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Greenkeeper

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July 1998

Your next issue of
Greenkeeper International
will be with you by August 10

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58 As I see it...



14 The Learning Experience

Let the only news be good news

As I write the television is on in the background and Italy are playing Cameroon. Yes, there's no getting away from it, the World Cup features in the Editor's Column.

The reason I've picked this as my topic for the month is not the quality of the play, excellent though it has been - particularly from my countrymen who despite this will no doubt have long since returned to these shores - but the quality of the playing surfaces.

Although it is the end of football season in France, and you might expect the pitches to look a little tired, they have been universally excellent.

But this is the one skill on display during the greatest show on earth which is taken for granted. There are no pundit's plaudits for, or special profiles on, the people who ensure that the best players in the world have the stage to perform their tricks.

How different it would be had the pitches not been up to standard. Managers, players, television experts and Prime Ministers would no doubt have lined up to give the benefit of their agronomic expertise. The poor groundsmen would have been lambasted.

It is exactly the same for the Course Managers at the top golf events. Heaven forbid if a big name player finds a bad lie or misses a putt. The papers would be full of it and a greenkeeper's professional reputation casually smeared.

For groundsmen and greenkeepers you can fully understand it when they say, "No news is good news".

In many ways you can equate the job of groundsman and greenkeeper with that of the goalkeeper. The last line of defence can produce miracles, mopping up the mistakes of others, and keeping a clean sheet but as soon as he makes one mistake and the ball ends up in the net all the good that has gone before is forgotten and he's the villain.

You don't know it before you start but one of the prerequisites of the job of greenkeeper, groundsman or goalkeeper is to have no desire to be credited for all the great work you might do, and a thick skin to cope with the flak when it occasionally goes wrong.

One man hoping not to be in the news this month is Chris Whittle, who becomes the first man to prepare two different Open venues. He says in The Open preview in this magazine that he hopes all the headlines are made by the golf rather than the golf course.

Surely, however, he and his team, deserve credit for the outstanding job they have done at Birkdale, and a comforting silence is the very least they should expect for the miracles they have routinely carried out.

Let's all hope for the sake of the World Cup groundsmen, and Chris Whittle and his team at Royal Birkdale, that there is a slight change and "The Only News is Good News".

They should be recognised for the great work they do.

Editor:
Scott MacCallum

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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23 Cover: Royal Birkdale

Photography by Brian Morgan, 0141 221 6296



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Building Fund grows!

Over 100 golf clubs have to date responded positively to the letter sent by BIGGA President Viscount Whitelaw asking for a contribution towards the building of BIGGA's new Headquarters and Training Facility.

Among the golf clubs to donate to the fund this month is the recently opened Merrist Wood Golf Club based at Merrist Wood College in Guildford, Surrey. College Principle John Riddle presented the cheque to BIGGA's Education and Training Manager Ken Richardson (right) during a recent open day at the college. Merrist Wood is the first college in the country to make a donation.

The Association would like to thank the following golf clubs for their donations.

Clubs who donate £250 or more will each receive a plaque in recognition of their generosity, while each golf club which makes a donation will appear on a Roll of Honour within the new building.



Thank you for support

This year for the first time BIGGA members were asked to assist with the Volvo PGA Championship held at Wentworth Golf Club at the end of May. A team of 80 members drawn from nearby clubs were on hand over the final two days of play. The main role of each member was to accompany a game, from start to finish, and rake any bunkers found by the players, a task normally carried out by the caddy. There are several benefits arising from this course of action:-

1. The caddy is left free to concentrate on the game and the player's next stroke.
2. It helps keep play continuous and thereby reduces delays.
3. While walking the course the support team member is able to keep a watch for any divots, litter etc which may have found their way into a bunker and thereby pose a potential problem for subsequent games.
4. The support team members were on hand to help the Wentworth greenkeepers in the event of bad weather.

The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who took part and we have been invited by the PGA European Tour to look at providing a similar team for 1999.

Congratulations to Edward Kitson and his colleagues at the PGA European Tour and to Chris Kennedy and his greenkeeping staff at Wentworth for a well organised, well presented tournament.

Thank you to the Scotts Company who provided each BIGGA member with a shirt, jacket and baseball cap as well as the catering in the BIGGA marquee.



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Coventry Hearsall GC
Coxmoor GC
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Dunfermline GC
Edenmore GC
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Moortown GC
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Churston GC
Clitheroe GC
Conwy GC
Cooden Beach GC
Coombe Hill GC

David heads towards the Deep South

Rigby Taylor has appointed David Rogers as Technical Sales Representative covering the south coast of England from Dorset to Hampshire including Wiltshire.

David is well known to greenkeepers and Course Managers throughout the area having had extensive experience during the past 15 years most recently with Gem Professional (Sta-brite Supplies) prior to joining Rigby Taylor.

