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Greenkeeper International

The links that Ben built

Ingrebourn Links' Course Manager Ben Adams on his greatest challenge yet



■ From Your Association

The final BTME countdown – see you in Harrogate!

■ Practical Greenkeeping

Gordon Rees on restoring heathland characteristics

■ Member Interest & Careers

Jake Field is thrilled to take on a new role at Basingstoke

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January 2026



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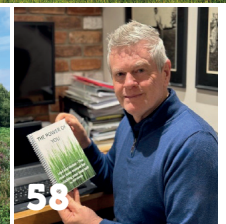
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We are committed to the continual professional development of our members, working with the leading bodies in golf for the good of the game.

BIGGA's activities on a national and regional level are underpinned by the generosity of our industry partners and supporters. BIGGA's various member benefits, learning and development opportunities and other activities are made possible due to the ongoing commitment shown by these companies, organisations and individual donors. From our supporters through to our national patrons and partners, our thanks go to them all for their dedication to BIGGA and its members.



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All you need to know from around our industry

- Andy Swift celebrates 45 years as part of the team at Formby Ladies
- What's on this month - make a note of January's key dates for your diary



- **Women's Initiative (sponsored by PING):**
Women in Golf Society, Ali McGuirk & Dolores Brown
- **Unsung Hero (sponsored by England Golf):**
Aimi Bullock, founder of Sports For All UK Foundation
- **Rising Star (sponsored by Acushnet):**
Aimi Bullock, founder of Sports For All UK Foundation
- **International Woman (sponsored by Perry Ellis International):**
Regina Gachora, Deputy Chair Junior Golf Region 4 Africa
- **Brand of the Year (sponsored by BGIA):** Acushnet
- **Women in Turfcare (sponsored by BIGGA & Syngenta):**
Lucy Sellick, Course Manager, Raglan GC
- **Women's Leadership (sponsored by the GCMA):**
Tamasine Green, owner, Bunker Mentality
- **PGA Coach (sponsored by TGI Golf Partnership):**
Emma Brown, PGA Advanced Coach, The Kendleshire GC
- **Woman Content Creator (sponsored by The Loop):**
Alison Root, Women's Editor, Golf Monthly
- **Inspirational Achievement:**
Jackie Davidson, Director – Golf Education, The R&A
- **Trailblazer:** Jane Carter

Raglan revival earns award recognition for Lucy

Lucy Sellick was "deeply honoured" to receive the Women in Turfcare Award at the Women in Golf Awards following her outstanding work in bringing Raglan back to life.

The recognition follows an intensive redevelopment of the Welsh venue, with Lucy and her team helping to shape Raglan from a near-dormant site into a thriving club with a rapidly growing membership. Her leadership through the rebuild has been central to the club's revival and earned wide praise within the industry, culminating in her triumph at Foxhills G&CC.

"I'm deeply honoured to receive this award," said Lucy. "This recognition is particularly meaningful as it coincides with our club's inaugural year of

operation, a testament to the collective vision, dedication and diligent efforts of our entire team.

"The journey of establishing and launching the club has presented its share of challenges and triumphs, and this award truly symbolises our shared accomplishments."

One of 10 winners, Lucy added: "It is wonderful to see the hard work and contributions of women in the turf industry being celebrated. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our sponsors, BIGGA and Syngenta, whose invaluable support continues to foster progress and expand opportunities for everyone involved."

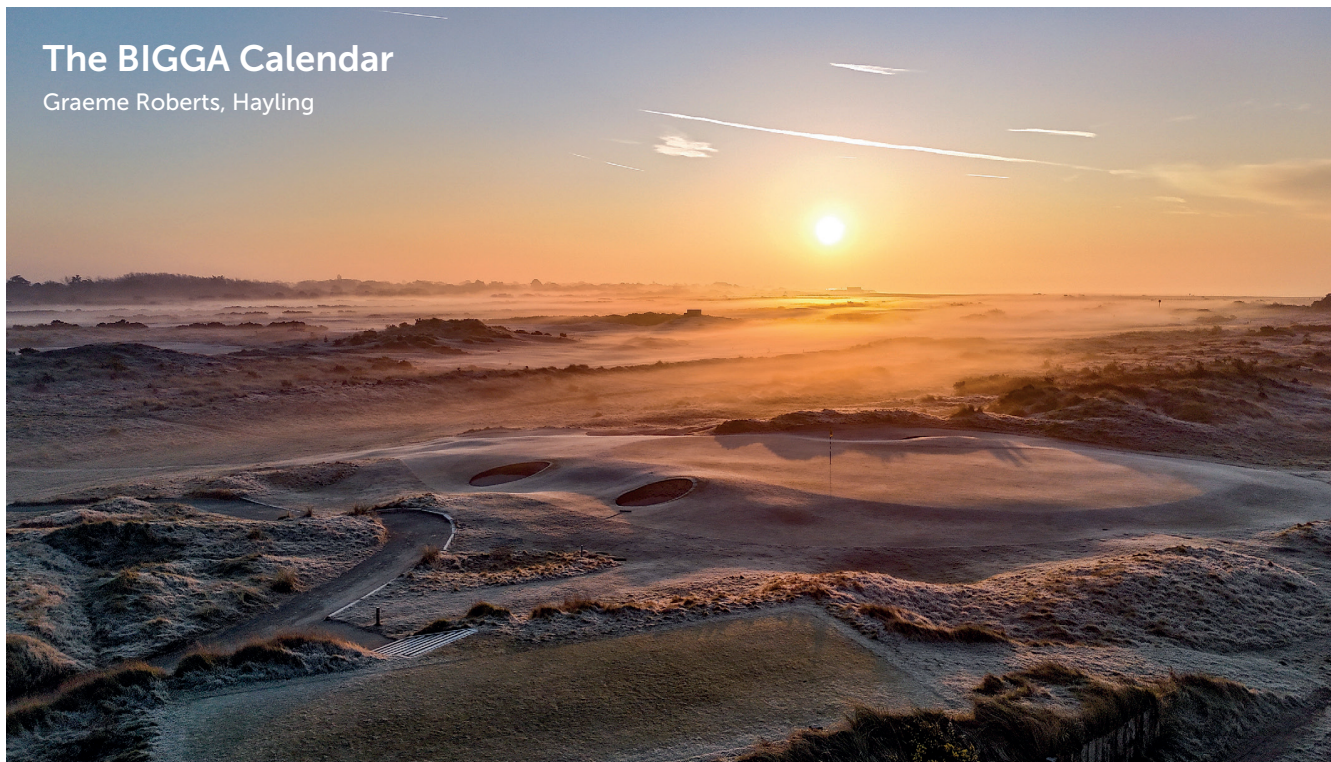
The ceremony also saw the awards' first double winner, Aimi Bullock, who

took both the Rising Star and Unsung Hero Awards for her work with golf and disability. Meanwhile, the special recognition awards, given to women who have paved the way for others, went to Jane Carter, whose career spans four groundbreaking decades, and Jackie Davidson, in recognition of her inspirational work at The R&A with The Women in Golf Charter and The Women in Golf Leadership Development Programme.

"Year on year, we uncover stories about women who are shaping the future of the industry. The competition this year was incredibly fierce; any one of the finalists would have been a worthy winner," said awards founder Nicole Wheatley. **GI**

The BIGGA Calendar

Graeme Roberts, Hayling



Andy Swift's 45 years at Formby Ladies



Andy Swift celebrated reaching a rare milestone in December as the long-serving greenkeeper brought up 45 years on the staff at Formby Ladies.

Joining the club straight from school, he has spent his entire working life on the links, becoming one of the most recognisable and respected figures in its day-to-day running.

Recognising Andy's tremendous service and loyalty over such a long spell, Course Manager Rob Sandilands said: "Andy has worked for Formby Ladies since he left school, aged 16, initially arriving on a YTS scheme in 1980.

"Throughout that time he has taken a lead role in maintaining, developing and enhancing the course and its surroundings as a SSSI."

The longevity of his service is matched by the consistency of his work ethic. Even after more than four

decades, Andy remains a driving force within the team.

"He continues to work as hard now as he has done throughout his incredible tenure," said Rob. "He is the fittest person in his 60s I've ever seen!"

Across those decades, greenkeeping has undergone major transformation. Techniques, machinery and expectations bear little resemblance to the industry Andy entered in 1980, but his willingness to evolve has been central to his impact.

craftsmanship. Rob explained: "Andy is known throughout the greens team and the members as the king of turfing! He's exceptionally good at turfing and reinstatement work, often leaving little to no trace of ever having been there."

His work has supported major improvements to drainage and irrigation, contributed to enhanced playing surfaces, and helped the club progress into England's Top 100 in 2019, where it still remains.

“Andy is known throughout the greens team and the members as the king of turfing!”

"So many tasks have now been made more efficient and mechanised through technology, to the point where they are almost unrecognisable even from 10 years ago," said Rob. "Andy has fully embraced these changes."

Within the team, Andy has earned a reputation for exceptional

His achievement also reflects a deep-rooted culture of loyalty at Formby Ladies. Rob highlights a five-strong team with 146 years of combined service. And as for how long Andy plans to continue, the answer is simple: "As long as his fitness levels let him." **GI**

Attend our AGM virtually

The 2026 BIGGA AGM takes place online at 1pm on Wednesday 14 January. All members of the Association are invited to attend. Scan the QR code to register and to access the agenda.





What's on this month

Dates for your diary

14 January

BIGGA AGM 2026 – Online

18-22 January

Continue to Learn – Harrogate Convention Centre



20-22 January

BTME – Harrogate Convention Centre

20 January

BIGGA Celebration – 5.30pm, Royal Hall, Harrogate

Free drinks reception from 4.30pm

21 January

BTME 5km Syngenta Early Bird Run – 6.15am,

Harrogate Convention Centre

A greenkeeper's best friend – Buddy



Owner's name: Roger Butler (BIGGA membership services manager for Northern Region)
Breed: Labradoodle (apparently)
Age: Four
Favourite treat: Toast
Favourite spot: Loves the beach and visiting golf courses with me
Naughtiest moment: Ate my wife's full bacon sandwich that was left on the kitchen counter
My dog is happiest: When having his tummy stroked



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



The background of the entire graphic is a collage of various photographs from a trade show. It shows people walking on red and green carpeted aisles, interacting at booths, and looking at equipment. Visible brand names in the background include Toro, Reesink UK, Star, Infinitum, and Kubota.

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From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- Willesley Park captain donates £4,000 to Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund
- The finalists of this year's BIGGA Awards highlight their outstanding work



“I’m incredibly honoured to be selected”

The 2026 BIGGA volunteers

- **Tiffany Mills**, Ryston Park Golf Club
- **Stephen van Rhyn**, Beaverbrook Golf Club
- **Andrea Sozio**, Carnegie Club at Skibo Castle
- **Paul Gater**, Caldry Golf Club
- **Adam Matthews**, Minchinhampton Golf Club

BIGGA members set for Sawgrass trip with John Deere volunteer programme

The five BIGGA members who will undertake the trip of a lifetime to TPC Sawgrass for this year's Players Championship have been revealed.

The chosen BIGGA members will be completely immersed in the hosting of the PGA Tour's flagship event, with flights, accommodation and other costs included courtesy of John Deere.

While in Florida, the greenkeepers will work alongside more than 100 turf professionals from across the globe and gain experience of elite championship agronomy.

"I'm incredibly honoured to be selected for the TPC Sawgrass volunteer support team," said Stephen van Rhyn, spray technician at Beaverbrook Golf Club. "I'm looking forward to meeting all the other BIGGA participants and volunteers at TPC Sawgrass. I'd like to thank John Deere, BIGGA and everyone behind the scenes who helped make this opportunity possible."

The scheme is open to full BIGGA members over the age of 21 and the trip takes place from 6-16 March 2026.

Chris Meacock, division sales manager

for golf and turf at John Deere, said:

"We always receive a large number of quality applications from greenkeepers who want to invest in their own personal development by being part of the tournament preparation for such a prestigious event. This year was no different."

BIGGA CEO, Jim Croxton added: "The TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Initiative is one of greenkeeping's most exciting opportunities and we are incredible grateful to John Deere for making it possible." **GI**

The BIGGA National Board comprises the following members who volunteer their time to support the association: Kevin Fish, Antony Kirwan, Gordon McKie, Peter Moore, Jonny Roberts, Lucy Sellick and Andy Smith
BIGGA President Ronnie Myles BIGGA Chairperson Steven Lloyd



BTME 2026: Let's talk First Green

Jenny Bledge will be discussing all things First Green at BTME – and she would love to see you there

January is often a time for reflection and fresh ideas. It gives us space to think about what we want the next 12 months to look like and maybe even try something we haven't before. With BTME just around the corner, it's the perfect opportunity to turn those thoughts into something tangible.

This year, I'm hosting a seminar that really taps into that mindset. It's for anyone who's curious about bringing young people into the profession in a practical and achievable way. If you've ever thought about running a First Green event or you're simply interested in inspiring the next generation, this seminar will give you a clear idea of what it involves and how to make it work at your club.

What the session is all about

We'll dive into what First Green looks like in practice and how any club, whatever the size or location, can make it work. I'll take you step-by-step through the process, share stories from clubs that have hosted brilliant events and highlight the easy wins that make the biggest impact. I'll also be joined by a panel of greenkeepers who hosted First Green events in 2025, representing clubs and organisations from across the country.

They'll be sharing how they found the planning, what the day itself was like and what they learned along the way. It's a brilliant chance to hear directly from those who have done it, ask questions and get a real feel for what the process looks like from their side.

Why you should be there

If you've thought about hosting a First Green event but don't quite know where to start, this is your chance to get clarity.

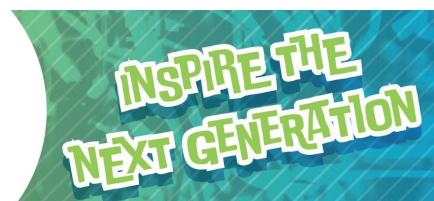
Already involved in outreach? You'll pick up new ideas and build confidence. Just curious about how the movement is growing across the UK and Ireland? You'll leave with the full picture of what's happening and why it matters.

Above all, this session is about momentum. The more clubs that feel confident to get involved, the more young people we can reach. And the more young people we reach, the stronger our future workforce becomes. It's a ripple effect and all of you play a part.

