deal, Loch Lomond members will continue to have playing rights at the Kyle Phillips-designed

course, which Loch Lomond general manager Bill Donald said was "an important part of the deal".

Speaking to The Scotsman, he added: "It is a bit of a wrench as we have built Dundonald Links up, but we think Darwin Leisure can give the club what is now required. It is purely an investment opportunity for Dundonald Links, which includes building a clubhouse and property as well."

Darwin Leisure operates 22 lodge resorts, holiday parks and golf courses around the UK, including The Springs in Oxfordshire, which the company highlighted as a similar project to that which it plans to undertake at Dundonald Links, the three-time Ladies Scottish Open host venue.



Alex Beesley

Germinal

Germinal has recruited Alex Beesley as amenity technical sales representative for South Wales, the South Midlands and the South West of England.

Alex joins Germinal with sales and marketing experience gained within the golf and grounds maintenance sectors. He has previously held positions with DBS Leach and Midlands Ground Machinery, where he was responsible for developing sales accounts and providing class-leading levels of aftersales and service support.

Prior to this, Alex was sales and marketing manager for The Oxfordshire and latterly had his own golf consultancy business.

Astbury Hall

The former estate of Judas Priest guitarist KK Downing is to be transformed into a luxury leisure estate.

The Astbury Hall Estate in Shropshire previously featured a championship golf course, but this will be cut down to nine holes, with an 18-hole putting course and a number of other sporting facilities, including two swimming pools.

The 85,142m² estate was owned by KK Downing, but was put up for sale in 2017 after four of his businesses went into administration.

Indigrow cancer support

Staff at Indigrow will be undertaking a marathon challenge in support of a colleague who was diagnosed with cancer.

Returning to the office after BTME 2018, the Indigrow team were informed that one of their colleagues, Christine, had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Throughout the year Christine would endure two operations, followed by long stints of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Indigrow's Bradley Foster said: "Chris has been inspirational, brave and strong throughout a very hard year. Following the last of her radiotherapy sessions, we hope and pray that Chris

has won her battle against the disease."

Indigrow's office staff will be undertaking the Thames Path Mighty Hike, a 26-mile walk along the Thames on 20 July 2019 to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Bradley added: "We have all supported Chris during her journey and feel this is a great way to show her how much we care for her and others who are battling, have survived or have sadly lost the fight to this disease."

To make a donation to Indigrow's fundraising efforts, visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/indigrow

Sustainable guidelines



The GEO Foundation has released new guidelines

A new publication from the GEO Foundation will provide information for public golf course operators to help them consider the wider environmental and social benefits they can provide.

'Sustainable Golf Development – Public Facilities Guidelines' sets out the benefits associated with responsibly-designed and managed public

facilities, including methods of delivering sustainable refurbishments and long-term operations.

The plan features 40 case studies and the GEO's Sam Thomas said: "With increasing competition for peoples' time, availability of public land and public service budgets, there is a need to make public courses as productive as possible."

Practice green for Willett



Danny Willett has had a Huxley Golf green installed at his Yorkshire home

Huxley Golf has revealed that it has just completed the installation of an all-weather practice area in the back garden of Masters champion Danny Willett.

Measuring 900ft², the Huxley Golf team created a practice area that has three tees, three hole locations and other features that enable the former DP World Tour Champion to practice his

wedge play from 120 yards in.

Danny said: "I have been so delighted with my Huxley indoor putting green over the last couple of years that I wanted to build on that experience outdoors. I can honestly say it's been fantastic! Despite the Yorkshire weather, I was able to practice for the DP World Tour Championship and the US PGA Tour."

FEGGA



FEGGA hosted its annual conference in Rome

Forty-one organisations made the trip to Rome to engage in an inspiring annual conference hosted by the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations.

Discussions included the challenges to golf around the globe and the need for responsible golf course management and the use of modern technologies.

FEGGA Chairman and BIGGA Life Member Paul Worster said: "Italy was a great venue for this event. The weather was kind and the delegates received a very warm welcome from the Italian Golf Federation and Greenkeepers Association."

The formal proceedings of the AGM saw Koert Donkers of the Netherlands voted on to the board of FEGGA.

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Avoncrop Amenity Products



The Avoncrop Amenity Products team

Avoncrop Amenity Products has demonstrated the strength of its relationship with BIGGA by becoming the association's latest Education Supporter.

Avoncrop Amenity Products was established by Rod Feltham in 1990. The company is a leading supplier of turf management products and sportsground equipment to the sportsturf, amenity

horticulture and landscaping industries throughout South West, South East and Southern England, including London Home Counties, Wales and the Midlands.

BIGGA Business Development Manager Lauren Frazer said: "Avoncrop Amenity Products has a long history of supporting BIGGA members and back in 1995 was one of the first companies to support the association's

Education and Development Fund."

Johanna McCloskey was originally employed as the financial controller as Rod grew the business throughout the 1990s. In 2004, Rod was immensely proud that Avoncrop Amenity Products achieved, 'By Appointment to Her Majesty The Queen,' a Royal Warrant for the Supply of Horticultural Products.

Johanna became managing director in 2015 under Rod's chairmanship and embraced control of the company upon the death of her father in 2017.

Johanna said: "I believe the strong foundations of the company are built around the family environment and core values of trust, integrity, discretion and goodwill that Rod worked so hard to develop.

"We are ever mindful of our responsibilities around business civilities and industry patronage.

"Avoncrop Amenity Products has a history of being involved with BIGGA's Sections for over 20 years.

"We are very excited to formalise and accelerate our continuing commitment to greenkeepers around the country."

Royal Guernsey



Rebuilt bunker at Royal Guernsey

Royal Guernsey, located at L'Ancrese on the Channel Island, has completed the first phase of a multi-year rebunkering using the EcoBunker Advanced synthetic edging product.

The project started in December 2017, when EcoBunker construction manager Llewellyn Matthews travelled to Guernsey to build a test bunker on the club's short game practice area.

The success of this project convinced Royal Guernsey to sign up for a three-year project to rebuild all 31 bunkers, as well as adding additional fairway hazards in the last phase, taking place winter 2020 to 21.

Course manager Marcus Hamon said: "Llewellyn didn't let me down and the rebuilt bunkers look great and sit nicely in the undulations of the course."

Dumbarnie Links



Work underway to prepare Dumbarnie Links

A course development on the south coast of Fife is due to open for play by spring 2020.

The 165ha Dumbarnie Links development reflects the historic location and sports club, which dates back to the 1830s.

Designed by former Walker Cup and Ryder Cup player Clive Clark, the course is

notable for featuring sea views on all 18 holes. The course manager is Grahame Taylor, who came from St Andrews' Old Course.

Luke Beardmore, of site manager OB Sports Golf Management, said: "Due to extremely favourable weather conditions last year, the construction took just six months to complete."

Golf and Health Week



A dedicated campaign to raise awareness of the health benefits of golf for people of all ages and abilities is to tee off during April.

The first ever Golf and Health Week will take place from 15 to 19 April and will aim to encourage golfers, non-golfers and lapsed golfers into taking part in the sport.

A number of health-related themes will be promoted during the week of the campaign.

The collaborative campaign will run

across digital and social media channels using the hashtag #GolfHealthWeek and include content focused on highlighting the physical and mental health benefits of playing golf and projects being delivered by golf bodies and clubs.

The campaign is also to be backed by professional golfers including Annika Sorenstam, Brooke Henderson, Padraig Harrington and Zach Johnson.

Martin Slumbers, chief executive of The R&A, said: "It is important that we continue to promote golf as an activity

that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities and demonstrate that playing golf can provide significant benefits for the health and well-being of those who participate in the sport.

"We are working closely with our affiliated national associations and partners to produce an engaging and inspiring campaign that will drive interest in playing the sport and encourage people to take advantage of the health benefits that golf can bring."

Last year, a global consensus among leaders in public health, public policy and sport backed golf in the race to tackle physical inactivity and the prevention of illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer of the breast and colon.

Evidence linking golf and health was presented at Westminster following research led by the University of Edinburgh.

Previous research has also highlighted that those who play golf live five years longer than those that don't play, while the sport has been shown to have self-esteem and self-worth benefits.

Industry Update

MORE

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Volunteering

Where will it take you?

Volunteering can...

- Produce a feeling of self-worth and respect
- Improve various skills development
- Gain BIGGA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits
- Gain and build experience to enable you to apply for The Open and BMW PGA Support Teams and the John Deere TPC Sawgrass initiative
- Make new friends and contacts
- Have some fun

There are many amateur and professional golf championships held around the UK and many head greenkeepers and course managers will be looking for additional support during these tournaments.

To the right is a list of some of the tournaments taking place throughout 2019. This list is by no means exhaustive and not every head greenkeeper will be looking for additional support, but if you don't approach them to ask, an opportunity may have passed you by!

Take Saunton, which will be hosting the R&A Boys Amateur Championship in August. Saunton's Jon Sutherland has asked

whether any BIGGA members would be interested in volunteering to get the course in top condition from 9 to 18 August, with 14 volunteer places available.

The event will see 252 of the world's best under 18 male golfers competing across both of Saunton's 18-hole courses and so all 36 holes will need to be presented in immaculate condition.

Jon said: "If you would like to volunteer to assist on any of these days to make sure the courses are in top condition for this global event, it would be very much appreciated."

A range of greenkeeping tasks will need to be covered and at least one greenkeeper with machine setting skills is required to assist the resident mechanic throughout the duration of the event.

All volunteers will be provided with food and refreshments throughout the event.

If you think you can help and gain some invaluable experience along the way, contact Saunton general manager Jon Sutherland by emailing jon@sauntongolf.co.uk or call 01271 812 436 with your name, contact details and the dates on which you are able and willing to help.

For more information on tournaments around the UK, visit the websites of The R&A, European Tour, PGA.



Shaun Cunningham meeting Jordan Spieth at The Open in 2017



Tracey Walker and Gemma St John at the BMW PGA Championship in 2018

Date	Venue	Event
26 to 28 April	Fulford Golf Club, York	R&A Girls U16 Amateur Championship
22 to 26 May	Saunton Golf Club	English Women's Amateur Championship
30 May to 2 June	The Alwoodley Golf Club, Leeds	English Men's Open Amateur Championship — Brabazon Trophy
5 to 7 June	Holme Hall Golf Club, Scunthorpe, Lincs	English Senior Men's Open Amateur Championship
18 to 20 June	St Enodoc Golf Club, Cornwall	English Senior Women's Open Amateur Championship
11 to 14 July	The Renaissance Club, North Berwick	Scottish Open, Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open
13 to 28 July	Evian Resort, Évian-les-Baines, France	LPGA Tour Evian Championship
23 to 26 July	Moor Park Golf Club, Rickmansworth, Herts	English U18 Boys' Open Amateur Championship — Carris Trophy
24 to 27 July	Parkstone Golf Club, Poole, Dorset	European Ladies' Amateur Championship
31 July to 2 August	North Berwick Golf Club	R&A Senior Amateur Championship
8 to 11 August	The Renaissance Club, North Berwick	Ladies Scottish Open, Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open
13 to 17 August	Montrose Golf Links	R&A Girls Amateur Championship
13 to 18 August	Saunton Golf Club	R&A Boys Amateur Championship
18 to 20 September	Royal St David's Golf Club	R&A Womens Senior Amateur Championship

Welcome new members

Scotland & Northern Ireland

John Leslie, Royal Dornoch, AGK; **Nick Turner**, Royal Dornoch, AGK; **Andrew Cousins**, Donaghadee, DCM; **Gary Tusler**, Dundas Parks, FA; **Andrew Deveney**, Williamwood, GK; **Connor Mackay**, Royal Dornoch, GK; **Daniel Healy**, Williamwood, GK; **Liam Kemmett**, Royal Dornoch, GK; **Murray Lewis**, Royal Dornoch, GK; **Scott Higgins**, Winterfield, GK.

Northern

Antony Price, Shipley College, A; **Alfie Pickhaver**, Sand Moor, APP; **Christian Smith**, Sandburn Hall, APP; **Daryl Williams**, Cookridge Hall, APP; **George Sturdy**, Forest Park, APP; **Jonathan Lee**, Cookridge Hall, APP; **Murray Morrison**, York, APP; **Joshua Rees**, Middlesbrough, APP; **Richard Fawcett**, Thirsk & Northallerton, APP; **Robert Walton**, Sand Moor, APP; **Robert Walton**, Sand Moor, APP; **Roy Carmichael**, Hull, APP; **Geraint Ellis**, Porthmadog, AGK; **Jordan Tear**, Ripon City, AGK; **Christopher Tiplady**, Myerscough, CA; **David Morris**, Oldham College, CA; **Matthew Longford**, Hallows, DHGK; **Adam Smith**, Hillside, GK; **John Smith**, Romiley, GK; **Martin McCrick**, Chester-le-Street, GK; **Nicholas Mansell**, Ramsley Hall, GK; **Will Adams**, Myerscough College, S.

Central England

Katy Castle, Caversham Heath, App; **Lewis Whitmore**, Elton Furze, App; **Bradley Martin**, Tydd St Giles, AGK; **Benjamin Hammond**, Woburn, AGK; **Mark Payne**, Sleaford, AGK; **Philip Newman**, The Bedfordshire, AGK; **Jonathan Knowles**, Myerscough College, CA; **Martyn Lumb**, Myerscough College, CA; **Brett Smith**, Wharton Park, CM; **Oliver Kavanagh**, Worcester, DHGK; **Jacob Shellis**, Farol Ltd, ED; **Mike Wheeler**, Farol Ltd, ED; **Adrian Fisher**, Tynley Park, GK; **Alexander Coubrough**, Staverton Park, GK; **Dylan Wood**, Woburn, GK; **Kevin Woodward**, Woburn, GK; **Mike Bartlett**, Channels, GK; **Shaun Woodbridge**, Newbury & Crookham, GK; **Mark Sims**, Cherwell Edge, HGK.

South West & South Wales

Jake Waites, Celtic Manor, A; **Harry Catterall**, Isle of Wodmore, APP; **Oliver Beecham**, Erlestoke, APP; **Mark Tubbs**, Milton Abbey School, AHGM; **Jack Mckay**, Wickham Park, HGK.

South East

Damon Kirk, Brands Hatch Circuit, A; **Adam Stone**, The Grove, APP; **Edward Smith**, Hanbury Manor, APP; **Jack Charge**, Hanbury Manor, APP; **Joshua Price**, Centurion Club, APP; **Matthew Barnes**, Foxhills, APP; **Scott Dunmore**, Rickmansworth, APP; **Jack Fitzpatrick**, Croham Hurst, AGK; **Chris Birkett**, Chesfield Downs, AGK; **Mark Waldman**, Wildernesse, AGK; **Richard Lewis**, Indigrow, ED; **Alex Baker**, Channels, FA; **Adrian Adascalitel**, Roehampton, GK; **Alexis Leseure**, Roehampton, GK; **George Coutts**, Wentworth, GK; **Simon Corrigan**, Links (Newmarket), HGK; **Chris James**, Whitehall, HGM.

