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Greenkeeper International

Presenting Royal Troon

We salute Billy McLachlan's home team and the greenkeepers who helped to make The 152nd Open such a success

■ Practical Greenkeeping

England Golf's Owen James
on water usage

■ From Your Association

Nominations now open for
2025 BIGGA Awards

■ Members

Chris Boakes on helping
reformed offenders find
employment in greenkeeping

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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 a greenkeepers' association, our natural inclination, quite rightly, is to focus on our members. It is our job to do all we can to improve the industry for greenkeepers, as well as providing education, initiatives and member benefits. This includes lobbying on BIGGA members' behalf across the golf industry. We aim to influence the other governing bodies in the sport to appreciate fully the crucial role of greenkeepers and to play their part in ensuring they are managed and remunerated appropriately.

One thing that undoubtedly goes a long way to ensuring greenkeepers feel supported and avoid undue mental stress is for them to have sufficient resources to do their job.

In recent years the major challenge with this has not been finance but enough people to do the necessary work to manage the golf course. The recent Workforce & Facilities study indicated that around 70 per cent of teams in the UK are short-staffed.

This is clearly a huge problem for the sport and certainly something we cannot solve on our own, but we have to do our bit. I'm delighted, therefore, that our workforce project, led by Jenny Bledge, is gathering momentum and it's

The Workforce & Facilities study indicated that around 70 per cent of teams in the UK are short-staffed

brilliant to see our First Green initiative really starting to gather pace, with Field Trips taking place across our regions. Additionally, the golf industry has committed heavily to a Careers in Golf initiative, which will certainly bear fruit in time.

However, labour is not the only resource under threat. This edition contains a great article about water resilience, provided by our colleagues at England Golf. I'm really grateful to organisations like England Golf and the GCMA who are grasping the nettle and committing serious resources to educating the golf industry on this crucial topic. Like the labour crisis, this is a challenge for the sport as a whole and one we cannot solve on our own.



Jim Croxton
BIGGA Chief Executive

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09



Contents

September 2024



20



24



34



44



46

First Cut

09 • Enter the BIGGA Photography Competition now

Share your incredible shots from the golf course to win

13 • Cowdray GC unveils £1 million redevelopment

Greenkeeping team praised for helping to deliver project

From Your Association

20 • Sign up for the BIGGA National Championship

Take part in the association's biggest annual golfing event

24 • We salute the greenkeeping teams at The Open

We look back at the week at Royal Troon with Billy McLachlan's home team and their BIGGA colleagues

30 • Nominations now open for the 2025 BIGGA Awards

Make your choices before the end-of-October deadline

Member Interest

33 • Bridport head greenkeeper retires after 50 years

Chris Tozer enjoyed a day of celebrations in his honour

34 • Refomed offenders find work in greenkeeping

Chris Boakes delivers courses at HMP East Sutton Park

Practical Greenkeeping

44 • Celebrating Golf Environment Awards winners

Canterbury won the Ecological Project of the Year

46 • England Golf's Owen James on water management

How greenkeepers can help steer the golf industry through the challenges of water availability and usage

66 • Dealing with the impact of this year's wet weather

The R&A's Paul Woodham on the future consequences

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



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Brilliant for safety and avoiding damage or excess wear and tear on the implements themselves.”

Daniel Spencer, Letchworth Golf Club



www.iseki.co.uk





First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- Royston prepares to celebrate 400-year milestone with weekend of events
- Carden Park's 84-year-old greenkeeper honoured with Unsung Hero award



Give it your best shot: The BIGGA Photography Competition 2024

Golf courses are beautiful places to spend time and BIGGA members take incredible photographs during their working lives, making the annual BIGGA Photography Competition, sponsored by Syngenta, one of the highlights of the association year.

The competition is free to enter, and the top 12 images will also be selected for the BIGGA and Syngenta desktop calendar. Prizes are awarded to the three category winners and overall winner. You must be a BIGGA member to enter, with each entrant able to submit up to five images.

Finalists will be put to a public vote on BIGGA's Facebook page and Instagram feed, with votes helping to select the top 12 images and category

winners. From those, an overall winner will receive a DJI Mini 2 SE Drone, and a framed print of their winning photograph. Category winners each receive a £150 Love2Shop Gift Card.

Please ensure your images are the highest quality possible up to a maximum of 5mb. If you need help submitting images, please contact the BIGGA team on comps@bigga.co.uk.

Closing date is 30 September. [GI](#)

Categories

Greenkeeping

We want to showcase the working lives of those who prepare the courses for the enjoyment of golfers. Greenkeepers are up early, they often work late and they always put 100

per cent effort into preparing the golf course. This category is about sharing that hard work and success.

Landscape

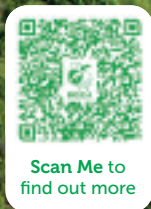
Golf courses provide some of the most spectacular landscapes, and this category celebrates the wonderful natural surroundings, where greenkeepers are privileged to spend their working lives.

Wildlife

Peaceful, remote and surrounded by nature, greenkeepers often enjoy some spectacular close encounters with the natural world. This category celebrates the beautiful wildlife that can be found on our golf courses.

The BIGGA Calendar

September: Craig Sinclair, Camberley Heath Golf Club
Download the desktop calendar by scanning the QR code



Royston prepares to celebrate incredible 400-year milestone

Royston Golf Club is gearing up for a weekend of celebrations to mark 400 years since the game was first played on the site.

The history books show that on October 4 1624, George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, played there, though the club itself was not founded until 1892.

To honour the historic landmark, the Hertfordshire club will host a match versus the Hickory Golf Society, as well as providing a hog roast for members and invited guests. Royston Museum is also staging an exhibition of golf club memorabilia.

The course at Royston is laid out on undulating chalk heathland, with no water hazards and few trees, but punishing rough that cannot be cut in the summer.

That restriction is one of several imposed by the site's SSSI status and Course Manager Ian Coote working closely with Natural England to deliver on an agreed management plan.

"Working at Royston Golf Club is amazing; every day provides a different challenge, whether it be dealing with the

course and coping with the strict regulations we must work under or interacting with the members of the public who have the right to walk on Therfield Heath, including on the golf course," he explained.

"The views of the surrounding countryside are spectacular – what better office could anyone want? The golf course is unique, as while some courses may feature conservation areas, we are a conservation area with a golf course built in"

"Working within the SSSI means we must continuously change how the golf course looks and plays. Fauna and flora, some very rare to the area and nationally, are found all over the course so we must reshape and redesign holes to protect the plants once they are found.

"We have many restrictions on what we can do and use on the course so are always coming up with different ways to get around this to maintain the golf course and protect the SSSI.

"It is a challenge but a challenge that myself and all the staff enjoy taking on." **GI**

A greenkeeper's best friend – Mollie

Owner: Paul Staples
Club: Broadstone Golf Club



Breed: Coonhound

Age: Five

Favourite spot on the course:

Anywhere she can lay in the sun
Naughtiest moment: She's never naughty...

My dog is happiest: When dad says, 'Are you coming to work this morning?'

What's on this month



Dates for your diary

3 September

BIGGA Scottish Golf Championship – Ladybank Golf Club

4 September

BIGGA South Coast Summer Golf Day – North Hants Golf Club

5 September

BIGGA East Scotland, Willie Woods Golf Competition – Gifford Golf Club

10 September

BIGGA Scotland/SGCMA Managers Education and Golf Day – Dunblane New Golf Club
Basis Certificate in Crop Protection Amenity Horticulture – Leicester City Training Centre

12 September

BIGGA Scotland/SGCMA Managers Education and Golf Day – Deeside Golf Club
BIGGA D&C Autumn Golf Day – Stover Golf Club
Mental Health First Aid Two-Day Course – Bedfordshire Golf Club

13 September

BIGGA Sheffield Section Autumn Golf Day – Thonock Park Golf Club

17 September

Mental Health First Aid Two-Day Course – Dunblane New Golf Club

25 September

First Green STEM Field Trip – Woburn Golf Club

26 September

Midlands Harborne Golf and Networking Event – Harborne Golf Club

30 September

Mental Health First Aid Two-Day Course – Rotherham Golf Club



Harborne Golf Club



BIGGA

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Amenity Sprayer Operator of the Year 2024 open for entries

The search is on to recognise the UK's most skilled sprayer operators in the sports turf, amenity and landscape management industries

The Amenity Sprayer Operator of the Year (ASOOTY) Awards highlight best practice and experience in the challenging role of ensuring accurate application on all amenity surfaces.

The Amenity Forum competition, supported by ICL and Syngenta, seeks to share guidance and advice that will raise the standards of spray application across the amenity industry.

The finalists will be announced at the Amenity Forum Conference on 10 October, with the overall winner presented at the prestigious BIGGA Celebration at BTME in January 2025.

Along with assessing operators' skills of spray application and use of products, the ASOOTY judging panel also now incorporate the importance of an integrated pest management approach to any issues involving turf and landscape maintenance.

Announcing the opening of the ASOOTY 2024 Awards, Amenity Forum Chairman Ian Graham said: "This competition seeks to highlight the remarkable talent that exists within our sector, and I encourage as many spray operators as possible to engage with the process.

"Our industry has many highly skilled spray operators

working within it, using a diverse range of products accurately applied through a huge range of complex application equipment.

“This competition seeks to highlight the remarkable talent that exists within our sector”

"The environments in which these applications take place can also be varied and are often challenging."

Dan Waring, professional spray technician at JCB Golf and Country Club in Uttoxeter, took home the prize last time and encouraged his fellow sprayer operators to seize all opportunities to hone their skills.

"I would urge all sprayer operators to undertake as much training as possible to gain more knowledge on the products being used and the application technology," he said.

"That will enable people to be more confident in what they are doing and give the spray tech's role the credit it deserves." **GI**





Cowdray greenkeeping team earn plaudits after improvement project

The greenkeeping team at Cowdray Golf Club won lofty praise after helping to deliver a £1 million course improvement project and redesign.

The West Sussex venue reopened in April and unveiled its new par-3 course in June, with CEO Jonathan Russell lauding the efforts of Course Manager Jonathan Smith and team.

Working with renowned golf course architect Will Swan, from Swan Golf Designs, and contractors Profusion, the ambitious project ran to schedule and has transformed the facility.

The project on the main course included a full rebuild and design of all bunkers and pathway networks, along with sympathetic landscaping around some green complexes.

"There has been a lot of hard work gone into the process," said Tim Allen, Cowdray's director of golf. "The whole team have been fantastic, and we all hope that members and all golfers really enjoy the improvements for many, many years to come."

The re-imagined short course is a creation of five new USGA specification greens and greenside bunkers, each reflecting a similar green complex on the main course at Cowdray. In addition, a new short-game area has been delivered complete with new practice green and bunker.

Unsung Hero award for Carden Park's Jeffrey Jones



Carden Park greenkeeper Jeffrey Jones was honoured with the Unsung Hero prize at the 2024 Chester Hospitality People Awards after nearly three decades of service.

The 84-year-old has been in post since 1996, becoming a popular character among staff and guests, with his colleagues having nominated him for the award, which he received at Chester Racecourse.

Jeffrey has been a key member of the team amid a period of significant change, having arrived just before the opening of the Nicklaus Course.

He has scarcely missed a day's work during his 28-year tenure, helping to keep both courses in pristine condition for generations

of guests.

Despite being well past retirement age, Jeffrey shows no signs of slowing down, and his exceptional knowledge of all 1,000 acres of Carden Park's country estate has helped the venue earn a nomination for England's Best Golf Hotel at the 2024 World Golf Awards, which takes place in November.

Peter Pattenden, estates manager at Carden Park, said: "Jeff has to commute 45 minutes to get here every day, but you could set your watch by him arriving in the greenkeeping warehouse and popping the kettle on for his first morning brew by 5.10am prompt.

"Jeff's experience, broad skillset and work ethic cannot be rivalled. His manager has tried to implement discreet changes to help ease his workload, but Jeff sees right through this every time! We certainly feel very lucky to still have him as part of the team and it's fantastic to see him recognised with this well-deserved award."



Myerscough College raises the bar with first Level 5 cohort

The accomplishment marks a new era in vocational education at the institution, which delivers high-quality, industry-relevant training

Myerscough College has achieved a significant milestone with the first cohort of Higher Apprenticeships at Level 5 for Golf Course Managers.

The programme includes comprehensive training in areas such as turf management, environmental sustainability, leadership and financial management and reflects the college's commitment to training that meets the evolving needs of the golf and sports turf management sectors.

