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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Dr David Lawson has compiled a list of some of the most commonly asked questions on turf fertilisers. The answers are based on direct knowledge from research carried out at STRI, as well as some of the basic facts of plant nutrition.

Cover photograph by Marc Haring.

WIN

A WICKER FOOD HAMPER!

Laze away those summer days with this superb picnic hamper containing a set of china plates, mugs, cutlery and that all important bottle opener. The hamper is supplied with a selection of tasty picnic food items and even includes a bottle of Bubbly! You could be a winner in this month's Buyers Guide competition sponsored by Greenlink International in support of their range of Nutri-Rational foliar.



 See page 44



Welcome

GRASS CUTTERS WITH DIPLOMAS

You know how the tone of a day can be set very early on. It's summed up by the saying "Getting out of bed on the wrong side".

Well I got out of bed on the wrong side last week when I woke, as usual, to The Today Programme to hear John Humphries quizzing someone on the Conservative Party's new idea to abolish tuition fees for students. They would do this by getting rid of some of the "Mickey Mouse" courses that are currently available. Well the course Mr Humphries mentioned first was, you've guessed it, Golf Course Management.

I remember visiting this theme a couple of years ago when the then Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, derided the course in a similar manner inspiring another editorial column. Well, it would appear we still have an education process to carry out.

The idea that greenkeepers cut grass and not much else is still prevalent. It seems to be accepted and fashionable to think that the only possible thing that a greenkeeping brain is used for is to predict how many more lines can be mown before the grass bucket has to be emptied. I can't for the life of me think of any other reason why Golf Course Management is picked on so readily as an example of all that is wrong with the British further education system.

I'm sure there is a debate to be had about vocational courses when set against academic courses and how vocational courses are now studied at University and not College. The chances are the University is probably just a College with a name change. For instance the College in Edinburgh where I studied Journalism is now a University and the people coming out at the end of their courses are University graduates and not College graduates. Snobbery?

Such a discussion is worthy of John Humphries' attention on The Today Programme, but the high handed swipe at greenkeepers is just lazy, ill considered and poorly researched.

Of course, we shouldn't be blaming John Humphries, who conducts many interviews during the course of just one programme and has to rely on notes from a researcher.

I am here to tell you that the depth of knowledge required to pass successfully an HND in Golf Course Management is probably greater than that required to pass a similar diploma in Media Studies, or whatever qualification John Humphries' researcher has to his or her name.

Your job is not made any easier by such exposure in the media, and it is high time you were given credit for the job you do. It is not a case of blowing your own trumpet just educating golfers on the range of skills you have at your finger tips and the skills that are required to make your golf courses what they are. Otherwise you will continue to be thought of as grass cutters, albeit some with diplomas.

Unfortunately it's easier said than done.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

ALEX ROBERTSON

The sudden death of Alex Robertson, Head Greenkeeper at Grangemouth Golf Club, came as a great shock to his many friends and colleagues especially in the greenkeeping fraternity.

Alex, who was 50, started his greenkeeping career as an apprentice at Glenbervie Golf Club in 1968 and he was one of the early students who went through the new greenkeeping apprenticeship courses at Woodburn House in Glasgow.

After finishing his apprenticeship and spending another few years learning his trade, Alex, like so many young greenkeepers, moved onto the 9 hole course at Bonnybridge as Head Greenkeeper and then from there to Carmuir Golf Club.

Having a break from greenkeeping, Alex became Groundsman at Brockville Park, home of Falkirk Football Club, for a couple of years before returning to greenkeeping as an Assistant at Grangemouth. He was a proud man when he took up the position of Head Greenkeeper there three years ago. He was popular with the members and the hard work and dedication he put into the course did not go unnoticed as many of them commented on the many improvements he made.

Alex was a great supporter of the greenkeepers' Association for many years and was a well known face under his shock of red hair at both educational and golf events from Section level through to National events including BTME. He served some time as a committee member of the Central Section and was always ready to do what he could to help. His was always one of the first entries in the Support Team for The Open each year and he was

successful on making the team on many occasions.

He was the "Quiet Man", so quiet sometimes you didn't realise he was there, but he was always there if he was needed. At his first Open, on going out as a bunker raker, he obeyed the



instructions to be as discreet as possible so well that we had a call to say there was no raker with his game. But he was there all right, being so discreet the marshals never noticed him.

At another Open an appeal was put out in the tent for someone to go out for a second round. Alex was first to volunteer even though, 30 minutes earlier, he had just finished a five hour round in pouring rain and blowing a gale.