International

Andrew Barker, Bernadus Golf; **Jared Vlarengo**, Applebrook.

A	Affiliate Member	GK	Greenkeeper
AGK	Assistant	GM	Groundman
APP	Apprentice	HGK	Head
CA	College Assessor		Greenkeeper
CM	Course Manager	HGM	Head
DCM	Deputy Course Manager		Groundsman
DHGK	Deputy Head	I	International Member
	Greenkeeper	L	Life Member
ED	Partner & Education	M	Mechanic
	Supporters	S	Student Member
FA	First Assistant	R	Retired Member



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Appre

National Apprenticeship Week took place during March. To mark the occasion, BIGGA paid a visit to Trentham Golf Club in Stoke-on-Trent, where Course Manager Ed Stant is keen to engage with apprentices.

Alongside The Greenkeepers Training Committee, BIGGA is working to encourage youngsters to consider taking on a career within greenkeeping through work-based training.

Trentham is a 125-year-old parkland course and has previously hosted Open Championship Qualifying and national amateur events.

Ed said: "Straight away, hiring apprentices reduces the wage bill, making that more sustainable. The club is fully on board with wanting to hire local people, which I think is a good advert for the golf club. Also, there's the added

benefit that when we take them on, they've no bad habits and we can train them exactly as we want them to learn.

"If your club is fully supportive, I would say go for it and hire an apprentice. Young men and women are going to make mistakes and it's a huge shock, coming from school to working with older people in all weathers. However, the benefits are enormous. I'd embrace it, so long as you are prepared to give them the time and the patience, you will be rewarded."

Trentham's Reece Tomalin was the first apprentice in the UK to sign on to the new trailblazer scheme in 2016. The redeveloped apprenticeship standard includes an assessment plan that is produced by employer-led groups known as 'trailblazers'. At the conclusion of the two-year apprenticeship, the trainee undertakes an end-point assessment that identifies how much they've learnt.

Reece undertook the City and Guilds Level 2 Certificate in Golf Greenkeeping and graduated in 2018. He's now a qualified greenkeeper at Trentham and the 18-year-old said: "I got into greenkeeping because I always wanted to work outside and the college environment wasn't for me.

You can watch a more in-depth conversation with the staff at Trentham by heading to our YouTube channel and searching for BIGGA.



Ed Stant teaching Tom Bromfield

ntices

How can work-based training help develop your golf course?

'The benefits of hiring an apprentice are enormous'

"I like being hands-on, speaking to the members, getting on with the other lads that you work with. There's a real bond between the group because you've worked together for so long and if you need help, you can reach out to them and they'll help you out."

Tom Bromfield, 18, is halfway through his apprenticeship at Trentham and said that working at the course benefits his studies.

"It's making it a lot easier," he explained. "I actually find that you learn more on the course than you do at the college sometimes. When my college tutor comes in and asks me a question, sometimes I already know the answer

because I've been out there and I've shown that I've already done it.

"At first I was a bit conflicted about whether to do an apprenticeship or go to college when I left school. Originally I was going to go to college and then I found out about the apprenticeship here and I thought why not, let's give it a go."

For more information about greenkeeping apprenticeships, head to www.the-gtc.co.uk/learning/apprenticeships/ or contact The Greenkeepers Training Committee Ltd.



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

Aaron Hurdwell, Harleyford; Bill Whybrow, Unattached; Neil Rogers, Advance Grass Solutions; Derek Robson, Old Course Hotel St Andrews; Jacob Armal, Worlebury; Sam Evans, Fulwell; Chris Browett, Richmond; Richard Stephens, Ringway; Richard Johnstone, Nairn Dunbar Golf Links; Daniel Ashelby, The Mere; Colin Powrie, Ladybank; David Stewart, Walmley; Sam Sweetzer, Queenwood; Graeme Davidson, Murrayfield; Ben Hunter, Richmond; Andrew Wilson, Whitecraigs; Andrew Castle, Highwoods; Michael Hughes, Scotsraig; Ian Smith, Dundonald Links; Tom Smart, Warren; Lee Strutt, Royal Automobile Club.

Congratulations to the following members who achieved their CPD Milestone this month:

Richard Sheldon, Handsworth; Josh Dunn, Bramcote Waters; Anthony Kirwan, Romford; James Cleaver, Stratford Oaks; Simon Pyett, Halesworth; Kevin Tigg, Merrist Wood; Matthew Wharton CGCS MG, Carolina.



INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS, Richard McGlynn, Jaey Goodchild, Frank Newberry, Greg Evans MG, Jon Kiger

What does it take to get to the top?

FTMI 2019

FTMI 2019



JACOBSEN
Every Blade Counts.



What do a chimpanzee puppet, a plastic skull named Yorick and 20 of the association's most ambitious members have in common?

All made an appearance at the Future Turf Managers' Initiative (FTMI), hosted by Jacobsen at the company's Ipswich factory during March.

For the BIGGA members who earn a place on the education programme, FTMI takes a step away from greenkeeping practices to focus upon developing the skills that are essential to be a successful manager.

Jacobsen's Karen Proctor said: "This is a phenomenal event, where we take 20 greenkeepers who have the potential to take that next step to becoming superintendents. We looked at this eight years ago and realised that the industry had lots of different training for how to be a greenkeeper but none that taught you how to take that next step to becoming a course manager. We thought that was the perfect opportunity to give back to the industry. After the three days the students go away looking absolutely exhausted but with our history of 43% so far actually becoming course managers, we know that it's absolutely going to impact their future and be a huge positive in their careers."

With early starts and education taking place well into the evening, it's an intense three days and this year's

class were put through their paces by presenters Michael Astrop, Phil Helmn MG, Eddie Bullock and Lee Strutt MG.

Michael worked with the 20 members for a day and a half. He has been speaking, writing and coaching on communications and human behaviour for 20 years and so was well-prepared for the challenge of turning 20 greenkeepers into management material.

Michael said: "This is my fourth year at FTMI and it's always a great excitement for me to come back because it's so great to see the lads developing and growing over time.

"The skull is a prop that I use in the presentation skills session. One of the key things about any opening is finding something that is unexpected, different or indeed quite strong and I find that a human skull has that impression in any situation. It's also a focal point when it's just sitting on the table as people in the audience will be sitting there and thinking, 'what's that skull sitting on the table for?'"

"The other prop I use is the monkey and although he doesn't have a name, I use him fundamentally to talk about the fight and flight mechanism, which refers to the 'chimp within'. Inside all of us is a cheeky chimp and I use the puppet when I say to the group 'where do you see your chimp most?' The answer is in the car and you'll see the chimp when

someone cuts in front of you. The chimp is very famous and I've been using him a lot at FTMI and BTME and people now ask if I've brought him along."

Helping the students to understand some of the lessons taught by Michael and the other tutors each year are a trio of mentors, themselves extremely experienced course managers and therefore well-placed to offer advice on what it takes to make the next step on the career ladder.

This year the mentors comprised of Steve Lloyd of The Worcestershire, Andrew Laing of Gaudet Luce and Euan Grant of The JCB.

Andrew said: "I think FTMI is a really valuable opportunity. We're all taught agronomically through seminars and colleges, but there's very little training given through that process to management, people management and those additional skills that you require as you move into a senior role. This is a really good opportunity for the guys to pick up on those additional skills and each of the students will soon see that the FTMI experience doesn't end after these three days, but we'll stay in contact and they're welcome to talk to us mentors or each other throughout their careers to help them develop their skills and progress."

Continued over

What did the graduates say?

Andrew Wilson, Whitecraigs

"I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone and I believe that doing this will help further my career. It's hard work but rewarding and you're networking with like-minded people who you'll keep as contacts for life."



Andrew Wilson of Whitecraigs

Gareth Hunt, Cricket St Thomas

"I want to progress my career and as I recently became deputy head greenkeeper, I need to look at the managerial side, more so than greenkeeping. I need to have a good balance of both sides of the job."



Ben Hunter of The Richmond

Tim Brewster, Reigate Hill

"This is actually my fifth time of applying and I thought they were never going to pick me. But I was encouraged by Alex Brougham at Trentham Park and my wife, who said I needed to do this because it's going to be so important for my career, and they were absolutely right."

Ben Hunter, The Richmond

"After the first few sessions I realised that building a relationship with the mentors is going to be really beneficial for me for the future. The tutors are very influential and knowledgeable and have much to teach you."

Craig Berry, St Andrews Links Trust

"We work outdoors every day and so being in a classroom, you could feel a bit lethargic at times, but I love these opportunities to interact with other greenkeepers and hear about their stories."



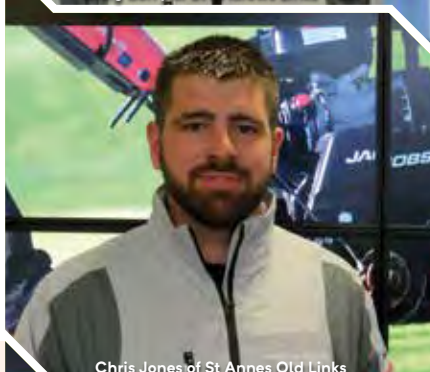
Craig Berry of St Andrews Links Trust

Eddie Campbell, Sandford Springs

"I've always wanted to better myself and I want to be the best greenkeeper that I can be. I think it's just a great initiative. I've seen a number of people who've done this and have gone on to be course managers and that's who I want to be and what I'm pushing for."

James Bruder, East Berkshire

"I want to progress to be a course manager and I feel at the moment this is one of the best opportunities to learn for that process. It's very interesting and intense with long hours, but you're kept really interested in it and it's very good."



Chris Jones of St Annes Old Links

Chris Jones, St Annes Old Links

"I applied for FTMI because I wanted to make myself a better deputy and to prepare myself for when I become a course manager. I particularly enjoyed the work on interview technique."

Ben Williams, Royal Cinque Ports

"I wanted to do FTMI to help progress my career to the next level. I wanted to gain some managerial skills to give me the confidence to hopefully push me to that next level. It's quite intense and there's a lot to take in but the guys are all in the same boat so it's really good."



Ben Williams of Royal Cinque Ports

James Cleaver, Stratford Oaks

"You can't Google how to be a good manager, especially when it's industry-related. To come and speak to your peers and listen to guys who are doing the seminar is something I really wanted to take away from it."

Scott Corrigan, Royal Troon

"I recognised there's not really any training out there to help you progress into a management role. I knew that I was going to be put out of my comfort zone and I've actually really enjoyed that experience."



Scott Corrigan of Royal Troon

John Scurfield, Morpeth

"I've just been recently promoted to head greenkeeper so some of the tools that I'm going to learn here will give me a good start in my career. It's been great learning about stuff that beforehand I wouldn't have come into contact with, such as dealing with committees."



Luke Hind of Gaudet Luce

Michael Hughes, Scotsraig

"FTMI will give me the skillset to improve myself as a manager going forward. It will help me, not just with treating staff better, but it will also enable me to understand them more as human beings."



Michael Hughes of Scotsraig

Scott Logan, Royal Bled

"I want to be a course manager one day but I'm not very good at public speaking, so I hoped this would give me the skills to improve. Everyone I've spoken to about FTMI says it takes you out of your comfort zone, but from what you get out of it, it's really incredible."



Sam Sweetzer of Queenwood

Dave Stewart, Walmley

"Speaking to past students here that have done FTMI, they told me how valuable it's been to them, with the budgeting, the presentations, interview styles, and just the people that you meet, it all helps to build relationships and confidence to help you go on in future."



David Stewart of Walmley

Simon Pyett, Royal Worthington and Newmarket

"The experience has been a bit different to what I thought it would be. It's been a challenge and it's brought up a lot of topics and feelings that really need considering more. It's about the beginning and the continuing of that process, rather than the conclusion of it."

Luke Hind, Gaudet Luce

"A few lads in the region have been on it and they've become course managers now. I thought I'm ready for the next step now and so this will help me get to where I want to be. It's lived up to my expectations and helped me learn a lot."

Phil Worth, Macclesfield

"Having been recently promoted, I'm looking into the budgeting side of things, so that was important to me. I've worked with employees in the past who've actually been on FTMI and they absolutely loved it. It's a very worthwhile course and looks great on your CV."

Sam Sweetzer, Queenwood

"Even though it's only a few days it opens your eyes about what's important when you're going for an interview. If I'm going for a deputy or course manager role in the future then I'm going to have that confidence, which you need when you're managing a team."

Graeme Davidson, Murrayfield

"It's been excellent, I've really enjoyed it. They're a great bunch of guys, with the mentors, trainers and all the BIGGA staff, who have all been excellent and they've answered all the questions that we're looking to get answered."

Scott Reeves

Meet BIGGA's new chairman

Karl Hansell, BIGGA

At BTME 2019, Leyland Course Manager Scott Reeves became chairman of the association.

Scott, 48, succeeded Les Howkins MG, whose term at the helm of the BIGGA National Board concluded with the BIGGA AGM on Tuesday 22 January.

Karl Hansell met Scott for a chat, to learn more about his career and his ambitions for the future of BIGGA.

How did you get into greenkeeping?

After school I went to university to do information management but realised it would put me in an office for the rest of my life and I didn't want that. I'd gone to university because no one in my family ever had. I chose something at random, but fortunately two years in I realised I was wasting everybody's time, including my own.

I knew I wanted to do something practical and my brother-in-law said his best mate was looking for an apprentice and he didn't want a 16-year-old. He ran a golf course in High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

I had no idea what that meant, so I went over to the course and the head

greenkeeper, Jim Sutherland, drove me around on the back of a quad bike. He said "there you go, there's the golf course, you start Monday". He didn't even ask me if I wanted the job or not. I went: "OK, I'll be here Monday then!"

I will always be grateful to Jim for giving me a start in this job. The golf club was run by Greene King the brewery, so it was a municipal course. It

was an awesome training ground.

We also had an 18-hole par-3 and a very young team, so what that meant was you had somewhere where you could go out and use all the kit, learn your trade, learn your skills, without it being a problem on the main course where people were paying more.

Continued over



Scott Reeves, James Dobie, Charlie Bevan, Guy Welding



Meet the Chairman - Scott Reeves



Was that the biggest difference, that you'd learned how to be a manager?

It's knowing how to manage people, how to manage upwards, how to say no. Your boss will be demanding of you, but you need to have an expectation of them as well. You need to understand what motivates them and what they're looking for if you want to be successful.

What was your relationship with BIGGA and when did you start getting involved with the association?

There's a number of our members who are critical of things that BIGGA does and I've been through that in my career. I got quite disillusioned because it felt like the industry was going through changes and we weren't moving forwards.

The level of respect and understanding that we have from the golfing public just wasn't there and I didn't feel that BIGGA was going to change that.

