



# Greenkeeper International

A portrait of Dana Handley, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a black polo shirt with a crest on the chest. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a brick building and greenery.

Dana  
Handley

“I used to watch the greenkeepers and thought: that looks interesting”

We speak to the Prince's assistant as part of August's Women and Girls' Golf Week

#### ■ Members

You are the course manager – how to deal with tricky workplace situations

#### ■ Practical Greenkeeping

How to improve your organic matter management

#### ■ Careers

Kimberley Yeldham on her winding journey to Flempton

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The magazine for BIGGA members Greenkeeper International exists for you, our members. Since 1987 BIGGA has helped thousands in golf greenkeeping to progress their careers, find inspiration and get involved in our varied and vibrant community. This magazine aims to reflect the passions and preoccupations of our members and we'd like you to be involved. Please drop us a line, send us a picture or post on our social media pages.

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# Welcome

It seems we must wait a long time these days for the top professional championships to reach our shores. But boy, once the big events arrive, do we have an absolute feast.

There are approaching 20 separate major professional – men's, ladies' and senior – events in GB&I during 2023, all of which provide a chance for our members to show off their exceptional skills. We've already had great events at The Belfry, Centurion Club, the Renaissance Club and of course Royal Liverpool for The 151st Open.

The Open provided me with the always inspiring opportunity to spend time with the home team and the nearly 100 volunteer greenkeepers who were involved in the event in various capacities. At every tournament I have ever known, the home team was supplemented by numerous volunteer greenkeepers. I can think of no other example in professional sport where such a critical function is carried out by unpaid professionals. Of course, tournament volunteering is a well-worn path to career development as it offers plentiful opportunities to be involved in elite events. The camaraderie also demonstrates just

“Volunteering is a well-worn path to career development

how much greenkeepers care about supporting their friends and peers. But it remains a strange dichotomy that volunteer support plays such an important role in the money-drenched elite level of our sport.

As ever, The Open provided a fantastic opportunity for BIGGA to engage with the wider golf industry. Our First Green initiative is gathering momentum and I'm thrilled that the governing bodies in the game are now committing serious financial backing to the workforce issues that represent the biggest current challenge the game faces. Whether that manifests itself in tournament hosts committing additional budget for course preparation remains to be seen. I hope so, but the way the industry comes together to voluntarily support greenkeepers is a constant source of pride.



Jim Croxton  
BIGGA Chief Executive

## Here to support you when you need us

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Greenkeepers Legal Assistance  
 0808 181 9194

Lifestyle Counselling 0333 000 2082

Human Resources 0845 646 1332  
[bigga@hrservicescotland.co.uk](mailto:bigga@hrservicescotland.co.uk)

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The USGA's Paul Jacobs assesses new methods aimed at reducing disruption to playing surfaces



# MAKES AERATING EFFORTLESS

// The IQ dual-clutch F24/R24 gear box was chosen as it makes manoeuvring the tractor around the course whilst operating the equipment so easy. Another feature we really like is the Auto PTO function or the Headland Management System, it is brilliant for when we get to the end of the run with the aerator, we can lift the implement up, the PTO automatically cuts out, we can turn around then lower again and PTO restarts by itself. Brilliant for safety and avoiding damage or excess wear and tear on the implements themselves."

Daniel Spencer, Letchworth Golf Club

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We are committed to the continual professional development of our members, working with the leading bodies in golf for the good of the game.

BIGGA's activities are underpinned by the generosity of our industry partners and supporters. BIGGA's various activities, initiatives, learning and development opportunities and member benefits are made possible due to the ongoing commitment shown by these companies, organisations and individual donors. From our supporters all the way up to our premium partners, our thanks go to all of them for their dedication to BIGGA and its members.



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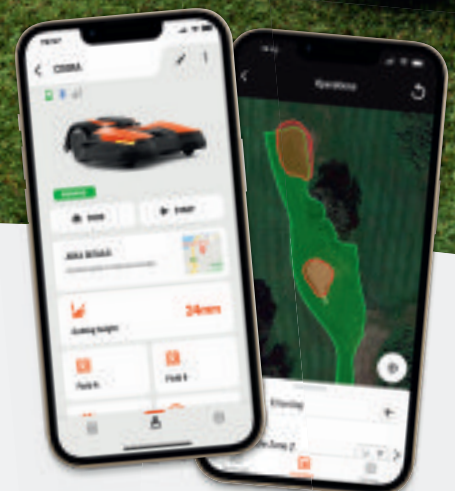
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- A greenkeeper's best friend – this month we meet Bertie
- All the dates for your diary in our what's on listings



## Burns bids a fond farewell to Lenzie after his 40-year stint comes to an end

Course manager Gary Burns has retired after 40 years at Lenzie.

The 59-year-old spent his entire working life at the Glasgow course, where he started out as a young apprentice. He held the position of course manager for 17 years until his recent retirement.

"I started work at Lenzie when I was 19 years old," said Gary. "Back then I was fit with dark hair and a bit of a six-pack, oh how things have changed!"

"Now my wife and I have both retired, we have recently relocated to sunny St Andrews and I'm enjoying a bit of sand between my toes rather

than trudging around in my wellies.

"With my mother still living close to the golf club, I'll definitely be down the road quite often to make sure the boys are keeping up the good work.

"As many say, it's the best job in the world and I'd do it all again," said Gary.

**GI**

“Any event can encourage participants to bring their water bottles, any club can prioritise locally sourced produce and put effective recycling and waste streams in place” – Roddy Williams, page 14



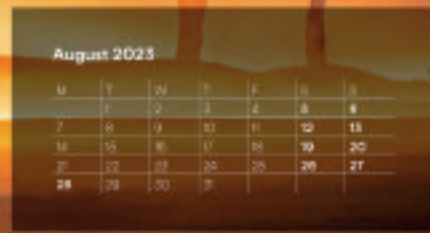
## The BIGGA Calendar

Above: Picture taken by Joe Simpson, Ipswich

Download the desktop calendar by scanning the QR code:



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Joe Simpson, Ipswich Golf Club – BIGGA Photographic Competition overall winner

# Buckley and Torrance triumph

The winners of two BIGGA-sponsored honours were announced at the annual student awards for Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

Held at the SRUC Elmwood campus situated in Cupar, Fife, the yearly ceremony celebrates the achievements of its students, with two claiming the BIGGA-sponsored awards after being rewarded for making notable contributions in the field of greenkeeping.

Lucy Buckley and Stuart Torrance each picked up the British and International Golf Greenkeepers'

Association Award (Scottish Region) for SVQ Level 2 in Sports Turf.

A first-year student from Aberdeenshire, Buckley works as one of only two green staff at her golf club and still found the time to engage in her studies.

She was praised for her development of core skills for using IT systems and submitting assessments, while also acquiring practical knowledge after being on the golf course even before being employed.

Meanwhile, Torrance, who is a second-year student from Lanark, works

for a local company that manages a variety of different sports grounds ranging from football pitches to bowling greens.

He has nevertheless studied hard to acquire the knowledge that is required behind golf and greenkeeping, constantly asking questions in class sessions and site visits to further his understanding.

Stuart earned praise for his desire and commitment to succeed beyond his current Level 2 standing and was cited as "a great Level 3 candidate going forward".

## A greenkeeper's best friend – Bertie

**Owner:** Chris Roberts, Course Manager, Sutton Coldfield

**Name:** Bertie  
**Age:** 3 years

**Breed:** English Setter

**Favourite treat:** Anything meaty!

**Favourite spot on the course:** Longmoor Valley. In between our 5th and 14th holes.

**My dog is happiest when:** Running.

**Naughtiest moment:** Running off at 4:30am while walking to the car, to be retrieved 30 minutes later from the local pond!



## What's on this month



### Dates for your diary

#### 2nd August

BIGGA Surrey Section Education Event with Syngenta – Syngenta, Jealotts Hill

#### 3rd August

BIGGA Essex Section v GCMA Golf Day – Boyce Hill

#### 3rd August

BIGGA Scotland/SGCMA Managers Trophy – Portlethen



Woking

#### 3rd August

BIGGA East of England Golf Day – Spalding

#### 10th August

BIGGA South Wales Summer Golf Day – Wenvoe Castle

#### 15th August

BIGGA South East Region Golf Day – Woking GC

#### 17th August

BIGGA East Midlands Golf Day – Beedles Lake

#### 17th August

BIGGA North West Section Summer Golf Day – Stockport

#### 22nd August

BIGGA Scotland Golf Tour Championship – Royal Aberdeen GC

#### 31st August

BIGGA South Coast Summer Golf Day – Brokenhurst Manor GC

## Read the digital version of GI online

BIGGA members are now able to read our monthly magazine online in an interactive format.

The digital version means you can access Greenkeeper International when you are on the move. Back issues will remain available within the portal should you ever need to revisit content from a past issue. The digital version is free for you to access now and housed on the BIGGA website.



Our programme of local and regional events is supported by regional patrons, whose generosity helps create opportunities for BIGGA members.

### GOLD



### SILVER



### PREMIUM



### CONNECT PLUS



### CONNECT



Head to the BIGGA website for more information about local activities near you





# Scholarship provides level playing field for BIGGA members

BIGGA members are being invited to apply for a scholarship which could help take their career to the next level

Each year BIGGA Premium Partner ICL Turf & Landscape offers five BIGGA members the opportunity to earn a scholarship to attend the Continue to Learn education programme.

ICL and BIGGA appreciate the valuable career-development opportunities provided by Continue to Learn are not available to every greenkeeper due to the cost of education, travel and accommodation. The scholarship, first offered in 2017, seeks to provide a level playing field for ambitious members who would otherwise miss out.

Following a selection process, the ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship offers five BIGGA members the chance to attend Continue to Learn at BTME. The scholarship is worth approximately £500 and comprises three nights' hotel accommodation and a comprehensive education package.

Michael Sparke, a 2023 scholar who serves as deputy course manager at Kings Hill Golf Club, was delighted to benefit from the initiative.

"Continue to Learn is very important to the industry as it is a place to learn and grow as a greenkeeper," he said.

"It plays host to so many different things such as seminars, workshops, shows and award ceremonies for many categories like FTMI, Master Greenkeepers and environmental awards, to name a few.

"The knowledge and experience gained from going is second to none and everyone throughout the industry knows it is our biggest calendar event."

To apply for the ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship you must be a BIGGA member in one of the following membership categories:

- Full Member (categories 1A or 1B)
- Assistant Greenkeeper (in training) (categories 2A or 2B)

Applicants should be CPD active and should be able to attend BTME 2024 and Continue to Learn. If successful you will be expected to meet the cost of travel, meals and any other personal expenses.

Entries are open until Thursday 31 August.



Scan Me to find out more



## Smith winds down after 52 years at Porters Park

**Porters Park course manager Martin Smith is winding down to retirement after an incredible 52 years' service at the Hertfordshire club.**

Having started as a trainee in 1970, the BIGGA member has decided to embark on a staggered retirement, dropping down to a few days a week.

His successor, David West, is working as co-course manager and will assume the title of course manager in April.

He described the responsibility of following in Smith's footsteps as being akin to "taking over from Sir Alex Ferguson".

"Martin is the best boss ever," said West. "We are all privileged to have worked with him. He is so laid-back; absolutely nothing fazes him.

"He is very well respected and many of his former deputies have gone onto become course managers.

"The members know they have been very lucky to have had Martin and appreciate everything he has done for the club over the years."

With plenty more spare time on his hands, Smith is set to play a lot more golf and take in a few extra matches at his beloved Luton Town, who are embarking on their first season back in the Premier League for 31 years.

## New consultancy aims to help deliver world-class playing experiences

A boutique greenkeeping and estate management advisory business for golf course owners, golf clubs and golf resorts has been launched by a respected industry figure.

The Phillip Chiverton Consultancy is led by owner Phillip Chiverton, an award-winning estate manager, greenkeeper and team leader with four decades of golf industry experience.

The new consultancy will guide its clients on key aspects of agronomy, golf course maintenance, capital investment and golf tournament preparation.

"Golf course and estate management gets ever more complicated and our objective is to offer end-to-end expert guidance across all aspects of agronomy, project planning and day-to-day operations," said Chiverton.

