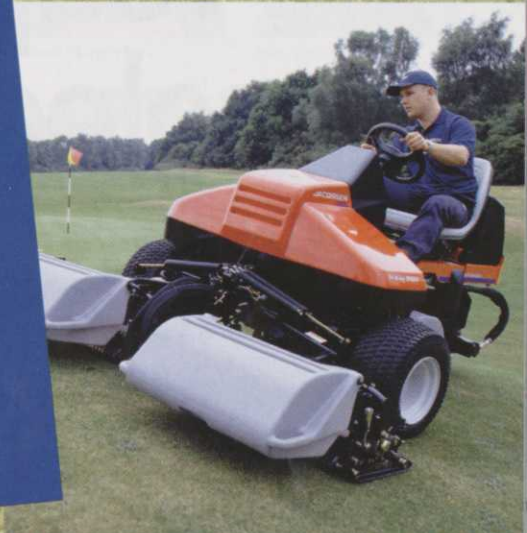


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Five hotels, 15,000 miles, thirty two interviews and the hottest week of the year so far, all contributed to this year's TORO Student of the Year Regional Interviews. However, as Ken Richardson found out, the quality and variety of finalists made the task of selecting the National Finalists an enjoyable rather than an onerous task.

A superb selection of students

Monday 25 June saw the first set of interviews, held in Edinburgh, when Jim Paton, BIGGA Education sub Committee Chairman, Pete Mansfield from TORO and myself interviewed the six Scottish entrants. At the end of the day, Mark Cummine, representing Langside College was picked to go forward to the Final. Mark, who is an assistant greenkeeper at Buchanan Castle Golf Club, nr Glasgow, has been in greenkeeping for 11 years and is currently studying for his HNC. Mark's other claim to fame is as an accordion player in a Scottish Dance Band, which has given him the chance to travel widely both in Scotland and around the World.

Tuesday 26 June saw the Roadshow arrive at the Hilton Hotel, Manchester Airport, where Pete and myself were joined by Andy Campbell MG, Golf and Estates Manager at Carden Park, to judge the Northern Region Entries and the Irish Entries. The excellent entries in the Northern Region saw both John Stuttard, representing Askham Bryan College and Mike Robertson represent-

ing Myerscough College selected for the Final. Mike is the Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Penrith Golf Club, where he has been for almost five years. John is an assistant greenkeeper at Wyke Ridge Golf Centre nr Leeds, where he has been for almost three years.

Ireland produced four very high quality entries and the judges selected two to progress to the final. John Williams represented Teagasc in Dublin and he works at Athy Golf Club in Co Kildare. He has been studying for his NVQ Level 3 and has ambitions to study for a Masters Degree with Penn State University. James Murphy works at the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale, Co Cork and it is a case of an old head on young shoulders as James is the youngest of the finalists.

Back on the road again saw us travel to St Albans, where Pete and I were joined by Ian Semple to interview the six candidates from the South East where Andrew Pledger was selected for the Final. Andrew took up greenkeeping as a second career after several years in retailing. Andrew said that he wished that he had

Following the dream



The prize was a seven week trip Stateside, the first six weeks of which, I would be based at the University of Massachusetts, followed by a week of travelling. Although very excited by this opportunity, I was at first understandably apprehensive. However, once meeting some of my fellow classmates who were also staying in the same accommodation as myself, it didn't take long for me to settle in. There was no time however to sleep off the jetlag. No sooner had my feet touched the ground, and I was straight into a full day of lectures.

The six and a half week Winter Turf School covered eleven subjects including: studies in Turf Grass Physiology and Ecology, Soil Science and Fertilisers, Irrigation, Diseases, Entomology and Weed Management. Each subject was lectured by a specialist in their own field, and often required long hours of background studying outside the classroom to keep up with the amount of scientific detail examined. Nevertheless, it was quite normal for everyone to come back from class, grab a bite to eat, and hit the books once again. There were no final examinations as such, but a continuous progression of quizzes and assignments, so the group study and

discussion sessions were of real benefit to everyone, and were a vital factor in guaranteeing success in the course.

My time in Massachusetts was not entirely confined to a classroom. Since this was my first trip to America, I was keen to visit as many places as I could. Fortunately, two of my classmates invited me to Boston, Rhode Island and Ottawa, Canada at the weekends.

This resulted in me having to spend only two weekends at the motel I was staying; but I managed to take in some of the local culture: seeing a basketball game and an ice hockey game.

I was kept very well occupied during this six and a half week period, and the Graduation Dinner and the presentation of certificates was quick in coming around. Although it was difficult to say goodbye to everyone, I was looking forward to the next stretch of my travels, and to having a rest from the books. After considerable celebrations at the graduation I flew out of Hartford to head for Dallas, Texas.

The Golf Course Superintendents of America Association (GCSAA) Trade Show and Conference was my next port of call. The show was enormous, and was certainly bigger than anything I've seen at home. Also attending were Toro representatives, BIGGA repre-

TORO STUDENT GREENKEEPER of the year AWARD



Mike Robertson



Andrew Pledger

made the decision to swap careers much sooner as he enjoys his job so much.