I got a little disillusioned, but then when I moved to the north west I got more involved and I set up turf clubs with Warren Bevan, who was course manager at Lancaster. He was the driving force, but he and I set up the turf clubs in this area and we ran those from Garstang and Myerscough for 10 years. They grew and grew and it was really successful.

That drew the attention of people in the association. I was still a member but I wasn't very active at all. There were four or five of us around 2014 who felt the North West Section could be better. That's not a criticism of anyone who was involved with what was going on, but we thought that if we got involved, instead of moaning, we could make a change.

Eventually you worked your way to being appointed chairman of BIGGA. What's that process like? What was your reaction when you found out?

We sat down and discussed it as a board in November 2017. That meeting was absolutely intense because we were discussing the changes to BTME 2019.

We got to the point in the meeting when the Board were to decide on the next chairman and it was announced that the preferred candidate was the Northern Region director, Scott Reeves! I was absolutely gobsmacked, I can remember it. It was a very surreal experience.

I remember vividly Chris Kennedy said 'well come on then, have you got anything to say?' I think I stammered some platitudes about being honoured and that I wouldn't let them down, but

There were four of us under 25 and they were all younger than me. They all had a head start on me, having started when they were 16 or 18 and I was 23, but I was really impressed by their dedication and professionalism and we had a great laugh as well. But I was behind and I had to catch up, so it really pushed me to try and get to where they were, even though they were younger than me.

Did you know straight away that in greenkeeping you'd found something special?

The first week in the job I raked bunkers and dug holes. I'd never worked so hard in all my life and I absolutely loved it. Within a few days I knew this was what I wanted to do.

It took me ages to get out on the mowers but I watched those guys going out and I thought, that's what I want to do.

I like physical work — my staff might laugh when they hear me say that now — but I like that sense of getting stuck in, fixing something and then putting it back to work, it's a good feeling.

I was there two years and in that time I did my NVQ 2 and also, because I was catching up, I went to evening school at Oaklands College and did my Level 3 at the same time.

The club purchased a course in Essex and at the end of my second year, when it felt like I had been doing the job five minutes, they asked me to go and run that, which was a mistake.

It seemed like a good idea at the time because I was nearly 25 and I thought I knew everything and I could handle

anything. But I'd never been in charge of people, there were a lot of things I didn't know and the course was going through a major reconstruction. There were nine holes being rebuilt, new bunkers all over the place, all sorts of things, and I just wasn't ready for that kind of challenge at that age and with that lack of experience.

I left and went to work at Stock Brook in Essex as first assistant.

You went from course manager back to a greenkeeping role?

It was the best thing I ever did to be truthful because at the end of that year I was so demoralised and I had no energy.

My mum died of cancer and it was quite a long process and it took a lot out of me, but fortunately the course manager at Stock Brook, Mick Fance, who works for Aquatrols these days and is one of the best greenkeepers I've ever met in my whole life, gave me an opportunity.

He could see where I was in my life and he rescued me. He promoted me twice and I was his deputy and I absolutely loved working there. It was one of the best experiences of my career. He was really demanding with high standards and really I learned how to be a greenkeeper there and how to manage people.

By 2000, I was married and had a son and I felt it was time to move on and run my own place. I went to Chobham in Surrey and that was a great experience again. It was a completely different experience to the first time around as I could handle it and I knew how to handle people.

‘I think the role of the chairman is about making sure the voice of the ordinary member is heard through the mechanism we have, which is the section, region and national board.’

then everyone just said ‘shut up’ and gave me hugs, shaking my hand, it was brilliant.

I had to come back to the club and make sure they were OK with it. The chairman was so supportive — he always has been, whether it’s my becoming North West Section chairman or BIGGA board member, he’s always been fully supportive.

What I take from that is, the things that BIGGA does or doesn’t do and whether you think those things are good or bad, you have the power to change that. This is our association. If you’re not happy about something, go to a meeting and make your voice heard. Or join a committee and put an alternative idea forward. You’ll always be listened to. I don’t know many other membership bodies where the ordinary member can

have such a big impact on a national level.

What do you consider to be priorities of the association going forwards?

I think the role of the chairman is about making sure the voice of the ordinary member is heard through the mechanism we have, which is the section, region and national board.

We’re seeing greenkeepers under pressure for all kinds of reasons. What BIGGA can do in that environment is provide people with the tools to cope with those pressures.

Secondly, we can have an influence with the powers that be in golf, of which we are one. We’re no longer looking upwards at The R&A and others, we’re part of that environment and we can influence things that they do.

Then, if things do go wrong for people, we’re there for them. Our membership services managers are working every day with greenkeepers to provide support for them. We provide the services that people need and we can put them in touch with the right people to help them cope when things don’t go well.

How about greenkeeping itself, perhaps that’s more speculative, but where do you think the priorities of greenkeeping in general should be?

That’s a difficult question because if you start talking about greenkeeping, there are as many points of view as there are greenkeepers.

I think there will necessarily be a focus less on presentation and more on accessibility and resilience. You can spend your time primping and preening and striping and doing those things that make the course look pretty. But when I talk about resilience, for a golf club like ours, we need to be open for business.

Yes, it’s important about the presentation of the golf course, but if you’re not open then it doesn’t matter whether it’s looking pretty or not. We need to make sure that it drains well enough and we need to make sure that we provide routes so people can play with a buggy or a trolley if they need to, or that we make sure children can get involved.

Also, greenkeepers have not done enough in previous years to be part of the business side of things. We were closed off and the clubhouse, the bar, the pro shop, were a whole different thing. We need to be part of that structure. We need to be in the room when these things are being discussed.

We need to understand the pressures and why we aren’t being given a greens mower this year or why we might need to cut our seasonal hours or whatever it may be. We need to understand why those decisions are being taken and perhaps inform them. I don’t have a greens committee any more, I sit with the board of directors. That was my chairman’s decision because, through exactly the reasons I’m talking about, he felt it was better for the running of the club if I was sat in the room and I understood everything and why decisions were being made.

I’m not saying you throw out all your principles to make people happy, but we need to be part of the bigger picture and part of the management structure of the club.



Scott Reeves with Naga Munchetty and Chris Kennedy at BTME 2018

Reflecting on the prize of a lifetime

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Daniel Ashelby reflects on his time in America

Daniel Ashelby, The Mere

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year



Nothing can prepare you for the amazing experience awaiting you as Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.

The final at BIGGA HQ seems a distant memory. Christmas soon flies by and then before you know it you are standing in an airport terminal, leaving the golf course behind and preparing to become a full-time student again for two months.

The journey to America went by in a blur of flights and taxis. I arrived at my hotel in the early hours of the morning and got my head down ready to start my education just a few hours later.

As the sun rose over Massachusetts, I got my first real look at America. It was a very surreal experience, like waking up in an American movie. I car-shared with

a fellow student into university; riding in a massive pick-up truck and watching all the interstate signs and semi-trucks pass by, listening to country and western.

We arrived on university campus, which is like a city within itself. It's full of wonderful architecture and amazing facilities. The first day of class was induction, where the students met each other and learnt the course structure. Many of the students on the course were from states local to north east United States and were staying at the same hotel as myself. Other students had come from further afield, including two other international students from France.

Continued over

Read this for:

- Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards
- Winter turf management
- Continued Professional Development



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**STUDENT
GREENKEEPER
OF THE YEAR
AWARDS**



The course was split into subjects, each taught by an internationally-recognised expert. It was very informative; being able to spend time learning in-depth the various subjects in quite an informal way. The teachers were very open and liked to encourage discussions, especially since the students all come from various backgrounds. The first few days we were eased into the subjects but the pace soon picked up and the workload increased. The tutors all had their own preferred methods of teaching and testing, which meant you were constantly being tested on your knowledge.

The subjects included topics such as plant pathology and turf entomology. They are taught from an American aspect, so a lot of the concerned problems and pests are not significant in Britain, adding an extra layer of challenge. It was fascinating to gain an insight into a whole new world of greenkeeping that I had no idea existed.

Weekends were usually quite relaxed, as other than revision most homework was completed during the week, which gave us students time to relax and explore the city. There were plenty of bars and restaurants to experience the authentic American culture and sample the cuisine. The steaks truly live up to their reputation and nights were regularly spent down the bowling alley or watching sports in a bar. I was fortunate enough to be there for the Superbowl final. The bar was packed with Patriots fans, and their team went on to win. We were joined by some of our professors to watch the event and the atmosphere was incredible; it was a

'I will never forget my time at UMass and all I have learnt'

truly unforgettable experience.

During the fifth week of my journey I exchanged snowy Massachusetts for the warm west coast, attending the Golf Industry Show in San Diego. I landed and took a walk down the harbour front to my hotel, walking between the palm trees and the deep blue Pacific, feeling very privileged to be in such a beautiful city.

Later that day I met up with Steve Ultram, my mentor who had nominated me for the award. We also grouped



with the other British greenkeepers in attendance, which turned out to be quite a few; it was like a British invasion. We visited the historical gaslight district and took in the nightlife of California in the evenings. Our party had a great group of lads and it was good to catch up with the guys from Reesink Turfcare and BIGGA. This was a much-needed taste of home after a month of intense schooling.

The next day was my first experience of the Golf Industry Show, which, like everything in America, is larger than you can imagine. It was great to see all the latest machinery on display and I also attended many educational seminars and made the most of this learning opportunity.

It was important to maintain my studies for winter turf school, which



Taking a closer look through a microscope



Dan collecting his certificate of achievement from UMass' Pat Vittum



Winter turf school, class of 2019



HMS Surprise



USS Midway in San Diego

was still ongoing during my absence, but during the evenings, we went out for meals with Toro and the trip was rounded off on the final night with a visit to the bar where Top Gun was filmed. I will never forget these days, in particular the great company and opportunity to meet and converse with some truly accomplished colleagues.

I arrived back at UMass for my final week of winter turf school, ready to catch up with the workload. The last week flew by and on the final day the students were invited to a graduation ceremony and celebration dinner. The tutors gave a speech and we were awarded our certificates of completion. Students were selected by each subject's tutor to be awarded high honours for outstanding performance. We were told that two of the 40 students who attended this year's course had been selected for high honours in each subject. I was very proud to be one of the two to accomplish this feat and was very pleased my hard work paid off.

Afterwards, we briefly had time to exchange our congratulations and goodbyes. While I was relieved to complete the course, I was sorry to see it end. It was a very enjoyable experience and I will use the knowledge I gained throughout my career.

For the final leg of my journey I visited Toro HQ in Minneapolis. With all the pressures of school over I felt I could relax and enjoy this valuable opportunity. The factory visit was the perfect way to round off my tour. I visited the main headquarters where design, development and testing take place in a state-of-the-art facility. The rigorous

testing laboratories were extremely impressive. Each new design is tested in simulated extreme conditions, in every way imaginable. The amount of detail that goes into producing robust functional machinery is really evident. Also on display throughout the building are restored historical models; there are some really interesting and quirky designs dating back to the 1940s.

The next day we visited the assembly plant and the distribution warehouse. It is a real spectacle to see brand new machines built from sheets of welded steel, right through to hi-tech completed machines all in one building by a very passionate workforce. Toro strives to keep its assembly line up

to date and is always bringing in innovations to improve the build quality of the machines.

For the final part of my trip we crossed the Mississippi river and the border into Wisconsin for a visit to the distribution warehouse, which prepares the new machinery for shipment around the world. Lines of sprayers and utility vehicles are parked as far as the eye can see and stacked three high on the shelves are fairway mowers. It is mind-boggling to see the scale of the operation. And yet, our tour guide apologised for the lack of machinery — apparently the majority of it had already

Continued over



Dan at the Toro factory



Dan Ashelby at the Toro factory



been shipped out and this was only a remaining portion! I really enjoyed the factory tours; Toro was very accommodating, as has been the case throughout my journey. I cannot thank everyone enough for all they have done for me.

Reflecting back on my time in America, I have learnt so much and taken so many life experiences away with me. Each part of my journey was completely different, but also so beneficial to my progression and helped me understand my career so much better. I will never forget my time at UMass and all I have learnt. The course was very testing and I was proud to

qualify so highly in my class.

The trips to California and Minnesota were engaging and a great opportunity to see what American greenkeeping has to offer. This journey has come at the end of an extremely busy year and has left me energised for the new season to come.

I would like to express my gratitude to the team at BIGGA for presenting me with this opportunity. I would like to thank Reesink Turfcare for making all this possible, especially David Cole and Christine Wilson, who have been extremely helpful in organising my trip and corresponding during my stay. I would like to thank the guys from Toro

who looked after me and Pete Newton for making San Diego such a good experience.

I would like to thank Steve Oultram for being an inspirational mentor, who has been committed to helping educate greenkeepers for many years and Myerscough College tutor Chris Tiplady for encouraging me to complete my work to the best of my abilities.

I would like to thank my dad Mark for helping me throughout my career and finally, I would like to thank my girlfriend Kerry for understanding my commitment to my work and being so supportive throughout this trip.

I am so grateful to have been selected as Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and join the prestigious ranks of previous winners.

I would fully recommend to any aspiring greenkeeper who is committed to their career that they should enter this competition. Just to enter is a wonderful learning experience within itself, but the opportunity is there to advance your learning and career in a truly unique way.



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Nominations are now open for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards 2019. Head to the BIGGA website to find out more.





