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Greenkeeper International



Daniel Lightfoot

The former greenkeeper appointed to The R&A's influential Director of Sustainable Golf role

■ **Practical
Greenkeeping**
International turfgrass
research plan launched

■ **Members**
The Royal Troon
greenkeeping team are all
set for The Open

■ **Careers**
Greenkeeper Laura Sayer-
Hall takes the road less
travelled

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

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Welcome

As we look forward with excitement to The Open at Royal Troon, the key focus is rightly upon the job that Course Manager Billy McLachlan, his deputy Gary Ross and their team have done to prepare for the season's final major. Those that watched the heart-wrenching conclusion of the US Open at Pinehurst will have seen praise bestowed upon John Jeffreys, superintendent on the No. 2 Course, by both the USGA and the champion, Bryson DeChambeau. I know the winner at Troon will be similarly grateful to Billy and his team.

As well as an insight into Troon's agronomy preparation, there is a wider R&A theme to this magazine. Our cover features Daniel Lightfoot MG, The R&A's director for sustainable golf. Dan's career progression is an extraordinary example of how far you can go in this industry with dedication and a thirst for education and knowledge.

His career has taken in greenkeeping, delivering education, course management and a senior position within the supply chain before The R&A role came along.

The R&A has always been a strong supporter of greenkeeping and BIGGA, but that has developed with

“We have never felt more supported in our challenge to improve the industry for you

their commitment to sustainability and the role our members play in achieving this. We've welcomed the shift in industry conversations from worrying about participation towards the underpinning fundamentals of golf – the people that deliver the sport at grassroots level and the innovation required to continue providing superb, sustainable surfaces for play.

With the sport's governing bodies now committed to both workforce and sustainability initiatives, we have never felt more supported in our challenge to improve the industry for greenkeepers. While the challenges are many and varied, our resources to overcome them are strong.



Jim Croxton
BIGGA Chief Executive

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- Phil Helmn MG joins the Bernhard Academy leadership team
- A round-up of BIGGA events taking place this month



Pleasington's greenkeeping team treated to Dublin trip

The greenkeeping team at Pleasington Golf Club was treated to a trip to Dublin in recognition of its sterling efforts.

The nine-strong crew enjoyed a one-night stay in the Irish capital in April thanks to the generosity of the club's members, who funded the endeavour.

A tour of the Guinness factory was the highlight of a busy itinerary which also included an escape room experience that ended in failure.

The overseas jaunt came about after Course Manager Chris Harding suggested his team needed a morale boost following a tough time of things amid the miserable weather.

The Lancashire club is in the midst of a five-year, £1 million renovation

project, with persistent rain having delayed works across the course.

Course Strategy Officer Pete Bedford proposed the idea of heading to Dublin and then enlisted the help of members to pay for the trip, with taxis provided by one of the regulars.

"The moment we told everyone about it, they were on cloud nine," said Harding.

"It's brought the team closer together and everyone is so much more motivated now.

"The members have been great and were asking how we got on, so it's just been a really positive thing all round."

While he acknowledged that financial constraints at some clubs might mean flights and overnight stays

will be off the agenda, Harding said appealing for help from members is a good way to help ease the burden.

"It's something other clubs can look at if members can chip in and they plan ahead, but it doesn't have to be Dublin – it could be a night out in your local town, just as a gesture and a way of bringing people together."

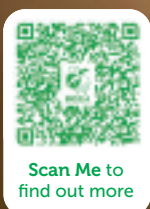
Harding laughed off the idea that the Maldives might be on the cards next year, but there are plans for the Pleasington's greenkeeping staff to enjoy another memorable visit to an as-yet-unknown destination.

"But we'd go earlier in the year, probably around February, and this time we'll include it in the budget rather than going to members." **GI**

The BIGGA Calendar

July: Elliot Walters, Robin Hood Golf Club

Download the desktop calendar by scanning the QR code



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Helmn joins Bernhard Academy's leadership team



Phil Helmn MG has joined the Bernhard Academy as Programme Leader for Agronomy, Leadership and Management.

The move sees the Academy expand its leadership team, with Helmn overseeing the delivery of all courses and workshops related to his new remit. He will collaborate closely with newly appointed Education Director Sami Strutt as well as internal and external teams to ensure a coordinated and positive experience at the Academy.

With over 35 years experience in the turf and agronomy industry, Helmn brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the role. He has managed full golf course construction projects and has previously supported the Bernhard Academy as a speaker and workshop guest. In addition, he is a GCSAA Class E (Educator) member and a Master Greenkeeper.

"I'm delighted to be joining the Bernhard Academy and helping Sami expand its operations," he said.

"Since its inception, the Academy has been making real progress and providing greenkeepers and turf professionals in the UK with superb tools to enhance their careers."

Former BIGGA Chief Operating Officer Strutt added: "Phil is a fantastic addition to the Bernhard Academy team. He is a Master Greenkeeper and highly regarded internationally within the turf industry, so his expertise will be a tremendous asset to the Bernhard Academy as we continue to evolve its offering.

"Since I started my role in the spring, it's been great to see the commitment from everyone involved in the Bernhard Academy to enhance the careers of greenkeepers and sports turf professionals. We're trying to provide something really positive for the turf industry, and Phil is sure to be a crucial part of that as we move forward."

During Helmn's first few months, he will be in charge of identifying and developing a range of workshops relating to agronomy, leadership and management subjects for the forthcoming autumn/winter season. **GI**

A greenkeeper's best friend – Margo

Owner: Matt Milligan
Club: Fulford Golf Club, York



Breed: Red Labrador
Age: 10 months
Favourite treat: Anything!
Favourite spot on the course: Up round the heather on the 10th and 11th
Naughtiest moment: Jumped up at an elderly member and hit in the delicates!

What's on this month



Dates for your diary

2 July

BIGGA North Wales Section Summer Golf Day –
Vale of Llangollen

4 July

BIGGA South West Summer Golf Day – Chipping
Sodbury Golf Club



Tenby

8 July

BIGGA South Wales Summer Golf Day (West) –
Tenby Golf Club

11 July

BIGGA Yorkshire Section Summer Golf Day –
Garforth Golf Club

BIGGA Scotland Legacy Golf Championship –
Auchterarder Golf Club

16 July

Sports Turf Leadership & Management: Effective
communication and decision making – Leicester
City FC training ground

17 July

Sports Turf Leadership & Management:
Understanding how to prepare & control budgets
– Leicester City FC training ground



Clevedon

22 July

First Green STEM Field Trip – Clevedon Golf Club

24 July

BIGGA South Wales Summer Golf Day (East) – The
Glamorganshire Golf Club

26 July

BIGGA Sheffield Section Summer Golf Day –
Stocksbridge Golf Club



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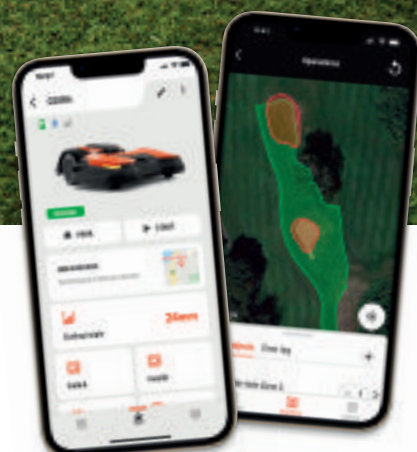
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From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

■ ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship 2025 applications now open

■ BMW PGA Championship Volunteer Support Team named



Brent Downs part of the 'family' as he becomes 90th Master Greenkeeper

Brent Downs thanked all those who helped him on his way to becoming the 90th Master Greenkeeper as he was welcomed into the "family".

The director of agronomy at Otter Creek Golf Course in Indiana started the process in 2020 and, despite a few doubts and wobbles, was recently told of his success in an early morning call from BIGGA's Learning and Development Manager Deb Burnett.

It was news that inspired a whole range of emotions in the former Loch Lomond intern, who was quick to

recognise the support and guidance of his peers and mentors.

"When Deb first told me, I was pretty overcome," he said. "I know the journey to get there and a lot of people have walked it before me, so it was equal parts shock and just gratitude. The elation, the thankfulness, the introspection, those came later."

His first call was to his Mum and, after word of Brent's achievement was circulated to his fellow MGs, he was flooded with congratulations.

"I'm proud of the part I played in this, but you don't ever accomplish anything like this on your own. It takes a village and I'm grateful for the Master Greenkeepers that mentored me, coached me and calmed me down – they just kept encouraging me to stay with it.

"The minute Deb sent out that email, I don't think I've ever received so many congratulations. It was at that moment I realised what a brotherhood, community or family it is." **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

Applications open for ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship 2025



Applications for the ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship for 2025 will be open throughout July.

Each year, BIGGA Premium Partner ICL Turf & Landscape invites five BIGGA members to attend the education programme at BTME in Harrogate.

The two organisations recognise that the valuable career-development opportunities provided by the multi-day event are not available to every greenkeeper, with the cost of education, travel and accommodation proving an obstacle.

The scholarship seeks to provide a level playing field for ambitious members who would otherwise miss out.

Jamie Caswell, Blue Course supervisor at Frilford Heath, was one of the scholars in 2024 and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

"The scholarship was amazing in giving me the opportunity to meet and learn from some brilliant people and also to help aid my continued learning and development, which I'm incredibly grateful for," he said.

"Anyone interested in further learning who has a passion for greenkeeping should definitely apply. It truly is an amazing opportunity."

Fellow scholar Chris Hale, deputy course manager at Taunton & Pickeridge, was similarly full of enthusiasm as he reflected on his time in Harrogate.

"I really enjoyed my time at BTME, the education classes

were first class, and I learnt a lot of new ideas and tips from them," he said.

"I wouldn't have had the opportunity to be provided with as much education without the scholarship, so I'm very grateful for the opportunity."

It truly is an amazing opportunity

Following a selection process, the ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship provides the five candidates with three nights in a hotel and a comprehensive education package worth approximately £500.

To earn an ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship, BIGGA members must demonstrate a commitment to developing their own professional abilities by engaging with BIGGA's Continuing Professional Development scheme.

Whether through in-person learning, reading this magazine or by accessing resources on the association's website, BIGGA members have access to thousands of learning opportunities, all aimed at helping improve their professional abilities. **GI**



Support team selected for BMW PGA Championship



The 2024 BMW PGA Volunteer Support Team

Joshua Burling, Cottesmore
Euan Bogle, Stirling
Jack Wellings, JCB
Joshua Smith, Piltdown
Brandon Wilkie, Camberley Heath
Dominic Wright, Fulford
Calum Forsyth, Elgin
Edd Lovatt, JCB
Louis Dunn-Allen, Sudbury
Charlie Wilkinson, Brookmans Park
Casey Phillips, Royal Worlington & Newmarket
Gareth Earles, Cardigan
Kane Stone, Oakland
Lee Blackburn, Clandon
Tom Cable, Guildford
Jakob Schur, Sand Moor
Matt Fox, Falmouth
Ben Anderson, Strathmore
Martin Turna, Royal Worlington & Newmarket
Tom Lowe, Woodhall Spa
John Ingham, Reigate Hill
Cameron Redden, Strathmore

The BMW PGA Championship Volunteer Support Team has been named, with 22 BIGGA members set to join the Wentworth Club greenkeeping team in September.

Apprentices and course managers alike will enjoy a behind-the-scenes experience at one of the DP World Tour's flagship events.

The volunteers will supplement the in-house greenkeeping team in Surrey as they prepare the course for play each day.

Joshua Burling, apprentice greenkeeper at Cottesmore Golf and Country Club, expressed his delight at being given

the opportunity to be part of the team.

"I'm thrilled to be selected as part of the Volunteer Support Team for the BMW PGA Championship," he said.

"I'm looking forward to getting there and meeting my fellow team members. I'm sure it will be an amazing experience."

Jack Wellings, senior greenkeeper at JCB Golf and Country Club, added: "This is an exciting opportunity to work with and learn from some very skilled industry professionals from all over the country." [GI](#)

Your future continues here

It was our largest education programme ever, and now you can relive Continue to Learn 2024, with 38 full-length sessions available to watch on the BIGGA website.

Free to BIGGA members, you can log in and rewatch some of the highlights from the record-breaking education programme, including talks by Hazeltine's Chris Tritabaugh, The R&A Sustainable Agronomy

team, Dr John Dempsey and others. You can also go back even further and watch selected highlights from every Continue to Learn since 2018.

Learning and Development Manager Deb Burnett underlined the educational value that Continue to Learn brings to attendees and the importance of sharing that with the wider membership.

