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Greenkeeper

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Cover photograph by Eric Hepworth.



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WIN

A PALM HAND-HELD COMPUTER!

You could win this superb Palm computer
in this month's Buyers Guide competition
sponsored by Greenlink International in
support of their range of Nutri-Rational
foliars.

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Welcome

A POSITIVE MONTH FOR GREENKEEPING

It's not often that greenkeeping is in the news for positive reasons but the praise which filled the newspapers and television screens for Royal St George's during the Open Championship was genuine and a real credit to Head Greenkeeper, Neil Metcalf, and his hard working team.

The course was firm and fast running and looked as you would hope a links course would look. The hard bounces, some cruel, some occasionally kind, presented golfers, more used to golf of the target variety, with all sorts of conundrums. Despite this players expressed their admiration for the course... if not always the pin placements.

This was even more of a surprise as players love to make birdies and most loathe grinding out the pars and only one player, Ben Curtis, managed to better Mr Par and then only by a single shot.

Speaking of Ben Curtis, whose father incidentally is a Golf Course Superintendent, he reminded me a little of Tom Watson in 1975 who was a virtual unknown when he arrived at Carnoustie and defeated Jack Newton in a play-off before going on to have a spectacular career. It would be fair to say that Curtis wasn't merely a virtual unknown, he was a complete unknown playing in his first ever Major and odds of 80-1 could still be snapped up on Sunday morning but I don't suppose the bookies were swamped. However he appeared to have some of Watson's unassuming demeanour and unflappable approach to the game.

Whatever, I'm sure there is a Hollywood producer even now looking at turning it into the latest golfing movie to join the illustrious list of Follow the Sun, Caddie Shack, Tin Cup and Happy Gilmore.

The fact that Curtis was a long shot winner is certainly not a reflection of the golf course. Davis Love said of Paul Lawrie and Carnoustie that the 1999 Open got the Champion it deserved. He was wrong in every respect. Lawrie has won two big tournaments since and Carnoustie is proud of its position as the toughest course on the Open rota, if not the planet.

Using Davis' logic, Royal St George's didn't identify the best player but the long list of superb players, including himself and Tiger Woods, who could and perhaps should have won defeats that argument.

It was also a great week for the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team which each year is becoming a more integral element in the Championship. This year an advanced party went out at 4am to rake bunkers before the start of play each day taking pressure off both the home team and the R&A who knew the job would be done to the highest standard.

On a final note it was great to see the aforementioned Tom Watson winning the British Seniors Open at George Brown's Turnberry to rekindle memories of his epic Open win over Jack Nicklaus in 1977.

Who says golf can't produce fairy stories?

Scott MacCallum, Editor

LONG SERVICE



George Newson

George Newson, Head Greenkeeper at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club, retires this month after 41 and a half years service with the same club.

As you might imagine George has thoroughly enjoyed his time at Felixstowe and hands over to John Houston, who has been working in harness with George for the past couple of months.

"Felixstowe has been a good club to work for and when they could afford it, they looked after us proudly. Now Felixstowe has got some of the best facilities in the country," he told the local paper, in a full page feature it did on his impending retirement.

"It's always been a friendly club and I've always been welcome in the clubhouse just like any other member."

George got the job in 1962 by chance when he was in the local pub listening to the club pro and the steward commenting on the state of the course.

"I'd had a few beers and I told them I could do the greenkeeper's job with my hands tied behind my back. Three days later I received a letter asking me to go for an interview and afterwards I was offered the job," said George who had worked on a farm prior to moving into greenkeeping.

"It's been a labour of love," said the man who played for 30 years off a handicap of five.

John Houston began his career at Ratho Park near Edinburgh and worked for Jack McMillan at Bush Hill Park before moving to Dorking GC as Head Greenkeeper. He has since been head man at a number of clubs including Addington Palace, Royal Blackheath, Fulwell and Dore and Totley.



John Houston

NATIONAL TURFGRASS FOUNDATION CONFERENCE

Following the success of last November's National Turfgrass Foundation Conference at Southport, the Foundation have again joined forces with Cranfield University at Silsoe to produce an even bigger event with a greater diversity of topics and speakers. This year's 'In Pursuit of Excellence' Conference will again be held at the Southport Theatre and Floral Hall Complex, and will run from November 3-6.