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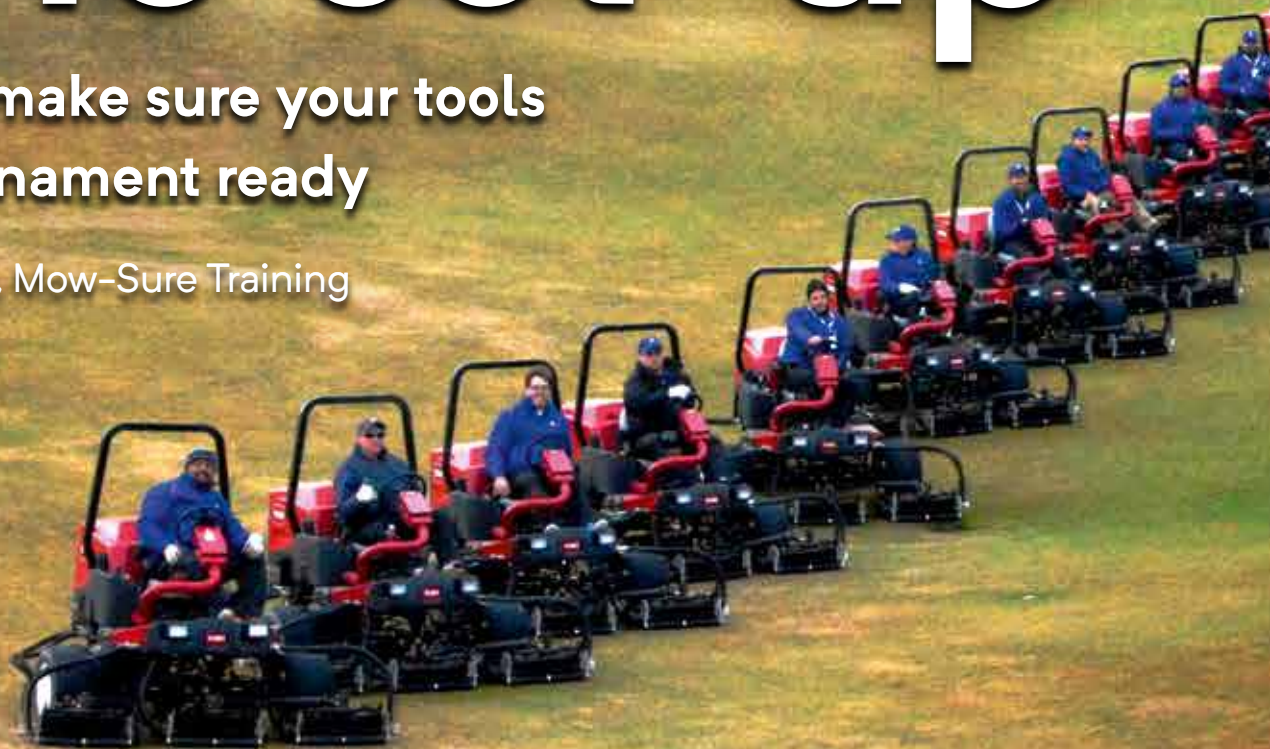



Member of Royal Reesink 

The set-up

How to make sure your tools
are tournament ready

Ian Sumpter, Mow-Sure Training





Read this for:

- Machinery maintenance
- Correct machinery set-up
- Tournament preparation

When is the best time to consider machinery preparation to help achieve that tournament finish?

When thinking about machinery preparation for a tournament, we should consider a much broader approach to timelines and how it progresses up to the tournament period. We should be considering machinery set-up as early as possible to give us the best chance of getting it right on the day.

When preparing for a tournament, we automatically start thinking about agronomy, such as reducing height of cut, improving green speed and

the visual appearance of the course. What we don't necessarily think about is that machinery maintenance and set-up could directly relate to 70% of the factors required to achieving good quality of cut. When we understand this, we understand machinery maintenance and set-up plays an important part in preparation for the tournament finish and maintenance through the competition and beyond.

With machinery set-up it is important to understand mowing equipment cannot remedy a turf condition; the solution to achieving a good quality

playing surface with good after-cut appearance is maintaining the partnership between the turf and the machine. There should, however, be no doubt that the cutting unit plays one of the vital roles in producing healthy turf and giving us the best visual quality.

Machinery preparation should be something we consider throughout the year, not just for tournaments. Correct set-up is one of the steps to perfection and only takes a little time, a little effort and is not costly.

Continued over



Royal Greens hosted the Saudi International this year

I have spent many years helping customers in different parts of the world with after-cut appearance issues. In nearly all the issues I have been involved in it has been due to incorrect machinery set-up for the expectations of the agronomy team. These expectations need to factor in machinery set-up accounting for:

- Climate, depending on season and changeable throughout the year;
- Grass species and how we manage the machinery;
- Composition of the greens and the affect this has on effective height of cut;
- Course location and how we manage the machinery to meet the challenges;
- And much more.

One fact I have come to understand is that what works for one course, machine or brand won't necessarily work for another. Taking this into account, the first step with any machinery set-up is to understand what works for you on your course in your conditions at specific times of year. Understanding limitations is as much a part of how we prepare machinery for tournaments as what we actually do to set-up the machinery.

Meeting expectations leading up to the tournament.

It is important to have all maintenance equipment in the best possible condition. Good ongoing preventative maintenance is one aspect of machinery preparation for tournaments and reduces the likelihood

'Tournament preparation and support is about starting early, finishing late and hard work in-between.'

of a unit down during the tournament.

This preparation needs to start on day one when your machinery is first delivered to site. To ensure equipment is safe, we must have pre-start checks in place before operating. We also need to demonstrate equipment is regularly maintained by a person that

has had adequate training. Pre-start checks and service schedules are the first step in preventative maintenance, ensuring the equipment is in the best possible condition and reducing the likelihood of a unit going down during the tournament.

It is important to have the machinery service schedule completed before the build-up to the tournament gets under way. At this point service parts that are required can be ordered and fitted in time. This releases time during the build-up to the tournament and allows for any potential issues to be corrected.

It's also a good idea to review stocking of perishable items as they can be ordered and fitted when required. Having key items in stock will avoid units down while waiting for parts to arrive



Early morning starts

during the tournament.

Correct unit sharpening and set-up should be an ongoing process throughout the year. Recently, a few months before a major international tournament, I was asked to look at a quality of cut issue. It was clear that the units were not cutting the turf effectively. This poor quality of cut had led to tearing of the grass, leaving brown tips and a poor visual appearance. Working with the agronomy and maintenance team I delivered training on grinding, covering correct bottom blade top face angle, front face angle and a cylinder grinding regime.

Things to check include:

- Sharp with no visible damage to bottom blade or cylinder;
- Maximum wear limits of the reel by measuring from the spindle to the outside of the reel;
- Unit set-up and best practice, check the unit is on cut, light contact or slight air gap depending on your preference or recommendation of manufacturer;
- Check height of cut is the same on all units.

I recommended for one member of the team to be responsible for the grinding and set-up process. This maintained the same standard and gave ownership and accountability to one person.

On my visit we discussed height of cut expectations leading up to and including the tournament so we could recommend appropriate set-up. It is important to give consideration as to what bottom blade will be required to achieve both the height of cut leading into the tournament and the tournament height of cut.

To fully understand heights of cut and correct bottom blade choice we need to understand the difference



between bench set and effective height of cut. The difference between the two will depend on factors such as agronomy, unit weight and weather.

The choice of bottom blade will be dependent on the height of cut range the agronomy team want to achieve. The wrong bottom blade that does not allow for the lower effective heights of cut will have a negative result on the tournament finish we are aiming to achieve.

I was asked if it is possible to drop to a bench set of 9mm on their fairway units for the international tournament. The standard bottom blade fitted at the time would allow a minimum effective height of cut of 9.5mm.

The short answer was no, the bottom blade is too thick to achieve 9.5mm height of cut. However, to achieve their goals and ensure flexibility, we discussed the height of cut range expected in the lead up to the tournament (12mm) and the potential height of cut during the tournament (9mm). I recommended using a low height of cut bottom blade, which gave

them the option of between 4.5mm to 12mm effective height of cut.

Once the correct bottom blade is fitted matching our desired height of cut range, we also know the attitude and aggressiveness of the bottom blade is important to the mowing operation. It gathers the turf, placing it into the path of the blade. As we alter heights of cut, we need to check that we have maintained the correct angle recommended by the manufacturer.

Reviewing quality of cut issues and correct unit set-up at this early stage meant we had time to implement corrective action and support the agronomy staff in achieving their goals.

Returning two months later to provide tournament support, it was good to see the improvement in the appearance of the turf and improved staff knowledge and skill. The quality of cut issue had gone and the units were achieving the quality of cut expected from the agronomy team.

Continued over



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Maintaining expectations during the tournament

Preparation is key to making life a little easier regarding machinery and the tournament days. Ideally before the tournament we have carried out the correct servicing, machinery has been thoroughly checked and any wearable items replaced if necessary. We have brought into service as much of the equipment as possible and ideally, we have back-up machines available. We have set the units up and we have the correct bottom blade fitted. We can't factor in for every eventuality but good preparation will reduce the need to crisis manage machinery issues.

During my support for the Saudi International on the European Tour, we implemented a number of processes to manage the machinery throughout the tournament. Following on from previous discussions during the build-up to the tournament, we fitted the correct bottom blade, giving them flexibility in choosing the height of cut they required.

It is important to monitor the machinery and in particular the quality of cut. Throughout the tournament we checked and set the units on cut twice a day. Additionally, we went out with the agronomy team and checked units at the side of the greens when the agronomy team felt there could be a potential issue. It can be a great troubleshooting aid when you monitor clippings.

One way I monitored the quality of cut was to send the agronomy team out with a bag identified to their machine or to each individual cutting unit on their machine. Each operator placed



some clippings into their bag and we were able to view the clippings under a microscope and identify each unit's quality of cut. When required, we pulled that machine out and checked thoroughly, giving a quick spin grind and setting on cut.

As the machinery returns from mowing it is important to have a methodical process to manage checking, setting and returning machinery ready for the next mowing session. One way to manage this is to have machinery requiring work facing into the workshop, machinery finished and ready for work facing out. This process allows all staff to know what machinery is available. At the Saudi International we had enough maintenance staff to manage this ourselves. The agronomy team washed the machines and left them lined up facing into the shed. The technicians brought them in, checked them over and set on cut and moved them back to

the starting position for the next later mowing session. Working this way, the technicians understood what was happening to each machine and the operators knew the machines were ready when placed back in the ready area.

When machinery has been checked and set on cut, time can be allocated to any potential repairs to maintain the machinery requirements of the agronomy team. If we have the appropriate parts in stock, we can easily maintain the level of machinery required. It is important to know the back-up machinery is only there to give us time to repair the fault. It is only a replacement as a last resort. This approach gives the agronomy team the maximum amount of machinery at their disposal.

Tournament preparation and support is about starting early, finishing late and hard work in-between. But to see the results of the whole team and know you played a part makes it all worthwhile.



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Time to de-compress

After a winter of heavy footfall on the greens, it's time to relieve some stress

Paul Miller, SRUC (Elmwood)

Aeration

Star tines

Read this for:

- Aeration

Aeration is one of those apparently simple things in fine turf management that can be taken for granted.

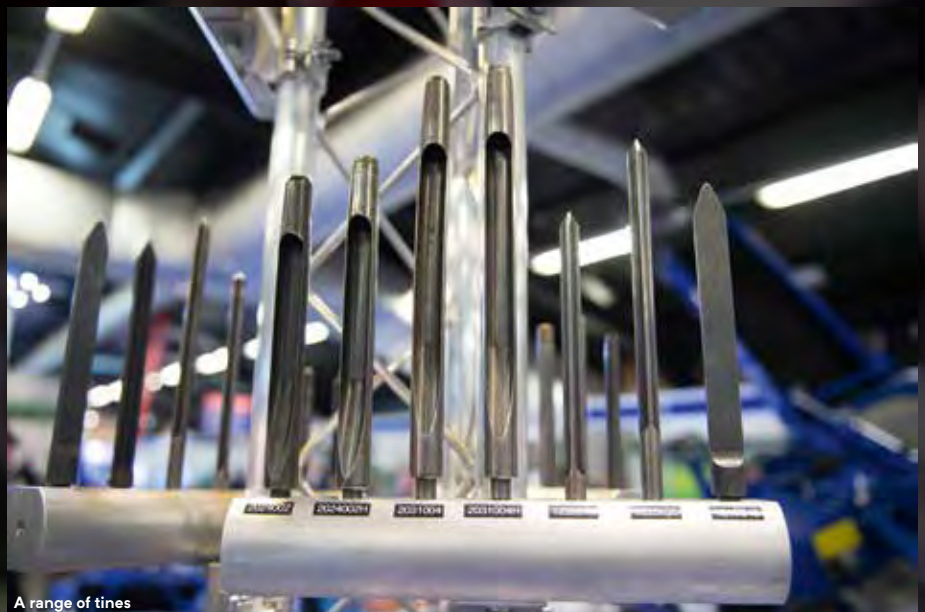
It is a part of the annual maintenance programme of every golf course, with the vast majority of greenkeepers having well-drilled practices for getting the job done quickly and efficiently and leaving the course tidy and ready for play.

Despite the universal nature of aeration, I find it one of the most complex areas of greenkeeping practice to introduce to young greenkeepers because there are so many variations on the theme in relation to tines, spacing, depth, frequency, timing and whether or not to follow-up with topdressing.

I'll look at one or two aspects of that later on, however before that it feels important to reaffirm some basics and ask why it is that we need to aerate, what are the perceived benefits, and what would happen if we just didn't bother? To do this we'll start by having a look at what is going on in the soil and how that affects the turfgrass plant.

As the name suggests, aeration — or 'aerification' as our American cousins would have it — is about getting air into the growing medium. Any of us who have been in the industry for even the shortest time will know that it commonly involves poking holes in the surface to encourage this to happen.

The need for aeration depends on a range of factors, but a good place to start is the soil. Soil is made of solid material (mineral and organic matter), water, and air. Mineral matter is the 'crushed rock' element of soils, and the mineral fragments are classified by size



A range of tines

into 'sand', 'silt' and 'clay', the relative proportions of which give soil its texture.

Common soil textures include sands, loams, and clays.

Sands as a group of soils have upwards of 90% by weight of their particles as sand. As the biggest of the mineral particles, these have large spaces between them, which allow rapid movement of water downwards to the water table or to the drains. As water passes through and empties from the spaces in the soil, it is replaced by air.

'There are only two things that can occupy the spaces — water or air — so if there is more water there is less air'

Loams are a group of soils that have a relatively high percentage of sand, as high as 50 to 60% by weight, with the balance being silt and clay. The silt and clay particles get into the spaces between the grains of sand, reducing the size and connectedness of these spaces, which has the effect of slowing down water movement, meaning more water is retained. There are only two things that can occupy the spaces — water or air — so if there is more water there is less air. For the finest textured soils, such as the clays, the particles are so small that the spaces between them are also microscopic, so consequently water movement and air penetration into these soils is really slow.

Why is it important to know how different soil textures handle water and air due to their particle size distribution and arrangement of internal space (porosity)?

Continued over

Well, we can look to golf's history to find at least part of the answer to that question. Golf became the game we know today due to its relationship with the links land of the east coast of Scotland; links soils are all 'windblown sand', or 'shelly sand' and have a predominance of sand particles that give the rapid drainage and high air content described earlier. These dry and inhospitable landscapes are the natural home of drought tolerant, fine leaved grasses. These are the fescues and bents that produce the surfaces for the game of golf and are still highly prized in our industry. It is accepted, in general terms, that to give these grasses a chance to be competitive, we need to manage water content around or below 30% by volume at field capacity.

Having soils with the 'right' water and air content is important for sward composition, but it doesn't stop there. The function of roots to grow and absorb water and nutrients, as an underpinning aspect of plant health, is dependent upon respiration, meaning an oxygen supply from the soil is essential. Of course, there is always the looming spectre of disease that is more prevalent in wet soils and in plants under stress. Given all of this, it is clear that maintenance of adequate air content in soils is of fundamental importance in fine turf management.

Photograph 1 shows the profile of the 'dream' soil; a sand with no apparent layering, and the need for aeration in this soil is less than it might be in others.