A small step that makes a big difference

Rather than just talking about change, this is a chance to do something that genuinely moves things forward. You don't need big budgets or complicated plans – a bit of interest and a willingness to open your doors can make a real difference to young people who might never have considered greenkeeping before.

So, if you're heading to BTME, take 30 minutes out of your day and come along. Grab a seat, bring your questions and hear how First Green works, why it matters and how you can get involved. **GI**





The **BIGGA** Picture



With
Jim Croxton, CEO

A new year brings new opportunities

I'm excited for a vibrant BTME and a united focus on the year's key challenges

I want to start by wishing everybody a very happy and prosperous New Year. The past 12 months have once again shown the remarkable resilience, professionalism and camaraderie that define our community.

Nowhere is that more evident than in the build-up to BTME. Bookings are significantly ahead of last year and the level of enthusiasm across the industry is palpable. Each January, Harrogate becomes the beating heart of the turf management world, and all the signs suggest this year's show will be one of the most vibrant and best attended we've ever delivered.

A huge amount of work has gone into shaping the Continue to Learn programme and I'm excited about what's in store. Our education offering continues to grow in depth and ambition, with an outstanding line-up of speakers who will bring insight, innovation and practical guidance to every corner of the profession. From climate resilience and agronomy, to leadership, wellbeing and professional development, the learning opportunities across BTME and Continue to Learn are exceptional.

It's particularly pleasing to see BIGGA Elevates added to the programme this

year, an event designed to support, inspire and connect women working in golf and turf. With a panel including the likes of Sky Sports' Sarah Stirk and Jackie Davidson from The R&A, it's a must for any women attending BTME. Promoting inclusivity and broadening the talent pipeline remains a vital part of our commitment to a stronger and more diverse industry.

Of course, BTME is also about celebrating the achievements of our members, and the BIGGA Celebration once again promises to be a wonderful evening of recognition.

The awards presented on the night, hosted by Sarah Stirk, reflect excellence across the profession, from outstanding team performances to the individuals who embody dedication and innovation at the highest level. It is always inspiring to see the very best of greenkeeping showcased in this way.

Looking ahead, our strategic priorities are shaped by the realities facing every golf facility. Water, workforce and weather – the 'three Ws' – will sit at the heart of BIGGA's work. These challenges demand clear leadership and collaborative solutions, and we are committed to supporting members as they navigate them.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Harrogate and to continuing our work on behalf of this exceptional profession. **GI**



“The BIGGA Celebration once again promises to be a wonderful evening of recognition”

A privilege from start to finish



Ronnie Myles,
President

It's been an unforgettable year as BIGGA President, filled with learning, friendship and pride in our brilliant greenkeeping community



As my year as BIGGA President comes to an end, I've been reflecting on what an extraordinary privilege it has been. After more than five decades in greenkeeping, I thought I understood our profession well. Yet this year has shown me there is always more to learn, more people to meet and more reasons to feel proud of the community we share.

The journey began at BTME in Harrogate, where the enthusiasm and kindness set the tone for everything that followed. Dozens of people introduced themselves, many who knew my name even though our paths had never crossed. Those conversations turned into friendships that I will carry with me beyond my time

in post. Ours is a global profession, but the sense of connection remains remarkably strong.

Soon after BTME came the trip to the GCSAA Conference in San Diego. It highlighted some of the differences in how our counterparts operate,

was equally enlightening. I was introduced to the impressive FEGGA Scholarship at Sweden's Kristianstad's GC and think that's a model that could be adopted in the UK.

Being invited to Royal Portrush to support the members selected for

That same enthusiasm was evident at the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and through the John Deere TPC Sawgrass programme, where both younger and more experienced candidates demonstrated how bright the future of the industry is.

Serving as BIGGA's President has been the greatest honour of my professional life. I'm deeply grateful to the staff, board, members, friends and family who have supported me throughout the year.

As I hand the presidency to John Wells, I do so with complete confidence. I wish him every success and know he will embrace the role with the same enthusiasm and enjoyment that I have been fortunate enough to experience. **GI**

“Serving as BIGGA's President has been the greatest honour of my professional life”

while still reinforcing the shared passion and professionalism that unites greenkeepers worldwide.

The visit to Bulgaria for the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations (FEGGA) Conference, where I met colleagues from 26 nations

The R&A Championship Agronomy programme was another standout moment. Working alongside eager greenkeepers embracing the chance to contribute to major events reminded me of the importance of creating opportunities for the next generation.

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Welcome to our new members

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International

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Turfgrass.ie (Turfgrass Consultancy)

Guðmundur Árni Gunnarsson (I)

Árni Ingi Steinsson (I)
Georg Rúnar Elfarsson (I)
GKG (Golf club of Kópavogur and Garðabær), Iceland

Graham Blower (I)

Cabot Cape Breton, Canada

Ryan Scott (I)

Beverly G&CC, Canada

Remco Klinkenberg (I)

Noordwijkse, Netherlands

Lance Lauer (I)

The Country Club at Castle Pines USAs

Scotland

Matthew Relph (AGK)

Andrew Butler (GK)
Trump International Aberdeen

Ross McWilliam (GK)

Meldrum House

Jack Knott (GK)

St Andrews Links Trust

Paul Bellew (GK)

Cathcart Castle

Nathan Innes (GK)

Prestwick

Daniel Scarr (P)

Rain Bird Europe

Benjamin Russell (RP)

Turf Irrigation Services (Scotland)

Northern

Dominic Johnston (APP)

Green Haworth

Anthony Lawler (AGK)

West Derby

Alexander Davison (AGK)

Adam Schoon (AGK)

Ben Brook (AGK)

Sand Moor

John Heginbotham (AGK)

Mellor

Hayden Blow (AGK)

Elsham

Joe Savage (GK)

Chorley

Ben Willshaw (GK)

Kieron Cunningham (APP)
Ringway

Richard Millward (GK)

Chapel

John Davenport (HGK)

Windermere

Nick Lofthouse (S)

Huxley Golf

Key

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

Central

Cullen MacCallum (A)

Kibworth

Bailey Godolphin (AGK)

The Worcestershire

Lee Phillips (AGK)

Kings Norton

Michael Butler (AGK)

Sunningdale

Arthur Andrews (AGK)

Harpenden Common

Max Crosby (AGK)

George Bielby (AGK)

Witney Lakes

William Worsley (AGK)

Cainhoe Wood

Bradley Fisher (GK)

Berkshire

Caden Woodward (GK)

Hoddington Estate (Atlas Country Club)

Mason Wakeman (G)

Churchill & Blakedown

Nicholas Walker (HGK)

Nuneaton

South East

James Freeman (A)

Mill Hill School

James Ferguson (APP)

Lexden Wood

David Scrutton (APP)

Batchworth Park

Daniel Pollard (AGK)

Ealing

Peter Stevens (AGK)

Berkshire

Samuel Wright (AGK)

Royal Mid-Surrey

Robert White (AGK)

Clandon Regis

Lewis Mitchell (AGK)

Langdon Hills

Ollie Grieves (AGK)

The Grove

Anthony Burnell (CM)

Sunbury Golf Centre

Gary Jones (M)

The Wisley

Christopher Illman (FA)

Hoddington Estate (Atlas Country Club)

Joshua Cramp (GK)

Thomas Day (GK)

Aaron Barry-Cox (GK)

Taran Stagg (GK)

Kiran Thomas (GK)

Philip Watkins (GK)

Terence Hare (GK)

Brian Dawson (HGK)

Garon Park Golf Complex (Norman Garon Trust)

Amy Edwards (GK)

Max Whiting (GK)

Sunningdale

Cameron Smith (GK)

Tandridge

Konnor Saunders (GK)

Banstead Downs

Blake Hardy (G)

Turf Tonics

South West & South Wales

Thomas Surey (APP)

Southampton FC

Joshua Woods (APP)

Bradfield College GC

Alan Jones (AGK)

Southampton City Golf Course

Luke Medlock (AGK)

Churston

Ricky Davis (DHGK)

Andrew Troop (FA)

Bude & North Cornwall

Joe Sexton (HGK)

Avington Park Golf Course



BIGGA

CPD

Continuing Professional Development

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

Lee Strutt MG CGCS MS CSTM PGDip, Loch Lomond

Marcus Davies, Royal

Matthew McCreadie, Myerscough College

Thomas Arbon, Woodbridge

Paul Fowkes, Kilworth Springs

John Ingham, Tandridge

Stefan Carter, The R&A

William Curran, Royal Ashdown Forest

Shane Meffen, Bramshaw



Royal Ashdown Forest

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

Marcus Davies, Royal

Derek Robson, The Duke's Course

Matthew McCreadie, Myerscough College



The Duke's

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Stuart Wilson. Managing Secretary.



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BIGGA's Steve Dudley-Brown receives the donation from club captain Bob Bissell alongside Chris Taylor

Willesley Park captain donates £4,000 to Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund

Willesley Park's outgoing men's captain marked the end of his term with a £4,000 donation to the Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund, declaring greenkeepers do not get the recognition they deserve.

The men's and ladies' captains at the Ashby-de-la-Zouch club select their charities at the start of each captaincy year, with the funds – raised through a series of events culminating in the club's annual charity day – split between the two.

Bob Bissell identified the fund as his charity of choice as he wanted to support the people who sit at the heart of every golf club's success.

Explaining his decision, Bob said: "I had plenty of charities I could have chosen, including some close to my heart, but when you're representing a golf club as captain your focus should be on doing the best for the club.

"The course is only as good as the people who maintain it, and greenkeepers can sometimes be

“The course is only as good as the people who maintain it”

overlooked. Most golfers who don't know the job imagine a greenkeeper on a sunny day riding a mower back and forth. They don't see the reality: nine months of the year in all weathers, often in darkness for half the year. I wouldn't do it this time of year, put it that way!”

The response among fellow members and past captains reinforced the feeling that he had made the right call.

"When I mentioned the Benevolent Fund to past captains and playing partners, every single one thought it was a great idea," he said. "Some of the bigger charities naturally attract attention, but if your focus is the golf club itself, it's the greenkeepers who

create and maintain the conditions golfers invest in and I wanted to do something for them."

Bob now hopes captains at clubs across the country will look at the Benevolent Fund as a worthy cause to support.

"Think about who's actually generating the charity money," he said. "At a private members' club, it's the members themselves, and the reaction I had from choosing a charity directly connected to the club was overwhelmingly positive.

"It's worth incoming captains considering charities that are close to the heart of their own clubs."

Course Manager Chris Taylor added: "I think it's great. Because it's a lesser-known charity, Bob donating that amount through his fund has been hugely positive. Like Bob says, maybe more clubs should do the same." **GI**



What's happening at BTME 2026?

We take a look at some of the star attractions at Europe's premier turf management exhibition later this month – see you all in Harrogate!

Venture through the grand halls of the Harrogate Convention Centre during BTME and there will be something to catch your eye at every turn.

From an impressive line-up of exhibitors to unparalleled opportunities for networking and learning, Europe's premier turf management exhibition offers an experience like no other.

Once again, this world-class North Yorkshire venue will welcome thousands of visitors, bringing together turfcare professionals from across the UK and beyond.

The event opens with Continue to Learn on 18 January, with BTME running from 20-22 January.

Here's a look at some of the standout highlights you won't want to miss at BTME 2026.



Exhibition

With more than 140 exhibitors covering services, from advice and consultancy through to architecture and design, and products spanning the range, from turf and seed to ride-on machinery, the exhibition truly is a one-stop shop for every need imaginable.



Callum Goodhind
Course manager,
The Wilmslow



I'll be attending BTME and have done so for the last 14 years. I visit because it's the single biggest standout opportunity of the year for not only education but brilliant networking among the industry that you only normally get over the phone or messaging. I recommend it to all greenkeepers who want to continue to build on or open a CPD account and to build relationships that they will very likely utilise for the rest of their careers."



Continue to Learn

Continue to Learn is BIGGA's world-renowned education conference, providing the equivalent of around three hours education for every golf club in the country. That makes it among the most influential and important annual events in the golf and greenkeeping calendar – and we hope to see you there.



BIGGA Hubs

These hubs are where our team will be based throughout the show and where you can come for help and advice on anything relating to your personal or professional development. There are three hubs located in the Hall 1 & 2 linkway, Hall 4 and Hall 5 – each aiming to cater to all your membership needs.



Jason Brooks
Course manager,
Stover

“I've been to BTME many times over the years and I'm looking forward to catching up with my peers this time around, many of whom I have not seen for a while. The Continue to Learn Programme provides invaluable education for those looking to gain more skills and knowledge, and the networking side of things is also hugely important. A casual chat over a beer can lead to some extraordinary new adventures both home and abroad.”





Seminar Theatres

All visitors to BTME are welcome to attend our free seminars, held across two theatres in Hall 4, to gain an insight into the latest technology and research. Seminars are also a great introduction to the Continue to Learn programme and there's no need to book in advance.



Education Hub

Visit the Education Hub in the Queen's Suite and meet representatives of the Greenkeepers Training Committee, who will be accompanied throughout the show by representatives from GTC-BIGGA Approved Training Providers (ATPs). They will be happy to discuss education opportunities ranging from apprenticeships to degrees, short courses, part-time and full-time learning and everything in between.

BIGGA Elevates

The inaugural BIGGA Elevates event, designed to empower women working in golf and turf, takes place at The R&A Clubhouse on 21 January. Featuring a panel of inspiring women, this exciting collaboration with The R&A and Syngenta offers guidance, networking and a welcoming space to build confidence and community.

5K Syngenta Early Bird Run

Join the 5K Syngenta Early Bird Run on 21 January to support the Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund. Syngenta donates £10 per runner, targeting £1,000. The event promotes wellbeing and camaraderie and is a great way to keep fit!



Matt Pleded
Course manager,
Stoneham

 I've always loved attending BTME. It remains one of the best ways to gain valuable education for our business and to stay up to date with changes across the industry. It's also a great opportunity to meet new people and catch up with friends from within the profession. From the moment we wake up to the late-night conversations in pubs and restaurants, we talk turf, share ideas and discuss the challenges facing our industry."



