



Greenkeeper International



“I want to have the time to do other things – like stay in bed until eight in the morning”

Bernard Findlay, Portstewart's course manager for 38 years, looks ahead to his retirement

■ Practical Greenkeeping

How to tackle leatherjackets as the growing season begins

■ From Your Association

Meet our Royal Troon Open Volunteer Support Team

■ Careers & jobs

Kerr Rowan is loving life in his new role at Barassie

Vitalnova[®] Links



2 proven products,
1 winning formulation.

Vitalnova Links is a formulation that is designed to improve turf health and quality without creating artificial growth. It contains SMX concentrated seaweed extract combined with the proven biostimulant Vitalnova Blade.



www.icl-growingolutions.uk | www.icl-growingolutions.ie



Researched, formulated and produced in house by ICL



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.

Contact us
Email

Membership enquiries, including changes of address
membership@bigga.co.uk
 Letters and editorial enquiries
info@bigga.co.uk

Post

BIGGA, Coxwold House, Easingwold Business Park, Stillington Road, Easingwold, York YO61 3FB

Phone

Membership services 01347 833 800

Social

[golfgreenkeepers](https://www.facebook.com/golfgreenkeepers)
[@BIGGALtd](https://twitter.com/BIGGALtd)
[@bigga_hq](https://www.instagram.com/bigga_hq)

The BIGGA team

Chief Executive Officer Jim Croxton
 Chief Operating Officer Sami Strutt
 Chief Financial Officer Steve Wragg
 Head of Communications Karl Hansell
 Editorial Assistant Lorna Taylor
 Design and Brand Executive Libbie Waddleton
 Head of Business Development Lauren Frazer lauren@bigga.co.uk
 Business Development Manager Gavin Rees gavin@bigga.co.uk

Publishers

Greenkeeper International is published on BIGGA's behalf by 18Players. For editorial enquiries, email Dan Murphy: d.murphy@18players.com

ISSN: 0961-6977

© 2024 British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited

Welcome

One of the things I love about our industry is the huge diversity across all elements. Greenkeepers come in all shapes and sizes from all backgrounds, and the facilities our members are employed at range from the humblest 9-holers to the most hallowed turf in the sport. Equally, there is significant diversity in the ways greenkeepers approach the profession of turf management.

It is our ambition to serve all our members regardless of their workplace, and we also aim to be representative of the membership in our committee structure, our initiatives and in GI. It is easy to focus on the big stories, and we make no apology for celebrating when our members are in the spotlight, but I personally really enjoy reading about experiences at all levels.

Back in January, there was a fantastic juxtaposition when our Championship Performance award – Michael Mann's Walton Heath team for the AIG Women's British Open – was immediately followed by Stewart Marshall claiming Project of the Year for saving modest Dudley from the brink of closure.

In a similar way, former BIGGA President Chris Kennedy, who oversaw a record number of

“ We aim to continue to provide a membership experience relevant to all greenkeepers

televised professional tournaments during a stellar career at Wentworth, passed on the baton to Chris Sheehan, who spent decades at the relatively unheralded West Derby.

And there is a nice contrast in this magazine with Bernard Findlay, who is retiring from Irish Open venue Portstewart, and the work of the dedicated team at Orkney Golf Club as they prepare to host the International Island Games.

This diversity is an undoubted strength of our Association and why we are embarking on a project to review membership categories and benefits to ensure we continue to provide a membership experience relevant to all greenkeepers and those associated with the profession.



Jim Croxton
BIGGA Chief Executive

Here to support you when you need us

Full Members Personal Accident
 Helpline 0161 687 2178

Greenkeepers Legal Assistance
 0808 181 9194

Lifestyle Counselling 0333 000 2082

Human Resources
 0845 646 1332
bigga@hrservicescotland.co.uk

BIGGA Greenkeepers
 Benevolent Fund
benevolentfund@bigga.co.uk



Contents may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission. Return postage must accompany all materials submitted if return is requested. No responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials. The right is reserved to edit submissions before publication. Although every care will be taken, no responsibility is accepted for loss of manuscripts, photographs or artwork. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Association, and no responsibility is accepted for such content, advertising or product information that may appear. Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £60 per year, Europe and Eire £75, Rest of the World £100. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.



Contents

April 2024

10



13



24



14



30



38

First Cut

09 • FairWays Foundation application window now open
Apply now for grants to support conservation projects

10 • Fortrose & Rosemarkie issue plea for support
The historic club seeks donations to fix storm damage

From Your Association

13 • Open Volunteer Support Team role for Lomax
Wilmslow's assistant greenkeeper is heading to Troon

14 • Articles educate golfers on wet weather challenges
How nationwide coverage helped us explain the measures our greenkeepers have had to take over the winter

16 • Northern board member Jack Hetherington
Looking ahead to spring after a challenging season

Member Interest

24 • The Greenkeeper Files: Bernard Findlay
The Portstewart stalwart reflects on his 40-year tenure

30 • Orkney GC prepares for International Island Games
How the team have transformed the course for 2025

Careers

38 • My New Job: Kerr Rowan – Kilmarnock (Barassie)
The course manager on his long-term goals at the club

Practical Greenkeeping

46 • Golf Course 2030: Golf & Nature
Conference to focus on our relationship with nature

54 • Letting nature into our golf courses
How golf clubs worldwide can support biodiversity



Husqvarna®

It cuts three things: grass, emissions and costs



Perfect conditions, every morning

Wouldn't it be nice to arrive each morning to freshly cut turf? A fairway or semi-rough that's cut in a way that, compared to conventional petrol and diesel machines, saves on equipment and maintenance expenses?

Whilst also producing zero CO2 emissions during use? With Husqvarna CEORA™ robotic mowers you get a perfectly cut golf course every morning, every day.

Read more at husqvarna.com/golf



Complete control at
your fingertips



SCAN FOR MORE



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.



Individual Contributors:

Andrew Campbell | Greg Evans | Frank Newberry | Jon Kiger | Richard McGlynn



BIGGA

Premium Partner



BERNHARD



BIGGA

Supporter



SLF1 ELITE

SUPER-LIGHT FIVE REEL LITHIUM MOWER



EARN YOUR SLF STRIPES



- PROVEN, POWERFUL, PERFECTED CUT QUALITY
- +5.5 HOURS RUN TIME ON A SINGLE CHARGE
- LIGHT & AGILE FOR UNDULATING TURF
- QUIET, CLEAN HYDRAULIC-FREE DESIGN

Proven

Samsung Lithium technology with 60 million hours of use on the finest professional turf worldwide.

Performance

Lighter weight, with no hydraulic oil. Virtually silent operation and minimal vibration.

Traction

All-wheel drive takes on the most complex manicured areas.

Range

Jake's leading 508 amp-hour ELITE Li-ion battery. +5.5 hours of operation with each charge.

On-board charger re-powers overnight and fits with most universal electrical infrastructure.

Our most advanced on-board and remote-ready monitoring system lockable speed and frequency of clip controls.

CUT WIDTH
82"
(2.08M)

CUT HEIGHT
0.30" - 0.70"
(7.62MM - 17.8MM)

BLADES PER REEL
8 OR 11

CUTTING REELS
5X5" (12.7CM) DIAMETER X18" REELS

LITHIUM POWER SAMSUNG SDI
25.5 KWH
508AH

SMART ALL-WHEEL DRIVE



SINCERELY

Jake

For information and support:
www.jacobsen.com / +44 (0) 1473 270 000 / +1-888-438-3946



Actual operating power output may vary due to conditions of specific use. Run time will vary based on conditions of specific use, accessories, and terrain. NOTE: Specifications, while correct at time of printing, may change without notice.

© 2023 Textron Specialized Vehicles Inc.



First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC seeks donations to fund erosion damage repairs
- What's on in April - a round-up of all of this month's important events



Golf clubs invited to apply for FairWays Foundation conservation grants

The FairWays Foundation application window is now open for the 2024 grant cycle, with golf clubs across the country invited to apply.

Submissions will be accepted until the end of April and successful grant recipients will be notified in October 2024.

The not-for-profit organisation supports conservation-based projects where the belief and commitment demonstrated offer a meaningful contribution to long-term change.

Funding is given to local and global projects that harbour an aspiration to protect natural resources, with a clear vision to address the following key focus areas:

- **Conservation** – Golf courses occupy over one million

acres of land across the planet. Encouraging conservation of natural resources helps to ensure a positive use of that land, with benefits that extend beyond the golf course

- **Stewardship** – Responsible use of resources not only within the industry but also within the wider community protects the environment for future generations

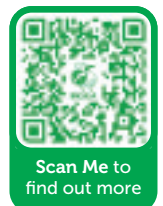
- **Education** – Everybody has a responsibility to protect the habitats they work and live in. Education regarding conservation and sound stewardship in this industry is to be encouraged

The foundation funds projects

that offer a commitment to reduce a facility's ecological footprint, increase the boundaries of standard husbandry, include benefits to the local community and protect existing natural resources.

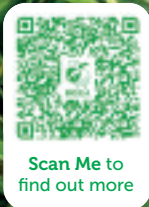
Successful applicants will show a clear strategy and identify goals and objectives that can be measured in order to evaluate success.

A record number of applications were made in 2023 and to date the FairWays Foundation has provided over \$697,000 (£548,000) in grants to support 48 conservation projects across the USA, Canada, Europe and the UK. **GI**



The BIGGA Calendar

April: Lee Carratt, Course manager, Belton Park Golf Club
Download the desktop calendar by scanning the QR code below



Fortrose & Rosemarkie make plea for help with erosion repairs



Credit: Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club

Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club are asking for donations to raise £100,000 to help repair storm erosion and fund new defences against the weather.

Golf has been played at the historic venue since 1793, but late last year it suffered some of the worst damage in its long history as Storm Ciaran battered

the Scottish Highlands.

The club was not alone in succumbing to the harsh elements, but the extent of the damage at Fortrose & Rosemarkie was significant.

Now, a sub-committee set-up in 2022 has identified ways to protect the course, but substantial funding is

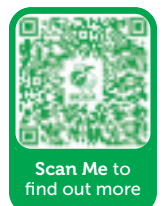
needed, and the club hope the wider golf community will rally behind them.

“Tragically, our worst fears were realised last October where five to six metres to the left side, in part, were lost down both the opening two fairways,” said general manager Mike MacDonald.

“It goes without saying, neither the committee nor the club members and our supporters expected the devastating extent of damage that took place during that time.”

Some work to address the issues has already been undertaken, but further repairs and preventative measures are required.

“It is why the club kindly seeks your financial support if you are in a position to do so,” added MacDonald. “All monies/donations received will be ring-fenced for carrying out the necessary works to restore these areas to how they once were.” **GI**



What's on this month



Dates for your diary

9 April

West Section - Course Walk, Scotland & Northern Ireland
Royal Troon Golf Club

18-19 April

Mental Health First Aid two-day course
Test Valley Golf Club, Basingstoke

18 April

Midlands Golf and Networking event
Stratford upon Avon Golf Club

19 April

BIGGA Scotland Legacy Group: President versus Vice President match
Montrose Golf Links

25 April

BIGGA Central Scotland Golf Championship
Lundin Golf Club

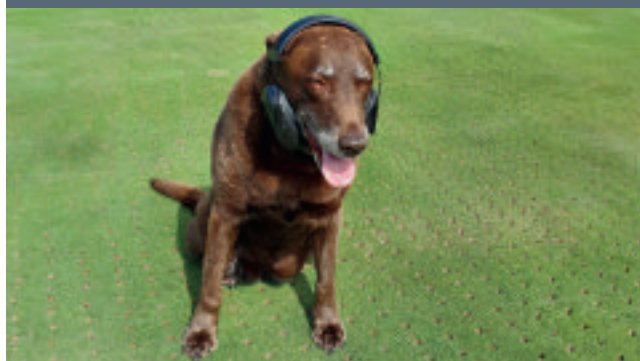
25 April

BIGGA Surrey Section Spring Golf Day
The Leatherhead Club

25 April

BIGGA East Anglia Section Golf Day
Saffron Walden Golf Club

A greenkeeper's best friend – Misty



Owner: John Grey
Club: Centurion Park
Dog's name: Misty
Breed: Chocolate Labrador
Age: 11
Favourite treat: Greggs pasty
Favourite place: Anywhere; she loves being outside
Naughtiest moment: Having a poo on the driving range
She is happiest when: Chasing a ball



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

GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



CONNECT PLUS



CONNECT



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





It's Spring sowing season

Sow Euroflor flower seed mixes now for stunning displays and enriched habitats

Euroflor flower seed mixes deliver beautiful, vibrant displays that enrich any environment and serve as an invaluable habitat for insects, birds and small mammals. They're ideal for a variety of settings including verges, roundabouts, green roofs, golf courses, country estates, parks and meadows.

- **A choice of 24 annual and perennial mixes**
- **1kg of seed covers up to 333m²**
- **Encourages and conserves biodiversity**
- **Minimal maintenance required**



Orders and enquiries:
0800 138 7222
sales@originamenity.com
www.originamenity.com



From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- BIGGA articles on wet weather challenges gain traction nationwide
- Have your say on the Continue to Learn programme at BTME 2025



Wilmslow's Lomax thrilled at Open Volunteer Support Team opportunity

Wilmslow Golf Club Assistant Greenkeeper Callum Lomax is relishing the chance to "get stuck in" after being included in the Open Volunteer Support Team for this year's championship at Royal Troon.

