

Rachael and Gemma from Membership Services would like to welcome 70 new members to the Association and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Membership Update



Changes to the Car Breakdown Scheme

Due to FSA regulations, which come into force from January 1 2005, GLP are no longer able to offer the Silver Knight Rescue scheme to members.

As we recognise what great value this scheme is to members we did not want to lose such a valuable benefit.

We therefore scouted about and are able to bring you a very competitive car breakdown package from Europ Assistance. The new scheme offers three levels of cover ranging from roadside assistance up to European cover.

The first level is Roadside Assistance and this covers you for incidents occurring at least one mile from home, it includes one hour of roadside labour and transportation to the nearest repairer. This is a good package for those on a budget.

The next level of cover is National Recovery and Doorstep, being more comprehensive than the Roadside Assistance.

Cover includes incidents within one mile of the home and guarantees to either get you home, your original destination or to a repairer of your choice.

The final level of cover is National Recovery, Doorstep and European. This features the same level of cover for National Recovery and Doorstep but also includes 31 days cover for travel in a European country. As you can see from the comparison table the prices are really competitive.

For more detailed policy information or to purchase cover please call 01603 828255 and quote BIGGA.

Members with existing Silver Knight Rescue policies will be unaffected by the change and will not suffer loss of cover. When your existing policy expires you will be contacted by Europ Assistance.

If you have any other concerns regarding your policy please call Silver Knight on 0800 068 1893.

Silver Knight Repair

Again, due to FSA regulations GLP can no longer offer this product to members from January 1 2005. As Silver Knight Repair is a unique policy we were unable to source an alternative. The scheme will therefore be closed to new purchasers from January 1.

Members with existing Silver Knight Repair policies will be unaffected by the change and will not suffer loss of cover. When your existing policy expires you will be unable to renew.

If you have any other concerns regarding your policy please call Silver Knight on 0800 068 1893.

	Europ Assistance ⁺	AA [*]	RAC [*]
Roadside Assistance	£19.04	£42.00	£34.00
National Recovery & Doorstep	£44.95	£126.00	£119.00
National Recovery, Doorstep & European	£63.66	Need to ring to obtain a quote	

*Prices quoted are for the nearest equivalent cover
 +Prices quoted are for cars up to 9 years old. For older cars please call 01603 828255 for a quote.

BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

Brian Dickson, Ayrshire
Iain Forbes, West

NORTHERN REGION

Kenneth Brierley, North West
Craig Davies, North Wales
Simon Dye, Sheffield
Daniel Entwistle, North East
Daniel Hayes, North Wales
Ian Kirwan, North West
William Owe, North Wales
David Smith, North Wales

MIDLAND REGION

James Biggerstaff, BB&O
James Castle, BB&O
Robert Day, BB&O
Peter Dear, Mid Anglia
Peter Fisher, Mid Anglia
Daniel Gascoyne, BB&O
Stephen Godding, BB&O
Jamie Harris, BB&O
Ben Hastie, BB&O
Simon Malone, Mid Anglia
Matthew Reed, Mid Anglia
Christopher Roberts, Midland
Clive Robinson, BB&O
Neill Smith, Midland
Craig Swindells, East Midland
Kevin Tilly, BB&O
Joe Vickery, BB&O

SOUTH EAST REGION

David Barnes, Surrey
Simon Bone, Surrey
Janice Collins, London
James Jay, London
Isaac Jones, Surrey
Benjamin Macleod, Surrey
Ray Mayhill, London
Darren Merridan, London
Lee Smith, Kent
Oily Stubbings, Essex
Matthew Tilley, Surrey
Neil Tutton, Essex
David Watkins, London
Richard Webber, London

SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

Ben Adams, Devon & Cornwall
Christopher Baker, Devon & Cornwall
Andrew George, Devon & Cornwall
Richard Lloyd, South Wales
David Longley, Devon & Cornwall
Justin Manester, Devon & Cornwall
Mark Moore, Devon & Cornwall
Merrill Mullins, South Coast