BIGGA elect Howard Swan as new President

The British Institute of Golf Course Architects has elected Howard Swan as its President for the forthcoming year.

At its Annual General Meeting, Swan's confirmation at the head of the Institute was accompanied by Jeremy Pern being made Vice President, and Neil Coles, Ken Moodie and Bruno Steensels, from

Belgium, joining the Committee.

Martin Hawtree stepped down as President, after 18 years of service to the Institute.

"I am privileged to have become President of what is Europe's leading professional body in the field, and look forward to a busy and productive year. We have much to do to bring together all Europe's

architects and to advance our own educational efforts for our members and students alike," said Howard.

In the Autumn the Institute will stage its International Conference at Wentworth on November 17 and 18, together with the Barenbrug European Architects' Trophy.

Video firm hires new director

After eight years working on the development and operation of the Buckinghamshire Golf Club, Kevin Munt has moved into a new role as a Director of Plexus Projects Ltd.

Plexus Projects is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Lanyfax Group a leading design and installation company in the audio visual and video conferencing market.

"I felt that after 25 years working at all levels within the golf business it was time to pull all my experience together and offer it to people who are working to further develop the game," said Kevin.

The company has been formed to provide a high quality project management and consultancy service to developers, architects and commercial operators within the leisure industry. Through the Lanyfax Group's computer generated design capability Plexus is able to offer a visually lead approach to the design and management services currently available to the leisure industry.

One of Plexus Projects first moves in the leisure market has been to form a division in the golf industry, this has been achieved by the acquisition Project Golf Ltd the owners and operators of the 1997 Senior Tournament of Champions.

Kevin has developed a vast field of experience within the golf industry, encompassing course maintenance, design, construction and facilities management through to tournament promotion and staging.

His previous employers include Royal Dornoch Golf Club, the Wentworth Club, John Jacobs Golf Associates and Kajima (UK) Engineering with whom he help to create the Buckinghamshire Golf Club, one of the country's most successful new golf facilities.

Kevin was also instrumental in bringing tournaments such as the Andersen Consulting World Championship of Golf and the Senior Tournament of Champions to Buckinghamshire Golf Club.

Sir Michael...

Michael Bonallack, Secretary of the R&A, has been awarded a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The 63 year-old five time Amateur Champion who was already a holder of the OBE has been at the helm of the R&A since 1983 and this latest honour comes on top of host of accolades he has received from the game itself.

Colin Montgomerie was also honoured in the same list with an MBE.

Lord Whitelaw in the frame



Having reached his 80th Birthday in June the Association's President, Lord Whitelaw, has been reviewing his personal commitments. He has decided to step down from his position with BIGGA after this year. In recognition and thanks for his support to the Association since its inception in 1987 Gordon Child presented Viscount and Lady Whitelaw with a framed print of the 13th hole at Nairn, the course where he spent many of his early golfing years.

Watch the birdie!

The largest single day birdwatching exercise on golf courses produced a remarkable score of 272 species from the 116 golf clubs in 18 European countries which took part.

Country	Number of clubs	Different species	Best site count
Ireland	21	102	Bandon (57)
England	20	108	Corehampton (62)
Scotland	13	96	Hilton Park (64)
Wales	12	88	Woodlake Park (52)
Denmark	1	65	Faaborg
Estonia	1	75	Niitvaija
Finland	3	84	Virvik (61)
Iceland	6	46	Ness (28)
Norway	1	37	Meland
Sweden	2	97	Falsterbo (87)
Austria	4	71	Waldviertel (41)
Germany	4	82	Nordkirchen (56)
Hungary	1	50	Hencse National
Netherlands	7	104	De Heemskerkse (58)
Switzerland	1	41	Club de Bonmont
Italy	8	137	Fiordalisi (79)
Portugal	4	80	San Lorenzo (61)
Spain	7	142	Ulzama (93)
Total	116	272	

New project beckons for Phil

Phil Langdon has joined Wardle Consulting Engineers as Projects Director, having worked for Watermation since 1988. Phil will be responsible for project management and inspection of works by contractors on behalf of our clients in addition to undertaking site survey and appraisals of existing irrigation systems in order to make recommendations as to system upgrade and extensions.

A BTLIA committee member, Phil's practical experience and knowledge of irrigation installation ensures that our expertise extends right across the board from survey, feasibility study, design, specification to installations supervision and inspection of the contractor's works.

"With Phil based in Scotland, Bill Hawthorn based in the South and head office the Midlands the company now has true nationwide coverage giving our clients a quality service," said Giles Wardle.

New signings at St Andrews for Millennium Open

St Andrews Links Trust has signed two exclusive agreements aimed at ensuring that the Millennium Open will see the Old Course looking at its majestic best while the town's other courses are also kept in tip top condition.