A BIGGA member will join every match during the 152nd Open and ensure every bunker is restored after play, with Lomax among those who will be on the ground.

The team will also be on hand to support the home greenkeepers in general course maintenance.

Responding to news of his inclusion, Lomax said: "It feels fantastic to be selected for the Open Support Team. I can't wait to get up to Royal Troon and get stuck in.

"I'm looking forward to being on a top-tier golf course at one of the biggest golfing events in the world.

"The Open is one of the UK's biggest annual sporting events. For me, it's up there alongside the FA Cup, Wimbledon, and the British Grand Prix.

"I'm just going to observe as much as possible and make the most of it."

Craig Jordan, greenkeeper at The Ashley Wood GC, is also counting down the days to the event, with tournament play starting on 18 July.

"The opportunity to be a part of the best golf event in the world is an experience I can't wait for," he said.

"I am looking forward to meeting other greenkeepers and furthering my connections within the industry.

"It's the best golfing event of the year. To be actively involved is something I never believed would be possible in my career." **GI**

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

Telling your story – how BIGGA shone a light amid the gloomy weather



Following a difficult period with extreme wet weather throughout the latter part of 2023 and extending into 2024, it was clear our members were asking for help in communicating with their golfers about the challenges they had faced.

Hearing that appeal, we produced a series of articles that can be found on the BIGGA website and that are supported by expertise from The R&A's agronomist Paul Woodham, with contributions from BIGGA members all over the UK.

These features enabled us to tell the complete story of how wet last winter had been and how measures such as course closures were essential for the long-term health of the golf course.

With effective sharing by greenkeepers across social media and other platforms, the lead story gathered 68,000 views on the BIGGA

website in a week and that number continues to rise.

From being included in club newsletters at Royal Dornoch and St Andrews through every level of the game, the article was shared with golf club members to explain the challenges you've faced and quickly attracted attention, with The Herald in Scotland producing a related piece, and the original article being reshared by National Club Golfer, Golf Monthly and others.

BIGGA's Karl Hansell said: "This is an example of how the BIGGA community can collaborate to make a difference in the lives of our members – and other greenkeeping professionals who aren't yet part of BIGGA membership. Speaking to experts, we were able to tell the full story and provide data that highlighted the challenges greenkeepers have

faced this winter. The BIGGA community then shared the story widely, contributing to the large readership numbers we saw.

"We wish we didn't have to tell this story and that golfers accepted their greenkeeping team's decision without question, but until that day arrives, we'll continue advocating on behalf of the profession and supporting our members through whatever challenges are thrown at them."

The article remains on our website, so please refer to it whenever required.

If there is a topic you believe we should be addressing, please get in contact by emailing info@bigga.co.uk or message us on WhatsApp at 07933 203 645. **GI**





Members' Choice Survey – help to shape the education programme at BTME 2025

BIGGA members are being encouraged to have their say on the Continue to Learn programme at BTME 2025.

The Members' Choice Survey, which is open from 16 April to 11 May, offers you the opportunity to shape the education programme at next year's show.

Continue to Learn at BTME is the most comprehensive education programme for greenkeeping professionals outside of the USA, with 1,145 education tickets sold and 3,215 individual education experiences in 2024.

Prospective speakers have until 12 April to submit their Proposal to Present, with members then able to vote on those submissions.

Deb Burnett, BIGGA's learning and development executive, said: "Immediately following the conclusion of BTME each January, we get to work planning the education programme for the following year.

"A vital aspect of Continue to Learn is that it is comprised of topics that our members tell us they need to learn more about, to support them in their daily lives.

"Members' Choice is that opportunity for BIGGA members, no matter what stage of their career they're at, to shape next year's education programme."

Keep an eye on our social channels and your emails for the release of the survey this month. [GI](#)



Congratulations to the following members who have achieved CPD Approved status

William Curran, Royal Ashdown Forest

Richard Ponsford, Clevedon

Lee Strutt, Cabot Cape Breton

Peter Smith, Bathgate

Scott Rigby, Gathurst

Ryan Fiander, Lees Hall

Jonathan Wood, St Andrews Links Trust

Andrew West, Ganton

Keith Byrne, The Island Golf Club

Kevin Deans, Gullane

Andrew Wilson, Whitecraigs

David Feeney, Prestwick

Matthew Plested, Stoneham

Adam White, Elsham

Jarno Ruscoe, Ingestre Park

Adam Kelly, Woodbridge

Stevie-Jon Hood, Ljunghusens Golfklubb

John Gubb, The Bedfordshire

Robin Cheney, Thornbury

Craig Swindells, Chipping Sodbury

Craig Mackay, Royal Dornoch

Simon Connah, St Andrews Links Trust

Oliver Kirk, Bury St Edmunds

Les Howkins MG, The Richmond

Richard Andrews, Chesfield Downs

Congratulations to the following members who have achieved their CPD Milestone

Nicholas Thorley, Saunton

Stephen Mancini, Prestwick

Michael Sparke, Kings Hill

Lee Strutt, Cabot Cape Breton

Robin Cheney, Thornbury

Jarno Ruscoe, Ingestre Park

Andrew Stuart Anderson, Muswell Hill

Sam Ludlow, Luffenham Heath

Darren Moxham, Saltford

Richard Andrews, Chesfield Downs

Spring brings renewed hope



Jack Hetherington
Northern board member

Winter outstayed its welcome but spring is here and it's time for optimism

Back in October last year, April felt like the distant future, and, as I sit down to write this article, I reflect on the multitude of challenges winter 2023 presented us with.

Many parkland courses, including my own at Chester-le-Street Golf Club, faced long-term closures, cancelled improvement projects and a membership that was feeling the effects of a challenging season.

The winter seemed endless, and there were countless moments when I yearned for April to arrive, bringing with it the promise of a fresh start and a new season.

And now, April is finally here.

The arrival of spring should bring a sense of relief and excitement, but instead I find myself confronted with a lengthy list of unfinished winter tasks.

The course hasn't been able to receive the necessary bunker sand, the winter routes require seeding, budgets are being adjusted based on January renewals and we still need to increase cutting frequencies throughout the entire course.

It's a daunting to-do list but one that we will tackle head-on.

Nevertheless, April is shaping up to be the most crucial month of the year.

It's a time when we can wrap up our winter



“ April holds the promise of growth, improvement and the beauty of a well-maintained golf course

workload and focus on reaching the standards we aspire to for the summer season.

Despite the challenges ahead, this month marks a transition from winter to spring and with it comes a renewed sense of hope and optimism.

As a golf course manager, I always strive for continuous improvement, setting high standards for myself and my team. This will result in new challenges as perfection continues to be elusive.

That's why it's important to take stock of our efforts and recognise the

immense difficulties this winter has presented for us all.

Golf course teams across the country have done exceptional work in the face of the most challenging conditions.

While new challenges will undoubtedly arise, we can find solace in the fact that we have successfully navigated through a demanding winter, and the obstacles ahead will hopefully be drier and warmer.

In conclusion, April brings both challenges and opportunities.

It's a month where

we can reflect on the past winter, learn from it and then make all the necessary adjustments to ensure a successful summer season.

It's a time to appreciate the resilience and hard work of golf course teams and to look forward to the warmer days ahead.

Despite the unfinished tasks and the adjustments that need to be made, the month of April holds the promise of growth, improvement and the beauty of a well-maintained golf course ready to be enjoyed by members and visitors alike. **GI**

THOSE THAT KNOW

For over a decade and across more than 40 countries, Revolution® has set the standard for all other soil surfactants. Its patented and proprietary methyl capped technology provides superior playability, reduced hand watering, and uniform soil moisture. Revolution users demand the best and don't settle for anything less.

REVOLUTION. TRUSTED ON GOLF COURSES AROUND THE WORLD.



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **REVOLUTION**® FOR YOUR COURSE?
Contact Your Local Aquatrols Distributor or Visit: EU.Aquatrols.com/ONLY-REVO



Welcome to our new members

International

Jack Brooks Hanrahan (I)
Ennis, Ireland

Tom Maddison (I)
Golfclub De Hoge Kleij,
Netherlands

Jack Smillie (I)
Winston Golf, Germany

Fritz Lord (I)
Compo Expert, Germany

Daniel Quinn (I)
Green Valley CC, USA

Nolan Stark (I)
Turf Star Western, USA

Michael Poch (I)
Foxborough CC, USA

Kevin Downey (ST)
Edmond Brosnan (ST)
Mark Duggan (ST)
Nicholas Fitzgerald (ST)

Ethan Hayes (ST)
Finbar Hughes (ST)
Noel McCarthy (ST)
Harry McSweeney (ST)
Cork College of FET,
Ireland

Northern Ireland

Alexander Kane (APP)
Bushfoot

Paul Revill (CM)
Royal Belfast

Steven McDowell (G)
Causeway Coast & Glens
Borough Council

Scotland

Jake Craigie (GK)
Dunbar

Daniel Gunn (AGK)
Shaun MacDonald (GK)
Royal Dornoch

Michael Burns (AGK)
Stirling

Lewis Connell (AGK)
North Berwick

Christopher Brown (AGK)
Richard Hillyear (GK)
Euan McPherson (GK)
Newmachar

Fraser Bunkell (GK)
Jamie Smith (GK)
Trump International
Aberdeen

Douglas Hart (S)
GBR Technology Ltd

Brenna Honour (GK)
St Andrews Links Trust

Edward McNaughton (GK)
Gullane

Conner Holland (GK)
Finn Taylor (AGK)
Kilmarnock (Barassie)