Martyn Jones and Louise Clegg, founders of the NTF and organisers of the Conference, said that the Conference has been designed as two programmes running in parallel to each other and delegates are free to move between the two depending on the topic selection of their choice.

This is the largest programme to date and will feature 38 speakers, sharing their vast knowledge and experience on 43 topics. Something for everyone and at an affordable price is definitely the theme for the event. With an impressive line up of speakers from a range of European countries and the USA, the conference should prove to be a winner with a wide range of turf managers.

Appearing alongside some of the most revered professors, researchers, and agronomists will be a number of notable BIGGA members. Duncan McGillvray, Potters Bar GC; Kerran Daly, MG, Gog Magog GC; Ian McMillan, Queenwood GC; Stuart McColm, Kingsbarn GC, and Wendy O'Brien, Carden Park Golf Resort, will be sharing their knowledge for the benefit of delegates. BIGGA Vice-Chairman, Andy Campbell, MG, CGCS; Walter Woods, BEM, and Jack McMillan, OBE., will also be inputting their

style and experience to the proceedings in their capacities of Session Chairmen.

Presentations cover a diverse range of subjects, including recent research conducted at Newcastle upon Tyne University into enhancing drainage rates by the use of electrokinetic geosynthetics, and details of a UK golf green construction specification. The effects of biostimulants on soil microbiology and composting as a management tool are other highly topical subjects. Maximising green speed while minimising damage, and rootzone/topdressing compatibility will be of particular interest to some greenkeepers.

"Those who have attended similar programmes will be aware of the tremendous knowledge that can be gained, not only directly from the presentations but also from socialising with the speakers and fellow delegates during out-of-conference hours. Greenkeepers will also have a marvellous opportunity to discuss aspects of 'Golf Greenkeeping throughout the World'. A panel of Course Managers, Superintendents and greenkeepers from numerous countries in Europe and North America will be talking of their experiences in different climatic zones; with contrasting budgets, and varying legislative constraints," said Martyn.

For further details of the Conference and accommodation contact Martyn Jones on Tel. +44 (0)1995 670675 or Louise Clegg on +44 (0)7879015921 or email NTFoundation@aol.com.

Email press releases and new product updates to: scott@bigga.co.uk

DISEASE MANAGEMENT DIFFICULTIES IN SWEDEN AND THE NETHERLANDS

Greenkeepers realise that fusarium patch is one of the most common diseases on north European golf courses and that a severe attack can leave disfiguring scars which will affect the quality of putting surfaces. They are also well aware that of the common grasses found on greens, annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*) is the most susceptible to this disease.

The vast majority of golf greens in northern Europe contain a significant proportion of annual meadow-grass, even though most will have originally been established with bent (browntop or creeping) and fescue grasses. This reversion has often been due to a combination of mismanagement at some point in their history (often forced on greenkeepers by the habit of golfers interfering directly with management of courses, the pressure from ignorant committees with their constant demands for greens that are soft and green), local environment influences (e.g. shade and drainage) and increased playing pressure.

Over the years, fungicides have provided a safety net for greenkeepers but recent EU Directives have placed far more stringent controls on their employment and in certain countries these Directives have been interpreted in such a way that the use of fungicides on golf courses has been effectively banned, eg. as is the case in the Netherlands, to public places in Denmark (on which approximately 50% of their golf courses are

situated) and in Sweden where courses fall into special environmental designations.

Earlier this year Tim Taylor and Nick Park of the R&A's Golf Course Committee went on a brief fact finding tour of Sweden and the Netherlands to see examples of what can happen to annual meadow-grass dominated greens hit by disease on sites where the use of fungicides is totally prohibited. The images arising from this trip should focus the attention of everyone involved in golf course management, including golfers who utilise courses, and make us all realise that without the back up of fungicides, alternative strategies will have to be adopted to provide sustainable golf green management.

The consequence of this damage is more anguish for greenkeepers and golfers, an even shorter playing season in situations where this is already an issue and, more worrying, the temptation to bring about a more rapid recovery through the application of extra fertiliser and water, which will undoubtedly exacerbate the diseased incidence the following autumn and winter.

The R&A Golf Course Committee are in the process of developing best practice guidelines and a research strategy, involving consultation throughout Europe, in an attempt to provide answers to problems such as these which will be facing greenkeepers worldwide in years to come. Regular updates on their progress can be found on the Course Management pages of the R&A website, www.randa.org.



RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

As part of BIGGA's ongoing commitment to Employers throughout the UK we can now inform you of recent Immigration law changes effecting UK employers and adding to the depth and breadth of the labour market.

Over 40,000 Antipodeans, (Australians and New Zealanders), enter the UK each year on a Working Holiday Scheme. This scheme traditionally allowed people under the age of 28 to enter the UK and work to supplement their incomes.

Until now this scheme was restrictive to people wishing to pursue a long term career path. From today these restrictions have been lifted on the type of work that can be undertaken, allowing people to

follow their chosen career path and work for the full two years of their visa. Also, the age limit has been raised to 30.

The changes create more flexibility for employers to retain these workers. After working in the UK for 12 months with a company, this experience can count towards to a UK work permit.

A work permit is issued to allow an individual to stay with an employer and reside in the UK for a period of four years, and can lead on to residency.

The bottom line: UK employers will now be able to secure a long term commitment from antipodean staff, and invest in their development.

LAST CHANCE

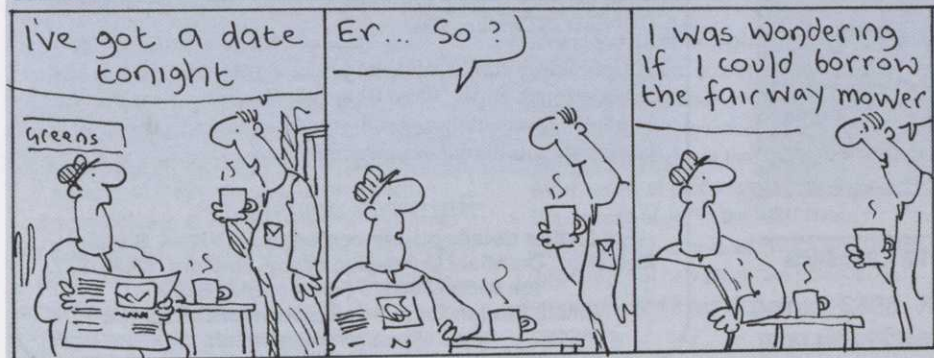
Anyone who has not yet entered this year's National Championship, sponsored by the Greenkeeping Supply Company, to take place at Coxmoor and Hollinwell Golf Clubs on 6 & 7 October, and who wishes to do so should contact BIGGA HOUSE as soon as possible to request an entry form. Entries are strictly limited to 100 and places are allocated on a first come first served basis.

MIDLAND SNOOKER

"The Nigel Tyler, of Alpha Amenity, Snooker Evening" run by the Midland Section was held at that infamous venue, "The Perfection Snooker Club", at Stirchley, in Birmingham. Not only did Alpha Amenity stand the players an extensive buffet, they were also gracious enough to afford the Lights, and prizes to boot. On the evening there were 17 players of which was eventually, after some fiercely contested battles, whittled down to two for the final: Robert and John Tomlin with John emerging the victor.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk



UN-SUNG HEROES - GIVE THEM A BREAK

Terrain Aeration are to acknowledge the scores of un-sung heroes among greenkeepers and groundsmen.

Nominated by you, as a practising member of either profession, the lucky winners - one greenkeeper and one groundsman - will receive the hire of a village house in the South of France for the week of their choice, plus £150 towards travelling expenses.

Judged by a panel of three, Gordon Child, BIGGA; Derek Walder, IOG and Tim Lodge, STRI, the winners will be announced at BTME 2004, in time for them to prepare for their unexpected holiday.

The judges will not necessarily be looking for outstanding turf care skills (there are awards for these already), but individuals who have shown outstanding dedication either to their jobs or the welfare of their colleagues, and whose contribution has made a significant difference to the quality of working life, at their particular work place.

Application form can be obtained Terrain Aeration at Saltex.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Bill Lawson, a doyen of the greenkeeping industry and former Course Manager of Heswell Golf Club on the Wirral, has just celebrated his 70th birthday and has the wishes of his many friends as he enjoys his septuagenarian years.

ALISDAIR MACLAREN

Unfortunately I have to report another loss to the greenkeeping fraternity with the untimely death of Alisdair Maclaren at the age of 60. Alisdair was a stalwart member of the Scottish Region where for many years he was the Education Officer and in particular the North Section where he was Chairman and Education representative.