One of the great things about Alex was his indomitable spirit. He was never at a loss especially in getting to BIGGA events. Although he did not have a car if he said he was going he would always be there. Many's the time I gave him a lift home from a committee meeting or golf outing after discovering that to get there he had taken a bus or a train or sometimes even both.

He also showed this same spirit playing golf and was a frequent prize winner as he always kept going.

Alex was a man who never had a bad word to say about anyone and he loved being a greenkeeper. He was always respected by all who knew him and this was evident at the huge turnout at his funeral which included many people from the greenkeeping fraternity.

He will be sadly missed by those who knew him.

Elliott Small

NEW APPOINTMENT AT JOHN DEERE

John Deere Limited has announced the appointment of David Hart as Commercial & Consumer Equipment (C&CE) Division Sales Manager, responsible for managing the company's sales and marketing operations for golf & turf, commercial and homeowner products and dealerships in the UK and Ireland.

David takes over from Pieter Nel, who has returned to his homeland after 18 months in the UK to become Marketing Manager of John Deere's agricultural and C&CE divisions in South Africa.

After graduating from Lincolnshire College of Agriculture & Horticulture, David began his career with a John Deere dealership. He joined John Deere



Limited in 1990, becoming an Area Service Manager and subsequently Area Manager Product Support (AMPS) in south-east England, a Territory Manager in south-west England and then Harvesting Equipment Product Manager.

He was brought up in Norfolk, where his father Ernie Hart was a well known and respected figure in the amenity and grounds care industry for many years. A keen golfer, David took part in the inaugural John Deere Team Championship golf tournament finals at The Belfry last year.

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

SOUTH WALES SECTION

The winners of the South Wales Section, Rigby Taylor Matchplay Doubles Championship Daryl Bray & Leigh Davies, receive the Rosebowl from company representatives, Dave Carvey (on right of photo) and Roy Barker (left of photo) with Section Chairman Julian Bartlett-Jones (on far left of photo). The winners were presented with their trophy at the Morrision Golf club, where they both work.



NEW SECTOR SPECIALISTS

Greenkeeper education is set to take a major step forward with the establishment by the GTC of a working group of sector specialists who will develop standard learning materials based on best practice and principles for golf course maintenance.

The skills which trainee greenkeepers learn on vocational courses are vital to the long-term success of the industry, but up until now employers have not been able to influence the educational content of such training courses.

The new move, which has the full support of awarding bodies such as City and Guilds, will address one of the long-held concerns of the GTC about the variability of what is taught. The working group aim to develop the learning materials by this autumn for the Sports Turf (Greenkeeping) National Occupational Standards – NVQs and SVQs Levels 2 and 3.

"Standardising education and learning information for our approved training providers is

essential. This move will give employers extra confidence that their greenkeeping staff are learning what they really need to know. There has been an overwhelming level of support for what we are aiming to achieve." said Dr Mike Canaway, Chairman of the GTC Technical Committee.

David Golding, GTC Education Director, added, "This initiative by the GTC will further strengthen the partnership between the industry and its training providers. Since the introduction of vocational qualifications, the awarding body representatives who regulate training providers have had no direct involvement with what is taught to greenkeeping trainees.

"This aspect of greenkeeper education is fundamental to the future standards of golf courses and if students are not taught the correct principles and best practices from day one then golf course conditions will inevitably decline."

DO YOU RECOGNISE THIS MAN?

A couple of years ago this family visited Jim Arthur at this home in Budeleigh Salterton and Jim kindly offered to take this attractive family portrait. Jim is not the most prolific of photographers and the film lay in his camera until recently. In the meantime, unfortunately, he has misplaced the contact details of the greenkeeper and his family.

So, do you recognise the greenkeeper in this picture? If so contact BIGGA HOUSE and we'll pass on the information to Jim who can then forward on the pictures.

Editor's Note: Yes, I took time to study the quality of the Arthur lawn as well!



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



STRI COURSES

STRI is holding a regional version of "Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century" – their popular annual training programme held every January, during BIGGA's BTME week in Harrogate – at Temple Golf Club near Maidenhead on June 24-25.



Following the oversubscribed success of the one day event piloted at Temple last year, the programme has been extended to two days and will include a conference dinner with guest speaker and a round of golf to end the second day.

The seminar will help all those who manage and administer golf courses, including Secretaries and Chairman of Green, to maximise the agronomic and financial potential of their golf course.