Thursday saw Pete and I in Cheltenham where we were joined by Richard Barker, Vice Chairman of BIGGA to judge the South West and South Wales Region entries. Mark Wilshire, a South African, working at Llanishen Golf Club was selected from a very high quality group. Mark who represents Pencoed College has only been working in Britain since 1999 feels that his NVQ course has given him the foundations to progress to the highest level in Greenkeeping.

The final journey saw Pete and I travel to Kettering where we were joined by BIGGA Board of Management Member, David Walden. The eighth finalist, selected from the five Midlands entries is Ewan McCabe. Ewan represents the College of West Anglia and works at Gog Magog Golf Club. Ewan started his working life as a greenkeeper, left to join the Army and finally returned to his true vocation five years ago.

The National Final will be held on Tuesday 28 October at the Crown Hotel in Boroughbridge, alongside the Final of the TORO Excellence in Greenkeeping Competition.

The National winner will be awarded the TORO Scholarship and travel to the United States for six weeks of study at the University of Massachusetts followed by trips to the TORO HQ in Minneapolis, and the TORO Factory in California and to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando.

Although judging is strenuous, this Competition gives me, and my fellow judges a great boost when we hear how greenkeepers are using their education and training qualification to further their careers, improve their pay and conditions of service and to improve the status of greenkeepers. The industry has continued to progress thanks to GTC ensuring the range and quality of greenkeeper qualifications, to BIGGA for encouraging greenkeepers to study and learn and to TORO for supporting this competition.



John David Williams



James Murphy



John Stuttard



Mark Wilshire



Mark Cummine



Ewan McCabe

I would say that winning the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2000 Award is a great honour, and one that was very unexpected. To those who believe that it could only be a dream, I would say follow that dream. Apart from the accomplishment of winning such a prestigious award, it was a great opportunity to attend The Winter School for Turfgrass Managers at the University of Massachusetts. This experience has fed my professional development, and given me a renewed enthusiasm for the problem solving nature of our business. It has changed the way I now look at my career. Jonathan Cleland

representatives and my college lecturer Chris Bothwell from GOSTA in Glasgow. On exhibit were a large range of turf care products and machinery. Not only was the show very informative but it allowed me to question representatives about their products and advances in technology. I was glad that my schedule had allowed me a full day, as it would not have been possible to see everything in any less time.

While in Dallas, I was also invited to attend the President's Dinner Show at the Adams Mark Hotel to celebrate 75 years of GCSAA. I felt very privileged to have been invited to such a prestigious event, and the entertainment wasn't disappointing. Before dinner we were given a presentation of how the Association has evolved over the last 75 years, and during dinner we were entertained by a fantastic ice display, which involved a huge block of ice being carved out using chainsaws into the GCSAA logo. After dinner entertainment was just as extravagant, with the World Classic Rockers entertaining us until the early hours.

My next destination was Minneapolis. For the remainder of my trip I was accompanied by Ian Ritchie, Links Superintendent at Portmarnock, Ireland who was award-

ed the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping, as well as Pete Mansfield and other Toro representatives. Over the next few days our itinerary included visits to the Toro Headquarters, the Shakopee Production Plant and the Tomah Manufacturing plant. However, our first day was free so we took the opportunity to visit the Mall of America that was once the largest undercover shopping mall in the USA.

The following morning we visited Toro Headquarters, where we were given a tour of the facility in which over 1000 people are employed. This is where all the research, development and equipment testing and trials are performed. It certainly made me appreciate how much work goes into the research and design of the machines we use on our golf courses. The Shakopee was where they manufactured various steel components such as the cutting reels and sole plates. My final excursion was to the Tomah Plant in Wisconsin, which is where all the machines are finally assembled, painted and placed in crates ready for consignment. I'll never take one of these machines for granted again!

The final destination of my eight

week trip was California. It was bizarre to leave Minneapolis where the temperature reached 40 degrees below and then to arrive in California where the temperature was mid 70's.

We were greeted at our hotel by Kenne James, from Toro who had arranged for us to visit Oak Valley Golf Club. There we were given a tour of their maintenance facilities and golf course. The Superintendent was available to answer any of our questions in relation to maintenance regimes.

During our time in California Ian Ritchie and I were also able to play a round of golf at the Hidden Valley Golf Club. This course was literally constructed in the middle of a desert. As you can imagine this made quite a dramatic backdrop to the golf course. However, our main purpose of being in California was to visit the Toro Irrigation Division where all irrigation components and sprinklers are designed, manufactured and tested. The highlight of our last night in California was the salsa dancing, which I have to say; Ian Ritchie was exceptionally good at!

Being home for a couple of months now, I can reflect on how much I believe I have gained from being named the Toro Student Greenkeeper

of the Year. The trip fulfilled all of my expectations, but it's been intangible areas that I feel I've benefited most from; such as increased confidence, contacts and a revitalised enthusiasm for my work. This coupled with the knowledge gleaned from working practises in the States will certainly help me with my career in the future.