"Drawing on my own business experience, I fully understand what it takes to deliver a world-class playing experience for golfers, whether that's for recreational guests at a resort, or preparing a golf course for a major professional tournament.

"My new consultancy aims to offer golf course owners and operators a clear, measurable and cost-effective service, underpinned by my industry knowledge and expertise."

Chiverton most recently led the greenkeeping and estate management team at The Grove in Hertfordshire.

His many professional achievements include working alongside world-renowned architect Kyle Phillips during The Grove's golf course construction and grow-in pre-opening phase.



# Reduce, reuse and recycle



**Roddy Williams**  
joined GEO  
Foundation for  
Sustainable Golf in  
2021 after more than  
two decades with the  
European Tour and  
Ryder Cup

It is uplifting to see the work being done at several high-profile championships during the game's peak season this summer

Tournaments come under the spotlight as the season hits mid-summer and the eyes of the golfing world fall on major events, all of which provide a platform to accelerate sustainability and climate action.

Last month, for example, the Genesis Scottish Open saw a special gathering of experts and stakeholders, hosted jointly by the DP World Tour, VisitScotland and the GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf, to explore what golf tournaments and events need to do to deliver greater responsibility and value – economically, socially and environmentally.

The discussion highlighted how events can continue in their journeys to fulfil their potential as all-round 'forces for good' in local communities and landscapes, and in terms of wider societal awareness and behaviour change. Specific focus areas were: carbon and waste reduction; the links between communities, nature and social and environmental justice; and how environmental quality and human health are connected.

As Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of GEO Foundation, said: "It is so exciting to push the boundaries on thinking



about how temporary events, particularly those in the great outdoors, can deliver on all fronts – providing jobs, investment, prosperity, enjoyment, health and wellbeing, while enriching local landscapes and addressing the hard challenges of low carbon, waste-free staging. There

stepping forward all the time. The European Tour Group Green Drive, for example, launched a new initiative for raising awareness celebrating every player who drove the green at the iconic 10th hole at The Belfry during the British Masters, and this is a campaign that

**“ It is so exciting to push the boundaries on thinking about how temporary events, particularly outdoors, can deliver on all fronts**

is so much re-imagining taking place in sustainability and the opportunity is there to tap into the creativity and visibility of the events sector to drive meaningful change.”

At GEO Foundation we are excited to support tournaments on their journey and more are

continues through the summer. Other positive impacts include the Genesis Scottish Open encouraging fans to bring their own refillable water bottles, a transition to renewable and lower carbon energy sources, expansion of electric car fleets and prioritisation

of locally sourced food options.

The Open featured a new sustainability zone, highlighting many of the initiatives taking place at Royal Liverpool and beyond, including sustainable agronomy practices, protecting and enhancing nature and sustainable championships through Greenlinks and the role spectators can play.

Over in the US, the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational, the first event on the LPGA to be GEO Certified three times, continues to use its platform to educate, inspire and innovate. A reuse programme, for example, converts mesh and other materials into pitchforks and tools, facilitating a circular economy.

These lessons can be applied to any club or tournament. Any event can encourage participants to bring their water bottles, any club can prioritise locally sourced produce and put effective recycling and waste streams in place, all events can encourage low-carbon transport options such as carpooling or public transport and every venue can celebrate its role in protecting and enhancing nature.

**• Check out sustainable golf/leaderboard and see what your club is doing. GI**



Heat



Drought



Excessive Rainfall

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# From your Association

What BIGGA's staff and volunteers are working on

- Support team named to travel to Wentworth for BMW PGA Championship
- Welcome to our latest new members



## Parker hails 'fantastic' welcome after taking membership role with BIGGA

Kris Parker has been appointed as membership services manager for the South West and South Wales.

The former sports apprenticeship officer and rugby coach made over 100 appearances in the Welsh Premiership for Ebbw Vale RFC and now wears the captain's armband for Pontypridd RFC.

He has already been getting stuck into his new role, with plenty of fresh challenges for him to tackle away

from the rugby field.

"I was really happy to get the offer and was quick to say yes," he said.

"I was itching to get started and even attended one or two events prior to my first day in the job as I was keen to meet members and start building relationships.

"The team has been fantastic in welcoming me aboard.

"I have had the opportunity to shadow others and see the variety of

great events they have to offer in their regions.

"Over the next couple of months, I hope to get out and about meeting as many members as possible, building successful working relationships and offering them opportunities to help develop their existing skills." **GI**



The BIGGA National Board is comprised of the following members who volunteer their time to support the association: Stuart Ferguson MG, Jack Hetherington, Antony Kirwan, Andrew Laing, Iain Macleod, Lucy Sellick and Richard Whyman  
BIGGA President Andy Smith, BIGGA Chairperson Steven Lloyd



# Wentworth support team named for BMW PGA Championship

The BMW PGA Championship Volunteer Support Team 2023 • Wentworth Club, September 10 to 17

Greenkeepers from across Europe will travel to Surrey in September to support Wentworth's home staff at the BMW PGA Championship. A total of 21 BIGGA members, whose home clubs range from Royal Aberdeen to Royal Guernsey, and Gerre Losone in Switzerland to China Fleet, successfully applied to volunteer.

**Ruben Aitchison**

Greenkeeper,  
Royal Aberdeen

**Euan Bogle**

Deputy course manager,  
Stirling

**Tom Cable**

Greenkeeper, Guildford

**Martin Coe**

Greenkeeper, China Fleet

**William Evans**

Greenkeeper, Tandridge

**Luke Fitzpatrick**

Greenkeeper, The  
Buckinghamshire

**Ruarc Grant**

Greenkeeper,  
JCB G&CC

**Mark Honey**

Greenkeeper, Sunningdale

**Ian Kirwan**

Course manager,  
Chorlton-cum-Hardy

**Ronan Latham**

Greenkeeper, JCB G&CC

**Craig Littlejohn**

Deputy head greenkeeper,  
Douglas Park

**Toby Long**

Greenkeeper, Broadstone



**Want to learn more?**

A place on the support team is reserved for members of BIGGA, with applications opening each April. Scan this QR code.



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**Marco Nembrini**

Head greenkeeper, Golfclub Gerre Losone

**Oliver Pennington**

Head greenkeeper, Royal Guernsey

**Jakob Schur**

Deputy head greenkeeper, Oakdale

**Andy Sellars**

Greenkeeper, The Grove

**Lee Sinnamon**

Greenkeeper, Erskine

**Josh Smith**

Greenkeeper, Beaverbrook

**William Stott**

Greenkeeper, Queenwood

**Dan Waring**

Greenkeeper, JCB G&CC

**Gavin Yeoman**

Greenkeeper, Woking



**BIGGA**  
**CPD** Continuing Professional Development

Congratulations to the following members who have achieved **CPD Approved status**

Andrew Smith, Shirley

Andrew Steele, Pennard

Callum Done, Royal County Down

Daniel Magill, York

Danny Collins, The Woldingham

David Feeney, Prestwick

Gordon McKie, St Andrews Links Trust

Iain Macleod, Life Member

Jack Hetherington, Chester-le-Street

Jack Maney, Disley

Jamie Wade, The Belfry

Jerry Scullion, Royal County Down

Joe Garner, The Wentworth Club

Leigh Powell, Windlesham

Lucy Sellick, Wenvoe Castle

Marcus Davies, The Wentworth

Patrick West, Sweetwoods Park

Peter Smith, Bathgate

Phil Helm MG, Affiliate

Richard Johnstone MG, Nairn Dunbar Golf Links

Tiarnach Magee, Royal County Down

William Curran, Royal Ashdown Forest

Congratulations to the following members who have achieved their **CPD Milestone**

Daniel Waring, JCB Golf & Country Club

John Gubb, The Bedfordshire

Johnathan Peacock, Luffenham Heath

Leigh Powell, Windlesham

Michael Gibbons, Disley

Phil Helm MG, Affiliate

Richard Johnstone MG, Nairn Dunbar Golf Links

Steven Lloyd, The Worcestershire

William Curran, Royal Ashdown Forest



<b>International</b>		<b>Martin Peters</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Jake Marshall</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Alexander Macdonald</b>	<b>GK</b>
<b>Jason Hollen</b>	I	Aspley Guise & Woburn Sands		Fairhaven		<b>Chris Ross</b>	<b>GK</b>
Pete Dye		.....		.....		<b>Zach Knibbs</b>	<b>GK</b>
<b>Dillon McCallum</b>	I	<b>Nathan Webb</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Jamie Cook</b>	<b>GK</b>	Brora	
University of Tennessee		Enville		Royal Lytham & St Annes		.....	
<b>Par Lindstrom</b>	I	<b>Owen Dack</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Joseph Stevens</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Chris Locke</b>	<b>FA</b>
Vaxjo Golfklubb		Ruddington Grange		Wellow		Lenzie	
<b>Central England</b>		<b>Stuart Ashley</b>	<b>FA</b>	<b>Liam Nolan</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Fraser Leonard</b>	<b>GK</b>
<b>Anthony Hardy</b>	<b>FA</b>	Hunstanton		Grange Park (St Helens)		.....	
Moseley		<b>Northern</b>		.....		<b>Gary Aitchison</b>	<b>GK</b>
<b>Carl Broad</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Alex Ashby</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Matthew Johnson</b>	<b>FA</b>	<b>Olivia Barron</b>	<b>GK</b>
<b>James Parry</b>	<b>GK</b>	Beverley & East Riding		Dunham Forest Golf & CC		St Andrews Links Trust	
Kidderminster		.....		.....		.....	
<b>Drew Rolfe</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Alex Calder</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Matthew Lynam</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Gregor Russell</b>	<b>HGK</b>
Calcot Park		Moortown		<b>Steven Parker</b>	<b>GK</b>	Gogarburn	
<b>Elliott Rhead</b>	<b>APP</b>	<b>Andrew Buchanan</b>	<b>GK</b>	Disley		.....	
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<b>James Stillman</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Ben Currie</b>	<b>GK</b>	.....		Kingsknowe	
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<b>Jordan Williams-Inglut</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>David Brown</b>	<b>A</b>	John Deere		<b>Kyle Hughes</b>	<b>GK</b>
Sunningdale Heath		Wheatley		<b>Scotland</b>		Western Gailes	
		<b>Elizabeth Fairweather</b>	<b>GK</b>	<b>Adam Little</b>	<b>P</b>	.....	
		Wallasey		Husqvarna		<b>Michael Hyde</b>	<b>GK</b>
						Kirkcaldy	
						.....	
						<b>Miles Burnett</b>	<b>DHGK</b>
						Stonehaven	

# Welcome to our new members

<p><b>South East</b></p> <p><b>Charlie Barbato</b>      <b>GK</b> Clandon</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Craig Holcroft</b>      <b>GK</b> Puttenham</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Gavin Mason</b>      <b>CM</b> <b>Nick Knight</b>      <b>FA</b> Chestfield</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Jack Chapman</b>      <b>APP</b> <b>Nathan Waller</b>      <b>GK</b> Grove (The)</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Lewis Collins</b>      <b>GK</b> Silvermere</p>		<p><b>Morgan Bowen</b>      <b>GK</b> <b>Nathan Bowen</b>      <b>DCM</b> Nevill</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Oliver Trotman</b>      <b>GK</b> Frinton</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Paul Notridge</b>      <b>GK</b> Shirley Park</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Paul Smith</b>      <b>APP</b> Tilgate Forest</p>		<p><b>Aarik Workman</b>      <b>GK</b> <b>Hayden Main</b>      <b>GK</b> <b>Marc Richards</b>      <b>DHGK</b> Worlebury</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Alfie Taylor Madge</b>      <b>GK</b> Lansdown</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Ben Dollery</b>      <b>GK</b> Skylark Golf &amp; CC</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Bradley Tennant</b>      <b>A</b> International Greenkeepers for Hire</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Chris Needham</b>      <b>GK</b> Torquay</p>		<p><b>James Horan</b>      <b>GK</b> <b>Joel Gregory</b>      <b>GK</b> <b>Lloyd Stovold</b>      <b>GK</b> <b>Steven Turrell</b>      <b>GK</b> Parkstone</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Jonathan Priestland</b>      <b>CM</b> Glynhir</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Larry Meyer-Root</b>      <b>GK</b> Les Ormes</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Matthew Court</b>      <b>GK</b> Southwick Park</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Pierce Bowkett</b>      <b>GK</b> Gloucester</p>	
<p><b>South West &amp; South Wales</b></p>							

Key					
<b>A</b>	Affiliate Member	<b>FA</b>	First Assistant	<b>P</b>	Partner
<b>AGK</b>	Assistant Greenkeeper	<b>GK</b>	Greenkeeper	<b>R</b>	Retired Member
<b>APP</b>	Apprentice	<b>G</b>	Groundsperson	<b>RP</b>	Regional Patron
<b>ATP</b>	Approved Training Provider	<b>HGK</b>	Head Greenkeeper	<b>S</b>	Supporter
<b>CA</b>	College Assessor	<b>HG</b>	Head Groundsperson	<b>ST</b>	Student Member
<b>CM</b>	Course Manager	<b>I</b>	International Member	<b>SUP</b>	Superintendent
<b>DCM</b>	Deputy Course Manager	<b>L</b>	Life Member		
<b>DHGK</b>	Deputy Head Greenkeeper	<b>M</b>	Mechanic		

# Welfare and wellbeing are my top priorities



Lucy Sellick, Director, South West & South Wales

Greenkeepers take great care of our golf courses, so let's take care of them

Staff welfare is right at the top of my list of priorities – nothing is more important than making sure our members are safe and properly taken care of.