"Each year at BTME we welcome hundreds of people to take part in the Continue to Learn programme,

which brings together speakers from a wide range of disciplines to provide practical learning, management advice and insight on a host of other relevant topics," she said.

"Opening up this vast educational resource free of charge will deliver huge benefits to our members and we are proud to be able to offer that opportunity to them."



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find out more

It's not all about the weather (I promise)



Andy Laing, National Board
Director, Central England

It might be time to move on from the weather, but I just had to mention it...

It would be very easy to spend the duration of this column discussing the atrocious weather we have experienced over the last 12 months, but that doesn't seem quite right now we have finally reached a period of more relatively settled conditions.

As has been the case for many, it's been a particularly difficult first half of the year here at Gaudet Luce, with continuous rain day after day, week after week, and on a heavy clay-based site, it's been a particular challenge for us.

It is a reminder that water management is likely to be a pressing concern for many of us in the years ahead, with wetter winters and hotter, drier summers becoming more commonplace, placing greater emphasis on drainage and irrigation solutions.

The difficulties have been not only in managing the expectations of our members and guests, but also of myself and my team. At times it felt like it was never going to end, and the important task of maintaining morale has been tough.

However, now, at the time of writing in the middle of June, we are finally achieving standards that I'd



“We are finally achieving standards that I'd have hoped to be achieving two months ago!

have hoped to be achieving two months ago!

It's a great relief to be able to say that, and I hope many of you are in the same position of now being able to appreciate the progress that has been made, despite the elements conspiring against us.

I'm grateful to the efforts of my team and the determination they have shown, which I know will have been replicated at clubs up and down the country.

Anyway, I started by saying that I didn't want to spend the whole column bemoaning the weather, so let's move on.

I was delighted to hear the news of the association's recent appointments for both the head of membership role and the learning and development manager's position.

They are both exceedingly important and key roles for the future of the association, and it fills me with optimism to see the

people who have been appointed.

Having worked with both Scott Reeves and Rob Phillips in their previous roles, I am sure we are in safe hands. I wish them both the very best of luck – not that they will need it.

I'm very much looking forward to seeing the impact that they will no doubt have in what are, in my view, the two most important areas of the association.

Of course, the real strength of BIGGA comes from its members, and without wanting to return to the subject of the weather, I do hope things are looking brighter where you are. **GI**



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Scotland

George Andrew (AGK)
Alfie Robinson (AGK)
Lamlash

Gordon Campbell (AGK)
Gleneagles

Andrew Cannon (APP)
Portpatrick

Murray Farquhar (GK)
Murcar Links

Donald Forbes (AGK)
Finlay Tebb (AGK)
Nairn Dunbar Golf Links

Kieron Gallagher (A)
South Ayrshire Council
Greenkeeping

John Keller (AGK)
Newburgh-on-Ythan

Kyan Low (APP)
Jamie Meldrum (APP)
Joe Perrie (APP)
Carnoustie Golf Links

Murray Mannall (HGK)
Brighthouse Bay

Robbie Murdoch (CM)
Thornton

Lewis Pacey (APP)
Nairn

Jordan Rhind (HGK)
Niddry Castle

Colin Scott (APP)
Muthill

Darren Shaw (GK)
Auchmill

Darren Welsh (CM)
Sandyhills

Brady Wilson (APP)
Lochmaben

Northern

Tom Deighton (GK)
Oakdale

Ben Fernley (FA)
John Glover (DCM)
Richard Morgan (GK)
Alfie Urwin (AGK)
Manchester

Richard Illsley (GK)
The Manor

Oleksandr Nebeliuk (AGK)
Ilkley

Ashley Webster (APP)
Sutton Park

Central England

Ethan Adlam (APP)
Drayton Park

Sam Arthur (APP)
Ramsey

Daniel Baker (APP)
Bedford & County

Ian Briggs (APP)
Robert Cass (HGK)
Danny Wells (HGK)
Woodhall Spa

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		

Andrew Corbishley (G)
Manor (Kingstone)

Nathan Cox (APP)
Wexham Park

Chris Darlison (GK)
Scraptoft

Luke Elsmore (GK)
William Mackie (AGK)
Brocton Hall

Morgan Garrett (AGK)
Ryan Smith (AGK)
Maidenhead

Toby Heaver (HG)
Bradfield College GC

Harry Oakes (AGK)
Tydd St Giles

William Oram (GK)
Barkway Park

Ray Palaganas Abaya (AGK)
Hennerton

Daniel Perkiss (GK)
Royston

Thomas Rees (AGK)
Frilford Heath

Samuel Rogers (AGK)
Stourbridge

Ross Wilson (GK)
Newbury & Crookham

 **South East**

Kevin Baker (M)
Rye

Justin Burke (AGK)
Haberdashers Boys' School

Max Davis (AGK)
Shooters Hill

Jamie Foreman (APP)
Jacobsen

Ewan Heard (AGK)
Harry Regan (AGK)
Warley Park

Keith Humm (APP)
Bramford Golf Centre

Alex Jackson (AGK)
Chigwell

Alan King (AGK)
Ellesborough

Shay McQueen (GK)
Romford

Luke Morris (APP)
Charlie Sinclair (APP)
Barnham Broom

Owen Patel (GK)
Jaco Pelser (AGK)
Jokubas Shkeir (AGK)
Royal Wimbledon

Aaron Poplett (AGK)
Pyecombe

Matthew Powdrell (GK)
Royal Ascot

Toby Smith (APP)
Redlibbets

Finlay Squires-Russell (AGK)
West Malling

James Watson (RP)
Agrovista Amenity

Ashley Webb (GK)
Moor Park

 **South West & South Wales**

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Shirehampton Park

George Gait (AGK)
Lyme Regis

Gareth Hole (AGK)
Thornbury Golf Centre

Ollie Payne (AGK)
Wellow

Dean Peacock (AGK)
Royal Winchester

Vinnie Phelps (GK)
Filton

Kerryn Rice (APP)
Mendip Spring

James Smith (AGK)
Parkstone



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Craig Hempseed, Mortonhall

David Drummond, Longniddry

Owen Mackay, Royal Aberdeen

James Parker, Machrihanish Dunes

Stewart Marshall, Dudley

Dominic Wright, Fulford

Sam Ludlow, Luffenham Heath

Marcus Davies, Royal Golf Club Bahrain

Michael Russell, Poulton Park

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Jon Methven, St Andrews Links Trust

David Drummond, Longniddry



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Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- We meet Daniel Lightfoot, The R&A's new director of sustainable golf
- Stabilising rings: how Great Barr GC and BIGGA changed the Rules



Shed heaven for Kimberley Yeldham as Flempton facilities get an upgrade



Head Greenkeeper Kimberley Yeldham is counting down the days until work on new sheds at Flempton Golf Course

is completed.

The 9-hole heathland course opened in 1895 and one of the sheds is an original feature of the Suffolk club.

Kimberley, who leads a team of three and has been in her role for three years, is pleased to see a project that has long been on the cards finally coming to fruition, with members having raised the funds to make it happen.

Work to install a new maintenance shed and room for welfare facilities

started in April and is scheduled to finish around October, and Kimberley is looking forward to the end result.

"There'll be an office, a break room, a drying room, a storage cupboard, a lobby, a toilet, and a shower," she explained. "There's also going to be a big chemical store attached to that and a secure store for things like chainsaws and blowers."

"We don't have a shower at the moment and the toilet isn't great, plus I don't have an office – I just use a table in the break room as my desk."

"This will make a big difference and it's definitely going to be miles better than what we've got now."


Inadequate facilities for greenkeeping staff is a problem at several clubs, and Kimberley revealed

how it had even hampered her career prospects in the past.

"I've had job interviews before and they said they can't take me on being a female greenkeeper because they don't have the welfare facilities," she said. "That's happened two or three times where they've just not had the facilities for both sexes."

She hopes Flempton's upgrade will help pave the way for other clubs to follow suit.

"Once it's all done, I'll probably see if any other greenkeepers in my area want to come around and have a look," she said. "I know there's two other golf clubs locally to me that are wanting to do their sheds and it's a case of seeing the sizes and what space they provide." **GI**

A man with glasses and a teal sweater is pointing towards a presentation screen. The screen displays a slide with the text "If you only remember 3 thing" and a background image of a golf course. The man is standing in front of an audience, and the back of several audience members' heads are visible in the foreground.

If you only
remember 3 thing

"There is no better sport in the entire world than golf to be able to deliver a positive example for sustainability"

Qualifications

Master Greenkeeper

MSc in Sports Surface
Technology

MBA in Business
Administration and
Management

The R&A's mission is to ensure golf is thriving 50 years from now and Director of Sustainable Golf Daniel Lightfoot is leading the charge. The 48th Master Greenkeeper has enjoyed a remarkable career and is now thrilled to be carrying the torch for sustainability in golf with The R&A.

Daniel Lightfoot knows the golf industry from top to bottom. Having started out as an assistant greenkeeper and worked his way up to Director of Sustainable Golf at The R&A via roles as a course manager, lecturer and commercial head, he has acquired the first-hand knowledge and experience required to embrace his new remit with a real clarity of purpose.

Leading a world-class team, he is helping to forge a path towards a brighter, more sustainable future for the game of golf.

It has been quite the journey from his days as an assistant at The Hertfordshire, where he had initially been on placement during his HND in golf course management, and even amid his busy schedule, Daniel sometimes affords himself a moment to let it sink in.

"If somebody said to me as a young greenkeeper that you're going to be a director at The R&A, I wouldn't have believed it," he said, with his career path proving to any ambitious greenkeepers that the sky is the limit. "It's just a great job. I've got an office at St Andrews and some days I just wander out and look at where I am and just reflect on what an amazing journey it's been."

But it's not the personal 'pinch me' moments that drive Daniel on, not when there is so much more at stake. Although the impact of climate change is being felt far beyond the world of golf, Daniel believes the sport is ideally placed to set an example for others to follow.

"There is no better sport in the entire world than golf to be able to deliver a positive example for sustainability," said the former Bearwood Lakes course manager.

"We are in the best position to show how amazing golf can be for land use, biodiversity and embracing the beauty of the natural environment. It's also great for people, for their

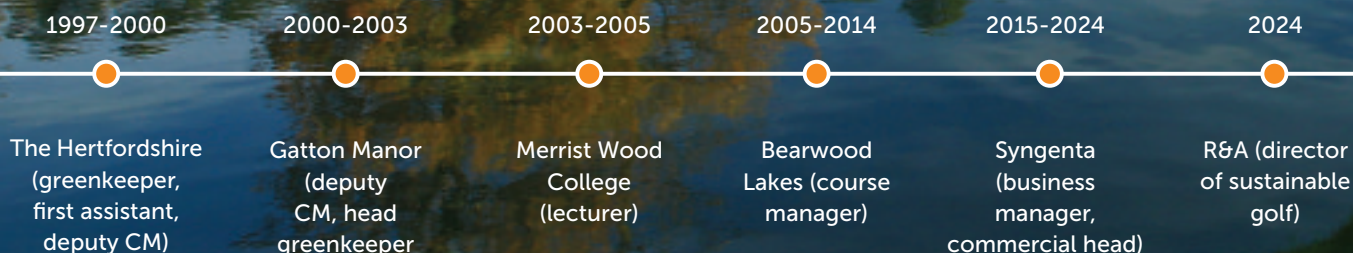
Daniel on his love of greenkeeping

"Greenkeeping is the best job in the world. You come in every day, there's a group of people you enjoy being with and you're all doing a job you love – it's like being part of a football team; the team spirit and the teamwork is just phenomenal.

"On top of that, the place you get to work is amazing. You go first thing in the morning, you get out in the countryside at the most beautiful time of the day and in the most beautiful surroundings. You can't beat it."



Daniel's career timeline



health, for getting out in the wider world and exercising and for connecting with the wider community.

"The opportunities are so powerful, and I'm really optimistic about the future of this sport we love."

Daniel, who spent two years as a lecturer in turfgrass science at Merrist Wood College, speaks with great passion on the subject of the work being undertaken by Sustainable Golf, a department that is supported by five strategic pillars, all of which provide the foundation on which The R&A can – with the help of stakeholders across the game – build a more sustainable future for golf, with the aim of ensuring it is thriving 50 years from now.

“I’m really optimistic about the future of this sport we love

In his position as Director of Sustainable Golf, Daniel is at the forefront of that, and it's a responsibility he is relishing, particularly given the exceptional qualities of the team he now leads.