Among the benefits the prize has offered me, the longest lasting and most valuable will be some of the relationships I struck with my colleagues and classmates. I plan to get over to the USA again as soon as I can, to check the next generation of developments taking place that we can learn from.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager and everyone else involved at BIGGA headquarters, as well as all the Toro representatives, especially Pete Mansfield. In addition I would like to thank my friends and family, Helensburgh Golf Club, and particularly Chris Bothwell from GOSTA for all their encouragement and support.

Jonathan Cleland, Toro Student of the Year 2000

This month, Tracey and Susannah, from BIGGA's Membership Team, welcome over 70 new members to the Association and give some important news about the 2002 Membership cards.

Picture perfect membership cards

Get prepared. It's coming your way! The new plastic Membership Photocard is what you've all been waiting for! As from 1st January 2002, BIGGA's Membership Department will be issuing plastic

credit card size Membership Photocards (at no extra cost to the member). This will not only provide you with an extra form of ID but it will continue to promote the professional image that the Association has achieved.

The Challenge...

to obtain 6,400 passport size photographs, that is one photograph for each Greenkeeper Member, to enable the Membership Services Department to scan each photograph onto each members file, which can then be reproduced onto your new card!

The Challengers...

Tracey and Susannah from the

Membership Services Department have accepted the challenge, but they need your help. To start preparing for the launch of the new card, they need a photograph of each of you! If you have a passport size photograph please send it to Tracey or Susannah, Membership Services Department, BIGGA, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, don't forget to write your full name, date of birth and membership number on the back. Alternatively, if you have mastered the art of digital cameras why not send us a photo by email to tracey@bigga.co.uk or susannah@bigga.co.uk

Watch out for more information on the new Membership Photocard next month.



You may have heard their names mentioned in conversation, or even seen them in print, but have you ever wondered who the individuals are who help BIGGA to run so smoothly as the leading Association in the fine turf industry? Read on...



Paul Jenkins

BIGGA Board Member for the S West/S Wales region

Name: Paul Jenkins

Golf Club: Lilleybrook GC

Association Position: Board Member for South West and South Wales Region

How long have you been a member of BIGGA? Since its inception in '87.

Where do you hope the Association will be in 10 years time? Equal or better recognition and profile within the industry

For what would you most like to be remembered? Good greenkeeper, good Board member and all round a good egg!

For what would you least like to be remembered? Letting a Past Captain of Lillybrook tell a joke at a BIGGA event!

Why did you take on a more involved role in the running of the Association? Having benefited from BIGGA I wanted to re-invest some time and commitment to the Association and help it move forward in the coming years.

Name one thing which would improve the Association?

I would like to see every British greenkeeper join the Association and for a higher percentage of international greenkeepers to become members.

What is your claim to fame (None, not acceptable)?

Supporting Gloucester RFC when they win the Premiership and the Heineken Cup (It will happen)

Describe BIGGA in 15 words.

An Association run for members, by members for the benefit of members

New BIGGA merchandise now in stock

Polo Shirts

BIGGA can now offer BIGGA logo classic polo shirts. Made by Cutter & Buck and available in sunflower and navy for only £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. Sizes Medium, Large, XL or XXL available.

Jumpers

Add to your range by purchasing a BIGGA logo jumper, made by Peter Scott and available in three styles:

1 Round neck, available in navy and charcoal, sizes from 40" to 48". £34.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

2 V-neck long sleeve, available in navy only, sizes from 40" to 46", larger sizes available on request. £34.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

3 V-neck no sleeves, available in navy only, sizes from 40" to 46", larger sizes available on request. £29.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

Waterproof Suits

Due to popular demand BIGGA have restocked this suit. Available in navy consisting of a jacket with matching trousers with a drawstring waistband. Sizes from M to XXL. £59.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

Baseball Caps

BIGGA have restocked this popular Slazenger baseball cap. Khaki with navy peak, one size fits all with adjustable strap. £12.95 inc. VAT, post and packing.

BIGGA Members Lapel Badge

BIGGA have introduced a new "Members" enamel lapel badge. Available to all members at the special rate of £2.50 inc. VAT, post and packing.

The new BIGGA logo merchandise can be seen at the BIGGA stand at the Saltex Show on 4/5/6th September. For further information contact Tracey or Susannah in Membership Services. Watch this space!

July's Monthly Membership Draw Winner

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA sportswatch. Our congratulations go to July's winner, Charles McKay of Aberdeen Petroleum Club.



BIGGA welcomes ...

Scottish Region

Iain Elliott, West
 Keith Gray, North
 Roy Green, North
 Archie Hempstead, West
 Michael McCabe, North
 Alexander McCaw, North
 Ritchie Morrison, West

Northern Region

Michael Ian Averill, N West
 Timothy John Barnes, N West
 Gary Lee Clowes, N West
 James William Cope, N Wales
 Paul Matthew Farrelly, N Wales
 Robert Galloway, N Wales
 Andrew Gannon, N West

John C F Mather, N West
 Jason John Mitchell, Northern
 Kenneth Geoffrey Moreland, N East
 Simon Olver, N East
 Kevin Platt, Northern
 Ian Sidebottom, N West
 Christopher Sperrin, N West