Dan Kendle
Head greenkeeper,
Newquay

 I've missed only a handful of BTME visits in the past 20 years. It's always good to go as everything industry-related is under one roof. As a head greenkeeper, it's the perfect opportunity to look at different products, machinery and companies in one place. It also provides a fantastic opportunity for education and networking. As part of the BIGGA Delegation for 2026, it's also going to give me the chance to meet my fellow delegates for the first time."



John Thornton
Irrigation technician,
Copt Heath

 I'm going this year as part of the Jacobsen FTMI class of 2025, where we will have a full complement of educational seminars. This will be my second time at BTME and I'm looking forward to reconnecting with people in the industry I haven't seen in a while, as well as the fantastic education that BIGGA put on every year."

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The BIGGA Awards

The BIGGA Awards recognise the exceptionally high standards and unwavering dedication of greenkeepers.

Such qualities, so common among BIGGA members, are vital to the success of any golf course or championship.

The awards, hosted by Sky Sports presenter Sarah Stirk, honour the innovation delivered by those who are at the cutting edge of their profession.

The ceremony takes place during the BIGGA Celebration, sponsored by Bernhard Academy, in Harrogate's historic Royal Hall on Tuesday 20 January, when winners will be crowned across three categories.

Greenkeeping Project of the Year with Price Turfcare

This award recognises those greenkeeping teams who have undertaken a specific project, completed within the past year. However, projects can be long term and may include course construction, renovation or rebuild. They particularly award innovative thinking and commitment to the project by the home greenkeeping team.

Championship Greenkeeping Performance of the Year with Bernhard & Company

This award recognises that the success of any tournament depends upon the expertise and dedication of the greenkeeping team. From the lowliest club championship through to golf's professional tours – all are only made possible due to the work of greenkeepers who go above and beyond to present the finest playing surfaces possible.

Outstanding Contribution of the Year with Kress

This award is presented to a BIGGA member or members who have made an outstanding contribution above and beyond their normal working life. This can be for charity, for the betterment of the greenkeeping profession or association or generally for society. There is no shortlist of nominees and the winner will be revealed on the night.

Greenkeeping Project of the Year finalists

sponsored by



Bearsden

The construction of a new nine-hole golf course at Bearsden marks the realisation of a long-held plan to modernise our facilities, writes Course Project Manager David McBride.

Working with my colleague John Brown, I helped deliver a sustainable layout to replace the club's original 1891 course, where ageing push-up greens restricted progress. A feasibility study in the early 2000s set the vision, and selling 10 acres of land provided the funding. Construction began in May 2023, and keeping the existing holes playable throughout became a major challenge, especially during periods of record rainfall. Public footpaths and the site's proximity to a UNESCO World Heritage location added further complexity.

We built three-and-a-half holes on new land before linking the layout back into the old course to maintain nine-hole play. Environmental priorities shaped the project, including a new flood-management system, native tree planting and the successful relocation of a protected ancient hedge. Establishing the USGA-spec greens was demanding due to a rapid-draining sand mix, but improved irrigation techniques reduced germination times significantly.

The completed course now offers modern playing surfaces, enhanced habitats and an improved experience for members whose support throughout the project was invaluable.



Royal Aberdeen

Royal Aberdeen has faced one of the most significant challenges in its long history as erosion continues to threaten key parts of the Balgownie Links, writes Course Manager Richard Johnstone.

The club, founded in 1780 and home to two renowned links courses, has lost substantial land over recent decades, with the 1st green sitting just 13 metres from the dune edge.

Our focus has been on preserving the current layout for as long as possible, prompting major reconstruction works, including a contingency 1st hole, a geotextile sandbag revetment, new 3rd tees and green, new 4th tees and a new walkway linking the 2nd and 4th.

With a small team, the scale of the project was enormous.

While contractors handled major shaping and the sandbag installation, all turving, ground preparation and finishing were carried out in-house, with nearly 12,000m² of imported turf laid and 2,000m² of our own turf lifted and reinstated.

High tides, frost, budget restraints and a cold, dry spring added further strain.

Despite these pressures, the team delivered every phase on time.



Greenkeeping Project of the Year finalists

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Royal Birkdale

Planning for Royal Birkdale's redevelopment was already in motion when I arrived more than three years ago, writes Course Manager Sean McLean.

Architects had produced early drawings and my first task was to lead contractor selection and prepare for a members' vote.

We assessed multiple delivery models, mindful that an Open Championship was less than three years away. Once members approved the plans, work started just four weeks later.

Phase one delivered the most significant redesign work: rebuilding three greens, creating two completely new holes and constructing tees, paths, bunkers and drainage across five further holes.

Phase two completed the remaining 11 holes, involving full bunker, tee and path reconstruction, major drainage upgrades on four holes and the creation of a new short-game area using the former 14th green and a new practice green.

Our in-house team made a substantial contribution, building all 100 bunkers, laying turf for every tee and half the paths and reinstating turf after drainage – all while preparing the course for an Open two years later.

Environmental gains were integral, with around 200 pines and scrub removed to restore natural dune habitat.

Key challenges included extreme weather, locating legacy infrastructure, coordinating multiple contractors, meeting tight timelines and managing agronomy alongside construction.



Burnham & Berrow

Just eight weeks out from Final Open Qualifying, Burnham & Berrow was confronted with a major issue on the course.

What began on 10 May as the unusual discovery of broken flags quickly escalated into a full-scale emergency.

By 12 May, offensive shapes and lettering appeared across the greens, revealing deliberate chemical vandalism that ultimately affected 20 putting surfaces. The team moved immediately into a structured recovery plan, balancing decisive intervention with the uncertainty of how deeply the contamination had penetrated.

Overseeding, light topdressing and continual monitoring were paired with soil tests and simple germination checks that offered the first indication that the rootzone was still viable. Close communication with The R&A agronomy team and support from ICL ensured every step was informed and measured. Despite early recovery, progressive die-back soon compromised ball-roll performance.

On 4 June, with four weeks remaining, the team opted to cut out and turf all affected areas. Standard machinery proved unworkable on such precise cuts, so the team engineered its own method: stabilising a CMW repair tool, adapting the Classen cutter with controlled rope assistance and lifting only the contaminated turf before reinstating clean material from a Channel Course green.

Careful rolling, watering and topdressing blended the repairs seamlessly. R&A testing in the final days confirmed championship standards had been met. On 2 July, the course presented flawlessly, drew no player complaints and delivered the performance expected of a Final Qualifying venue.



Championship Greenkeeping Performance of the Year finalists

sponsored by



Nairn

Preparation for the 2025 Women's Amateur at Nairn Golf Club closely mirrored the challenge faced ahead of the Men's Amateur Championship in 2021, writes Course Manager Richie Ewan.

Then, the team battled the coldest spring in six decades followed by an exceptionally wet May. In 2025, winter arrived early, with snow and ice from mid-November leaving the Championship Course in poor condition. Spring brought the driest period on record, and with cold irrigation water and cool easterly winds blowing off the Moray Firth, growth stalled as the plant stayed in a dormant, self-preserving state.

Sunlight was scarce through late 2024, with persistent damp, grey days affecting agronomic progress and staff morale. Micro-coring and VGR Top-changer work carried out in autumn had little time to settle before winter, leaving greens exposed. To rebuild momentum, the team cold-seeded and top-dressed through March to May, making the most of any suitable seedbed despite the rapidly approaching June deadline.

Recovery signs were slow but encouraging. Plans were repeatedly adapted in response to the extreme conditions, with valuable input throughout from R&A Agronomy Manager Adam Newton. By mid-to-late May, temperatures finally lifted, growth accelerated and closer monitoring of grass clippings guided final nutrient adjustments. With recovery established and competitors just days away, attention shifted to refining surfaces through cutting, aided greatly by a three-day window without golfers.

The championship proved a resounding success, showcasing excellent golf. The team took great pride in the outcome and were deeply grateful for the support from neighbouring clubs and from BIGGA and The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme.



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A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY.



The R&A Clubhouse at Harrogate 2026.

The R&A's Clubhouse schedule for Harrogate 2026 is as exciting as it is varied. To help you plan your visit and ensure you get the most out of the event, here's a comprehensive schedule of all the presentations, insights and learning opportunities from industry experts.



Day 1: Tuesday 20 January

Excellence in Agronomy Performance Delivered Sustainably.

13:00 – 13:45

Hands on Sustainability for Golf Course Managers

Prof. Jacob Thomsen

In this interactive session, you'll discover your sustainability strengths, identify areas for improvement, and explore where to take your next steps - or how to begin your sustainability journey - with practical insights for golf courses of all types.

14:30 – 15:00

Understanding your Soil Analysis

Sharon Bruce, ETL

Overview of soil analysis and what it means. From the most common analysis such as Organic Matter content and Golf Green indexing to some of the lesser-known physical testing methods which may help you in areas such as material selection and depth of profile construction.

16:00 – 16:30

USGA Golf Green Guidelines Update

Richard Windows and Gordon Howat, The R&A and Jordan Booth, USGA

Richard, Gordon and Jordan will discuss golf green specifications, and the challenges that must be overcome in 2026. After reviewing current guidance and the reflecting on ongoing performance and management of USGA greens, topics such as climate change, turf health and limited resources will be considered as The R&A looks to plot a sustainable pathway for new golf green constructions in the future.

9:00 – 10:00

The R&A Agronomy Brunch

Grab a coffee, meet and network with The R&A's leading experts in Agronomy. The Open Championship and AIG Women's Open Trophies will be on display.

10:30 – 11:15

Data Collection and the Golf Experience

Measuring golf green agronomic and surface performance in championship and club situations.

Paul Woodham, The R&A
and Matthew Pringle, USGA

Join the USGA and The R&A to discuss the value of data-collection and the impact it can have on the golf experience. Taking lessons learned from USGA and The R&A research programmes and championships and apply them to your facility. No matter your budget or location, this is valuable information to help you meet your site-specific goals and provide an excellent golf experience.

12:00 – 12:30

Golf Course Drainage and Construction

Gordon Howat and
Greg Smeaton, The R&A

The challenges in golf course construction are becoming more complex and extensive. Gordon will look at where the challenges are coming from and the impact this is having on the industry as a sustainable future that is resilient to these challenges is sought after. Greg will showcase technology and how the use of technology in construction facilities time, cost and resource benefits.



Day 2: Wednesday 21 January

International Insights into Sustainability and Greenkeeping.



Day 3: Thursday 22 January

Championing Leadership of Golf Courses.

9:00 – 10:00

The R&A Agronomy Brunch

Grab a coffee and meet and network with the international team working for and with The R&A, providing leadership and expertise in Agronomy and Sustainability.

10:30 – 11:00

Measuring and Controlling Growth

A look into clip yield analysis.

Pablo Munoz and Richard Windows, The R&A

Clipping volume measurement offers turf managers powerful insights into turfgrass growth consistency and plant performance. By tracking clipping yield trends, managers can detect early signs of stress, assess fertiliser and growth regulator effectiveness, optimise nutrient applications and improve ball roll performance. This session will review standard measurement protocols and share practical examples of how to interpret results and trends to guide data-driven agronomic decisions.

11:30 – 12:00

Good Irrigation for Great Agronomy

Pablo Munoz and Luiz Conejo, The R&A

Efficient irrigation is essential to achieving uniform turf quality and sustainable agronomy. This session explores key factors that influence water application and how each impacts turf performance. Key new strategies for assessing and improving irrigation efficiency will also be reviewed, as well as water conservation practices that supports responsible resource use.

13:30 – 14:00

USGA GS3, Deacon and Moisture Meter

Richard Windows, The R&A and Matt Pringle, USGA

A look back on data collection methods for golf green performance in the UK to present day with the introduction of the USGA GS3, Moisture Meter and Deacon platform. Learn how the technology works and what it can do for you to elevate green performance at the same time as optimising inputs by working to targets.

14:30 – 15:00

The R&A's and USGA's Approach to Championship Agronomy

Adam Newton, The R&A and Jordan Booth, USGA

Join Adam and Jordan as they discuss the challenges and lessons learned from championship agronomy. Get insights into previous championships and preparations for the 2026 championship season.

16:00 – 17:00

BIGGA Elevates Women in Golf & Turf

In collaboration with The R&A and Syngenta. An invite to women from the industry to join us in The R&A Clubhouse for drinks, bites and networking. During a panel Q&A you will have the opportunity to hear from inspiring women from the world of golf, turf and sport.

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome and coffee networking for golf club leaders

Grab a coffee and meet and network with The R&A's team, and fellow golf club and course leaders.

9:30 – 10:15

Market to Maintenance

Course condition and playability guidance for managers and committees.

Dr John Fry

This interactive workshop helps delegates assess their golf club's core market demographic and ensure course quality levels reflect this, by identifying key maintenance priorities. The session combines research insights with collaborative exercises, and attendees receive takeaway copies of The R&A's 'Golf Course Condition and Playability' resource documents for continued implementation.

10:30 – 11:15

Sustainability

How to get started in your club.

Prof. Jacob Thomsen

Sustainability is not a department in your club... it is a core part of your club! Before you start your first sustainable project you should measure your motivation to make sure it becomes a success - this interactive session will help you do that.

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Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

■ Course Manager Ben Adams discusses the ambitious project that has seen Ingrebourne Links become a championship venue



Jeremy's journey to becoming the 91st Master Greenkeeper

Jeremy Boone's path to becoming the 91st Master Greenkeeper did not run smoothly, but Springdale Resort's general manager and director of agronomy simply "refused to give up".

He is just the 37th person to possess both Master Greenkeeper and Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) classifications – two of the highest accolades available to experienced greenkeepers either side of the Atlantic – and an achievement he has been striving for since 2022.

He described the moment BIGGA's Deb Burnett called to deliver the news.

"It's been quite a journey," he said. "It's been at least three years of trying, with some failing along the way, but each time I refused to give up.

"When Deb called, she didn't say that

I had passed or failed, she just said, 'I called to see if you'd be available to come over here to BTME in January'. It was the best way to tell me I'd passed. I just lost it. I told her she'd have to talk for a minute because I couldn't."

Jeremy paid tribute to Springdale owner Lex West for his encouragement, but he reserved the highest praise for his wife, whom he calls his greatest supporter.