Ben Morrison (AGK)
Douglas Park

Christopher Palmer (GK)
Largs

Morgan McQueen (GK)
Dumfries & Galloway

Northern

Connor Ambler (AGK)
Halifax West End

Glyn Brown (A)
Ilkley

Luke Chism (AGK)
Oscar Hayhurst (AGK)
Mark Marrow (GK)
Pleasington

Jeremy Eastwood (HGK)
Branshaw

Luke Sowerby (APP)
Adam Wilford (APP)
Knaresborough



Woodhall Spa 2nd

Keiran Fenton (AGK)
Hesketh

David Flynn (AGK)
Rotherham

Russ Greaves (A)
18Players

Jack Hurst (AGK)
Houghwood

Thomas Ison (HGK)
Hawarden

David Kirkham (GK)
Lobden

Lewis McCulloch (AGK)
Hull

Harry Gunning (GK)
Andrew Nicholson (GK)
Cottingham Parks G&CC

Jordan Harrison (HGK)
David Kershaw (AGK)
Grange-over-Sands

Callum Scanlan (HGK)
Brightmet

Philip Sutterby (AGK)
Filey

Dave Towse (AGK)
Thirsk & Northallerton

Joanne Duck (A)
North Cliff

Tim Clover (GK)
Easingwold

Dale Pennington (AGK)
Chorlton-cum-Hardy

Stephen McKenzie (GK)
Widnes

Greg Milton (P)
James Wright (P)
Origin Amenity Solutions

Michael Manser (AGK)
Wallasey

Sam Cowens (AGK)
Goswick Links

Alfie Wilson (AGK)
Bondhay

 **Central England**

Michael Barnett (GK)
Daniel Pratchett (AGK)
Market Harborough

Louise Barrington-Earp (A)
Mansfield Sand Company

Thomas Brooks (HGK)
Heacham Manor

Danny Burton (GK)
Omersley

Alfie Cox (AGK)
Alfie Dunning (AGK)
Davey Jones (AGK)
Welwyn Garden City

Paul Dickson (AGK)
Mapperley

Glyn Hannah (GK)
Collingtree Park

Robert Hodgkinson (AGK)
Worplesdon

Morgan Hughes (AGK)
Royal Winchester

Finlay Jones (AGK)
Vale of Llangollen

Jack Marsh (AGK)
Wollaton Park

Callum Moore (DHGK)
Woodhall Spa

Dean Ballard (AGK)
Jack Walter (AGK)
Huntercombe

Tonderai Kennedy
Nyemba (GK)
Stoke Park

Nigel Rowland (GK)
Chapel

Zach Tallent (GK)
Ingestre Park

David Thomas (AGK)
Sleaford

Joseph Timmis (G)
Liam Williams (GK)
Wrekin

Joe Tonks (APP)
Vale G&CC

Harrison Park (APP)
Walmley

Freddie Green (GK)
Essendon CC

Jack Carter (GK)
Wrag Barn G&CC

Rory Kelly (G)
Edd Lovatt (AGK)
JCB G&CC

Aaron Chapman (G)
Sunningdale

Nicholas Borrell (G)
Boston

Matthew Tofts (G)
Mount Pleasant

Benjamin McMurdo (AGK)
Oakmere Park

Bruce Moore (AGK)
West Berkshire

James Phillips (AGK)
Great Barr

Thomas Matchan (AGK)
Mill Ride

Daniel Sowerby (AGK)
Michael McCrorie (G)
Bird Hills Golf Centre

Charlie Topping (AGK)
Harleyford

Reece Bond (AGK)
Longcliffe

Charlie Wilde (AGK)
Newbury & Crookham

 **South East**

Ciaran Brown (DCM)
Crowborough Beacon

Taylor Christian (APP)
Mid Kent

Sean Cozens (GK)
Nicole Weir (GK)
Michael Boura (AGK)
Wentworth Club

Jamie Dealey (AGK)
Moor Park

Nick Durkin (S)
GBR Technology Ltd

Carrie Hardiman (AGK)
Hendon

Jamie Hillier (AGK)
Fulwell

Lewis Matthews (AGK)
Silvermere

Philip Mawson (DHGK)
Stockley Park

Liam McKendry (HG)
Charterhouse School

Richard Hawkins (P)
Laurence McCrory (P)
Origin Amenity Solutions

Thomas Roberts (AGK)
Watford Football Club

Jimmy Heritage (A)
Grassplant Ltd

Max Hinton (APP)
Diss

Jake Bonds (APP)
Sittingbourne & Milton
Regis

Radoslaw Suchomski (FA)
Thomas Sunney (GK)
Charlie Clements (AGK)
Wyke Green

Callum Brown (GK)
Piltown

Peter Trevelyan (GK)
Canterbury

David Barbrook (GK)
Southwold

Adam Shears (G)
London Borough of
Hammersmith & Fulham

Jasper Marks (HG)
Highfield School

Timothy Peeling (S)
Envu

George Kelly (AGK)
Singing Hills Golf Course

Nathan Mitchell (AGK)
Slinford G&CC

Jay Green (AGK)
London Golf Club

 **South West & South Wales**

Toby Berry (AGK)
Burnham & Berrow

Austen Godfroy (AGK)
Oliver Shapland (AGK)
Boundary Lakes

Connor O'Driscoll (AGK)
Mike Stradling (AGK)
Naunton Downs

Harry Resoli (AGK)
Boringdon Park

Roger Tomey (A)
Huxley Golf

Ben Rexworthy (APP)
Minehead & West
Somerset

Samuel Burlinson (APP)
Yeovil

Nick Carroll (FA)
Bowood Park

Gareth Earles (GK)
Oliver Jones (GK)
Cardigan

Oliver Beecham (GK)
George Dawson (AGK)
Cumberwell Park

Euan Murphy (AGK)
Llanishen

Paul Wooldridge (AGK)
Tall Pines

Key

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



SUPERIOR FINISH EVERYTIME



The ISEKI SF range of powerful 22.5-49hp diesel engine mowers enable you to mow your grass whatever the weather keeping the same pristine finish everytime. With a variety of rotary or Muthing flail decks to choose from, the ISEKI SF range really is the ultimate mowing machine. Available as cut and drop with a useful toolbox on the back, or cut and collect, with a turbine driven collection system direct from the deck to the large hopper, available up to 1300L. Designed and manufactured in Japan for quality that's built to last.

Contact your local dealer to book a demo on your premises today!

**Contact your
Local Dealer to book
a demonstration
on your site today!**



Award
An Avoncrop Amenity Product



A unique soil surfactant with the added benefit of increased stress resistance and root stimulation

Contains a surfactant blend designed to take both preventative and curative action. It also contains amino acids and rootbooster to further enhance performance.

Benefits

- Concentrated soil surfactant with unparalleled curative and preventative properties
- Applies a full application of amino acids to prevent stress associated with heat and drought
- Contains rootbooster to increase the plants water holding capacity

- Uniform wetting of the rootzone to provide the perfect balance of water to air ratio
- Increased rate of photosynthesis
- Improved seed germination, root development and vigour
- Ideal for links courses as amino acids will help the plant cope with salinity problems
- Exceptional turf safety, non-scorch

For added rhizospheric stimulus tank mix with Award Turfxtra Rhizoboost

Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd
Tel: 01344 891730
sales@avoncrop-amenity.com

X @avoncropamenity
www.avoncrop-amenity.com



Help us to create **10,000 sq.m** of new wildflower areas across the UK!

At **COLLIER TURF CARE** we are on a mission.



Since the 1980's, approximately **33%** of British wild bee species have declined¹, and **80%** of butterfly species have declined since the 1970's². **We want to change that.**

To help create some small pockets of wildflower grassland for our bees and butterflies, Collier Turf Care are giving away **10,000 sq.m** worth of Bees & Butterflies wildflower grass seed.

Scan the QR code to see the Wildflower Seed live map, and to apply for a bag (stock dependant)



Sources:
¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-47698294>
² <https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/80-of-uk-butterflies-have-decreased-scientists-warn-time-is-running-out>



Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- Portstewart stalwart Findlay looks back at his 40 years in charge
- Orkney prepares to host the 2025 International Island Games



Course manager Brooks outlines the benefits of Stover's enforced redesign

Stover Golf Club is undergoing a major transformation, with golf course architect Simon Gidman overseeing a redesign of the original James Braid layout to accommodate the widening of a bordering road.

Here, course manager Jason Brooks discusses the project and the benefits he is already seeing.

"The project to widen the A382 required Devon County Council to use part of the golf course, meaning a complete redesign of the front nine, including four completely new holes, built within adjacent land purchased for the club. In all, eight out of the original front nine are new holes.

"Profusion won the tender to do the work over two years in three phases. The spec was really high with

USGA greens, rootzone tees that are playable all year around and Rain Bird IC valve-in-head irrigation.

"It was a stipulation that the club had to have 18 holes playable at all times to minimise disruption, and at the minute we've got 22, so the area of management has grown significantly, and we've had to take on extra staff. It has been a great experience for all the staff involved and credit to them, they've worked incredibly hard.

"The council have also provided machinery based on what I needed for a grow-in, so that's been a nice addition for us as well.

"Only once all the new areas are in play, which we expect will be in June, will they start work on the road project. The additional holes will be

phased out returning us to looking after 18 holes again.

"It fell to me to decide what grass species would be used on the greens, and we've gone for creeping bentgrass – the quality of this and the surfaces it provides are amazing. The plan is to phase in a reconstruction of the old push-up greens on the rest of the course over the next few years.


"It wasn't too hard to sell after the members had played on the first phase of greens that opened last year.

"This has definitely been a blessing for Stover, as we're basically getting a whole new golf course. It has really piqued interest from local golf clubs, and their members have come to play it and given great reviews. Suddenly we've got a waiting list to join." **GI**

Greenkeeper
Files



Bernard
Findlay



After nearly four decades in post, Bernard Findlay has called time on his Portstewart tenure and a distinguished career in greenkeeping

Bernard Findlay spent a career making things better than he found them, but it wasn't in his nature to simply stop and admire his handiwork. Whenever he beheld the inarguable and ever-evolving beauty of Portstewart Golf Club – which he did practically every day for almost 40 years – it was always the imperfections that preoccupied him.

Such is the lot of a greenkeeper, chasing perfection where it can't be found, finding fault where scarcely anyone else can detect it and fixing problems few knew existed.

However, it's that level of attention to detail that served Findlay so well over a long career – a career that came to an end in March of this year.

Here, he reflects on that 52-year journey and looks ahead to what comes next.

School's out forever

Born in 1957, Findlay was a pupil in the last year group who were able to "escape from school" at the age of 15, and he didn't hesitate to do just that. Despite being born and raised in south London, Findlay was surrounded by golf courses, counting as many as 12 within a seven-mile radius of his home in South Norwood. Among them was Shirley Park, where his brother Joe was already employed.

Findlay didn't have any grand career plans, but he did know that working outside appealed to him, and his older sibling seemed to like his job.

"I wanted to work outdoors and being on a golf course certainly fitted the bill. It was hard graft," he said. "I started as an apprentice under the watchful eye of a very good greenkeeper by the name of Bill Machin, who was instrumental in the greenkeepers' association of the time.

"My time at Shirley Park and doing the apprenticeship made me realise this was definitely what I wanted to do. I enjoyed being one of the lads and it was a busy parkland course with plenty of trees, lots of work with the chainsaw, and the chance to gain experience of problem-solving in greenkeeping."

The journey to Portstewart

Even as a teenager, Findlay was beginning to form much clearer ideas about how this job that he enjoyed so much might translate into a career. He was hungry to move up the ladder and seized the opportunity at nearby Croham Hurst, where Findlay set his sights on becoming first assistant to George Brown, a role he soon claimed for his own after furthering his education at Merrist Wood College, where he was named Top Student in 1975.

His first head greenkeeper position was not long in coming, with the now defunct Hurst GC in Reading giving Findlay the opportunity to do what he does best – find and fix problems.

"I was there for about six years, and it broadened my



The Strand Course



experience a fair bit. I got involved with all the issues they had going on there with drainage, and there was the opportunity to work on rebuilding parts of the course. All of that appealed to me.”

Those various postings around London and the Home Counties were preparing Findlay for a bigger challenge at a place where he could really make his mark. He would soon find out where that place would be, and once again his brother – who had moved to Royal Portrush as head greenkeeper in 1975 – had a role to play in taking him there.

“Joe told me there was a job coming up at Portstewart and I made enquiries. I was told they wanted a course manager and someone to oversee development work in the dune system associated with the golf course, a piece of land called Thistly Hollow which the club owned – it was spectacular, absolutely spectacular.”

The job seemed made for Findlay, appealing directly to his desire to be involved in something that required thought, planning, imagination and no small amount of elbow grease. It took little time for either party to make their mind up – Findlay applied, and the job was his.

Moving to Portstewart

Findlay did not harbour the same misgivings that some may have had over a move to Northern Ireland in the 1980s, not least because he had visited many times in the preceding years and found a place full of beauty and warmth, particularly on the north coast that was now to become

his home. Nonetheless, any move requires a degree of adjustment and Findlay was bringing his young family along.

“As you can imagine there was a lot to get used to. After all, I had moved home, job and culture, but lots of people were immediately very helpful and friendly, including my brother Joe and the Portstewart Golf Club staff and members.”

He was also welcomed by Michael Moss, club manager from 1978 until 2017, who Findlay described as a “fantastic manager of people”, while also reserving praise for his successor and current incumbent David MacLaren, whose “knowledge of golf is second to none”.

Findlay had real agency in his role and a chance to create a lasting impact with the work in Thistly Hollow – where seven new holes would be created – offering challenge and reward in equal measure. Fortunately, help was at hand.

“At the time there was a greenkeeping staff of 12 and the existing head greenkeeper remained in place. I took over the running of what at the time was two courses, The Strand Course and the Old Course. The development work that followed was overseen by me, along with a chap called Des Giffin, who was the designer of these new holes to link up to The Strand.

“I had been asked at my interview what I thought about the venture into Thistly Hollow – I had no experience of development in a dune system, especially something as spectacular as Portstewart had in their portfolio, and they didn’t know how to develop it either. My answer was a



General Manager David MaLaren on Findlay

“ Bernard completed over 38 years’ service at Portstewart. That is in itself an incredible feat, but to have presided over everything from an Irish Open to the creation of world-renowned new golf holes is testament to Bernard’s commitment, resilience, knowledge and sheer determination to continually move the golf club forward. His retirement leaves a colossal gap in the life not just of the club but also of members, colleagues and the team of excellent greenkeepers that he has built. Bernard has put his heart and soul into the rise of Portstewart, some aspects of which only he properly understands. Everyone with any connection to or relationship with Portstewart owes Bernard a huge debt of gratitude, and future generations will also benefit from the work of a truly great course manager.”



Findlay’s five traits for success

1 Education – I have been involved in the interview process for my successor. Each of the final candidates were armed with an impressive level of greenkeeping education, up to degree level in some cases.

2 Practical ability – There is no escaping the fact a good course manager must have hands-on practical experience in so many areas of the industry. You cannot bluff your way to the top.

3 Dedication – Be prepared to drop everything to return to work for meetings, irrigation problems, vandalism, weather-related issues, machinery breakdowns....

4 An eye for detail – Our work is under the magnifying glass by both amateur and professional players in some cases. Pre-empting their critique by paying attention to detail can only enhance your reputation.

5 Empathy – Do you understand what you are asking of your fellow workmate? This trait is heavily linked to both a practical greenkeeping ability and knowledge, important when managing people.



Findlay's career timeline

1972

Starts as an apprentice at Shirley Park

1976

Moves to Croham Hurst and rises to the role of first assistant

1981

Takes head greenkeeper role at the now defunct Hurst GC in Reading

1986

Gets the top job at Portstewart

2024

Retires after 52 years in the industry

About Portstewart

Founded in 1894, Portstewart isn't a modern club. However, a portion of the course is, with The Strand Course being renovated in 1992, when Findlay oversaw the construction of seven holes through the dunes in an area known as Thistly Hollow.

Portstewart has a history of being developed to designs by those who know it best. In 1934 the course was enlarged to 18 holes and designed in part by James Rea, the greenkeeper at the time. A.G. Gow of Portrush designed the first Strand Course in 1908 and then Des Giffin, a member and schoolteacher, designed the present 18-hole layout, built by Bernard in 1992. He also designed a 9-hole course, which became known as the Riverside and was expanded by Bernard to 18 holes in 2003.

The Strand Course is recognised as one of the UK and Ireland's very best links layouts and, in addition to many national and international amateur championships, in 2017 it hosted the Irish Open, won by Jon Rahm.