Midland Region

Matthew John Axton, Midland
 Colin Michael Beech, Midland
 Carl Broad, Midland
 Christopher Brown, E Midland
 Thomas Brown, Midland
 James Causer, Midland
 Luke Spencer Davis, Midland
 James Evans, Midland
 Jonathan Peter Farrell, Mid Anglia
 Luke D Foley, Mid Anglia

Neil Hawkins, Midland
 Matthew Johnson, Mid Anglia
 Andrew McLaren, Midland
 Adam Christopher Moss, Midland
 Matthew Newton, BB&O
 Joe Sheward, Midland
 Kelvin Lee Walker, Midland

S East Region

Martin John Acres, Kent
 Tony Clark, Surrey
 Ian James Coote, East Anglia
 Terry Edmonds, Essex
 Martin Pearson, Surrey
 Matthew Philip Rich, Surrey
 Tony Sharman, Surrey
 James Peter Skinner, Kent
 Stuart James Waite, Surrey
 Richard Mark Young, E Anglia

S West & S Wales Region

Robert Leslie Cole, S Wales
 Ben Dilling, S Coast
 Sean Peter Prior, Dev & C'wall

International Members

Paul Darren Marsden, Austria
 Kevin John Barsley, Germany
 Brian Phillips, Norway
 James J Nicol CGCS, USA

Corporate Members

David Drummond, East
 John Somerville, West
 Peter Hall, North East
 P Cawood, East Midland
 Paul Clifton, Midland

Alan Robertson, Midland
 Dave Clarke, Kent
 Austin Davies, Essex
 John Hall, Essex
 Brian Richardson, East Anglia

Associate Members

Stewart Clayton, Sheffield
 Richard Newman, E England
 Gavin P Judge, Surrey

Student Members

John Gregor Smith, Ayrshire
 Peter Jones, Rep of Ireland
 Nicholas Holmes, Northern
 Jacqueline North, Essex

Next month ...
 July's latest members

BIGGA launches the Golf Club Show

BIGGA has launched The Golf Club Show offering golf club owners, managers and secretaries all they could possibly need to ensure their clubhouses are as well equipped inside as their golf courses are outside.

The Golf Club Show will run in the Harrogate International Centre from January 22-24, 2002, alongside, and complemented by, the existing and tremendously successful BTME (BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition) which has been established there since 1989. The unique "double header" will offer visitors the opportunity of taking in both Shows during a must-visit week for everyone connected with the running of golf clubs and courses.

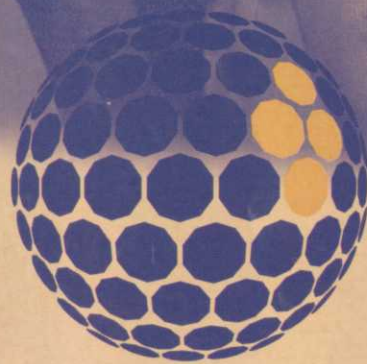
A dedicated educational seminar programme will be run in conjunction with the show and will feature a Key Note Speech by 400 metre Olympic Silver Medalist, Roger Black, and a much anticipated session with the world renowned agronomist, Dr James Beard.

"Many Golf Club Secretaries, Chairmen of Green and other senior club personnel already attend BTME with their greenkeeping staff and for some time we have been considering the possibility of offering a complete golf club experience for these, and the many more visitors who will be attracted to Harrogate by the advent of the new Show. Now is the time to make it happen," said BIGGA Executive Director, Neil Thomas.

"While BTME will continue as an exhibition with the whole range of products and services for the golf course, The Golf Club Show, which will have its own Hall within the Exhibition Centre, will offer all the additional equipment, furnishing and service needs for a golf club," explained Neil.

Bookings are currently being taken from companies wishing to exhibit in The Golf Club Show.

For further information contact Neil Thomas or BIGGA Press Officer, Scott MacCallum Tel: 01347 833800