We could be forgiven for thinking that it is only sandy soils that have sufficient internal space to allow water and air movement, but in the natural situation there are soils with a heavier texture, such as the loams, that have found a way to facilitate it. What has happened in these soils is that the individual particles stick together to form aggregations known as 'peds', this phenomenon being known as 'soil structure'. The aggregation can take many forms, but what they all have in common is that well-structured soils create channels between peds that allow root penetration, water movement and air replacement.

A problem for all land managers though, and a particular one for us in greenkeeping due to repeated foot and vehicle traffic movement over the one area, is that these aggregations are fragile and can be easily disrupted and smeared against each other, leading to a loss of the water and air movement



Photograph 1 shows soil with no layering

characteristics that we need. We call this phenomenon 'compaction' and much of our aeration practices are designed to address compaction, which is a significant consideration, if not a problem, in many turf management situations.

If we follow through the logic of the situation, compacted soils have fewer water and air movement channels. They retain water at the expense of air and end up with moisture content higher than the 30% guideline. This means that the fine grasses are outside of their range of adaptation and therefore struggle to compete with other species, particularly *Poa annua*.

We have seen that natural soils can facilitate water movement and air content through texture, structure, or a combination of both. If golf course soils are blessed by a high sand content then this is a great start to maintaining air levels, but it is difficult to do so in the heavier soils. The squeezing together

of particles and disruption of soil structure — compaction — is commonly more significant in these heavier soils. Aeration is a general term applied to management practices that aim to maintain soil structure and consequent water and air movement, which is great, but why are there so many options in aeration if it were that simple? The answer to that lies in the precise nature of the problem, and where in the soil profile the problem is found.

Three common situations where water movement and air penetration are restricted are firstly in the build-up of unwanted organic matter in the surface layers, secondly in the upper regions of the profile (perhaps 100 to 150mm deep) and thirdly in deeper regions, possibly as a consequence of the original construction methods or in natural changes in the profile.

Build-up of unwanted organic matter, or thatch, leads to a surface layer that



Photograph 2 shows an extremely thatchy profile

retains water against the pull of gravity, preventing it from moving into the layers beneath and then through the profile.

Photograph 2 shows a very thatchy profile in need of some real attention if it is to grow healthy turf and produce good quality surfaces.

Aeration to deal with this can include regular spiking or slitting at various depths to facilitate water movement, but it is also a widespread practice to remove this organic material through hollow-coring.

A second fairly common problem in the soil profile is the formation of a compact layer occurring not at the surface but perhaps 100 to 150mm down.

Photograph 3 shows a profile in a parkland golf course where the upper layer has become sandy through regular topdressing over many years.

Just beneath this is where we find the native, unchanged soil and we have

a region of compaction. One possible explanation for this is the suggestion that repeated coring with 100mm tines or thereabouts causes the layer just beneath the depth of penetration to become compacted and this is something that many of you will be familiar with.

Compaction at 150mm or so is beginning to get tricky to reach as you need a long and robust tine to reach it and break the compaction. The verti-drain is probably the best-known aeration equipment that has the capacity and the power to drive tines to this depth and for them to effectively break the compaction. Over the past 25 to 30 years it has become a widely-used piece of equipment. Even within the practice of verti-draining, there are many variations on tine diameter and depth and degree of heave, all of which have to be judged by the course manager or head greenkeeper to deal

with the specific issue.

A third example is where a compact or other problem layer can exist deeper in the profile than can be reached by 'conventional' aeration, examples of which include the 'clay saucer' or 'ash saucer' construction of the early to mid 20th century that was designed to retain water in the days prior to automatic irrigation systems, or perhaps even the existence of a naturally-occurring change in soil type within the profile.

In relatively recent years we have seen the development of machines that can inject water or air under high pressure into surfaces with the aim of breaking deeper compaction, and there is also 'drill and fill' technology to go deeper still, so with the right equipment used properly we can still deal with compaction issues that present more of a challenge.

From a personal perspective, and by way of conclusion, it is my feeling that every golf course faces compaction to some degree or another, and therefore has a need to incorporate aeration of one form or another into the maintenance programme, with the details of this having to be decided by a competent and experienced head greenkeeper or course manager.



Photograph 3 shows an excessively sandy soil profile

Sports Metals

We are the UK and Ireland distributor for JRM tines, reels and bedknives. We also manufacture our own range of tines and the extracut-brush. Most aerators come with 3-400 tine options, in truth you need about 8-10. 3-4 coring options and 5-6 solid (including Bayonet or Star tines).

Coring tines

The tines in our range can pull up to a 20mm core with the most popular pulling 10-12mm. For those wanting less disruption, our micro tines start with a 6mm core and our new "Ninja Tine" a 4mm core.

Solid Tines

Our range starts at 5mm and goes through to 30mm with a variety of lengths (up to 450mm) and mounting options. Our 7" (177mm) solid tines for the ProCore648 are our most popular, selling faster than any other type of tine. Customers often topdress first and follow with a solid tine and extracut-brush attached to the ProCore.

Case Study

After recent "Ninja Tine" coring trials at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Craig Betts completed coring the greens on Monday. He collected the cores using verti-cut units. The greens were then topdressed and mother nature helped with

10.6mm of rain. The greens were fully recovered within 48 hours (see pictures). The process can be observed on our Twitter page @sportsmetals.

If you know your aeration programme for the year, we will quote, and if you want everything we are happy to take a monthly payment against your order. Get the tines in and when mother nature gives you the opportunity, grab it.

Contact us on 07828 145 598, or email us at office@sportsmetals.com



Coring with Ninja Tines



48 hours later

Terrain Aeration

Heavy downpours of rain on compacted grass areas on sports pitches, bowling greens, golf courses and amenity areas can leave standing water, rendering them unusable and stopping play.

The action of normal aeration, use of machines and foot traffic over time can leave areas compacted and panning occurs, causing poor drainage and depriving grass roots of oxygen and nutrients. Sports turf specialists Terrain Aeration have been providing a long-term solution to this for over twenty five years, using one metre deep penetration of the playing surface.

The Terrain Aeration Terralift machine not only solves the immediate compaction problem, the process has a beneficial effect that lasts many years. It works like this.

The Terralift hammers a hollow probe one metre into the soil using a JCB road breaker gun (this is because the ground is usually so compact at depth that it needs this hammer to break through). Once the probe has reached one metre depth, compressed air is released up to a maximum of 20Bar (280psi), the Terralift being the only machine using such high air pressure, which is needed to fracture and fissure the soil. The probe is withdrawn and the process repeated using two-metre centre spacings on a staggered grid pattern – this means that each shot interconnects with the previous ones.

On the tail end of the air blast, dried seaweed is injected

which sticks to the walls of the fractures and fissures and, over time, expands and contracts with the moisture content in the soil – similar to "breathing" underground. The 1½" probe holes created by the Terralift machine are backfilled with aggregate to provide a semi permanent aeration/ventilation shaft, helping to keep the whole aeration process working. The top 1" should be topped with the usual top dressing to encourage grass growth over the probe holes. The Terrain Aeration process is ecologically sound, there is no mess and once the pitch or green has been given a light mow it's ready for play to resume.

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Aeration today...

...the Charterhouse way

Nick Darking, Charterhouse

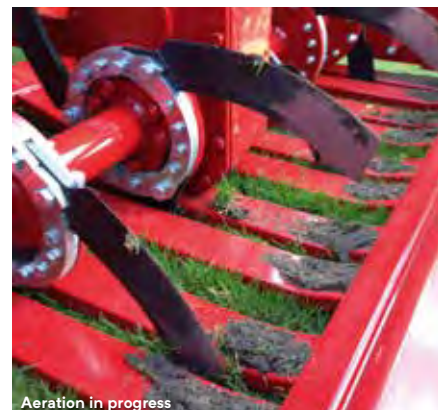
Trends, fads and fashions come and go in turf care but aeration remains a key topic for all greenkeepers, especially the need to do it properly.

In previous eras, turf managers may have considered successful aeration to be about getting the biggest machine, working to the greatest depths. While this may have yielded results in times of predictable weather, with the patterns we now face and growing demands on playing surfaces, a successful aeration programme requires a more measured approach. Nick Darking of Charterhouse Turf Machinery explores why techniques should be altered depending on the time of year and desired result.

It is well-documented that ideal soil conditions should comprise 45% mineral, 25% water, 25% air and 5% organic matter. Any imbalance in one of these components can result in the soil becoming inert, restricting growth or even killing the grass plant.

For strong, healthy root formation and a free draining soil, maintaining a network of pores and fissures in the topsoil is essential. Aerating turf aims to do just that, allowing air to move throughout the profile to provide a healthy environment for the grass plant. However, as with most turf management activities, the method and timing of aeration is essential.

We all know about Verti-Draining and its benefits, but using your Verti-Drain should be seen as a year-round activity. Using the Verti-Drain with a range of different tine options can maximise the effectiveness of aeration work conducted throughout the year. Micro-tining can be employed during periods of drier weather to help keep the surface from "capping" over and create a path down through the profile, helping to maximise the effects



Aeration in progress

of irrigation and nutritional programmes. Aerating at the right time will reduce the costs associated with irrigation and feeding, maximise the utilisation of any rainfall, while creating minimal surface disruption.

If wet weather is on the cards, the linear aeration provided by the Redexim Verti-Quake may be a more favourable option. The rotary motion, combined with the forward speed, sets up a wave action which helps decompaction to take place. However, it should be used with caution in dry conditions as slit lines can shrink and open up if the ground is too dry.

Another complimentary aeration technique could be to use the Redexim Level Spike. While slitting does not de-compact the soil, the speed of the technique makes it an effective method of keeping the surface open, letting oxygen in. As the action of the



Verti-Drain 1517

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Charterhouse
TURF MACHINERY

Level Spike, or smaller Multi Spike model, does not produce any heave, its results are not as long lasting as the work conducted by the more aggressive aeration techniques. However, it is a method which can be used effectively in most weather conditions — primarily a key tool in spring, autumn or pre-renovation works. As has been mentioned previously, the timing or work with the Level Spike is essential — too dry and you may struggle to get the machine down into the ground, too wet and you've missed the boat!

During the winter months, deep aeration to 12 or 14 inches during any relatively dry period will help keep surfaces playable, draining and free from puddling. As soon as you can get a machine onto the surface, without causing issues, aeration should be conducted. This deeper aeration work can then be complemented by following up with lighter Verti-Drains through drier periods.

For the targeting of specific, problem areas Charterhouse recently launched the OxyShot, the latest product in their aeration range. The OxyShot is an air-driven probe which penetrates up to 50cm into the soil before blowing a shot of air at up to 110psi to alleviate compaction, delivering air into the soil profile and creating drainage channels. The OxyShot can be used across a host of facilities from golf and winter sports surfaces, to arboricultural operations where aeration can assist tree roots growing in compacted, air starved soils.

Maintaining good surface drainage, gaseous exchange and a de-compacted root zone will provide the required air spaces for the grass plant to thrive. With unhindered root growth, development and establishment, you stand the best chance of achieving uniform and healthy coverage to deliver surfaces worthy of top-level play. With the modern demands and expectations placed on golf courses, an effective aeration regime is even more essential.



Mind the gap



Getting the most from aeration

As any greenkeeper will tell you, it's the gaps between the soil particles that matter just as much as the make-up of the soil itself. Well-aerated soil improves drainage and ensures sufficient oxygen is available to the turf's root system, allowing the roots to access nutrients and water, which in turn leads to a healthier plant.

Opening up the subsoil through aeration and applying topdressing improves the fertility and drainage properties of the soil profile. The choice of dressing very much depends on the required end result; do you simply need improved drainage, or is improved fertility also important?

A 100% sand dressing is designed to improve drainage, whereas a sand/soil dressing could improve both drainage

and fertility. Where access to irrigation is an issue, applying a sand/soil dressing as opposed to a high sand content dressing will help to retain moisture in the soil profile for longer.

Back in 2016, BIGGA Education Supporter British Sugar TOPSOIL, producer of sustainable, BS3882:2015-compliant topsoil and topdressing, launched Sports&Turf. Developed in association with leading soil scientist Tim O'Hare and extensively trialled by the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) at their Bingley research facility, Sports&Turf is a 90/10 topdressing. It was specifically designed to be used by greenkeepers on high wear areas, such as approaches, fairways and tees; it is not, and was never designed to be, a substitute for top dressing USGA greens.

A sand and soil mix is preferable in high wear areas as, although sand is inert and has no nutrient content, it helps to open up a soil profile and improve the drainage. Soil that is a blend

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Sports&Turf



Case study: Northwood Golf Club

Course Manager Wesley Walker instigated the construction of three new tees, utilising onsite material for the sub base and spreading Sports&Turf to a depth of 300mm as an effective medium for turf establishment: "I chose this material as we have had great success with it in the past. The sandy nature of this rootzone is not only great to work with but performs really well in wet conditions. The growth of turf on this rootzone is excellent."

Maintaining ideal course conditions across the seasons is undoubtedly a constant challenge for greenkeepers. Regular aeration and the application of products that aid drainage by keeping those important gaps in the soil are essential to course playability. But so, too, is the selection of friable, consistent topsoil with inherently good percolation for other works.

of sand, silt and clay contains nutrients. Clay particles are negatively charged and attract positively-charged nutrients such as potassium, magnesium, calcium, manganese and copper, which all feed the turf. Therefore a blend of sand and soil will both improve drainage and feed the turf.

At least 50% per cent of the sand content of Sports&Turf is very coarse to medium sub angular sand, which makes it easy to apply and less likely to cap existing fairway material. Large to medium sub-angular sand particles, when mixed together, will have gaps between each particle. This is due to the irregular shape not being able to lock together and the gaps allow for easier passage of water and roots through the profile. A sand containing medium to coarse round particles would be very unstable and lead to an unstable surface — imagine how unstable a glass full of marbles would be.

The soil component of Sports&Turf is British Sugar TOPSOIL's Landscape20 — a friable, BS3882:2015-compliant topsoil derived from prime arable soil. The topsoil element of the dressing

supplies a small amount of nutrients which, in the STRI trials, resulted in a 'greening up' of the turf.

Where Landscape20 has been used for many years by greenkeepers for bunker construction and general landscaping around the course, Sports&Turf is being successfully used to build tees, particularly where access to irrigation is an issue.

Since its launch in 2016, and reflecting the careful, evidence and experience-based decision making required of today's course managers/head greenkeepers, Sports&Turf has now established its credentials.

When applied as part of a regular maintenance programme of aeration, it is proving both effective and cost-efficient. When used for tee construction and extension, and for repairing divots and treating compacted areas, Sports&Turf really demonstrates its versatility.

British Sugar TOPSOIL's 'The essential guide to Top Dressing' is available to download free of charge at www.bstopsoil.co.uk or call 0870 240 2314 for a free hard copy.

AIRWAVE TE



Aeration is fundamental to maintaining healthy turf. But no single machine will solve every compaction issue on a golf course and that is why Campey Turf Care Systems offers a number of aeration options.