Meet the Portstewart team

- Richard Engall – Deputy course manager
- Neil Gibson – Senior greenkeeper
- Jonathan Doey – Senior greenkeeper
- Marc Brown – Senior greenkeeper
- Richard McMullan – Head greenkeeper, Old Course
- John O'Brien – Greenkeeper
- Jonathan Hemphill – Greenkeeper
- Nick Menzies – Greenkeeper
- Gary McLelland – Greenkeeper
- David Smyth – Greenkeeper (in training)
- Michael McAfee – Greenkeeper (in training)
- Gary McFadden – Greenkeeper (in training)
- Phil Crocker – Trainee greenkeeper
- Gavin Morrison – Trainee greenkeeper
- Derek McMorris – Senior mechanic
- Kieran McConnell – Mechanic
- Raymond McMath – Seasonal
- Gordon Stuart – Seasonal



Team Portstewart (from left to right): John O'Brien, Gary McFadden, David Smyth, Ricky McMullan, Michael McAfee, Gordon Stuart, Richard Engall, Jonathan Doey, Bernard Findlay, Marc Brown, Nick Menzies, Jonathan Hemphill, Raymond McMath, Gary McLelland, Derek McMorris, Kieran McConnell, Phil Crocker, Neil Gibson

simple one: I can work to the specification drawn up by a golf course architect. That seemed to satisfy them. I wasn't aware my golf course architect was actually a schoolteacher who played a lot of golf!"

There was a degree of trial and error to it all, but Findlay possesses an analytical mind and could make educated guesses about the impacts and outcomes of any proposed course of action. This is after all the man who delivered a presentation under the title 'Can you build a seaside links or is that nature's job?' and won widespread acclaim, with the renowned Jim Arthur among those to congratulate him. By the September of his first year in post, a pilot hole had been built – the first step in what was to prove a hugely successful undertaking, with Findlay quick to credit his team for making it so.

"I didn't have experience of that scale of construction in what was obviously a very natural area, but what I did have is that I had inherited a very practical greenkeeping staff. Now, I was an Englishman coming into a Northern Irish setup, so I won't say it was easy, but most of the people that I worked with were fantastic. They've got an endless amount of practical experience and an ability to make do with what they had. We weren't a particularly wealthy club – the wealthy club was three miles along the road – but those seven holes were built for under £100,000."

After a steep learning curve, Findlay was proud to see The Strand Course host the Irish Close Championship in 1992 – paving the way for other high-calibre tournaments to follow.

The layout was a hit, inviting players to pit their wits against a course whose natural and man-made elements blended seamlessly in a vision that was at once new and exciting and yet also traditional and established.

Find the negatives, put them right

After decades of alterations, improvements and refinements, Portstewart has to Findlay's mind remained steadfastly unchanged in one defining element.

"It's always been a building site; they have never stood still," he explained. "But my job in all of that has been to not look at the place through rose-coloured spectacles, but to look at the areas and find fault with them and see the negatives, and then make list after list of all the things that I want to put right."

"That's the way I have viewed my job to a certain extent – find the negatives and put it right. If things don't meet my own expectations, then I'm not happy."

The building site vibe will remain, with the club having embarked on an ambitious plan for further development across several phases, including upgrading the practice facilities and the selective development of both the Strand and Riverside courses under the guidance of world-class golf architecture practice, European Golf Design.

Leaving it all behind

It's something Findlay would gladly be involved with, but he has a rich life away from work, and he plans to enjoy that.

"I suppose some people may say I'm fairly possessive; perhaps that's part of the reason I've had success. But without a doubt, I want to go out and enjoy myself and have the time to do other things – stay in bed until eight in the morning, I like to draw, I enjoy photography, I've got beautiful grandchildren. I might even play a bit of golf as well." **GI**

“ If things don't meet my own expectations, I'm not happy **”**





**Chris Rae, head greenkeeper,
Orkney Golf Club**

Rae hails from Australia and started working in the industry in 1998 at Sydney's Pennant Hills Golf Club. He undertook his apprenticeship at Concord Golf Club before building a varied CV, which includes golf construction work alongside his experience in greenkeeping. He got the Orkney job in 2013, having lived on the island since 2008.



**Stewart Fotheringhame, golf co-ordinator,
Orkney 2025**

Fotheringhame was instrumental in forming the Golf Committee in 2018, with fellow host course Stromness, and has been its chair ever since. Rae credits him as being vital to the course renovation project and playing a key role in the logistics of running a tournament, liaising with the Orkney Island Games committee, Sport Scotland, Scottish Golf and the Orkney Islands Council.



The International Island Games are coming to Orkney

Orkney Golf Club is undergoing substantial redevelopment in preparation for the big event in 2025

It's a little early to be handing out medals for an event that isn't happening until next year, but Chris Rae and Stewart Fotheringham surely deserve one.

The duo have been pivotal in preparing Orkney Golf Club for the 2025 International Island Games, which will be staged in the British archipelago next July, two years later than initially planned.

Covid put paid to the 2021 edition and Guernsey retained hosting duties for 2023, affording a little more breathing space for the substantial redevelopment of Orkney GC, which will share responsibility for staging the golf action with Stromness Golf Club.

Issues to address

Head Greenkeeper Rae and Orkney 2025 Golf Co-Ordinator Fotheringham, along with a small team of dedicated volunteers, have transformed the oldest of the island's seven courses in readiness for the big occasion.

Golf Architect Stuart Rennie was brought in to draw up a masterplan and work to execute that began in 2020, though 13 new bunkers and six new tees had already been built by then, while widespread drainage was undertaken.

Among the issues that needed addressing was the state of some of the greens, particularly the 1st and 3rd, which posed challenges likely to tax even the most proficient of putters.

“Those two greens had a 7% fall across them – just a straight line down, no flat areas,” explained Rae. “Some days we wouldn’t mow those greens or roll them if it was too windy because the prevailing wind blows the same way as the slope did.”

“I think one lady recorded 27 putts on the first – we really didn’t want to have a situation where we embarrassed ourselves by having greens that were basically unplayable.”

Exceeding expectations

The extensive renovation of what is a compact site located on the west side of Kirkwall, Orkney’s capital, has also included relocating the 2nd tee to a safer location, as it previously sat in a landing area for the 9th hole, while other work has added definition to a course that is now winning warm praise from members and visitors alike.

“We had a group of about 40 Americans and a few other nationalities come and play here on a PerryGolf tour,” explained Rae. “They’d played Carnoustie, Gleneagles and Royal Dornoch and we just happened to be mixed in with that lot.”

“They couldn’t believe the standard of the course and for the price they’d paid – we put on sandwiches and soup and provided caddies; we felt like we were out of our depth really, but we managed to achieve it, and they booked for another two years, so I guess you’d call that a success.”

“But that’s what I set out to achieve when I came here 11 years ago – I want to surprise people and I want them to be impressed with the quality here.”

Fresh eyes, new ideas

Projects on such a grand scale are always likely to raise eyebrows among the membership, but it didn’t take long to win over the majority at Orkney, some of whom even volunteered their time to help get the work done.

Temporary greens were required for up to a year while some of the work was carried out and areas of ground under repair



The history of the Island Games

Orkney 2025 will be the 20th edition of the Games – a remarkable feat for something that was intended to be a one-off.

The inaugural event, then titled the Inter-Island Games, was held in the Isle of Man in 1985 as part of the self-governing British Crown Dependency’s International Year of Sport.

Such was the success of the Games, it returned bigger and better in Guernsey two years later and has continued as a biennial spectacle ever since, with the 2021 Covid-enforced cancellation the only exception.

From those humble beginnings four decades ago, when 700 athletes from 15 island groups competed across seven sports, the renamed International Island Games has since regularly hosted over 2,000 competitors from up to 25 island groups, with as many as 15 sports on the programme.



Orkney 2025 mission statement

1. Provide a competitive sporting programme in excellent facilities
2. Create a meaningful legacy for local sport and communities
3. Involve communities and businesses as much as possible
4. Celebrate the best of Orkney: place, produce, and people
5. Make the 2025 Games as environmentally friendly as possible

“I want to surprise people and I want them to be impressed with the quality here

were commonplace, but, beyond the odd grumble, most were understanding and supportive.

The results have been as surprising and impressive as Rae could have hoped for, with the upgrades providing for not only a more aesthetically pleasing track but also one that rewards strategy rather than dumb luck.

And Rennie’s vision wasn’t all about more of everything – in many cases, his plan called for elements to be removed.

“It wasn’t a case of adding things in,” said Fotheringham. “He was seeing bunkers in positions on par threes and saying, ‘How do high handicappers play this? Take that bunker away and there’s an opportunity to run it in.’”

“Through his fresh eyes, we were able to see things we hadn’t noticed before.”

A helping hand

Rae’s experience in golf construction has enabled him to do a significant chunk of the work himself, though he readily acknowledged an undertaking on this scale is not a solo enterprise. He had the help of another greenkeeper and two summer labourers while working on the greens, and Fotheringham is among the small army of volunteers who have willingly chipped in. Some haven’t even had to get their hands dirty in order to help move things along, as one member proved by donating machinery and manpower to the club.

“He had a civil contracting company, and they wanted to keep their boys working as there wasn’t much on coming out of Covid,” explained Rae. “He sent up his best digger operator, an eight-ton digger, five-ton digger and a six-ton dumper all for free for three weeks – we couldn’t have done it without them.”

Not remotely a problem

Orkney’s remote location is largely mitigated by the resourcefulness of its people, and the golf club is no different, though Rae does sometimes meet with the odd issue.

“We’re pretty well serviced up here,” he said. “The hardest part of my job is getting machinery and parts as there’s usually a bit of a wait, but that’s more on the greenkeeping side.

“On the construction side, we’ve got a large industrial area near us and if there’s anything we need, we can get it.

"We have a few members who own construction companies, so if we need any topsoil we give them a shout – we pay the haulage, and the topsoil is donated to the club.

"We also own a 25-acre field next to the course, which we rent to a farmer, but we've fenced off 5,000 square metres to create our own turf farm."

Don't go, Laura!

It's trickier to find workarounds for the scarcity of potential recruits, however. Rae put a young prospect called Fergus McIvor through his apprenticeship, but after a few years he moved on to other things, though he still returns to help out now and again.

So Rae relies on summer labourers and his own broad skill set to keep everything in order, though he does have the help of greenkeeper Laura Sayer-Hall for the next year.

Sayer-Hall worked at Ardfin on the Inner Hebridean isle of Jura and Rae is hoping to keep hold of her for as long as

The sports

- Archery
- Athletics
- Badminton
- Cycling
- Football
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Lawn Bowls
- Sailing
- Squash
- Swimming
- Triathlon

Golf events

- Women's individual 72-hole scratch
- Men's individual 72-hole scratch
- Women's team event 72-hole scratch
- Men's team event 72-hole scratch



“The work we've done on the course will certainly leave a legacy”

possible.

"She's a great attribute to the club. The members have embraced her attitude, she's really positive," he said. "We don't have a mechanic, so I've got to do all the work myself – we try to remain self-sufficient, so she's been learning all about it over winter and she's really embracing it.

"But other than that, I don't think we can ever really lure anyone here in the greenkeeping world. It presents some challenges, and it won't be for everyone, but I love it."

Let the Games begin

More than 2,500 competitors and officials are expected to attend across the duration of the International Island Games, which it is hoped will attract up to 3,000 visitors to Orkney.

It makes the event an incredible platform for Orkney to enhance its reputation on a global stage, and Fotheringham is aware of the potential to create something that endures well beyond the seven-day sporting spectacular.

"Legacy is a big thing with these big sporting events," he said. "We're hoping that general interest in golf in Orkney will go up, and the work we've done on the course will certainly leave a legacy.

"The fact we're hosting this will leave a legacy with regards to marketing the golf club to tourists. We get a huge number of cruise liners in Orkney, well over 200, and that represents a big opportunity for us."

About those medals...

Rae and Fotheringham may have to settle for being content with a job well done rather than having the honour of a medal hung around their necks, but what are the chances of an Orkney local laying claim to some precious metal?

"The top player on the island is a guy called Steven Rendall, who came sixth in Guernsey last year," said Fotheringham. "We've never won a medal in the golf, but I'd like to think we've got a chance this time." **GI**

Orkney 2025 in numbers

7

days of competition

24

island groups represented

12

sports

2,500+

competitors and officials

3,000

visitors

GET AHEAD THIS SPRING



Invest in the best.
Whatever the task, you can always depend on a Kubota.



BOOK A DEMO
Contact your dealer today

Kubota Care
Up to 5yrs warranty available.
*Available on selected models

www.kubota.co.uk

For Earth, For Life
Kubota

Marathon ALGAE **GOLF**

The solution for environmentally-friendly, healthy, resistant turf!

Overview:

Marathon ALGAE gradually releases the nutrients needed for the grass to grow, whilst stimulating the soil's bacterial activity. This avoids the accumulation of undecomposed organic matters.

Usage:

The Marathon ALGAE GOLF range is recommended for maintenance fertilisation on **greens and tees**.



Formulations:	Application Rate	Pack Coverage	Longevity
7-13-9 + 3.2MgO + 0.5Fe + 0.3Mn	20 - 30 g/sq.m	500 - 666 sq.m	In addition to sowing
5-0-27 + 4.2MgO + 0.5Fe	20 - 30 g/sq.m	666 - 1,000 sq.m	4 - 6 weeks
16-4-8 + 3.6MgO + 0.5Fe	20 - 30 g/sq.m	666 - 1,000 sq.m	4 - 6 weeks
10-0-15 + 3.1MgO + 0.5Fe	20 - 30 g/sq.m	666 - 1,000 sq.m	4 - 6 weeks

Why should you use **COLLIER TURF CARE?**

We are large enough to compete, small enough to care...



We have **6 months** worth of stock on selected lines.