The content covers a range of topical issues including:- Selection of grasses for the golf course; Choosing rootzones; Avoiding and controlling pests and diseases; Avoiding mistakes in construction; Solutions to modern day problems; Systems of golf course management; Taking an ecological approach.

Speakers from STRI will be joined by Martin Gunn, Course Manager at Temple. Well known for its sympathetic ecological approach to golf course management, Temple's progress is documented in "Confessions of a Chairman of Green" written by Malcolm Peake and published by STRI last year. Martin's session will include an ecological field walk illustrating the work at Temple.

Full programme details can be viewed on the STRI website <http://www.stri.co.uk/training>. Bookings with payment to be sent to Tim Nichols at STRI, St Ives Estate, Bingley, BD16 1AU.

TGA TURF SHOW

The biennial TGA Turf Show will be hosted this year by Inturf at their Wilberfoss site near York on June 25 and 26.

The TGA Turf Show will feature wide-ranging static exhibits from a wide array of companies as well as working demonstrations, equipment parades and educational workshops.

"We hope to improve upon the huge successes of our previous shows." said TGA Chairman, Chris Carr.

"Anyone with an interest in the Turf industry is very welcome. Our aim is to provide a relaxed yet informative environment for visitors to view, sample and discuss the very best that our industry has to offer." Exhibitor information and visitor registration cards are now available on request from the TGA, 22 Chapel Street, Bildeston. Suffolk, IP7 7EP.

Tel/Fax: (01449) 741638

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ABBHEY HILL GOLF CENTRE WINS FIRST JOHN DEERE QUALIFIER

A four man team from Abbey Hill Golf Centre in Milton Keynes is heading to The De Vere Belfry, having won the first British regional qualifier in the 2003 John Deere Team Championship golf tournament, played at Magnolia Park Golf Club.

The team - consisting of Club Captain, Jerry Collis; Club Manager, Jonathan Gale; Head Greenkeeper, Steven Cherry, and Club Professional, Craig Stephenson - beat off the challenge of 16 other teams in the competition, which was organised by John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare of Bledlow, Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

The winners finished on a score of 60, just one shot clear of the field. The competition is based on a modified scramble, with the professional playing his own ball throughout the 18 holes, and the other three players forming the scramble.

Abbey Hill, joined by a representative of Turner Groundscare, now goes through to the Great Britain national final at The Belfry on July 25, to play for a place in the world final at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA in November.

"We took part in the tournament last year but didn't make it to the next round," said Steven.



"So we are all very pleased, if not a little surprised, to now be going to The Belfry, and who knows, maybe Scottsdale, Arizona. I have played at The Belfry before, but we'll still be putting as much practice in as possible between now and the next round."

The John Deere Team Championship is now in its 17th year, and last year teams from Great Britain and Ireland were invited to participate for the first time. A total of 27 dealers took part in the qualifying tournaments, with 450 teams and 1,800 players participating. The national winners, Brokenhurst Golf Club from the New Forest and Milltown Golf Club from Dublin, travelled to North America to compete against teams from the USA, Canada, Germany, Australia and Sweden.

John Deere Limited is continuing its support of greenkeeping Associations by making a donation of £25 for every British and Irish team entered, to assist the educational activities of BIGGA and GCSAI.



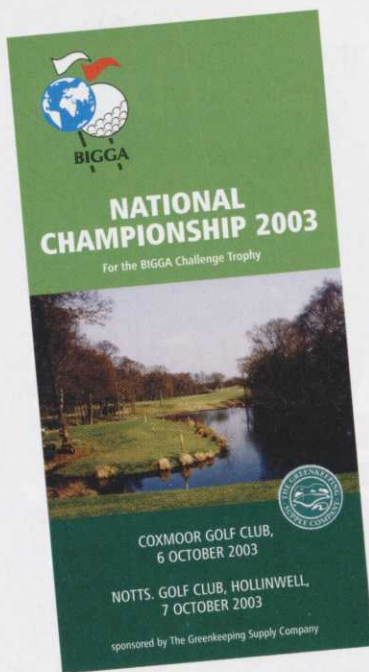
SUCCESSFUL ROADSHOW

Ransomes Jacobsen recently concluded the Turfco Roadshow, a lightning quick tour of specific golf clubs in the UK, to demonstrate the top dressing abilities of some of the equipment in the Turfco range.