Originally from a farming background Alisdair moved into greenkeeping in the Speyside Area looking after the 9-hole course at Nethybridge. At one point he was running three nine-hole golf courses in the area as well as building the par-3 course at Grantown-on-Spey called Craggan. Despite these commitments he always made time to attend education meetings on behalf of the Association and never missed Regional Section meetings.

Coming from a well-educated background he easily immersed himself in education ways with all its abbreviations. SILC, VQ's, HNC's etc. and as Chairman of the college industrial liaison committee was one of a few good people in our Association that have assisted in moving greenkeeper education forward.

Alisdair and his partner, Pat, moved to New Zealand in February 2002 where they bought a small holding with some livestock and he also worked as a manager within the sports industry.

Our sympathies and thoughts go out to Pat in New Zealand and Alisdair's family over here at this sad time.

Iain MacLeod
Board Of Management (Scottish Region)

NEW MANAGER

Countrywide has appointment Martin Townsend as their new Turf and Amenity Sales Manager.

Martin Townsend joins Countrywide from Scotts UK, with a wealth of knowledge in the industry stemmed from his early days in the 1970s as an apprentice cricketer and groundsman at Lords Cricket Ground. From 1976 until 1989 Martin held posts of Head Groundsman and Head Greenkeeper.

He then moved into the Amenity Distribution side of the industry, a natural transition for a man who is always up for a challenge, during this and

subsequent roles. Following 10 successful years as a Technical Sales Manager working predominately in the south west of the country Martin joined Scotts UK Professional four years ago as Senior Sales Manager for the South West, South Wales and the Channel Isles.

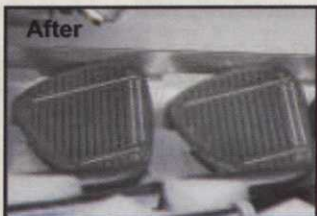
Martin's remit is to build a sales and distribution Turf & Amenity business that will run along side and compliment the portfolio of Countrywide's products and services available throughout the midlands, southern England and Wales.

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SUNSHINE ON LEITH!

PETER BOYD REPORTS ON THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

The Scottish National Championships took place over the Kintyre Course at the Turnberry Hotel on the Ayrshire coast, home to our National Chairman George Brown in June.

The Kintyre course has undergone major changes and now ranks with the very best in the country and during 2003 will be host to another major event the British Seniors Open and in 2004 it will be one of the qualifying courses for the Open at Troon.

With 80 competitors taking part the course was in immaculate condition. With the first players due to play at 10am, play looked in doubt when literally the heavens opened up and we experienced horrendous conditions, rain everywhere, the greens were flooded and the fairway's in some cases completely under water, but credit to Martin Lothian, Jimmy Johnstone and their staff who worked tirelessly to get play started. Play soon got under way and with the overhead conditions improving greatly and the usual sea coast breezes this made the playing of the course very difficult, but never-the-less there were some excellent scores returned, none more so than David Leith, from St Andrews, who posted the winning score of 71 and was Scottish Champion for 2003 winning the SGGA Challenge Cup.

The Friendship Trophy for the Best Nett went to Paul Conway of Alyth with a score of 72.

The prizes were presented by George Brown, Chairman of BIGGA who welcomed everyone to Turnberry and hoped that everyone had enjoyed the experience of playing over the Kintyre Course. Archie Dunn the Scottish Chairman on behalf of the competitors thanked George and the Management of Turnberry for hosting the event.

Results:

SGGA Challenge Cup Scratch Scottish Champion. David Leith, St.Andrews, 71. Friendship Trophy Best Nett. Paul Conway, Alyth, 72; Ransomes Trophy First Class. 1. James Manuel, Goswick, 73 (BIH); 2. Douglas McIntosh, Cathkin Braes, 75 (BIH); 3. Paul Murphy, Downfield, 75. Pattison Trophy Second Class. 1. Richard Mullen, Oldmeldrum, 73; 2. Craig Pennyquick, Winterfield,



The prize winners



Scottish Chairman Archie Dunn presents George Brown with a memento



David Leith with the trophy

76; 3. Ian Donaldson, St Andrews, 78; STRI Trophy Third Class. 1. Joe Bell, Millport, 77 (BIH); 2. Hugh McLatchie, Peterhead, 77; 3. Colin Scott, Glasgow, 81. Dick Aitken Trophy Best Head Greenkeeper. Iain MacLeod, Tain, 73. M & M Trophy Best Assistant. Richard Love, Kilmacoll, 73. Souter Trophy Best Apprentice. Edmund Wood, Glasgow, 77. SIGGA Trophy Best Veteran. Duncan Gray, Pines, 75. St Mungo Cup Team Trophy (Best four nett scores)

Central Section, David Leith, St.Andrews, 71; Paul Conway, Alyth, 72; Paul Murphy, Downfield, 75; Archie Dunn, Auchterarder, 76. Total 294.