Next day delivery available

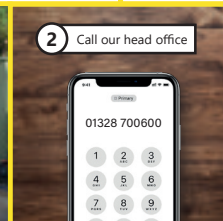
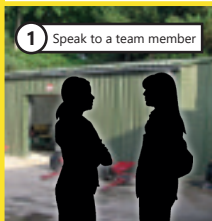
We dispatch same day where possible on a **2 - 3 day service**.



We have **30,000+** square feet of warehouse space filled to the max.



99.9% of our deliveries arrive safely due to our careful packaging policy.



Very easy to order - Customers can place an order or ask for advice in a variety of ways.



Marathon fertilisers are available exclusively from



01328 700600 | sales@collier-turf-care.co.uk | collier-turf-care.co.uk



Careers

Jobs, expert advice and peer-to-peer support

- **My New Job: Kerr Rowan on life as course manager at Kilmarnock (Barassie)**
- **Recruitment: see the latest industry vacancies**



From The Beano to the Home of Golf – Aitchison’s comic book story

Gary Aitchison enjoyed a 22-year career as a graphic designer working on publications including *The Beano*, but when that came to an end, he wasn't so much looking for the next chapter as an entirely different story.

Having taken redundancy last year amid a restructuring at DC Thomson, Aitchison was facing the prospect of finding something to replace a job that he had always treasured. Being a keen golfer and not wanting to compromise on his philosophy that "you should do something you enjoy", Aitchison seized the opportunity to pursue his passion and, following a helpful suggestion from a contact at Elmwood College, he attended an open day at St Andrews Links.

"I was told if I could get a seasonal

position and show I had the right attitude, that might be a way to secure a full-time role. As it was such a massive change in career, I had my concerns, not least the hours, which I knew would be very different from the 9-5 I was used to.

"However, I really wanted to give it a go and with it being seasonal, there was a natural end point where I could decide to do something else if I didn't like it – but I found out I absolutely loved greenkeeping."

With his evident enthusiasm and a desire to learn, Aitchison soon made the transition to full-time employment at the Home of Golf. His work in graphic design had taught him the value of attention to detail, but he knew he would need to get to grips

with a whole lot more.

"Many people don't grasp what greenkeeping involves and will say, 'You just cut grass', but you can learn as much as you want – there's real scope for growth in the industry."

With the full support of St Andrews, Aitchison is now doing his SVQ Level 2 as he looks to progress further.

"I didn't realise just how good a fit it would be for me. The more senior members of the team are passing on their knowledge and I'm learning all the time. They put a lot of trust in me and are very supportive. I owe a huge thanks to Kevin Muir, Stephen Lawlor and Louise Abercrombie, who have played a key part in helping me achieve a full-time role at the Home of Golf. It's a fantastic place to work."



Kerr Rowan

Kerr Rowan spent 18 years living in the clubhouse at Kilmarnock (Barassie) and now he is back as the club's course manager.

His mum used to do the catering at the club and Rowan, now 44, was a junior there – it's very much familiar territory. But while Rowan sees his new role as a long-term gig following his January move from The Addington Golf Club, that doesn't mean he's getting comfortable. The desire to improve still drives the man who once interned at Augusta National and has worked at all four men's majors.

Tell us about your new role

I look after the 27 holes, consisting of the Barassie Links (18 holes) and the Hillhouse course (9 holes). We have a team of 10 and, although we're not a true links course because we're not right next to the sea, we do have very sandy soil, so we are a links in that respect.

What do you hope to achieve in the role?

First and foremost, I'd like Barassie to be known as a good place to work and somewhere with a strong ethos. If we can get the team all working together and singing from the same hymn sheet, the golf course will take care of itself. I could be the greatest greenkeeper in the world, but if I can't get people to work for me, I'm useless.

How does it fit into your career path?

I was very fortunate when I was young in that I didn't have any ties, so I was able to move about and follow opportunities for my benefit. I got married, but we don't have kids, and my wife was happy to go to different places as well, so I've done a lot of travelling and seen a lot of the world. It's time to settle down and put some roots down. I've lived in over 20 houses, and I don't want to do that anymore. Coming home to Ayrshire was always in the plan, and I don't see me moving again.

What skills have you found vital to your job?

The most important skill set is being a good leader and being a good man-manager. I think the grass is the easy part. In Ayrshire, a lot of greenkeepers don't move around; we've had guys here for 47 years, 21 years – they know what they're doing. My role isn't to tell them how to do their job, it's to offer a little bit of nurturing and be the glue that binds them all together. I hope that being a good leader is what sets me apart.




Kilmarnock (Barassie) 7th hole

Kilmarnock (Barassie) Golf Club's new course manager is no stranger to the Ayrshire links

“ First and foremost, I'd like Barassie to be known as a good place to work





“ Coming home to Ayrshire was always in the plan, and I don't see me moving again

What is the best thing about your new job?

Being on sandy soils. I've worked on a lot of different courses and the beauty here is that it's links, it's year-round, it drains – if we wanted to cut fairways or greens any day of the year, we could. I haven't had that luxury at other courses. There's also less disease pressure because we've got free-draining soils, we don't have a lot of trees, so we're not picking up a lot of leaves – the sandy soils go a long way to helping with a lot of things!

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

I wish I had been more confident when I was younger. I was very influenced by the thought of, 'These guys all know more than I do'. I did a lot of education when I was young, and I wish I had carried that forward a little better by believing in myself a bit earlier.

What has been your best career break?

Going to Augusta National at the age of 21. I've loved golf from a very early age so to go there, see that and learn habits at such a young age was great for me.

When I'm in interviews, it's always a talking point, it's always something people are interested in. Very few British guys have done that, so it definitely catches the eye when it's on your CV.

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

I'd hope to still be at Barassie trying to make the golf course as good as possible.

There are some architectural changes in the pipeline, as well as bunker renovations. We will look to upgrade the irrigation system as well; a full new system is hopefully only a few years away. **GI**



Kerr on applying for a new job

Describe the recruitment process for your role

The head professional Gregor Howie sent me a cheeky WhatsApp message just saying, 'Get your CV polished'. A few days later word got out, people started telling me and a job advert went up, so obviously I applied. I came up for an interview with the general manager, the chairman, and the finance convenor. They decided I was the guy for the job, which was quite flabbergasting.

What were your new employers looking for?

I think the club were looking for a fresh pair of eyes. One of the advantages I had is that I'd worked on a lot of golf courses, so I was bringing a lot of different thoughts to the table.

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

The fact I'm well-travelled and I've done this since I was 18. I've genuinely got no idea what anyone else had, but 26 years in the turf industry is a fair stint and a varied 26 years as well. I think that probably ticked the box the most.

What advice would you give to anyone applying for a similar role?

Do your homework. Find out about the club. Walk the course numerous times. Stalk social media. Be prepared for anything!

Kilmarnock (Barassie)

Latest job vacancies

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

Assistant Course Manager



Chestfield Golf Club, Kent

Chestfield Golf Club are looking for a dedicated Assistant Course Manager to join our well-established team. The 18-hole course has had considerable improvements over recent years including a full installation of an automated irrigation system, a new fleet of cutting and spraying machinery as well as a course improvement programme over the next 3-5 years being implemented. Essential skills and qualifications include a minimum of 5 years' experience, S/NVQ level 3 or equivalent, NPTC Pesticide: PA1, PA6, PA2a plus knowledge of irrigation system maintenance. Chainsaw certificates in felling and cross cutting desirable. The successful candidates will be enthusiastic and dynamic with the ability to motivate and lead a team, have excellent attention to detail with communication and project management skills and full UK driving licence. **Please send CV and covering letter to Gavin Mason, course manager: coursemanager@chestfield-golfclub.co.uk**

Greenkeeper

Chigwell Golf Club, Essex



Chigwell Golf Club, an 18-hole private members club founded in 1925, is currently seeking to recruit a highly motivated and enthusiastic greenkeeper to join our ambitious and friendly team. We are a forward-thinking and ambitious club with big plans ahead, particularly with the centenary just around the corner. We encourage personal growth and assist with training requirements and requests. Reporting to the course manager, the successful candidate will contribute to the daily presentation of the course, project work and all other aspects of turf maintenance. This is an excellent career opportunity for the right candidate.

Job Type: Full time, permanent.
Salary: Competitive. In keeping with BIGGA recommendations.
Contact: Jeff Foulger, course manager: coursemanager@chigwellgolfclub.co.uk

Assistant Greenkeeper

Horsley Lodge Golf Club,
Derbyshire



Horsley Lodge is an 18-hole course with USGA spec greens on the outskirts of Derby and one of the leading golf courses in the East Midlands. With emphasis on professional development, this role would suit an experienced greenkeeper looking for a new challenge. Requirements include excellent attention to detail and ability to produce a high standard of work, good time management and good communication skills. The successful applicant will be a team player able to use their own initiative and have a flexible approach to work hours and weekend duties, qualified to NVQ Level 2 Amenity sports turf with PA1,2 & 6 spraying certificates. Competitive salary based on experience. **Please send covering letter & CV along with salary expectations to Simon Hardman, head greenkeeper: simonhardman67@gmail.com**



Recruitment

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 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

We're **BIG** on...

CAREER-DEFINING OPPORTUNITIES



FAST AND PRECISE OVERSEEDING FOR EFFECTIVE GERMINATION

- Accurate seed metering without wind drift gives even growth and reduces wastage
- Seed is brushed into holes to maximise germination
- Overseed 18 greens in just a few hours, no need to close any greens
- Discrete overseeding leaving instantly playable surfaces
- Fitted to your triplex in minutes

Get ready for the season with the Dynamics range



DYNA-CORER

Fast and discrete micro coring



DYNA-SPIKER

Aerate your greens quickly and efficiently



DYNA-BRUSH

Contra-rotating brushes collect cores and debris



DYNA-SEEDER

WATCH THE VIDEO

to see the Dyna-Seeder in action



ASK FOR A DEMO

GreenTek

Trusted by the best in the game

0113 267 7000

www.greentek.uk.com

sisis

Greens, tees and fairways maintained with *expertise & passion.*



Discover



Pedestrian Scarifiers

Tractor Mounted Brushes

Tractor Mounted Slitters

Tractor Mounted Aerators

Tractor Mounted Scarifiers

Our other products include: Slitters | Sweepers | Spreaders/Top Dressers | Hand Tools

For more information or a no obligation demonstration call **01332 824777** or visit www.sisis.com

Proudly part of **Howardson** Group Ltd

We're **BIG** on...



BIGGA

British and International
Golf Greenkeepers Association

SUPPORT WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH

BIGGA Greenkeepers' Benevolent Fund

Lifestyle counselling support line

Official wellbeing partners

Personal accident insurance

Human resources advice line

Greenkeeper legal advice line

BIGGA.ORG.UK



Seed to Succeed!

Enhance sward density, prevent weed ingress and optimise germination from each and every operation with our range of disc and dimple seeders.



Overseeder 3D



Multi-seeder 1200



Cultipack

Redexim



BIGGA
Regional Partner

redexim.com

01428 661222 - sales@redeximuk.com





Practical Greenkeeping

Refine your skillset and expand your knowledge



Syngenta Technical Manager Sean Loakes discusses tackling the problems posed by leatherjackets this spring



What we do in... April
How to combat soil-dwelling larvae

As soil conditions begin to warm up, the activity of leatherjacket feeding damage will become more evident. Larvae that have survived the winter are larger and start to feed voraciously, as they build up fat reserves ready for adult flight.

Playing surface effects typically result in horribly uneven ball roll where larvae have created pock marks as they nibble around aeration holes each night, while below the surface they feed away on roots – weakening turf and making it significantly more susceptible to stress. Plus, predators in the form of birds, particularly crows, pecking at the surfaces, or worse larger badgers rooting for grubs, can cause catastrophic damage.

While greens treated last autumn may have been well controlled, wider areas, tees or approaches that were outside treatment programme areas could now be subjected to heavier pressure.

All efforts over the spring should be focused on symptom management for turf recovery and building plant strength to withstand the larvae feeding activity, including good nutrition, adequate irrigation, wetting agent strategy, PGR

programmes, cutting height, large-scale sheeting and aeration.

Nutrition may need to be tailored slightly at this time of year to include nutrients to give plants the opportunity to outgrow leatherjackets' feeding damage, as well as leaf growth that can mask the effects of damage.

Any integrated turf management (ITM) practices that can alleviate stress will help develop more resilient plants, as well as being aware that affected areas are going to be more

susceptible to other issues, such as dollar spot or fairy ring, and may require more intensive actions to prevent further losses.

Focusing now on spring ITM strategies will help to build stronger turf, more resilient to leatherjacket damage and summer stress effects, while preparing for treatment actions at the appropriate time later in the season. **GI**



“ Focusing now on spring ITM strategies will help to build stronger turf, more resilient to leatherjacket damage and summer stress effects, while preparing for treatment actions at the appropriate time.

A person in a red vest is pushing a lawnmower across a golf course at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting long shadows across the grass. The background shows rolling hills under a warm, golden sky.

Golf Course 2030: Golf & Nature



The precious relationship between our game and nature will be discussed, celebrated and strengthened at a global conference this month – and greenkeepers like you are at the heart of it , says John Kemp, The R&A's Project Manager – Golf Course 2030



Later this month, leading bodies in global golf will gather at a two-day seminar in Paris to discuss the relationship between golf and nature.