Jeremy's greenkeeping journey began in 1991, when he transferred to NC State University to study turfgrass management. Over the following decades he worked across four states, earned CGCS status and became aware of the Master Greenkeeper qualification in 1996 when he noticed 'CGCS, MG' alongside Gary Grigg's

name. He later stepped away from golf to run a hardware business, helping expand it from one store to five, but was drawn back when Springdale came calling, with his family having roots at the North Carolina venue.

"The only reason I came back was this golf course," he said. "My mother, father and grandmother worked here. My grandparents are buried within a few hundred yards of it. This place drew me back."

Jeremy has also achieved something personally meaningful.

"I'm probably the first Native American to be a Master Greenkeeper – I am an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians," he said. "That is the reason why I have such an affinity and a tie to the land." **GI**

Building Ingrebourne Links

The lure of the ambitious Ingrebourne Links project in Essex proved too strong for Ben Adams to resist

Some career opportunities are too good to turn down, even when you're already occupying a coveted role.

Such was the case for Ben Adams, who was making a name for himself at the prestigious London Golf Club when the chance to get involved in an exciting project presented itself.

After more than 20 years in the industry, Ben made the bold decision to take the helm at Ingrebourne Links in 2017, arriving at the Rainham site at a crucial time.

The course's inland-links identity, engineered landform and phased build created a demanding set of challenges for

Ben and his team. The scale of material movements, the complexities of establishing turf on an exposed site and the constant settling of the ground called for a strategic, adaptable approach from the outset.

Here, Ben outlines that journey in detail, reflecting on the construction process, the agronomic decisions that have shaped the course and the evolution of the playing surfaces as the site has matured.

His account offers an insight into the realities of guiding a modern venue from construction to championship standard and the mindset required to keep raising the bar.



Our owners had a plan and the necessary permissions to create something extraordinary”



Ingrebourne Links is situated in Rainham, Essex, just 20 minutes from central London. Its futuristic clubhouse – more akin to a ‘Grand Designs’ construction – boasts more glass than is perhaps sensible at a golf course yet offers visitors and members a striking welcome and stunning facilities.

Ingrebourne Links currently has 18 holes of championship golf. The unique inland-links style of the championship course offers a very different challenge to the traditional parkland courses in the local area. As any golfing purist would know, a typical links course is normally close to the sea, but the rolling fairways, gorse, large undulating greens and some blustery winds coming off the Thames Estuary really provides a feel of playing golf by the coast.

The unique site first received planning permission back in 2007, with tipping of materials starting in 2010, mostly coming from the Crossrail project. In 2013, Ingrebourne Links opened the par 3 Mini-Links course and the driving range. Next to open was the North nine in 2017, while the East nine opened gradually in 2019/2020, with certain holes

opening as they were completed. It was in July 2020 that we fully opened the 18 holes.

It's hard to believe how much material was required to create the fantastic manmade courses that we now have the pleasure of maintaining every day. It took about six years in all for all material to come to site, all in different states of condition, and even today the course is settling down and moving where materials are compacting and contracting.

Our owners had a plan and the necessary permissions to create something extraordinary. They also found a way to generate funding by using what was effectively a landfill project to construct the course from scratch, reinvesting the proceeds to purchase specialist materials – including rootzone and gravel for the USGA greens – as well as drainage and irrigation components, machinery and other essential items needed throughout the grow-in stages.

We tried to reduce costs by having unscreened topsoils delivered, which we then screened and used around the whole course. In fact, we produced enough to apply 200mm of screened topsoil to the whole site, which



About Ben

Ben has been in the greenkeeping industry for more than two decades, beginning his journey as a trainee greenkeeper at the London Golf Club in Kent back in 2003. Following a brief spell at Kings Hill, he returned to the London club as a first assistant before ascending to head greenkeeper by the age of 28. Ben held the course manager's role when the opening arose to be part of a new construction and grow-in project at Ingrebourne Links, representing a rare and ultimately irresistible opportunity.

Teamwork makes the dream work

I'm really proud of the way our team has developed alongside the golf course. I've got a strong core around me.

Joe Horlock is my deputy course manager and someone I worked with at the London Club. He's been at some high-end clubs and brings great experience, and with only the two of us able to spray, he takes on a huge amount of that workload.

Richard Whiting, our first assistant, has been in the industry well over a decade and can turn his hand to pretty much anything — tractors, grinding, irrigation, mechanics. He also supports me and Joe in overseeing and helping to guide the team.

Among the rest of the group, we've got two lads who have been here since the start and the remainder have come on board more recently, with a mixed range of ages across the whole team.

I try to rotate jobs so no one gets stuck doing the same thing every day. It keeps things interesting and steadily builds their skills.

While some don't have the same experience and qualifications you might find elsewhere, they're all willing learners and very committed.

You could say that we are stronger than the sum of our parts, and that is a huge credit to the whole team.

Timeline

- 2007:
Planning permission granted
- 2010:
Tipping of materials begins, primarily sourced from the Crossrail project
- 2013:
Par-3 Mini-Links course and driving range open
- 2017:
North nine opens
- 2019–2020:
East nine opens gradually as holes are completed
- 2020:
Full 18 holes open for play
- 2025:
Hosted the PGA Professional Championship



“Our course strives to provide a championship experience every day”

provided us with almost entirely stone-free material to prepare seed straight away.

Behind the scenes and even before any materials could be delivered, vigorous permissions and planning applications were required, with lengthy and costly processes involving:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Hydrological assessment
- Ecological Survey
- Buildings Regulation Approval

With the course now predominantly built with inert materials, and then the 200mm topsoil applied, the choices of which grasses to be sown was something we had to consider carefully. The decision in the end was to go with a fescue/rye mix on all tees, fairways, approaches and rough areas.

With USGA greens built, our initial decision was to only sow with fescue, but I altered that approach in light of how wet the winters were, as the fescue on the greens just wasn't surviving. To address that, we first introduced some

browntop bentgrass and had some success but ultimately found it is quite a problematic grass species to establish on an open golf course.

In 2019, I made the bold decision to go with a dwarf ryegrass mix from Barenbrug and have had some great results with it.

The inspiration was seeing an article published in this magazine about a course in Scotland that was suffering with similar traits, but with the added problem of being next to the coast and suffering from salt scorch and high winds. This was a massive learning curve for me as we only trialled this initially on the open North nine greens.

Having seen an increasingly positive impact from the introduction of dwarf ryegrass to the greens sward, I moved forward with including this from the grow-in stage on the East nine course, along with fescue and bent after the sward established, but this time before we opened the holes for play. To date, the mix seems to work well for us and can achieve cutting heights down to 3.5mm.

Disease tolerance has improved, but generally only seems



Hosting the PGA Professional Championship

We hosted four tournaments in 2025, but the standout was the PGA Professional Championship – a four-day, 72-hole event with 144 players. At 7,150 yards, par 72, with changing winds and tournament-speed greens, the course offered a stern test. Harry Casey's 13-under-par performance underlined the challenge, and the event drew excellent feedback from The PGA and competitors.

My previous experience with major tournaments shaped the preparation. Once The PGA provided the format, schedule and course-set-up requirements, I planned backwards from tournament week: cutting lines, heights of cut, staffing and equipment needs. That informed the lead-up work, from bunker checks and spraying schedules to aeration, topdressing and gradual height adjustments. With spring renovations completed in early March, we had three months to prepare. An exceptionally dry spring forced some tactical changes, but the team responded superbly, maintained standards and entered the week ready, focused and able to enjoy the event.

Course set-up

A team of 10 completed daily tasks as follows:

- Changing holes each day
- Ride-on mow greens at 3.5mm
- Rolling greens
- Single-cut approaches at 9mm
- Cutting tees at 9mm
- Cutting fairways 50/50 at 15mm (higher than preferred due to prolonged dry conditions)
- Cutting two bands of semi-rough at 50mm
- Fully raking all 50 bunkers
- Green speed averaged 10.5 on the stimp (on notably undulated surfaces)

to affect the poa annua. We have seen most improvements on the perimeters of the greens and around the pins, as there seems to be a lot more resilience to wear.

A wall-to-wall irrigation system has certainly contributed to successful establishment of all areas, the downside meaning we have just under 1,000 heads to keep an eye on!

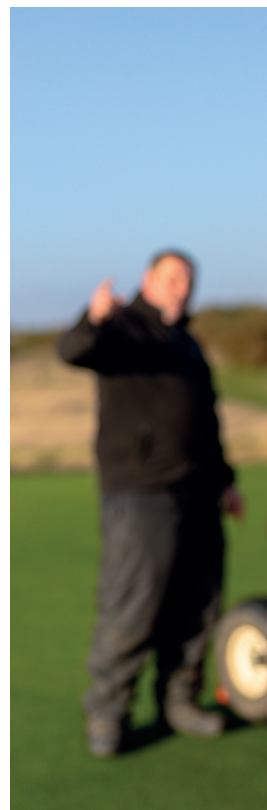
In July 2026, the complete 18 holes will have been open six years. Throughout the years, we have had the privilege of hosting many tournaments from county to national level, with our biggest four-day event arriving when we hosted the PGA Professional Championship in June 2025.

I have had the opportunity through this period to work alongside a fantastic man, Alan Walker, a PGA Master Professional and golf course architect. Together we have overcome many a hurdle, which we expected from what is still a very moving, settling golf course, but I feel a huge part of what has enabled us to host such prestigious events in a relatively short period has been understanding what goals we want to achieve, and being realistic about how to achieve them.

It really has been amazing seeing things mature over the years, from having a blank canvas to then shape, mow and tweak until we are happy with the results. The relationship between Alan and I has been critical in our success.

Our course strives to provide a championship experience every day, so trying to understand what that experience should feel like and present like has also helped me focus on what's required. I need to understand the golf course and the whole club from a player's perspective, and my golf game is slowly improving, playing off a 10.5 handicap.

Developing that understanding of the member and visitor experience was something I learnt back during my days at the London Club, where I had many wonderful opportunities hosting DP World Tour events. I truly believe gaining an insight of what your club wants the customer to experience also helps create a benchmark of how you set things up – should greens be fast? What height of cut should fairways be? These are the things that will also determine the type of budget you may need to achieve certain things.





It's so important to understand that changes can be brilliant, they can improve the golfers' experience, make operations quicker, improve surfaces, but such changes can have unintended consequences too and may even have an impact on the budget.

Moving from the London Club to Ingrebourne Links is a great example of this. At the London Club I was part of a very large team with 36 holes to look after. Here, I have 10 staff, including myself, and that means I have to be hands-on when I can, including spraying from time to time.

Our ambition is to work towards the exceptional standards and experience the London Club can offer, especially as I have experienced how and what is needed to achieve this. I like to use the saying 'Rome wasn't built in a day' but believe that pushing for excellence and high standards certainly drives you closer to achieving your goals.

Every year spent here at Ingrebourne Links has been a learning curve, emotional, exciting but most of all rewarding. Having an open mind to possibilities and its potential has really helped move Ingrebourne Links forward and provided a catalyst for the success we have had so far. We may currently be seen as a small fish in a big pond, but we absolutely have ambitions to join the company of the elite clubs out there. **GI**

The importance of SMART goals

Setting clear, realistic and achievable goals is vital to the success of any project. This is where having SMART goals comes into play. Every year I aim to improve at least one area of the course, using the SMART approach to plan and budget for the work required.

- **Specific** – Clearly defined objective with no ambiguity
- **Measurable** – Quantifiable outcome to track progress
- **Achievable** – Realistic and attainable given resources
- **Relevant** – Aligned with overall goals or priorities
- **Time-bound** – Set within a defined timeframe



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Seasonal Gardener

All England Lawn Tennis Club



The Seasonal Gardener supports tournament landscaping and venue presentation across all AELTC sites, including Wimbledon, Raynes Park, Roehampton, the Wimbledon Queue and hospitality areas. Responsibilities include planting, watering, pruning, weeding, hedge cutting, clearing and tidying grounds, while operating and maintaining horticultural machinery and tools. The role requires adherence to health, safety and manual-handling procedures, driving buggies and working across horticulture and groundstaff teams. The role plays a key part in delivering the AELTC's "Tennis in an English Garden" vision, contributing to the installation of thousands of plants for The Championships. Candidates need horticultural training (RHS Level 2 or equivalent), practical experience, strong communication skills, reliability, attention to detail and a full driving license.

Please scan the QR code to apply



Seasonal Groundsperson

All England Lawn Tennis Club



The Seasonal Groundsperson supports the preparation and maintenance of all AELTC playing surfaces and surrounding grounds for The Championships, Pre-Wimbledon Qualifying, Members' events and year-round use. Duties include daily care of grass, clay, hard and covered courts; mowing, marking, renovating, applying nutrition, and controlling weeds, pests and diseases. The role involves operating machinery, maintaining equipment, setting up courts for play, and ensuring tidy, safe grounds across all venues. Strong turf knowledge (Level 2 or equivalent), PA1/PA6A, and a full driving license are essential, along with professional experience on competition-standard courts. The position requires flexibility, teamwork, excellent communication, and working varied shifts, including extended hours during the tournament.

Please scan the QR code to apply



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Orient Irrigation Services seeks a Golf & Turf Customer Support Specialist to support expanding machinery sales across the region. The role involves providing technical advice and training for top-tier brands like John Deere, TruTurf, Campey, Dennis/SISIS, Trimax and Wiedenmann. Candidates should bring at least five years of technical support experience—ideally within golf and turf—and strong IT skills for using diagnostic tools. Key responsibilities include field demonstrations, overseeing product handovers, optimisation training and resolving customer issues. You'll build lasting customer relationships and provide exceptional service to promote continued product use. Familiarity with John Deere products, excellent communication and flexibility for extended hours are essential.

To apply: Please send your CV to harry@orientirrigation.com



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It's shaping up to be a busy start to the year for Sam Cook and his team at Frinton



What we do in... January

Club: Frinton,
Essex

We've just completed one of our par-3 tee rebuilds and the next one is scheduled to start on 5 January. It's another full re-level and re-turf job, roughly 200 square metres, and it will take three or four of the team out of day-to-day operations for a good stretch.

With 475 square metres completed before Christmas, getting this next tee done cleanly and on time will be a big focus and, if it goes well, I'll be absolutely over the moon.

Alongside that, I'm hoping to begin our fairway aeration programme. Under normal circumstances I would have already completed the first pass by now, but the ground has been too firm and dry. We've put a lot of money into overseeding and fertilising the fairways following the damage from the summer, and with some areas still quite weak, I've been cautious.