"My role is to be a facilitator and provide leadership,"

he said. "I aim to facilitate my teams and give them the resources they need to be able to do their job. It's my role to find out how we can do a better job at championships, how we can do a better job in sustainable agronomy, how we can grow our agronomy teams, how we can grow our education and how we do better research so that I can support that and work hard to give my team the resources to deliver it.

"On the leadership side, my job is to stand up at the front and really deliver that message about what we're doing. I've been in the industry a long time now so I know a lot of people, but you can always know more.

"I've got an amazing team of great people. Some of them I've known a long time and some I've known for six months, but it's just an absolutely outstanding team with some world-class agronomists and world-class employees, and that was my main reason for joining."

A key part of The R&A's vision is the Sustainable Agronomy Service, with its expert team of agronomists on hand to deliver advice to any golf clubs seeking to fulfil their potential while maintaining a strong focus on environmental stewardship.



With his years of experience as a greenkeeper, Daniel understands the importance of providing support and advice that is practical and relevant to the specific challenges faced by an individual golf club, rather than trying to enforce blanket solutions.

"The Sustainable Agronomy Service is for any golf club that wants to engage our world-class agronomists to help them achieve their potential," he said. "That service is growing very well in the UK and Ireland, we have a team in the Asia-Pacific, and we're just launching into Europe.

"We don't necessarily look for one-size-fits-all solutions because you'll find the market challenges and the agronomic challenges will vary hugely across different countries.

"The R&A's job is to pull everybody together and share best practice, but it's also to understand the cultural differences and the agronomic differences within all the countries and try to find sustainable strategies that are best for the specific circumstances."

Sustainable Championship Agronomy brings that same approach to facilities that host R&A championships, where some of the finest golf courses in the world are produced under sustainable practices.



The key is to deliver solutions where sustainability, or environmental performance, meets agronomy and playability performance

The five pillars of The R&A's Sustainable Golf

1 Sustainable Agronomy Service
Providing bespoke advice and guidance to golf facilities worldwide to increase awareness and adoption of best practices in sustainable agronomy

2 Sustainable Championship Agronomy
Delivering sustainable, world-class playing conditions for championship venues – a platform for showing what is possible

3 Golf Course 2030 Research
Providing research funding to establish practical solutions in sustainable agronomy, resources, biodiversity and climate change

4 Sustainable Greenkeeping & Scholarships
Providing support, funding and opportunities for practical experience to new and developing greenkeeping talent

5 Sustainable Championships (Greenlinks)
Demonstrating leadership in hosting sustainable golf championships and addressing The R&A's operational impacts in staging major sporting events



"The key is to deliver solutions where sustainability, or environmental performance, meets agronomy and playability performance," Daniel explained.

"Everything we do within Sustainable Golf is about providing a showcase for sustainable strategies in golf to drive better sustainability behaviour for clubs around the world and deliver outstanding playing conditions.

"Something that has to really underpin our message around agronomic and environmental sustainability is that it's a positive thing. We've got an opportunity to bring people together — our affiliates, greenkeepers, other key stakeholders — and to share best practice with the aim of continuously raising the bar.

"That's our remit, that's our responsibility, and that's what we're aiming to do." **GI**

Daniel's top tips for continuous professional development

- Have an idea of where you want to get to, but don't lose sight of where you are now, and make sure you're doing that role to the best of your ability
- Think about the education and qualifications you need for where you plan to be five years from now — don't wait until an opportunity comes up that requires something you haven't got yet
- Be open to moving around and trying different things. Getting out of your comfort zone is where you experience growth

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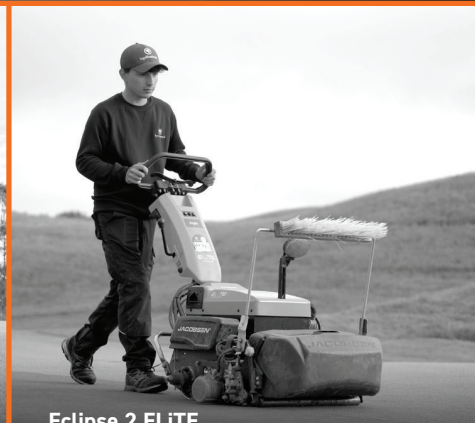
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“ We’re trying to get it back
to how it used to be



Billy's sixth Open

We visited Royal Troon ahead of the 152nd Open to find a course manager who has seen it all before and a team who are truly ready for the biggest week in the golfing calendar

"It's a different ballgame compared to what we play on normal Tour events," said Henrik Stenson following his Open Championship victory at Royal Troon in 2016. Certainly, this stretch of Ayrshire coastline has its own personality and history, one that's been shaped for more than 40 years by Course Manager Billy McLachlan, with the help of Gary Ross since 1996.

Deputy Course Manager Gary, who grew up in nearby Prestwick, welcomed members of BIGGA's South West Scotland Section along for a course walk in the build-up to this year's Open, and Greenkeeper International tagged along.

"If I didn't like it, I wouldn't be here," said Gary, with this year's set to be his fifth Open on the staff. "Billy's a great boss, but not just that, he's a great guy and a great human being."

Longevity, it seems, is key to the team's success and it's rare to find a greenkeeper who has been on the staff for less than 15 years. That experience means they are largely unflustered when The R&A rolls up every eight years or so to host its biggest championship. There have previously been 10 Opens at Royal Troon and half of those have been hosted under the stewardship of Billy, who remains tight-lipped about whether this will be his last.



Credit: Antao Greer Communications

There are 20 greenkeeping staff at Royal Troon, working across the Old Course (which hosts the championship) and the Portland. They have recently benefitted from the opening of a new greenkeeping compound, which includes offices, a staff room with kitchen, wet and dry changing facilities, showers and toilets. Such sizeable investment suggests Royal Troon, despite its 145-year history, is a club that's not only looking towards the future, but also appreciates the key role its greenkeeping team has in its ongoing success.

Out on the course and this year's championship contenders will discover an Old Course that in places has been updated to reflect modern fashions in agronomy and presentation, balanced against tradition and the preservation of old-school values.

Areas of rough have been removed to expose large sand scrapes, where exposed sand is visible to the golfer, creating a wilder appearance. Not considered bunkers, these sand scrapes remind the viewer of the dunescape that links courses grew up out of, while providing varied habitat for a range of flora and fauna.

Elsewhere and the course architect Martin Ebert was brought in to redevelop the 9th hole, which now has a stadium feel with high banking around the rear of the green that collects long shots and provides a ready-made viewing platform for spectators.

Even Royal Troon's most famous hole, the Postage Stamp 8th, has been tweaked slightly and Coffin Bunker is deeper than ever, while the 623-yard 6th, Turnberry, has reclaimed the crown of longest hole on the Open rota.

The overall size of greens has been expanded, up from 8,000m² to just under a hectare, with the opportunity for exciting new pin positions that brings, and it is on the putting surfaces that the greenkeeping team has been focusing most of its efforts. Over 200 tonnes of sand has been injected into the putting surfaces – "We've no sand in the sheds, put it that

New facilities for Royal Troon's 20-strong team

Royal Troon Golf Club has upgraded its greenkeepers' compound, incorporating state-of-the-art locker rooms ahead of this summer's 152nd Open.

The 145-year-old club has made a large investment in a new welfare block, with changing rooms that feature 28 modern lockers and benches to cater for the dedicated team responsible for maintaining the club's pristine courses.

Stephen Anthony, club secretary at Royal Troon, said: "The club is delighted with the new facilities, including the lockers, for our 20 greenkeepers.

"The club is committed to the well-being of every employee and this upgrade speaks volumes about the value the club places on our dedicated team of greenkeepers and their integral role in maintaining our course's international standards."

Credit: Antao Greer Communications



way!" quips Gary – and nitrogen input has increased from 40kg in 2016 to 87kg over the past year.

"We want them stronger for everything that's coming," Gary added. "It's just a matter of leaving them alone now because they've been through quite a bit."

An additional 700 tonnes of topdressing sand has been spread onto the surface over the last few years, so it's useful that Royal Troon quarries its own aggregates from two in-house sites, with a third due to be opened up soon.

"Our sand is very fine, it's probably the finest on The Open rota," said Gary. "It's good for bulk density, but everything you learned at college – no. We're about 70% fines."

Despite all the sand added to the surface, the organic matter levels have actually increased from 5.7% in the top 20mm to just under 8%. Gary's belief is that increased pH levels have created an acidic layer that prevents microbes from diluting the organic matter. Increased fescue levels as the course moves into summer will help as that grass species creates less organic matter than the bents that proliferate in winter. But in the longer term the team will need to core the greens, something they haven't done for years. The planned addition of 260g of lime per square metre over an extended period should reduce the pH levels and, hopefully, organic

“Our sand is very fine, it's probably the finest on The Open rota

matter levels.

Revolution wetting agent is used on fairways and Tri-smart on the greens. Increased moisture levels may have led to an increase in moss levels on the surfaces earlier in the year, but Gary attributes that to the consistent cloud cover and wet weather. Efforts last year to reduce moss levels are also paying dividends and have limited the impact this season. That has kept gravities up to a level The R&A's agronomy team is comfortable with.

During The Open, viewers will see large areas of gorse. The bright yellow flowers may look good for television, but they deter native plantlife and hide the natural undulations of the dunes. Pictures from the 1950s show no gorse on the course, although it is believed tanks that used the area for practice during the Second World War may have brought seeds onto the links.

Following the championship, much of this thorny shrubbery will be removed, as will other non-native species such as Japanese rose, willow and Himalayan balsam.

"We're trying to get it back to how it used to be," said Gary. "Some places [the gorse] helps, but others it just takes over and I prefer to see the hills and the topography of it all."

The first six of the Old Course's holes run directly along the coastline, enhancing the spectacle of the site as the golfer – and television cameras – look out towards Lady Isle and, further afield, Arran. This has long been Royal Troon's strength, but in 2024 it may prove the venue's Achilles' heel, if campaigners that threatened the 2023 championship choose to return. Securing such a large, exposed area isn't impossible, but the required fencing would certainly reduce the visual impact.

Adding to the spectacle of Royal Troon will be the course's famous bunkers, the total number of which has been upped



Credit:
The R&A

by three. In late May, The R&A moved to ease concerns that the bunkers would be too penal, as was seen to be the case in the early rounds of last year's event at Royal Liverpool.

Removing bunker sand took place early in preparations as it gives the revetted faces the opportunity to recover, so there isn't a clear distinction between the regular surface level and the championship level, particularly as the Royal Troon team prefers to allow the faces to green up, rather than burn them off as has been seen at championships in recent years. This is a telling break from current trends that reminds you of the self-confidence this team has developed after four decades of championship course presentation.

The same weather endured by the rest of the UK has had an impact on preparations in this part of Scotland, too, delaying the conclusion of several projects and contributing to issues such as coastal erosion. The Pow Burn that runs between Prestwick and Royal Troon has moved about 200 yards north in recent years due to the increasing power of the water. With Royal Troon built at sea level, several bunkers remained flooded when we visited, but remedial work on the fairways should mean the large puddles seen during the 2016 championship don't return, if the weather turns inclement.

The weather itself may be out of the team's control, but they're confident they have done all they can to limit any complications.

Two hundred and fifty thousand spectators, up by more than 77,000 on 2016, are expected in Troon later this month. When they walk the course, as we did, the spectators will discover a Royal Troon that balances tradition with modern trends and practices.

Congratulations to Billy, Gary and the rest of the team on everything they have achieved so far and good luck for the rest of the month. **GI**



It was a small slab of text – found at the bottom of England Golf’s multi-page winter checklist for golf clubs last October.

“Plastic Hole-Stabilising Rings,” it read. “Stabilising rings do not comply with the Rules of Golf and having discussed this with The R&A, the use of these rings would not merit an exception.”

Then came the killer line – one that was completely out of the blue for Great Barr course manager Dave Stewart.

“Any scores returned for handicap purposes when the stabilising rings are in place would NOT be acceptable for handicap purposes.”

This was news to Stewart, whose Birmingham parkland course, along with many others fighting off the worst of the deluges that have battered Britain since the summer, used them to protect the integrity of the hole when conditions demanded.

They sat on top of the liner, covering up the top inch of soil

normally exposed when the hole is cut.

“It was just an advantage for us to keep the holes round,” he said of why Great Barr used the ‘collars’, which were first introduced at the club amid the slew of restrictions following the first Covid wave in 2020.

“We thought they were a handy tool to use, and we started there.”

When conditions were problematic, in they would go. As soon as they improved, out they would come. Stewart found they were having a huge impact and began documenting their influence.