Scott Gardner, previously course manager at Heswall Golf Club, was among the first cohort to graduate this year, along with Chris Marker, Steven Croucher, Shaun Kernaghan and Neil Morgan.

Paul McGrail, Executive Director for Apprenticeships at Myerscough College, caught up with Scott to recap on his experience of the apprenticeship.

Why did you apply to study the L5 Golf Course Manager qualification?

I was originally looking at doing an agronomy degree course to help broaden my knowledge and push my boundaries somewhat. Then, I heard about the Level 5 GCM qualification that was about to start its first intake at Myerscough College. I decided to give this course a try as I felt it was a natural progression for the position I was in at the time, as course manager.

What are your highlights from the programme, key points of learning?

For me, I found it an honest way of highlighting some



Scott Gardner and Barry Graham

weaknesses I had in the methods I was trying to adapt with my staff and managing projects or resources. It helps to evaluate your current management style and become a more competent manager. It gets you thinking differently about how you approach projects, events and even club meetings.

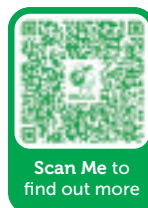
Having graduated, how will the Level 5 now benefit you?

I believe the Level 5 will be a new standard eventually for course managers throughout the UK, I think it can help with future employment by showing those managers that are serious about career progression. The main benefits for me personally were gaining extensive knowledge in management techniques as well as acknowledging the confidence in current management methods I already had in place.

If you could offer any advice from someone considering studying the Level 5, what would it be?

Go for it! The course is very thorough, and I had great support from my personal tutor Barry Graham. You will learn new skills and knowledge that will enhance your career prospects as well as building a network of peers.

Scott will move to Australia in October to start a new job as a project manager for a sports ground contracting firm. We wish him all the best in his future career.





From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- The Royal Troon highlights from Open Volunteer Support Team members
- Make your nominations now for the 2025 BIGGA Awards



Thank A Greenkeeper Day 2024 set for success as stars show appreciation

We at BIGGA are hoping Thank A Greenkeeper Day 2024 will be the biggest and best yet, with those who love golf showing their appreciation to the hardworking professionals who make the sport possible.

Taking place on September 10 and using the hashtags #ThankAGreenkeeper (in the UK) and #ThankASuper (elsewhere), this social media movement has a real impact on the working lives of golf course professionals, with gestures of support boosting morale, increasing job

satisfaction and fostering a culture of mutual respect.

Messages of support have already been flooding in from the likes of former footballers Jimmy Bullard, Peter Crouch and Joe Cole, reality TV star Mark Wright and social media influencers Mia Baker and Gaz Beadle.

Crouch said: "Shout out to all the greenkeepers. Without you, we wouldn't be here [playing golf]."

Sky Sports presenter Kirsty Gallacher added: "I would like to say a huge thank you so much on Thank A

Greenkeeper Day for all your hard work, for all your diligence – you're amazing."

During the 2023 event, social media messages reached more than 14.7 million followers around the world, while broadcast media reached an additional 18 million people.

The initiative is supported by The R&A Foundation and will see BIGGA and colleagues at superintendents' and course managers' associations working together to make the occasion a success. **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



First Green event

'one of the highlights of my greenkeeping career'

Richard Ponsford described hosting a First Green event at Clevedon Golf Club as "one of the highlights of my greenkeeping career".

The Somerset venue became the latest in a growing list to offer up their facilities as a classroom for STEM learning, welcoming nearly 50 schoolchildren for a day of hands-on education.

Richard was inspired to get involved with the initiative after seeing it first-hand during a trip to the United States as part of the BIGGA Delegation to visit the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show, courtesy of Bernhard and Company.

Despite some last-gasp nerves threatening to overwhelm him, he ultimately found the experience to be one of the most fulfilling he has had in his professional life.

"It was one of the highlights of my greenkeeping career," he said. "You have a handful a highlights you choose from a career, and that's right up there.

"To be able to give something back and to see the smiles, the excitement and the enjoyment on those kids' faces was really special.

"I went from feeling quite sick at the thought of a bus load of schoolchildren arriving to feeling a nice warm glow afterwards, and I even feel emotional now talking about it."

Some of the members who were on hand to help were "blown away" by the experience, while a couple of Richard's team got involved and found it hugely rewarding.

Each of the workstations provided an insight into the role of a greenkeeper and underlined how the job requires all the pillars of STEM education.

"The kids loved being able to try things out for themselves, whether it was measuring the area of a green or using the stimp meter – they were just so excited to get involved," said Richard.

"I'd encourage anyone who is thinking about hosting a First Green event to do it. Reach out and talk to BIGGA, talk to others who have hosted an event, and I'm sure you'll be glad you did it." **GI**

About First Green

First Green is an innovative environmental science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education outreach programme using golf courses as hands-on learning labs. The initiative aims to introduce young people to the career opportunities available in golf and showcase the skills required for these roles. In doing so, First Green hopes to inspire the next generation of greenkeepers.

Get involved by scanning the QR code.



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BIGGA
Partner

Workforce survey results show positive signs



Steve Lloyd
Chair

I was heartened to see that salaries are on the rise and greenkeeping is providing suitable rewards for its workforce.

Many of you will have now seen the findings of the workforce survey and no doubt drawn your own conclusions from it. To my mind, there were lots of positives in there.

Comparison may be the thief of joy, as they say, but seeing how pay in our industry stacks up against others provides useful context.

Firstly, the general trends are moving in the right direction, with salaries on the rise at all levels. The average salary for a senior greenkeeper is higher than that of a police officer, while for course managers it is higher than for head teachers and not far short of a lawyer's pay.

These numbers underline the fact that, while pay can be an issue in some cases, greenkeeping as a whole does provide remuneration that is comparable to other well-regarded and sought-after professions.

We will be covering the findings of the survey in more detail in next month's issue of the magazine, but one thing I would like to add is this: If you have an opinion on your pay and working conditions – as we all surely do – please take the time to engage with surveys like these when you have the chance. The more people who contribute, the



more accurate and in-depth the results will be. Your voice matters.

In keeping with that theme, I hope you are all looking forward to the Regional Conferences that we have coming up in November. This year's line-up features a host of top-tier speakers at some excellent venues.

These events provide a great opportunity to network with people in your area and beyond, so there

really is value in attending if you can.

This month brings one of the highlights of the year, and another that will be getting the attention it is due in the October issue of the magazine – the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards.

It is always brilliant to see the level of talent coming up through the ranks and to have the comfort of knowing the future of this industry is in such safe

hands.

Education is such a vital component of our profession and those awards really help to shine a light on that. It's also pleasing to know that those who may just be starting out on their journey in this

industry are doing so at a time when things are looking up in so many ways. **GI**



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Sign up for next month's BIGGA National Championship

Entries for the BIGGA National Championship 2024 are filling up fast, and members are being urged to book their spot for the association's biggest annual golfing event.

This year's competition will take place at two Edinburgh clubs, the Royal Burgess Golfing Society and Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society, on Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 October.

A fresh format will see the field split, with half playing on each course each day – similar to the Alfred Dunhill Links, which concludes on Sunday 6 October at St Andrews.

"The annual BIGGA National Championship gives BIGGA members the opportunity to pit themselves against their peers over two days, and we are delighted to be playing at Royal Burgess and Bruntsfield Links in October," said BIGGA's Roger Butler.

"The event will bring together golfers from across the UK, with many of the competitors being put forward to play from winning local section events.

"The great thing about the event is that any BIGGA member can enter and, for only £110, they get two rounds of golf at these superb venues, a gala dinner after the first round and other refreshments throughout the event.

"Our thanks go to Golf Finance & Fairways GM, sponsors of the BIGGA National Championship 2024."

Prizes are available for best overall gross score, daily and overall Stableford, a combined team score, best affiliate score and daily longest drive and nearest the pin prizes.

The dinner will be held at Bruntsfield Links after play on day one.

There are prizes up to the value of £2,000, including the BIGGA National Challenge Trophy (Scratch Medal over 36 holes) and the Challenge Cup (Stableford over 36 holes), along with daily winners from three different handicap categories and a team event with the top four scores from each Region being counted. [GI](#)





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Regional Conferences Book your place

The BIGGA Regional Conferences are on the horizon, and you can now book your spot at one of five events



Throughout November, BIGGA will be presenting a series of educational events around the UK, with members and guests invited to participate in a full day of learning and networking opportunities.

Members can attend any venue, regardless of regional boundaries, so you are free to choose whichever event you wish.

Each conference is hosted at a top-class facility and provides an outstanding array of speakers, who will vary depending on the venue.

This year's stellar line-up includes several members of The R&A's agronomy team, Mark Hunt on the impact of weather systems on golf course management and Bruntsfield Links Course Manager Richard Jenkinson on

the differences between links and parkland courses.

Check the What's On listings on the BIGGA website for the full line-up for your chosen event.

The conference series begins in Scotland on November 12 and concludes with the final event in the South East at the American Express Stadium in Brighton on November 20.

Vicars Cross Course Manager Richie Stephens has found great benefit in attending the events.

"The regional conferences are great," he said.

"They give you a fantastic opportunity to meet up with local turf professionals and friends, discuss trends and ideas, earn CPD points and interact with some great speakers. There is something for all levels of our industry." **GI**

Dates for your diary

12 November

BIGGA Conference - Scotland & Northern Ireland
Doubletree by Hilton, Dunblane

13 November

BIGGA Conference - Northern
Toughsheet Community Stadium, Bolton

14 November

BIGGA Conference - Central England
King Power Stadium, Leicester

19 November

BIGGA Conference - South West & South Wales
Somerset County Cricket Ground, Taunton

20 November

BIGGA Conference - South East
American Express Stadium, Brighton

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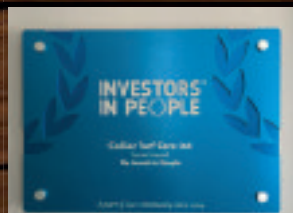
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Billy's pride as Royal Troon shines

In what was Course Manager Billy McLachlan's sixth Open in post, the Ayrshire links has surely never been presented in better condition



Picture: Toro/Reesink

Royal Troon Course Manager Billy McLachlan lauded the efforts of his greenkeeping team and the army of volunteers who ensured the Ayrshire venue provided a stunning stage for The 152nd Open.

The July major was McLachlan's sixth, and the fourth in his current role, and though he admits his experience does little to negate the workload, the assistance provided by the countless helpers certainly eases the burden.

Expressing his delight at the way the course performed throughout a week in which conditions varied without ever getting too nasty, McLachlan highlighted the team effort in bringing it all together.

"I'm really pleased with how it went," he said.

"All the help that we got here was fantastic. The local guys were

brilliant and the volunteer support team too. People came from all over and, honestly, I couldn't fault them.

"I couldn't be prouder of my own team because we've been working at it for years – you never really stop – and they were just first class."

He offered special thanks to former Kilmarnock Barassie Course Manager Brian Finlayson, now retired but clearly unable to resist getting involved.

"Brian made it so much easier because he would go off and take care of the practice greens and things, and there'd be no worrying about it," he said.

"He'd go out in the morning, cut the greens, rake the bunkers, and I didn't have to think about it. I'm so grateful to Brian for that."

The course won glowing praise, not least of all from the man who

took home the Claret Jug, with Xander Schauffele saying: "I'd like to thank Billy McLachlan, his greenskeeping crew, everyone. I'm from San Diego, so I don't know how you guys manage this weather and make the course look as good as it does."

While his duties kept him from seeing even a single shot, McLachlan – who remains tight-lipped on whether this was his last Open – did encourage others to soak up the occasion.

"It's something that only happens every so many years, so I do tell people to enjoy it," he said.

"We do all this work building up to it and then it's here for a week and it goes by in a flash, so you have to make the most of it."

McLachlan suggested retirement could still be a way off as he

Course set-up

Tees cut at 8mm
Approaches/surrounds cut at 8mm
Fairways cut at 10mm
First cut rough at 37mm just prior
to championship
Uncut rough beyond



Green set up

Round 1: Double cut at 3.1mm. Average speed 10ft 7in. Firmness 122 gravities

Round 2: Double cut at 3.1mm. Average speed 10ft 7in. Firmness 121 gravities

Round 3: Double cut at 3.0mm. Average speed 10ft 8in. Firmness 123 gravities

Round 4: Double cut at 3.0mm. Average speed 10ft 8in. Firmness 108 gravities

reflected on a stellar career in an industry that often strikes a delicate balance between challenge and reward.

"I'm dead lucky to have the people I work alongside, dead lucky with the people I've had to work with in the club – some fantastic conveners and captains – and I've had so much support,"

said the 60-year-old.