This first-of-its-kind gathering – made possible by The R&A's Golf Course 2030 programme – will invite key golf industry stakeholders to attend for a discussion, planning and information exchange about golf and nature. The aim is to establish how golf can tell a story that, for some, seems as natural as the courses we maintain.

Industry bodies – including BIGGA – and national golf federations will come together, represented by people working in different roles in our sport. Delegates from Great Britain and Ireland, Europe, Africa and Asia, working in roles across golf course management, club management, scientific research and sustainability, will all share their knowledge and experiences.

The event, hosted by ffgolf – the golf federation for France, will offer insights into the many projects taking place across Europe and further afield. It will ask how golf can capitalise on its greatest strength – the places we play.

Golf has a unique relationship with the natural environment. Few other sports are played over landscapes that are as diverse as the communities they are part of. With that comes a responsibility to ensure that future generations can enjoy those natural environments and a game played by millions around the world.

The value of nature is felt by us daily. Studies prove the importance of it for our health. As part of The R&A's global study into the health benefits of golf, leading environmental psychologist Professor Jenny Roe, from the University of Virginia, highlighted that golf courses possess many of the natural features – including water and biodiversity – that help with our wellbeing.

"Contact with nature slows down our stress response and induces calm," said Professor Roe.

Learn more about Golf Course 2030



Scan Me to
find out more

For more information about golf and nature, Golf Course 2030, and many of the initiatives mentioned in this article scan the QR code

Why nature matters for the next generation of golfers

38%

Percentage of non-golfers who say that time spent outdoors was a reason for them to play golf – more than any other reason

50%

Percentage of non-golfers who agree that golf is good for the environment

60%

Average percentage of a golf course that consists of natural habitats important for conservation

75,000ha

Estimated habitats on UK golf courses – an area larger than Exmoor National Park



"It is promoting stress resilience, it is improving our mood, it is decreasing our risk of depression and increasing our social wellbeing, particularly on a golf course where you are interacting with other members of that community. So, there are a host of mental and social wellbeing benefits," she said.

If spending time in nature on natural golf courses is good for our health and wellbeing, the question then becomes: could better nature on courses be a reason for people to play more golf?

Very possibly, as research conducted by The R&A tells us. When people who currently don't play golf were asked what makes the sport appealing, the biggest reason was time spent outdoors in nature. In addition, 50 per cent of non-golfers agreed that golf was a sport good for the environment – while only 15 per cent disagreed.

Nature is an important appeal for the game of golf. Whether it is the subliminal benefits of time spent outdoors engaging in healthy recreation, or the fact that our golf courses can be havens for nature, we have an opportunity to bring people of all ages and backgrounds into the sport through our management of golf courses and nature.

Led by Sophie Olejnik, of Oleo Ecology, who will be familiar to many as a leading ecologist in golf, The R&A Golf Course Biodiversity Project was established in 2022 to assess and quantify the biodiversity value of existing golf courses over five years. Annual reports share data and case

studies from around Great Britain and Ireland and are complemented by practical guidance for golf course managers to consider.

“The relationship between golf and nature is one of the great opportunities for us to talk positively about golf and golf courses

"I count myself fortunate to have worked with many different golf courses to study and enhance their nature and biodiversity," said Olejnik. "I'm excited about this study and the opportunities we have to better understand the nature supported by courses and how we can provide practical management recommendations to help continue to conserve important flora and fauna on them."

After just one year, the findings of the study were enormously promising – with more than 150 species of conservation concern identified on golfing landscapes, including some with the highest level of European protection.

This data, coupled with the examples of good greenkeeping, is incredibly important in telling the wider



world – those outside of golf – about the good work we have done for so long. Increasing the awareness and appreciation of golf courses as havens for nature is an important part of The R&A's sustainable golf strategy.

"The results in the first-year report, highlighting over 150 species of conservation concern and 14 habitats of principal importance, is an exciting result to demonstrate the contribution golf courses can and already are making to nature conservation," said Jeff Knot, Director of Policy and Advocacy at the RSPB.

The R&A's Golf and Nature study is not alone. It complements many other research projects globally which

aim to demonstrate that golf is good for nature (see Global Projects on Golf and Biodiversity alongside).

The R&A partnered with the RSPB in 2020 to appoint a Business Conservation Advisor for golf. Since then, Dr Marie Athorn has worked across Great Britain and Ireland to raise awareness of the conservation actions golf courses can take, but also promoting golf's positive role in supporting species in decline, reintroduction of rare reptiles, or even wildlife using golf courses as greenspace stepping-stones in urban areas.

"Golf Course 2030 has given us the opportunity to find out more about the many different projects focused on golf and biodiversity," said Daniel Lightfoot, Director – Sustainable Golf at The R&A.

"Importantly, we can learn a great deal from all of them and sharing those global learnings can inform the actions of greenkeepers around the world."

The bond between good greenkeeping and thriving nature might seem obvious to most working in golf course management. Greenkeepers spend their days working outdoors in natural landscapes seeking to manage with, not against, natural processes.

There are countless actions that greenkeepers can take to improve nature and biodiversity on their courses.

Many, if not all, of you will hope that your work will complement nature, and sometimes we are privileged enough to experience nature up close in a way that people in other industries are never afforded.

Simple small actions can make a big difference for nature and come with added benefits such as cost savings, increased volunteer support and collaboration with local groups.

Dr Alister MacKenzie said that the goal of any golf course architect should be to make their work indistinguishable from nature itself. This is a goal shared by all those working on golf courses – whether greenkeepers or golf course designers - but also those supporting the sport across industry bodies and golf federations.

So, while 40 people representing the game gather to discuss what needs to be done globally to support nature through golf, the daily work to manage golfing landscapes that support nature continues by professional greenkeepers around the world.

The relationship between golf and nature is one of the great opportunities for us to talk positively about golf and golf courses. As custodians of golfing landscapes, greenkeepers are the people who make this opportunity possible. **GI**

Key Best Practices to Improve Nature in Golf

Taken from The R&A Golf and Nature – Year 1 Report

- Establish your course biodiversity value by working with local conservation groups and involving enthusiastic members
- Appoint an in-house Biodiversity Champion to raise awareness of biodiversity internally and externally
- Create a nature management plan with support from nature conservation groups and independent experts
- Improve diversity and density of habitats such as woodland, scrub and grassland
- Reduce mowing of out-of-play areas to save money and improve diversity

Global Projects on Golf and Biodiversity

At the Golf and Biodiversity Seminar, organisations will share the work they have done to promote golf and nature and the positive impact they are having. This includes some of the current Golf Course 2030 projects

Studies into the Biodiversity of Golf Courses ffgolf (French Golf Federation)

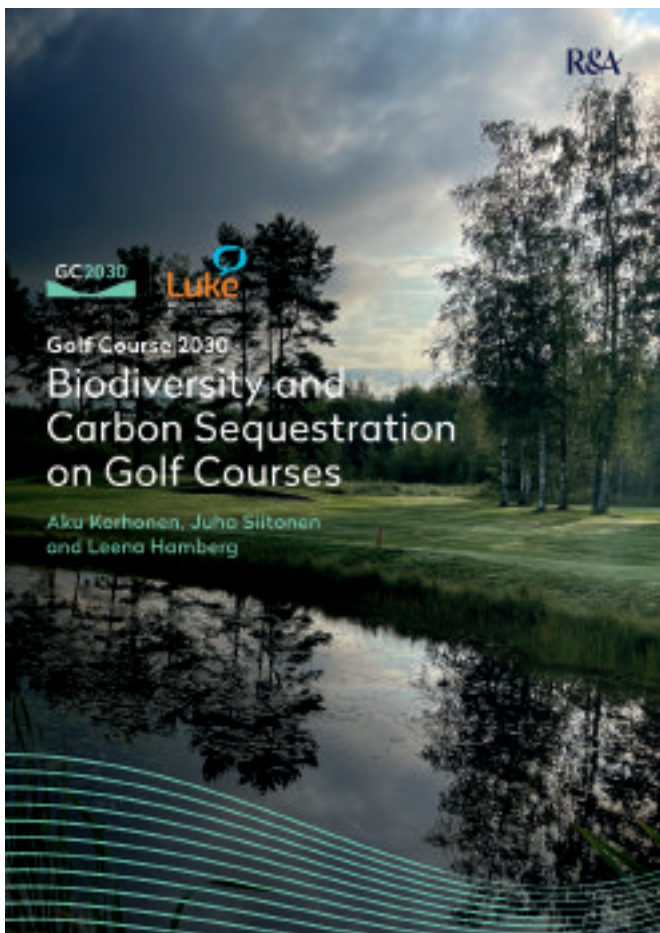
This project develops the partnership between the French Golf Federation and the National Museum of Natural History. Producing industry guidance and reports and hosting educational events across Europe, it will promote the added value of golf courses in terms of biodiversity preservation and scientifically measure the relationship of biodiversity and sustainable golf course management.

Biodiversity and Carbon Sequestration on Golf Courses Finnish Golf Union, Finnish Greenkeepers' Association

This literature review concentrates on the potential of golf courses to maintain and promote biodiversity through a variety of natural habitat types and species diversity. Additionally, it explores possibilities to address climate change through carbon sequestration on golf courses. The published handbook provides guidance to golf courses for enhancing biodiversity and adopting climate-friendly course management practices.

Biodiversity and Multifunctionality of Golf Landscapes STERF and Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research

This project seeks to undertake an ecological analysis of 40 courses in peri-urban and rural landscapes in several countries. It will document contributions to biodiversity and provide knowledge of how golf courses can be designed and managed to improve their contributions to biodiversity and ecological functions at the landscape scale.





YOUR CHANCE TO CELEBRATE YOUR TEAM'S SUCCESS

The BIGGA Awards recognise that high standards of quality and dedication are vital to the success of any golf course or championship.

They reward the innovation delivered by BIGGA members who are at the cutting-edge of their profession.

NOMINATIONS OPEN NOW FOR

GREENKEEPING PROJECT AWARD

CHAMPIONSHIP GREENKEEPING PERFORMANCE AWARD

Sponsored by Bernhard and Company

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD



Ready. Preset. Go.



WideSpin™ 1550 Topdresser

Calculates your preferred topdressing rates and saves your settings for exceptional greens, tees and approaches. See the most comprehensive line of spinner and drop-style topdressers on the market.

For a demo, call John on 07512 909792



Beauty through productivity
www.turfc.com



We're **BIG** on...
FUNDING FOR YOUR FUTURE



BIGGA
British and International
Golf Greenkeepers Association

Disease of the Year

FOCUS ON FAIRY RING

Fairy ring has become an increasingly visible challenge for many golf courses over recent seasons

Fairy ring related stress on turf has severe visual effects and can affect surface quality.



Working in partnership with

syngenta[®]

Find further insights at
www.syngentaturf.co.uk

Changing climate increasingly creates conditions for fairy ring fungi to thrive, as well as being more difficult for turf growth to mask the effects. As a result, the dark unsightly rings can occur at almost any time through the season, typically from April to September, with the rings often getting larger and more noticeable, as well as lasting longer, year on year.

With increased pressure, cultural controls can struggle to cope and turf is less resilient to recover. While in some areas of fairways the turf quality effect is primarily visual, when rings appear on greens surface consistency can be affected, along with damaging effects during recovery.

For the most part the turf is not infected or attacked by the fairy ring pathogens, however the fungi activity on thatch and organic matter in the profile will physically change the properties of the soil – which in turn impacts on turf health and resilience to stress factors.

Controlling fairy ring is best approached with an integrated turf management (ITM) strategy, utilising cultural controls to combat the physical changes in the soil, combined with a fungicide programme designed to reduce the pathogen and limit the effects.

Controlling fairy ring is best approached with an ITM strategy

Selected fungicides, such as new Ascernity and the well-established Heritage, have been shown to give good results in trials to reduce the incidence of the fairy ring pathogen. The most effective and reliable results have been with preventative treatments early in the season; once effects are being seen there is little curative control of the symptoms.

Trials in the US with a range of Syngenta fungicides had indicated treatment at soil temperature between 13°C and 15°C could provide the best results, compared to application at cooler or hotter temperatures (Fig 1).

Now, new Syngenta research for the 2024 season in the UK is seeking to refine application timing benefits

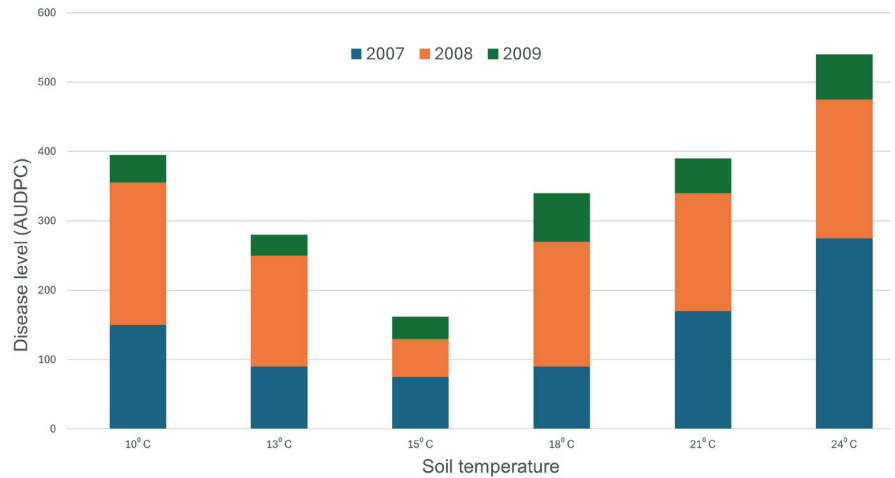


Fig. 1: Syngenta US trials for fairy ring fungicide application at varying soil temperatures, now being evaluated in the UK.

with Ascernity applied at different soil temperatures, using decision support guidance for the Turf Advisor App. Treatment when soils reach a consistent 10°C; 15°C or 20°C will be evaluated for fairy ring suppression. This work will combine with Ascernity applications for summer dollar spot and anthracnose control.