Reading product information can be helpful but learning from first-hand experiences is often better. Campey machines have been used in the United Kingdom and worldwide to solve long-standing compaction issues and enhance aeration programmes.

At Ruddington Grange, some greens were as compacted as 1000psi, but after a demo with the Imants ShockWave that reading dropped dramatically and led to the machine being added to the aeration programme.

Head Greenkeeper James Wheatley, said: "We decided to have a demo of the ShockWave and straight away the compaction came down to 450psi. It was used on the whole green and it didn't make a mess and we were really pleased with the job it had done.

"We then wanted to run it off the green where again we tried the penetrometer, and this time it wouldn't even go in. With one pass of the ShockWave it went straight in with no problem whatsoever."

Being able to aerate without having to close holes has become increasingly important in golf and the Air2G2 Air Inject provides industry-leading aeration with no disruption. While the machine can be used during wetter conditions to keep the root zone open, it can also be used effectively in a long-term maintenance programme.

An example of this is Notts Golf Club where the Air2G2 has helped solve a long-standing greens compaction issue as Course Manager Phil Stain, explained: "At Notts, we're constantly on the lookout for equipment that can help resolve problems we encounter during the day to day management of the course. For many years we've struggled with compaction in greens, very fine particles in the root zone clog up air spaces, impede drainage

and hinder root development. These are not ideal conditions for encouraging fine grasses.

"While we've tried numerous techniques over the years, we've had little success in relation to resolving this problem. In 2018 Campey offered to demo the Air2G2 on one of our most problematic greens, the demonstration would involve several treatments through the season penetrating the green to various depths.

"Initially we saw very little impact and after the first couple of treatments there was still no obvious sign of improvement. However, towards the end of the season, it was quite obvious that root density and depth of penetration had improved significantly.

"For us, the machine wasn't a one-hit wonder, it's something that will improve things gradually. To get a strong healthy sward you need an open healthy soil, I believe the Air2G2 can help us achieve that. Used properly this machine gives me the opportunity to work on improving the soil profile with minimal surface disruption, something that's very important in our industry."

With no single machine key to aeration, getting the right combination for your course is important and something John Bishop, course superintendent at Bray in County Wicklow found with the ShockWave and Imants Rotoknife — a linear aerator designed to relieve surface compaction, improve aeration and reduce thatch build up.

Speaking about the use of the machines on the fairways, John said: "We try and ShockWave once or twice a year depending on the weather conditions, but inbetween that we use the Rotoknife once a month during the winter to keep the surface open.

"We continued that through the playing season from March to September and this year we've used no wetting agents on the fairways at all. So, in the last two

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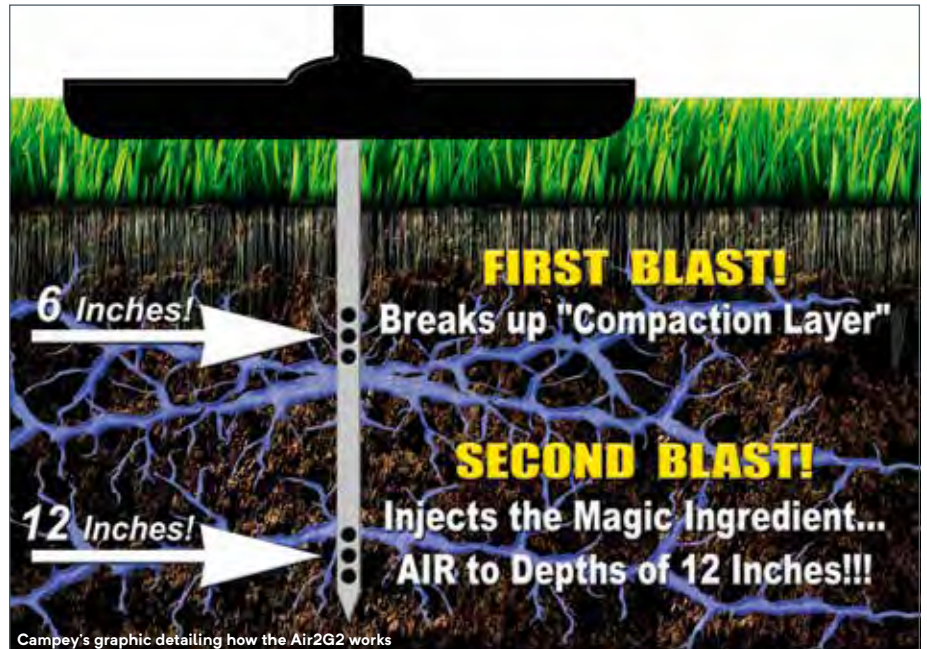


TECHNOLOGY

years our wetting agent programme has disappeared.

"In July we had 17mm of rain, the average for Bray in July would be 52mm, but we didn't have to use any wetting agents. That's because by using the two machines we are getting a much better root structure and we can take the stress of a dry summer.

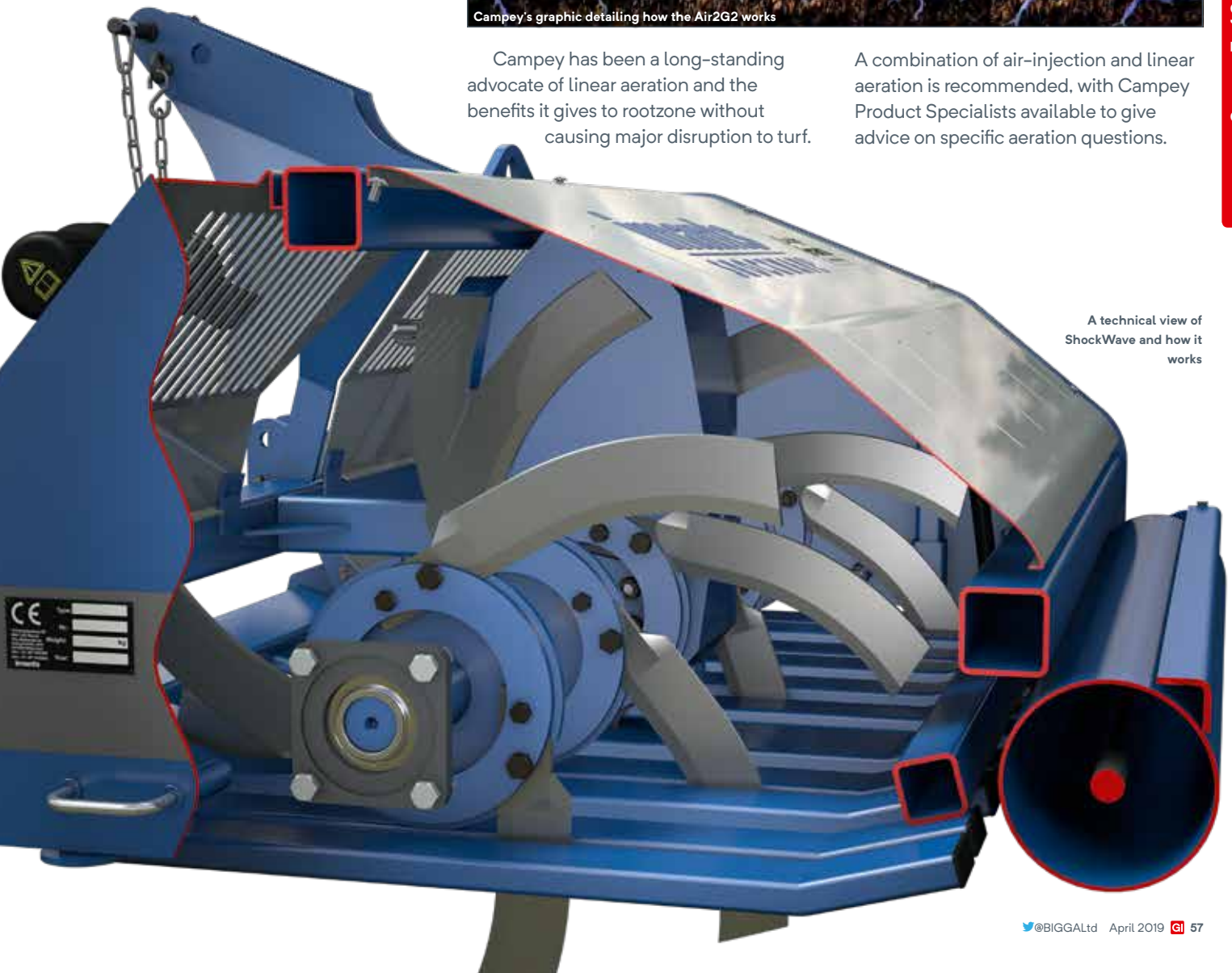
"We've had a lot of advantages through using the machines. We now have a better playing surface, we're using no wetting agents and our root structure is much stronger. They've gone from being weak with some superficial qualities to being strong in structure and presentation."



Campey has been a long-standing advocate of linear aeration and the benefits it gives to rootzone without causing major disruption to turf.

A combination of air-injection and linear aeration is recommended, with Campey Product Specialists available to give advice on specific aeration questions.

A technical view of ShockWave and how it works



Alternatives to disruptive aeration and thatch management

Symbio

The USGA specification rootzone for green construction and top dressing was developed nearly 60 years ago.

It was designed to be managed with a high input of inorganic fertilisers and powerful pesticides, many of which are now banned. The inert rootzone can build a layer of thatch and become compacted. The standard remedy has been scarification, hollow coring, rootzone replacement and heavy topdressing.

Many agronomists still recommend high inputs of sand, invasive aeration and scarification for decompaction and thatch removal with programmed chemical management to control disease. Club owners and greenkeepers may find these practices are no longer viable due to cost, golfer dissatisfaction and stress on the greenkeeper. Is it time for the turf industry to move forward?

The USGA specification provides an excellent base from which to work, but new techniques also been developed. These replace hollow coring and intensive scarification with less invasive



The speed with which the transformation can take place, the pictures were taken just 60 days apart in April and June 2018 at Greenburn Golf Club in a fairly wet area of Scotland. Aeration was provided by solid 8mm tines and small spikes together with Symbio Liquid Aeration, microbial inoculants and biostimulants.

microtining to create a healthy rootzone with improved drainage when wet and water retention when dry.

The alternative option

The alternative to physical disruption, thatch dilution and rootzone replacement is to degrade thatch, convert it to humus and encourage natural processes to decompact the rootzone and incorporate these processes into the daily management of the rootzone and playing surface.

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105-year-old sand rootzone with open vertidrain hole in healthy humus rich soil.

Healthy grassland soils comprise 50 to 60% soil particles, 15 to 25% air space and 15 to 25% water. A core out of the rough of most golf courses shows that it is almost thatch free and friable because natural processes are at work. The key to easy turf management is to get these processes to work in the largely artificial environment of a sand-based rootzone.

One misconception to knock on the head is that organic matter is bad. It is not, but too much organic material, or thatch, is bad. Organic matter in the rootzone comprises roots, humic compounds, partly degraded humus plus soil microbial life, which by itself can weigh up to 3 tonnes per hectare and which most people agree is good. When you use a loss on ignition test to measure organic matter, all the good stuff gets mixed with the bad, which can give a very misleading result.



Very limited oxygen transfer from hollow cores

‘Humus retains moisture, increases Cation Exchange Capacity, acts as a support for soil microbiology and creates the air and water space necessary for root growth...’

So how can greens and pitches be managed without coring and heavy scarification?

Thatch will degrade very quickly with the right fungi, actinomycetes and bacteria that convert it to humus. Humus retains moisture, increases Cation Exchange Capacity (the nutrient holding capacity of the rootzone), acts as a support for soil microbiology and creates the air and water space necessary for root growth, rapid percolation and nutrient recycling.

When thatch converts to humus, much of it becomes soluble in water so frequent tining with micro tines creates channels for water to carry the humus deeper to create a healthy, disease-resistant rootzone. When fully degraded, humus is not organic.

Creating a fast draining root zone

To naturally maintain free draining rootzones you need a minimum of 2 to 2.5% w/w humus or humic compounds in the rootzone and until the thatch is completely mineralised, which can take up to 30 years, humic compounds show up on the loss on ignition test to measure “organic matter”.

The positive effect of humus cannot be overemphasised. It turns the rootzone to a rich brown colour so it is easy to see if you have enough.

If the microbes needed to convert thatch to humus are missing then products containing thatch eating fungi and bacteria have been available for over 25 years. Symbio Thatch Eater has been guaranteed to work since 1995. If you degrade half the thatch layer you double the amount of topdressing in the surface layers.

Oxygen the best biostimulant

The most effective way to get oxygen evenly distributed throughout the rootzone is to alternate tining with 6 to 8mm block tines that hardly disrupt the surface with sorrel rolling that penetrates to the bottom of the thatch layer every two to three weeks.

There are also a number of liquid applications like Symbio Liquid Aeration that contain high numbers of oxygen atoms which allow oxygen to become available throughout the rootzone.

Quality is Everything

Simon Taylor, ICL

ICL

Within our industry, ICL is widely known for being fertiliser and nutrition specialists. However, course managers and greenkeepers are generally less aware of our expertise in seed selection.

At ICL we know that the quality of the turf grasses is one of the fundamental building blocks for producing high quality sports surfaces. For the last 10 years we have been focussing our efforts on developing a comprehensive and high quality turfgrass seed portfolio.

I have 25 years' experience in the seed sector and I know it takes time to build a quality seed portfolio — hard work, determination and strategic partnerships.

We must take a proactive approach to the development of our seed range and look years ahead to create quality varieties that will be able to satisfy future demands. To this end we work with private breeders such as Den Haan Zaden in the Netherlands and Mountain View in the US, to bring to the table new varieties across all the major species. On his own, Pieter Den Haan annually collects thousands of individual plants to further diversify the genetic background of his turf breeding programme. The aim of our breeders is to constantly develop new cultivars that will accommodate a wider

range of environmental conditions and be more adaptable across a range of management regimes.

A great help when evaluating the choice of cultivars or the quality of blends are the independent national turf trials. We place our new varieties into the various testing programmes when we feel we have something worth pursuing. The American National Turf Evaluation Programme (NTEP) is a comprehensive system that collects data across the majority of States. But it is very much based on evaluation of summer sports. For Southern Europe, those turfgrass rankings fit perfectly into sports stadia and golf course applications.

Of course, when it comes to the cooler northern regions with lower light intensities, the selection criteria need to be completely different, especially for turf under intensive wear. Most countries have their own turf grass trials programmes and can be used as a reference to turf performance, although there is still no substitute for seeing what works best in your situation. I will use these results myself when sourcing quality varieties on the world wholesale markets.

From a UK and Ireland perspective, our temperate climate is undoubtedly becoming more challenging and we are seeing more extremes of weather. The

grass breeding and selection process focusses on developing characteristics such as drought tolerance for water conservation and also stress tolerance/ disease prevention to make them better suited to survive such extreme conditions. We work with plant breeders to constantly make improvements in the new cultivars to fit the requirements of the future.