"I've been very fortunate all the way through and so privileged to have done all this, but it's getting that balance right as it can be quite stressful."

When retirement does come, it will be all about timing for McLachlan, who is keen to manage the succession plan

carefully.

"I don't like the idea of retiring and leaving someone with a big competition coming up the next year, because I'd like them to know the place a wee bit," he said.

"I've spoken to a lot of people who've said, 'you shouldn't retire – I'm regretting retiring'. Working keeps your mind occupied, and my wife tells me, 'you retire and you'll end up just walking the dog and your brain will turn to mush' – it's already turned to mush!"

"So, I listen to that but I'm also balancing that with the fact I'm getting older, and I don't want it to be that I can't enjoy life after retirement.

"But at the moment I've not seriously thought about it, let's put it that way." **GI**



Picture: Locit/Nationwide Lockers

"It's just awe-inspiring to see what the guys at Troon produced"



Credit:
The R&A

Members of our Open Volunteer Support Team enjoyed a week to remember at Royal Troon, playing a part in The 152nd Open

The 51 BIGGA volunteers who travelled to Ayrshire soaked up a priceless experience on the famous links, making memories to last a lifetime.

With 96 bunkers on the course, including five protecting the Postage Stamp, the team were kept occupied throughout the championship.

Here are the reflections of some of those who were on match-raking duties for The 152nd Open. [GI](#)



Bunkers raked during The Open

Thursday: 364

Friday: 354

Saturday: 176

Sunday: 223

Total: 1,117

David Beatson, Fairmont St Andrews



"That was unbelievable! I've just walked with Xander Schauffele and Justin Rose, basically the

best ticket in the place. I didn't have to rake a single bunker and watched some amazing golf. That walk up 18 was just mind-blowing."

Daniel Taylor, North Berwick West Links



"Anybody who is a member of BIGGA needs to get their name in for this kind of event; you're inside the ropes, seeing all

these guys who are absolutely fantastic gentlemen, the peak of the golfing world, and BIGGA are working alongside them – what more do you want?"

Nicholas Ball, Little Aston



"It's one of the best tournament experiences I've had. I've done quite a lot of

volunteering before but being inside the ropes and experiencing it from a different point of view – incredible."



Jacob's journey from greenkeeping to The Open

Jacob Skov Olesen is a greenkeeper-turned-golfer who won the Amateur Championship to qualify for The Open.

Before competing at Royal Troon, where he made the cut and finished in a respectable tie for 60th, we spoke to the 25-year-old Dane about his past career.

"I honestly sometimes really miss it. I sometimes really miss just sitting on that fairway mower, listening to the radio and the early mornings.

"I don't miss when it's bad weather and it's pouring rain sideways, but when it's nice with the sun coming up and you can smell the fresh grass in the summer, I do miss that.

"I don't think people realise sometimes how hard it can be to get a course to be in championship condition, or in great amateur field condition. You can't just do that on the daily with 6, 7, 8 guys. It's easier to knock down the conditions when they're bad than to hype them up when they're good.

"When they're really good you're like, 'oh that's how they're supposed to be', but I also feel that comes if people haven't been in it and seen how it is."



Stewart Marshall, Dudley



"I've seen what can be achieved with the right people, some investment – it's just awe-inspiring to

see what the guys at Troon have produced for this week. There's countless volunteers and it's just incredible."

Patrick Brown, Wentworth



"It's quite exciting being inside the ropes and being an actual part of the golf. It was

quite an adrenaline pump raking a bunker for the first time. It was a unique experience and really worth applying for and giving it a go."

Steven Neuliep, Etowah Valley



"The networking is one of the main reasons I pursued this; being in another environment, seeing links golf, which I

love. The camaraderie, the networking and the ability to compare how we do things in America compared to the UK – that's where I gain the most."

Welcome to our new members

International

Pawel Zacha (I)
Wroclaw, Poland

Scotland

Shaun Allan (AGK)
Luc Chisholm (AGK)
Steven Miller (GK)
Kilmarnock (Barassie)

Robbie Mackay (AGK)
Glencruitten

Matthew Mairs (AGK)
Baberton

John Paton (GK)
Trump Turnberry

Matthew Slater (GK)
Gailes Links

Northern

Jacob Aslett (AGK)
Worsley

Jason Baker (AGK)
Ryan Williams (GK)
Royal St David's

Daniel Bell (GK)
Peel

Michael Byerley (HGK)
Stocksfield

Eric Chen (P)
Syngenta

Sam Creaghan (AGK)
Waterfront

Mark Culshaw (GK)
Leyland

Thomas Elliott (AGK)
Hindley Hall

Mark Lake (GK)
Blackwell Grange

Dylan Marsh-Hughes (AGK)
Richard Williamson (GK)
Conwy

Paul Martin (AGK)
Hale

Nicolas Mead (HGK)
Hartford

Key

A	Affiliate Member
AGK	Assistant Greenkeeper
APP	Apprentice
ATP	Approved Training Provider
CA	College Assessor
CM	Course Manager
DCM	Deputy Course Manager
DHGK	Deputy Head Greenkeeper

FA	First Assistant
GK	Greenkeeper
G	Groundsperson
HGK	Head Greenkeeper
HG	Head Groundsperson
I	International Member
L	Life Member
M	Mechanic

P	Partner
R	Retired Member
RP	Regional Patron
S	Supporter
ST	Student Member
SUP	Superintendent

Scott Morrison (APP)
George Washington Golf Course

Jack Sleight (HGK)
Ricky Webster (GK)
South Cliff

Central England

Howard Bass (G)
Nathan Holmes (AGK)
Woburn G&CC

George Bevan (AGK)
Woodhall Spa

Ian Bosley (GK)
Samuel Earl (AGK)
JCB G&CC

Harrison Cooke (AGK)
Wayne Gentry (GK)
Charles Groves (AGK)
East Herts

Glen Craddock (GK)
Northamptonshire County

Oliver Henderson (GK)
College Pines

Craig Inness (AGK)
Alex McMurdo (GK)
Frilford Heath

Reece Jones (AGK)
Ben Shaw (GK)
Shrewsbury

South East

Samuel Attard (AGK)
Woking

Phillip Bannister (DCM)
Braintree

John Brinson (AGK)
Warley Park

Joshua Chunn (AGK)
West Herts

Jamie Cushing (GK)
The Warren G&CC

Gary Davis (A)
Harewood Downs

Joe Evans (AGK)
Sasha Shelley (AGK)
Royal Mid-Surrey

Charlie Fitter (GK)
Clayton Rowe (AGK)
Heron CC

Joe Healy (GK)
The Goodwood Club

Sarah Hughes (P)
Syngenta

Tommy Jones (AGK)
Konrad Kasproicz (GK)
Alastair Moore (GK)
Matthew Speller (GK)
Beaverbrook

South West & South Wales

Daniel Barrett (AGK)
Frilford Heath

David Bougen (DHGK)
Lanhydrock

Gavin Butcher (AGK)
Forest Hills

Joseph Golding (GK)
Cohan Saunders (GK)
Falmouth

Jack Helme (AGK)
Grove Golf & Bowl

Mike Jupp (A)
The Woodhorn Group

Tom Marsh (DCM)
Osborne

Jacob Palmer (AGK)
Worlebury

Mark Rollason (AGK)
Tehidy Park

Alun Stanley-Lock (GK)
Yeovil

Casey Walters (AGK)
Cardigan

Stephen Walton (G)
Meyrick Park



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

Steven Tierney MG, Golfpark Zurichsee AG

Andrew Sellars, The Grove

Jon Methven, St Andrews Links Trust

Richard Shields, Sherdley Park

Daniel Waring, JCB G&CC

Richard Johnstone MG, Royal Aberdeen

Lee Greveson, The Manor

Tom Smart, Bury St Edmunds

Samuel Hughes, Ganton



BIGGA Awards: Get your nominations in now

The clock is ticking to submit your nominations for the 2025 BIGGA Awards, with entries closing at the end of October.

The awards are split into three categories, and the winners will be announced at the BIGGA Celebration, held on the opening day of the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition in January 2025.

BIGGA members may nominate themselves for an award, and external nominees may also put forward a BIGGA member. There is no restriction as to who an external nominee may be.

For group awards, greenkeeping teams may be nominated if at least one permanent member of the team is a full BIGGA member.

Dudley took home the Greenkeeping Project of the Year trophy last time out, having been nominated by Midlands Golfer Magazine after the three-man team helped save the club from the brink. Course Manager Stewart Marshall encouraged his fellow BIGGA members to get involved in

the awards, with the win having had a transformative impact on the club and himself.

"I understand why people wouldn't want to nominate themselves, and it's not something I would have thought to do, but there might be people out there who know of clubs who deserve that recognition who might want to nominate them, which is what happened in our case," he said.

"It can be tougher at these smaller clubs – there are no on-site mechanics or spare machines, we have to bush fix anything that breaks, and the budget isn't always there to buy new things or replace old stuff like-for-like.

"Those are the sort of challenges you face, and I do hope seeing us win gave other clubs in a similar position the sense that they could do it too. People had probably never heard of Dudley before, but it feels like we're on the map now." **GI**



Scan here for more details and to nominate



The BIGGA Awards categories

- Greenkeeping Project of the Year
- Championship Greenkeeping Performance of the Year with Bernhard and Company
- Outstanding Contribution of the Year



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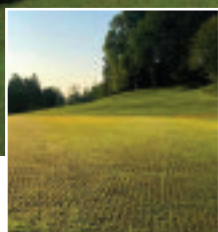
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Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- The initiative offering greenkeeping opportunities to reformed offenders
- See the latest industry job vacancies both in the UK and further afield



Bridport head greenkeeper Chris Tozer calls time after 50 years at the club



Bridport & West Dorset's head greenkeeper Chris Tozer has retired after half a century of dedicated service.

Chris called time on his long stay with the county's oldest golf club in July, having started his career there at the age of 16 after leaving Colfox School.

In an emotional farewell, Chris reflected on his tenure with pride as he predicted a bright future for the club, with Ed Cary, formerly of Remedy Oak, taking on the role.

"It's been a massive part of my life, the club," he said. "I want to thank all the board members, management and staff for their support over the

years. "It's now time to spend more time with my family, especially my granddaughter.

"The club is in good hands and is moving from strength to strength. The change over the past five or six years has been incredible. It's so forward-thinking and dynamic, it's really going places."

Club Chairman Geoff Joy praised Chris's remarkable achievement and underlined his huge popularity, with the club having held a day of celebrations, including a competition that attracted 160 golfers.

"Chris has dedicated 50 years of service to the club, and it's a remarkable achievement," he said. "You only have to see the numbers that played in his golf day and

attended the evening celebrations to see how highly Chris was thought of at the club. We all wish him well in his retirement."

The celebrations in Chris's honour began with the huge field of competitors playing in a four-ball better-ball Stableford competition, while the evening festivities saw over 100 people in attendance, enjoying live music and a hog roast.

Emotional speeches highlighted the significance of Chris's contributions, and the club awarded him an honorary membership, a personalised framed 18th flag and vouchers for P&O Cruises, following a collection from club members. Chris and his wife Jude plan to enjoy a well-deserved cruise. **GI**



Could greenkeeping be the key to **unlocking** **prisoners' potential?**

Recruitment and staff retention is a common issue for golf clubs - could offering opportunities to reformed offenders help to address this problem? One former Hadlow College instructor thinks so



Chris Boakes provides a demonstration to a prisoner at HMP East Sutton Park

Chris Boakes is the Land-Based Activities (LBA) Manager at HMP East Sutton Park, a female prison in Kent with 100 prisoners.

The facility runs a programme to help prisoners gain qualifications and find employment opportunities, with greenkeeping among the possible career avenues for the women.

Boakes hopes to see more people from East Sutton Park get the chance to try their hand at a job he loves, and he is calling on the golf industry to lend a hand.

Can you describe your current role?

I am the LBA Manager at HMP East Sutton Park, which is a female open prison with an 80-acre estate in the heart of Kent. We are not specific to sports turf, but that's where I originally started as an apprentice almost 40 years ago.

We supervise the prisoners in a mixture of activities in horticulture, agriculture and butchery, like any outside college specialising within the industry. If they wish, the prisoners can participate in horticultural or agricultural City & Guilds NVQ Levels 1 to 3 and NPTC machinery skills tests.

We currently deliver NPTC brush-cutter and trimmers, tractor, blowers, hedge cutters, pedestrian, ride-on and tractor-mounted mower. We utilise the skills gained to help in resettlement work if this is a career they wish to pursue

while still in our care and upon release. With some supportive business partners both past and present, we have helped prisoners find employment in all areas of horticulture, and this has included greenkeeping last year.