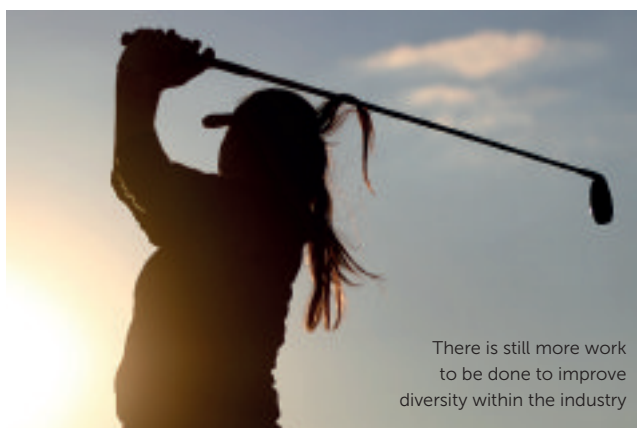
Greenkeepers look after a golf club's main asset and it's important that they feel their efforts are rewarded with a working environment that places a high value on their wellbeing.

We have helplines at BIGGA to provide support for our staff, including a counselling helpline and ones for HR and legal matters. People should be aware of those and also feel comfortable in reaching out to them whenever they feel the need.

I firmly believe greenkeepers are passionate and we love our jobs. We work hard and we deserve to have things in place to make those jobs easier where possible, even if it's basic things like somewhere clean and warm to have our break, or access to drinking water.

Nobody should be made to work in conditions that are a hindrance to the fulfilment of their duties.

We work in a great industry and we should ensure that message is



spread far and wide by people who have positive stories to tell about their job and the environment in which they work.

Where there are failures to provide the right kind of working conditions, it lets down not only those people directly affected, but the wider industry as a whole.

for change and the importance of being proactive rather than reactive.

For example, there is a pressing need for clubs to be on top of their water management in order to be ready for challenges ahead. And, rest assured, there are many challenges ahead.

doorstep. Acting too late can be as damaging as not acting at all.

I want to finish with a word on Women and Girls Golf Week, which takes place this month, and generally on a point about diversity. The industry has made progress on this front during the years I have been involved in it, which is pleasing to see, but there is still scope for us to do more.

The importance of diversity should not be downplayed or overlooked – it brings varied skill sets, different perspectives, and fresh ideas; all hugely positive things that we should be encouraging.

It's not just about seeing more women in the industry, but a broader

**“ We know the enjoyment and pride we derive from the work we do and everyone should feel welcome to come and experience it for themselves**

Part of this dynamic is good governance and that responsibility rests on the shoulders of all of us in positions to make positive changes to help our industry.

This leads me on to the matter of our preparedness

Some of those challenges will be logistical, some will relate to resources, others will be cultural or environmental – whatever they are, we need to plan for them as they appear on the horizon and not wait until they are at our

demographic in general – it's about having diversity in race, religion, age, sex. We know the enjoyment and pride we derive from the work we do and everyone should feel welcome to come and experience it for themselves. **GI**



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# Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals

- Why Dana Handley, a greenkeeper at Prince's, loves her job as an assistant
- You Are The Course Manager: How would you deal with these situations?



James Bledge and his team at Royal Liverpool

## Seeing how our members embrace technology continues to inspire me

Karl Hansell, BIGGA's Head of Marketing and Communications, reflects on his recent visit to Royal Liverpool.

Technologies move quickly, so it's important to never get complacent.

When I began this role in March 2016, I had somewhat of a monopoly on communications activities across greenkeeping. Back then, we were just finding our way around social media and the chief means of sharing stories was via this magazine.

At BIGGA, we're convinced this journal retains an important role in

tying the BIGGA community together, but things are definitely changing out there. This realisation culminated in a tour of James Bledge's office in the build-up to the Open. He is the first course manager that I've ever encountered who has podcast recording equipment on his desk, but I sincerely hope he isn't the last.

Communicating effectively is my profession and nothing excites me more than seeing others take on the mantle of ambassador for the entire greenkeeping industry. So, whether it

be James Bledge, John Rowbottom, James Matthewman, Dale Housden, Matt Wharton MG or the growing number of others who have taken on board that responsibility of telling the wider world about greenkeeping, I say keep up the good work.

And at BIGGA, we're embracing new technologies and opportunities – whether to speak to our members or those countless others we want to engage with – and I hope that during my time with BIGGA, I never fail to be inspired by what our members get up to. **GI**

“ It would be nice to have more females in the industry. It's something that at school you never would have thought about – Dana Handley



# Dana Handley

The Prince's greenkeeper describes the moment when she realised that she wanted to try greenkeeping – and how she hasn't looked back since starting work at the Kent links

Dana Handley was working front of house at Prince's Golf Club when she got the overwhelming urge to join the greenkeeping staff. With a little help, a lot of hard work and no lack of self-belief, she has established herself as a valued member of the team during her two years in the role of assistant greenkeeper.

Despite the relative scarcity of females within such positions, she has never been made to feel out of place – although when she tells people what she does for a living, it never fails to surprise them.

**When did you decide you wanted to become a greenkeeper?**

I would come in every morning and the greenkeepers would be out there doing all sorts of stuff and I just thought, 'That looks interesting'. It appealed to me because it was outdoors, they were doing different things and it just looked interesting – not that front of house isn't! I enjoyed that too, but I fancied a change.

**“ They gave me a week as a sort of trial and I never looked back”**

**Who did you first speak to about making that career move?**

The first person I spoke to about it was General Manager Rob McGuirk. I was working behind the bar when Rob came in and we could see the greenkeepers from the clubhouse. They were burning down all the rough in the winter. It was this huge project they were doing and it just looked quite fun. They had big blowtorches and all sorts.

I said to Rob, 'I'd love to do that, that looks fun', and he was like, 'I don't think you'd want to be doing that in winter!'. I told him I'd like to give it a try to see what I thought and he said he'd speak to Head Greenkeeper Sean McLean, and once he'd spoken to him and Aaron Launchbury – who was the deputy and is now the superintendent – they said, 'We'll let her do it for a week and see if she likes it, see how she gets on, and we'll go from there'. So, they gave me a week as a sort of trial and I never looked back.



### Did you feel that you had the support of the team to make that transition into a completely new role?

Sean and Aaron were really good with me and I'm very appreciative to them for giving me the chance to do it in the first place. And obviously Rob, if he didn't give me the chance to have a go then I wouldn't be doing it now.

On my first day, I went out with Sean and we did some shoveling and I just remember thinking, 'As long as I can just keep up with him, he won't be able to say that I can't do it'.

It would have probably been easier coming in during the summer because I think the job's probably a bit more laid back in terms of the actual job roles you're doing. But obviously I went into it in the winter and during maintenance and whatnot, so there was a lot to learn and it was a lot of the more physical jobs. But even though it was tough, it was probably a good thing coming at that time because I learned the harder stuff first.

bunkers, like completely redone them and built some tees as well. We did two tees this winter as well, and just seeing them now coming into the summer months and going into play and how much they've changed, it's crazy to think that bunker's gone from a muddy hole in the ground to be something that's a feature of the course. It's great to see that. The big maintenance things are definitely what I like most.

I actually can't put my finger on anything I dislike. There is no particular job I dislike. I don't like doing repetitive jobs because after a while I get a bit bored of it. In this job, you don't really have much repetitiveness because you do a bit of everything every day.

### Do you ever get to hear feedback from the members at Prince's?

We get a lot of feedback from members. Coming onto the green team, I already had a good relationship with a lot of the members

**“ It would be nice to have more females getting into the industry. It's something that at school you never would have thought about ”**

### Has the job lived up to the expectations you had when you decided you wanted to do it?

I didn't really have an expectation of the job before I started, I just wanted to try it. I was quite blind to what I was going into and with not playing golf, I didn't know that much about golf courses. I just knew that I liked being outdoors and the active side of it.

The fact that I saw them doing different jobs all the time, it wasn't the same sort of stuff, so that was what drew me into it. I guess my expectation was to be doing all that, all those different bits that I'd seen them doing. I suppose it has lived up to that, because obviously I now do all those jobs that I used to see them doing, but I understand why they need doing and of course how to do them.

### What are the best and worst parts of your job?

The bits that I enjoy the most are the maintenance in the winter and doing things like building bunkers and building tees, because that's when you really see the difference it makes. We've built a couple of

from the clubhouse. I was full-time and you see the members who come and play every day and you get chatting about their lives and whatnot, so I had a good relationship with a lot of members here anyway. Going out onto the green team, they were really supportive and like, 'Oh wow, I can't believe you're doing that'. They were pleased for me and just generally supportive.

When we're out there and particularly if we're working on a big job, they'll come over and ask us about it, so they're always great. They are members and they're paying for it, so they will be honest, and it's nice when they say nice things, and we do often get people saying how great the course looks.

### Have your tattoos caused you any problems in the work environment?

When I worked in the bar, I had the odd tattoo or two and then I got the sleeve, but I've never really thought about it or asked about it. It wasn't until quite recently and I was going to get a tiny tattoo on my finger and my partner said, 'Have you spoken to

## A (Working) Day In The Life



**0500**  
Arrive at work and start with a morning briefing to discuss duties for the day



**0515**  
Cut the greens and rake the bunkers



**0900**  
Wash-off and put all the equipment away



**0930**  
Quick clear-up, ensure tees look neat and tidy



**1000**  
Lunchbreak



**1030**  
Head back out to sort the tee banks



**1200**  
Tasks will vary, but things like sorting mole traps would come next



**1300**  
Leave work



### Self-steering GPS fairway mower can be an efficiency-driver for Prince's

The greenkeeping team at Prince's have been trialling a GPS fairway mower (pictured). Course manager Aaron Launchbury said the team had been given the equipment by Tuckwells for a trial spell to see what it can do. "It's a self-steering machine that will cut the fairways for you," he said.

"We still need to put it through its paces a bit more, but it's offering a more efficient way of undertaking those tasks. Staff now need to learn all the time-honoured skills of greenkeeping but they also need to be on board with new developments in technology."



work about it?’, I was like, ‘I’ve literally got a sleeve of tattoos – I really don’t think it’s going to matter’. But he said, ‘What if you go to work at a different golf course and they say you can’t have that?’. It did make me think and I realised I can at least cover up what I have. But I’ve had no trouble here whatsoever. They’re very good at letting you be yourself and do what you want to do.

**“ I work in a great team and I’ve got a great relationship with them. It’s like a big family”**

**There are not many women doing the job you do, have you faced any sexism?**

I haven’t encountered it. I work in a great team and I’ve got a great relationship with them. It’s just like a big family. In any job where you’ve got a team of people, you spend so much time with those people and there’s banter and some bickering, but we all like each other.