Changing the holes on a Saturday morning, one of the team would take a photograph. They would do this throughout the day, also enlisting the help of the club professional, and then repeat the trick on Sunday.

“What we would find is that by the end of the day on Saturday, the hole had already changed a bit in shape. It was



Utilising data to change an interpretation of the Rules of Golf

Great Barr's course manager, Dave Stewart, has worked closely with BIGGA to effect change regarding hole stabilising rings.

starting to drop in towards the top edge and, on Sunday, the deterioration accelerated faster throughout the day."

So the restrictions to their use came as a body blow to the club, who were keen to provide as many chances as possible for members to put in scores. And it led Stewart, who has overseen the course for three-and-a-half years, to take action.

"The club were getting to a point where they had to go on to individual records and delete cards because the collars were in when they played a couple of casual rounds of golf," he explained.

"In my eyes, there was an issue. Why are we not allowing golfers to submit cards when the only thing that's stopping it is a plastic insert, which is helping the hole to be stable and round for the duration of the day it was in that position? This was a big challenge."

Stewart contacted BIGGA chief executive Jim Croxton – and the data the club collected became key.

"I sent him all the details – the photo evidence of deterioration. We talked about the collars and how this had affected us as a club," he added.

Croxton contacted England Golf and followed up with The R&A – submitting Stewart's findings to the game's governing body.

"Within hours, I had a phone call from Jim saying that after due consideration and in light of the very challenging conditions, they were happy to change the interpretation. If we're in abnormal conditions, through the winter months, the stabilisers were allowed to be used if needed."

England Golf's new checklist wording says the R&A "appreciates that our current climate can result in considerable challenges for greenkeepers and course managers. Consequently, if there are times of the year when the nature of the soil is such that having a hole liner closer to the surface will help to protect the integrity of the hole, there is flexibility within



Plastic Hole Stabilising Rings

Placed above the top of the liner, these plastic rings normally cover the top inch of soil and aim to protect the integrity of the hole in inclement conditions.

In the Rules of Golf, the definition of hole says if a lining is used it "must be sunk at least 1 inch (25.4mm) below the putting green surface, unless the nature of the soil requires that it be closer to the surface".

While you may have taken 'nature of the soil' to include the types of conditions that can arise in the UK, previous rules appeared not to cater for that – referring instead to dry, crumbly, soils that might be found in desert environments.

the Rules to allow for that. It is also important to note that as soon as the ground conditions are such that hole liners are no longer required, they must be removed."

For Great Barr, and no doubt numerous other clubs up and down the country, that change was cause for celebration.

"It was almost like a weight lifted off our backs," Stewart said.

But he added there was a wider – and just as important – consequence that could have implications for greenkeepers if similar situations arose.

"It just shows the support from our Association that is out there," he explained.

"For me to be able to have a chance to present my case and for BIGGA to have the relationships they have built with the other governing bodies, is a potential advantage to every greenkeeper and course manager. As an industry, we are being listened to.

"For me to help bring about a change that can help other golf courses up and down the country is something of which I'm quite proud.

"[But] You can't just have an opinion and hope people will listen. With every part of our job now, you've got to have data

and records.

"You've got to be seen to be trialling every avenue before people are realistically going to listen and act on that information.

"In terms of the photos and the evidence we collected, I knew that's what it would take for governing bodies to potentially understand exactly what happens out on the golf course.

"Ultimately, they're not on the course day in and day out and they don't always see the conditions we're working in – especially this winter. It was some of the worst I've ever experienced.

"To have that data to hand, to be able to say, 'look, this is exactly what's happening and it's probably happening up and down the whole country, surely there is something in this?'

"By the looks of it, we've done enough to get the right channels listening.

"Going forward, if there are any other scenarios across the industry – certain rules or situations we could potentially change or adapt – then through the right channels, and with the correct evidence, we do have a voice." **GI**



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7-0-21 + 2.6MgO + 0.5Fe													30 - 35 g/sq.m	571 - 1,000 sq.m	8 - 12 weeks
9-3-9 + 2.2MgO + 0.6Fe													20 - 30 g/sq.m	666 - 1,000 sq.m	8 - 12 weeks
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Happy birthday to our oldest member

Honorary BIGGA Life Member, Robert Janovskis celebrated his 100th birthday in May. Here, with thanks to his daughter Laura, is the story of our oldest member



Born and raised near Jekabpils in Latvia, Robert was conscripted into the Latvian Army aged 18. At the end of the Second World War, he came to Britain as a displaced person. Initially, he used his farming skills in the south east and then moved into factory work in Rochdale. Desperate to work outside on the land, Robert eventually joined Springfield Park in Rochdale as an assistant greenkeeper during the 1950s. This was the start of a career that lasted nearly 40 years.

From Springfield Park, Robert moved on to become head greenkeeper at Grange-over-Sands, where he redesigned parts of the course, and then on to Swinton Park in Salford. Over the years, he worked at various golf clubs in the Greater Manchester area, eventually ending his career at Worsley in the early 1990s.

One of the first things Robert did when he joined Swinton Park in 1968 was to plant a row of lime saplings along the club's boundary with the A580 East Lancashire Road. Over 55 years later, those trees are still there, a landmark on the journey out of Manchester city centre. Although, unfortunately, the golf club itself is no more.

Robert has always valued his membership of BIGGA. He often attended conferences, taking part in the seminars and lectures to improve his knowledge. Having attended a short BIGGA course at Cambridge University he now jokes that he is university educated. Additionally, he appreciated the opportunity the conferences gave him to network with other greenkeepers and industry professionals.

Things have changed a lot since Robert started his career. If he wanted to know the weather forecast, he had to make sure he was home in time for the 6 o'clock news. Today, we use weather apps. When Robert and his team were installing Swinton Park's first irrigation system, they had to hand dig the trenches for the pipes. At Springfield Park, Robert was given the job of stripping turf by hand with a spade. All these things would be achieved using machinery today.

Robert is still very proud of his BIGGA membership, involvement with the organisation as treasurer of the North West section and of his contribution to golfing in the Greater Manchester area. He now lives near Aylesbury close to his family with whom he celebrated his birthday. **GI**



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■ As she prepares for the 2025 Island Games, Orkney's Laura Sayer-Hall takes us through the career that began just five years ago on the island of Jura



Kitchinson to oversee Lincoln GC succession plan as he eases into retirement



Adrian Kitchinson will take a hands-on role in the succession plan at Lincoln Golf Club as he winds down after his 47-year career at the facility.

Kitchinson recently called time on his 23-year spell as head greenkeeper, with Andy Gillum making the step up into the role – but his predecessor isn't disappearing into the sunset just yet, with BIGGA's East of England section chairman still coming in three days a week.

With Lincoln having developed into one of the county's finest courses, Kitchinson won't find it easy to step back, but he has every faith in the team picking up the slack.

"When I said I wanted to step

aside, the chairman and I agreed we wanted to promote from within," said Kitchinson, who joined the club at the age of 16 after leaving school.

"Part of the agreement was that I would do two or three days a week for a couple of years, so the team could still bounce ideas off me.

"They've all been here a long time as well, and I was conscious of giving them a chance at the job.

"I'm probably one of those people who like to try and do too much or to try to do everything, but I feel like I've got to the age now where I don't want to be in bed at night worrying about all these things, so I'll pass it on to the younger generation."

Plans for his semi-retirement include looking after his elderly mother,

playing more golf and spending time travelling with his wife, both home and abroad.

Having been heavily involved with BIGGA throughout his career, Kitchinson will also continue to play an active role in the association as he enjoys the camaraderie of the greenkeeping profession.

"I'm a big believer in BIGGA and all the work they do," he said.

"I've never met a bad greenkeeper. Going to these golf days, events and seminars to meet other greenkeepers has been a great thing for me for sharing ideas.

"It can be quite a lonely life out on your own on the golf course, but these things remind you you're not the only one." **GI**



The accidental greenkeeper

Little did Laura Sayer-Hall realise when she travelled to the Scottish island of Jura and started working in a pub, that she would shortly begin embarking on a completely different career path



Greenkeeping was not on Laura Sayer-Hall's radar when she joined her sister on the Scottish island of Jura in 2019.

Having left behind the Wirral and her latest job as a laminator in the aerospace industry, she originally worked in the local pub and it was there that she got talking to the greenkeepers at Ardfin.

An opportunity to join as a casual worker came up and, despite her initial hesitation, Laura's curiosity got the better of her.

A desire to learn and experience new things has continued to serve her well within the industry, with Laura now on the staff at Orkney Golf Club, where she has helped prepare a newly rebuilt course for the 2025 Island Games.

How soon after accepting casual work as a greenkeeper did you realise this was the career for you?

I accepted a permanent role at Ardfin three months after becoming a seasonal. At that point I didn't know I wanted to be a greenkeeper long-term, but I was enjoying the variety of work within the role and thought I didn't really have anything to lose by continuing and seeing where I ended up.

“ Starting your day while most people are still tucked up in bed just feels very special

What was it about the job that sparked something in you?

I've always been quite a practical person and I really enjoy the physicality of greenkeeping. Yes, quite often it's hard work, but seeing what you've achieved by the end of the day really fires me up to do the best job I can each day.

I also love being out in nature – seeing the sunrise each morning (in Orkney this isn't always the case!) and starting your day while most people are still tucked up in bed just feels very special, and I think makes it all worthwhile.

You came to it a little later. Has that fuelled a desire to make up for lost time?

I've always been passionate about whatever I am doing and like to give 100 per cent whenever I can. I wouldn't say coming to greenkeeping later in life has fuelled me to make up for lost time, but being a bit more mature means you get a bit of a head start with things as you have more life experience behind you on which to build a rewarding career. It's easy to see that the more you work hard and get involved in as many things as you can, the greater the benefit to your development.

How would you describe your approach to education and diversifying your skills?

I have ADHD so I have a lot of enthusiasm and drive to learn about lots of various subjects, and I love to experience new things. In the past it's been difficult to stay interested in a particular career long-term as it feels like they become mundane after a time. But greenkeeping feels like it has everything I need and gives me the variety day-to-day to stay engaged. This is boosted further with the transition from daily mowing and maintenance in summer to project work and mechanics over the winter season. Being able



to work at different courses has also been brilliant as you can see both the good and bad aspects of various ways of doing things and build up your own idea of the type of greenkeeper you want to be.

What interests you most about the job and what would you say is your specialism?

I am most interested in the environmental and sustainable side of greenkeeping and always aim to leave courses I've worked at in better stead than I found them. This is difficult now working at a course with a small budget and lack of staff, but I always try and carry out work in the most ecologically friendly way I can without affecting the final result on course too much.

However, beyond this, I'm not sure I have a specialism really. I like to learn a bit about everything and build upon

my knowledge in a balanced way as I feel this gives you a more unbiased view of the overall product we're trying to achieve.

I am, however, a stickler for details. I believe it's the small things you can do each day and the attention to detail that really elevates a course.

What are your ambitions within the industry?

My career ambitions aren't really set in stone. My approach to life is just to go with the flow and my gut usually tells me what's the right path to take. If all goes to plan, my next step is to hopefully head back out to Australia for another winter season before coming back to Orkney to help in the lead-up to the Island Games next summer. After that, I've no idea where I'll end up, but I like the feeling of anticipation of potential future opportunities. **GI**

“Greenkeeping
feels like it has
everything I need

The Isle of Jura

Laura's top tip

The best piece of advice I would give is to take every opportunity that comes your way, and don't be afraid to get stuck in and ask questions, no matter how daft you think they are. The more enthusiasm you show, the more the right folk will come into your life and act as mentors. To have people on hand when you're not sure of something is invaluable in this industry.



Greenkeeper Training

As a member of the Greenkeepers Training Committee, BIGGA strives to enhance professional education through various means, including local and national workshops and conferences. We also work closely with training providers that enable greenkeepers to achieve the qualifications required to progress their careers. Across these pages are detailed a selection of educational organisations who offer training opportunities for golf greenkeepers. Get in touch if you'd like find out more.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee maintains a list of GTC Approved Training Providers (ATPs). These colleges and training centres offer Government-approved greenkeeping courses and qualifications that have been developed by the GTC and other relevant organisations.

To achieve ATP status, a training provider must fulfil a strict criteria, which is available to view on the GTC website.

If you are in doubt about which training provider, course or qualification is correct for you, please contact the GTC to discuss your options.