“ We have helped prisoners find employment in all areas of horticulture”

Which golf clubs do you work with and are there others who may get involved in the future?

We have The Ridge Golf Club right next door to us, and we put two ladies there for paid employment last year. We plan to get back in there but it's about having the right people at the right time, as obviously they must make sure they're covered for casual labour.

I played Chart Hills recently and spoke to the general manager there, Anthony Tarchetti, about our wish to explore the possibility of sending people there. I plan to invite him to come and have a look around HMP East Sutton Park.

We've had a few working at Leeds Castle, just down the road from us, in the past but that's been more within the



estate and not specifically on the golf course.

We have got plenty of golf courses around us here who we'd like to try and get involved with a bit more.

How common is this kind of initiative?

It's very rare. The prison service is facing some difficulties, and it's changed a lot from when I first started 32 years ago. Back then, land-based services were massive in terms of training prisoners, rehabilitating them and getting them back into work. Likewise, prior to 2004, the prison service was almost self-sustainable in its production for kitchens, but now much has been devolved, with only five prison farms left in the country.


Recruitment of vocational instructors nationally is a huge problem for us, and this is holding back training to help prisoners into the land-based sector where jobs are available.

Do you find there is any reluctance from employers to take prisoners on?

It can be an awkward one. We are a resettlement prison, and we work with several large employers – Sainsbury's, Greggs, Timpson – that support other avenues of work.

You do meet with some resistance at times, but we explain to employers that you know everything about these people as they must disclose their history. In most cases you find





“I’d encourage golf clubs to speak to the prisons”

Boakes on his career in horticulture

I started out as a groundsman with a local park department and joined the prison service 32 years ago as an instructor on the grounds maintenance and sports turf facilities.

I commenced as an NVQ Assessor and IQA in 1994 and returned to college myself twice to study ecology and conservation, followed by agriculture. That’s how I ended up in education covering multiple disciplines.

During my time working for the prison service, I have been engaged in secondary employment for other colleges and training centres both in NVQ and NPTC assessment. It was while working for Hadlow College many years ago I first became a member of BIGGA due to a high percentage of the work-based learning students being golf or sports ground employed.

there is some abuse or trauma that has led to them being in this position, and they’re looking to do something positive to turn their life around.

We get loads of women who write to us and let us know they’re doing well, and they thank us for helping to change their lives, which is the really rewarding bit.

What do you tell the women about what greenkeeping can offer as a career?

We do find that many of them don’t really know what it involves, and the two who went over to The Ridge last year were really surprised by it – it’s definitely more than just cutting grass!

I always tell them that greenkeeping - and any work in horticulture - is a labour of love. You’re probably not going to get rich doing it – although some don’t do too badly – but it’s a great career. You get to work outside, you meet people so there’s social interaction and the big one, which is close to my heart, is that you’re working with nature.

It has its challenges but they’re all part of it – the weather can vary, you’ve got pests and diseases to deal with - it’s all what makes the job varied and enjoyable.

What is your message to those reading this who are in a position to engage with an initiative like the one at East Sutton Park?

I’d encourage golf clubs to speak to the prisons as every prison now has an employment liaison person. I’ve done the bulk of it down the years, but we’ve got someone in that role now at East Sutton Park who is speaking to employers.

I’m a little bit sad that, having worked at Hadlow College for many years and having been involved with work-based learning, I’ve lost contact with many of the greenkeeping instructors and head greenkeepers. I used to do site visits and meet a lot of people in the industry around Kent and the South East, so I would like to touch base a little bit more with those people again, and I can have these conversations with them in person. **GI**



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Please send your CV to Director of Golf Paul Pahi at paul.pahi@tbilisihihills.com by 15th September 2024.

Head Greenkeeper

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To apply, please send a covering letter and a copy of your CV to office@the-wiltshire.co.uk by 5th September 2024.

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Assistant Greenkeeper

Halifax West End Golf Club, West Yorkshire



Halifax West End Golf Club is a mature heathland golf course sitting 1000 feet above sea level. With the club about to embark on a major redesign, a fantastic opportunity has arisen for an enthusiastic, motivated assistant greenkeeper to join our team. Applicants should be qualified, working towards level 2 or further qualifications such as level 3 and above. Desired qualifications include PA1, PA2A or PA6W. Chainsaw certification would be an advantage but not essential. Salary negotiable depending on qualifications.

Applications in writing with full CV to manager@halifaxwestend.golf or ian.donaldson@halifaxwestend.golf

Head Greenkeeper

Wenvoe Castle Golf Club, Cardiff



Wenvoe Castle are recruiting for the position of Head Greenkeeper to manage day-to-day operations of the course. Candidates should possess all relevant green keeping qualifications, NVQ level 3 or equivalent, spraying certificates PA1, PA2 and PA6, and have a history of success, either as head greenkeeper or deputy head greenkeeper. You will be expected to budget and control expenditure, contribute positively to course improvements and lead any course developments.

To apply, please send a full CV, 2 references and current salary to Nicola Manning: Secretary@wenvoecastleclub.co.uk by 13th September 2024

Assistant Greenkeeper

Barkway Park Golf Club, Hertfordshire



Barkway Park is located in scenic countryside on the outskirts of Hertfordshire. The course was designed by Vivian Saunders in 1992 and is lined with maturing oak and sycamore trees. We are looking to recruit an Assistant Greenkeeper to join our team. Candidates must be self-motivated, hard working and able to work alone or as part of a team.

The successful candidate will have some form of greenkeeping/ golfing knowledge, good communication skills, own transport and full driving license. NVQ Level 2 would be an advantage but not essential. Salary dependent upon experience.

Please send CV to barkwaypark@btconnect.com



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Sheffield Park



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Shropshire and Staffordshire



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Area Sales – Turfcare Equipment

Burwell



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Branch Manager

Livingston, Scotland



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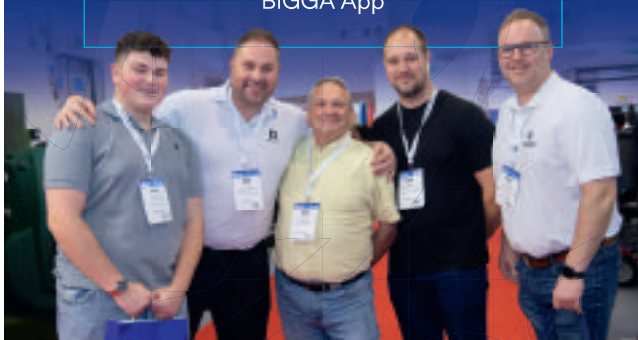
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Practical Greenkeeping

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Saunton Course Manager Murray Long sees the month of September as a time for reflection



What we do in... September

Club:
Saunton, Devon

As the tourists head home and calm returns to North Devon, September brings the latter stages of Saunton's competition calendar, with the Mizuno pairs and members guest day the main events.

It's time to review all of our greenkeeping practices over the growing season – what did we do well? What can we improve next year?

More frequently, we think about our mental health and what pressures we have been through over the season. For me, on the links, this has been a stress-free greenkeeping year without the pressures of a dry spring and water management through the season, but it's not the same for everyone.

The pressures of dollar spot have been ever-present and still go on into September and October. We manage this using the

Smith Kerns model and a proven fungicide strategy developed with Syngenta, along with the proven cultural practices such as dew removal, irrigation timings, specific nutrition, soil biology and sowing in disease-resistant species.

This month is golden for seed germination in our area. All fairways and semi-rough will be over sown with 50% hard fescue, 25% chewings, and 25% slender creeping red. Special focus will be given to greens

surrounds.

We will also focus on presenting plans for course improvements to the members for the autumn and winter ahead. This is the second year of our higher-level stewardship works with Natural England, and we will be focusing on the West Course with the removal of invasive scrub and creation of sand scrapes and dune slacks, with the aim of returning the site to favourable

condition.

All trees or shrubs removed are covered by our felling license and the numbers and site of these form part of the presentation, along with standard practices such as revetted bunkers, tees to be built and pathway renovations and creation.

Works start in October so communicating the areas for improvement helps members understand and plan around any disruption and gives us time to consider any feedback.

Briefing our team helps prepare for the transition ahead and focuses on new targets after the busy growing season.

After the lack of sunshine this year, I pray for an Indian summer from September with a chance of a sunset surf. **GI**



More frequently we think about our mental health and what pressures we have been through over the season"



Showcasing what golf clubs can achieve for nature conservation

As the Golf Environment Awards head into their 30th year, we celebrate some of the past winners, with the focus this month on Canterbury Golf Club, who claimed the Ecological Project of the Year.

Turtle dove

Canterbury Course Manager Ray Goodsall on biodiversity

Biodiversity for me is a passion and it has been all the way through my career. Ecology and biodiversity of your out-of-play areas is a big part of our remit now as greenkeepers.

Promoting that within the club has been welcomed by the majority of people, who recognise that our focus should not solely be on the playing areas of the course.

We have introduced about seven hectares of what I call eco-rough, and that was a bit of a shock for some initially because it's not as easy to find a wayward ball in amongst that!

But with seven hectares of ground that used to be cut, that's a huge time-saver, and the strategic enhancement of adding this other element to the course has enriched both the biodiversity and the golfing experience; it straightens up a lot of people's play!

Canterbury's award-winning wildlife conservation work not only highlights the club's commitment to biodiversity but also its community-minded approach to environmental stewardship.

The work undertaken by staff and local volunteers has seen the Kent venue become a haven for wildlife and a shining example of the positive impact golf clubs can have on biodiversity.

The course, designed by Harry Colt and opened in 1927, was built on land used for military training by the Ministry of Defence, but now appears strikingly different almost 100 years on.

Having originally been carved out of the gorse, Canterbury is now a parkland, tree-lined course, abundant in alder, oak, hazel, silver birch, hornbeam, beech and willow.

Much of it is designated as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI), and there are areas of what Course Manager Ray Goodsall describes as eco-rough, where nature is allowed to flourish without interference.

Given that SSSI status, Canterbury works closely with Natural England, who in 2020 asked for a biodiversity management plan, with member Anthony Dance coming to the fore.

The retired landscape architect offered to put a draft plan together, with his expertise and keen interest in wildlife conservation making him the perfect volunteer.

"We're very keen on opening up and engaging the local community, and we see this as a way of getting more people



Nightingale



Eco rough alongside the 18th fairway

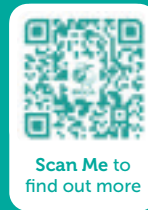


From left to right: Ray Goodsall, Anthony Dance, Phillip Thorne and Steve Eeles

About the Golf Environment Awards

With the ever-increasing spotlight on environmental matters, it is fundamentally important for golf courses worldwide to assess what they can do to achieve environmental sustainability while continuing to

maximise the enjoyment of golf. Since 1995, the aim of the Golf Environment Awards has been to recognise, reward and promote outstanding individuals and golf courses, no matter how big or small, for the time and effort they have put into protecting and preserving their unique surroundings.



involved in what we're doing," he said. "Biodiversity is in crisis, and it needs all the help it can get.

"We, as a golf club, have got a large landholding and most of it is SSSI, so it's a very special site, and it's a great opportunity to help nature and involve younger people."

Dance's plan ultimately received government funding, allowing the club to manage out-of-play woodland and grassland areas with a view to increasing the number and diversity of plants and wildlife.

A volunteer group stepped up to help Goodsall and members of his team execute a plan designed to increase the ecological value of the land. The club installed 25 bird nest boxes and 15 for bats, with volunteers responsible for monitoring and cleaning them, while a pond was built to provide drinking water for the turtle doves that now breed nearby. That species is on the critical list in the UK and, from one sighting, the confirmed number visiting Canterbury has now reached double figures.

Other work has been undertaken to encourage thorn and bramble growth, producing ideal habitat for numerous bird species, including nightingales, blackcaps and whitethroats, along with several reptile species.

The project has encompassed a broad range of groups from across the county and at a national level, and that was

part of what impressed the judging panel sufficiently to honour Canterbury with the prize.