If I go in too deep or too hard while the surfaces are still dry, I could set recovery back significantly. So the plan for January is to start with a shallower depth and then, ideally, crank it down for a second pass when conditions allow.

Beyond those headline jobs, it's the

usual January work where possible – cutting, ironing, strimming, weeding, bunker sand work and keeping presentation standards up. We're still mowing most areas weekly at the moment, and if winter growth and ground conditions allow, we'll continue that to maintain a consistent look across tees, collars, fairways, rough and surrounds.

While we've been fortunate as a club to invest heavily in fairway renovation, some of the weaker areas remain fragile. That will affect other cultural practices too. For example, I normally verti-drain twice and carry out a spring rake with the Wiedenmann Terra Rake.

If the young grass hasn't filled in as strongly as I'd like by early spring, I'll have to avoid those thin areas so that I don't rip out what we've only just managed to establish.

A lot will depend on what sort of spring we get – warm and wet, and golfers won't notice much; another cold and difficult one, and the difference will show.

We ended last year in decent shape, and if we can get these two tee projects chalked off without major issues, the whole team will start 2026 in a good place. **GI**



“We've put a lot of money into overseeding and fertilising the fairways”



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Weeding out clean turf

The launch of a new selective broad-leaved herbicide, Crenzar from Syngenta, brings a valuable option for weed control strategies to keep turf surfaces clean



Author: Pete May, Syngenta Technical Manager

Weed free surfaces rate as one of the highest priorities for players, second only to ball lie and turf consistency in a player rating survey. Given its importance for playability and appearance, many greenkeepers are adopting a season long approach to herbicide strategies.

That has been further compounded over the past year, where many

fairways in particular suffered turf cover loss in the extreme hot, dry conditions – leaving bare soil and space for serious weed incursion, with rapid establishment over the wet and warm autumn. The increasing burden of worm casts also creates ideal conditions for weed seeds to germinate.

While a spring herbicide treatment has traditionally been the norm, at least two applications are now often needed to tackle more problematic weeds. For some turf surfaces where weed pressure is high and control is a priority, multiple applications may be required during the growing season, requiring a robust herbicide strategy.

Like all plant protection controls, targeting weeds follows the mantra of right product; right time; right place.

First step is selecting the herbicide that most effectively controls the spectrum of the weed population present. Common threats that are quick to pop up – including daisy, dandelion and clover – can be effectively controlled by many different broad-leaved weed herbicides at the right timing.

It's the more challenging species, such as plantain, yarrow and speedwell, that can be harder to achieve a consistently high level of control, and where attention to application timing, techniques and

“Targeting weeds at early growth stages while they’re actively growing is key”

herbicide selection will pay real dividends.

Some of these more difficult to control weeds may require different herbicide choice, a mix of herbicides to give a broader spectrum of activity, or a sequence of treatments that deliver multiple hits to weaken and kill the weeds, particularly if treatment has been delayed and the target plants have grown larger.

Products with more than one complimentary active ingredient can offer a greater weed spectrum of control and reliability, as well as reducing the risk of herbicide resistance developing. Many products only have one application per season permitted, requiring new strategies and approaches to enable a season-long approach.

The new twin-active broad-leaved weed herbicide, Crenzar from Syngenta, has root uptake into weeds, as well as foliar. Its systemic movement up and down within the weeds phloem system gets to the key growing points in the weed for a better kill.

Early target

Targeting broad-leaved weeds at early growth stages will always achieve better results, compared to later timing on larger weeds. The more difficult weed species are to control, the more important it is to treat them early.

Alongside the priority for treating weeds at early growth stages, is the requirement to target actively growing weeds. This is essential for the effective translocation of the herbicide throughout the plant and into the roots. The levels of control could be impaired if weeds are sprayed when it is too cold or too dry for active growth, along with potential risk of adverse turf effects if herbicide is applied in stress conditions.

Using the Syngenta Turf Advisor App to identify Growth Potential conditions is a good gauge for weed germination and growth.

Application advice

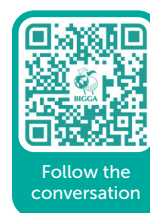
With application, although systemic foliar herbicides are taken up and moved within the plant, optimum results will still be achieved with better spray coverage of the leaf surface.

The most important aspect for foliar retention is to avoid over wetting the surface of the leaf, leading to run-off of the spray. That can be a particular problem with waxy or shiny leaved weed species, and on small leaved weeds at their most susceptible treatment timing.

Where conditions and the herbicide product label allow, treatment at a water volume of 200 to 250 litres per hectare, applied using a Syngenta 04 XC Nozzle, for example, will give a good combination of leaf coverage and retention on the surface. With some herbicides, the addition of an adjuvant in the tank mix has been shown to give enhanced performance for weed control.

For many turf managers it is also important to have the flexibility of knapsack application approval on the herbicide label, to target patches or spots of weeds, as well as overall boom sprayer treatment. Options are now very limited for knapsack herbicide treatments in turf, although both Overtake and Crenzar can be used for all applications.

With extended seasons of conditions favourable for weed seed germination, new herbicide strategies and more integrated actions will be required to prevent weeds spreading further in turf surfaces.



Key factors for effective weed control

- Weed identification
- Herbicide activity selection
- Treating weeds at early stage
- Apply to actively growing weeds
- Target weeds with accurate application
- Monitor results and adapt future strategies

Changing weather conditions are increasing the challenges of weed incursion. Last summer's extreme stress on fairway turf left gaps that weeds have been quick to fill.



Target weeds while they are at early growth stages and actively growing for the best control results.

Continue to Learn

Latest developments in turf herbicide technology, and how to get the best results, will be covered in the **BTME Continue to Learn programme**. Find out how to get the best from Overtake and Crenzar, along with new developments in selective grassweed herbicide to restore fescue surfaces and ecological rough. Thursday 22 January, Seminar Theatre A.



The world of greenkeeping

From Italy to India and America to Australia, there are BIGGA members working all over the world

Martin Slater has spent the past 15 years helping to shape Fontana into one of Austria's standout venues.

Originally from Devon, he entered greenkeeping at 16, trained at Cannington, worked in New Zealand, and arrived in Austria in 2004 expecting a six-month stint. Instead, he built his career there, joining Fontana – a prestigious club located just outside Baden – in 2011 and becoming course manager in 2015.

Today he oversees a large, multinational team at a resort-style course presented to an immaculate standard.

Fontana went through a major reconstruction while you were in charge. What was that period like?

From 2017 to 2021 we rebuilt the greens, tees, bunkers and irrigation, and built four new holes, but always kept 18 in play. At one point we had 30 greens on the go at different heights and different stages of grow-in. Some even had different hole numbers depending on the year. Trying to tell staff where to go, especially the new guys, was very difficult. Confusing is the word for it.

What agronomic choices did you make during the rebuild?

We manage 16 hectares of bentgrass fairways, all reseeded

with 007 to improve dollar spot resistance, and our tees are also 007, maintained at 5 mm. We've upgraded irrigation from block coverage to Rain Bird single-control heads, which lets us water far more precisely. If you have the option to go single-control, it's a big step forward for efficient water management.

What are the main climatic challenges you face in Austria?

Because of the constant heat and humidity, when we check the Smith-Kerns model in the morning the dollar spot pressure is often around 30–35% and can stay elevated for weeks. That sustained pressure is generally much higher here than in Scandinavia, where cooler conditions usually shorten and reduce the high-risk periods.

You run a large, international team. How does that work in practice?

We're at 28 staff now and at least 50:50 English-speaking. We've had people from India, Australia, UK, Germany, Poland, Italy, Brazil, Hungary, Slovakia, Albania – all over. Most years I put out an advert for British greenkeepers. A lot of people stay two or three years, learn a lot and then move on, and I'm more than happy to support their development.



Martin Slater
 Fontana, Austria

“At one point we had 30 greens on the go at different heights and different stages of grow-in”

What are the key skills you try to develop in seasonal or short-term staff?

I always show them how to calibrate sprayers and fertiliser spreaders properly. Most don't learn that in college. They learn how to put down a bag of fertiliser, not how to apply 25g per square metre. Irrigation is another major one. We've

The nine and nine system

One of the big things Barry Britton introduced at Fontana is the nine and nine system. Instead of cutting all 18 fairways in a single day, the team cuts nine fairways along with foregreens and tees one day, then the other nine fairways and foregreens and tees the next day. This rotation continues seven days a week. For greenkeepers coming over from the UK, this approach can be a difficult one to get to grips with. However, with fairways here spanning 16 hectares, mowing and boxing off all of them in one day would be extremely time-consuming.

got 2,000 sprinklers and at any point 20 might need fixing. A trainee might take a day doing something an irrigation tech could do in an hour, but the job gets done and they learn.

You follow a data-driven approach. How did that develop?

That came from Barry Britton, the Canadian superintendent who carried out the original build and grow-in here. He got me into data back in 2015 – soil samples, OM246, Clip Volume, Smith-Kerns, GDD, everything. My deputy Adam and myself have followed Jason Haines and Micah Woods for many years, and this year we followed the GvX model and averaged 11.2 feet on the greens from March to November. We only put down 6.8g of nitrogen for the whole year. No stress, no issues – the easiest year we've ever had and the best results.

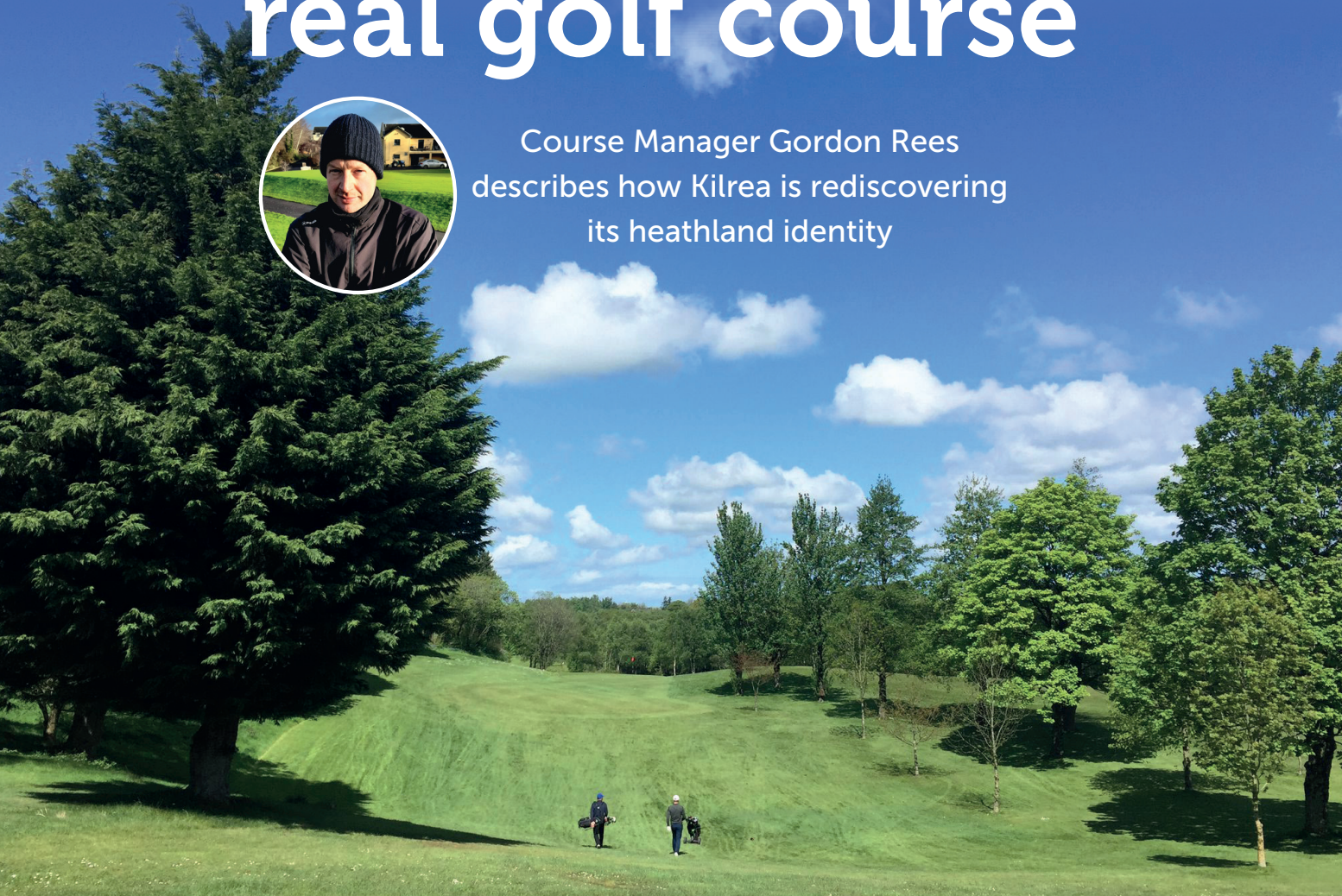
How settled do you feel at Fontana now?

I've had a few job offers, but it would be very hard to leave. The facilities are massive – sand bays, space, a big team, even a bulldozer and a 25-ton digger. My girlfriend is a teacher in Vienna and doesn't want to move, so it's Fontana or Vietnam – it would have to be somewhere completely different! **GI**

Revealing the real golf course



Course Manager Gordon Rees describes how Kilrea is rediscovering its heathland identity



Formed in November 1919, Kilrea Golf Club is situated just outside the town on land known as the Rough Hills. The original 9-hole layout was designed by Hughie McNeill, the professional at nearby Royal Portrush. Following the official opening, contemporary press reports highlighted the 'dry nature of the soil', which provided fine quality turf for golfing purposes.

Several factors led to a brief switch of venue in the late 1920s, but when this proved unsuccessful, the club returned to the Rough Hills in 1938. Thereafter, only minor changes were made to the layout. The most notable feature of the undulating terrain was its heathland character, with gorse, heather and fescue grasses all thriving.

While a number of hedges were used to separate some holes, the only trees present were located on the course's perimeter. Indeed, our oldest member can recall a total absence of trees in the playing corridors in the late 1960s.