Nobody has ever made me feel left out. When I started out I felt like I had to prove myself, which I did, but you get that in any job regardless of your sex.

**It helps when people see someone like them doing a job they might want to do – did you have anyone like that?**

When I went out onto the green team, there was an older woman, so that did make it easier for me to know it’s not like I was going to be the first woman on the team. She left very soon after I started, so I didn’t really get to go under her wing too much, I just had

to make my own way. But I got along with everyone so well, I just blended in. It would be easier to go in if you had somebody that you could look up to who is more like you, but once you’re in that environment and working, you don’t really think about it.

**What would you say to any young women or girls who might want to follow in your footsteps?**

Just apply for jobs and, regardless of the fact that it’s a male-dominated industry, just go for it. Funnily enough, my niece, she’s only about five, and

**Course manager Aaron Launchbury on Dana**

Before Dana started on the greenkeeping side of things, she was pretty hands-on and nothing seemed to faze her, so it’s no surprise she’s taken to the role so well. I don’t think she’s ever turned her nose up at any job, whether it’s been trimming pop-ups or learning how to drive a tractor. She has just gone from strength to strength. She’s a valued a member of the team who does everything that’s asked of her and usually with a smile on her face.



she always said that she wanted to be a dog groomer when she was older, and now sometimes she sees me coming in from work and she's like, 'I'm going to be a greenkeeper when I'm older'.

It would be nice to have more females getting into the industry. It's something that at school you never would have thought about – working on a golf course? I would never have even imagined it. There are women doing it and, although there aren't a lot, maybe others can see people like me and think, 'Maybe I'd like to try that'.

**Do you have any career goals in mind at this stage?**

Obviously, this is where I started, my first golf course – I suppose I don't know how well I'd get on anywhere

else. I think I'd have a bit of a foot in at a different course to be able to feel comfortable to go and work there. It's very daunting to think that if I got offered a job somewhere else, I'd be going in meeting an entire new team and everything like that, but there are a lot of good courses around here.

I'm not too keen on the idea of traveling too far for work, so if I was going to go somewhere I'd try and go somewhere locally. But Prince's is a really good golf course and, without me travelling, there's not really anywhere much better than Prince's.

**Which qualifications are you working towards at the moment?**

It's quite tough to get the qualifications in greenkeeping and

I'm currently trying to work towards a Level 2. As I said, qualifications open doors so I would like to potentially get my Level 3 as well. They're very time consuming, but if I had the time to do it then I'd like to get my Level 3. But I also think that, in terms of things to put on your CV, I've learned that experience is huge in this job. I think experience is unmatched and that probably goes for a lot of jobs.

You can have a lot of qualifications and pieces of paper, but the experience you've got on a golf course I think is unmatched.

I'd love to be able to go to more golf courses and get more experience at other golf courses just to see what they do differently and how they do things. **GI**

**The team at Prince's**

Course manager: Aaron Launchbury

Head greenkeeper: Shaun Kernaghan

Deputy head greenkeeper: Chris Clark

First assistants: Jake Hill, Charles Bruder

Senior greenkeepers: Nick Chidwick, Andy Hall, Tom Jezzard

Greenkeepers: Peter Baldwin, Mick Foster

Apprentices: Ross Pollard, Dana Handley

Mechanic: Niall Woodcock

# YOU ARE THE COURSE MANAGER



We asked two award-winning members to demonstrate how they would use their communications skills to deal with situations that many BIGGA members will recognise

Meet our expert panel



**James Bledge**

Links manager at this year's Open venue, Royal Liverpool



**Shaun Cunningham**

Course manager at Prestonfield and winner of the 2022 Innovation and Thought Leadership Award





**1**

It's Saturday morning, it's been raining all night and your course is flooded.

You want to close it to avoid damage to the greens. The rain has now stopped. The golfers are desperate to go out and play. What do you say to them?

**SC:** Mention that you understand their frustration but explain your reasons and that the decision has not been made lightly. Make the point that playing on flooded greens will prove detrimental to all the maintenance regimes and hard work the greens staff carry out throughout the year to deliver a high standard of playing surfaces. One day's golf will greatly impact on the club's long-term objectives.

**JB:** The key here is to have everyone on board. The starter and the pro need to be singing off the same hymn sheet and back the greenkeeper up because the message needs to be delivered from them when you are not there. A message sent out via email or on the booking system in plenty of time will prevent any golfers making unnecessary journeys which will aggravate them more than arriving at a closed course. The course manager does however have to stand firm and stick with the decision. It is equally important to keep a calm head and not be dragged down to the levels of any upset golfers.



2

You want to recruit an additional team member. You need to persuade the committee that the additional outlay is not only justified but essential. How do you go about convincing them?

**JB:** By using data it is easy to justify your proposals. For example, an architect could have added another 15 bunkers in the winter. By showing the committee how many staff hours are spent raking bunkers you can justify this recruitment. You can also give them options of the standards they can achieve with having certain numbers of staff. The key is in the preparation. Offering facts and examples should set you in good stead.

**SC:** Go in very well prepared with facts and figures and carefully explain the possibilities that would come with another staff member. Describe what could be achieved and how this can be beneficial to the condition of the course and in turn improve member perceptions, visitor revenue and new opportunities. What I have done in the past is to calculate the man hours required to deliver the course to the desired standard relevant to the club's course policy and compared it to the actual man hours. Having this in document form with all the tasks included that are essential to achieve the desired standards are a very easy way to highlight to the committee what is required.

# 3

It's late August. You have recently aerated the greens and it's taken longer than everyone hoped for the surfaces to recover fully. You encounter a member, who has just missed a short putt that has cost him his place in the final of the club knockout. He is pointing the finger at you for causing the offending bobble. How do you react?

**SC:** You will never be able to change the initial opinion and reaction of the member and no doubt they will be frustrated and want to blame someone, so keep professional and listen to their viewpoint. Be honest, and if the greens are indeed bumpy, say that they are, but explain the reasons why this has happened, and although careful planning has been carried out prior to the scheduled aeration, unfortunately the weather has not been kind to us and affected recovery rates. Be positive that the situation will progress quickly once the weather improves. If the member becomes aggressive or abusive, calmly ask them to continue their point by emailing the club committee and situation will be discussed at the next greens meeting.

**JB:** I would explain to said member why the work was carried out and direct him to the blog, I would probably try and use humour to defuse the situation as its always better to avoid confrontation. Greenkeepers should be protected from any sort of finger pointing and any complaints should go through the proper channels. We all try and do our best but sometimes Mother Nature stands in the way. I think I'd end by agreeing that I was also a bad putter!



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# BIGGA Careers

Jobs, expert advice and peer-to-peer support

- My new job: James Bass on taking the reins at Warley Park
- All the latest greenkeeper vacancies



## Continue to Learn 2023 sessions now available for you to view

BIGGA members now have access to a host of highlights from the Continue to Learn 2023 education programme.

Exclusively reserved for BIGGA members but free to view, you can log in to the Members' Area of the website and access content from Continue to Learn programmes dating back to 2017 under the Education & Training tab. By making highlights from the programme available, you're able to revisit sessions that you may have attended or others

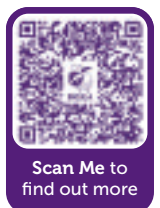
that you missed. This service is free of charge and is funded by those who attend Continue to Learn in person each year and the exhibitors who participate in BTME.

### Highlights include:

- Heading to the 2023 Ryder Cup with Lara Arias and Alejandro Reyes
- Using data to guide maintenance decisions with USGA agronomist Zach Nicoludis

- Hoylake's place in the game with James Bledge, Chris Trimble, Sam Cooper and The R&A's Alistair Beggs

Continue to Learn 2024 will be launched in the October edition of Greenkeeper International, with the event taking place in Harrogate next January. **GI**



Head to the **BIGGA** website and view sessions from **Continue to Learn 2023**, available exclusively to **BIGGA** members. **Speakers include:** Zach Nicoludis, USGA agronomist; Dr Frank Rossi, Cornell University; Lara Arias, Marco Simone G&CC; James Bledge, Royal Liverpool; Alistair Beggs, The R&A. Scan the QR Code above



# James Bass

With almost 12 years as a greenkeeper spent at courses ranging from parkland and heathland to links, James Bass has plenty of experience to draw on. He also has a genuine love of the game, having grown up playing his golf at Ashford, in Kent.

"I'm very passionate about my work and always strive to improve," he said.

"I enjoy playing golf whenever I can and have a handicap of three. I enjoy spending my time off with my three children, weightlifting and playing golf with my dad."

#### Tell us about your new role

My new role is course manager at Warley Park in Brentwood, which is part of the Get Golfing group. It's a 27-hole parkland course with numerous lakes and mature trees with a great setting looking towards the Thames Estuary. My role is to help improve the current condition of the course and provide year-round quality to all our members and guests. We're a busy course so planning jobs and being as efficient as I can around the play is vital.

#### What do you hope to achieve in the role?

I took this role on as there is so much potential. Get Golfing have already started rebuilding three new greens and new tee complexes. The bunkers are dated so it will be great undertaking a bunker programme, including drainage and rubber crumb lining. The old 1970s irrigation system is planned to be upgraded, making it more efficient and drainage is also planned in a later phase. There are lots of exciting projects to look forward to.

#### How does it fit into your career path?

Being a course manager is something I've been striving towards for many years. One of the toughest things I've had to learn was patience and managing expectations. I never really switch off from thinking about products to

“One day I'd like to manage a links course. Firm, fast greens, wispy rough, hand-mown tees with great scenery would be absolute bliss to me”

“I never really switch off from thinking about products to improve soil biology, irrigation or planning jobs around ever-changing weather forecasts”

improve soil biology, irrigation or planning jobs around ever-changing weather forecasts.

#### What skills have you found vital to your job?

Maintaining a positive can-do attitude when things are against me. Understanding people's strengths and weaknesses and getting the most out of them. Becoming a better people person.

#### What's the best thing about your new job?

Having the freedom to plan everything from feed to wetting agent and incorporating my vision through presentation on the golf course. Being a single-figure handicap golfer, I understand attention to detail very well. It's great having a vision of how I want the course to look so seeing it get there day by day is rewarding.

#### What do you wish you'd known at the start of your career?

Understanding micronutrients and biology. I never thought chemicals would have been taken off the market.

#### What has been your best career break?

I was lucky enough to work under Malcolm Grand at Littlestone, who was a great old-school greenkeeper. He was all about minimal inputs and choosing the correct cultural practices in different climates to get the best surfaces possible. Attention to detail was especially important – I'll give credit to Malcolm for that as he pushed me every day to improve. I feel the breaks I've had is what he drilled into me.

#### What would you like to be doing in 10 years' time?

One day I'd like to manage a links course. Firm fast greens, wispy rough, hand-mown tees with great scenery would be absolute bliss to me. **GI**

The course manager at Warley Park, in Essex, is a serious golfer in his own right and also enjoys weightlifting in his spare time



Waverley Park GC



Littlestone

## James on applying for a new job

### Describe the recruitment process for your Warley Park role

I had previously worked at Redlibbets as deputy course manager and built a relationship with Ross Jones, the group maintenance director. I messaged him as I heard the group had bought a couple of courses and asked if they had any course manager vacancies. I was in the right place at the right time.

### What were your new employers looking for?

They were looking for a new direction in raising the standard throughout the course. The machinery needs a little work, but the investment is there for machinery.

### What do you think set you apart from other candidates?

The role didn't get advertised but with previous experience in the group Ross knows the standards I work to which I feel would have been a key factor to getting the role as course manager.

### What advice would you give to fellow members applying for a new job?

Have confidence in yourself and don't sell yourself short. Know your worth and what you're bringing to the role which will benefit the employer.