The two contacts are with The Toro Company for its irrigation systems for all five championship courses and Barenbrug for its grass seed and related products such as wild flowers.

Toro sprinklers are currently being installed on the fairways of the Old Course in preparation for the Millennium Open but other work includes irrigation to the walk-offs from the tees on the Jubilee Course.

"Our selection committee liked the broad range of products and flexibility that Toro offered," explained Links Manager, Ian Forbes.

"Using a total irrigation system is new for us. Working with Toro we know we have found the system to keep our links courses in the beautiful and natural state that has typified St Andrews throughout its 600 year history."

The agreement was warmly welcomed by The Toro Company.

"It highlights our commitment to create solutions to manage the world's landscapes. As water resources become increasingly valuable, our ability to provide flexible systems that meet the needs of our customers is important," said Phil Burkart, Toro's International Director of Marketing.

The agreement with Barenbrug will see the company's grass varieties being used for the continued enhancement of the playing surfaces of all the St Andrews Links Trust courses.

"We are impressed by Barenbrug's research and development facilities and are confident that they will supply the quality products and technical support we here at St Andrews look for," said Ian Forbes.



Clinching the deal. Above: Barenbrug and below, Toro



Michel Mulder, Managing Director of Barenbrug UK, said "Given that St Andrews is insistent that its suppliers live up to its own world-class reputation, it

is a pleasure and an honour to join up with them. St Andrews can rest assured that they will receive our total commitment to service in the years ahead."

New Recruit at BIGGA HQ



Rebecca Watson has joined the Association Headquarters' staff as Membership Services Assistant.

A native of York Rebecca (24) arrives at Aldwark Manor having worked in the membership department of a York-based Health Care company. She is also a graduate of Modern American History from Liverpool University.

Keen on sports, particularly athletics and tennis, her other interests include travel - she spent six months as an au pair in Switzerland.

"I am really looking forward to working for the Association and getting to know the BIGGA members," said Rebecca, who will be working alongside Tracey Maddison, the Membership Services Officer.

Duncan's new challenge

Duncan McGilvray, Course Manager at Letchworth Golf Club for the last 11 years, has been appointed Course Manager at Potters Bar GC succeeding John Adamson, who will shortly be retiring.

"While I have had a long and enjoyable spell at Letchworth I'm looking forward to my new challenge," said Duncan, who is a well known speaker on the seminar circuit and an occasional contributor to Greenkeeper International.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

by Tony Husband



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World Cup fever?

While Scotland were tackling Brazil in the opener to the World Cup in Paris another big event was taking place in London.

Remarkably the result was similar with the London Scots coming up short and losing bravely to the London English. Carl Crocher, of Orsett GC, and Steve Lee, from Browns, are pictured being presented with the winning shield.



Course Ranger: Out for the count

It is a paradox that the simplest question to ask of a golf club is often the most difficult to answer.

"How busy is your course?" on the face of it should be straightforward enough but coming up with an answer, which is anything more than an approximate may prove trickier than you might think.

Yet knowing the amount of traffic a course copes with, and its busy and quiet times would be extremely valuable information for both greenkeeper and secretary alike.

Course Ranger is an infra-red detector beam which monitors the number of rounds played on a golf course. The Course Ranger can work even in isolated parts of the course, owing to its independent power supply.

It makes it possible to count how many rounds are played in any one day, week or year. The count is activated when an individual golfer interrupts an invisible beam between two discrete points, one a receiver the other a transmitter. The system is suitable for use over any distance up to 15 metres which may be extended under favourable operating conditions.

The benefits it can produce are wide ranging. Which part of the day, week and month are the quietest? Course maintenance can be carried out more efficiently and cause less intrusion to the playing membership.



Which are the quieter days to book societies etc? On Pay & Play courses - do green fees tie up with

the number of rounds played?

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New appointments at Kubota

Kubota (UK) Ltd has made two important appointments within its agricultural and grass machinery sales division,



Newly appointed Marketing Manager is Tom Barnes (above) who has been with Kubota for 13 years, most recently in the position of sales manager responsible for Kubota's south east region. Prior to joining Kubota in 1985, Tom worked for an agricultural and horticultural machinery dealer in the eastern counties.

In his new position, Tom takes on responsibility for all of the marketing activities carried out to promote and support Kubota's agricultural and grass machinery sales

throughout the UK. In addition to researching and identifying new market and product opportunities, Tom is responsible for co-ordinating sales promotion, new product introductions, demonstrations, exhibitions and shows, ensuring that the company's marketing activities comply with the quality procedures required under ISO 9002, gained by Kubota in 1996.

The second new appointment at



Kubota (UK) Ltd sees the company's former Agricultural and Grass Machinery Distribution Manager, David Roberts, (above), become Regional Sales Manager for the south east, taking over the position vacated by Tom Barnes.