Over time, the course began to lose some of its original heathland features. The club, like many others, planted many leylandii trees when this was fashionable in the 1970s and 1980s. As well as looking totally out of place on a

course of this type, these specimens had grown to such a size by the early 2000s that they were having an increasingly detrimental effect on turf quality.

Large conifers were not the only problem. Well-meaning committees had continued to plant oak, ash and pine trees until about 10 years ago. This was a period in which our understanding of climate change and carbon emissions was much less nuanced than it is today. A belief existed that all tree planting was good for the environment and all tree removal was bad.

Some trees had also been planted in a bid to improve safety by 'protecting' golfers from errant shots. However, this was quite literally a 'hit-and-miss' affair and in some cases actually increased the level of danger as golfers playing adjacent holes were unable to see each other due to the trees.

In addition to tree planting projects, attempts to ascertain whether sections of peat bog which bordered the course on one side could eventually be developed into golf holes led to the peat and heather being moved by excavation machinery. These plans to extend the course were quickly

abandoned, but the disturbance of the soil provided the opportunity for birch trees to self-seed and invade what had previously been an open area of heather and gorse.

By the mid-2010s, it was becoming apparent that these trees presented challenges in terms of turf management and had a negative impact on the aesthetics of the course. It was the former issue that was initially most pressing for the greenkeeping team, as the quality of the turf on multiple greens and tees was beginning to suffer. Tree management became a regular feature of the winter maintenance programme, as staff sought to ensure that greens and tees had access to sufficient light and airflow.

While improving playing surfaces was the main objective, these tree clearance projects also formed the starting point for a more general heathland restoration project. The importance of this work was becoming more evident and was often discussed when the course was visited by experts in agronomy and tree management.

Advice was sought from District Forestry Officer Ian Wright-Turner, whose verdict provided a stark warning of what was at stake. Standing on the 2nd hole, which was once a signature heathland par 3 played over an expanse of heather, Wright-Turner remarked that birch trees, if left unchecked, would completely take over the area.

Following a visit to the course in the spring of 2021, the agronomist Dr Ian McClements commented that, "Kilrea has a unique position in Irish golf in so far as it is one of the very few genuine heathland courses in Ireland with a mosaic of heathland habitats to match. The club is at significant risk of losing this due to scrub encroachment and declining heather". He advised that, "Appropriate interventions are taken to halt the decline or subsequent loss of this biodiversity which is not just important to the golf course but also nationally and indeed within a European context".

“ You just need to peel off the superfluous stuff and reveal the real golf course ”

With the need to prevent the loss of the course's native heathland character now better understood, the club also sought to explore how the entire golfing experience at Kilrea could be improved. In 2024, the club's committee engaged golf architect Ken Kearney to draw up a coherent masterplan for long-term course development. After a thorough appraisal of all aspects of the course, he observed that the club possessed a unique and special landscape and suggested that there was an, "Obligation to restore the site to its former glory". He compiled a comprehensive masterplan which contained a wide range of recommendations, including the redesign of bunkers, the extension of closely mown turf to create more interesting shots around the greens and major alterations to the tee complexes at the 1st, 3rd and 9th holes.

By far the most important issue he identified, however, was the need to restore the course's heathland character. The main focus of the masterplan, therefore, was ensuring that the environment was conducive to the regeneration of 'heath' plants such as heather and gorse.

To achieve this, the removal of all non-native trees

About Kilrea

Kilrea Golf Club is a 9-hole course in Northern Ireland, located approximately 20 miles from the championship links of Portstewart and Royal Portrush. Recently described by golf course architect Ken Kearney as, "By some distance the most interesting nine-hole layout in Ireland", Kilrea is a heathland course that enjoys a reputation of being a very dry site with greens closer in quality to its more illustrious neighbours than might normally be expected at a small club.



Natural rough - Native grasses have been encouraged in recent years.



2nd hole - A picture which neatly captures both the potential for heathland regeneration and the potential for further loss if no action is taken. Heather in front of the tee has gradually been invaded by birch trees. Work to remove these is ongoing.



Heather at 2nd - Picture taken looking back towards the tee. The heather is under threat from birch trees. Work to remove these started last winter. Before that, the tall trees on the left of the picture extended all the way across to the tee, which can be seen on the right, where they impacted on turf quality as well as on the view.

Letting nature take its course

Sustainability was at the heart of architect Ken Kearney's masterplan for Kilrea. He emphasised the gradual withdrawal of previously widely used chemicals and concluded that golf clubs would have to create the conditions that allowed disease-tolerant fine grasses to flourish.

At Kilrea, the need for sustainability was already influencing practical, day-to-day course maintenance operations, but the masterplan brought together sustainable turf management and heathland restoration.

Naturalised rough had gradually been introduced across several holes, with specific areas allowed to grow through the spring and summer before being cut and collected in early winter. This was fully endorsed by Kearney, who advised the club to develop further natural areas as a matter of priority and noted that the previous practice of boundary-to-boundary mowing was not compatible with the aim of embracing diversity, wildlife and conservation.

Leaving rough to grow naturally saves time and fuel, reduces emissions, greatly enhances the aesthetics of the course and creates habitats for flora and fauna. The predominance of native fescue at Kilrea made the introduction of naturalised rough possible as it results in a wispy type of sward in which golfers could retrieve a ball without too much difficulty. More productive grass species would not have been suitable.

and vegetation, which were detracting from the golfing experience as well as causing agronomic issues, would become a priority.

Kearney pointed out that trees and scrub were hiding from view the rolling landscape and long vistas which made the course unique. He concluded that Kilrea had, "A stunning golf course; you just need to peel off the superfluous stuff and reveal the real golf course".

The architect's masterplan was presented to the club's committee in October 2024, but would not be implemented until approved by the wider membership at their annual general meeting in February 2025. In the intervening period, the greenkeepers focused on aspects of the proposal which

overlapped with existing winter work programmes. The removal of birch trees, which had gradually encroached into the native heather beside the 2nd tee, helped to improve a playing surface which had previously suffered from excessive shade. Work continued on thinning out a plantation of pine trees along the south-western boundary of the course.

These trees had grown to a considerable height, preventing this area from drying out and making fungal disease much more likely. Their removal helped to address these problems and also opened up the superb view of an open expanse of heather on the course's perimeter.

Following the adoption of the masterplan at the February 2025 meeting, work could begin in earnest. The plan's emphasis on tree management meant that this was an obvious starting point. While the extremely dry spring of 2025 caused a myriad of problems for golf clubs throughout the UK and Ireland, the firm ground conditions did at least enable the use of heavy machinery to remove large conifers, poplars, alders, birch and ash trees affected by dieback. Where these trees were located within the playing zone, the areas which contained the trunks and roots were levelled and sown with fescue. Where trees were removed outwith the normal line of play, the objective is to facilitate the regeneration of heather and gorse.

The extensive tree removal works have many interlinked benefits"

Tree removal provided much improved views of the surrounding landscape and the Sperrin mountains in the distance. Significantly, it also addressed a range of safety issues identified by the architect by opening up a line of sight between different holes. With the large leylandii trees gone, golfers striking wayward shots and those in danger of being struck were now visible to one another.

Removing trees is, of course, critical to protecting and enhancing the heath-style landscape. Equally important, however, is ensuring that native vegetation subsequently returns and thrives. Previous efforts by the greenkeepers to re-establish heather at the 2nd hole had met with mixed success, as some new plants were overrun by the regrowth of brambles and other undesirable vegetation.



3rd hole (with poplars)



3rd hole (without poplars)

Three large poplar trees which were not in keeping with the heathland environment have been removed. Naturalised rough has been introduced and can be seen in both pictures.

It was often difficult for the small team to keep on top of this type of work while also carrying out routine and seasonal course maintenance tasks. However, with Kearney's masterplan emphasising the absolute necessity of preserving the true character of the course, it is hoped that going forward the club's members will take a much more active role in helping to ensure that native plants have the opportunity to regenerate.

An earlier tree clearance project at the 1st hole offers a tantalising glimpse of what may be possible in the future. The area surrounding this green often became very wet as self-seeding birch trees were blocking sunlight and airflow. These were removed over the winter of 2016/17, and the area was sown with fescue grass.

Over the next few years, heather plants, which had been predominant prior to the invasion of birch, began to emerge among the fescue. The objective over the coming years is to replicate this regeneration throughout the course by removing the non-native species against which the heathland plants and fescue grasses were having to compete.

Fescue grasses also play a critical role in enabling a more sustainable approach to the management of closely mown turf. The ambition at Kilrea has been to develop putting surfaces with improved resilience to fungal disease and low water and nutrient requirements. Since 2021, greens have been overseeded regularly with fescue-only seed mixtures. Fungicide usage over this period has been minimal. The last blanket fungicide application was in 2017. This was followed by occasional use of fungicides on greens that were particularly prone to disease.

Simultaneously, the factors which were making these greens vulnerable were addressed. Disease-prone grasses like *Poa Annua* were discouraged through a programme of brushing and localised manual scarification. Since 2024, no fungicide has been applied. Instead, healthy playing surfaces are promoted through regular applications of seaweed, iron and phosphite. The adoption of the heathland restoration programme outlined in the masterplan goes hand-in-hand with the club's ongoing efforts to make routine turf management more sustainable.

The extensive tree removal works have many interlinked benefits. Opening up the natural vistas around the course and encouraging native heathland plants to regenerate are crucial if the original landscape is to be recreated in the long term. At a more immediate practical level, tree management, particularly in the vicinity of tees and greens, helps to ensure that fine turf can flourish without the need for chemicals and fertilisers.

Going forward, the club will continue to follow Kearney's masterplan. So far, work has focused on the largest trees, which tended to have the greatest impact on golfing strategy, aesthetics and turf quality. This winter, attention switches to the removal of smaller birch trees and the regeneration of heather in the vicinity of the 2nd hole and the adjacent 8th green.

One of the most attractive features of the masterplan is that the changes recommended are realistic for a small club as they can be achieved in-house by the greenkeepers and volunteers from the membership. The plan is designed to be implemented gradually over a number of years and gives the club the flexibility to take meaningful steps towards heathland regeneration and long-term course

improvements without incurring huge costs.

Securing buy-in from members has been of critical importance in fostering the informed, can-do attitude required for successful course development. While Kilrea is a small club, it can hopefully become a beacon for sustainability and heathland restoration in Ireland and further afield. **GI**

Below - The view of the original heathland environment is now obscured by self-seeding birch trees, which also cause shade issues. Note the seemingly innocuous newly planted leylandii in the 1980s picture.



7th hole (1980s)



7th hole (2025)



7th hole (Leylandii)

Far more than a golf course

Craig Boath and Jodie Docherty explain how Carnoustie Golf Links is redefining sustainable golf course management



Day two of
the Continue to
Learn Conference
programme runs from
9.30am-4.40pm at the
DoubleTree by
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When Craig Boath and Jodie Docherty take to the stage at BTME during day two of the Conference programme in Harrogate, they will be asking attendees to look at their golf courses through a wider lens.

Drawing on work carried out at Carnoustie Golf Links, their session explores how a renowned championship venue on the Open rotation is being managed not just as a sporting arena, but as a functioning ecosystem and a shared community asset.

For Craig, Carnoustie's Head of Sustainability, the subject carries particular weight. Across a long career at the Links, he has been closely involved in hosting some of the game's biggest events – including three Open Championships, two Senior Opens and two Women's Opens – while simultaneously helping to embed sustainability into the fabric of daily course management.

"It's important to recognise that the places we work are far more than just golf courses," he said. "There is such a variety of wildlife on our courses and it's our job to gain an understanding of that and share it with others."

That belief underpins both Carnoustie's approach to sustainability and the message Craig and Jodie will deliver at BTME: that environmental responsibility, community engagement and championship standards are not competing priorities, but interconnected ones.

Carnoustie is a venue scrutinised at the highest level, and expectations around presentation and playability are non-negotiable, yet that pressure has also encouraged deeper thinking about how land is used, managed and protected over the long term.

"Yes, we want the place to be as pristine as possible, but that doesn't mean compromising on sustainability," said Craig. "For example, you don't need to cut everything – there are areas you can step back from, and that reduces labour, fuel use and other costs. That's money that can be used elsewhere and in other areas."

Rather than viewing sustainability as a perfunctory checklist of dos and don'ts, Carnoustie has adopted a more holistic approach. Decisions are increasingly shaped by weather patterns, climate variability and long-term ecological thinking, rather than habit or calendar-driven routines.

"In modern greenkeeping, you can't simply rely on tradition and say, 'We fertilised on the first week of April for the past three years, so we'll do the same again,'" he explained. "Changing weather patterns and a shifting climate means decisions now have to be based on current conditions, taking all relevant factors into account to make informed choices."

That way of thinking has informed a series of significant ecological initiatives under Craig's leadership, from habitat development for native bumblebees – which earned Carnoustie the Operation Pollinator Award in 2016 – to large-scale regeneration projects such as the planting of 1,000 trees to enhance biodiversity across the venue.

Jodie's role has been central in broadening the sustainability conversation beyond purely environmental metrics. She joined Carnoustie four years ago in greenkeeping administration, before becoming increasingly involved in sustainability projects and community

About Craig Boath

Craig Boath is head of sustainability at Carnoustie Golf Links and has spent nearly 30 years working across the Links in a range of greenkeeping and leadership roles. Craig has led major ecological initiatives including pollinator habitat creation, large-scale tree planting and conservation work for the small blue butterfly, earning multiple national sustainability awards.



About Jodie Docherty

Jodie Docherty is sustainability coordinator at Carnoustie Golf Links. She joined the organisation four years ago in greenkeeping administration before becoming increasingly involved in sustainability projects. Jodie plays a key role in developing partnerships with schools, ecological specialists and local groups, helping to connect the Links with the wider community.



engagement, moving into the role full-time earlier this year.

"Sustainability has quite a few aspects," she explained. "To sustain something is to make sure it's here for the long term, whether that's the land or the business itself. We have a responsibility to take care of both."

That long-term outlook encompasses environmental, community and financial sustainability, which Jodie sees as inseparable.

"When you actively bring people in from the local community, you create a stronger connection with the Links," she said. "Those individuals are far more likely to return, spend time on the course, maybe try to get into golf, visit the restaurant, and engage with the pro shop, helping to build a sense of belonging while also supporting the wider facility."

"All of that links together. It's about changing the mindset that sustainability isn't just one thing, when actually there are different ways to think long term."