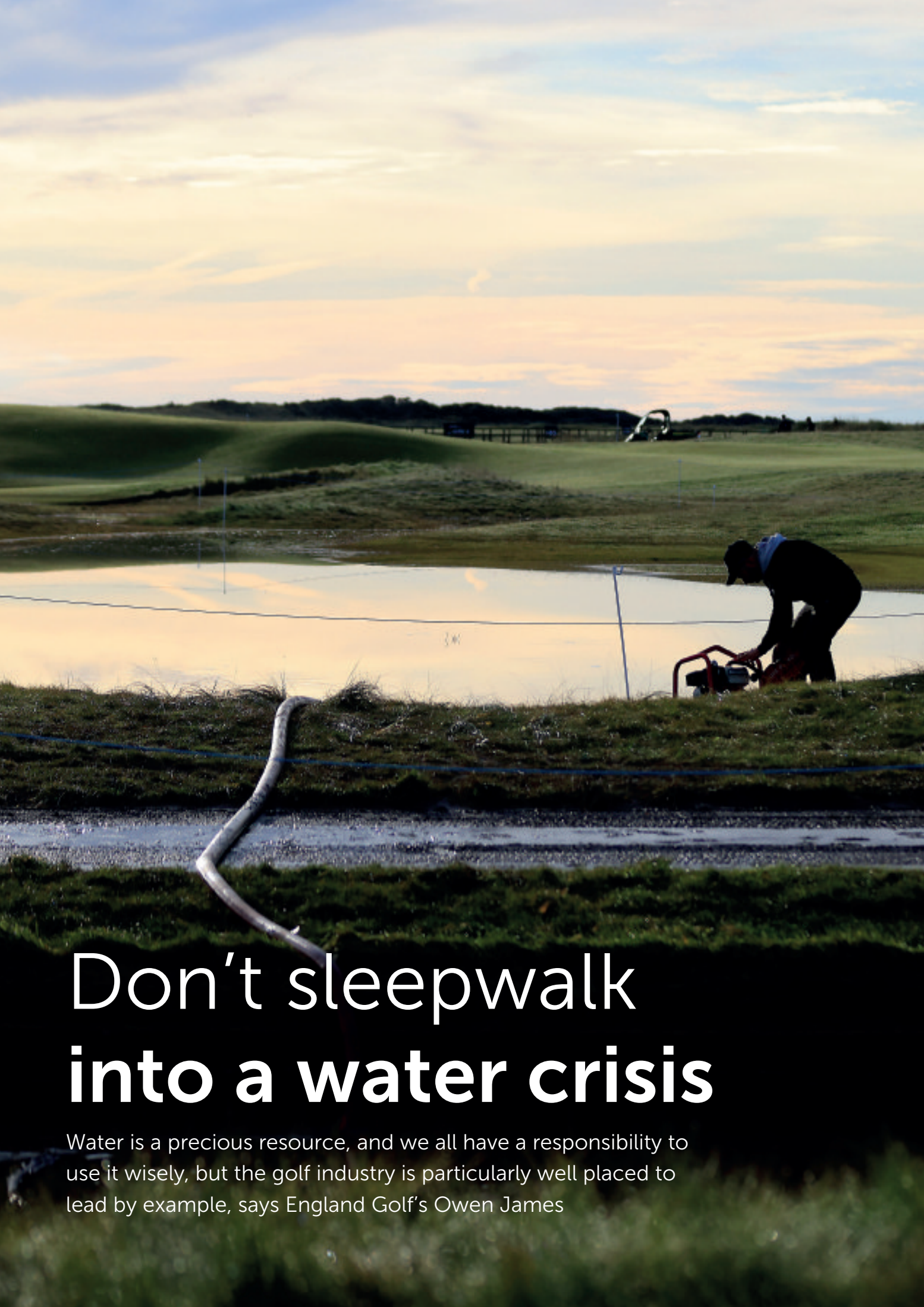
"The win was a great surprise, but we were really honoured," said Dance. "It's great to have the recognition, and it validates all the work we've done at Canterbury.

"It provides a platform to engage more widely with members and the local community to promote nature conservation and to showcase what golf clubs can achieve.

"Hopefully, it's going to help us to bring all the members along with us on this long journey because we are only just starting; we see it as a long-term project."

Club Chairman Steve Eeles added: "This award is due to Anthony's effort in creating the club's biodiversity management plan and for all the hard work of fellow members and volunteers led by Phillip Thorne and David Elliott and their ever-growing band of helpers, assisted by our greens staff. Without Anthony's vision and skills this project would not have seen the light of day.

"Through his drive and contacts, the club has engaged with other local groups, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Kent Moth Group and many others, who have helped in understanding the wealth of nature on and around the course. On top of this, he helped gain a five-year programme of grant funding from DEFRA." **GI**



Don't sleepwalk into a water crisis

Water is a precious resource, and we all have a responsibility to use it wisely, but the golf industry is particularly well placed to lead by example, says England Golf's Owen James

Greenkeepers are in a prime position to help steer the golf industry through the biggest challenge it will ever face.

That is the view of Owen James, sustainability manager at England Golf, who described water availability and usage as the primary concern for the sector.

Water is variable in its supply and golf facilities lean heavily on artificial irrigation for course maintenance, but that approach is not sustainable.

"Without being alarmist, I think it is the biggest issue that golf has or will ever face," said Owen

"It's the only resource that every single golf course in the world needs at some point throughout the year. Therefore, if it were to be lost, the ramifications to golf would be absolutely huge.

"Too many courses are unaware of the problems or not prepared for the changes required, and they are sleepwalking towards a potential crisis."

With climate change bringing more extreme and less predictable weather patterns, the golf industry is facing uncertain times, but Owen believes the road to sustainability, though fraught with difficulties, is also laden with opportunities.

"Golf is uniquely placed, compared to other sports that are played on grass, in that the space we take up and the space that we have to store water means that we've got massive opportunities," he said.

"It's about taking the necessary steps such that the fluctuations in rainfall are mitigated. For example, your drainage is set up in a way that won't pose a flood risk during a wet winter, but it will retain enough water



Owen James on his role

"I'm the sustainability manager at England Golf. I oversee our sustainability strategy, which includes making sure that our organisation and head office and courses at Woodhall Spa are sustainable, that our tournaments and championships are sustainable and that our affiliated golf courses are sustainable too. I work across those three different areas to try to take necessary steps, both short and long term, to futureproof golf against all of the challenges that the climate crisis may or may not bring."

Contact: owen.james@englandgolf.org



Case study: Tiverton Golf Club

"Tiverton has taken an interesting approach and changed a par-4 into a par-3 to create space for an attenuation pond that sits at the lowest part of the course, so all the water drains into it. They capture water from the roof of the greenkeeper sheds, and it's pumped back into the greenkeeper compound and the irrigation system. That's a more significant change because of the impact on the course, but they have identified an opportunity and been proactive in embracing it."

on-site during a dry summer.

"We've certainly had enough rain recently. I had a greenkeeper email me and say he'd calculated there was enough water sitting on his fairways for three summers' worth of irrigation, but he just had no way of storing it.

"They've essentially got a lifeline there, but it requires a means to channel it and that would mean spending just a bit of money to capitalise.

"Golf isn't the cause of the problem, but water management nationally is poor, and golf suffers as a consequence. We have an opportunity to be seen as leaders of change by adjusting the mind set shift towards rainwater reusage as a positive thing."

The lingering possibility of legislation to restrict mains water

supply to golf clubs means facilities must have a plan B, but it is not only red tape that may necessitate a change of tack.

"There are other countries around the world where golf courses don't use any mains water, either through legislation or because of perception and public pressure," Owen explained. "In that sense, we are definitely behind the curve.

"In the last 10 to 15 years, the water industry has changed – there is a lot more wastage, there are more leaks than ever and there's less investment in infrastructure. All of those factors have led to this issue creeping up on us as a society, not just in golf.

"But we have a problem because, as much as we love golf, nobody outside of the industry really cares about golf club issues, so it's up to us to find these innovative solutions to manage a problem that's been created externally and turn it into a positive internally.

"The possibility of mains water restrictions has been spoken about for some time, but at this stage there is no clear stance

“Greenkeepers are some of the most innovative people that I speak to; they’ve always got a solution”

from the government.

"However, it may not be legislation that prevents you being



able to use mains water – what if you have a burst pipe or the pipes have seized up? You need to have a plan B to ensure your facility is self-sufficient and not so reliant on mains water.”

Greenkeepers are at the heart of this issue, charged with producing playing surfaces that meet the expectations of players but within the restrictions of their club’s budget, all the while shouldering a key responsibility to uphold practices that demonstrate environmental stewardship.

Those pressures are oftentimes in conflict, but the stark impact of the changing climate ought to ensure the views and interests of turf experts and golfers coalesce around a common understanding that something has to give in order to serve the greater good.

With average temperatures rising and a higher incidence of extreme weather events, be it record-breaking rainfall or prolonged drought, short-term management practices that fail to prioritise the efficient use of resources, such as water, are becoming increasingly outdated and irresponsible. As such, golfers – and greenkeepers – will need to embrace a return to more natural conditions.

“There’s certainly an extent to which expectations play a part, which is only heightened by the fact you can turn on your TV at any time of year and see a beautiful, lush green golf course and that leads some people to believe that’s what they should expect from their course all year round,” Owen admitted.

“But golf is a sport that’s played in, and controlled by, the natural environment, so we should embrace nature a little bit

Case study: Romiley Golf Club

“Romiley has worked with their local council and the Environment Agency on a water reuse project. They had a situation where water was running off the moors, through the golf club and it was flooding the local area. Through a series of leaky ditches and attenuation ponds, the golf course is now storing water on the course, using it for irrigation and averting that flood risk to the local community.”

more and move back towards natural conditions. That means in summer the course should look and perform a little differently compared to winter.”

Greenkeepers have the knowledge to make informed course management decisions, but their wisdom is not always apparent to golfers, which is why Owen wants communication to form a key part of a turf professional’s toolkit.

“It’s important for greenkeepers to be able to communicate with members so they understand the challenges,” he said. “If members are expecting certain conditions or aren’t happy about something, greenkeepers are in a position to be able to explain why – they can point to a balance sheet and say, ‘This is why we can’t do X, Y and Z’.

Five reasons to embrace sustainability — England Golf

1) Long-term protection: taking action now in the face of changing weather patterns and changing legislation will save you time and money in the future, meaning that the club will be resilient and thrive

2) Ecological benefits: golf courses are often the only greenspace in largely concrete landscapes. Encouraging good environmental stewardship can help a golf course to increase biodiversity, promote cleaner air and act as a watershed for urban areas

3) Pride and reputation: naturalising the golf course and boosting biodiversity can help transform image and generate pride and positivity among golf club members and members of the local community

4) Greenkeepers can prioritise: efficiently managing the course means that greenkeepers can focus more on the areas that matter the most – tees, fairways, greens and bunkers

5) Monitor and celebrate success: reducing resource consumption, buying more locally produced goods, reducing the club's carbon footprint and engaging more with community are all positive effects that golf clubs can point to as success stories and potential participation drivers

"This is where data really helps, too. We all know it's been a wet winter, but how wet? If you can tell people we've had 200 per cent of an average winters' rainfall this year, that puts the challenge into context. And then there's the cost of products and fuel going up, and members don't necessarily know that, so making that information clear and available can really help to foster that understanding."

Club managers and those charged with approving capital expenditure also need to demonstrate foresight on this issue, which may mean looking beyond the bottom line of the balance sheet.

"I think some clubs make the mistake of thinking the only solution is to build a massive reservoir, and they don't have the space for it or the funds to pay for it, so it's a non-starter," said Owen. "But there are other ways to come at this issue – whether it's the type of grass species used or upgrading existing systems – and one of the key things is to educate all the key stakeholders on the steps that can be taken and why it's important.

"We also need to get buy-in from members, because water



conservation projects aren't necessarily that exciting for the paying members, and if you take the example of a club upgrading its irrigation system, that's all out of sight so members literally don't see the benefit.

"We need to be able to demonstrate that a golf course where water usage is more efficient and where there is less exposure to fluctuations in supply will ultimately be a better maintained course."

Despite the challenges, Owen retains a strong sense of optimism and puts significant stock in the ability of greenkeepers to deliver a brighter, more sustainable future for the game of golf.

"There will always be water sources, and there will always be an opportunity to find water from somewhere," he said. "It's just a case of making sure that the golf club is moving towards a plan of self-sufficiency."

"It doesn't have to be a multimillion-pound project, but actually phasing out reliance on mains water and phasing in self-sufficiency is what golf clubs should be working towards."

"Golf clubs have the space and the opportunity to really play

a huge part in, not just their own future, but their community's future and community flood resistance by adapting over time to issues around water shortage.

"We've got so many opportunities at our fingertips, it's just about relishing them and being bold enough to be slightly different."

"Golf can sometimes be stuck in its ways, and the worst six words in the world are, 'It's how we've always done it'. We're moving into uncertain times when how we've always done it might not be the way forward. It's about making plans and taking steps to become the guardian of your own future."