Patrons. Kevin Brunton, Greentech. Nearest the Pin. Iain MacLeod, Tain. Qualifiers National Championship. David Leith, St. Andrews and Paul Conway, Alyth.

NOVOZYMES BIOLOGICALS

Novozymes Biologicals has announced the acquisition of Roots Inc., a leader in the development and application of organic based fertilizers, mycorrhizal fungi, biostimulants, and micronutrients for the turf, ornamentals, horticultural, landscaping and agricultural markets. This acquisition is effective June 19th, 2003.

Novozymes Biologicals, part of the Danish company Novozymes A/S, world leader in enzymes for industrial use, has been developing and selling a range of biological products for the Turf Industry as well as the Home & Garden sector.

Roots and Novozymes believe that this

consolidation will provide many benefits to the market, including:

- A combination of technologies and products from both companies to accelerate new product development efforts.
- New manufacturing processes, equipment and know how to increase the ability to supply a wider variety of products and product forms.
- The creation of an "in the field" Field Development Group to accelerate Novozymes introduction of new plant care products and provide improved technical assistance to customers.

The acquisition of Roots reflects Novozymes' strategic commitment to the plant care market with a goal to greatly increase the use of environmental friendly products, to reduce dependency on chemical fertilizers and pesticides while delivering high quality compounds to the market.

Best example is Novozymes' EcoGuard Biofungicide, a novel fungicide for control of fungal diseases that has recently received US EPA approval for use on turf and nursery crops in February 2003.

Novozymes' research and development team has already initiated several key "synergy projects" designed to bring new product technology to the market.



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J H Fry; J H Greasley; WJ Rogers; David S Robinson; Stuart Townsend; Andrew Cornes; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Roger Barker; Chris Yeaman; Iain A MacLeod; Bruce Cruickshank; John Crawford; Stuart Cruickshank

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Silver Key Individual Members

Clive A Archer; Douglas G Duguid; Robert Maibusch MG; Elliott R Small; Steven Tierney; Richard Lawrence; Clive Osgood; David Robinson; Richard Stillwell; Stephen Dixon; Ian Semple; Paul Jenkins; Robert Hogarth; R Steele; Lee Reif; Raymond Warrender

Ken Richardson describes his annual trek in search of this year's Toro Student of the Year finalists.

The TORO Student of the Year Competition 2003



When I started this job in 1994, nobody told me that it might involve walking through Glasgow at 11.30 pm on a Sunday night. It was all part of life's rich experience and I soon reached my hotel for the night and the venue of the Scottish Regional Final of the Toro Student of the Year Competition.

Now in its 13th year, the Toro Student of the Year Competition aims to find the top student greenkeeper from the 3500 greenkeepers under training each year. The Regional Finals, held in Glasgow, Manchester, Cheltenham and Harpenden, aimed to select eight candidates for the National Final, which will be held, this year, at BIGGA HOUSE on September 29.

George MacDonald from Toro, Jim Paton and myself gathered together on Monday, June 30 to interview seven Scottish Student Greenkeepers. It was encouraging to see such a high standard of presentation from all seven candidates and there was little to choose between them. However, the judges had to make a decision and selected Paul Todd as the Scottish Regional Winner.

The Finalists from the North are Keith Scruton and John Talbot with Justin Waddell chosen to represent Ireland.



Keith Scruton is 29 and is the Head Greenkeeper at Colne Golf Club, where he has been since the beginning of 2003. Keith has been involved in golf course maintenance since 1989, starting with

summer work at Darwen Golf Club. Currently studying for an HND at Myerscough College, Keith has had to fit his studying around the demands of his young family. Another keen golfer, playing off 8, Keith has ambitions to manage an Open Championship venue.



Paul Todd, who is 27, is the Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Lanark Golf Club, where he has been for six years. Paul has been a greenkeeper since he was 16, starting as a summer boy. An excellent golfer, he currently plays off 1.7,

Paul feels that he has learned a great deal from his Head Greenkeeper, Jim Lyon. Currently studying Level 3 at Oatridge College, Paul has aspirations to run his own course and would like to work overseas.