The turfgrasses within the ICL portfolio take positive characteristics from both US and EU genetic sources. With this strategy we aim to create seed blends with a broad-spectrum of attributes for coping with the diversity of conditions encountered across the UK and Ireland.

The ICL cultivar range is among the most diverse in the industry, giving turf managers the best and most exclusive cultivars, including the creeping bent Riptide, the browntop bent Heritage and the perennial ryegrass Torsion.

The grass types on our golf courses have always been important but with extremes of weather, product revocations and increasing levels of expectations they are more important than ever and this will only intensify. The reason we form partnerships with top breeders, blenders and suppliers is because in this market, quality is everything.

Working together with our partners





Insight

The science of modern greenkeeping

Light matters

Insight - Syngenta

Now that we increasingly have the tools to manage light and plant health more effectively, it becomes ever more important to measure and record light to better target inputs. Glenn Kirby reports on some of the latest research

Measuring light during short season days, from late autumn through to early spring, we can understand the severe restrictions it creates in trying to manage Bentgrass in the UK. Short days, low light levels or shaded conditions can be particularly harmful for finer grasses.

Poa, on the other hand, is well-adapted to lower light levels. It can function happily in light levels possibly

half of that required by Bentgrass — which is one of the reasons it can thrive and dominate on shady greens. But we also need to consider if all the light that is available can be utilised by the plant.

We now understand that once light levels exceed around 6-700 micromoles per m²/sec, then a turf plant's ability to photosynthesise reaches its limit. The excessive light

is wasted, but when coupled with other factors, such as extreme soil temperatures, low soil moisture or low nutrition, the additional stress could in fact be extremely damaging.

Research at Arkansas University indicated that Bentgrass requires a minimum Daily Light Integral (DLI) of 30 to maintain healthy turf quality. The DLI is a measure of the number of photons of Photosynthetically Active Radiation (PAR) light that falls on a surface over a 24-hour period.

However, studies of the daily light fluctuations have shown that, even where the total light measured would indicate sufficient is available, if the plant has been unable to fully utilise the high peaks through the middle of the day, there could be a serious shortfall of the plant's requirement (Fig 1).

Furthermore, shady conditions will limit the DLI reaching the turf surface.

That emphasises the importance of removing shade from around greens and tees, so the plant can gain longer exposure to the essential light levels to promote healthy growth. Taking light readings on course has shown intensity can be reduced by as much as 85% as a result of tree shade; dappled shade typically excludes around 40% of light.

It also possibly explains why stress indicator symptoms and disease often

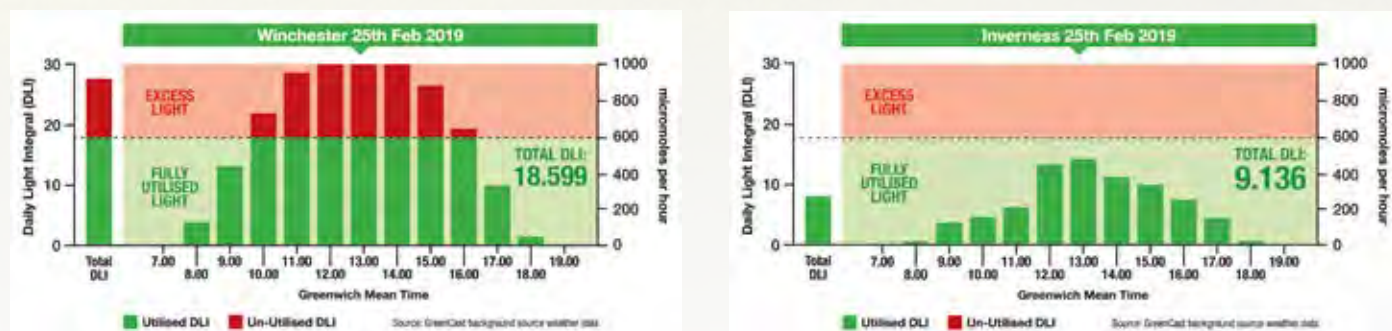


Working together with our partners

syngenta



Fig 1. DLI data gives a picture of where actions may be required to manage light more effectively and help turf cope with light shortfalls. Source: GreenCast background source weather data



On a bright early spring day in Winchester (above left), turf surfaces get good levels of sunlight and approaching the required 30 DLI. However, when periods of unutilised light intensity above 600, in red, are excluded, the actual useable light DLI is far lower, at less than 20. And with a partially shaded green, intercepting perhaps 40% of light, that would fall to around 10. For a course in Inverness on the same day (above right), with a DLI of 9, the shortfall in light for fine leaf turf grasses, including Bentgrass and Fescue, is extreme.

break out at a time when you would expect turf to be growing away from problems; plants need longer access to the light levels necessary for healthy growth. Removing shade will also help surfaces dry faster, to alleviate moisture-related disease risks.

STRI shade trials have shown that in low light situations, a Primo Maxx II programme helps produce stronger turf plants that are better able to utilise available light. The implication is that any areas that are frequently low in light, such as shaded tees, would be better able to withstand the stress under a treatment programme.

This work suggests that, under

such a programme, the crucial limiting light requirement may be as low as a DLI of 25. When light levels are low day-after-day, that could make a real difference. It is an area of work that requires further investigation.

From the results we have seen, in shaded or low light situations there would be a benefit in continuing a Primo Maxx II programme right through the winter on tees and fairways, albeit at a lower rate and extended application interval than would be used during better growing conditions. Further work needs to be done to confirm my thoughts that greens would benefit during the winter months.

The physical growth regulatory action of Primo Max II also holds back the vertical extension of leaves in search of light in shady conditions and encourages stronger lateral density. Chlorophyll concentration is also higher in shorter leaf growth, making photosynthetic activity more efficient.

Then, as we move into a summer programme with higher light levels that are frequently well in excess of the plant's requirements, there will be greater need to protect leaves from the excess with a Ryder UV pigment programme — particularly when turf may be under any other stresses that will exacerbate the sunlight effects.



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**North
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Firstly I would like to thank Neil Sadler for providing us with news from the North section for the last five years!

I think everyone will agree it was a really strange start to the year with 18 degrees in February, but unfortunately it seems to have gone back to normal.

There has been a lot of movement in the north recently, so a few congratulations are in order.

Richard Sharp is the new course manager at Murcar Golf Links. Michael Mann is the new head greenkeeper at Boat of Garten. Graeme Mellis is the new deputy head at Torvean/Kings Club. Adam Black has started at Deeside after moving up from Loch Lomond.

A few reminders: The spring outing this year has changed to The North of Scotland Golf Championships. It will be held at Elgin on 2 May and will act as qualifying for the BIGGA Scotland Golf Championships at Haggs Castle. This will be a Stableford format and we will send out more information on this soon.

Club 200 remains the same as last year but if anyone has changed their email address, could you please let us know. Both the golf championships and Club 200 should be paid in advance by BACS or cheque.

If anyone has any news they would like included please get in touch.



**SW Scotland
Robert Tosh**

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As I write this, I can't believe that it is almost the end of March already!



Section News

We want to hear what's been going on around your section so get in touch with your section scribe

Alternatively, email your news to karl@bigga.co.uk

Hopefully you've all had a good winter and are beginning to tie up all your winter projects to now focus on the new season starting.

There was a great turn out at the Scottish conference with some really good speakers. It was good to see so many faces from the section and I'm sure those that did attend were all able to take something from the day.

Congratulations to Scott Corrigan of Royal Troon who was selected to take part in the FTMI this year. Also, congratulations to David Feeney from Prestwick and Glen Mlotek from Shiskine who will both be representing the section at this year's Open Championship as part of the greenkeeping support team.

The spring outing will be at Largs on 9 May. There will be more details to follow but I hope we can get a good turn out.

Hope you all have a great season!



**West
Scott McTaggart**

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Hope everyone is doing well and all ready for the season ahead.

The Scottish conference was held in Perth on 5 March. It was a great day with a wide range of topics discussed. Hope everyone that was able to attend managed to take something away from it. It was also another good opportunity to catch up with fellow greenkeepers. Thanks to all the speakers and to everyone involved with organising it.

Well done to Lyle Davidson from The Carrick for being chosen to be part of the Solheim Cup support team and to everyone else who is lucky enough to have been selected.

On a personal note I am delighted to have been selected for the BIGGA Open Support Team at Royal Portrush. I am really looking forward the experience and a well done to everyone else selected. I would also like to thank my club, Ralston, for their support.



**Northern Ireland
Phillip Snellin**

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Here in Northern Ireland we're not always able to network as much as we'd like, so I'm going to use this column to



introduce you to some of the people in our section.

After leaving Greenmount college in 1991, Kyle Irwin immediately started working as a golf greenkeeper. Kyle continued his education at Elmwood and Myerscough colleges during his career, and prior to his move into sales, he was a head greenkeeper for nine years.

After working for two companies based outside of Northern Ireland, Kyle realised the need for a locally based company to support his customers in Northern Ireland and surrounding area.

Irwins Sportsturf Limited was founded in May 2018 to offer customers the best service and products available from leading suppliers in the industry.

The company distributes Barenbrug seed, Aquatrols, OGT and Angus, along with a bespoke range of granular and liquids under the Isturf brand.

To support the needs of customers, work has commenced on a bespoke build premises located close to the M1 at Junction 10, Lurgan, Co. Armagh.

Kyle said: "May I take the opportunity to thank my customers for their loyalty and support in getting Irwin Sportsturf Limited this far and look forward to exciting times ahead".

Good luck to Kyle on his new business here in Northern Ireland and I'll be doing more Player Profiles over this year.

We have had such a great winter so far and summer is just around the corner, bringing the smell of cut grass and construction jobs behind us. I'm seeing so many great photos on your Twitter and Facebook pages. I always try and retweet them as much as possible. If anyone wants a section on their course please let us know at phillipsnellin@hotmail.co.uk



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The section has a new member from Richmond. Rob Ibbotson has been with us for 10 months and we have finally signed him up, so watch out at the golf days because he's a bit of a bandit!

We held a spring quiz night at Teesside, compered and sponsored by quiz master general Brendan Brown of Northern Lubricants and Services. Although it was the first activity of the year, numbers were as expected and a decent turnout made for quite a competitive eight rounds of quizzing. Fortunately the cream rose to the top and one team's extensive knowledge of useless but interesting facts won.

Bonus Question: why are there no horses on the Isle of Wight? Answers on a postcard to PO BOX just for fun.

The sprummer golf day is to held at sunny Saltburn on 4 June. Further details and costs will follow.



North West Steve Hemsley

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The high temperatures certainly fooled a lot of golfers into thinking spring had sprung early last month.

However we know better and since then we have had more snow, sleet and plenty of rain, 7 inches at time of writing in Bolton for mid-March.

Around 90 people attended the North West Seminar Day held at Leyland, kindly sponsored by ICL and Bathgate. It was a very good day with lots of different speakers talking about a variety of subjects. Jim Croxton started things off with a talk about the association and how we are moving forward for the future. This was followed by Euan Grant from The JCB illustrating how the challenges were met for building a new championship course.

Matthew Brighton of Alwoodley then clearly demonstrated his excellent communication efforts for his members and committee, regarding his management of heather on the golf course. We were also joined by John Deere dealers, Balmers GM and Turners, who provided a three-pronged workshop

with the subject matter being a demonstration of new and existing machinery, how to optimise the performance of your units and a detailed explanation of Tier 5 engines.

After a hearty lunch, we were treated to a presentation from David Edmonson of The Island, who demonstrated how he achieves such a great level of presentation and standards. Well done to the education committee for all their hard work.

Events to look out for soon are the Turf club on Monday 8 April, with food available from 6pm. The Foley Company will present on the facts on grinding, spin and relief and much more. Email ntwturfclub@gmail.com to book a place. Also make sure you get your name down for the spring golf tournament at Warrington on 1 May. Before the golf there will be a machinery demonstration at 9.30am by Campey Turf Care with the event being sponsored by Campey and Consolidate Turf.



North East Paul Walton

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Best of luck to Jamie McDonald who is leaving his current assistant greenkeeping role at Northumberland and is heading out to work at Torreby Stott in Sweden.

Jamie is set to start work in Sweden at the start of April. This will be an excellent opportunity for him to gain some priceless experience that will stand him in good stead for his future in greenkeeping. Good luck Jamie.

John Scurfield (Morpeth) has recently attended the Future Turf Managers' Initiative (FTMI). John would like to thank everyone who was a part of the experience and can strongly recommend it to any future candidates that are thinking about applying for it.

After the mention of Adam Lund (Durham City) last month, Adam has settled in well with his new role of head greenkeeper and has got in touch to take this opportunity to thank everyone from his previous role at Heworth.

Congratulations to Tom Pattison of Blyth on taking part in the BIGGA Delegation to the Golf Industry Show.

After a successful Lantra-based chainsaw course, Ian Fletcher is available to supply the next tier up (cross cutting and felling over 360mm). If anyone is

interested in this course please get in touch via the email address supplied at the top of this article.

This year's BIGGA North East spring golf day will be held at Garesfield on Wednesday 8 May. If anyone would like to be a part of the day please get in touch via email or BIGGA NE Facebook page to help with catering arrangements. First tee time will be 10am, bacon sandwich and coffee on arrival, with presentation and a meal afterwards.



Yorkshire Rob Gee

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Here's a reminder of the golf days:

1 May at Scarcroft, 1pm tee off with brunch before;

24 July at Otley, invitation day;
18 September at Bingley.

More details to follow.

Congratulations Philip Baldock, previously of Ganton, on your new role with Rigby Taylor.



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North Wales Eifion Ellis

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Beware the 'Ides of March'? Just down the road, Capel Curig recorded 125mm of rain on that day!

Never mind, it will soon be spring.

I have just attended a machinery demonstration day organised by Campey Turf Care and Major Owen. We had more cakes than sandwiches, brilliant! Thanks also go to Dan and the Llandudno Golf Club, Maesdu, for hosting. What's great about these days is not only seeing new equipment, but the chance to network, catch up with old friends and make new ones. Communication is the way forward.

Did you read the article in last month's magazine about Sawgrass and its team of 105, plus an extra 90 volunteers to help the week go smoothly? In the 40 or so courses in North Wales, we only total around 130 greenkeepers! Scary eh?



Section News

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Alternatively, email your news to karl@bigga.co.uk



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The season is fast approaching and this year's golf and education seminars are as follows: Tuesday 7 May, Elsham; Thursday 11 July, Spalding; Wednesday 9 October, North Shore; Friday 13 December, Newark.

We are planning on holding an additional seminar at Woodhall Spa in November. Date to be confirmed.

Please be aware the first two competitions of the season are being held as an accumulator of points. The winner will receive sponsorship for the BIGGA National in September on behalf of GKB Machines. Many thanks to Tom Shinkins for the sponsorship.

