

tion, Last but not least our thanks must go to Perranporth Golf Club for allowing the Section use of their facilities and all their staff who made our day run so smoothly.

As usual January brought an exodus of greenkeepers from our counties to attend the BTME show held in the lovely town of Harrogate. With the BTME show seminars and conference offering so much in education many members decided to travel independently. The Region's coach departed from Fingle Glen on the Monday with videos on board to keep members amused on the long trip North. Most of the Region's members were able to stay in the same hotel, which created an excellent atmosphere.

The show it self just seems to get better each year and is now one that you can't afford to miss. Many members attended the Amenity Technology evening which was just buzzing with greenkeepers from all over the world.

Congratulations must go to our Regional Administrator, Paula, and Stuart Ashworth, of Amenity Technology, who had organised the superb trip. Also, I would like to congratulate all the staff at head office for organising a superb BTME.

Our last meeting of the winter programme will be the Aventis and Supaturf meeting, which will be held at Taunton & Pickering Golf Club on Wednesday, March 20.

Richard Whyman

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DETAILS ON PAGE 42

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Any member who has found themselves out of work as a direct result of the Foot and Mouth Outbreak may wish to take advantage of the BIGGA website to help find another club. As a special service to members the Association will allow you to post a Job Shop advert on the website, listing your experience and qualifications, offering your services free of charge. Further information can be obtained from the Sales & Marketing Department at BIGGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833800 email: sales@bigga.co.uk

Please note: This offer only applies to website adverts and not those which you wish to appear in Greenkeeper International.

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require a

### FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants should have a minimum of 3 years experience and be currently working towards or have NVQ Level 3. Also must have spraying certificates PA1, 2, & 6.

Must be hard working and a good team member.

No Accommodation.

Salary negotiable.

Applications in writing with full C.V. to:

Mr Perry Harvey, Course Manager,  
Oakland Park Golf Club,  
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### Invite applications for the post of ASSISTANT GREENKEEPERS

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Accommodation may be available for the right candidate.

Please apply in writing, including full CV to:

The Head Greenkeeper, Jim Sutherland, Reading Golf Club,  
17 Kidmore End Road, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8SG.

## HEATON MOOR GOLF CLUB LTD STOCKPORT

### ASSISTANT COURSE MANAGER

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### TRAINEE GREENKEEPER

Full training will be given to NVQ Level 1, 2 etc.  
Salary negotiable according to age and experience.

For both these posts apply in writing with full CV to:

Ian Somerville, Course Manager, Heaton Moor Golf Club,  
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## Hastings Golf & Country Club

Invite applications for the posts of

### HEAD GREENKEEPER & FIRST ASSISTANT

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All applications in writing together with current CV to:

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For an application form and further details please contact Swindon Services Personnel on (01793) 464517 (24 hour answering service). Minicom for deaf users (01793) 436659. Please note that we cannot accept CVs.

We are actively working towards equality of opportunity and welcome applications from any individual.



## STOKE BY NAYLAND GOLF & LEISURE

require a

### HEAD GREENKEEPER

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Derek Howe M Inst. GCM, Stoke by Nayland Golf & Leisure,  
Keepers Lane, Leavenheath, Colchester, Essex CO6 4PZ  
Tel: 01206-262836 Fax: 01206-263356

E-mail: info@golf-club.co.uk Web site: www.stokebynaylandclub.co.uk



**Sandy McDivot takes puts his own inimitable slant on the Golf Club Committee**

# Committee'd FOR LIFE

Intelligence is a hard commodity to measure. They say that Einstein for all his wisdom did not possess the mental faculties necessary to boil an egg, or change his clothes. This is quite understandable when you come to think of it. How often have we come across people with an abundance of brainpower but no actual ability to think? Why only today I was listening to our venerable Home Secretary on the radio comment on the nations latest crime figures. "They are lower" he stated, "but not low enough". Brilliant, and at what stage are the crime figures deemed to be "low enough". Then there was that unfortunate contestant on Mastermind who could cope with Magnus Magnusson's first question as to what his name was but when asked to divulge his occupation, was totally stumped.

The measurement of intelligence, it is said, can be used to categorise the hierarchy of life forms, while intelligence itself, can be described as degrees of consciousness. Let me explain. The more conscious one is, the more intelligent one becomes. So at the lower end of the scale of life, we have single celled organisms and

surroundings but are unable to experience the process of thought and simply utilise the limited information gathered about their environment, as a survival means. Some of those old golf club secretaries, would be the equivalent in our particular world. Then we come to the slightly higher forms of life to be found in the animal kingdom. These have all the senses intact and are able to gather information on their surroundings and carry out a degree of conscious thought, although often lack the faculties for emotional response. They are also remarkably adept at learning patterns of behaviour and of coming to intelligent conclusions based on incoming information. Therefore a cow will sit in the shade on a hot day, or a cat will hide itself in the undergrowth ready to pounce on its unsuspecting prey.