Approved
Training Provider

2023-2024

Hadlow College



Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 0AL

Contact: Anthony Stockwell

t: 01732 850551 e: AnthonyStockwell@northkent.ac.uk

w: www.hadlow.ac.uk

Hadlow College is delighted to be offering the new level 5 Golf Course Manager Apprenticeship standard. This eagerly-anticipated qualification will expand your management knowledge, expertise and maximise your career potential. If you would like to find out more about this new and exciting qualification, Hadlow would love to hear from you. Hadlow college also successfully runs the new apprenticeship standards for Level 2 and Level 3. For a full list of courses please visit www.hadlow.ac.uk.

For further information and advice please contact AnthonyStockwell@northkent.ac.uk, WayneSyres@northkent.ac.uk or stuartfranks@northkent.ac.uk



Myerscough College and University Centre



St Michaels Road, Bilsborrow, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 0RY

Contact: Course Enquiries Team

t: 0800 652 5592 e: enquiries@myerscough.ac.uk

w: www.myerscough.ac.uk

Myerscough College and University Centre is the pioneering centre for sports turf and golf course management education in Europe. Courses are available at all levels, from introductory practical skills training to the postgraduate Masters Degree in Sustainable Golf Course Management.

There are options for full time or part time online study. The foundation degree, honours degree and MA programmes are available online and have students enrolled from across the globe.

Apprenticeships delivery is across England and includes Golf Greenkeeper Level 2, Advanced Sportsturf Technician Level 3 and Golf Course Manager Level 5 with flexible start dates across the year. We also offer a wide range of industry short courses.

Plumpton College



Ditchling Road, Plumpton, East Sussex, BN7 3AE

Contact: Plumpton Business Services

t: 01273 892127 e: business@plumpton.ac.uk

w: www.plumpton.ac.uk

Plumpton College is a leading land-based further and higher education provider of apprenticeships and specialist training and assessments, supporting golf clubs and greenkeeping professionals across the South of England. The college delivers Golf Greenkeeping Level 2 and Advanced Sports Turf Technician Level 3 alongside a suite of LANTRA and NPOTC-approved industry courses and assessments, delivered either at the main college near Brighton or onsite with the employer. Training is delivered by expert tutors with extensive experience of working in a commercial industry setting with excellent results for learners. Plumpton prides itself on its partnership with employers to develop the most appropriate learning programme to meet their business needs.



Sparsholt College



Westley Lane, Sparsholt, SO21 2NF

Contact: Danielle Fancourt

t: 01962 797322 e: Danielle.Fancourt@sparsholt.ac.uk

w: www.sparsholt.ac.uk

Our stunning 450-acre campus boasts all the facilities students need. The college cares about the environment and is well on its journey towards carbon neutrality.

We have a team of industry experts to deliver and assess the Level 2 Golf Greenkeeping and Level 3 Advanced Sports Turf Technician Standards as well as the Level 2 Horticulture or Landscape Construction Operative and Level 3 Landscape & Horticulture Supervisor standards.

Our assessing and teaching team has experience that enables them to support with the End Point Assessment. In addition to this the college offers short courses in horticulture, landscaping and arboriculture, such as pesticide application, safe use of brush cutters and strimmers, first aid and more.



Askham Bryan College



Askham Bryan, York, YO23 3FR

Contact: Apprenticeship Department

t: 01904 772277 e: apprenticeships@askham-bryan.ac.uk

w: www.askham-bryan.ac.uk

Askham Bryan College is a specialist land-based college and university centre offering a large range of courses from foundation to degree level and beyond, which will set you up for a career doing what you feel passionate about. In addition to Level 2 Golf Greenkeeper, Level 3 Advanced Sports Turf Technician and Level 3 Advanced Golf Greenkeeper standards, we can offer specialist short-course training and bespoke CPD events based on your business need.

Askham Bryan college is a great place to study and is graded as 'good' for teaching and 'outstanding' by Ofsted for its care provision and accommodation. The college prides itself on making all students feel welcome and providing a great learning experience.



Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA)



Hall Place, Burchetts Green, SL6 6QR

Contact: Rob Phillips

t: 01628 824444 e: Robert.Phillips@windsor-forest.ac.uk

w: www.bca.ac

BCA offers a range of apprenticeships and work-based diplomas in golf greenkeeping, sports turf management, landscaping, arboriculture and horticulture. Taught by industry experienced assessors, delivery is either class based or online. BCA also offers short courses including PA1, PA2 and PA6 chainsaw courses, brush cutters, tractor driving, first aid and more. Based on the edge of Maidenhead in a stunning 400-acre campus, BCA has been delivering land-based and vocational education training since its establishment in 1949.

Get in touch by emailing landbasedtraining@bca.ac.uk or visit www.bca.ac.uk



Oldham College



Rochdale Road, Oldham, OL9 6AA

Contact: Phil Lomas

t: 07912 485436 e: Phil.Lomas@oldham.ac.uk

w: www.oldham.ac.uk

Oldham College is the first-choice college for work-based greenkeeping apprenticeships in Greater Manchester and the surrounding areas. Michael Russell, current Toro Greenkeeper of the Year, is a student at the College and working towards the completion of his Level 3 apprenticeship. With strong employer links, the College offers Golf Greenkeeping Level 2 and Advanced Sports Turf Technician Level 3 Apprenticeship Standards. We also offer short courses, including Pesticide Application and Safe Use of Mowers.. Our teaching staff have vast experience in the greenkeeping sector, keeping up-to-date with current practices to ensure high-quality provision is delivered. The team also has first-hand experience of the End Point Assessment process, ensuring apprentices will have the best possible experience.



Pershore College



Avonbank, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 3JP

Contact: John Colclough

t: 0330 135 6940 e: employerenquiries@wgc.ac.uk

w: www.wgc.ac.uk/apprenticeships

A national centre for horticulture situated on a 60-hectare site near Evesham. Pershore College (part of WCG) offers the very best in land-based learning.

Land-based apprenticeship standards available at Pershore College include: Arborist (Level 2); Crop Technician (Container Based Level 3); Golf Greenkeeping (Level 2); Horticulture Supervisor (Level 3); Horticulture Operative (Level 2); Landscape Operative (Level 2); Land-based Service Engineering (Level 2 Engineer, Level 3 Technician); Sports Turf Operative (Level 2); Advanced Sports Turf Technician (Level 3). Pershore College also offers short courses in landscaping and horticulture as well as pesticides training: PA1, PA6 and more.



SRUC Elmwood



Carslogie Road, Cupar, Fife, KY15 5YT

Contact: Anja Boehme

t: 01334 658800 e: anja.boehme@sruc.ac.uk

w: www.sruc.ac.uk

SRUC Elmwood is based in Fife just 10 miles from St Andrews. For those seeking an entry level qualification we offer Work Based Modern Apprenticeships at SVQ Level 2. For those looking to develop their managerial careers, the college offers SVQ Level 3 in Sportsturf, as well as our online Higher National Certificate/Diploma in Golf Course Management.

The curriculum is embedded with sustainability and enterprise, while offering an international perspective. We recognise the rapidly changing challenges facing the golf sector, their impact, and the opportunities they present to future leaders in the industry.



Suffolk New College



Rope Walk, Ipswich IP4 1LT

Contact: Apprenticeships

t: 01473 382600 e: apprenticeships@suffolk.ac.uk

w: www.suffolk.ac.uk

Our Suffolk Rural campus, at Otley in the heart of the countryside, benefits from an extensive number of regional golf clubs where we can offer a high quality educational and professional experience for trainee Golf Greenkeepers, amongst an offer of 40+ apprenticeship standards. Our most recent addition is Advanced Sports Turf Technician and our industry experts also deliver Countryside worker, Sports Turf Operative, Golf Greenkeeping and Horticulture or Construction Landscape Operative routes. Delivery modes support classroom or workplace-based learning and we also offer a range of integrated commercial short courses including pesticides encompassing PA1, PA2 & PA6 accreditation, chainsaw, and first aid qualifications.



Latest job vacancies

Golf Team Leader

Arrowe Park Golf and Warren Golf, Merseyside

This is an exciting opportunity to work as part of the golf team, where the role combines practical golf course maintenance and managing the golf greenkeeping team at Arrowe Park Golf and Warren Golf.

You will be required to undertake all practical elements of golf course maintenance. A full driving licence is required and experience in using a full range of golf maintenance equipment.

We are looking for somebody who is enthusiastic and highly motivated. You will need to demonstrate a professional and modern approach to greenkeeping.

The position is a full-time, permanent post.

If you are interested in applying for this post, or to view the full job description please visit the following website:

<https://ats-wirraljobs.jgp.co.uk/vacancies>



Assistant Greenkeeper

Berkhamsted Golf Club, Hertfordshire



Established in 1890, Berkhamsted is Hertfordshire's joint-oldest golf club and is regarded as one of England's Top 100 golf courses.

We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic Assistant Greenkeeper to join our team of 8. You will work on preparing our 18-hole golf course and extensive practice facilities.

Requirements:

- Full clean driving license is desirable due to the nature of the work
- Minimum Level 2 NVQ qualified in Sports Turf Management

If you are passionate about golf and have the skills and experience we are looking for, we would love to hear from you.

Apply now to Gerald Bruce, Gerald@berkhamstedgc.co.uk with a CV and cover letter and become a part of our dedicated team at Berkhamsted Golf Club.

Closing date Wednesday 24th July 2024.

Greenkeeper

Near Wincanton, Somerset

Experienced, qualified and forward-thinking greenkeeper for full time position on privately owned, non-members golf course overlooking Blackmore Vale. 24-acre landscaped course with lake and pond plays 9, 12 and 18 holes from 13 tees and 6 greens.

- Minimum Level 2 NVQ qualified in Sports Turf Management
- Minimum of 5 years golf course experience
- Spraying PA1, PA2, PA6 certificate and Chainsaw Licence preferred
- Knowledge of irrigation systems
- Knowledge of machinery maintenance and mechanics

Responsible for general management of golf course and all machinery (John Deere)

Annual salary: 31-35K, 20 days annual leave, company pension scheme and flexible hours.

Email CV and covering letter of knowledge and experience to Richard Worrall: richardworrall81@gmail.com

Seasonal Greenkeepers – Multiple positions

Pymble Golf Club, Australia



Pymble Golf Club is seeking the services of UK greenkeepers looking to spend 6 months on a working holiday visa.

Pymble Golf Club is a private member-only parkland course in north Sydney, in the affluent suburb St Ives. We recently renovated the entire course under course architect James Wilcher and moved back into Golf Australia's top 100 courses. We are located a short 15-minute drive to magnificent beaches, excellent access to shopping centres and public transport.

We offer excellent working conditions including onsite accommodation, flexible working hours, uniforms and daily meals supplied whilst on shift.

Applications close Friday 26th July

For further details please contact David Stone.

super@pymblegolf.com.au



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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

Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Chevin Golf Club, Derbyshire



Chevin Golf Club is seeking a motivated Deputy Head Greenkeeper. The course is renowned for its superb greens and warm hospitality. The ideal candidate will assist the Head Greenkeeper in enhancing the course, developing future strategies, and managing work programs.

Requirements:

- 4+ years of greenkeeping experience
- PA1, PA2, PA6 licenses
- NVQ Level 3 in Sports Turf Management (or work towards it)
- Strong leadership, communication, and organizational skills
- Knowledge in agronomy, fertiliser, and chemical applications
- Flexible, reliable and able to work early mornings, weekends, and bank holidays

Competitive salary and benefits offered. Apply by 10th July, 2024.

Email CV and cover letter to: manager@chevingolf.co.uk

Course Manager

Chippenham Golf Club, Wiltshire



Due to retirement, Chippenham Golf Club is looking for an experienced Course Manager to take complete ownership of the course and practice facilities that include Top Tracer. The Course Manager will be an experienced manager or deputy from a similar course looking to develop their skills or career with a golf club that has recently invested over £200k in new machinery and extended the course in the last 10 years.

Reporting to the Director of Golf and the Board, the role will manage a substantial budget for people and programmes that include 5 people and more development on the course such as rebuilding the first tee and completing a 4-year bunker replacement program. Salary upwards of £44k is on offer for the right candidate.

If you are interested in this position, **send your CV and covering letter to Ben Lloyd at golf@chippenhamgolfclub.co.uk** by 15th July 2024.

Technical Area Sales Manager

ICL Group



We are seeking two high-calibre Technical Area Sales Manager to support our growth and serve our customer base in the South and North East regions of England.

• Role 1: Technical Area Sales Manager – South

This role will focus on supporting our customer base in Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire, and Sussex.

• Role 2: Technical Area Sales Manager – North/East

This role will focus on supporting our customer base in Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire.