Scott Kinkead, Turfco Vice President, flew in from the USA to accompany Matt Gough and Rupert Price of Ransomes Jacobsen on the tour, which included the new Queenwood Golf and Country Club, The Oxfordshire, Brocket Hall, The Belfry and several more golf clubs and schools across the UK.

The visits resulted in seven orders for equipment and several requests for further demonstrations.





BIGGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2003

COXMOOR GOLF CLUB, 6 OCTOBER 2003
NOTTS. GOLF CLUB, HOLLINWELL, 7 OCTOBER 2003

If you have not yet received your copy of the BIGGA National Championship brochure and Entry Form, sponsored by The Greenkeeping Supply Company please call Sarah Sowerby at BIGGA HOUSE on: 01347 833800

A FULL PROGRAMME

"Learn at the Conference - use at the Club" was the one-liner put out by the Association of Golf Club Secretaries before their ninth Conference - and it turned out to be far more. It was a refresher course for Secretaries on the latest developments, and, for the sake of his/her club, every Secretary needs such up-dating.

What Secretaries think about running golf is obviously of importance and interest far beyond the club office, for among the 200 delegates were representatives of the R&A, the English, Welsh and Irish Home Unions, of BIGGA, the PGA, and the Golf Foundation. There was a splash of international visitors, too, with club managers from Portugal and Sweden.

The Conference was opened by Tim Yeo MP, Shadow Minister for Trade & Industry. A keen golfer and columnist in the golfing press, his theme being the Secretary's increasingly demanding role - appropriate remarks for the ensuing Papers.

The pressing need for clubs to operate commercially was laid out in Papers on Leadership and Management, on Marketing and Service to members and visitors, and the importance of "disaster planning" and adequate insurance cover.

The nationwide call for more golfers and club members, particularly juniors, came under scrutiny, with a snapshot of the work by the Golf Foundation, and this was followed by a warning explanation of procedures required today by the Child Protection legislation. Year by year, the laws impinge more directly on running a golf club, and the difficulties of conforming to the Disability Discrimination Act and the new Employment Law (due 2004) had the audience shaking their heads.

The challenge of playing golf was not forgotten, a course architect from Donald Steel's company told how they are modifying long-established courses to withstand the attack of the latest golf equipment, while a description of the new Centralised Handicap Database introduced by the Golfing Union of Ireland proved very impressive to an audience of secretaries. The English Golf Union's centralised scheme is at present 'on hold' for technical reasons, and so the Irish experience caught the imagination and received enthusiastic support.

Besides the presentation of papers, there was an Exhibition covering matters of particular importance to the Secretary at work.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Weeds are everywhere. They have always been with us, and no doubt will continue to cause problems for a long time to come.

A fact pointed out with satisfaction by Roger Turner, Managing Director and founder of Complete Weed Control, which this year celebrates 30 years in business.

Providing specialist weed control services to a wide variety of amenity, local authority, industrial, aquatic and forestry areas, Complete Weed Control has grown from an initial seven franchisees in 1982, to a nationwide network of 44 successful

businesses regularly supplying and applying specialised weed control techniques.

"Companies that have used our services range from Butlins, Shell Oil and British Waterways to local golf courses, small industrial estates and local authorities," said Roger.

"It's the ubiquitous nature of weeds that makes our potential marketplace absolutely huge, and their persistence in even the most unlikely environments that means ours is a regular, growing business."

EARTHWORM SUGGESTION

A novel approach suggested by Bayer Environmental Science has enhanced the effectiveness of its earthworm cast suppressant in areas of high pH levels in the water.

A number of clubs in Southern Ireland were being treated with Bayer's Mildothane Turf Liquid with the average results expected for the product.

However, not satisfied that anything less than three months should be achievable, Bayer, in conjunction with local distributor Spraychem, investigated a number of factors including the weather record and soil conditions before testing for pH levels in the water.

Finding that these indicated greater fluctuations than usual, an adjuvant, the whetting agent X Change, was added to the Mildothane solution.

"The results were extremely good," commented Colm Murphy, Course Supervisor at Malahide Golf Club in County Dublin.

"The mix had the effect of neutralising high pH content. By adding X Change, treatment with Mildothane Turf Liquid gives us around a three month suppression of worm casts," according to John Hall, Marketing Manager at Bayer Environmental Science, this is the first time that X Change has been utilised in this particular area of turf treatment.

NEW AEA CHAIRMAN

Keith Christian, Managing Director of Claymore Grass Machinery, has been elected President of the AEA after having served as Chairman of the Outdoor Power Equipment Council of the AEA for the last two years.