"Greenkeepers will play a huge part in this because they have the knowledge and the vested interest, and their outlook is broader and more long-term than many, so they can be the catalysts for real change to future-proof the game of golf."

"Greenkeepers are some of the most innovative people that I speak to; they've always got a solution. They know their courses better than anybody else, and therefore they understand the opportunities to really shape the future of their club." **GI**



“ We have an opportunity to be seen as leaders of change”

Bio future for turf

Syngenta R&D has highlighted how biostimulants and biocontrols can add an effective integrated approach, to get the best overall results.



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A new focus and investment in the research and development of biological products has revealed exciting opportunities within integrated strategies to get more consistent and reliable results from all applications.

That includes how bio products can help to make better use of conventional products within an ITM strategy and to improve resilience against climatic change challenges, which may enable reduced reliance on chemical inputs in the future.

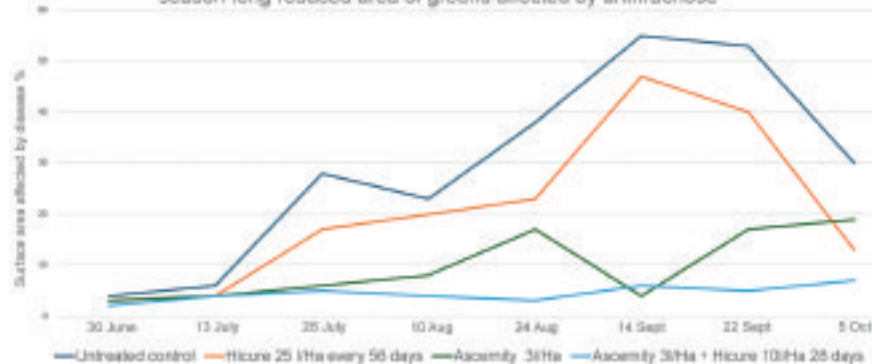
Bio products for turf management can be broadly defined as those based on naturally occurring materials that are used for abiotic stress management to enhance plant health – biostimulants – or those that have a direct effect on fungal and bacterial diseases, insect pests, nematodes, and weeds – biocontrols.

Within biostimulants, there are

products that can improve sustainable use of resources, such as improving nutrient use efficiency or to capture nitrogen from atmospheric sources that will reduce reliance on manufactured products.

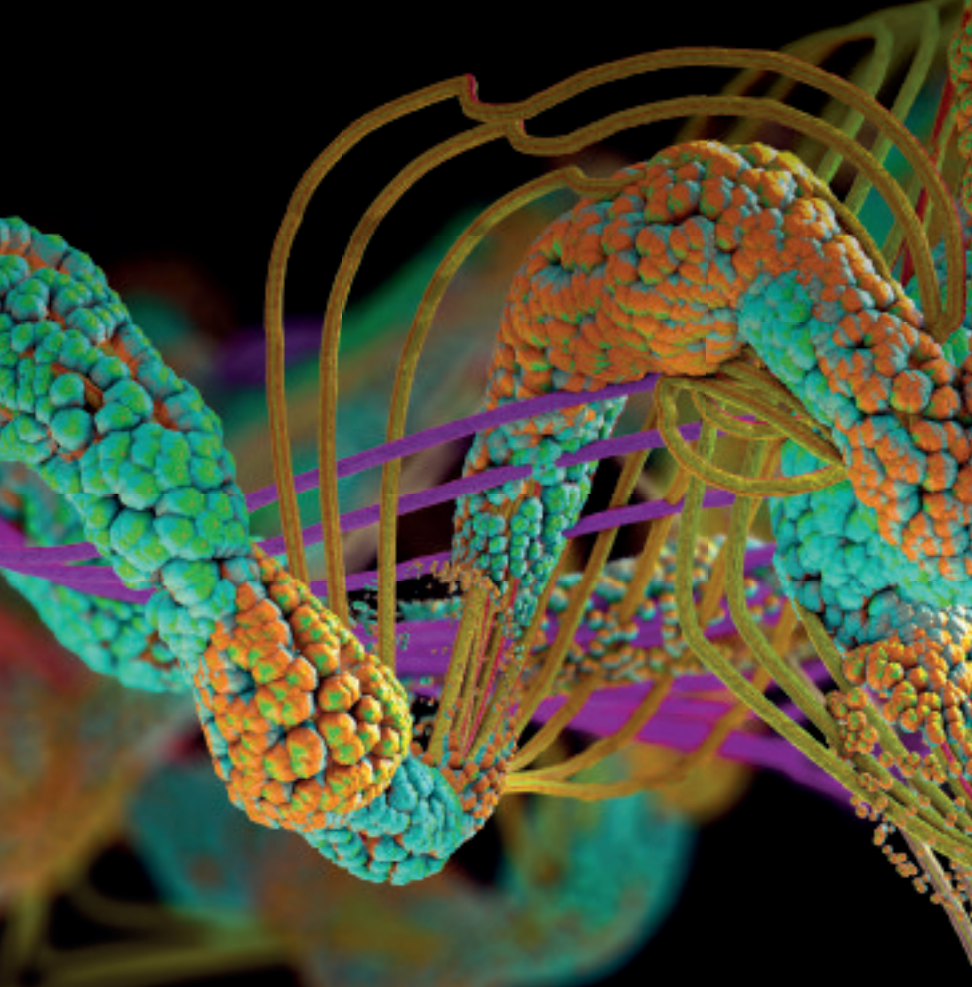
Biostimulants can also seek to use natural processes more efficiently and

Fig 1. Integrated strategy of Ascernity and Hicure resulting in season-long reduced area of greens affected by anthracnose



Read this for:

- Biocontrols insight
- Anthracnose trials
- Developing ITM strategies



“Consistency and reliability of products is a key focus for their future success”

Biocontrols have an increasing role in Integrated Turf Management strategies.

effectively in the plant. They may not have a direct impact on the fungal pathogen, but the physiological effect on the plant can enable or elicit a natural response that allows the plant to be more resilient to the disease attack and mitigate effects being seen.

Trial results

Results of Syngenta anthracnose trials, undertaken by STRI in Yorkshire under very high disease pressure, demonstrated that the biostimulant Hicure, which provides amino acids and peptides to promote turf health, did help turf resist the damaging effects of turf to a limited extent (Fig 1).

But it did not perform anywhere near as well overall as treatment with Ascernity fungicide in the trial plots. Particularly where pressure was the greatest and untreated infection reached over 55% of the turf surface,

compared to 47% with Hicure alone, but just 5% with the fungicide treatment.

However, combining Ascernity in a strategy with Hicure at monthly intervals gave the best results and maintained disease damage at consistently low levels throughout the trial period from June to October - even when using the biostimulant at reduced rate, compared to the product alone.

Some of the new chemical controls coming through registration increasingly have limitations on the number of times they can be used or the areas of application, so we may need biologicals more to fill the gaps. They are also a useful tool in resistance management strategies for the chemistry that is available.

The challenges identified by R&D programmes and practical use in golf course situations, is the lower levels of



Author: Sean Loakes
Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland

efficacy generally achieved, compared to what would normally be expected with conventional chemistry. Results may be sufficient in some instances, but typically biologicals have been seen to give less consistent performance in practice.

Consistency and reliability of products in the manufacturing, delivery and application process is a key focus for their future success.

Extensive Syngenta research with NemaTrident beneficial nematodes, for example, demonstrated across a series of trials that the biocontrol nematodes achieved an average 45% reduction in leatherjacket larvae, from an average 35 larvae per m² in untreated areas. Within the spread, the control ranged from 75% in one trial, to 13% reduction in another.

By comparison, treatment in the same trials using Acelepryn insecticide alone gave consistently higher levels of control. But when the two products were used together in an integrated approach, a further step change in efficacy resulted in an average of 90% control of leatherjacket larvae.

Environmental conditions

Practical research is revealing that managing the environment in which biocontrols work is highly important to achieve desired results, and far more so than the more flexible conventional products.

The Syngenta Turf Advisor app has specific data to support the timing of applications when soil moisture and temperature conditions are appropriate. Along with new remote soil and leaf wetness monitoring techniques being developed to enable practical and more time efficient management.

With changing climates and pressures on turf health, the combination of conventional chemistry and bioproducts could be even more important to help with resilience and enhance an ITM strategy in the future.



Follow the conversation

How accurate spraying can **save money**

Smithco's GPS-guided sprayers can dramatically improve efficiency

Golf course managers are always looking for products and equipment that can help them improve playing conditions, conserve resources and save money and that's where Smithco can help.

GPS-guided sprayers have been around for some time, but Smithco have consistently been at the forefront. Not only does a GPS-guided sprayer improve the quality of applications, it also helps to save money over the longer term. While the initial investment can be significant, course managers will usually see a return over a three-to five year timeframe, through savings in products and labour.

GPS-guided sprayers are a significant development because they greatly reduce the risk of human error during spray applications. Even the most skilled spray tech can miss an area or inadvertently overlap their coverage. These mistakes waste product and time and have the potential to cause serious turf problems. Smithco sprayers eliminate these issues because each individual nozzle is controlled by a computer that confines applications to desired areas and prevents overlaps or under-spraying.

Smithco's technology allows areas to be mapped by driving around a perimeter or during the actual spraying process. Once an application is entered into the system it can be repeated with great precision, making



it possible to perform all applications with more accuracy and efficiency. GPS technology also allows an operator to stop and resume an application in exactly the same spot. It also keeps track of how much product is needed to complete an application, saving time and reducing waste.

When it comes to accuracy, precision and productivity in application, Smithco sprayers are the best in the business. They deliver maximum capacity spray applications, saving time and money on the course with fewer trips back and forth to the maintenance facility.

This is a result of a long-term partnership with TeeJet Technologies and their Dyna-Jet pulse-width

modulation advanced rate control and dual nozzle system. This provides the ultimate control over spraying speed, pressure and droplet size. Spraying is consistent across any area regardless of terrain, shape or size of the surface area.

Smithco incorporate these control options into two specific systems designated Star Command 1 and Star Command 2.

Star Command 1 features TeeJet Radion Rate Controller, Radion with Dyna-Jet Pulse Width Modulation which controls sections of the boom and allows automatic tip control with independent control of application rate, ground speed and pressure.

Star Command 2 with TeeJet's Matrix 908 provides consistently less than 50 mm (2") corrections, turn compensation, individual nozzle control and features industry-leading 250 mm (10") nozzle spacing offering a 100% greater accuracy than competitors.

Both systems feature drift control, which allows the spray tech to select droplet size on the fly.

Droplet sizes range from fine, medium, course and very course and a larger droplet size can be specified to control the drift and still maintain the correct rate. www.smithco.com



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Wellingborough's record renovation

In the midst of the Northamptonshire countryside, in 160 acres of fine, rolling parkland, the 18-hole championship course at Wellingborough Golf Club regularly hosts premier PGA and county golf events.

Founded in 1893, nine holes of the original course were laid out by Old Tom Morris. Today's course is built in the grounds of Harrowden Hall - an impressive Georgian hall that subsequently became the elegant, permanent home of Wellingborough and is now its clubhouse, surrounded by five acres of beautifully maintained, formal, listed gardens.

Since 1998, the club's progressive investment has resulted in fully rebuilt greens, most teeing areas, fully rebuilt

bunkers and intensive drainage work, improving year-round playability.

Yet, as Course Manager Steve Mackie explained, as it became more difficult to get spare parts for the old irrigation system, and with lengthy watering periods, the club decided it was high time to modernise and replace the ageing irrigation system.

Giles Wardle of Iriplan was retained to advise, design, and specify a new irrigation system for greens, green surrounds and approaches, and tees.

"The design challenge was altering the system architecture to deliver more efficient irrigation and provide cover for surrounds and approaches so these could be cut closer, more often," said Wardle. "Another requirement was allowing for fairways,

potentially, to be added in the future."

Mackie said: "When we started looking at new irrigation systems, I spoke to quite a few other clubs and looked at what they had. We wanted new technology but didn't want anything overly complicated. Rain Bird asked what we needed and gave us great, needs-based advice. Not the hard sell at all."