**“Listen, ask lots of questions and never be afraid to ask why. Gain as much experience as you can, whether working on different courses or volunteering for events”**

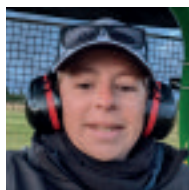
**Master Greenkeeper Phil Helmn’s key takeaways**

- The step into leadership isn’t always easy. Kim’s thirst for knowledge helped her build the confidence to take the plunge. It’s widely acknowledged that managing a golf course requires 40 per cent agronomic and 60 per cent people skills
- Education and networking is the key to success. Enrolling on BIGGA events and offering tournament support will definitely boost your career prospects
- Almost everyone I’ve spoken to wished they’d worked abroad. If you get the chance then grab it
- Our industry must find better solutions to our agronomic challenges. And increasing customer expectations are still a worry



Royal West Norfolk





Kimberley Yeldham has been a greenkeeper for 17 years. In her current role, she is the head greenkeeper at the beautiful 9-hole course of Flempton, in Suffolk, close to Bury St Edmunds

Kimberley Yeldham began her greenkeeping career at Colchester on a work placement while studying for a National Diploma in Horticulture. After finishing college, she started at Burnham on Crouch before moving to Romford as assistant. Next came a promotion to deputy at Royal West Norfolk for two years before deciding to move closer to her parents by becoming deputy at Barnham Broom. Last year, she decided it was time to take the next step and she became head greenkeeper at Flempton.

#### When did you decide greenkeeping was the career for you?

I fell into greenkeeping by accident as I was intending to become a landscape gardener/designer. However, my turf lecturer suggested greenkeeping as an alternative. So, I took a year's work placement at Colchester – and the love for the job started there.

#### What did you study?

After finishing my GCSEs, I wanted to do something outside. I studied a National Diploma in Horticulture before converting to greenkeeping and studying NVQ Level 3 in sports turf. It's a career I wouldn't change as every day is different.

#### What do you wish you'd known then?

How much of a thick skin is required for the role of head greenkeeper! Greenkeeping is a lifestyle not just a job – you're thinking about your course all the time. It hasn't always been easy: it was ten years before I met another female greenkeeper but now enjoy the support with more females out there.

#### What has been your best career break?

My current role, as I applied for it halfway through my FTMI programme. I thought I'd jumped in the deep end but learning management techniques there and from my previous boss helped. It's been a huge learning curve and I've had to think on my feet quickly.

#### What should your fellow greenkeepers be doing to improve their career prospects?

Attend BTME, educational events and add to your CPD points. The FTMI programme is the best thing I have ever done. Volunteer for tournaments – it's a great way to network, see other courses and learn new skills. This is something I do every year at the AIG Women's Open, The Open and the Solheim Cup.

#### What's the best advice you've received?

Don't worry about the things you can't control – only worry about the things you can.

#### And what about your biggest professional mistake or regret?

Not working abroad. I applied for the Ohio State Program and decided it wasn't for me at the time. Since then, I have made the most of every opportunity offered to me.

#### What advice would you give for working with golf club stakeholders?

Communication is vital with regular course reports and posts on social media where members can follow you. Have a set of stakeholders who are supportive of you and the team.

#### What advice do you have for someone new to the industry?

Listen, ask lots of questions and never be afraid to ask why. Gain as much experience as you can, whether it's working on different courses or volunteering for events.

#### What skills did you develop quickly?

Good communication skills, otherwise it makes it very difficult to manage a team (big or small). Treat your staff how you'd like to be treated. Don't expect anyone to do a job you won't do yourself.

#### What's the biggest change you have seen in your time in the industry?

The loss of vital fungicides and pesticides and higher customer expectations. **GI**

Flempton, where Kimberley is currently based

“Communication is vital with regular course reports and posts on social media where members can follow you. Have a set of stakeholders who are supportive of you and the team”

# Latest job vacancies

## Assistant Greenkeeper

Oake Manor Golf Club, Somerset



We have an 18-hole parkland golf course.

The ideal candidate will be: Qualified to NVQ Level 2 or higher in sports turf; Minimum of one year's experience; Able to operate the full range of greenkeeping equipment; Able to make decisions when required.

Full time position working 40 hours per week with rotational weekend work required; Overtime paid; 20 days plus bank holidays.

Salary negotiable dependent on qualifications and experience; Uniform PPE provided; Staff discount in the clubhouse; BIGGA membership; Pension.

To apply, email a CV and covering letter to James Williams, Course Manager: [james@oakemanor.com](mailto:james@oakemanor.com)

## Assistant Greenkeeper

Lutterworth Golf Club



Requirements: At least two year's greenkeeping experience; BIGGA recognised NVQ Level 2 in Turf Management qualification or working towards; PA1; PA2 and PA6 Pesticide spraying qualification or working towards; Experience of cutting playing surfaces and tees, plus spraying and disease control; Knowledge and ability to complete tasks in line with any health and safety regulations; Ability to work on own and as part of a team; Full, clean UK driving licence; Be able to work flexible hours.

Minimum 20 days' paid holiday, plus Bank Holidays; Regular training and development; Starting salary from £21,000 to £22,500 depending on experience.

Please email your application to the Head Greenkeeper at: [course@lutterworthgc.co.uk](mailto:course@lutterworthgc.co.uk). Closing date for applications: August 26.

## Greenkeeper

Newcastle-under-Lyme Golf Club, Staffordshire



We are seeking an experienced greenkeeper to join our team. Founded in 1908 Newcastle is an established parkland golf course. We are private members club; our priority is ensuring the course is maintained and manicured to the highest possible standards. The successful candidate will be motivated, hardworking, and enthusiastic about the role.

**Objectives:** To maintain the golf course to the highest possible standards; To work in a safe and responsible manner; Ability to work independently and carry out manual work; To be polite and courteous to colleagues and members.

**Remuneration:** £22,500 - £25,500 depending on qualifications and experience.

To apply please send your application with CV to: [manager@newcastlegolfclub.co.uk](mailto:manager@newcastlegolfclub.co.uk). T: 01782 617006.

## Deputy Greenkeeper

Ilford Golf Club, East London



**The Role:** Be entrusted with the daily maintenance operations and management of the golf course and greenkeeping team in the absence of the course manager; Work alongside the Course Manager in preparing work schedules; Undertake general mowing and course practices.

**Working hours:** 40 hours/weekend on a rota basis.

**Skills and Experience:** NVQ level 2 or equivalent in sports turf maintenance; PA1, PA2 and PA6 spraying certificates; CS30 Chainsaw Licence (desirable but not essential); Practical experience and skills in machinery maintenance and setup; Three years minimum experience in greenkeeping. Salary is negotiable depending on experience and qualifications.

Please apply via email with an up-to-date CV and covering letter to: [Greens@ilfordgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:Greens@ilfordgolfclub.co.uk)

## Assistant Greenkeeper

Royal Wimbledon Golf Club



We are inviting applicants who are qualified to, working towards or wish to work towards level 2 in sportsturf. Further qualifications such as Level 3, spraying or chainsaw certificates would be an advantage but not essential as we welcome applications from any experience level.

**Headline benefits:** Salary and OT package between £33,000 – 35,000 p.a; Opportunity for training, education and an encouragement for CPD; BIGGA Membership; Pension Scheme; State-of-the-art welfare facilities and equipment; A friendly, unified and dedicated team; Located just off the A3, Royal Wimbledon is within easy commuting distance from a variety of locations inside and outside of the M25.

Applications should be made to Nicholas Paris, Course Manager at [nickp@rwgc.co.uk](mailto:nickp@rwgc.co.uk)

## Assistant Greenkeeper

Coombe Hill Golf Club, Kingston-upon-Thames



Are you passionate about golf, and maintaining pristine playing surfaces? Coombe Hill Golf Club is seeking a dedicated and enthusiastic Assistant Greenkeeper to join our team.

**Responsibilities:** Assisting with the day-to-day maintenance and golf course set up tasks; Collaborating with the team to prepare the course for tournaments and events; Contributing to the overall enhancement and improvement of the golf course.

**Candidate:** Previous experience in golf course maintenance or related field; An understanding of turf management practices; Physical stamina and the ability to work outdoors in varying weather conditions; Attention to detail and the ability to follow instructions meticulously.

Please send your CV and a cover letter highlighting your relevant experience and why you would be a valuable addition to our team to Josh King, Course Manager: [greenkeepers@chgc.net](mailto:greenkeepers@chgc.net)

From trainee vacancies to senior management roles, new greenkeeping job opportunities are added daily to BIGGA's online recruitment pages. BIGGA's website receives 1.6 million page views per year and 55% of those are to our careers pages. Visit [bigga.org.uk/careers](http://bigga.org.uk/careers) to see our latest opportunities and find out more about advertising your position. For more call 01347 833 800 or email [info@bigga.co.uk](mailto:info@bigga.co.uk)

## Deputy Course Manager

Tiverton Golf Club, Devonshire



An exciting opportunity has arisen for a qualified and experienced Deputy Course Manager to join the team. The Deputy Course Manager will report to and support the Course Manager in training and managing the greens team and ensuring that the golf course is maintained and presented to the highest standards.

The successful candidate should have Level 3 spraying and chainsaw qualifications.

Must have a positive, can-do attitude and the ability to work well in a team, be enthusiastic and self-motivated with a keen eye for detail.

Salary between £27,000-£30,000

To apply, email: [coursemanager@tivertongolfclub.co.uk](mailto:coursemanager@tivertongolfclub.co.uk) with a letter of application and a CV.  
Closing date is Sunday 13 August.



## Recruitment

[www.bigga.org.uk/careers](http://www.bigga.org.uk/careers)

From trainee vacancies to senior management roles, new greenkeeping job opportunities are added daily to BIGGA's online recruitment pages.

BIGGA's website receives 1.6 million page views per year and 55% of those are to our careers pages.

Visit [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) to see our latest opportunities and find out more about advertising your position.

For more information call 01347 833 800 or email [info@bigga.co.uk](mailto:info@bigga.co.uk)

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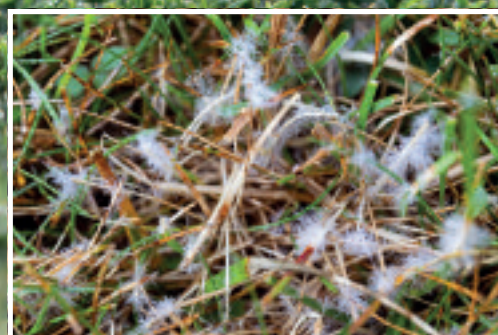
- Apprentice Corner – advice on how to repair divot holes
- The USGA's Paul Jacobs on new methods to reduce disruption to surfaces

“ If you can combine a focus on those areas with good decision making, it will give you the best chance of getting the results – Paul Jacobs

# Investing in Dollar spot

Dollar spot is under investigation in a new Syngenta UK turf research initiative, to better understand disease pressure modelling and the options for effective ITM strategies

High humidity climatic conditions and stresses on turf have increased the incidence of Dollar spot across many courses



When individual Dollar spot scars start to coalesce, significant turf loss can occur



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[www.syngentaturf.co.uk](http://www.syngentaturf.co.uk)

Dollar spot has been widely reported as occurring earlier in the season than normal this year. On affected courses where outbreaks had typically been seen initially in July to September, the symptoms have been breaking out in May and June.

The trend of damaging Dollar spot attacks hitting earlier and with more severity, has been increasing across Europe over recent years, with some valuable lessons for UK greenkeepers to get a step ahead and be more proactive in actions and timings.

When the classic symptoms of small silvery patches – the size and appearance of a silver Dollar coin – start to coalesce, large areas of turf cover can be quickly lost.

Looking at historical records, conditions that can drive Dollar spot pressure can begin as early as April.

## ITM actions reduce disease pressure alongside fungicide applications

Climatic pressure doesn't normally hit the critical 20% treatment threshold on the Smith-Kerns model until mid-to-late June in most seasons, but that can occur as early as mid-May – most notably in 2020 and again this spring.