Keith is 47 years old and has been with the Claymore company since its start up in 1985, being appointed Managing Director in 1993. Prior to helping to establish Claymore he had started in the gardening machinery industry with H Burlinghams Garden Machinery near Tewkesbury selling to golf clubs and councils and he then moved to Spear and Jackson to sell the Stiga line to garden machinery dealers.

In taking on this role Keith has declared that his aim is to encourage new blood into the industry, recalling the opportunity and training he was given in his early days with Burlinghams.

Keith is married with three children and is known for his love of rugby, being Chairman of the Bredon Rugby Club and captaining their second XV.

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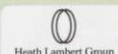
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Following a busy start to the year which saw ever more delegates at the Continue to Learn sessions in Harrogate and some very successful local training courses, I decided to follow Sami's example and take a few weeks holiday in the sun. Not only did I manage to soak up the rays, but I also found time to visit a superb golf course at Aphrodite Hills, near Paphos in Cyprus. Peter Bradburn and his team have had a difficult job bringing this 18-hole course into play but it was looking magnificent on the day that I visited. My wife thinks that I have got a plan to visit a golf course on each of our wedding anniversaries as we were at Carden Park last year and Aphrodite Hills this year. Where next?

Once back in the office, it was time to check on the plans for Continue to Learn 2004, check on progress with the Golf Environment Competition, to sort the entries for the Student of the Year Competition, to follow up actions from the Future Committee meeting, to remind Regions and Sections to bid for local training courses and to organise the posting of 1,700 Machinery Training and Assessment Manuals.

Continue to learn 2004

There will be a number of significant organisational changes to Continue to Learn 2004 at Harrogate, which takes place from 19 to 22 January. Prospective delegates should start their planning now to ensure that they get the package that they require. The changes are:

ACCOMMODATION

The continued expansion of BTME/ClubHouse and the subsequent increase in visitors requesting accommodation makes it impossible for BIGGA HQ to continue to administer requests for accommodation. Therefore, all Continue to Learn packages will be sold on a non-residential basis and delegates will be able to book their own accommodation. This can be done direct with hotels or through our booking agents Reservations Highway. They can be contacted on: 01423 525577 or www.reservation-highway.co.uk using the access code 'bigga'.

The BIGGA Headquarters Hotel will, still be the Majestic Hotel which will also host the Education Dinner on Monday 19 January and the Exhibitions Banquet on Thursday 22 January.

Remember, you can choose your own accommodation, however, so can every other delegate so book early to avoid disappointment.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND BTME/CLUBHOUSE SEMINARS

The BTME/ClubHouse Seminars 2004 will be held in Hall D of the Harrogate International Centre and not in the Royal Hall. The National Education Conference, whose theme will be 'Golf, Sport and Business', will take place on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 January 2004. The BTME/ClubHouse Seminars will take place on Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 January 2004.

Watch out for further updates on speakers, subjects and booking information in future editions of this magazine.

CONTINUE TO LEARN WORKSHOPS

There will be three one-day, Continue to Learn Workshops in January 2004. They will cover Health and Safety at Work, Water on the Golf Course and Influencing Skills – How your Golf Club Really Works.

BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Entries for the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2003, supported by the R&A, Scotts UK Professional and Syngenta Professional Products have been passed to STRI for judging. Watch out for further details in the next issue of this magazine.



Regional Training Course

There is still time for Regions and Sections to apply for training courses to be run during the autumn/winter 2003 and spring 2004. BIGGA subsidised local training by more than £40,000 last year so make sure that you get the training that you want at low cost in your local area by letting us know what you want.

Training Vouchers

Delegates at the Gold and Silver Key meeting held at Aldwark Manor, last month, agreed to discontinue the Training Voucher Scheme and allocate the funds to other training projects.

Student of the Year Competition

The first round of judging for the TORO Student of the Year Competition takes place during the week commencing 30 June 2003. Regional interviews will take place in Scotland, the North of England, the South East, the South West and the Midlands, when the judges will select up to 8 national finalists. The National Final will take place at BIGGA House on Monday 29 September.



Higher Education Scholarships

BIGGA continues to award Higher Education Scholarships to its members thanks to generous support from Ransomes Jacobsen. Twenty-four members are attending higher education courses, ranging from N/SVQ Level 4 to MSc thanks to this scheme, which has awarded more than £22,000 so far.

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