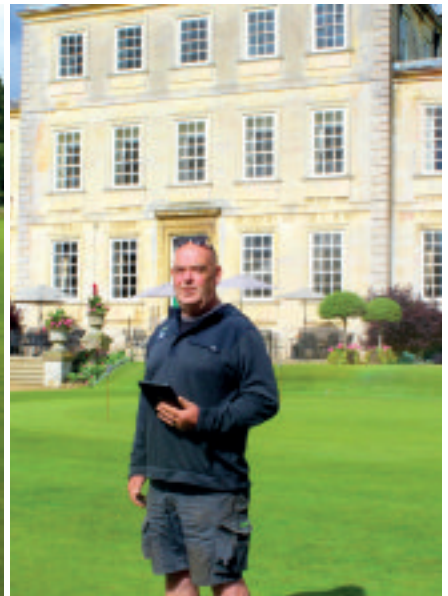
Ocmis was appointed as main contractor, beginning work in May 2023, completing a fast-paced installation in record time, in just under 40 working days.

"Ocmis had an efficient team of 10 or 11 working long days every day," said Mackie. "They knew technically what to do and worked extremely quickly. Only one green or hole was

“We wanted new technology but didn’t want anything overly complicated.

Rain Bird asked what we needed and gave us great, needs-based advice” - Craig Mackie, Wellingborough Course Manager

Main: Wellingborough Golf Club has a new irrigation system thanks to Rain Bird **Below left:** Sprinkler on the 18th green at Wellingborough **Below right:** Craig Mackie, Wellingborough’s Course Manager



A new irrigation system was installed inside 40 working days during the peak golfing season last summer at the Northamptonshire club

closed at any one time so disruption to play was absolutely minimal, which was especially important for us during our peak golfing season. Work on the new system coincided with a particularly hot dry spell and so playing surfaces had to be hand-watered while the system was down. Luckily, the turf healed well, bouncing back almost at once, so you could hardly see where work had been done.”

Dan Whaites, Irrigation Sales Manager at Ocmis, said: “With competitions taking place throughout the peak summer months we made sure the course was left in a pristine condition during installation. Greens, tees, and approaches received timely and consistent watering,

mitigating the challenges posed by dry and hot conditions, so that playing surfaces flourished, solidifying the club’s reputation for impeccable course conditions. The installation of the irrigation system stands as a resounding success. Greens, tees, and approaches have been brought to life and transformed by the irrigation system, reflecting Wellingborough Golf Club’s commitment to maintaining the highest standards. Close collaboration between Ocmis and the club ensured the project was executed swiftly and seamlessly, leaving an irrigation system for the golf club to cherish for many years to come.”

The renovation replaced the previous block system with over two hundred

Rain Bird 752 Series rotors and an upgrade to the latest generation of irrigation technology, the Rain Bird® IC System™ with CirrusPRO™ Central Control software.

Mackie said: “CirrusPRO™ is new and so easy to use - it’s unbelievable, especially as you can access it from anywhere. Even our apprentice uses it from a tablet. We have a fairly basic set up right now, but we can easily add to it as we need to. And Rain Bird’s GSP back up service is fantastic. The difference now is that our irrigation window is only three hours, instead of eleven, we’re applying water exactly where we want it to be and the system measures times, application rates and the exact volume of water being used.”



Smooth operator

Pyrford Lakes GC transforms turf management with TurfKeeper from OAS

In the dynamic world of golf course management, success is not solely attributed to one factor, but to a combination that includes innovation and strategic partnerships.

Pyrford Lakes Golf Club, set amongst 23 acres of beautiful lakes in Woking, Surrey is led by the seasoned expertise of Lee Williams, the general manager with an illustrious 28-year tenure in the golfing industry. Under his guidance, Pyrford Lakes has embraced TurfKeeper as an instrumental tool in their quest for excellence.

The club is no ordinary golfing destination; it is a U.S. style parkland course boasting magnificent golf holes, many of which are accentuated by water features. Pyrford Lakes combines exhilarating golf and a peaceful setting to create a 'must-play' for all golfers. However, maintaining such a course to the highest standards amidst the myriad challenges of modern-day golf management is no small feat.

TurfKeeper is a comprehensive turf management solution offered by Origin Amenity Solutions (OAS) through their platform TurfKeeper.

com. What sets TurfKeeper apart is its holistic approach to course management, empowering golf course managers with the tools and insights needed to manage every aspect of their operation. From labour management to resource allocation, from cost tracking to inventory management, TurfKeeper offers a host of features designed to streamline

improvements matter more now than ever."

The journey with TurfKeeper began for Pyrford Lakes last year, marking the onset of a transformative partnership. By providing analytical support and data insights to their course manager, Richard Covey, Pyrford Lakes aimed to elevate their course maintenance practices to new heights. Despite

“Using Turfkeeper means you are giving your course manager the tools to deliver a world-class golf course during challenging times”

processes and drive efficiency.

For Lee the decision to integrate TurfKeeper into their operations was a game-changer. "Using TurfKeeper means that as a manager, you are giving your course manager or head greenkeeper the tools and support to deliver a world-class golf course during challenging times," He explains. "An increase in supplier costs and wages and higher customer expectations means those 1%

the staggering volume of 56,000 rounds of golf played annually, the feedback on the course's quality has been consistently exceptional—an achievement attributed to Richard and his team.

Lee's endorsement of TurfKeeper extends beyond Pyrford Lakes, spanning eight years across three golf clubs. His confidence in the system's efficacy is unwavering, as he states, "If you want to be in a position to



Lee Williams
General Manager



Richard Covey
Course Manager

Origin
amenity solutions



support your course team, who are the driving force behind your golf course, I recommend reaching out to Kevin Scarce, TurfKeeper's Sales Manager, and booking a free trial."

He adds, "Systems and processes are not always about preventing an issue or establishing standards, sometimes they are the perfect tool for recording and evaluating the good work you are doing and to support the physical efforts of the team."

TurfKeeper isn't just a software solution; it's a catalyst for transformation. The user-friendly interface and comprehensive features make it an indispensable tool for golf course managers seeking to optimise their operations. From detailed cost reporting to streamlined stock management, TurfKeeper offers unparalleled visibility and control, empowering managers to make informed decisions. Lee confirms, "TurfKeeper helps us to manage costs, the detailed cost reporting makes decision-making easy with the information to justify a decision just a keystroke away."

Part of the appeal of TurfKeeper is

the ease of the installation and set-up process. Lee testifies, "The TurfKeeper onboarding by Kevin is exceptional. The system was all set up for us and is easy to use—even for the computer illiterate!" This seamless integration ensures minimal disruption to daily operations, allowing golf courses to harness the full potential of TurfKeeper from day one.

TurfKeeper's affordability and value for money make it a compelling choice for golf courses of all sizes. Lee stresses, "I think it's the best system on the market. It is well-priced and great value for money." This accessibility ensures that TurfKeeper isn't just reserved for elite golfing establishments but is accessible to all.

All the hard work for Lee and his team has been rewarded with Pyrford Lakes Golf Club recently earning a coveted spot in the Top 100 Golf Courses of the World for group golf. Lee enthuses, "Top 100 Golf Courses of the World is the ranking list on which every golf facility would love to appear. I'm delighted and proud that Pyrford Lakes is on this list."

The club is part of the prestigious

Get Golfing network, the UK's largest charity born from a collective desire to change the landscape of golf; to challenge the norm and make golf truly accessible to all. Lee is committed to sharing their success with TurfKeeper across the network and the golfing community.

TurfKeeper is more than just a software solution; it's a strategically for golf course management and a day-to-day management tool for greenkeepers. It enables them to navigate the complexities of modern-day course management with confidence and ease. With its unrivalled features, seamless integration, and unwavering commitment to excellence, TurfKeeper is redefining the landscape of turf management, one course at a time. **GI**

For more information on
TurfKeeper contact OAS on
0800 138 7222 or email
sales@originamenity.com



Bio-Control Fungicide

One year on - what have we learned?

Introduction

A year ago, Envu introduced Harmonix Turf Defense (HTD) to the UK greenkeeping market, promising a novel biocontrol fungicide aimed at reducing common turf diseases. Now, following a year of practical application and observation, it is time to reflect on its effectiveness, the lessons learned and its impact on the greenkeeping community.

The promise of Harmonix Turf Defense

Harmonix Turf Defense is a biocontrol fungicide that leverages naturally occurring microorganisms to combat turf diseases. The unique bacteria in HTD directly target

Here are some key takeaways:

1. **Disease Suppression:** The biocontrol fungicide has shown effectiveness in suppressing a variety of turf diseases, including dollar spot, anthracnose and microdochium patch. Its multiple modes of action with both preventative and contact activity has helped reduce the severity of outbreaks on turf throughout the year.
2. **Environmental Benefits:** Harmonix Turf Defense's use of naturally occurring microorganisms has helped reduced the number of chemical fungicides in many programmes, aligning with sustainable greenkeeping practices and promoting a healthier ecosystem.
3. **Turf Performance:** By enhancing the plant's natural defences, Harmonix Turf Defense has contributed to overall turf health and resilience. This has resulted in improved turf quality and playability on golf courses and sports fields.

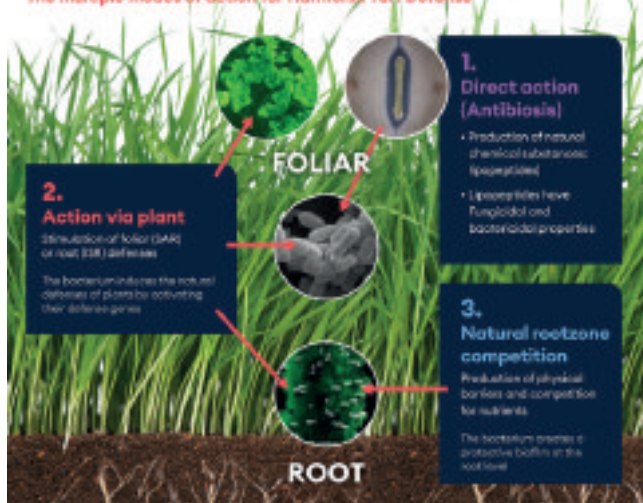
Challenges and lessons learned

The first year of using Harmonix Turf Defense has brought valuable insights. Here are some of the challenges and lessons learned from the field:

1. **Application Timing:** Correct timing of applications is crucial for achieving optimal results. Preventative applications, before the onset of disease, have proven to be most effective. Greenkeepers have had to carefully monitor disease pressure and environmental conditions.
2. **Environmental Conditions:** As Harmonix Turf Defense is based on naturally occurring bacteria, it does not have the same longevity of its synthetic counterparts. By monitoring growth and reducing application intervals during warmer conditions, turf managers have reported fantastic results.
3. **Integration with Conventional Chemistry:** Harmonix Turf Defense works best when integrated into a comprehensive turf management programme. Combining it with appropriate conventional fungicides, particularly during high disease pressure, alongside solid cultural practices such as moisture management, aeration, and balanced nutrition has enhanced its effectiveness.
4. **New Way of Thinking:** While offering environmental benefits, Harmonix Turf Defense is most effective when the

Mode of Action – Multisite

The multiple modes of action for Harmonix Turf Defense



pathogens and enhance the turf natural defences (see below). This environmentally friendly approach aims to maintain healthy turf while reducing the environmental impact of disease management practices.

Effectiveness in disease control

Over the past year, greenkeepers across the UK have reported their experiences with Harmonix Turf Defense.



turf manager is tracking weather data to ensure application intervals keep disease at bay. Greenkeepers have had to balance a new way of thinking against the long-term benefits of sustainable disease management.

Trials results

Trials conducted at Throws Farm Turf Technology Centre (Origin Amenity Solutions) in 2022/23 showed that by incorporating Harmonix Turf Defense in between fungicide applications, traditional fungicides could be halved (from six to three) with no significant difference in disease incidence compared to plots using fungicides alone.

“Harmonix Turf Defense has proven to be a **valuable tool in the greenkeeper’s arsenal.”**

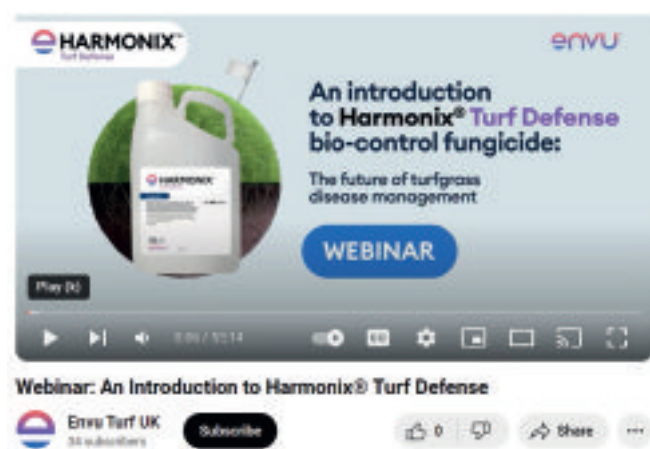
Using Harmonix Turf Defense alone was able to significantly reduce disease but was unable to fully control it. No problem! Turf Managers up and down the country already perform many practices designed to reduce disease. By building HTD into an effective IPM that also considers the local climate, we can soon see why it is a vital tool for reducing our overall reliance on conventional fungicides.