### Read this for:

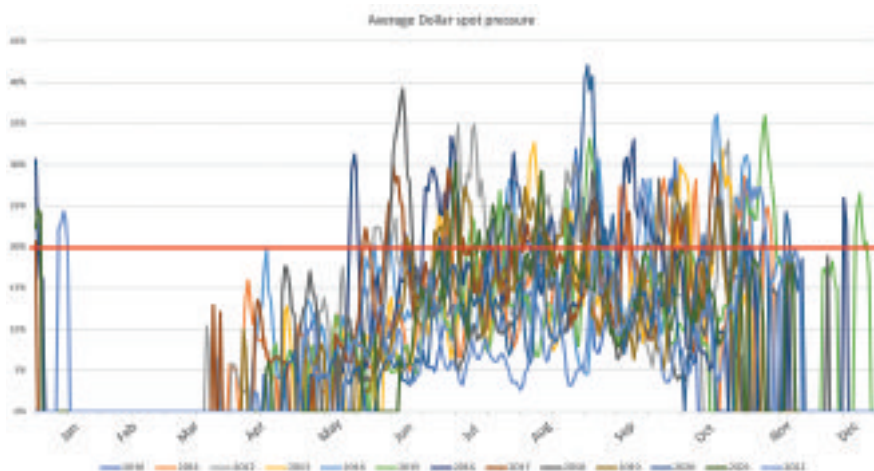
- Dollar spot ITM
- New Syngenta trials
- Greenkeeping advice

Over recent years, a degree of disease pressure has constantly remained right through the summer, with by far the most concentrated periods of prolonged pressure through July to September. However, it is notable that in some years repeated high pressure periods do occur through the autumn – exemplified in 2015 and again last year.

Furthermore, a useful analysis of the number of days per month with over 20% pressure prediction shows a significant peak in July, but the frequency of occurrences into September and October cannot be ignored, particularly if the pathogen population got out of hand during the peak months.

The Smith-Kerns model does appear to give a good indication of Dollar spot pressure. Although it was

## Smith-Kearns average Dollar spot pressure for central southern England



designed for conditions in the US, where the disease is generally far more prevalent, it is now being fully evaluated in Syngenta research under UK conditions, as part of an evaluation for a new turf decision support app.

The model helps to effectively focus attention on actions and treatments at the optimum timings. The challenge comes where changing climatic conditions are seeing periods of high pressure persisting for longer in more seasons.

In the UK, the best fungicide option currently would be Instrata Elite with the combined activity of fludioxonil and difenoconazole, while in Ireland they also have approval for Ascernity on golf turf that is highly effective against Dollar spot. Ascernity is currently being used on the trials for Dollar spot research in the UK.

Coupled to the fungicide strategy to prevent outbreaks, greenkeepers' turf management actions can help to reduce the pressure and promote greater resilience to the disease pressure. Stressed turf is inherently more susceptible to infection, with any ITM measures to reduce stress helping to alleviate issues.

Extensive trials in the US have consistently shown the effects of Dollar spot are more severe when turf is under nutrient stress. The work indicates the key is to provide a consistent level of nutrition throughout the growing season, avoiding fertility flushes, through the use of controlled release fertiliser or regular repeated low dose applications.

Soil moisture management has also proven highly effective in reducing

stress on turf growth through the summer. Since the development of Dollar spot is encouraged by higher humidity levels, improving air flow across the surface and limiting leaf wetness could help reduce localised pressure, along with good organic matter management practices.

We also know that the pathogen survives in the thatch, where a good greens' aeration strategy could lower pressure and risk. While Dollar spot will attack all turf grass species, it appears that, in general, annual meadow grass is most susceptible, along with creeping bent grass and then red fescue. Dollar spot resistance is an area of particular interest for plant breeders and an area of great potential for ITM practices in the future.

Additionally, some of the new bioproducts developed to alleviate plant stress, such as Hicure, Ryder and new products in turf R&D evaluation, could have additional opportunity to enhance plant resilience.

Reliable modelling of Dollar spot and up-to-date disease risk information will ensure ITM practices can be prepared and in place ahead of upcoming challenges, along with optimised timing of fungicide applications to protect turf through the critical pressure points. **GI**



**Author:** Sean Loakes, Syngenta Turf Technical Manager UK & Ireland



**Andrew Howarth** hopes Syngenta Dollar spot research trials will provide answers to an increasing issue

### Dollar spot ITM actions

Andrew Howarth, Estate Manager at Gog Magog Golf Club in Cambridgeshire, reports finding Dollar spot is becoming more of an issue every year, with increased areas of the courses becoming affected.

"We first saw it on green surrounds, primarily on 'non-play sides' with least traffic, but over recent years this has progressed onto more 'in-play' areas, including tees and greens." He attributes changes in climate as the overriding reason for the increasing incidence of the disease. He regularly uses the Smith-Kearns model to monitor humidity and attempt to predict the rise in disease pressure. When these periods are identified, he carries out a number of ITM practices to mitigate risk:

- Increased turf rolling
- Dew removal
- Nutrient applications
- Biostimulants for turf health
- Fungicide applications
- Resistant cultivars

"We are at a point now where from mid-May to mid-September the model will be factored into all of our turf management decisions for greens surfaces."

He believes it will be valuable for further research on both chemical and cultural Dollar spot controls, with data to back up any results so a clear strategy of management can be identified and implemented by turf managers – as with other turf pests and diseases.

"I am hoping that being involved with the Syngenta trials will give us a further understanding of the disease and climatic triggers through the Smith-Kearns model and ultimately what chemical control is possible."

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in a process that requires physical access to the equipment. The gateways always initiate connections to Grundfos Connect, which allows you to block all inbound traffic using a firewall.

**Device networks**

Through the device network section, all working hardware, such as controllers, pumps and other devices can communicate with each other, as well as the system gateways, through serial fieldbuses. No communication in this section is TCP/IP based.

**Cloud computing platform**

The backend services of Grundfos Connect are hosted in a highly-

**“ Automatic notifications keep you informed about any issues that may occur, enabling you to take preventive actions to avoid costly service interruptions and reduce operational costs.”**

equipment, data security is of the utmost importance. To always keep your data safe, Grundfos Connect comes with a set of built-in security measures.

The four main components that enable Grundfos Connect to work quickly and securely are: communication networks, gateways, device networks and the cloud computing platform.

**Communication networks**

Grundfos Connect communicates via ethernet or a cellular network and can be accessed through a web client from anywhere with internet access.

Both the web client and Grundfos Connect use secure HTTPS connections.

To offer you the highest level of security possible, the system uses a mutual authentication scheme where both server and client are authenticated every time a connection is established.

**Gateways**

Whether you are using an ethernet connection or a wireless network, data to and from Grundfos Connect is transferred through secure TLS connections.

Gateways are assigned to users

scalable cloud infrastructure, protected by modern and next-gen security technologies, such as reverse proxies with Layer7 filtering and traffic analysis.

The backend services include an IoT endpoint, which handles the general communication with devices, and an authentication service, which handles the authentication of devices.

Together, all of these features ensure the level of cyber security necessary for you to be able to enjoy the benefits of Grundfos Connect with no need to worry about whether your data is safe.

More detailed information about the security features in Grundfos Connect, can be found in the Grundfos Connect Security Application Note. [GI](#)



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# Apprentice CORNER

## Repairing divot holes

A divot is a piece of turf gouged out with a club in making a stroke or by a sports player's boot

### Reasons for repairing divot holes

During play, golfers remove divots from the tees and fairways. These divots, if not filled in, can lead to an untidy looking and uneven surface. Golfers will find it hard to obtain a good solid stance when playing. The bare ground exposed by taking divots also makes a good place for weeds to establish.

Short par 3 tees suffer more damage due to the type of club used and shot played. The golfer will try to get a little under the ball to put backspin onto it. This will mean a greater amount of turf is removed as a divot. For this reason, tees for par 3 holes should be at least twice the size of a typical tee on a par 4. The other main area will be the landing area on each fairway where the golfer plays his or her second shot.

### How and when to repair divot holes

Materials used for divoting will normally be a mixture of some of the following: sand, soil, peat, compost or other proprietary materials. Sometimes the seed is broadcast onto the tee first but often it is mixed with the sand/soil mixture and is applied in one go.

The seed used should be able to withstand wear and tear and have a good recovery potential. Many clubs will also want a seed type which does not look out of place with the other grasses used on the golf course, eg. a links club may not use a Ryegrass for divoting tees. This is because the dark green shiny-leaved Ryegrass will stand out against the grasses more typical to this environment. So, for many golf clubs it is a balance between providing the surface characteristics they need and the environment that the course is located in.

Possible seed mixes for use depending on conditions might contain a mix of: Chewings and/or Creeping Red Fescues; Browntop and/or Creeping Bent; Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass and Perennial Ryegrass.

Divoting, ideally, should take place when the course is least busy (eg. early in the mornings or on the quieter days).



How often the job needs to be done will depend on the time of year and the level of play on the course. It should be recognised that divoting should occur on a regular basis to give the turf time to recover before it is used again. This probably means divoting golf tees twice a week on par 3 holes, perhaps once a week on par 5 holes and divoting fairway landing zones once a month.

Leaving areas for long periods without repair will lead to grass growing over the affected area making the task more difficult and time consuming. **GI**



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# Organic matter management: It matters more than you think



## The USGA's Paul Jacobs introduces and assesses new methods aimed at reducing disruption to playing surfaces while still yielding desirable outcomes

Organic matter management is crucial in producing resilient fine-turf surfaces. Although traditional methods can be effective, they are frequently disruptive to the playing surface.

The advent of alternative methods is allowing many facilities to produce the results they want but without the downside.

### What we mean by 'organic matter'

Organic matter is the decaying plant material that forms near the surface of the profile as stems and roots die off as part of the plant's natural growth process.

That plant material remains in the soil and decays very slowly, so if we're not removing or diluting it, it begins to accumulate near the surface.

By nature, that material is very soft and that leads to increased moisture retention, which will prove problematic over time.

### Why organic matter management matters

As greenkeepers, or superintendents, our core goal is to manage the gameboard.

We shouldn't forget that golf is a game and that means we can view the course as the board. Just like you would play Monopoly much differently to how you would play Scrabble, the same goes for golf courses. Different golf courses play differently and organic matter content significantly influences that.

We saw above that organic matter content tends to be very soft and spongy, so if it becomes excessive on a golf course, we can expect it to play much softer and slower than if we were playing somewhere that organic matter content has been well managed.

That management relates to the process of modifying the profile to either remove the accumulation of organic matter or dilute it with the addition of sand or other material. I regard it as one of the three key components of sound turfgrass management, along with the growing environment and drainage.

If you can combine a focus on those areas with good decision making, it will give you the best chance of getting the results you want.



### About Paul

Paul is an agronomist with the United States Golf Association

A keen golfer from a young age, Paul's passion for the sport paved the way for a diverse career in turf maintenance. Having studied at Michigan State University, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in crop and soil science, Paul's career has seen him work at Tucson Country Club, Shinnecock Hills Golf Club and Bel-Air Country Club. He joined The USGA Green Section in 2016 as an agronomist in the Northeast Region. His duties include conducting course consulting service visits in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Canada.

**“If you go down the list of common turf diseases and look at the solutions to alleviate their risk, the appropriate management of organic matter will be the common theme.”**

### Increased disease risk

A failure to implement proper organic matter management methods poses a risk to turf health and this applies to all fine-turf areas, including putting greens, tees and fairways.

Diseases such as dollar spot and pythium root rot are more likely to occur wherever organic matter becomes excessive. If you go down the list of common turf diseases and look at the solutions to alleviate their risk, the

appropriate management of organic matter will be the common theme.

It's not surprising because that layer of excessive organic matter holds water like a sponge. It's almost like an incubation chamber for diseases.

### Traditional methods and their drawbacks

When I talk about traditional methods for organic matter management, I mean things like hollow core aeration, light and frequent sand topdressing, and aggressive verticutting. Those are things that have been done for quite some time. As it relates to managing organic matter, they are certainly effective, but they are also extremely disruptive.

As an example, topdressing needs to be undertaken consistently throughout the season and, even in the summer months, we should aim to be doing that every seven to fourteen days. You can make an exception if there is some crazy unfavourable weather, which will mean you may want to back off a little.

However, this process is not without its issues, especially when topdressing with a coarser sand. A couple of problems may arise where those particles remain on the surface – firstly, those are the particles that are going to be picked up by our mowers so they're going to damage reels and they're going to damage bed knives, which creates some equipment concerns. Secondly, there is an impact on ball roll and playability.

### New methods are becoming more common

One emerging trend in organic matter management relates to sand selection. It's becoming increasingly common to employ a two-sand system – a coarser sand for aeration and a less coarse sand for frequent topdressing. I'll pick up on the benefits of that further on.