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CLUB
SHOW
2002**



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Confirmed Exhibitors

Details correct as of 23.07.01

- | | |
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| Advanta Seeds UK Ltd | Links Leisure Ltd |
| AF Trenchers Ltd | Lloyds & Co Letchworth Ltd |
| Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd | Logic Irrigation |
| Allen Power Equipment Ltd | Long Equipment Ltd |
| Allett Mowers | MJ Abbott |
| Amenity Land Services Ltd | Major Equipment Ltd |
| Amenity Technology | Merrist Wood College |
| Angus Horticulture | Mitchell Hire Ltd |
| Arden Lea Irrigation Ltd | New Holland |
| Aventis Environmental Science | Nickerson UK Ltd |
| Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd | North Staffs Irrigation Ltd |
| Barenbrug UK Ltd | Ocmis Irrigation UK Ltd |
| Bathgate Silica Sand | Oliver Seeds Ltd |
| BCA | Pentagon Amenity Marketing Ltd |
| Bernhard & Company Ltd | Prestige Sports Surfaces Ltd |
| Better Methods Europe Ltd | PSD Agronomy Ltd |
| Bickers plc | Rain Bird Europe S.A.R.L |
| BLEC Landscaping Equipment Co Ltd | Reasheath College |
| Boughton Loam Ltd | Richard Campey Ltd |
| Boyd Golf Course Accessories | Rigby Taylor Ltd |
| British Seed Houses | Risboro Turf |
| Cannington College | Rolawn (Turfgrowers) Ltd |
| Capri Pumps (UK) Ltd | Rousseau Equipment Ltd |
| Charterhouse Turf Machinery | Rufford Soil Technology |
| Charterhouse Turf Machinery | Same Deutz-Fahr UK Ltd |
| Course Care | Saxon Industries |
| Dennis | Scotts UK |
| Distinct Manufacturing | Shirley Aldred & Co Ltd |
| DLF Perryfields | Simon Tullett Machinery |
| DW Tomlin | Sisis Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd |
| Eagle Promotions | Spaldings UK Ltd |
| Elmwood College | Speedcut Contractors |
| Etesia (UK) Ltd | Sumi Agro (UK) Ltd |
| European Turf Technology Ltd | Supaturf Products Ltd |
| Evenproducts Ltd | Swan Golf Designs Ltd |
| Farm & Garden Machinery | Swan Plant Services Ltd |
| Farmura Ltd | Symbio |
| GPS Services Ltd | Tacit |
| Gambetti Barre UK Ltd | Talbot Farm Landscapes Ltd |
| Garfitts International Ltd | TEG Environmental |
| Gem Professional | Textron Golf Turf and Specialty Products |
| Geosynthetic Technology Ltd | The Association of Golf Club Secretaries |
| Golf Car UK Ltd | The Golf Sign Company |
| Greenkeepers Training Committee | TIL Irrigatoin Ltd |
| Greenlink International | Tildenet Ltd |
| Groundsman Industries | Tonick Watering Ltd |
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| Hardi | Totrax Ltd |
| Hayter UK Ltd | Trelleborg Wheel Systems |
| Headland Amenity | True-Surface Rollers |
| Hunter Grinders Ltd | TT Proturf Ltd |
| IQG | Turf Seed UK Ltd |
| Irrigation Control Ltd | Turfgrass Services International Ltd |
| John Deere | Turfmech Machinery Ltd |
| John Greasley Ltd | Tyre-line Original Equipment Ltd |
| John Hinton Associates | Verde Sports Ltd |
| Kawasaki Motors (UK) Ltd | Vitax Ltd |
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| Kestrel Golf | White Horse Contractors Ltd |
| Kubota (UK) Ltd | Whitemoss Amenities Ltd |
| Lastec UK Ltd | Wiedenman UK Ltd |
| Lewis Equipment Ltd | Yamaha |
| Lindum Seeded Turf Ltd | York & Martin |

Preparations for BTME2002 are cruising along, but you'll have to step up a gear to catch our Keynote speaker ...

TUE 22 JAN 02

WED 23 JAN 02

THU 24 JAN 02

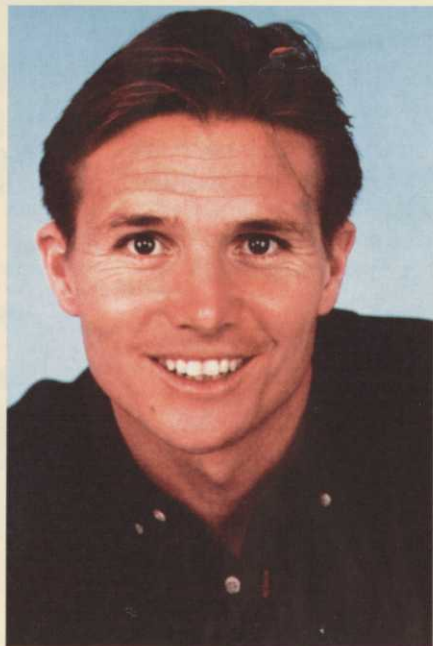
Making a sprint to Harrogate

Keynote speaker announced for BTME2002

Roger Black M.B.E. will be the Keynote Speaker next January at BTME 2002. For 14 years Roger represented Great Britain at the highest level in the world of athletics, both as an individual 400 metres runner and as a member of 4 x 400 metres relay team. He won 15 major Championship

Focus on Grandstand, "The Black Run" for skiing enthusiasts and is presenting at all major Athletics Championships, most recently at the Sydney Olympic Games.

By combining his close understanding of motivation and self-development with his personal experiences both on and off the track, Roger now inspires, motivates and entertains audiences throughout the country. Once again, the Keynote Speaker session looks set to start the BTME off on a high note and we look forward with anticipation to welcoming Roger Black.



Dr James Beard at the BIGGA Learning Week at BTME. The BIGGA Education and Training Department can announce that Dr James Beard, PhD will be making two presentations as part of the Learning Week at BTME to be held in Harrogate in January 2002.

Dr Beard will be presenting a Master Class at the National Education Conference on Monday 21 January and will present an extended Seminar session on Thursday 24 January.

Watch out for further Learning Week announcements in your monthly copy of Greenkeeper International,

in the News and Events section and the BTME section of our website.

medals including European, Commonwealth and World Championship Gold medals. His greatest achievement was winning the Olympic 400 metres Silver medal in 1996 and he is particularly admired for his triumphs over adversity, successfully overcoming several serious injuries and setbacks throughout his career.