Unfortunately, experience has taught me that the average golf club committee does not always attain such levels of consciousness. Correct conclusion based on gathered data, is not something that is automatically arrived at. Now I know this is a horribly condescending statement to make and I do recognise that some

reason for crowned holes is that when the turf is wet and soft in the winter, golfers will all step approximately six inches away from the hole to retrieve their ball and the subsequent compression of several such golfers, causes the hole to stand proud above the adjacent area. We can reach this conclusion by using such things as our eyes. I have on many occasions explained the correct cause of the crowned hole malady but each winter the complaint goes up that we never use a board to change the holes.

I even remember one committee man, congratulating me on finally learning how to change the holes properly, when he followed me around straight after I had moved them. Even after explaining it to him yet again, he appeared not to grasp the fact that the cause of the holes being flat on that occasion, was that he was the first person to play on them. I have now resolved the issue in true traditional greenkeeping fashion, by the deployment of many years of near zero fertiliser input. This has had the effect of eliminating all thatch from the soil surface and firming up the greens considerably. I now get a flood of complaints each sum-

**Another classic that committees have managed to wind me up with on several occasions, is that of holding important events on a Monday. Is it just myself, or have we all looked in the club fixture list only to find a pro-am, or a Ladies' Invitational, or a Seniors' Open starting on a Monday morning?**

such like, that have no actual consciousness or awareness but are simply programmed to search for food and engage in reproduction. Replace food with alcohol and it's a bit like myself as an apprentice greenkeeper. Of course the consumption of alcohol was necessary because of its ability to make unwelcome sights considerably more pleasing to the eye and thus aid the fruitless search for the reproductive division of my mental programming.

Moving up the scale, we have other simple creatures such as insects. These have a vague awareness of their

committees are highly proficient, but I will endeavour to back this statement with some of my own evidence gathered in a lifetime of working among them.

Take the crowned hole syndrome so popular among committee men as an excuse for their missed three foot putts, even though their putting strokes often involve a twitch of such horrific violence that divot replacement is required. The crowned hole phenomenon is, they assure us, due to our inability to use a board to change the holes.

Now we all know that the real rea-

son that the greens are like "bleedin' concrete" but rarely about our inability to change the holes correctly.

"You're following us around on purpose aren't you?" is another cry that goes up when we unfortunately meet up with the same group of golfers, on more than one occasion, when engaged in the execution of our duties. Now the logic behind this accusation is somewhat bewildering to us, but a colleague of mine once enlightened me on how his lady golfers became convinced that all greenkeepers were guilty of making this their sole objective in life.





Amazingly they passed a resolution at their AGM that on ladies' days, the greenkeepers had to mow the greens by starting at the 18th hole and then work their way back to the 1st. This, they concluded, would result in ground staff never interrupting their game. With the full backing of the secretary, I am delighted to say that my colleague did indeed carry out the ladies' wishes to the letter of their law. Predictably enough, the result was utter chaos and apparently the embarrassment of the ladies was something to be treasured. Needless to say the lessons in communication have been well and truly learnt.

Actually the aforementioned colleague of mine, told me of another classic example of golfing lack of consciousness. He was one morning checking the irrigation system, by putting the full greens pop-ups on a two-minute cycle and then racing around the course, taking note of any faults in the system. He got to one green just before the sprinklers were due up, only to find that a two ball was putting out. He rushed onto the green and politely informed them that they needed to vacate the area immediately, or they would get very wet indeed. They completely and utterly ignored him. He repeated the warning but one particular golfer simply looked up at him with a look of contempt and then proceeded to stand back over his putt. At this point the sprinklers came on with one of them aimed directly at the golfer. With true British stiff upper lip, he stood up, stared at my colleague and slowly walked over to him, only for the sprinkler to follow his every move. He eventually arrived at his destination in a condition of complete saturation at which point the sprinkler shut down. "What's your name?" asked

the sodden golfer through clenched teeth. My friend found it difficult to reply due to the fact that he was focusing all of his attention in the avoidance of wetting his own underpants, albeit via uncontrolled laughter.

Another classic that committees have managed to wind me up with on several occasions, is that of holding important events on a Monday. Is it just myself, or have we all looked in the club fixture list only to find a pro-am, or a Ladies' Invitational, or a Seniors' Open starting on a Monday morning. Have they stopped for one second and asked themselves how we are supposed to get everything double cut, raked and changed in the couple of hours of daylight available. I have even come across them making the brilliant decision of bringing onboard the full shotgun start, just to make things doubly impossible for us.