That has driven a concerted effort to reconnect the Links with the town of Carnoustie – a relationship complicated by both geography and perception.

"There's a railway line that physically separates us from much of the town," Jodie explained. "That barrier isn't just physical – it reinforces a long-held perception of golf as a sport for the wealthy, which may make people reluctant to come down here."

Breaking down that barrier through education, access and visibility has become a core objective of the sustainability team. One of the most effective tools in that process has been Carnoustie's annual BioBlitz – a 24-hour biodiversity survey that brings together ecologists, specialists, volunteers, schools and local residents to record as much wildlife as possible across the land.

The first BioBlitz, held in 2024, marked a step change in how the club engaged with the wider community. Supported by The R&A and ecological partners, it welcomed people onto the estate who had never previously set foot on a golf course, many of whom were unsure whether they were even allowed to be there.

"We have broken down a barrier," Jodie said. "Community and nature groups give us data from walks and surveys that they have conducted around the Links, but in turn they are also keen to learn about golf, the ethics of the land and what's expected when the public comes onto a course."

For the greenkeeping and sustainability teams, the benefits are practical as well as philosophical. Specialist knowledge feeds directly into management planning, while long-term datasets help guide conservation decisions that would otherwise require paid consultancy.

"If we had to pay for that expertise, it would be expensive," Jodie noted. "So, it saves us money, helps the company and builds relationships at the same time."

The impact of that work has not been limited to external audiences. Within the Links itself, attitudes have shifted as season ticket holders and members of staff have become more aware of the ecological value of the Links.

"A lot of them are interested in wildlife," Craig said. "They come to us now saying they've seen bats, birds or other animals, so there's definitely a good level of engagement there and understanding of why conservation matters."

That growing sense of shared ownership has been



What is BioBlitz?

"A BioBlitz is a biological study in a very short space of time," explained Jodie. "We've run ours over a 24-hour period, where we base it on the estate and try to record as much wildlife as we can. We've done that by hosting seven specialist walks and talks. Local researchers come in and lead sessions of about an hour to two hours each — we've had a bat survey, moth trapping, an ecology walk, dawn bird watching — and all the while we're recording what we see."

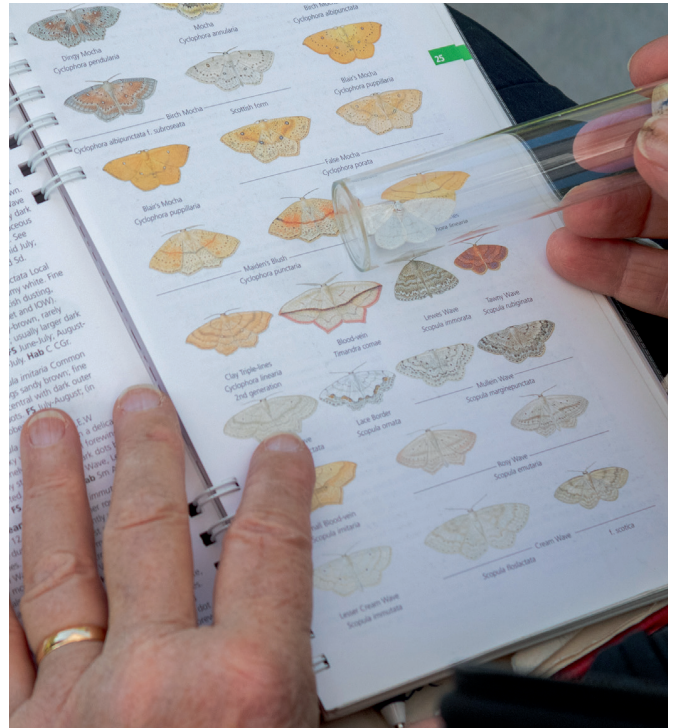
"It gives us a really good set of data for that snapshot in time. We did the first in 2024, ran one again in 2025, and we'll do another this year, so we're starting to build trends and see changes over time. The BioBlitz has given us valuable data and also a connection with the community, getting people interested and involved."

"We are a golf course, and we'll always be a golf course, but there's so much good that's done on this land. If it wasn't a golf course, we'd likely lose all that goodness to housing or a holiday park, and all this lovely green space would be gone. So, we're trying to show just how much good there is here."

"We publish our records each year, which helps spread the word further. Every year we find more people are interested, and a wider age range too — our youngest attendee this year was four years old."

"It's really good to get a mix of people, golfers and non-golfers. It's hugely worthwhile for us, and it gets the word about Carnoustie out to people who probably hadn't thought about it beyond the golf before."





supported by regular communication, from weekly updates to community newsletters, helping to normalise sustainability as part of everyday golf operations.

"They get quite excited telling you what they've seen," Jodie added. "When we had an injured otter on the course, people knew exactly who to phone."

Education has long extended into local schools through the Golf Development team, who for many years have worked directly with pupils to build a strong nucleus of more than 400 children enrolled in the Junior Golf Development Programme. This programme combines school visits, site visits to the Links and free golf lessons, ensuring the sport is accessible to all. Sustainability, delivered as a complementary strand alongside this programme, further deepens engagement, reaching even those pupils who may have no initial interest in golf itself.

"If children don't have golf in their family, they've probably never considered this as a career," Jodie said. "But they might become golfers, ecologists or greenkeepers in the future."

One of the most persistent myths surrounding sustainability is that it inevitably compromises playing standards. At Carnoustie, Craig is clear that the opposite has been true.

"It's not about restrictions or cutting back on everything," he insisted. "It's about managing things more effectively and efficiently. We are proof you can produce world-class conditions while being mindful of the environment."

That might mean phased habitat management rather than wholesale clearance, or targeted investment in infrastructure. Recent irrigation upgrades across three courses, for example, have allowed water to be used more

It's important to recognise that the places we work are far more than just golf courses"

efficiently and precisely.

Craig noted that while many sustainability initiatives can be delivered without major expense, there are times when real progress demands greater investment.

"Water usage is a critical issue," he said. "It's essential that we manage and invest in this resource responsibly if we are to move forward."

That approach has helped Carnoustie maintain elite agronomic standards while retaining its long-standing GEO Certified status, first achieved in 2013, and earning wider recognition for its sustainability leadership. The club's work has been recognised with the Climate Action Award at the 2021 IAGTO Sustainability Awards, as well as the inaugural Sustainability Award at The Golf Course Awards 2024.

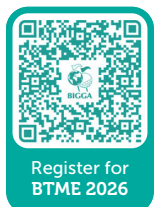
As their BTME session will underline, Craig and Jodie view sustainability not as an add-on, but as an extension of greenkeeping itself.

"John Young made a really valid point recently at a BIGGA event in the North that really stuck with me," Craig said. "You're more than keepers of the green – you're keepers of the land", and I guess we as a whole need to realise that nowadays."

It is a message he believes should resonate with anyone responsible for managing a golf course, regardless of size, budget or profile.

"Gathering data doesn't have to come at a massive cost," he said. "Get people involved. Get your members and your community to help. It all feeds into things like GEO Certification and helps show value to decision-makers."

For Carnoustie, that philosophy is already delivering results, forging a stronger bond between the Links, the people and nature. **GI**



The distinctive styles of negotiation

In an excerpt from his new book, Phil Helmn MG shares his experiences of common communication styles and how best to engage with them

We all accept that everyone has different communication styles. Individuals bring their own set of experiences, skills and tools that affect the way they interact with others, both at home and in the workplace.

Individual communication styles also translate into how they negotiate. From these natural patterns of communication, five distinct negotiation styles appear:

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Accommodating
- Avoiding

These negotiation styles are derived from the Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument, a widely used framework for understanding and managing negotiations. It is designed to help individuals and groups assess their typical responses to negotiation and select proper resolution strategies.

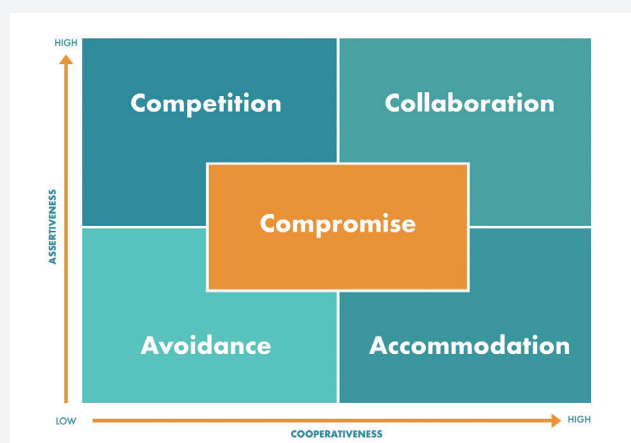
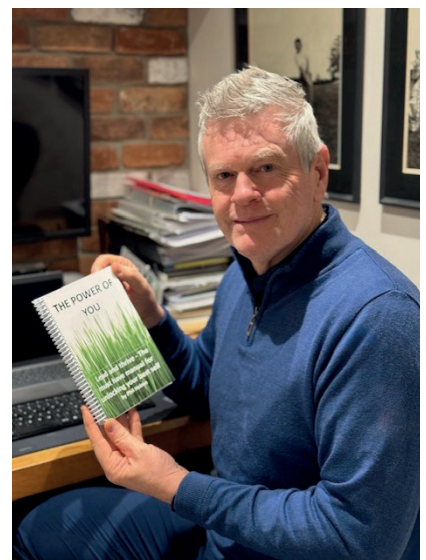
The model is based on two key dimensions of behaviour:

- Assertiveness. How strongly one

pursues their own needs and interests over others

- Cooperativeness. How much one considers the relationship and needs of others

Each of the five styles usually uses a different combination of assertiveness and cooperativeness, creating different scenarios of "I win, and you lose," or an "I win, and you win" and so on.



Conflict Mode Instrument (Kenneth Thomas - Ralph Kilmann 1975)

CASE STUDY

In workplace negotiations, considering relationships is crucial. When we neglect relationships in workplace negotiations, it fosters distrust and conflict. Poor communication ensues, leading to less collaborative and unsatisfactory outcomes. Over time, this erodes team cohesion and morale, making it challenging to achieve long-term success and support a positive work environment. Over the years, I have come to realise that all negotiations require some form of partnership. This could mean friendship or simply respect for others. With this mindset comes the best opportunity for a mutually beneficial outcome.

Competitive negotiation style

A competitive negotiation style follows the model of "I win at all costs." Competitive negotiators tend to do whatever it takes to reach their desired agreement, even when it comes at the expense of another person or entity. They are results-oriented and focused on achieving short-term goals quickly. Their desire for success motivates them, though the process of negotiation can blind them to potentially harmful impacts.

Collaborative negotiation style

A collaborative negotiation style follows the "I win, you win" model. Collaborative negotiation focuses on making sure all parties have their needs met in an agreement. This style values strengthening, setting up and building relationships. Individuals with a collaborative negotiation style are willing to invest time in finding innovative solutions and building stakeholder partnerships. A collaborative negotiation style is effective in most negotiations.

Compromising negotiation style

This style can be sometimes confused with collaborative. Unlike the "win-win" collaborative style, where each party concedes part to gain another part, the compromise negotiation focuses on splitting all parts of the negotiation equally. This style is best

used where there is little trust, or the two parties do not know each other particularly well. A competitive negotiator can easily take advantage of a compromising negotiator.

Avoiding negotiation style

An avoiding negotiation style follows an "I lose, you lose" model. People who identify with the avoiding negotiation style highly dislike conflict and tend to talk in vague terms about the issue at hand, rather than the issue itself.

If an agreement is reached and an avoiding negotiator dislikes the outcome, they may try to take revenge on the opposite party before the party even knows that they were unhappy with the agreement. Since avoiders dislike conflict and struggle with direct communication, they come off as passive aggressive, which can cause rifts in relationships.

Accommodating negotiation style

An accommodating negotiating style follows the "I lose, you win" model, which does not seem to be in a negotiator's best interest. Accommodating negotiators are the direct opposite of competitive negotiators. They focus on preserving relationships and building a friendly rapport, by sacrificing some of their own interests or goals in favour of the opposite party's interests. **GI**

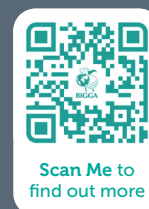
Field-tested leadership: Phil on his second book

Every leader eventually faces moments where the road feels heavy and the decisions feel isolating. I've walked that path myself, and it's in those moments that the true test of leadership begins, not in leading others but in finding the strength to lead yourself. That belief is what inspired me to write *The Power of You!*

This book is for anyone who carries the torch of vision and integrity, whether in turf management or any other profession. Inside, you'll find candid insights and field-tested lessons that show how self-leadership, the ability to intentionally influence your own thoughts, emotions and actions, can transform not just your career but your life. By reading *The Power of You!*, you'll discover tools to build resilience, adapt to change, stay motivated and

embrace lifelong learning.

The Power of You! is available now. Scan the QR code to learn more and to buy the book.



A new shallow-aeration solution from Wiedenmann

Terra Core 8 launches with signature VibraStop damping system

Wiedenmann UK is launching the Terra Core 8, a high-performance shallow aerator for golf greens, tees, fairways and sports fields. Designed to work precisely in the top 100 mm of the profile, it delivers fast, accurate hollow coring or solid-tine aeration to improve air movement, drainage and root development while preserving play quality.

ENGINEERING AND PRECISION

Proven design with modern refinements

The Terra Core 8 combines proven Wiedenmann engineering with modern refinements. Its adjustable twin-crank system allows precise depth control in 4 mm increments, enabling operators to match settings to site conditions quickly and accurately.

Signature VibraStop comfort

Central to the new model is Wiedenmann's VibraStop damping system, a long-established feature across the range, which isolates vibration and shock before they reach the operator or tractor.

The result is smoother, quieter operation with reduced strain and wear on both machine and driver.

CLEAN WORK PATTERN AND COVERAGE

Revised lateral gearbox layout

A revised lateral gearbox layout gives the machine unrivalled operation.

Its compact balanced driveline arrangement also contributes to stable performance and simple handling across a wide choice of tractors.

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

Tines and spacing

With a 1.95 m working width, the Terra Core 8 achieves up to 816 holes per m² using seven tines per holder at 35 mm spacing. The full working width coverage is beyond the tractor's wheel marks, ensuring an even finish with minimal overlap.