He was British Men's Team Captain and was awarded the MBE. in 1992.

Roger is now a presenter for BBC Television Sport and works on a range of programmes including Athletics

Speaker Update

The Continue to Learn Week at BTME is approaching fast. The Education Programme is starting to take shape with most speakers confirming their attendance.

Those speakers confirmed include Dr James Beard, who will speak on both the National Education Conference and Seminar Programme. Jim Moore, from the USGA, will also make two presen-

tations, again at the Conference and on the Seminar Programme. His subjects include green construction and bunker design and construction.

The Conference will also feature sessions on Global Warming and the Golf Course and Preparation for Winter.

Workshops include a two day Golf Course Design 1 workshop, presented by Howard Swan and Simon Gidman and two, one day workshops on the subjects of Emergency First Aid and Environmental Management. These one day workshops will run on both Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 January.

The Seminar programme will commence on Wednesday 23 January and will include speakers from the USA, Canada and Ireland. Paul Crowe will be making a presentation on Preparation for the Ryder Cup at The K Club and in contrast Kevin Ross from the Country Club of the Rockies in Colorado will be discussing Gizmo's, Gadgets and Inventions.

An extended seminar session on Thursday morning will be presented by Brin Bendon, Vector Training and David Winterton, MG, Maidenhead Golf Club on the subject of Strategic Planning.

The seminars continue on Friday morning with Dr Mike Canaway presenting Training and Professionalism go Hand in Hand. Additional presentations will also be made by Andy Campbell, MG and Clive Osgood, BIGGA Chairman.

The 2002 Education Programme offers maximum flexibility to delegates allowing them to mix and match the Conference, Workshops and Seminars.



For the very latest BTME2002 news and event information visit: www.bigga.org.uk

This survey, produced for the Berkshire College Greenkeeping Liaison Committee by Ray Clark, Course Manager of Harleyford Golf Club and Martin Gunn, Course Manager of Temple Golf Club and the BB&O Section, underlines the need for better communication and education of golfers ...

Aeration survey digs deep

It was planned that the foundation of this review would make use of Head Greenkeepers/ Course Managers considerable local knowledge and experience, acknowledge their recommendations and identify whether or not their proposals were being utilised fully by their employers. If not, the survey was designed to seek their opinions as to why their suggestions were being overlooked.

Our intention was to contact and question at least 50% of the Head Greenkeepers! Course Managers within the Berks, Bucks and Oxon (BB&O) region. 105 affiliated golf clubs were identified, with 62 clubs actually targeted for the survey. It was agreed by the survey team that although the number of clubs taking part would not provide conclusive proof, 65% represented a large enough

number (and therefore the evidence) to provide a good indication of what was happening within the industry.

The survey was to be carried out somewhat covertly, under the pretext of Berkshire Colleges-Industrial Liaison Committee and was therefore not able to use such direct questioning as perhaps would be required.

Aim

The main aim of the survey was to gain insight as to what is considered the correct amount of aeration (for individual golf courses) as perceived by Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers.

Along with this, the survey was designed to highlight which areas of conflict (if any) were most often encountered and how that conflict impacted on aeration objectives and scheduling.

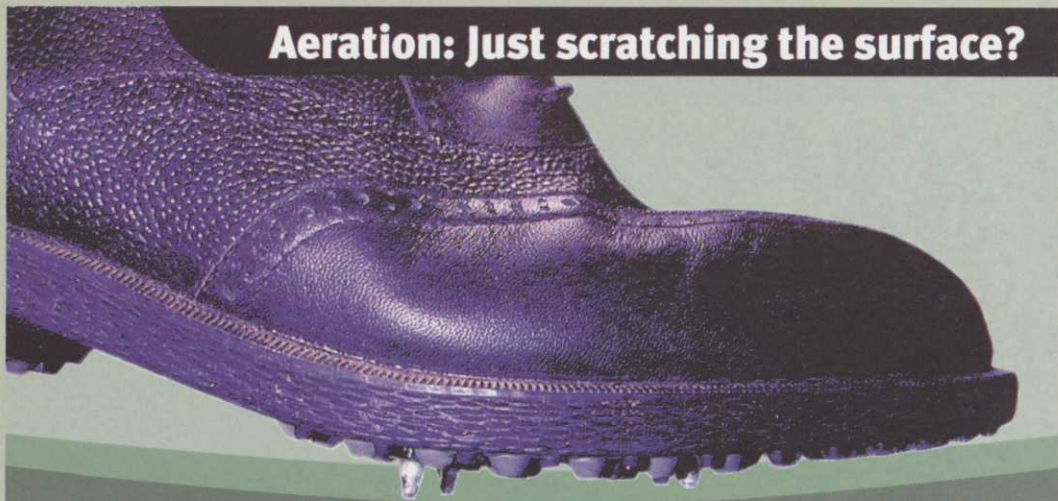
Implementation

It was felt that the most effective way to achieve the high level of responses required, would be to conduct a telephone survey. A wide variety of clubs (from PGA tournament venues to local authority) were surveyed during the first two weeks of February. From the 62 clubs targeted a success rate of 100% was achieved. Please refer to the graphs for our findings.