Future outlook

Looking ahead, the continued use of Harmonix Turf Defense appears promising. As greenkeepers become more familiar with the product and refine their application techniques, its effectiveness is likely to improve. Furthermore, its role in promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly turf management cannot be overstated.

Conclusion

One year on, Harmonix Turf Defense has proven to be a valuable tool in the greenkeeper’s arsenal. While there are challenges to overcome, the lessons learned and the successes achieved highlight its potential for sustainable disease management. By continuing to share knowledge and best practices, the greenkeeping community can optimise the use of this innovative biocontrol fungicide,



ensuring healthier, more resilient turf for years to come. The first year of Harmonix Turf Defense has been a learning journey for many greenkeepers. Its successful integration into turf management programmes demonstrates its potential as a cornerstone of sustainable disease control, providing both environmental benefits and effective disease suppression. **GI**

More information

For more information on Harmonix Turf Defense, visit www.uk.envu.com or contact our exclusive UK distributor, Origin Amenity Solutions.




Need a refresher? Catch up with our Webinar. BIGGA CPD points available at the end of the recording.



Aquatrols®

Extremes of weather and how surfactants can help

by Emma Beggs, portfolio manager, The Aquatrols Company



The challenge for those managing golf courses and other sports turf surfaces is how to deal not only with extended periods of high rainfall and saturated ground, but with the abrupt transitions between these extended cool, wet periods and sudden dry, heat. These changeable weather patterns are ramping up the difficulties for those tasked with keeping golf courses open, playable and presented to the required standards year-round.

Extended wet weather alongside hotter, drier conditions

In the UK and much of Western Europe it has been the wettest 18 months since records began in 1836, with the large increase in rainfall causing widespread flooding. In contrast the UK has seen the five warmest springs all recorded since 2007 and globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record.

These greater extremes of weather result in a warmer atmosphere holding more moisture, giving rise to increased rainfall. Unsettled weather, continuous low pressures and more active storms have resulted in more frequent, heavier bursts of rain and greater flooding.

In terms of course management, trying to protect golf courses against these weather extremes often demands drainage as well as upgraded irrigation systems, and deciding which one to prioritise is almost impossible.

The impact of the soils beneath a course

What is often not realised by golfers and members of green committees is that the soils beneath a golf course hugely dictate year-round performance. The majority of golf courses in the UK and Europe are on inland sites with many situated on poorly draining clay, clay loam or silty clay loam soils. Heavy soils perform poorly when saturated, take a long time to dry down but once dry they become difficult to work. Only 11% of golf courses are on sandy, free draining coastal links land.

Where greens have been rebuilt with sand dominated rootzones the reality is that under prolonged periods of rain it can be very difficult to get golfers, or mowing and aeration machinery, around the rest of the course despite the greens remaining firm and dry.

The role of surfactants in managing weather extremes

As a manufacturer and supplier of soil surfactants to turf managers across the UK and Europe, The Aquatrols Company are revisiting how we can use soil chemistries to help course managers cope with the changing weather patterns, wetter ground conditions and increasing restrictions on water use.

Aquatrols surfactants are proven to be beneficial, not only in helping turf cope with extended hot, dry periods, but also for moving water more effectively away from the surface under cooler, wetter weather.

Independent research has shown the benefits of using specific Aquatrols soil surfactants under wet ground conditions, increasing rates of surface water infiltration by a significant margin and moving water more efficiently through soil profiles.

At Aquatrols our portfolio includes these chemistries in products designed for treating larger areas such as fairways or practise grounds, to improve the speed of water movement away from the surface.

Soil surfactants are able to move rainfall away from the surface and deeper into the profile not only improving surface firmness but also effectively harvesting rainfall, making it available for plant uptake next time weather conditions switch back to being hot and dry.

Next Steps

For the majority of clubs, it is a case of bringing together and implementing a range of turf management techniques, including aeration, thatch reduction, sand top dressing and appropriate surfactant use to maximise the potential of a specific site. It is a case of doing the correct maintenance operation when ground conditions are right – even if this means omitting certain operations or carrying work out at unusual times of year. Maintenance alone is unlikely to solve the severe drainage issues seen this year. Tackle the most pressing priorities and plan future drainage and irrigation projects effectively to address issues over a financially manageable timeframe. Use a long-term planning model and work to an overarching framework, and guard against dramatic personnel changes at committee level. [GI](#)



The grass is always greener

The experts at Collier Turf Care share tips for successful overseeding

Overseeding is best carried out in the spring or autumn when weather conditions are conducive. Each grass has its own optimum temperature for germination so getting this right is essential.

Guidance on germination temperature

Grass	Minimum	Optimal
Perennial Rye	5°C	10-20°C
Fine Fescue	10°C	14-18°C
Bent	12°C	16-22°C

Before starting, ensure that everything is in place for a successful overseeding.

Consider which seed is most suitable for your surface and what it's being used for. Grass breeders have developed some fantastic grass mixes as well as dwarf ryegrasses; some having leaves as fine as fescue, which is more disease resistant and can be happily mown down to 4mm.

The quality of your turf starts with choosing the right seed in the first place. As well as looking at cultivars it is important to pick a seed that has the highest purity so that you are not planting weed seeds, chaff or annual meadow grass.

Seed contains its own bank of nutrients and all it needs to germinate. Seeds do not need to be coated in fertiliser; this just means that you get

less seed for your money. A pre-seed fertiliser can be used just before seeding to encourage strong growth once seed has germinated. Seedlings need a balanced NPK fertiliser to allow root and shoot growth.

Avoid any applications of Sulphate of Iron as this can dry out and desiccate the leaf.

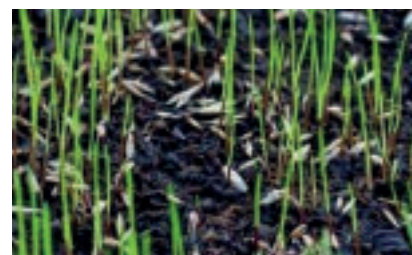
For a seed to germinate and establish it needs to be planted in a rootzone, kept moist and have sufficiently warm temperatures. A new seed needs to grow in soil and is unlikely to germinate successfully in a compacted thatch layer. Before overseeding, prepare the ground by scarifying to remove as much thatch as you can. Ensure that the moisture levels are adequate and are maintained from sowing right through to full establishment.

Seed needs to be planted at the correct depth into the rootzone, if there is some thatch present then plant into the soil below the thatch layer. There is a variety of great seeders on the market, including disc, dimple or slot to suit every situation.

Professional soil moisture meters are a great tool to check soil moisture levels before, during and after germination. An important thing to check is that soil isn't hydrophobic, if this is the case it will need a curative wetting agent such as Aquatrols Aqueduct liquid or Aqueduct Flex granules. Once the soil is moist it is good practice to maintain moisture

levels with a quality wetting agent such as Prestige Super Replenish Plus, Aquatrols Zipline or ICL H2Pro TriSmart.

To further aid establishment, apply Primo Maxx II at half standard recommended rate five days before overseeding and again two weeks later. Primo Maxx II holds back the top growth and allows new seedlings more room to establish without competition for light and with no detrimental effects on seed germination. **GI**



Recommended planting depths:
Bent – Soil contact
Fescue – 8mm to 12mm
Rye – 10mm to 15mm

COLLIER®
TURF CARE

For more information on overseeding or wetting agent options, contact a Collier Turf Care Area Sales representative or our office on **01328 700600** or email **sales@collier-turf-care.co.uk**

Whatever the weather



Verti-Quake and Verti-Drain combo help Wrekin GC weather the challenge of increased rainfall

Like many, the team at Wrekin Golf Club recorded extraordinary levels of rainfall over the winter of 2023/24. And yet, Course Manager Gary Turner explains that they emerged with free-draining fairways, which he attributes to a single pass with their Redexim Verti-Quake. The timely purchase in the autumn was swiftly followed up by the delivery of a Redexim Verti-Drain® 1517 in the spring of 2024 to further improve aeration results and enhance drainage in other areas of the course.

Nestled at the base of the Wrekin and surrounded by both natural woodland and picturesque views, Gary is now into his 20th year at the Telford club. A lack of available resources resulted in little aeration being conducted on the fairways for the last three or four years, which is why the delivery of the Verti-Quake 2516 by Charles Ag & Turf was hailed a 'godsend!'

"They had begun to lay wet so we knew it would take something robust to break through those years of compaction. The budget we had at the time allowed us to purchase the 2516, which went out on the fairways almost as soon as it came through the gates and the results were astounding! We created channels at depths of 4" and transformed the fairways into the driest part of the course with just one pass."

"The plan is to utilise this during renovation weeks in March and September and complement the linear aeration with monthly passes of our Verti-Drain® 1517 on the fairways, as well as the greens and tees."

The 1517 from the award-winning Redexim range offers a lightweight aeration solution with a 1.7m working width and 6" working depth – a combination that makes it a popular choice for sensitive turf areas. Its larger size and faster operating speed compared to Gary's previous aerator



presents more effective results, in less time.

"Matt Lewis from Charlie's delivered the Verti-Drain® at the start of March and, as soon as it was dry enough, we passed over all 18 greens with 12mm solid tines, in three and a half hours less than the task previously took. A few weeks later we could still see the holes." Gary adds, "We plan to follow the monthly verti-draining with applications of dressing, which will bring multiple benefits to the profile and help us manage the challenges posed by mother nature!"

He concludes, "The service we've had from Matt and the Charlie's team has been excellent at every stage and the machines have already proven to be the best, and most timely, purchases we've ever made." **GI**

For more information email info@redeximuk.com or call **01428 661222**

We will be dealing with this year's rough consequences for some time



Paul Woodham is The R&A's Head of Agronomy Europe

The rain may have finally stopped – or at least slowed down - but the wet weather of the past 12 months will impact our golf courses for some time yet

Drought and heat stress have naturally thinned out the rough in recent years but the sustained strong growth potential, accelerated during what was the warmest average daily temperature for May since records began, has led to exceptional growth.

Rough has been particularly dense this year with the potential for longer term botanical changes with a proliferation in moisture loving grass and other plant species also influenced by changing climatic and environmental conditions.

In the same way that courses see

help with the speed of play. Granted, some of the carry areas may only be 80 yards in length from forward tees but the height and density of the rough could be daunting for the higher handicap golfer. We should be mindful of inclusivity across the range of golfers but we need to meet the balance and not expect wall to wall mowing.

Surges in growth potential is nothing new and the playability, grass species and texture of rough will naturally vary according to the conditions of the year. Seasonal work for cut-and-

maintenance elsewhere. The nature and presentation of the rough, and of the course in general, should always reflect the conditions of the year. We should not 'juice it up' in dry years nor repeatedly cut it back in wetter years.

We would normally see clubs wanting to maintain the longer rough into September, because of definition, when the rough would have ideally been harvested. There is value for those bringing forward the cut-and-collect work this year and being more aggressive with raking and scarification.

If cutting is to take place in late summer, consideration must be given to ground-nesting birds during the breeding season (March to August, inclusive) given that it is illegal to disturb or destroy an active nest of a bird of any species.

In addition to birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles may also be present in rough and a cautious walk through to disperse wildlife prior to mowing is recommended.

Each golf course is unique and managers should be aware of any and all ecological constraints specific to their course before undertaking potentially damaging operations. **GI**

“The nature and presentation of the rough, and of the course in general, should always reflect the conditions of the year”

the legacy of drought in the following year, I think that we will see the impact of the wet weather on the texture of rough this year and into next year too.

We have seen courses temporarily adjusting the playing lines of the rough to meet the balance of course playability and what's sustainably achievable from an operational point of view. Strategic widening in the frequent bail-out points has commonly been necessary to maintain fair conditions and help with the speed of play. Any permanent changes need to be carefully considered.

We have also seen courses adjust fairway carry areas, sometimes with interim cut-and-collect mowing to

collect scarification or raking of rough generally produced a poor result at the end of last summer because of wet conditions. We also saw these operations pushed back too far into October, by which time the rough was naturally returning nutrient to the soil.

Looking ahead to this year's work, the efficiency of the operation is going to be tested because of the volume of plant matter needing to be handled.

It takes time to create the right balance between functional playability and habitat. Managed rough must first and foremost enhance the course and not be too penal in the wrong areas. You should have a clear plan focussing management on the areas needing action and reducing



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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