Something else facilities are increasingly using now is sand injection, which has been around for a while but is not necessarily in common use everywhere. It uses high-pressure blasts of water to inject sand into the profile. However, that process deposits most of the sand well past the target area for tackling the issue of organic matter at the

Right: Course maintenance is key to providing firm, fast surfaces

### The firmer, the faster, the better?

Just like football, baseball or tennis, golf is at its most exciting when the ball is in motion. With that in mind, you can make a strong case for a firmer surface harbouring the greater potential for thrills.

A course where organic matter is left untreated will inevitably become softer and therefore be slower, but where management techniques are applied appropriately, a firmer, faster track is more likely. I think most would agree that is what they want to see.



surface of the profile.

In the past year or two we have seen the arrival of technology which enables sand to be injected in a way where it stays in the top 4-6 centimetres of the profile.

Another development is with micro tine aeration, which is where manufacturers are creating tines that are very small in diameter. This facilitates a more frequent implementation of tine aeration throughout the season, but in a fashion which is much less disruptive.

Aside from having to undertake the task more frequently, one of the downsides is that you're not creating a hole large enough to backfill with sand, so you first need to ensure you're up to speed in regard to moving organic matter, and in the meantime use this as a supplement

to conventional aeration and not necessarily a replacement.

#### Research findings

Rutgers University initiated a study to look at the effects that topdressing with a finer or a less coarse sand will have on turf health and playability. The reason for this research was that we all know that if we topdress with a finer sand it will be easier to incorporate into the dense turf canopy, but we're always aware of the associated risk of moisture retention near the surface where finer material is deposited on top of more coarse material.

The research wanted to answer two questions – firstly, does topdressing with a finer sand produce the negative effect of increased moisture retention near the surface; secondly, if we do see that impact, can it be offset if

we aerate the plots and backfill the aeration channels with coarser sand?

In the study they used three topdressing sands – a medium-coarse sand, in line with recommendations for a USGA putting green; a medium-fine sand (77% medium particles); and a fine-medium sand (67% fine particles). They also had various treatments, some aerated, some not aerated, and each treatment was topdressed with one of the three sands after the USGA green was grown in.

The key findings showed that any sand is better than no sand. However, there was increased moisture-holding potential near the surface of the profile and a slightly softer surface with the fine-medium sand, which did not occur with the medium-fine sand. The coarser sand, containing a



larger proportion of particles greater than 0.5 millimeters, was more likely to be picked up by mowers and also increased the risk of interfering with the ball where it remained on the surface.

The takeaway from this is to opt for fine sand with predominantly medium particles, very few coarse or very coarse ones, and perhaps a slightly higher proportion of fine particles.

#### Backfill aeration channels

It should be noted that facilities adopting this type of programme using a less coarse sand to topdress greens are still using a coarser sand to backfill aeration channels throughout the season.

One reason is that we want to make sure we're getting those coarse and very coarse particles back into the profile. If we're topdressing with sands

that are predominantly medium-sized particles, the putting surface will become shifting and unstable.

When all the sand particles are the same size, it's very unstable and very unlikely to compact, thus creating a soft surface. Again, that's the reason why we want to incorporate some of these very coarse and coarse particles at aeration to achieve a well-graded sand.

#### Organic matter testing protocol

We've probably all done some sort of soil tests periodically on the putting greens to help quantify exactly how much organic matter is in our greens, right? Because that helps us determine what course of action we need to take to reach what we would consider an acceptable level.

There has been a change in how we are quantifying organic matter content

in the putting greens recently. The end goal is to create a standardised protocol both in the field and in the laboratory for organic matter testing.

Right now, you can look at the literature regarding organic matter content and what researchers or different agronomists will call an 'ideal range' is all over the place. This is down to the variability in how samples are collected and tested.

The methodology being implemented by all USGA agronomists employs a tool – a plugger an inch and a half in diameter with four lines to separate the sample into different depths, each of which can then be analysed for organic matter and compared like-for-like with other samples. This should achieve the kind of consistency and clarity that ultimately benefits everyone. **GI**



# How trailed mowers are revolutionising the golf industry

As a Greenkeeper, there needs to be a constant focus on balancing the work and the costs involved in maintaining grounds while ensuring maximum sustainability. But above all else, every tee box, fairway, rough and green must retain the same consistent appearance and playability.

While the frequency with which a course is mowed is important, decisions around mowing apparatus and techniques must be carefully made.

If a course isn't maintained to a high aesthetic standard, golfers may choose to take up membership in another nearby club.

Ride-on mowers have long been a popular choice for maintaining large grass areas such as golf courses, however, advancements in trailed mowers mean a big switch in the way golf clubs are maintaining their

turf. Here are some of the advantages of trailed mowers and how they are revolutionising the golf industry.

## **Sustainably using existing machinery**

The more machinery a club owns, the more it costs to upkeep the course. In addition to the cost of buying the apparatus, there are the running and maintenance costs associated with keeping up with daily use.

Along with a fleet of ride-on mowers, most golf courses will own a tractor used for various other purposes, which may sit unused much of the time. Regardless of how often tractors are used, they require a schedule of maintenance. Using these tractors makes economic sense since they cost the club money, even when not in use.

Using a trailed mower attached to a tractor improves the sustainability of the club and potentially saves

a considerable amount of money. When not in use, the mower can be detached and the tractor can serve alternative purposes.

## **Adaptability**

Ride-on mowers are dedicated pieces of machinery that serve one task. Often, a golf course may require numerous ride-on mowers to cut the grass in specific areas like the green, rough and fairway. Thanks to the versatility, easy height adjustment and contour following abilities, trailed mowers can help maintain all these areas without damaging or scalping the turf.

In addition, trailed mowers excel in wet conditions so cutting dewy morning grass doesn't result in a clumpy mess. There's no need for double-cutting or blowing. Being able to cut in these conditions reduces the disruption for players.





St.Helens Bay Golf Club and Resort

“Using a trailed mower attached to a tractor improves the sustainability of the club and potentially saves a considerable amount of money. When not in use, the mower can be detached and the tractor can serve alternative purposes.”



With over 2,500 golf courses in the UK serving over 5.3 million golfers, competition has never been so high. With this comes the need to maintain grounds to the highest standard possible and in the most efficient manner

#### Low total cost of ownership

Golf clubs that have switched to trailed mowers have enjoyed a lower total cost of ownership. Buying the mower is cost-effective, as a trailed mower and tractor is a fraction of the price of a dedicated machine. Additionally, you can use the tractor for multiple purposes.

Once in operation, it requires very little hp to run and minimal moving parts, there's not much that can go wrong!

Unlike machines with engines, trailed mowers retain their value and typically sell well second-hand.

#### Improved efficiency

The average UK golf course is 111 acres. To maintain the health of the grass, mowing needs to take place regularly, trailed mowers speed up this constant and time-consuming process.

With large cutting widths, a trailed mower requires fewer passes and could dramatically reduce the time needed to maintain the entire course. This, in turn, reduces the labour costs associated with the task, improving the profitability of the course.

In addition, covering the entire course with fewer passes reduces fuel use, creating a more eco-friendly cut.

#### Safety and comfort

Ride-on mowers place workers almost directly above the grass being cut without protection.

On a golf course, there is one common hazard – golf balls. Whether the golf ball is travelling at speed from elsewhere on the course, or thrown up in the process of mowing, if it hits the worker on the mower, it could cause serious injury.

A trailed mower and tractor improve worker safety. Most tractors have

enclosed cabs that protect the operator from any projectiles on the course.

In addition, greenkeepers must work continuously throughout the year to maintain high standards on the course. Battling the elements on a ride-on can be uncomfortable. Trailed mowers attached to tractors with enclosed cabs provide a positive experience that makes the task enjoyable, improving team morale and productivity.

#### It's a no brainer!

Trailed mowers offer greenkeepers a cost-effective, low-maintenance and versatile alternative that improves the appearance and health of the grass while ensuring operator safety. By utilising trailed mowers, golf clubs can maintain the high aesthetic standards which members demand in a very efficient and eco manner. **GI**

“It’s very important to focus on providing sustainable, environmentally friendly machinery alternatives that do not compromise on the quality of the work.” – Jon Cole



# How do you decarbonise?

Decarbonisation has taken over sustainability’s position as the latest buzz word. It’s directly associated with the fight against climate change, but what is it?

Decarbonisation refers to all measures through which a business sector or entity reduces its carbon footprint to reduce its impact on the climate. It was a key topic at COP26 and the UK is leading the way – it was the first major economy to legislate for net zero and is decarbonising faster than any other G7 country with the aim clearly identified as carbon neutrality by 2050.

The government’s roadmap focuses on achieving the transition to a low-carbon economy by:

- Aiming for energy efficiency when powering vehicles
- Emphasising an approach focused on developing energy sufficiency which involves reducing energy consumption
- Using renewable energy sources, which are greener

## What do we need to do?

The journey of switching away from fossil fuel combustion to low carbon alternatives such as electrification is well under way. In March 2023, a robust package of measures to turbocharge the UK’s progress towards decarbonising transport was announced by the government to help boost net zero ambitions and increase use of electric vehicles.

The government has also unveiled its proposals for a world-leading zero emissions vehicle mandate which, from next year, will set minimum annual targets for the percentage of new car and van sales that must be zero emission. The proposed mandate makes the UK’s path to zero emission vehicles the fastest in Europe.

The plans support the government’s commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, and from 2035 all new cars and

vans must be fully zero emission at the exhaust or be able to drive a significant distance with zero emissions.

This move was declared by the technology and decarbonisation Minister Jesse Norman as “the government doing more than ever to help the UK move away from petrol and diesel and towards electric vehicles.”

That means investing in charging infrastructure and giving a clear direction to manufacturers, so they can roll out new electric vehicles faster and more efficiently. The announcement provides long-term certainty to the industry, increasing the number of zero emission cars available for people to buy and setting a clear direction for operators to accelerate the installation of charge points. More drivers will benefit from lower overall running costs against their petrol and diesel counterparts and improving air quality across the country.

Toro was first to market with an all-electric riding greensmower, the Greensmaster eTriFlex 3370

“Responsible water management is paramount and Bio-Circle provides an alternative way of cleaning parts that limits water wastage for a positive effect on a club’s finances as well as the environment.” – Jon Cole, divisional business manager – turfcare, Reesink Turfcare



The water-saving washdown system Bio-Circle from Reesink

### How do you decarbonise?

As a business, Net Zero is achieved by balancing your carbon emissions with techniques that remove CO2 from the atmosphere, such as carbon offsetting.

The first step to achieving this is to reduce CO2 emissions or, where possible, cutting CO2 emissions altogether. The first and arguably most effective way of doing this is by replacing diesel/petrol powered machinery with battery powered machinery wherever possible. And with the car industry seemingly well in hand, one must wonder when the focus will extend to include all vehicles – buggies, mowers, tractors and utility vehicles too.

Sustainability is such a focus for Reesink UK it created a division to cater entirely to electric vehicles. It’s the only distributor to provide the UK market with the only all-electric riding greensmower from Toro and the first

all-electric tractor from Farmtrac, and considers it very important to focus on providing sustainable, environmentally friendly machinery alternatives that do not compromise on the quality of the work, while reducing the customer’s carbon footprint.

Its current offering includes products powered by biodiesel and advanced batteries made more efficient by incorporating electronic fuel injection, hybrid and electric technologies, as well as water-saving washdown systems. The technological changes in washdown systems have developed almost as fast as battery powered equipment but with slightly less fanfare. Reesink now offers Bio-Circle, a system that incorporates air and water feed that reduces water usage to 400ml per minute compared to 40ltrs per minute which is the average used in a high-pressure wash system.

It’s surprising how much technology

can help when it comes to sustainability. Some people may assume that being more sustainable means using less technology or reverting to a more holistic or simple approach, but that’s certainly not always the case. **GI**



To learn more about Reesink UK, Toro, Farmtrac and Bio-Circle, call 01480 226800 or visit [reesinkturfcare.co.uk](https://reesinkturfcare.co.uk)

# Baroness extend their Agrimet offerings for the UK



Adam Butler, Director for Baroness UK, said, "We are extremely pleased to be already working with Agrimetall having sold more than 40 rollers within the first year. We are now excited to be complementing our range with the robust and powerful Agrimetall blowers to include the very well-priced and powerful 27HP TB-270.