Finally, let me relay to you, a story that came from a Course Manager friend of mine, who has plied his trade in a particular coastal resort that will remain nameless for reasons of possible litigation. Now several of the golf clubs in this place, let me tell you, have the absolute worst committees and members the world has ever known. If they had been working for the Spanish inquisition, half of them would have been thrown out for unreasonable behaviour. In fact if you accused them of being a bunch of Hitlers, they would take it as a complement. One of these clubs - and this is entirely true - once placed an advert for a club secretary/manager that stated that the applicant "must have the ability to manage 800 members, all of whom are experts in golf club management".

This

particular Course Manager, was working away with the rest of his team on a hole, when he noticed someone observing them from up in the woods. He thought nothing of it but the next day, the same person was once more gazing down upon them. This continued for a week or so, before curiosity finally got the better of the Course Manager and he made his way up the hill to confront this strange human being.

"Can I help you" he asked. The reply, when it came was somewhat disconcerting.

"I'm the new Green Chairman. I've been watching you and there are going to be a few changes around here". With this thought in his mind, my friend made his way back down to the rest of his staff to inform them of the distressing news. The Green Chairman continued to observe them for quite a few days after this, until finally the day

arrived when he made his way down the hill to make his pronouncement to the Course Manager.

What awful observations had he made, thought my friend, as he saw him marching towards him. Would this be cards on the table time, had he made a fiendish discovery that would prove incompetence, would there be some impossible demand made, would he harass them all with the results of this despicable time and motion study. No, instead the Green Chairman asked, "How do you cut the greens?" "What do you mean?" asked the Course Manager. "Well, when you cut them, do you go up and down, or around and around?"

**Sandy McDivot.**  
**Head Greenkeeper:**  
**Sludgecombe Pay and Play.**





## Feature listing from March 2000

**March 2000;** Clebury Mortimer GC; Course Furniture; R&A Conference Report; Cutting heights; Avoncrop profile; Valderrama report; Westurf preview

**April 2000;** Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC; Utility Vehicles; Irrigation; Seed breeding; Gem Professional profile.

**May 2000;** Ross-on-Wye GC; Top Dressing; Course Mapping; Compact Tractors

**June 2000;** National Championship preview; Spraying; World Education Conference review; Environmental Management; Mowers

**July 2000;** Open Championship Preview; Dougal Duguid Court Case Report; Pest Control; Aventis profile; Course Conditioning

**August 2000;** Open Championship review; Water Features; Saltex preview; Charcoal; Malone GC; Royal County Down; Grand Tour Scholarship

**September 2000;** Blowers and Sweepers; Berkshire College Academy; National Championship roundup; Gordon McKillop interview; Winter health checks

**October 2000;** Toro Awards Preview; Ronald Fream; Irrigation; Saltex Review; Pest Control; Woburn GC

**November 2000;** Grass Cutting Machinery; Clandeboye GC; Drainage; National Championship review; Leatherjacket management

**December 2000;** Toro Awards; Making the most of your Dealer; Budget Boosters; BTME2001 preview; BIGGA/Bernhards CGSA delegation preview

**January 2001;** Communication; Tyres; Turf diseases; Kingsbarns Golf Links; Environment Competition Winner - Dyke GC; Talking Heads - Pest Control

**February 2001;** BTME2001 review; Winter Mowing; Irrigation; Broadstone GC; Hedges; Security

**March 2001;** York GC; Greens Maintenance; Meland GC, Norway; Greens Mowers; BIGGA Essay Winner; Grass Science profile

**April 2001;** Lightning detection; Brockett Hall GC; CGSA report; Fairway Mowers; Irrigation; Sward renovation; BIGGA Essay winner; Turf Disease

**May 2001;** Foot and Mouth Disease Special Report; Maintenance Facility report; Bunker Sand; ATVs; RainBird Profile; Fineturf Genetics; BTME2002 countdown; Electric-powered machines

**June 2001;** Stoke Park Club profile; Stuart Cagle MG; Tractors; Leaf Spot Disease; Take All Patch; Construction

**July 2001;** Royal Lytham profile; Tees Mowers; Fertilisers; Green Grasses; John Deere profile; Sandy McDivot; College Listings

**August 2001;** Aeration Survey; Machrie GC profile; Rough Mowers; Saltex Preview; Dr Alan Gange - environmental research; Hayter Profile; Ponds; Open Championship review; Toro Student of the Year profile;