Fungicide programme

In addition to the fungicide programme, cultural controls targeting dry patch will reduce its impact, including an effective Qualibra wetting agent strategy – and most importantly starting that early enough in the season before the issue is ingrained in the soil.

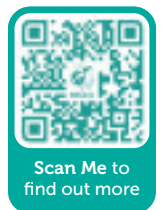
Furthermore, agronomy inputs to encourage and maintain greater root mass through the summer, when fairy ring normally starts to appear, will help to mitigate the effects of dry patch. That is likely to include a Primo Maxx II PGR programme to build stronger rooting, along with a nutrition plan designed to optimise root growth, along with an aeration strategy that will both encourage rooting and can help to reduce the organic matter levels that fairy ring relies on to thrive.

Nutrition has an important role in managing the visual effects of fairy

ring, since the dark green rings are far more pronounced when surrounding turf is pale and under fertilised. Turf managers have also found aesthetic issues of contrast with dark fairy rings can be masked with Ryder pigment.

Syngenta application research has demonstrated application techniques to better target the pathogen. Fungicides for soil-borne pathogens are best applied with a white 08 Syngenta XC Soil Nozzle. The relatively large orifice allows application at a higher water volume, of 600 – 800 l/ha, at a lower operating pressure that generates more large droplets.

Trials have also shown little or no benefit from aeration prior to application targeting soil borne pathogens, although a light sorrel roll could aid penetration in capped or very dry soils. More effective is 2-3mm of water irrigation post application. However, where fungicides are also looking to target foliar disease, such as dollar spot and anthracnose, application technique may need to be tailored accordingly to the priority of diseases to be tackled. **GI**



Read this for:

- Understanding fairy ring
- Improving rooting
- Fungicide timing



Author: Sean Loakes
Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland

Letting nature in



As we enter the growing season, Roddy Williams, from the GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf, considers how we can let nature into our courses to enhance the landscape and maximise our value to biodiversity



Pollinator patches at Harjattula Golf & Country Club, Finland

A new wildflower meadow between the 11th tee and Harjattula Road is beneficial for pollinators and game animals.



Rewilding at Hunley Hotel and Golf Course, England

Biodiverse habitats have replaced large areas of previously mown grass. Most were simply created by leaving meadows to grow and then managed with annual cut and collect. This saved 60 man-hours a week in peak season while reducing fuel consumption by 2,500 litres of diesel per year. Now 60 of the 100 hectares are managed purely for wildlife as grasslands, scrub, woodland, hedgerows and ponds support a large variety of species.



Spring heralds the awakening of nature, a season of rebirth, growth and vibrant life. It is a time of great anticipation not only of the golfing season ahead but of the natural sights and sounds bursting forth.

It is a time to reimagine golf courses not just as tees, fairways and greens, but as protected and enhanced landscapes where we let nature in, enrich the playing experience and maximise golf's value to biodiversity.

As human impacts continue to drive climate change and biodiversity loss, there is a need for golf to support the global effort in building a nature-positive world. Operating with a sustainable golf mindset can empower greenkeepers and course managers to steward and support habitats and biodiversity where nature and sport coexist in harmony. From incorporating native species to implementing sustainable maintenance practices, each step can enhance the ecological richness of golf courses. The fun and features of golf can truly embrace the natural world, particularly because the game depends on, and can be improved through, flourishing landscapes and ecosystems.

Golf courses occupy roughly 6m acres of land globally, and all have unique opportunities to conserve, or create, green space with ecosystem service, health, and well-being benefits for communities. These golf courses are living landscapes that provide

biodiverse features while generating shot value and an enjoyable, nature-based experience for players.

An average 18-hole golf course measures 60 hectares, of which roughly 20 hectares is short, managed grasses like fairways, greens and tees. The remaining 40 hectares are roughs and hazards like bushes, trees, and ponds. When designed, maintained, and operated responsibly, roughs and non-play zones, like wetlands and woodlands, can let nature flourish – ensuring long-term positive outcomes for players, staff and communities.

Sophie Olejnik, ecological consultant at Oleo Ecology, has worked on projects across the British Isles in both upland and lowland environments, regularly working with golf clubs to provide ecological surveys and reports.

"Golf courses can be incredibly important hubs of biodiversity, linking other greenspaces together and providing nuclei of nature where they sit within more isolated urban landscapes," she said. "Habitat corridors often bind the golf holes and, if managed well (or not at all!), can support a number of species of conservation concern. Even tee banks and carries can be home to rare species, if they're left a little wilder.

"Take bedstraw broomrape, for example, a rare and protected plant which can be found alongside footpaths, tees, and fairways at Royal St George's, where the sensitive dune



Nature thriving at Walton Heath, England

A biodiversity audit highlighted 175 different species, including 12 Species of Principal Importance, such as small heath butterfly and brown long-eared bat (also a European Protected Species), and five birds of conservation concern: two red listed, and three amber listed. Eleven notable plant species included all three native heathers (common, bell and cross-leaved), all of which are Near Threatened in England.



Promoting biodiversity at Dromoland Castle, Ireland

The club identified areas to transition into natural rough where species such as wild Irish hares can forage. These are generally connected to woodland to create corridors that encourage other species to co-exist such as red squirrels. Native wildflower species have been introduced to encourage butterfly and bee activity. The reduction in management and mowing of these areas also cut down GHG emissions and increased carbon sequestration.



Wildflower areas at Cumberwell Park, England

During the first course construction at Cumberwell Park, an area of former agricultural land was stripped of topsoil. Since then, the area has received no inputs allowing the development of a wildflower area. All species are naturally colonised, and the area is now managed by an annual cut and collect in late summer.

grassland management undertaken by the team of greenkeepers ensures that this species continues to thrive year after year.”

Fostering nature is one of the four key pillars of the Sustainable Golf Framework, with action areas including protecting landscapes and ecosystems; enhancing biodiversity and environmental quality; and supporting responsible turfgrass management.

The Sustainable Golf Highlights Hub serves as a testament to collective action with hundreds of tried-and-tested sustainable golf stories and examples. Every club and facility, regardless of their stage in the journey towards sustainability, is invited to explore and contribute, turning aspirations into tangible achievements. Please have a browse through and add your own. **GI**



Expanding wildflower meadow and insect hotels at Motala Golfklubb, Sweden

After a successful sowing of Swedish meadow flower seed, the club expanded the area, creating a beautiful vista from the clubhouse, restaurant and other surroundings. An insect hotel is located nearby with a bed of sand provided for Hymenoptera and wild bees.



Creating aquatic ecosystems at Quinta do Lago, Portugal

Managing vegetation in and around the water bodies has created a flourishing aquatic ecosystem with a natural feel and balance for golfers. Playing companions now include birds, such as cattle egret, little grebe, mallards, common moorhen, and native insects and amphibians like blue emperor and scarlet dragonflies, viperine water snakes and Perez’s Frog.



BIGGA

British and International
Golf Greenkeepers Association

BIGGA.ORG.UK



We're **BIG** on...

COMMUNITY

Local events | BIGGA National Championship
Greenkeeper International | BIGGA App
BTME | BIGGA Conferences

Tips and advice
from the GTC

Petrol and diesel are often stored in the workplace to power mobile plant onsite, such as strimmers, mowers, tractors and generators.

Many businesses store quantities of petrol fuel within the workplace, but it is a highly flammable substance and certain precautions are required regarding how it is transported, used and stored.

There are no longer any specific regulations over the storage of petrol at workplace sites other than where petrol is dispensed, such as at petrol filling stations.

However, petrol is classified as a 'dangerous substance' under the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) and the requirements of DSEAR will have to be met.

If highly flammable liquids are being stored in a place that is also a workroom, then no more than 50 litres in total can be stored. This is a general requirement that applies to all highly flammable liquids, including petrol.

If the storage area is not a workroom, DSEAR requires, as far as is reasonably practicable, that risks from 'dangerous substances' are controlled and measures to mitigate against the effects of any fire or explosion arising from these substances are introduced.

This means conducting a risk assessment on the transportation, use, and storage, as well as recording the findings and then acting upon any controls deemed as required. **GI**

The storage of petrol and diesel in the workplace

Key requirements

The main requirements to manage Class 3 flammable goods are:

- A suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Providing persons affected with information, instruction and training on the safe storage and handling of these hazardous substances.
- Having staff trained on a suitable emergency procedure, including spills procedure and fire evacuation procedure.
- Provision of suitable spills materials.
- Providing emergency firefighting equipment to deal with an emergency.
- Suitable storage area for these flammable materials away from sources of ignition.



Identify how you can reduce risks to a minimum

Look at the storage area to ensure that:

- It does not have any sources of ignition and that none are brought into the area, such as compressors, electrical switching or hot-work.
- It should be properly ventilated (large vents in doors and on one outside wall would be good practice).
- It should be secure (padlocked and not able to be accessed except by authorised persons). Consider the likelihood and impact risks of arson.
- Refilling of equipment should preferably take place in the open air and away from sources of ignition (you could refill on hard standing outside and clear of the building – something your insurers will appreciate as well as the environment).
- Care is taken to avoid spills and the consequences of a leak or spill is assessed e.g. could a spillage leak to surface water drains? The consequences could be serious for the environment and your business.
- Containers should be kept securely closed when not in use.
- Only containers approved for the storage of petrol are used. They should be stamped and signed for petrol use.
- Funnels or petrol transfer equipment is available for use when refilling equipment.

Questions to consider

1. Are all pieces of equipment that may come into contact with flammable materials non-sparking?
2. Is there appropriate firefighting equipment available?
3. Is there signage available to identify the storage of these flammable goods both in-house and for transportation?
4. Has your insurance company been informed of the handling and use of these flammable goods?
5. Has the storage and handling of dangerous goods been included in your fire risk assessment?
6. Are these goods being stored in a bunded area to prevent spillages occurring?
7. Are there good housekeeping practices in place to monitor the areas where flammable materials are stored?
8. Are incompatible goods appropriately segregated?

The grass is always greener



Luxury Lawns harness non-disruptive decompaction with the new Air2G2 336

Around the Southeast of Scotland, Luxury Lawns are the go-to company for lawns and greens restoration, keeping them in play during difficult weather. The company is the first in the UK to receive the new Foley Air2G2 336 in corporate grey, from Campey Turf Care Systems.

Luxury Lawns owner Donald Campbell started the company in 2009 with 20 years of greenkeeping experience behind him. In the 14 years that followed, the company has grown from providing impressive lawn transformations to completing contracting work on bowling greens, golf greens and football pitches.

Working closely with Richard Heywood, area manager for Campey Turf Care, Donald initially hired an Air2G2 from local machinery dealer Double A Trading Company, but with

increasingly wet summers, common compaction issues among new golf and bowling green contracts and the need for no disruption to play, he knew the time was right for his own Air2G2.

"With the way the climate is changing, I knew I needed to be able to react to it, and the Air2G2 is the perfect tool for that," Donald explains. "It operates with minimal disruption and is doing a lot of good underneath the surface, and that's what I really like about it".

"In many areas we work, the popularity of golf is high, resulting in greens being extremely busy so we needed a machine we could use during the season to keep the surfaces healthy and draining without stopping play.

"Some of these greens we work on are old, and they've developed black layer over time. In the Borders, there's

been a lot of industry - with industry comes a lot of ash, and many of these greens have been built on it. That layer needs to be broken up so we can produce healthy roots which in turn will give us strong surfaces, and the Air2G2 does a brilliant job of it."

Consistent use of the Air2G2 is proven to create healthy, firm, and free-draining surfaces. This happens over time because the pressurised air fractures the hardpan layers without disrupting roots while increasing pore space, promoting faster drainage and root development. This respiration forces oxygen in and pushes CO2 and other anaerobic gases out for root zone gas exchange.

The optional probe lengths and fully customisable pressure setting to meet virtually any turf condition make it perfect for multi-sport use, and it will



“ We needed a machine we could use during the season to keep the greens healthy and draining without stopping play.”



be key in the continued growth of Luxury Lawns.

With his own machine, Donald also anticipates an in-creased amount of reactive aeration contracts on golf courses during the winter as well as preventative work on a weekly basis.

GI

Campey

TURF CARE SYSTEMS

QUALITY GROUND CARE EQUIPMENT

Campey Turf Care Systems is one of world’s largest independent sports turf and ground care machinery suppliers, distributing innovative sports turf maintenance equipment.

Over the years Campey has earned a reputation for offering practical advice and superb aftercare service.

The company acts as a new equipment importer for some of the most respected grounds care machinery manufacturers including Dakota, Imants, Koro, Campey, Vredo, Foley Air 2G2, BellonMit, and Omarv.

The company also has a thriving used machinery business and a subsidiary company, Tines Direct, which supplies replacement tines, blades and replacement parts for a wide range of turf care machinery.