About the Roles

In these roles, you will deliver exceptional sales and technical support to turf managers and distributors, fostering strong customer relationships. Your responsibilities will include identifying new business opportunities within the turf and landscape sectors and providing expert advice on our range of products.

What We Offer

We provide a competitive salary with a performance-based bonus, a company car for business and personal use, 26 days of annual leave, a contributory pension scheme, and subsidised private medical and dental insurance. You will also benefit from excellent career development opportunities and ongoing product training.

About You

The ideal candidates will have a proven track record in technical product sales within the turf and landscape sectors or experience as successful turf managers. You should have strong knowledge of turf management practices, supported by an industry-recognised qualification in a relevant discipline. Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to engage confidently and professionally in various environments are essential. Flexibility and a willingness to travel are required.

About Us

ICL Group, with over 12,000 employees globally, is a world leader in the production and distribution of professional horticulture, turf and landscape, and specialty agricultural products. In the UK & Ireland, ICL Turf & Landscape provides innovative solutions and expert advice to help our clients achieve the best results. Our well-known brands are supported by the strength and resources of a global business, ensuring we remain at the forefront of the industry.

How to Apply

Please email your résumé and application letter to Jean van Vuuren at jean.vanvuuren@icl-group.com by Friday 19th July. Indicate in your application whether you are applying for the South or North/East role.

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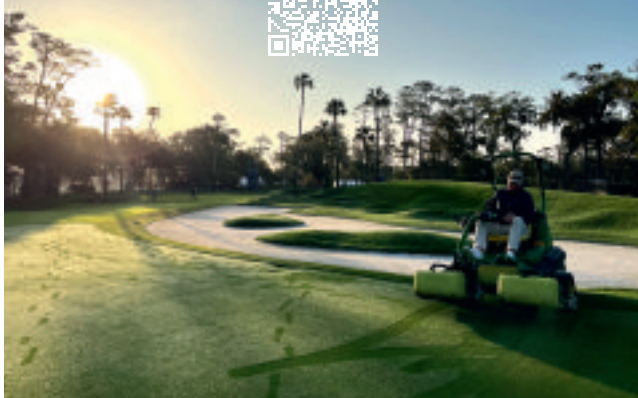
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Practical Greenkeeping

Refine your skillset and expand your knowledge



Deputy Head Greenkeeper Chris Clark reveals how the team at Prince's are preparing for the club's main events of the year



What we do in... July
Club: Prince's Golf Club

We have been fortunate enough to hold Final Qualifying and The Women's Amateur Championship over the last couple of years, but this year our focus is on the major club events, and it's just as important for us to achieve our usual high standards.

We have our Open week on the horizon this month and then our flagship event of the year, known as The Sarazen Trophy, towards the end of August – an annual event the entire club looks forward to.

First and foremost, we'll concentrate on the greens to ensure we continue to produce the quality putting surfaces our members and visitors have become accustomed to.

We aim for fast, firm and true greens daily; however, naturally a little more attention to detail is

given during these events. Double cuts with regular rolling and close moisture control will be part of our weekly schedule in the build-up to any event.

We view every aspect of the golf course as being a crucial part to helping us achieve our end goal. We endeavour to have all fine turf areas as sharp as possible throughout the summer months, and increasing our cut frequency on certain areas is a good way to help us

achieve this.

During larger competitions, every task gets a little bit more attention than it would do day to day.

It feels as though the cutting never stops, as controlling any new growth throughout competitions is crucial in delivering high-level surfaces for the golfers.

With regular divoting across the entirety of the golf course being applied as well as bunkers receiving

daily maintenance – tasks we rarely have the manpower for daily – the 13-strong team is often stretched during these periods. Nonetheless, they always deliver when it matters.

I would say it's our most rewarding time of the year. A lot of the foundation work has already been done.

Everything we do throughout the autumn, winter and spring periods is to put us in the best place possible for summer.

Once summer arrives, it's fairly routine for us to then make sure the golf course reaches its full potential.

We have a great team who all take pride in their work, and the positive feedback throughout these periods make the slightly harder times worth it! **GI**



We view every aspect of the golf course as being a crucial part to helping us to achieve our end goal

Turfgrass research: Driving new solutions



Introducing the International Turfgrass Research Initiative (ITRI) – designed to support leading global research to address the biggest challenges facing sustainability in golf

Even as the golfing season commenced in earnest, the UK weather has continued to throw dramatic extremes at greenkeepers as you focus on refining playing surfaces for the golfing season ahead.

Extremes of weather experienced in the UK were also mirrored elsewhere in Europe and even further afield. Other pressures faced by golf course managers worldwide continue to intensify year-on-year; regulatory pressures, changing climate and resource scarcity among others.

If your attention was rightly focused on your course, it might surprise you to know that a significant turfgrass research plan was announced in May.

Three of the leading bodies in international golf course and turfgrass management research – The R&A, The Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environmental Foundation (STERF) and the United States Golf Association (USGA) – launched the International Turfgrass Research Initiative.

The ITRI programme is designed to support leading global research to address some of the biggest challenges facing golf course sustainability. The challenges for the future of golf and the larger turfgrass industries are many and diverse. Climate change is transforming abiotic stress patterns, pest life cycles and basic turfgrass selection and management. Strong restrictions on the use of chemicals and fertilisers and increasing pressure on natural resources (notably water, energy and land) are expected to increase. Development is accelerating the loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity

meaning golf course landscapes are viewed as both a solution and a problem. This calls for more research and innovation for a sustainable future.

In 2022, Copenhagen hosted the 14th International Turfgrass Research Conference, attended by 300 people from 28 different countries all working in the turfgrass management sector. The theme was Development and Sustainability and included keynote presentations, scientific sessions and field tours.

A one-day practitioner seminar focused on low-input and stress management, new technology, pesticide-free management and ecosystem services of turfgrass systems. A special symposium was held in memory of Dr James Beard, one of the early pioneers of turfgrass science, whose work remains influential today.

Sustainable agronomy is the most prevalent area of interest for the ITRI. In light of increasing pesticide regulations, warmer weather patterns and more frequent droughts and irrigation restrictions, integrated pest management (IPM) and water conservation are important areas of focus. Another emphasis is biodiversity research in turfgrass management, which is essential to foster ecological balance by understanding and preserving diverse ecosystems within turfgrass and golf course landscapes. A better understanding of the carbon balance in turfgrass management globally is crucial for understanding the impact of turfgrass on greenhouse gas emissions and net carbon sequestration.



About the 15th International Turfgrass Research Conference

The International Turfgrass Research Conference takes place every four years bringing together experts, researchers, academics and turfgrass managers. In July 2025, an expected 500 people from 30 countries will gather in the next edition in Karuizawa, Japan.

In addition to keynote and scientific presentations, the conference will include technical tours of local turfgrass facilities, and a practitioner seminar day specifically for golf course superintendents and greenstaff to attend.

“We aim to positively influence standards and practice in sustainable agronomy through guidance and support of golf facilities. The International Turfgrass Research Initiative is an important step towards developing practical solutions that can be used by golf facilities worldwide to address the challenges being experienced



in golf course and turfgrass management.”

Daniel Lightfoot, Director – Sustainable Golf, The R&A

“The only viable strategy to meet current challenges and to create a sustainable future is international collaboration. We look forward to realising this important initiative, in close partnership with our colleagues at the USGA and The R&A. We want to support and inspire scientists all over the world to collaborate and create and supply new knowledge and tools that are essential for modern and sustainable golf course and turfgrass management.



Maria Strandberg, STERF Director and Past President of International Turfgrass Society

“The future of our game is dependent on the steps we take today.

Alongside our colleagues at The R&A and STERF, we encourage international cooperation among scientists to align on important turfgrass management research topics. As stewards of the environment, we have a responsibility to develop innovative solutions that promote future sustainability, while tackling the current critical challenges the industry faces.



Cole Thompson, Ph.D., Director, Green Section Research at the USGA

What happens next?

The first round of research proposals are currently being written and submitted. These will outline the areas of research and expected benefits.

These proposals will be reviewed by a panel of academics, researchers, agronomists, consultants and practitioners in international golf course and turfgrass management to identify a select number to submit detailed proposals.

It is anticipated that two to three projects will be selected for funding in the years 2026 to 2028. The successful projects will be announced at the next International Turfgrass Research Conference held in Japan in 2025.

Find out more about The International Turfgrass Research Initiative by scanning the QR code.



Scan Me to find out more

Research Programmes Around the World

Research informing Greenkeeping: Integrated Management of Turfgrass Diseases and Pests

Scientific research is at the heart of so much of traditional and modern greenkeeping practices used on a daily basis by greenkeepers globally. Understanding and demonstrating the practical use of scientific research is a central aim of Golf Course 2030 and STERF research programmes.

In 2020 a collaborative project was agreed to research various areas of management of disease and pests in northern Europe – the UK, Nordic nations and central Europe.

The overall aim of the project was to investigate cultural practices and new technologies for the prevention and control of the two most important turfgrass diseases on golf course putting greens – microdochium patch and dollar spot – and insect pests on golf courses with minimum use of pesticides.

The project included a wide range of research areas: fungicide and non-fungicidal management strategies, biostimulants, nutrition programmes, rolling, UVC radiation and cultural practices. In some cases confirming best practice, in other areas offering opportunities for new technology and solutions.



Golf Course 2030 by The R&A

Golf Course 2030 (GC2030) was established by The R&A in 2019 to address the threats of regulation, climate change and resource scarcity to golf course management.

GC2030 involves working with more than 25 different

countries to communicate key sustainability issues faced by golf course management around the world.

Golf Course 2030 has supported research across the UK, Europe and in Asia-Pacific, with nearly £2 million invested in 21 research programmes to-date.

Visit <https://www.randa.org/what-is-gc2030> for more information.



STERF Research Programme

STERF (Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation) is the Nordic golf federations' joint research body. STERF supplies new knowledge that is essential for modern golf course management, knowledge that is of practical benefit and ready for use. STERF prioritise R&D within the following areas: Integrated pest management, Multifunctional golf facilities and ecosystem services, Sustainable water management and Winter stress management. Since 2006 STERF has invested €10 000 000 in more than 250 projects.

For more information visit www.sterf.org

USGA Green Section Research

The USGA has promoted and advanced turfgrass research for golf since 1920, investing more than \$50 million since the inception of its Mike Davis Grant Program in 1983. In 2023, another \$30 million was committed over 15 years to further advance water conservation through the USGA's 15/30/45 initiative. More than \$2.5 million are invested every year, which returns an estimated \$2 billion to the U.S. golf industry annually.

Visit <https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/turfgrass-and-environmental-research.html> **GI**

What are the aims of ITRI?

Discussions between the different international bodies were exciting and fast-paced. A shared set of priorities across the research programmes of STERF, the USGA and The R&A were quickly identified and agreement that collaboration was an important, and unique, opportunity.

1 Agree on the most important global research topics

Bringing three leading international bodies together provides a unique opportunity to identify the global issues. With extensive networks ranging from golf course managers to agronomists, researchers and academics, industry bodies and solution providers, we can gather a wide perspective on the most important topics for golf courses now and into the future.

2 Solicit and select research proposals

ITRI is based on the collaborative aim to identify some of the best and most exciting opportunities requiring research, which will provide practical solutions to turfgrass

managers. The process of asking for proposals will open doors and identify opportunities for the industry to take.

3 Support global projects with international research teams

The central aim is to look for a small number – two or three – of projects which have significant potential to deliver solutions which can be applied in many different regions. By collaboratively funding this research The R&A, STERF and the USGA will ensure that projects have value to as many golf courses – and their managers – as possible.

4 Model global research cooperation

ITRI is unique as it prioritises international cooperation to address topics on a global scale. If successful, it will produce practical solutions for the golf and turfgrass industries, but it will also demonstrate how working collectively as an industry we can have a bright future for sustainable turfgrass management.



The 14th International Turfgrass Research Conference in Copenhagen

“ Sustainable agronomy is the most prevalent area of interest for the ITRI



A Golf and Biodiversity seminar was part of The R&A's Golf Course 2030 programme



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Total approach to leatherjacket control

Hampshire greenkeeper Sam Evans has pioneered integrated techniques to better manage an extreme leatherjacket challenge

The combination of NemaTrident beneficial nematodes, integrated with targeted Acelepryn application, has been instrumental in Course Manager Sam Evans MG successfully managing extreme leatherjacket issues at North Hants Golf Club.

The strategy has been for an autumn application of NemaTrident nematodes and Acelepryn, typically in mid to late October and about 10 days apart. "The results have been incredibly successful, with no perceptible leatherjacket damage to playability on the greens over the past season," he reports.