Solid and hollow tines are available in diameters from 7 to 20 mm, and tine carriers can be swapped quickly with two screws to reduce downtime.

Easy maintenance

A wide-opening hood and optional

turf retainer further support easy servicing and turf protection.

PRODUCTIVITY AND OUTPUT

Offering up to 4,282 m²/hour at 2.2 km/h and 540 rpm, the Terra Core 8 combines productivity, precision, and operator comfort in one refined shallow-aeration solution.

KEY FEATURES

- VibraStop vibration-damping system
- Precision 4 mm depth adjustments
- Full-width coverage beyond wheel marks
- Quick-change tine carriers (two screws)
- 7–20 mm solid and hollow tines
- Up to 4,282 m²/h output

IDEAL FOR

- Greens and tees
- Fairways
- Sports fields



TERRA RAKE GAINS NEW AND RETRO OPTIONS

Wiedenmann UK has introduced new brush and roller attachments for its 2.3 m Terra Rake, giving existing owners even greater versatility from an already hard-working machine.

The new components allow operators to rake, brush or roll using the same frame, adding flexibility and sustainability by expanding what the machine can do across larger turf areas.

ROLLER ATTACHMENT

The roller attachment is exclusive to the new 2.3 model Terra Rake fitted with two front wheels and a parking stand.

Easy conversion

To fit the roller:

- Lift the frame using tractor hydraulics
- Remove the front wheels
- Lower the frame onto the roller's two locating posts that integrate with the existing wheel mounts

Roller design

The three-section heavy duty roller is designed to float on undulating terrain.

With a wide diameter, it ensures a firm, even finish across the full working width.

Consistent results at any speed

Crucially, the roller applies the same downward pressure at all working speeds, whether travelling at 3 km/h or 8 km/h. This gives:

- Uniform ground contact
- Smooth, firmed surfaces
- Improved ball roll and pace
- Reduced turf-disease risk (e.g., dollar spot)

Ideal for fairways and large turf areas, it delivers an effect similar to a greens iron while maintaining healthy grass length.

BRUSH ATTACHMENT

The brush attachment — available for both the 1.7 m and 2.3 m Terra Rake models — has long been a part of the

Wiedenmann range, and it offers quick conversion for different turf conditions.

Conversion

Operators simply unbolt the rake sections and bolt in the brush sections.

Brush grades

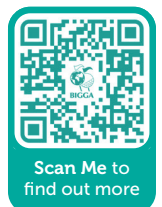
Three stiffness levels allow tailored turf presentation:

- Black – general-purpose work
- White – softer finishing or finer turf
- Yellow – the stiffest and most vigorous brushing action

FAST CHANGES, MORE VERSATILITY

Switch between rake, brush or roller setups in under 15 minutes, making it easy to adapt to changing conditions throughout the day.

Dealers offer all attachment options and can guide users through different configurations to help them get the most from their Terra Rake.





In recent years, the conversation around golf course aeration has become dominated by deep-tine, hollow-tine and cutting-edge injection systems.

These newer approaches attract attention because they promise aggressive compaction relief or organic matter removal, often wrapped in impressive technology. Yet in the process, one of the game's most dependable practices has become quietly underappreciated: slit-tine aeration.

At Visby Golf Club, consistently ranked among the Nordic region's finest courses, slit aeration hasn't been sidelined. In fact, it remains at the heart of their greens maintenance programme.

Located on Sweden's Baltic Island of Gotland, Visby's stunning coastal site brings significant challenges: persistent moisture in low-lying areas, drying winds, and extremely high levels of play. Course Manager Petter Lindblad, who has led the maintenance team for nearly two decades, explains:

"Our biggest challenges are excess water in the low points and heavy play pressure. We have a lot of people wanting to play and many members,

so we need to work efficiently and quickly while maintaining high quality."

To meet those demands, Visby relies on the SISIS Multislit for deep slitting across all 27 greens.

"The Multislit helps us keep the low points dry. It's easy to use, quick to attach and we can aerate all 27 greens in around 2.5 hours. Best of all, players can be back on the course almost straight away, with very little disruption."

While progressively more sophisticated aeration methods can be invaluable tools, slit tining delivers a combination that remains hard to beat: deep penetration, vertical channel creation and minimal surface disturbance. By improving oxygen exchange, root respiration and water infiltration, slitting supports deeper rooting, nutrient uptake and resilience under wear, essential traits for heavily played surfaces.

Equally important is risk reduction. Research and field experience have shown that aggressive operations such as hollow tining can temporarily encourage pest activity, including leatherjackets, by creating open, navigable soil channels. Slitting avoids this issue, delivering airflow benefits without the same exposure risk,

making it a particularly suitable tool during vulnerable periods.

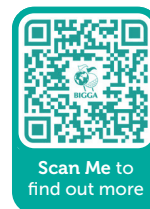
The Multislit's spiral tine shaft and angled tine design allow clean, consistent penetration without tearing the surface, meaning greens can stay open while work continues. Interchangeable boron-steel tines and integrated rollers ensure depth control across uneven ground, allowing operators to fine-tune treatment to current conditions.

For Lindblad, reliability and simplicity are decisive:

"I've always liked SISIS: simple, reliable, cost-effective machines that just work."

At Visby, the results are clear: firmer, drier surfaces; faster recovery from wear; and consistent playing quality throughout the season.

New techniques may offer fresh talking points, but courses like Visby prove that some of the most effective solutions aren't the newest, they're the ones that simply deliver, day after day. Slit aeration remains not just relevant, but essential in modern turf management where playability, efficiency and agronomic safety must coexist.





Playing in winter just got good!

When the world says pause, Spurk Golf says play. Its time to put the world's best winter mat on your fairways

Set, strike, lift. It's that easy with the Spurk Golf mat, renowned around the world for quality and providing unrivalled playing experiences.

That's why this bestselling, revolutionary design is the go-to mat for protecting the planet's best golf courses, including Royal St Georges prior to The Open in 2021, and Royal Birkdale ahead of the Claret Jug's return in 2026.

Meanwhile, Le Golf National, in Paris, TPC Potomac, in Maryland, and Castle Pines, in Colorado, have relied on it to protect their course ahead of the Olympics, Wells Fargo Championship and BMW Championship, respectively.

Now your members and visitors can play through the winter months with full confidence they can hit proper golf shots and enjoy the game all year round whatever the weather, with no damage to the course.

We hear you. How does the Spurk Golf mat stand out? Well, with its

patented six angled spike design, it locks low into the ground and doesn't move at address or impact, while it's extremely lightweight at just over 300g, making the carry bag easy to attach to your golf bag. The mat features a tapered wedge at the rear, which protects the edge of the latex grass backing and, subsequently, makes it appear closer to the turf.

By guaranteeing an uncompromised experience for players of all abilities, this is the closest thing to playing off grass – the definition of game changing. Golfers have the choice of two mats, as well. While the short pile mat is more popular, a long pile mat is



equally as reliable. The Spurk Golf strike mat is currently protecting the fairways of a fast-growing number of over 500 golf courses.

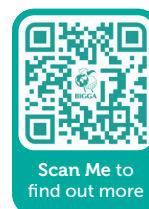
Made for golfers, by golfers, the Spurk mat combines quality materials and first-rate manufacturing

to seamlessly solve an issue faced by players and clubs alike around the world at this time of year.

Despite only launching in 2017, the Spurk Golf mat has already rapidly established itself as a must-have accessory for both play and practice, allowing golfers full compression of the ball.

Spurk provides full protection of the golf course without compromising the playing experience of members and guests. It really is a no brainer for any well-presented course during the winter months or for the run up to big events.

Spurk offer trade only discount prices with low minimum orders and fast delivery to hundreds of courses both in the UK and Europe.



Contact enquiries@spurkgolf.co.uk for trade prices and terms.

Scan Me to find out more



On the road with the Clere Golf HUB

How three clubs are using digital tools to strengthen course management



A recent road trip to visit clubs using Clere Golf's HUB course-management platform provided a valuable insight into how greenkeeping teams across the UK are adopting digital tools to streamline their work, support decision-making and communicate more effectively with

stakeholders.

From Surrey to East Lothian to Kent, each venue had its own priorities—yet all three shared a common theme: technology is becoming an essential partner in modern course management.

THE ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB – bringing every detail into one place

The journey began at the prestigious Royal Automobile Club, where Course Manager Iain Dye oversees two high-profile courses that demand meticulous planning and precise information management. For Iain, the challenge has always been the sheer volume of data generated throughout the year—maintenance notes, agronomic observations, project tracking, environmental documentation and long-term planning records.

golfHUB's ability to bring everything into one central digital location has proven invaluable. What once required multiple spreadsheets, documents and disparate

systems now sits within a single platform accessible to the whole team.

"For us, golfHUB isn't just a piece of software—it's a central information hub. Having all our course data in one place has improved consistency, streamlined planning and helped the team make quicker, more informed decisions," added Iain.

The consolidation of information has strengthened daily workflows while also improving long-term strategic clarity—essential for a venue hosting thousands of rounds annually and known for its high standards.





Kyle at North Berwick
planning winter works

ROCHESTER & COBHAM GOLF CLUB – enhancing the player experience

The final stage of the road trip was Rochester & Cobham Golf Club, where Head Greenkeeper Danny Dalton is preparing to use golfHUB's pin-location system to deliver accurate daily pin placements directly to golfers via the free golfHUB player app.

This isn't just a convenience for players; it brings operational alignment across greenkeeping, the professional shop, and the wider club team.

"The pin-location system is a simple but powerful tool. For golfers it enhances the experience; for us it ensures accuracy and removes a lot of manual admin from the daily routine," said Danny,

Rochester & Cobham joins an expanding list of clubs—including Hankley Common, Craigelaw, Gullane, Hillside, Tandridge, Alwoodley and Hadley Wood that are using the app to improve communication and deliver more consistent information to players.

NORTH BERWICK GOLF CLUB – documenting winter works with clarity

The next stop was North Berwick Golf Club, where Course Manager Kyle Cruickshank has been using golfHUB extensively through the winter to document the club's series of bunker rebuilds and revetting projects.

Kyle emphasised how the platform has transformed their ability to present work clearly to committees and members:

"We have been using the Course Manager feature of Clere Golf HUB for auditing and creating a database of works that have been undertaken. We have a busy winter programme of rebuilding and revetting bunkers and to be able to have a platform where we can have 'before and

after' photos as well as important information to justify our work has been a great management tool."

For a links course where heritage, aesthetics and playability are constantly under review, the ability to couple photographic evidence with explanatory notes has proven invaluable. It not only documents the work completed but also helps communicate why each intervention is necessary.

Kyle added: "Steve and the team have assisted us with any queries... We are probably still not using the platform to its full potential but we look forward to delving deeper into its capabilities."

Driving development through meaningful engagement

Across all three venues, one theme was clear: engagement between developers and greenkeepers is critical to meaningful innovation. The road trip offered not only an opportunity to see how clubs are using golfHUB but also the chance to gather feedback that will directly influence the next wave of development.

Clere Golf is now working on a significant user interface overhaul and new functionality designed to make the platform even more intuitive and powerful. These enhancements have been shaped directly by conversations with users such as Iain, Kyle and Danny, ensuring the system evolves in step with the profession's needs.

A shared commitment to better course management

From the detailed record-keeping at the Royal Automobile Club to the project documentation at North Berwick and

the player-focused technology at Rochester & Cobham, the trip highlighted how digital tools, when thoughtfully developed, can support the craft of greenkeeping without ever replacing the expertise behind it.

As golfHUB continues to grow, shaped by the feedback of its users, the platform's ambition remains the same: to give course managers the clarity, efficiency and confidence they need to perform at their best.

Find out more about golfHUB
by arranging a demonstration
with the team at Clere Golf, call
01635 43026.



Scan Me to
find out more



Jake Field

After five years at Edgbaston, Jake Field is ready to embrace a fresh challenge at Basingstoke



“I can’t wait to get started”

Jake Field is relishing the prospect of leading a new chapter at Basingstoke after being named as the next course manager.

The ambitious Hampshire club will officially open its redesigned course in spring and Jake has been charged with leading the greenkeeping team at the start of a new era.

It comes after a five-year spell as course manager at Edgbaston, where he earned widespread recognition for the conditioning and presentation of the Birmingham club’s layout after overseeing a significant period of development.

Jake also has extensive greenkeeping experience abroad, having held senior positions and placements at PGA National Sweden and Harbour Town Links in South Carolina – a regular venue on the PGA Tour.

Although sad to be leaving Edgbaston, Jake admits the temptation of a new challenge was too strong to resist.

“It will be very emotional for me to leave Edgbaston after five unforgettable years, but the opportunity at Basingstoke Golf Club is something that fills me with real excitement,” he said.

“The club has entered a new chapter with its impressive

downland course and facilities, and to help guide its next phase is a privilege.

“My family and I are looking forward to relocating and becoming part of the community. I’m incredibly grateful to Basingstoke for giving me this opportunity and I can’t wait to get started.”

Basingstoke relocated to its new home in Dummer in 2021 and has since undergone a major redevelopment, including an 18-hole championship downland course by Weller Designs, a modern clubhouse and ongoing investment in practice facilities as part of a £20 million transformation.

General Manager David Green said: “We’re delighted to welcome Jake to Basingstoke. His achievements at Edgbaston speak for themselves, but it was his drive, technical expertise and clear passion for agronomy that really stood out and made him the outstanding candidate.

“This is an important appointment for the club as we continue our work transforming the course and facilities and Jake is the right person to lead that work. We look forward to supporting him as he settles in and begins shaping the next stage of our development.” **GI**

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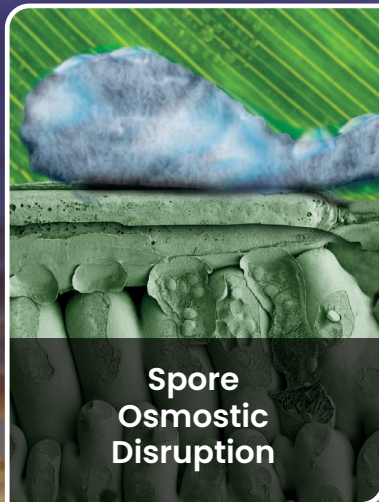
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