John Talbot is a native of the North East and is currently the Head Greenkeeper at Ravensworth Golf Club. Currently studying for an HNC at Askham Bryan College, John wants to continue with his education and wants

to study for an MSc at Cranfield University. Another golfer, John plays off 8 and plays regularly in Competitions. John's ambitions include managing a top course in the United Kingdom.

A lengthy journey from Glasgow to York surrounded by a large group of noisy Russian teenagers and an early morning drive to Manchester Airport led to the next judging location where I was joined by Trevor Chard from Toro and Andy Campbell MG CGCS, vice Chairman of BIGGA. A long day of judging resulted in us selecting two candidates from the North plus an Irish Finalist.



Justin Waddell is a 24 years old Assistant Greenkeeper from Northern Ireland, where he works at the Fortwilliam Club. Justin has been a greenkeeper for six years, four of which have been at his current club. Justin has ambitions to become qualified to Head Greenkeeper standard by the time he is 25 and is currently studying Level 3 at Greenmount College. Justin plays golf off 16 and is an exponent of Kick Boxing.

Back in the car for another long journey saw me crossing the M6 five times in an attempt to bypass an accident at Mere, some 10 miles from Manchester Airport. I eventually reached Cheltenham, where I met up with Peter Mansfield, from Toro and Gordon Irvine MG to judge the candidates from the South West and Wales. Dylan Hughes and Bobby Vining were selected to progress to the National Final.



Dylan Hughes, as his name suggests, is a native of North Wales, and he works as the First Assistant at Pwllheli Golf Club, where he has been for seven years. Now studying for his Level 3 NVQ at Welsh College, Dylan has a range of other qualifications including an NVQ in Forestry. Dylan plays golf when he can spare the time from his project to renovate a 19th Century cottage. He wants to progress to be a Course Manager, running his own golf course.



Bobby Vining is a 23 years old Assistant Greenkeeper at Mendip Spring Golf Club, where he has worked for just under two years. A love of golf led Bobby to Mendip Spring where he has developed his skills under the supervision of his Course Manager, Ian Harrison. Currently studying NVQ 2 at Cannington College, Bobby is keen to learn about the full range of jobs on a golf course and see how greenkeepers cope in warm weather areas, where he may even be able to indulge another of his passions, American Sports.

The penultimate leg of my travels took me to Harpenden where Graeme Francis, from Toro and Ian Semple, joined me to judge the candidates from the South East and the Midlands. After a long day judging 10 candidates, we chose Martyn Gray and Robert George to progress to the National Final.



Martyn Gray is an Assistant Greenkeeper at Bramley Golf Club which is situated near to Guildford. Now 19 years old, Martyn began his involvement with greenkeeping through work experience when he was still at school. Martyn gained a National Certificate through study at Merrist Wood College where he has now completed his Level 3 NVQ. A relative newcomer to greenkeeping, he has ambitions to move quickly through the ranks to become a Course Manager.



Robert George is the Deputy to last year's TORO Student of the Year, Murray Long, at Coombe Hill Golf Club. A native of Australia, Robert decided to travel the World after a successful greenkeeping career 'Down Under'. As well as moving quickly through the ranks in the UK, Robert has got married and now has two children. He is studying his Level 3 at NEScot and hopes to become qualified this year. As well as playing golf off a handicap of 6, Robert plays National League Baseball, the highest standard in the UK.

The final leg of my journey was back home to North Yorkshire where I could recover from my tiring but, nonetheless, enjoyable week. Interviewing candidates for this competition has always given me a boost, confirming that I am contributing to the rapid increase in qualified greenkeepers. Standards continue to rise each year and the majority of greenkeepers now hold formal qualifications, present themselves very professionally at interview and have the full support of their golf clubs.

All eight candidates will assemble at BIGGA House on 28/29 September where they will again be interviewed by a panel of judges and be asked to conduct a survey of the Aldwark Manor Golf Course. The National Winner receives the Toro Scholarship which includes an eight week trip to the USA with six weeks at the University of Massachusetts and a visit to the GCSAA Conference and Show in San Diego.



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YOUR LETTERS ARE NEEDED!