In conjunction with the first two competitions, the third will be played for points to win the Cooper Man Trophy, which will be presented at Newark.

Congratulations to Graham Ives (Louth) for being selected to join the support team at The Open Championship.

Congratulations also to Colin Hopper (Elsham) and Matthew Shaul (Cleethorpes) for being selected to join the support team at the Solheim Cup.

As a section we would like to thank Rob Welford for all his support for our section over the years. All the very best in your new position.

Congratulations to Graham Ives on his new position as head greenkeeper at Waltham Windmill.



**Midland
Glen Howard**

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Congratulations to Mark Cleverley on his



SW&SW South Coast: Gemma St John and Bev Blair will volunteer at the Solheim Cup



SW&SW South Coast Leigh Powell spoke at the South Coast Section seminar

appointment as head greenkeeper at Hollywood. We wish you every success in your new role.

Kim Blake of Fulford hit a milestone last December with 30 years' service for his club. Kim was very thankful for his presents from the club and especially his work colleagues. Kim added that it's a rare thing these days for a course manager to stay at a club for so long and is looking forward to the next 30 years!

ICL Pairs Knockout Round 1 (home team listed first): Dave Stewart/Ed Beard vs Gary Turner/Tony Cheese; Ryan Neil/Matt Higgins vs Ed Stand/Adam Jones; Nick Bird/Dave Fellows vs Rhys Thomas/Kev Baker; Chris Lowe/Ben Wiggins vs Dave Gibbons/Craig Hartley; George Page/Luke Hine vs James Evans/Adam Throssell; Gary Watkins/Clive Jones vs Jim Moverley/Kev Booth; Craig Moss/Jason Gore vs Craig Potts/Matt Purcell; Karl Williams/Jam Harrison vs Tom Howells/Josh Marshall. All matches to be played by Friday 10 May. For more information contact Jim on 07415 718 854.

Our spring tournament is being held on 15 May at Leamington.

The summer team event takes place on 9 October at Moseley.



**East Midlands
Paul Fowkes**

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We had an excellent education day in March at Hinckley. Thank you to Rain Bird for running the event as everyone enjoyed it and learnt a huge amount.

We have some of our dates finalised for this coming season, starting with our spring golf day at Market Harborough on 30 May. This is also our national qualifier so I am sure it will be very popular.

Then we have our summer par 3 event at Beedles Lake on 22 August. Roger will have all the details and entry forms out as soon as possible.

A massive thank you to all our sponsors for their continued support. Without you our golf days would not happen.

Thank you
to our section
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Section News

We want to
hear what's
been going on
around your
section so get
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South Wales: Southerndown hosted a golf day



Section News

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and topdressings and Geoff Fenn from AGS took us through to lunch with a look at plant health, nutrition and disease prevention.

BIGGA's Membership Services Manager James Hutchinson delivered an interesting talk on golf course ecology and the seminar finished off with Leigh Powell presenting a fascinating slide show and talk on his volunteering experiences over the years.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended and to all our speakers who provided the audience with some great education, learning and points of view.

Many thanks also to our hosts on the day, Salisbury and South Wilts.

A special mention for two of our female greenkeepers in the section who have been selected to volunteer at the Solheim Cup in September at Gleneagles.

Bev Blair from Southwick Park and Gemma St John from Brockenhurst Manor will be part of the volunteering team helping to prepare the course for this prestigious and exciting competition.

Well done ladies and to everyone else who has been selected.



**South West
Seb Cavilla**

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I will begin by thanking the previous author of this column, Dave Taylor.

Dave has been part of the South West Section committee for the last two years.

In this time he has written for the magazine every month and was instrumental in organising a very successful mechanics-based workshop last summer. Dave has recently taken up his first course manager role and will be focusing his time there, so good luck, and thank you for your hard work.

As I'm writing this, the successful candidates of the John Deere sponsored volunteer trip to TPC Sawgrass are working hard preparing for the tournament. Our very own Mark Simmons is representing the South West for the 10 days, and if you don't already I recommend you have a look at his social media pages, it looks like quite the experience! Don't forget, it could be you next year, so keep your eye out for the chance to apply later in the year.

We are looking to hold an ecology based turf club in May at Minchinhampton. Hard work is currently

ongoing to make sure it is a great chance to gain insights and knowledge from experts in the field – further details will follow here and via email/social media.

Despite the weather finally turning for the worse, it seems there are an amazing amount of projects and maintenance works being carried out. Spring really must be just around the corner and I'm sure we will all be reaping the rewards from our hard work.

As always, if you have any stories, projects or anything exciting going on in the section, please do email me on southwestsection@bigga.co.uk



**South Coast
Jim Fancey**

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We held this year's South Coast Section Seminar at Salisbury and South Wilts on 26 February.

We had five speakers covering a range of interesting topics across our industry. Grant Peters, course manager at Parkstone, started proceedings by talking us through some of the drainage challenges he has faced over the years and how he has overcome them.

Joe Crawley, commercial manager at Roffey's, talked us through soil structures



**South Wales
Tom Howells**

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I'm sure if you haven't done it already, greens maintenance will be just around the corner now we have got rid of this wet weather!

There is tons going on within the section, including the most recent golf day down at Southerndown. The prizes were: 1st, Dale Sullivan; 2nd, Craig Sherman; 3rd, Steve Trickey. Nearest the pin was Clive Moran, longest drive went to the winner Dale Sullivan.

Tracey has asked if there are ways in which the section can make the events better and how they can increase attendance and make the events – both educational or golf – better and supported more! Get in touch with myself or Tracey if you can think of ways in which we can do this!

Now we are getting to the main playing season there is plenty to be getting on with making sure we have a great summer like last year (just with a bit of rain overnight). Anything else you want putting in the magazine then let me know and I'll see what I can do!



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**East Anglia
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On the education front for the East Anglian section, a cutting unit day was held in February at Wensum Valley and was a great success. We plan to repeat it in the not-too-distant future. A full write up is on the Section website..

Aldeburgh will host an ecology-focussed course walk on Thursday 30 May, with input from James Hutchinson.

There will be a Partners' Education Fayre again this year, building on the success of the event at Diss last year, and an exciting series of new education events covering a range of topics is in the pipeline. Further details on all these will follow.

The winner of the inaugural Order of Merit 2018 is Tony Thacker. This event is kindly sponsored by Simon Banks of Banks Amenity and Simon will continue his support of this event in 2019, where the winner will receive a trophy and £100 voucher. Thank you Simon.

Our first Section golf day of the year will take place at Southwold on Thursday 25 April, with arrival from 9am for 10am start. Hopefully we will have a good turn out and the weather will be kind to us. For your diaries, the second golf day will be at Rushmere on the 20th June. Further details will follow in due course..



**Essex
Wayne Wilson**

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Our next 18-hole golf day is on Tuesday 30 April at Braxted Park.



Order of merit winner Tony Thacker receives his prize

Section News

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Alternatively, email your news to
karl@bigga.co.uk

The event starts at 12noon with coffee, tea and bacon rolls. Tee off in threeballs from 1pm. The cost is £20 including a meal after the golf. Please contact our golf chief as soon as possible to book your place. Andy Harding from Boyce Hill can be contacted either by email at andyh125@hotmail.com or by phone, text or Whatsapp on 07884 433 327.

Sadly, due to lower than expected numbers, the grinding day that had been organised at Bernhard and Company was cancelled.

A one-day irrigation workshop in conjunction with Rain Bird has been organised for 10 April. The venue is Boyce Hill and it is free to BIGGA members. This course aims to provide an understanding of the maintenance and management of Irrigation systems. Food will be provided and relevant attendees will earn four CPD points. The maximum number of people for the course is 24 and it is expected to be very popular. Therefore, it is recommended to check availability and book quickly with Ian Nichols on 07974 924 141.

Last month we announced that the section wishes to encourage assistant greenkeepers and deputies to gain additional experience and knowledge by applying for tournament support. Applications for The BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth are still

open and we urge you to apply. Closing date is 30 April. The section will support any assistant greenkeepers and deputies who are successful with their application with reimbursements for travel expenses.



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Buyer's Guide

Advertorial

50% off golf rotors with LWS Irrigation

Would you like 50% off the cost of your golf rotors?

As irrigation systems across the country get fired up and tested in preparation for the 2019 season, this special Rain Bird spring offer is perfectly timed.

Rain Bird EAGLE Rotors are engineered to efficiently manage water. With worry-free performance and maximum water distribution uniformity they help your course, pitch or court achieve maximum playability and profitability.

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Head Greenkeeper Henley Golf Club



The club is seeking to appoint an experienced and motivated head greenkeeper to lead and manage the team.

Requirements:

- Considerable experience as a deputy or head greenkeeper/course manager
- A successful track record of course, plant, budget and team management
- Responsible for planning the annual maintenance schedule of the course
- The ability to communicate well with members, guests, colleagues and committee members

- Leading, managing, training and motivating the existing greenkeeping team
- Relevant greenkeeping qualifications

What we can offer:

- An attractive salary - negotiable D.O.E
- Club pension scheme
- Club membership
- Performance related bonus
- Staff uniform

Please apply by email before 19 April 2019 with a CV and covering letter detailing your suitability for the position to: manager@henleygc.com

First Assistant Greenkeeper Knole Park Golf Club

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a first assistant greenkeeper position at Knole Park Golf Club, in Sevenoaks, Kent.

The club is ranked 90th in England and 5th in Kent. Unique amongst golf courses in the United Kingdom, Knole Park Golf Club is located within 1000 acres of outstanding parkland, home to the finest deer herd in the South East.

The club is looking for an enthusiastic and qualified individual who is a strong team player and has a fine eye for detail.

For more information or to apply for the above position please contact: Kris Durrant via email: hkg@knoleparkgolfclub.co.uk

Please include a CV and covering letter. Visit our Website: www.knoleparkgolfclub.co.uk



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Here for you

If you notice your mental or emotional state getting worse, or you're worried about someone you know – help is available. You're not alone, so talk to someone you trust as sharing a problem is often the first step to recovery. BIGGA may not be the first place you consider asking for help, but help is at hand when you need it.

BIGGA's Counselling Assistance Helpline

Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Completely confidential and provides you with support by telephone by specialist call handlers and counsellors — 0333 000 2082.

BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund

For the benefit of members when times get tough and need financial support by way of a grant, award or a payment. Details available through the members area of the BIGGA website at www.bigga.org.uk

Perennial

Perennial is the UK charity dedicated to helping people who work or have worked in horticulture including greenkeepers. BIGGA works very closely with Perennial to help any member who needs free and confidential advice, support and financial assistance on 0800 093 8543 (general advice) or 0800 093 8546 (debt advice).

Call BIGGA House

and speak to a member of the Membership Team on 01347 833 800, visiting www.bigga.org.uk or by contacting your local BIGGA Membership Services Manager.





Around the Globe

Lukas Böttcher | Golf Club Gut Apeldoer, Germany

What is the most unusual thing you would tell other BIGGA members about Germany?

Germany is a very interesting country to visit, with great differences in landscape and culture.

In the north, Germany borders to the North and Baltic seas with beautiful beaches and a great fishing industry.

Down south we have the Alps, which is a fantastic place for hiking and skiing.

Germany is very much in the centre of Europe and so you can easily visit other countries.

How would you describe the style of course that you manage and what are its most defining features?

Gut Apeldoer is a classic parkland course in the north of Germany, right between Hamburg and the Danish border.

The club was designed by David Krause and just celebrated its 21st anniversary. Some of its main features are the rolling fairways, large lakes and sloped greens, which are in contrast to the flat surrounding countryside, without sticking out unnaturally.

How does greenkeeping in Germany vary from the UK?

Our ground and weather conditions are very similar to the ones you will find in

Great Britain, so general greenkeeping practices do not vary greatly.

We have very strict pesticide laws in Germany though, which are just getting tougher every year.

We took this as a reason to start managing our greens chemical-free from last year, which we found has only benefited our turf health.

What is the best part about living in Germany?

The quality of life is very high in Germany with a rich culture.

The education and job opportunities are also very great, for anyone who is willing to work hard.

What is the worst?

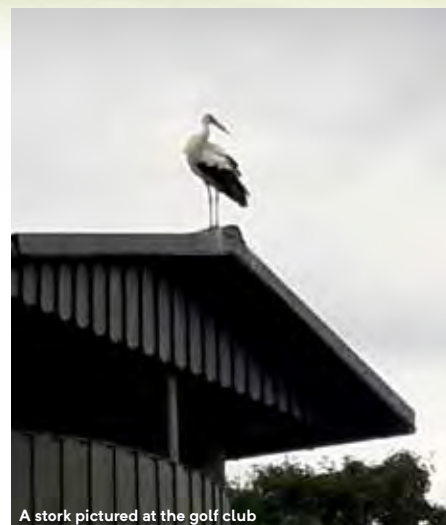
Most challenging are the unstable weather extremes that we have to face today with global warming.

The uncertain, inconsistent weather and the resulting guessing game affects us most, I believe.

What wildlife do you get on the course, that you wouldn't in the UK?

We have a great diversity of wildlife on our course, but storks are the one animal that is unique to our area during summer.

What is your club management structure like?



A stork pictured at the golf club

We are a privately-owned golf course, with the owner and general manager taking an active part in our daily business.

This makes it very easy for us to make decisions on all matters, without having to consult with a greens committee first.

What is the public perception of golf in Germany?

Even though there are more than 730 golf courses around Germany and golf is a very popular sport, it is still seen as a posh sport by the general public.

Why do you choose to be a BIGGA member?

In 2008 I became a BIGGA member when I started my education at Elmwood College as it enabled me to be informed about what's going on in our industry.

Greenkeeper International and BTME are the key benefits for me, personally.

What is one tip you would give to British greenkeepers that you have learnt in Germany?

Always be open to advice from people around you, as not every answer to your problems is to be found in the greenkeepers' textbook.



Gut Apeldoer



GM1700 MID-MOUNT ROTARY MOWER

Known worldwide for producing the finest pedestrian greens mower in the industry, Baroness is introducing the GM1700, a unique rotary mower to tackle the most severe slopes.

The Baroness GM1700 is a 1.5m mid-mount rotary mower for rough and semi-rough mowing. Thanks to a very low centre of gravity and wide wheelbase the GM1700 is extremely stable when mowing all those awkward slopes on a golf course and/or sports facility. The switchable 2-wheel / 4-wheel drive system ensures maximum traction on the most difficult of terrain. Rated according to ISO 5395 for slope mowing the GM1700 is equipped with a seat which tilts to 30 degrees to ensure the operator is sitting upright whenever slope mowing is the order of the day.

The GM1700 comes standard with a 1.5m, 3 – part contour cutting deck which enables the mower to better follow undulations and mow around bunkers. An optional 1.8m tough cut, rear discharge cutting deck is also available. All mower deck options provide superior cutting performance and enable the GM1700 to be used in a very wide range of terrains around golf courses, parks, motorways or cemeteries.



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