Sam advocates that key to the success in managing the leatherjacket issues has been a series of incremental gains from multiple turf management practices to make turf more resilient

to the effects of pest numbers.

"Anything we can do to encourage turf health - through stronger rooting, nutrition, moisture levels and avoiding disease or other stresses on the plant - can help to overcome leatherjacket damage, or at least keep it at a level that does not affect playability," he says.

The ITM measures can also be important to the success of the NemaTrident application. Soil moisture levels that can be raised to help re-

covery from the pre-planned October renovation week, for example, are also highly beneficial for nematode efficacy in targeting leatherjackets in the soil.

Although Sam aims for a soil moisture in greens of around 18% for optimum playability, that can be raised to near field capacity 30% at the time of nematode application, through a combination of natural rainfall and irrigation if required, depending on the season.

Over the following days soil moisture should ideally be retained at around 25% for a week to 10 days after application - field capacity -5% being around the optimum for nematodes to have moisture to move, but still with sufficient air pockets for them to survive and be active.

Read this for:

- Managing leatherjackets
- Application timing and tips
- Developing ITM strategies



Incremental gains from multiple integrated turf management practices have been instrumental for leatherjacket control, says Sam Evans.



Sean Loakes
Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland

Proven pack

An integrated strategy of Acelepryn followed by NemaTrident F beneficial nematodes can enhance the overall consistency and reliability of leatherjacket control, reports Syngenta Technical Manager, Sean Loakes.

Syngenta leatherjacket research in 2022 - in a high-pressure situation with 100 larvae per m² in the untreated turf areas - showed 89% control from Acelepryn alone, with a 65% reduction in larvae population where just NemaTrident F plus NemaSpreader was used. Where the two components were used in sequence the trial resulted in complete larvae control. The recommendation for this integrated approach is for one application of Acelepryn at 0.6 l/ha, followed by NemaTrident F within seven days, at a rate of 2.5 billion nematodes per hectare.

“Anything we can do to encourage turf health can help to overcome leatherjacket damage.

In addition to tracking soil moisture daily, Sam records soil temperature probe readings at a depth of around 100mm. The aim is to ensure nematodes are applied while soil temperatures are still above 8°C for at least 12 to 14 hours a day – with an eye kept on forecasts of weather patterns, and particularly temperatures, to optimise application timing.

When the conditions are right, every effort is made to get the application on as soon as possible. The sprayer is prepared in advance, with all the filters removed – in both the pump circulation and the nozzle lines – and the large orifice white 08 XC

Soil Nozzle fitted. The addition of NemaSpreader in the spray tank also helps the nematode movement and activity in the soil.

The spray tech is provided with a sheet with a reminder step-by-step checklist. That includes to remove the nematodes from the storage fridge 20 minutes before use and put them in the mess room to warm up, and then to mix in a bucket to get them active before adding to the sprayer.

Then, time is imperative to prevent nematodes sitting in the spray water for too long. The plan is to get application out without delay and, if necessary, make multiple loads that

can be sprayed out quickly.

Best practice is to irrigate immediately after application to wash nematodes down into the soil surface, or apply during light rainfall. They also calculate to make sure all the nematode packs in the refrigerated storage are used in the application.

“Our primary focus has been on protecting greens, which so far has been successful,” highlights Sam.

“Now we might look at trials to adapt the nematode application rate and timing so that, for the same budget, we could extend treatment out onto tees and approaches,” he adds. **GI**

The changing nature of greenkeeping and education



Ian Butcher, MBA is the programme leader for Golf Course Management at SRUC

A perspective from the SRUC's Golf Course Management department

Let me start by discussing how education has not changed. It still enhances prospects for individuals and the performance of companies that invest in it. It still develops a network of real benefit, for both individuals and organisations, and it supports a passion for what one does.

Times do change, however, and we can choose to adapt with positivity or resistance. I'd begin with highlighting the digital transformation taking place since the early 2000s and the access to information it has created. When I began my teaching career at SRUC Elmwood in 1995, there were no laptops, mobile phones, apps, search engines or even email. I remember PowerPoint being introduced to replace projectors and slides. I am sure I remember carrier pigeons, but maybe not...

Now, rather than a library and a core

textbook, any current learner can gain access to millions of gigabytes on any subject simply by sitting with their personal device. Recorded video supports evidence or a proposal. AI technology can now write assignments for you, as universities now know only too well.

The reason why this is important is this: what justifies your salary now is not necessarily going to be the same in the future. Robotics have already replaced many work roles, AI systems are now going to join in.

With information so easily available, the value in education shifts from simply gaining knowledge to practically applying knowledge. Employers routinely express their need for people who can think creatively, innovate, communicate well, work in teams, are adaptable and are self-confident. Therefore, education needs to develop

the whole person beyond simple knowledge exchange.

To quote Thomas Friedman, "when change gets this fast, the only way to retain a lifelong working capacity is to engage in lifelong learning." If we learn to collaborate and use the new technologies available to us, we are going to cope.

The good news is that the education industry is taking advantage of technologies to deliver the higher levels of learning the modern world looks for in graduates. A reliable 24/7 digital platform allows for people to work and study at the same time, so we can continue to develop ourselves alongside change.

If we look at how we are teaching and learning now, a digital approach is proven to deliver flexibility, reflection, teamwork, motivation and collaborative communities of



learning resulting in skills-sets looked for by not only employers, but whole sectors. Delivering education online has opened up opportunities for international learners to come together and share their own unique digital content with each other. The collaborative content created in the online environment is much more global, promoting innovation and spreading knowledge; more so than campus-based education was able to do alone.

Coping with a digital age requires us to be open minded and connected to a support network that is enthusiastic and enjoying the change. And these are the elements in education I said at the beginning haven't changed: the capacity for higher education to provide a place of reassurance, explanation and camaraderie.

To change ourselves at SRUC

we had to change our curriculum; not just content, but how it works, how we deliver, how we embed professional development. We call our new approach SEEDABLE: the embedding of Sustainability, Enterprise, Equality, Diversity, enabled by Active and Blended Learning. It means we can be a touchstone for the sector at a time of change, where through a range of short and long-term learning journeys those working in golf can comprehend and adapt to a transforming world.

To summarise, digital technology has been the most significant change in education I have witnessed in the last 25 years, and it will continue to change us, faster and more dramatically than anything we have seen before. How we embrace the new technology will determine how education looks moving forward. **GI**



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The Celtic Connection

A journey through design, research and data



Old world golf

Golf in Great Britain and Ireland is characterised by its diversity of courses. From its windswept coastal links courses to the lush countryside of the parkland courses in between, our courses are a testament to the natural heritage we contribute to this noble sport. The one thing our courses tend to have in common is a minimalist approach to their design. They blend naturally with the landscape, emphasising strategy and shot making. Playing them requires creativity, precision and a deep respect for the game's traditions. For this reason, our courses are mimicked by American designers and architects on an increasing level. Their courses are designed for visual impact, often

requiring significant changes to the landscape to create desired features. The results are incredible, yet many are seeking a more "old world" experience.

Due Process and old world golf

Tony Hooks is an American superintendent inspired by first-hand experience on both sides of the pond. Hooks' parents are from Ireland, and he has maintained those roots over the years. He still has his father's original home in Lahardane, which sits on just over 20 hectares, and spends time there at least four times a year. He jokes that he would live there full-time if the weather was better! One place he would be missed if that were ever to happen is Due Process

Stable, where he serves as head superintendent.

Due Process is truly a modern classic in terms of golf course architecture. The course moves harmoniously with the natural landscape. The fall lines are integrated seamlessly into the contours of the land, which Tony and his crew have put a lot of effort and construction into creating. There's little doubt that Tony's love for old-world golf in the UK is a big inspiration. It feels like you've stepped back into the early 18 or 1900s when the golf courses were created into the existing land rather than building the land to fit the golf course. Even though most of what you see at Due Process is manufactured, it appears as if it's older. Plant Food Company,



Jim McKenzie

Director of Golf Courses
& Estates at The Celtic
Manor Resort



Tony Hooks

General Manager at Due
Process Stables & Golf

There are three different golf
courses at Celtic Manor:

- **The Montgomerie**, which has been described as an inland links – although without the firmness of a links, there are pot bunkers and many other links-like features.
- **The Roman Road Course**, designed by Trent Jones Senior - his only design in Wales and a legacy of his father's Welsh heritage. This has been described as "an American design" due to its massive high face bunkering and other features.
- **The 2010 Course** which hosted the 2010 Ryder Cup matches.

Each course is managed differently
with the customer in mind at all
times.

Due Process Hole 14

an American fertiliser manufacturer, has worked closely with Tony over the years and has seen, and contributed to the transformation. Plant Food has seen an increasing trend of courses seeking playability over aesthetics, which they, and many other clients like Tony, hope will continue.

Playability

"It's just a shame," comments Hooks. "The biggest problem [we have] is visual. And I think Augusta, in general, is our biggest culprit. I mean, it's like the most unnatural place to play. By the way, it's one of my favorite golf courses in the world. I mean, the best place. But if you're using that as your peak to compare yourself to, you're dead in the water."

Jim McKenzie MBE, director of golf courses and estates at The Celtic Manor Resort, knows the pressure of achieving and maintaining tournament conditions, having hosted the Ryder Cup in 2010.

"We are unique in so much that golf for us here at Celtic Manor is a business.

"Over 40 years ago Chris Kennedy, who was famously at The Wentworth Club, and hosted 54 televised golf tournaments there, said to me, "there will come a day son, when you become a businessman first and a greenkeeper second.

"I remember thinking what the hell is he talking about, and it took me another two decades to realise he was right.

"As an example, both The Montgomerie and Roman Road Course have green fees very much cheaper than the 2010 Course, and this is taken into consideration when deciding on course management strategy – they also attract higher handicap golfers who maybe are less skillful at getting the ball to stop on firm greens, so we tend to keep them softer than the 2010. By flattering the ego of the higher handicap golfer, they are more likely to become a returning golfer.

"On The 2010 it is different - we are trying to make it playable at all levels and then turn it into a stern test of golf for competitors in the many DP World Tour and other events such as The Ryder Cup. Sometimes the



turnaround needs to be as little as a few days - however we do have more resources available in this instance due to the higher green fee.

"As we are not a member's club, we are very much a spend as we earn business and often this is taken into consideration when scheduling both activity and spend along with our heads of dept's team which includes head greenkeepers, heads of gardens, workshop and irrigation as well as others, this is a major focus for me."

Jim had the opportunity to visit Due Process in 2022 where he saw first-hand an American course that prioritises playability. "I knew that such philosophies existed in the USA but during my travels, I had rarely come across it. The visit to Due Process, meeting Tony and Pat (Husby, golf course superintendant), was an amazing experience for me. Especially having been brought up around the many Scottish, and British golf courses who produce amazing results with low budgets and subsequently low inputs.

A unique venue in every sense, the course mirrored the uniqueness of the clubhouse, the stables and even the Due Process back story.

The many naturalised areas

make a stunning contrast against the maintained tees, fairways and greens. The attention to detail is second to none. I guess with Tony's Irish background, and his love for European, and links golf, this is not surprising, and he speaks with

“The best way to know that you're making the right decision for your golf course and its members is to lean on the expertise of those around you

absolute passion on the subject.

Tony's footprint is seen and felt all over the property as he constantly tinkers and develops what was a strong golf course, even at its original completion stage. I sense that he feels very fortunate to have Pat as his superintendant, who is very firmly on board with Tony's vision."

Knowing that Plant Food Company and TurfCare shared this philosophy of playability over aesthetics, Hooks had the foresight that connecting the two companies would benefit the UK industry. Plant Food Company's products are developed with improved turfgrass health and playability in mind and reducing chemical inputs. TurfCare's aim is to produce the best playing surfaces in a sustainable environment. This collaboration has been moving the industry forward on both sides of the pond. Tom Weinert, Vice President of Plant Food Company, shares their unique approach to the U.K. market.

Research

TurfCare and Plant Food are conducting all the testing in GB & Ireland and the USA on sustainability, lower input amounts, and control products. They are looking at how to make nutritional programmes and the soil work better for superintendents.

This collaboration has involved key people in the industry. Plant Food has participated in independent university trials, mostly conducted at Rutgers with Dr. Bruce Clarke. Beyond the universities, our research becomes more personal. Vice President of



Above: Left - The 2010 Course, Hole 14 Right - The 2010 Course, Hole 18

Research and Development Jason Dowgiewicz consults with our clients and performs field trial research, where real-world solutions are developed.