"We already produce market-leading cutting technology for a wide range of mowing equipment but now have added another fantastic product to our ever-growing portfolio, to be sold and supported via our extensive dealer network.

"Like the rollers, they will also be coming into the UK sprayed in the fantastic Baroness red."

**Some of the fantastic features include:**

**Remote control**

The weather resistant wireless remote system provides no-delay throttle and chute control at your fingertips.



**Enclosed Turbine Air Intake**

Our enclosed turbine air intake provides minimal intrusion of debris within the turbine chamber.



**Muffler**

Our large muffler reduces noise. The exhaust manifold is 1/8" larger in diameter compared to some of the competition. This improvement prevents the engine from overheating

to prolonged life. The exhaust system is completely covered with a metal mesh for added safety.



**Steel Fenders**

Our fenders are constructed of steel with exclusive impact resistant bumpers to re-enforce the overall structure.



**Large fuel tank**

The 24L fuel tank allows you to get more done between fill-ups.



**90° air Nozzle**

The 90-degree air nozzle is made of a composite material with an exclusive oblong shape outlet. **GI**



To find out more and book a demo with your local dealer, visit: [www.baronessuk.com](http://www.baronessuk.com) or scan the QR Code



# Look after your Kubota machine, to help it look after you!

## Why you can't afford to not look into service plans and extended warranties

Costs are rising across the board – from grass seed and nutritional products through to tractors and maintenance machinery. Availability issues and global economic factors impacting the supply chain are having a major effect, resulting in higher initial investment today compared to typical retail values just a few years ago. With higher outlay, comes the necessity to protect that investment and limit the possibility for further expenditure. Tom Lockwood, Field Service Manager for Kubota UK Aftersales, explores whether courses can afford to ignore the importance of servicing and extended warranty.

We've all been there – buying a mobile phone or perhaps a new washing machine when the advisor in the tech store explains why we need this insurance policy and that warranty cover to give us complete peace of

mind on our new purchase. Discussing servicing and warranties are never a popular subject, but the higher the initial investment, the more thought should be given to the value given by those assurances, ultimately securing or 'fixing' the costs of future ownership.

In the groundcare industry, we as manufacturers haven't only been subject to increasing costs associated with components, materials and production, government regulations and legislation around emission control has forced the introduction of additional electronic components to ensure compliance. This has not only increased asset cost but made the equipment more complex to service, requiring trained technicians and specific technology to fault find any niggles in the system.

With technical advancement, can come cost, so where a £500 repair bill would have been considered

steep a decade ago, bills spiralling into thousands of pounds are now almost expected.

Like we've seen in the agricultural sector, customers' awareness of the need to protect and reduce their risk has seen an increase in uptake of service plans and extended warranty plans. We at Kubota are blessed with a very reliable product, but like everything, there is always the risk of an issue cropping up and, for us, it's about our nationwide dealer network being able to provide a service and solution to rectify that as quickly and cost-effectively as possible for customers – maximising uptime, with no nasty bills.

Kubota Care is our extended parts and labour warranty scheme, available on all product lines. It has the flexibility to suit product application and hours required by the end user but offers fixed assurance for a five-year term.



“ We at Kubota are blessed with a very reliable product, but like everything, there is always the risk of an issue cropping up and, for us, it’s about our nationwide dealer network being able to provide a service and solution to rectify that as quickly and cost-effectively as possible



Kubota Care can help protect your products by using genuine Kubota parts and lubricants

Together with peace of mind and competitive fixed cost of ownership, Kubota Care promotes preventative maintenance and reliability through the use of genuine Kubota parts and lubricants to keep the machine running efficiently - protecting its residual value and your investment.

Costs of an extended warranty may be lower than people imagine, typically in the region of 4-6% of the retail value of the machine. To cover 5 years/2,500 hours on an L2452 compact tractor for example, the customer can expect to pay approximately £249 per year, or less than £21 per month\*. Factor that against the costs associated with machinery downtime and/or repairing or replacing components and parts and you may find that a percentage, if not the total cost of the premium, would be recouped in a single job.

It’s important to note Kubota Care

is not an insurance policy – so there is no excess to pay, but it is subject to a service agreement between customer and dealer. Kubota, like all manufacturers, would emphasise the importance of regular servicing as basic good practice. I, personally, am a true believer that if you look after your machine, it will look after you in return.

Similar to Kubota Care, service contracts can be tailored to customer needs and needn’t necessarily be expensive. The warranty requires an annual inspection by the authorised dealer, but depending on the type of machine and the number of hours it’s clocked up, it may be as simple as that – an inspection. Alternatively, a more thorough service may be required where filters, consumables or other parts may be replaced. Again, there’s the security of knowing that any parts used will be genuine and therefore come with their own 18-month parts

and labour warranty when fitted by an authorised Kubota dealer.

It is always worth speaking to your local Kubota dealership as a range of flexible packages are available to provide the expert support at the right level to suit your unique servicing requirements. Promotions and deals may also be available to help make further savings!

At a time when it can appear hard to be in control of costs across the golf course, fixing expenditure on your Kubota machinery is one thing that should certainly afford your attention! **GI**

\*Costs based on 2022 figures and average dealer labour calculations

For more information on Kubota scan the QR Code.





# All-new irrigation system protects links course for the future

Prestwick St Nicholas Golf Club is a traditional links course on Scotland's west coast. With views of Arran, this 18-hole course has free-draining sandy soil, gorse, deep bunkers and ever-present coastal winds

One of the world's oldest clubs, the current site has been home since 1892 with 'Salt Pan' buildings dating back to 1790, where salt was extracted by boiling sea water, and a flooded quarry that today forms a lake attracting swans, ducks, oyster catchers, herons and grebe. Although only 50 metres from the sea, the water is fresh and used for course irrigation.

John MacLachlan has been Head Greenkeeper since February 1998 and in 2019 highlighted the urgency for the almost 50-year old system to be replaced. Keeping it operational was an ongoing battle for John and his team, with regular failures, continual unplanned maintenance and pumps running at 60% efficiency.

"This is one of the driest links courses in Scotland, so straight after

Covid we decided to do something.

"Every day we'd find burst pipes and we were watering too many areas which we just didn't need to – such as the gorse. Since 2018 we'd used more water year on year and with irrigation just on greens, tees and fairways previously, thousands were being spent on overseeding, on top dressing and hand watering, especially roughs and semi roughs, only to see areas dry up completely in summer."

Irrigation Consultant, Giles Wardle of Irriplan, designed an all-new system with an overriding design objective of uniform and targeted irrigation coverage.

He explained: "The objective for links is to maintain a healthy sward that withstands frequent mowing at low-cut height and traffic of play, which means keeping soil moisture as low as

possible while maintaining turf vigour.

"There have been three very dry springs in the last six years which put more demands on an old system and means the greenkeeping team are playing 'catch up' all summer. Investing in water resourcing is a complex process with financing and system longevity now spanning multiple generations.

"The pipe network has a 50-year design life, hardware and rotors 25 years plus. Prestwick St Nicholas are fortunate in having an irrigation lake for fresh water storage but they installed their new system at just the right time."

Contractor Turf Irrigation Services completed installation between January and May 2022 including a Rain Bird® IC System™ with CirrusPRO™ Central Control software.





Prestwick St Nicholas

The new system was fully operational by August 2022.

Over 800 Rain Bird 752/702 rotors were installed, selected for their ability to be changed from full to part-circle operation in seconds, providing greens staff with complete flexibility regarding optimisation, reducing run-time and water consumption. A new pump house, higher-capacity pumps and larger diameter piping underground has reduced the irrigation window from 10 to eight hours.

The greenkeeping team can now be proactive and make split-second operational adjustments. When decoders fail, a whole section or cable path can be taken out, requiring one of the team to go out on the course to find the fault location. Advanced system diagnostics now in place can

immediately flag up individual rotors or valves on the system PC, or mobile device. Each Integrated Control Module (ICM) can be interrogated from the central control and the health of over 1000 ICM's checked in 45 seconds. Replacing the previous decoder system with the most up-to-date technology on the market has enabled the club to manage its long-term water needs and save time and labour.

John adds, "Rain Bird CirrusPRO™ mapping is fantastic and being Windows-based is very easy to use.

"For anyone looking at system renovation, don't be shy to try what can appear to be very technical and sophisticated technology. You can select a single rotor, with one finger on your phone. We can pick and choose precisely where we irrigate,

and sit in the office or at home and see exactly what is happening, or if there are faults, which saves so much time.

"In March 2023 we built a couple of new bunkers and could set rotors specifically for those, which we couldn't have done in the past.

"The new system has made a massive difference to us and is a 100% improvement on what we had. I can't praise it enough." **GI**



Discover the benefits of CirrusPRO



# Does your course offer rough justice?



Dr Simon Watson works in the R&A Sustainable Agronomy Service as Senior Agronomist

In the first of a two-part series, we consider the importance of rough management and the central role that it plays in the character of a course

The rough is a vitally important component of any course. Its form and texture can be considered the backdrop in which a course is set, and a well-managed rough environment can add a great deal to the golfing experience. Mismanagement can attract unwanted attention and complaint.

'Too thick', 'I can't find my ball', 'the fairways are too narrow', 'cut it back', and so on, are complaints and frustrations that echo around many a golf clubhouse. Consequently, it is a mistake to consider golf course rough as areas of benign neglect. Significant management is required to maintain them and thereby enhance the enjoyment of the game.

The extent to which the rough is managed is dependent upon several factors. It is important to start with clear objectives that guide the management regime. Rough areas are important strategically for the game of golf. The rough frames each hole and has a direct influence on the way a hole is played as well as the speed of play. Beyond the game, as we move

from in-play to out-of-play areas, the rough can also add significantly to the ecological value of the golf course. Many clubs today pride themselves on their ecological credentials and their stewardship of critical parkland, links, heathland and moorland habitats.

implementing a grassland management programme of cutting and/or scarifying and removing the debris over several years. If the rough is particularly thick, cutting on four to seven occasions per growing season may well be required. Ultimately this process will result in the

back onto the fairway. The management objective in this instance is to simply maintain the status quo. Low fertility grassland rough will only require between one and four cuts per year. Two cuts per year might be considered an optimum in these situations: one cut in

**“ It is a mistake to consider golf course rough as areas of benign neglect. Significant management is required to maintain them and thereby enhance the enjoyment of the game ”**

Soil type dictates the type of rough. Heavier, more nutrient and water-retentive soils tend to support denser rough dominated by coarse grasses such as ryegrass, Yorkshire fog and cocksfoot. Where management has been limited or non-existent, such areas of grassland will become rank, thick and tussocky, low in biodiversity value and offering poor playability. Perhaps typical of inland parkland courses in the UK, this type of rough tends to generate the most play delay and lost balls, and with it golfer dissatisfaction.

Where areas of rough have been allowed to become rank, a good management strategy aims to deplete the nutrient status of the ground. This can be achieved through

desired depletion of nutrients and will start to reward the effort by encouraging finer grasses and opening up the sward base, thereby improving playability.

The more nutrient-poor, free-draining soils of heathland and links courses tend to support what might be viewed as the ideal rough for golf courses: a sward dominated by the finer grasses throwing up wispy seed heads from a 'tight' base during the season. A stray ball can be easily found and the golfer is offered a reasonable shot

late February or early March – prior to bird nesting – to remove any early growth and vigour, with another cut in August after seed set to reduce vigour into the winter months. In most instances clippings should be removed after each cut or scarification, but returning some finely chopped clippings on occasion can be beneficial.

Clearly, good rough management involves commitment and adaptation to existing conditions if the true character of a golf course is to be unlocked. **GI**








Our monthly column from The R&A's Sustainable Golf team shares news and insights on agronomy and sustainability themes. For more information on The R&A's Sustainable Agronomy Service please contact [sustainablegolf@randa.org](mailto:sustainablegolf@randa.org)

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