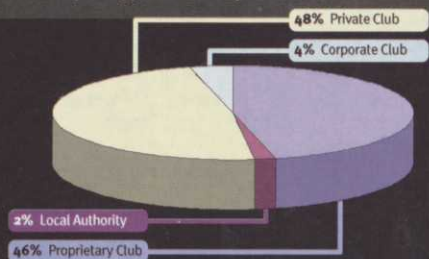
Discussion

There appears to be a very accurate match of information gained from Questions 1 and 2. The link between those facilities playing on pure sand greens and the percentage of corporate clubs surveyed is too obvious to ignore. Likewise, the links between soil greens and private clubs and

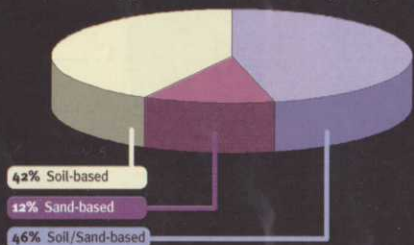
Aeration: Just scratching the surface?



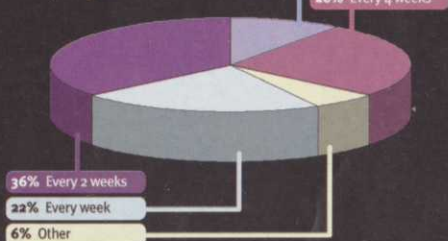
1. What type of club do you work at?



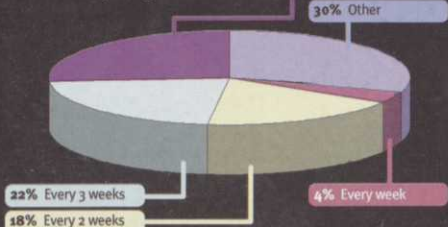
2. What type of soil best describes your greens?



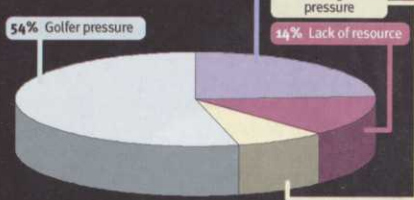
3. How frequently do you feel your greens should be aerated?



4. How often do you actually aerate your greens?



5. Why do you not aerate your greens as often as you'd like?



6. List the aeration methods in order of frequency used by you



7. Are golfers notified of your aeration programme?



8. Do you receive enough support from your industry to achieve your aeration objectives?



sand/soil greens and proprietary clubs are also similar.

Given the information so far, it would be fair to suggest that Questions 3 and 4 would clearly identify the frequency of aeration required for the different types of growing mediums associated with the above facilities especially as these questions use the Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers local knowledge of ground conditions and their collective experiences.

Surprisingly, there appeared to be no direct correlation between the frequency of aeration operations and the specific soil type. It could be argued therefore, that greenkeepers are either unsure of their aeration frequencies relating to soil type, or that there is a lack of an accepted industry standard.

In Question 3 the vast majority surveyed (62%) felt that their greens should be aerated every two or four weeks. It is also interesting to note that 22% felt their greens should receive some sort of aeration on a weekly basis. Only 6% felt that the period between aeration operations should be greater than four-week intervals. Of these it is worth pointing out that one individual suggested that their greens only needed aerating two to three times per year, while another suggested that his golf greens should receive 60 aeration operations in any twelve month period.

In Question 4 we observed a noticeable swing between that of the ideal aeration frequencies and those that are actually being achieved. The immediate comparison is between greenkeepers who would like to aerate every week (22%) and those who actually aerate every week (4%). The majority of those surveyed (58%) felt that they should aerate at least every two weeks, of which only 22% achieved this.

What is also clear is that 94% felt that they should aerate their greens between one and four times a month. Of that percentage only 22% reached their objectives.

By far the largest difference came in the category of 'Other' from 6% to a staggering 30%. Of those, the worst case recorded was one person who had not aerated within the last three seasons!

Question 5 revealed that over 50% of those surveyed failed to meet their aeration objectives due to golfer pressure. When 'management pressure' and 'lack of resources' are added to this, the figure becomes an overwhelming 76%. Of the remaining 24% the majority (implied) that their failure to meet objectives was due to a combination of the aforementioned factors. However, several did state that they received no pressure from either golfers or from their management team.

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The main observation from Question 6 is that the majority of aeration undertaken is of the least disruptive type (slit tinning). When linked to the issue of 'golfer pressure' discussed in Question 5, a worrying pattern begins to emerge.

Despite the fact that 88% of those surveyed in Question 7 are communicating with their club members, it appears that these communications are clearly not helping greenkeepers achieve their aeration objectives. This raises many questions, particularly those of communication methods, the timing of communications, the authority of those communications and how they are supported.

Although the initial results in Question 8 seem promising, it is worth bearing in mind that the majority of those who answered yes, were in fact talking about receiving support from either BIGGA, their agronomists, machinery manufacturers or STRI.