Send to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE,
Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: scott@bigga.co.uk

Dear Editor

I read your welcome note in the June magazine and appreciate your candour about getting out on the wrong side of the bed but I am glad you brought up the fact that the turf grass profession takes regular hits from people like Mr. Humphries and nobody stands up for the profession in your country, except you.

I call this a profession because here in this country it is classed as a profession and recognised as a good career in part by constant information and media awareness being made available to anyone who questions the Superintendents role and how he or she may have got to that position. If someone of Mr Humphries' stature were to criticise the education and training of Superintendents I can assure you, there would immediately be a rebuff from the GCSAA in the national press the very next day or there would be plenty of information to back up and give credit to the courses taken by young superintendents. There is no industry rebuff given, (except by you of course).

If Mr Humphries thinks that these courses taken by the vast majority of future Superintendents in your country are so called "Mickey Mouse" courses then he is in turn insulting some of the best Golf Course Superintendent in America. Why? because right now four of the top ten courses in America have UK educated trainees on their courses. There are many other courses in the country including Pinehurst and Augusta that request British educated trainees every year from our Program here at The Ohio State University.

The recent US Open had a young man from Myerscough College on the course; Augusta had a young lady do an internship there in 2002 (refer to your article of April this year) and there will be another Myerscough student interning at The Ryder Cup in 2004. If, as Mr Humphries says, you need to get rid of these "Mickey Mouse" courses, maybe he needs to be made aware of how well respected the recipients of these courses are over here in the States. Maybe industry need to put their foot down and demand a little more respect from the politicians, after all, where would they go play their golf if the Superintendents went on strike and did not mow the grass !!! if that is all they think they do with this education ?

Michael O'Keefe
Via email

Dear Editor

I am writing this letter to you at present in a state of annoyance, having once again been rejected following yet another interview for a Head Greenkeeper's post somewhere in the country. I am actually Head Greenkeeper on a nine hole course at present, a post I have held for some considerable time. I have to say from the start that I certainly do not have any problems with fellow Greenkeepers being offered these positions instead of me, as I know there have to be other more qualified and experienced colleagues around.

I am actually writing to you for some advice from yourself and any other Greenkeepers who could possibly help. Please can someone tell me where I need to go to receive training in being a Greenkeeper who is capable of looking after an 18-hole course, rather than a nine hole course! I have probably had more interviews than years I have worked on golf courses, which amounts to quite a lot, and practically every response I get when I phone up after receiving the bad news is the same. "Thank you very much Mr X for coming along, everyone on the panel thought you were very good and came across really well - unfortunately you have not got the management experience required to run an 18 hole course."

In light of this I would like to ask if there are any colleges I could go to receive the type of specialist training that is obviously required in order for me to make the step up to an eighteen hole course. I already have heaps of training behind me but unfortunately I must have gone to the only Greenkeeping College in the country that specialises in nine-hole golf courses!

I look forward to hearing from these training providers soon. In the mean time on a more serious note I would ask any course who is looking for staff not to totally dismiss the large group of nine holers, such as myself. After all we are only half the size of you big boys with probably half or less staff, budgets and resources to look after the course. I am sure you will agree this makes us just as able, if not more so, to run and maintain an eighteen-hole course to the high standards demanded of us by all members and visitors alike.

Name withheld

Dear Editor

The article by two American professors on the use of 'waste-water' for golf course irrigation seems to me to miss a very significant point. It itemises all the extra 'manurial' contents of purified effluents/sewage etc. as if these are of benefit, though in fairness it does accept that such materials encourage algal bloom and others may be toxic.

What it does not state is that such content or contamination is undesirable or indeed harmful. The main problem with waste water is that it does contain many products with undesirable side effects. No reputable agronomist would dare to suggest that our golf greens (old or new) need trace elements. Good ones and good greenkeepers would agree that we want no phosphates, only controlled nitrogen and a little occasional potash.

The authors correctly state that most waste water, pre-treated for application to public sites are satisfactory (in the absence of better alternatives) for the irrigation of golf courses. I and many others would disagree that routine fertiliser management needs to be 'adjusted' - the problem with waste water is their 'contamination' with so called nutrients - all we want from our irrigation water is that it should be wet!

In passing could I also protest about the ever increasing use of the term 'fertilisation' - when what the perpetrators mean is fertiliser treatment. The former relates to reproduction not nutrition and grates as much as Greens committees which if they deal with anything are dealing with cabbages. It is the green - the whole course that greenkeepers manage.

Jim Arthur
Honorary Member