**September 2001;** Ryder Cup preview; Chafer Grubs; Drainage; BIGGA National Championship preview; Sandy McDivot; Machinery Maintenance; Soil Analysis; Wild Flowers

**October 2001;** Major Award for Walter Woods; Royal Portrush GC; Portstewart GC; Irrigation; Soil biodiversity; Leaf collection systems; Sootsturf preview/ Saltex review

**November 2001;** BIGGA National Championship review; Environment Competition winner; Spraying; Toro Awards Preview; Cutting regimes; Dyke GC

**December 2001;** Toro Award Winners; Southern Gailes GC; BTME preview; Specialty equipment; Thatch removal

**January 2002;** Walton Heath profile; Greenkeeping in Denmark; Moving materials; A first for Andy Campbell; New products

**February 2002;** Harrogate 2002 Review; Drainage; Castlerock GC; Trees; Recycling; TurfTrax profile; Barn Owl special report



## Richard Barker enjoys a roller coaster experience at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando

# Stateside experiences



Having just unpacked my bags after BTME it was time to pack them again and off to the States for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America show in Orlando.

Early on Sunday morning (February 3rd) I met with Neil and Tracey, as well as Andy White from Oatlands College - Andy was on the trip as lecturer of Andrew Pledger, winner of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award; Huw Morgan, winner of the Toro Greenkeeper of the Year Award, and Graham Taylor, top student at Elmwood College. I also met the 10 lucky delegates on the Bernhards Scholarship, but more on that later.

Some 11 hours later we had arrived and how nice it was to see and feel some warm sunshine and also meet up with many other Brits who had made the journey under their own steam.

Each year BIGGA have a reciprocal arrangement with the GCSAA on stand space and I was quite surprised at the number of American Superintendents who we have as members. Throughout the show there were plenty of membership renewals as well as signing up new members, plus a great deal of interest in the magazine for American Companies wishing to advertise. What was extremely pleasing was the interest in our Master Greenkeeper Scheme. The Americans rate this very highly in pursuing their education and next year

many have said they will visit BTME. In fact, someone tried to book 15 people into the Majestic Hotel there and then!

For those of you who have not been to the States, everything is vast and their show is no different. The majority of products that you view are pretty similar to what you will see at BTME but you can also pick up plenty of new ideas.

I personally enjoyed meeting and talking to Superintendents and listening to their stories. On talking to one he told me he had 54 staff of which five worked on clubhouse surrounds. He also had staff dedicated to machinery maintenance and irrigation. Although he had 36 holes 14 staff worked on the short course and 30 on the main course. This was helped along with a budget well in excess of \$3 million. Another Superintendent, who had a similar amount of staff, told me he hand raked bunkers twice a day. Now that I think is a bit over the top. But before you get depressed the message came over loud and clear that these guys despite the staff and large budgets (not in all cases) are under tremendous pressure.

Now earlier I mentioned the Bernhards delegation. This is the second trip that Stephen has sponsored and it is fair to say this is no holiday as the guys were kept extremely busy attending seminars, organised trips to golf courses, the show and also social functions. On speaking to them each and every one had a marvellous time, learning plenty and making new acquaintances. But their work is not over as they will be making presentations back home. Please try and support these if there is one in your area, I can assure you of a good evening!

On behalf of all the delegates I would like to thank Bernhards for their continued support and encourage you all to apply next year. It is open to everyone - young, old, experienced or inexperienced as the lottery says - It could be you!

Throughout our stay we did have two

free days to do as we pleased and a few of us took the opportunity to visit two of the theme parks. Firstly, we visited Islands of Adventure the new Universal park. This is a must if you like roller coasters and having your insides turned upside down, and secondly, Universal Studios which was equally good. If anyone tells you these parks are for kids they're right... but for BIG Kids. If you ever have a chance - GO!

But the highlight of our week had to be at the banquet on the Friday evening to see our former Chairman, Walter Woods, being presented with the old Tom Morris award by Tommy Witt, the GCSAA's President.

This is the most prestigious award that an Association can make, and in Walter's case was presented for a lifetime of dedicated service and enthusiasm to the industry. It was made all the more special for Walter with his family being present and also his fellow Scotsman that made the trip wearing their national uniforms - Quite a sight!

Congratulations Walter you should be very proud - we certainly are. So with the week nearly over we could reflect on what was a successful week for BIGGA and all that attended and start to prepare ourselves for the long trip home, while Andrew Pledger and Huw Morgan continued their adventures in the States.

Upon reaching our own shores there were no surprises, it was still cold and damp. My golf course is certainly very wet as I am sure yours are, but looking ahead Spring is not a million miles away so we all have a few more weeks to complete those winter programmes and look forward to some better weather and a good season.

Richard Barker