The 30% who answered in a negative way suggested a number of areas where improvements could be made. These included: -

- Better education of the golfer
- Better education of golf club secretaries
- Better greenkeeper education
- More help from the R&A and Home Unions
- Improved liaison with the golf professional organisations
- More exposure in golfing journals

There can be little doubt regarding the information gained in Question 9. Clearly there is an opportunity to build on this survey and perhaps in future, questions should be more direct and challenging.

Conclusion

From the survey we can see that the main issue to be addressed is 'why are we underachieving on our aeration objectives?'

According to those surveyed, aeration is an essential operation necessary if quality sports turf is to be provided. However, it would appear that the frequency of aeration operations and the type of aeration

required for each soil category is a mystery to those even with intimate knowledge of their specific environments. Obviously this does not provide a good foundation for greenkeepers to argue a positive case regarding aeration timing and scheduling. This comes as quite a shock, particularly as greenkeeper training and education has clearly moved in the right direction over the last few years. Perhaps another more nebulous issue now dominates this subject. Could it be that job security and continuity are now so important to greenkeepers that they do not actively follow what they know to be correct or what they know their employers will resent?

Possibly, the blame for underachieving should be targeted at those who are responsible for developing industry standards. After all, if the majority of greenkeepers were intrinsically motivated, it would follow that they would try hard to implement correct procedures. If clear research exists to confirm type and frequency of aeration relating to soil type and season, greenkeepers seem unaware of its validity. Further research and development may therefore be needed so that everyone associated with the industry has a higher understanding of this topic.

The most concerning issue drawn from the survey appears to be the pressure administered by the golfer. It is painfully obvious that aeration affects the putting surface, but the survey indicates that the balance between getting oxygen into the soil and producing an even putting surface has been entirely lost to the golfer. Shortermism has taken centre stage. Tactical and strategic objectives for green aeration are the casualties of this naive situation. A concerted effort must be made if things are to change. With golfers paying more for their round, pressure to produce ideal conditions undoubtedly increases. If we are to right this situation, the question of industry leadership once again comes to the fore. Without it, it would seem that circumstances could only deteriorate.

A plea to others

It would be of great benefit to know if the information revealed by the survey in the BB&O Section is reflected elsewhere in the country. Please take time to answer the eight questions and mail, email or fax your answers to Scott MacCallum at BIGGA HOUSE or simply pass on anecdotal evidence you've experienced personally to the magazine. The more widespread the problems identified in the survey are seen to be the greater the attention which can be given to them.

Carol Dutton meets up with new Master Greenkeeper Phillip Helmn who has a novel way of testing new products

The Masterplan



Master Greenkeepers don't grow on trees. With just 31 qualified individuals worldwide - despite the fact that it is now 13 years since BIGGA devised the scheme - it is logical to assume that successful candidates possess more than the experience, education and practical greenkeeping and management skills demanded by the award.

Phillip Helmn, one of this year's new Masters is a case in point. He has come up with one of those simple ideas which is so obvious you wonder why nobody thought of it before.

As Course Manager at Overstone Park in Northamptonshire he is often approached by trade representatives, extolling the virtues of the latest products their companies have to offer.

"I wasn't happy about

putting anything new on my greens without testing it first," he says. "I know the companies conduct their own rigorous trials, but no two golf courses are the same, and the chances of soil conditions at the testing grounds exactly matching those here, were slim."

Encouraged by David Barraclough, Group Managing Director at Overstone, who has backed Phillip throughout his Master Greenkeeper studies, Phillip decided that what he needed was his own trial green, built as closely as possible to match the 18 on the course. Vitax put their support where their representative's mouth was, giving practical help and technical advice, which has resulted in the construction of a new testing area. At 16 by 10 metres, it is situated directly in front of Phillip's office window.

"Although the rootzone has not been constructed strictly to a USGA specification, in all other aspects, conditions, including fully automatic

irrigation, are identical to those on my greens.

The area is subject to the same maintenance regime, and is effectively our 19th green.

One aspect in which the trial green differs is the amount of poa resident within the sward.

Having decided to build his own testing green to assess new products, Phillip realised that he now had an opportunity to safely investigate methods of combating poa annua.

"In the fight against poa invasion there is no real substitute for good, traditional greenkeeping techniques, but outside pressures can reduce the effectiveness of an Integrated Disease Management Plan, and I was keen to experiment."

For this reason, the trial plot was deliberately sown with a large percentage of poa.

"We can even put paraquat on it if we want to. The whole area has been sectioned into grids, and we are keeping detailed records of every application administered," he says.

The first step was to establish the percentage of poa in each grid by using a point quadrant frame which is simply a piece of softwood 60cm long with two rows of 10 pins five centimetres apart.

Where the pins landed the grass species was recorded, and although results varied, on average poa coverage was found to be 60%.

"One area has been left untreated as a control and other grids subjected to treatments ranging from high to low doses of Glyphosate total weed killer. We have also applied excessive rates of chemical and biological fungicides to some areas, to see if this has a detrimental effect on the poa. Already some interesting things have started to happen," said Phillip.

Although he will offer the results of research carried out at Overstone to fellow greenkeeping professionals, given the space, time and resources, the only way to assess the effects of applied products with total accuracy may be to try them on your own soil.