In 2018, the research moved to the UK when an independent turf pathologist in Ireland, Dr. John Dempsey, challenged claims about their Polyphosphite 30® product. This led to trials looking at Anthracnose suppression, and what Dempsey found was that it was suppressed by over 60% compared to untreated plots. This sparked a collaboration to research ways of combining different nutritional elements along with Polyphosphite 30® for disease suppression. They continue to discover that this approach toward sustainable plant health stimulates its natural defenses and produces a higher-quality turf.

Legislation and the need for better Agronomic practices

TurfCare's Scott Nightingale says this supports what has been the company's mission from the beginning. "Since TurfCare was founded in 1992, our vision has always been about delivering results. This can only be achieved with solid research

and data to back up our claims. It's of paramount importance to us all that we form strong bonds with not only our clients, but the people who supply us with the products which are used in Great Britain, Ireland and continental Europe. Plant Food Company in particular share our vision for the betterment of our industry through an improvement in the research of a product before even considering bringing it to market. This is why we have forged such a strong partnership with their people, it really is a family affair."

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the EU continue to limit the number of inputs superintendents have at their disposal. In fact, the EU aims to reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030 through the proposed Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products Regulation. So, the more change we see in this direction, the more we must embrace a nutritional approach to achieving sustainable plant health. This challenge has bolstered the mission of Plant Food Company and TurfCare to see less infection with fewer inputs and healthier turf.

In addition to their extensive research together, they advocate the

practice of soil testing with all their clients. Looking at what's going on underneath the turfgrass is a crucial step towards achieving results on the surface.

Jim commented, "We regularly test our soils here at Celtic. In particular, we look at the OM content, pH and base saturations to give us a better understanding of how things are performing for us. It's important to get comprehensive analysis completed so that you can adapt and adjust nutritional inputs accordingly.

"We can take inspiration from our design approach and apply it to our agronomics. Work with nature, not against it. A simple tweak to the soil environment can transform the availability of applied nutrients. The most valuable benefit of the TurfCare and Plant Food collaboration is the relationships that result from it—the best way to know that you're making the right decisions for your course and its members is to lean on the expertise of those around you."

"My biggest piece of advice," says Hooks, "is don't be afraid to get advice. I ask more questions of people to this day because if you're not learning something new every day, you're going backwards." **GI**

Wetting Agent Longevity

ICL Technical Manager, Henry Bechelet, looks into how trials have proven the effectiveness of bi-monthly applications of H2Pro TriSmart at double the standard rate



The value of values

The ICL technical values are simple. We aim to provide products that perform, we make claims based on research and we try to be progressive with our advice and conscious of our impact.

At the very heart of these values is the investment in robust trial work.

Internal trial programme

ICL employ trained scientists to conduct and oversee internal and external trial work. An example of internal trial work would be the wetting agent field trials conducted in North West England in 2023 by Dr Richard Collins. This work revealed that applying TriSmart bi-monthly at double the standard rate was just as effective as using monthly standard rate applications. This is an important finding because it allows us to advise course managers that they can continue to achieve excellent results with a bi-monthly approach while conserving resources.

What is TriSmart?

H2Pro TriSmart is a premium wetting agent that is designed to optimise moisture management in turfgrass rootzones. It combines three surfactant types to ensure effective water infiltration, retention and distribution through the rootzone. By improving water availability, TriSmart has also been shown to enhance plant health by improving nutrient uptake. TriSmart also optimises water conservation and helps prevent the development of localised dry spot. These powerful attributes make TriSmart an ideal choice for areas like golf course fairways and tees (as well as greens), where consistent moisture availability and retention is crucial for maintaining turf quality during dry summer months.

Trial set-up

The 2023 trial work's primary objective was to evaluate the performance of H2Pro TriSmart when applied bi-monthly at a double rate (20 L/ha in 700 L/ha water) compared to the standard rate monthly programme (10 L/ha in 700 L/ha water). The study was conducted on fescue-dominated turf typical of tees or fairways on a links golf course. A randomised-block design was implemented using 1m x 1m plots, with assessments conducted fortnightly to evaluate turf quality and rootzone moisture content.

Results

The trial's results were compelling. Both the monthly and bi-monthly applications of H2Pro TriSmart significantly improved the visual quality of the turf by maintaining higher rootzone moisture content than the untreated controls during dry summer conditions.

Interestingly, the study found no discernible difference between the monthly and bi-monthly schedules in terms of turf quality or soil moisture content. Both approaches are effective when managing turf through dry conditions, however the bi-monthly program stands out for its potential to drastically cut down on resource usage, including fuel, labour and water (both during and after application, if irrigation was required) thereby offering considerable savings for golf clubs. This would also contribute to a lower carbon footprint, aligning with broader environmental sustainability goals.

Practical implications

By adopting the H2Pro TriSmart bi-monthly application schedule, course managers can achieve the same high standards of turf quality while reducing the frequency of applications and the level of resource use. Moreover, the bi-monthly application schedule can help to minimise disruption to the golf course caused by regular maintenance activities. Fewer applications means less frequent interruptions to play.

Conclusion

This study shows the impetus that results from having progressive technical values. This trial demonstrated that bi-monthly applications of H2Pro TriSmart at double the standard rate can help effectively maintain turf quality during dry summer weather and also reduce resource consumption. This approach not only reduces our environmental impact but also enhances the operational efficiency of golf course management, providing a win-win solution for greenkeepers and golfers. Above all else, this work shows H2Pro TriSmart to be an extremely powerful performer in the important area of water management, which is something that we would all value.

For further information on this and other ICL turf trials go to <https://icl-growingsolutions.com/en-gb/turf-landscape/trials/GI>

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In preparation for the summer, it is necessary to adapt the fertilisation of sports pitches and golf courses. Advice on the correct analysis is available from Collier Turf Care to help find the right ‘fitness programme’ for your sports turf.

Late spring and summer regularly bring variable periods of heat, drought or precipitation. So many changes in conditions that affect turf at a time when pitch use is increasing, and there are less opportunities for fertilisation.



To ensure that playing surfaces are as well prepared as possible for this period, we interviewed

Emmanuel Bausson,

Product Manager Turf and Amenities for Olmix Plant care.

First of all, can you describe the main problems for turf during the summer period?

E.B. They are mainly of two kinds. On the one hand, irregular growth due to variations in temperature and humidity, and on the other, an increased risk of disease. After frequent mowing in spring there is always some uncollected residue, which gradually builds up to form a thatch. This layer of undecomposed organic matter maintains a damp, asphyxiating environment, conducive to the development of disease. The absorption of nutrients by turf can also be more complicated in summer. Heat and drought are naturally more frequent during this period, which affects sap flow in the plant and therefore the absorption and circulation of nutrients.

In the run-up to the summer, should we adjust the fertilisation of turf?

E.B. Yes, you should use fertiliser formulas that are enriched with potassium. Potassium helps to

maintain osmotic pressure in plant cells, encouraging the flow of sap and the transport of nutrients for good turf nutrition. It is also preferable to choose less reactive forms of nitrogen, such as urea or ammonium, to smooth out growth peaks. In the Marathon ALGAE range of fertilisers, we recommend using formulas with potassium sulphate such as 9-3-9, 10-0-15 or 7-6-14.

Can you remind us of the main characteristics of Marathon ALGAE fertilisers?

E.B. This is a range of fertilisers with an organo-mineral profile. In other words, it combines mineral forms of fertiliser to concentrate the formulas into a sufficient quantity of nutrients to meet the needs of turf, and an organic fraction to stimulate soil microbial activity. The organic component is carefully made up of dehydrated (not composted) matter, which makes it highly reactive on soil microflora, and dry seaweed extract SEADRY®, rich in specific polysaccharides, which acts as a probiotic for soil bacteria.

Secondly, all Marathon ALGAE formulas benefit from a patented technology for sequential diffusion of nutrients, called XSER®. This technology allows nutrients to be released up to 12 weeks after application, providing balanced nutrition, in regular doses, to encourage uniform turf growth.

You insist on stimulating soil life. Is this important when it comes to fertilising sports turf?

E.B. It's essential. The stimulation of the soil's natural microbial activity by Marathon ALGAE fertilisers helps prevent thatch build-up by regularly decomposing residual organic matter. This improves the circulation of air and water in the first layers of soil, thereby maintaining an environment conducive to healthy turf.

What formulas do you advise for autumn?

E.B. In mid to late summer, it is recommended to use formulas that are richer in nitrogen, such as 16-4-8, to support the natural growth of turf at this time. Then, during the autumn/winter, use again formulas that are richer in potassium, such as SPORT 7-0-21 or GOLF 5-0-27, to support the accumulation of nutrients for winter.

In addition to the Marathon ALGAE SPORT formulas, Olmix and Collier Turf Care are now offering the Marathon ALGAE GOLF formulas. Can you tell us about them?

E.B. Two types of granulation are now available: SPORT formulas with a particle size of 2 to 4 mm and GOLF formulas with a particle size of 0.7 to 2 mm. With a finer, semolina-type particle size, GOLF formulas break down more quickly, making them particularly suitable for fertilising golf course greens. They are also suitable for all situations where the time between fertilisation and mowing or use of the pitch is reduced. By dissolving quickly, the granules are not collected with the grass cuttings and the turf retains an impeccable appearance for users.

With the numerous references in the Marathon ALGAE range, it is therefore possible to manage the fertilisation of sports turf in an appropriate way according to the constraints imposed by each season, and thus maintain a permanently high level of quality to the greatest satisfaction of users. **GI**

For more information or advice on the Marathon ALGAE range, contact our office on 01328 700600, email sales@collier-turf-care.co.uk or your local area representative.



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Data is knowledge – and we are using it more with every passing season



Dr Simon Watson is Senior Agronomist, The R&A

Much has changed – for the better – over the course of my career in turfgrass agronomy

Having returned to turfgrass agronomy after my first stint in the mid-to-late noughties, I have been afforded the opportunity to see, firsthand, the changes that have occurred either side of over a decade in the commercial world. While many elements of the job as a turfgrass agronomist are still similar, others have changed. For example, the pressure of golfer expectation has risen, and one of the most notable advancements I have seen is the way we now encourage and collect objective data to drive agronomic decision making.

I remember during my first stint, turning up on many a golf course across Scotland with my soil auger in hand to examine the condition of the soil profile and two trusty feet to

different story. Regular testing for soil organic matter is becoming the norm. Alongside that, measuring performance parameters, such as firmness, can help justify deploying certain operations – or not as the case may be. As once pointed out to me, good agronomy is as much about taking the decision not to do something as it is to do something.

Soil moisture meters are also now being used more widely. Measuring soil moisture content regularly is helping us better understand the need for irrigation, how rootzones and surfaces respond to different irrigation cycles, when to apply water and how much to apply. Collectively, all this information is helping optimise water use, something golf clubs are going to need to demonstrate as we move into

potential) is held within some excellent apps. Such information can be built into the overall agronomic data package for the golf course.

If poor turf health due to shade is not enough, there are also digital apps that measure and predict light levels and can be used to justify the emotive subject of tree removal or limbing.

To build up robust data sets on golf courses, measuring is a commitment, and protocols need to be in place. Data collection need not be onerous but needs to be realistic – and aligned with the resources available. Consistency, and not necessarily quantity, is key. It is no good setting out to collect data on weekly intervals if only monthly, bi-monthly or wider is feasible.

Of course, for some, data collection is not for them. Quite right – some greenkeepers are so experienced on their golf courses that no amount of data would aid improvement: the art of greenkeeping lives on. For others, I would argue the collection of data is realising improvements in agronomic decision making, helping us to understand what effects different agronomic operations have on playing performance and how to produce better playing conditions. **GI**

“Data collection need not be onerous but needs to be realistic – and aligned with the resources available. Consistency and not necessarily quantity is key

assess firmness. A quick stamp of the heel followed by a verbal declaration of “the greens are firm” or “the greens are soft” was all it took. You can imagine, as a trained scientist, the difficulties I had with such subjectiveness. Not only that but it was always a challenge to get the clubs to do the work required to make any improvement. The work needed was quite often disruptive and perceived only to get in the way of the game of golf.

Today, thankfully, it is a slightly

a more sustainable world.

Another benefit of collecting data is that targets can be set and used to give purpose to recommended agronomic programmes. The use of specific targets gives the ability to measure progress, in soil organic matter decline for example.

There are also other sources of data for golf clubs. For example, for those clubs without weather stations, site-specific data (like weather data, evapotranspiration rates and growth



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

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