For more information or a demo of the Foley Air2G2 336, contact your local Campey dealer. More information is available, scan the QR code.



Scan Me to find out more

It's time to go green

Wath Golf Club incorporates biological solutions within its turf management plan for impressive greens

Set in the tranquil countryside of South Yorkshire on the outskirts of Rotherham, Wath Golf Club has found an amenity supplier where they get everything under one roof – Origin Amenity Solutions (OAS).



Mark Hudson,
Wath Golf Club

Head Greenkeeper Mark Hudson has been at Wath Golf Club in Rotherham for two years and is happy that with the help of his team of six, he's turning the greens around.

He explains, "I first met Andy de Wet from Symbio (part of Origin Amenity) four years ago while I was head greenkeeper at Crow Nest Golf Club in Brighouse. We had issues with black layer and thatch. I had always used synthetic fungicides and will continue to do so while they are available but with legislation changing, I felt a change to my future plans to incorporate biological products was needed, to be more sustainable, and to improve results at my golf course. This was when I approached Andy, and we began putting together a balanced

programme. I was really impressed with the results and so when I moved to Wath Golf Club I was keen to replicate what I had achieved."

Mark has been a customer of Rigby Taylor (also part of Origin Amenity) for over 20 years and purchases nutrition products and grass seeds from them. His go-to is R9 and Cobra Nova grass seed and the Nutri-Link system, specially formulated liquid supplements to improve plant health.

Symbio and Rigby Taylor, along with Headland Amenity and TurfKeeper joined forces and were rebranded as OAS in 2021. Mark comments, "This was brilliant for me. Rather than being inundated with reps from all companies, I have just one – Andy. I much prefer our single source supply approach. On



Origin
amenity solutions

average I see Andy once a month, but he is always at the end of the phone and will visit more or less regularly depending on what I need. He's like an extension of our team. Along with having Andy on board, he is backed by a whole team of experts in all fields of this industry. He introduced me to Headland products, and I am converted to the 20-20-30 IPM strategy and Multigreen controlled release for the tees and approaches. I like that I have access to different products and have found that improvements to my course are being made because of this."

From Mark's first walk around at Wath Golf Club "it was clear to see the greens were suffering from problems in the ground. After an in-depth look under the surface, high levels of thatch were

the obvious reason for poor turf health. As I had used some of the products from Symbio, I was keen to get the biology doing its thing to break down the thatch issues."

He continues, "Thatcheater was the first product Andy and I discussed as we were approaching the perfect timing for application. After our first season using Thatcheater and compost tea, the difference was amazing. We went from high levels of tight thatch to a reduced amount, and it was a lot easier to pull apart and less dense. The condition of our greens improved massively in the first year and the surfaces already looked better health-wise. We continued using Thatcheater in the second year and again visible results were there to be seen, with improved turf health. Our bent grasses started to thrive in a healthier environment meaning our playing surfaces are better all the time. We will be applying it again this year to improve things even further and I know that when used alongside the compost teas and OAS DegrAid we will be in a great position by the end of the year. We will have created a much more hospitable environment for our finer grasses to flourish, which will give us better all-year-round surfaces."

“After our first season using Thatcheater and compost tea, the difference was amazing. The condition of our greens improved massively and the surfaces already looked better health-wise.”

Wath Golf Club is a par 70 6,096-yard parkland golf course that was established in 1904 and is considered one of the most friendly and inclusive golf clubs in the region. The course is challenging with its narrow fairways and small greens; it is flat and a test for all standards of golfers. Mark adds, "It is a welcoming club with real potential. Members are happy to see the standards of the greens increasing and say it's the best the course has looked."

Mark is also a keen advocate of the OAS TurfKeeper.com, an online turf management tool. "It's great" he adds, "I use it for my budgeting, to manage my stock levels, spray applications. I can use this to plan future applications giving me a full breakdown of costs and nutrient inputs. It's a fully integrated

operations and management solution and invaluable for me. It's another example of where OAS has helped me and added real value by making my job so much easier."

TurfKeeper is a personalised, single environment that gives turf and grounds managers complete control and insight into staff management, task planning, machinery management, inventory control, chemical applications planning and recording, and budgeting and expense management. There is detailed reporting on all areas readily available, and a resource library provision.

Each January, Mark, and Andy put a programme together which addresses areas of concern or where improvements can be made. Mark adds, "I tell Andy what I want to achieve, and he advises the best products for that. He also suggests areas that I might not have thought of. After listening to the advice on products a full yearly plan is put together, discussed, and implemented."

"We split the programme into three - January, March, and mid-summer; however, it is fluid, and we tweak it as necessary. This year I am keen to introduce a wildflower meadow to a rough area, so Andy introduced me to a wildflower specialist in OAS. She

explained what I needed to consider, how to prepare the ground and sow the seed for the best results and gave me a flower seed mix recommendation. This is how easy it is to work with OAS."

Mark is happy with his course but concludes, "I'm not resting on my laurels, I'm really pleased but there is still room for improvement. I'm working with my OAS rep on a couple of areas and then I'll be happy." **GI**

For further information or to discuss a bespoke programme for your club contact the OAS team on 0800 138 7222 or email sales@originamenity.com



Baroness dealer awards presented at BTME 2024



George Browns Ltd
UK Salesperson of the Year 2023

Pictured above is David Fish, Area Sales Manager (Groundcare), collecting his award from Adam Butler from Baroness UK. "I'd like to thank all my customers for trusting in myself and George Browns and I hope we can continue into 2024 for another positive year."



Lister Wilder
Highest overall sales for 2023

The Lister Wilder Groundcare Sales Team attended BTME2024 where they were presented with the Baroness Award for highest overall sales. The award was presented by Luke Collins, Area Sales Manager for Baroness U.K

Although Baroness UK has been producing mowers for over 65 years, their time in the UK market has been relatively short. The huge growth that both Lister Wilder and Baroness have seen over the last 5 years is proof that we have become a "go-to" choice for golf, sports and other fine turf customers.

During BTME2024 Baroness worked alongside #Kubota UK promoting Japanese excellence. Both companies are renowned for producing high-quality machinery that represents low operation and lifetime costs, and second-to-none aftersales support through a dedicated dealer network.



Henderson's Grass Machinery
Machinery Sales Highest Growth

Henderson's Grass Machinery were awarded the Baroness U.K "Machinery Sales Highest Growth on previous year 2022- 2023" at BTME2024. Richard Connell, Area Sales/ Service Manager Scotland from Baroness U.K presented the award to the sales team! Well done to all!

Adam Butler, Director Baroness U.K. adds: "The Baroness Dealer Awards provide a superb stage on which we can showcase the hard work and dedication our multi-branch dealers continue to produce year on year. We are extremely proud of all our dealers and especially the 2023 winners. We produce world-leading machinery for which we require world-leading backup. That's what we have and that's what we will continue to do day-to-day, year-to-year. A big thank you from TEAM Baroness goes out to all our dealers and customers alike for their continued support."

For more information on Baroness please scan the QR code.





As nature intended

Building back the UK's wildflower habitats – the Collier Bees & Butterflies project

At Collier Turf Care, we are on a mission. Since the 1930s, we have lost a staggering 97 per cent of wildflower meadows in the UK. As a result, since the 1980s approximately 33 per cent of British wild bee species have declined, and 80 per cent of butterfly species have declined since the 1970s.

We want to change that.

Within the amenity and sports turf industry, the use of glyphosate-based weedkillers can be a contributing factor to that loss; as well as land clearance for managed amenity grassland areas, larger-scale intensive farming and increased urbanisation. As a supplier of chemicals and pesticides, we felt that we wanted to do our bit to decrease those worrying statistics by encouraging the sowing of new wildflower areas across the United Kingdom.

To help create some small pockets



of wildflower grassland for our bees and butterflies, we have been giving away 10,000 sq.m worth of Bees & Butterflies wildflower grass seed to professional horticultural settings and managed amenity grassland areas.

There are 200 x 250g packs of seed available with each bag covering 50 sq.m.

Each bag is made up of an 80/20 mix (80 per cent grass seed and 20 per cent wildflower seed) containing 32 different wildflower species specifically for bees and butterflies.


The hope is that we can send bags to all corners of the UK, and encourage businesses, clubs and more to set aside areas for our native pollinators.

The best-looking patch will receive a **£100 Amazon voucher**.

Full terms and conditions can be found on our website. **GI**



Scan the QR code to see the live map of where we have sent wildflower seed already, and to apply for a bag (stock dependant)



Scan Me to find out more



Help us to create **10,000 sq.m** of new wildflower areas across the UK!

The joys of spring for the greenkeeper



Dr Simon Watson is Senior Agronomist, The R&A

Patience is a virtue when dealing with the unpredictability of this time of year – but it can also be a rare commodity at our golf clubs

A depressingly wet winter is now turning to optimism as the days get longer and the green hue of new leaf illuminates the trees. In late February, I was measuring soil temperatures at 6°C one day and nearly 12°C just 48 hours later. This highlights the inconsistency of spring weather in Great Britain and Ireland. One minute, warm southerly winds lift temperatures; the next, the cold winter conditions return.

Spring is notoriously challenging for greenkeepers, but for those that hold their nerve and think of the bigger

Were you to have spent the winter outside, you would also be in a miserable state by now, and your recovery would be slow. The grass plant is no different. Yes, some grasses, bent grasses for example, may fare better than annual meadow grass, but the trouble in the spring is that growth is inconsistent.

It is far better, though not always possible, to respond to growing conditions and the growth of the turf. Monitor clipping yields, for example, and take advantage of flushes of growth to apply small amounts

consistent growth later in the spring. Club management and golfers need to understand this.

It is also worth thinking of the bigger picture. I maintain, like most, that if you go into the winter with your turf in good health you give yourself the best opportunity to emerge in the spring with an easier job.

I think having clear objectives in place as to where you are with regards to the agronomic development of the greens can help protect against criticism at this tricky time. If the objective is to reduce soil organic matter, then that is why the greens are being scarified and/or hollow cored. Even better is to have this backed up with data to set targets, monitor progress and drive agronomic decisions as to what operations are carried out and when. Data is also a useful tool to justify why certain operations are being carried out. Hopefully, moving forward, progress will be such that the need for the most intrusive work on greens can be reduced as growing conditions improve, and better playing surfaces will undoubtedly result.

The spring development of a golf course is one of patience, taking opportunity and communicating. I wish you all agronomic luck for the forthcoming playing season. **GI**

“ The spring development of a golf course is one of patience, taking opportunity and communicating

picture the rewards can be great. The difficulties usually arrive with several mild, dry days. The fair-weather golfers emerge from hibernation while the all-weather golfers seize the opportunity to put the Gore-Tex away. With golf comes expectation, and herein lies the problem.

Golfers want beautifully firm, smooth greens at a time of year when turf health can only rarely deliver. However good turf health is coming out of the winter, there is always a certain degree of recovery needed. For the turf to recover, temperatures and light levels need to increase.

Growth is what is required to facilitate any rootzone amendment operations, sward refinement work and top-dressing applications that might be necessary to deliver optimal playing conditions.

of nutrient and conduct some refinement work. If grass growth is good, the sward can withstand verticutting and a slightly heavier application of top dressing. If growth is not so strong, reaching for the brushes or some light grooming and reducing the amount of top dressing applied might be better decisions.

Often greenkeepers are given maintenance weeks in spring, typically March, and late summer. While calendar-date agronomy in greenkeeping is understandable, I am not convinced it is best practice due to inconsistencies in growth of the turf. If the weather conditions are good that week, the job will be efficient and recovery of the turf quick. If not, the development of the surfaces can be significantly set back and not recover until the onset of



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

CONSISTENT PLAY DAY AFTER DAY



AVAILABLE
IN 5, 10, 20
LITRE PACKS

TOP TO MEET DEMANDS
OF GREENKEEPERS

No.1 DEMAND FOR
CONSISTENT BALL ROLL

PLUS TURF DENSITY; TIDY
FINISH; ROOTING

*Greenkeepers' Viewpoint Survey of requirements from a PGR Programme

PRIMO MAXX II
KEEPS CONSISTENT
CONTROL OF TURF
GROWTH THROUGH
THE SEASON

 **Primo Maxx® II**

syngenta.

Turf
REWARDS

Syngenta UK Ltd. Registered in England No. 849037. CPC4, Capital Park, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5XE
Email: product.technical_enquiries@syngenta.com Web: www.syngentaturf.co.uk

Primo Maxx® II is a Registered Trademark of a Syngenta Group Company. Primo Maxx II (MAPP 17509, PCS 05401) contains trinexapac-ethyl.
All other brand names used are trademarks of other manufacturers in which proprietary rights may exist. Always read the label and product information
before use. For more information including warning phrases and symbols refer to www.syngentaturf.co.uk © Syngenta February 2024. GQ 13045.

Distributed in the UK and Ireland by ICL Ltd. Tel: 01473 237123 Email: prof.sales@icl-group.com Web: www.icl-growingsolutions.uk / www.icl-growingsolutions.ie

®



40 YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER



The Workman you know, but now *electric*

The new **Toro Workman MDX Lithium** utility vehicle. Same powerful performance, same operator comfort, same hefty payload capacity, the Workman MDX Lithium adds HyperCell® battery-power to another customer favourite.

reesinkturfcare.co.uk

Reimagining turfcare, together.



Member of Royal Reesink. Reesink UK LTD is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Images shown for illustration only.