IRELAND

Patrick O'Brien

INTERNATIONAL

Barry Dolan, Norway
Lars Knutson, Sweden

STUDENT MEMBERS

Robin Auburn, Central Scotland
Paul Carella, Central Scotland
Andrew Cockburn, Central Scotland
Andrew Cockburn, Central Scotland
Guido Gaechter, Central Scotland
Todd Jerome, East Scotland
Harge Kranstad, East Scotland
Kenny Liddell, Central Scotland
Brian Marmion, Central Scotland
William Rodriguez, East Scotland
Hilde Taklo Knutzen, East Scotland
Alexander Walker, Central Scotland
Richard Poskitt, North West
Simon Neville, Midland
Laurence Fennemore, Surrey
Daniel Weston, Essex
Andrew Lewis, South West
David Millar, South West

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Thomas Abbott-Stone, North West
John Owen, Mid Anglia

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Victoria Willett, Northern
Paul Sheather, East Anglia

Malcolm designs our slogan

Our congratulations go to Malcolm Searle, of Bury St Edmunds Golf Club, who's winning slogan, 'On Course For Better Greenkeeping', will be gracing BIGGA car stickers in the coming months. Well done Malcolm, a Highlander Cargo Suit is on its way to you.

Message of the Month Winner

Our congratulations go to December's winner, Severin Schmitz MG, an International member who's message was posted on November 17 under the 'Education and Training' section. Severin wins the last Gelert Rucksack.

DECEMBER'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win an 0.5 litre isolating flask suitable for hot and cold drinks and soups. Our congratulations go to Howard Mogridge, of Whitehall Golf Club.

Course Feature



More to Henley than Rowing

Scott MacCallum visits Henley Golf Club and discovers there is more to the town than Boris and its world famous Regatta.

Think of the Oxfordshire town of Henley and most people will immediately conjure up images of Redgrave and Pinsent; glasses of chilled Pimms and conservative hemlines.

The more politically in tune would perhaps think of the never-out-of-the-headlines, Boris Johnson, who is the local MP. I would certainly offer long odds on golf finding its way onto your Henley radar.

But Henley Golf Club has made significant strides over the last five years and anyone who does venture into the famous town with a bag of clubs rather than an oar should no longer feel out of place.

A James Braid design constructed in 1907, the course was initially conceived as an alternative summer pursuit for the town of Henley and Braid built it for the man arriving on a bike with a half set of clubs slung over his shoulder. It would of course be wrong to criticise one of golf's finest golfer/architects but that market has changed and the pressures on some of the country's senior golf courses became too much.

To meet the demands of all year round golf and the vast increase in membership – there were 400 members in the '70s with around half active



A view down the 18th.



The new look 3rd hole.

playing members while now there are over 700 with 80-90% of them regular golfers – a plan was put in place to bring the club and course up to modern day spec and standards without compromising the original Braid design.

Much has been achieved since then thanks to a trimmed down committee and a young vibrant greenkeeping team for whom no task is too big. Head Greenkeeper, Steve Shaw, and Deputy, Mitch Stewart, operate a very workable system whereby Steve, while still spending more than his fair share of the time out on the golf course, handles all the administration – planning, record keeping, policy writing and implementation - and Mitch takes charge of the day to day greenkeeping and construction work and assigning daily and weekly tasks to the seven strong team.

A decision was taken early on that construction work in the plan would be done in house and the team has worked hard to determine how long each job should take to complete, weather permitting, so much more accurate work programmes can be established and they have found that their productivity has increased markedly as a result.

Another benefit has been to highlight just how much work is involved in apparently minor jobs. For example an arrangement with the local cricket club to maintain their pitch in exchange for the use of their car park has been shown to absorb over 300 man hours per annum not to mention the cost of seed, feed and other materials.

“The beauty of it is that the greenkeeping team has taken ownership of the golf course which wasn’t the case five years ago. Now every time I tell them how good I think the course is looking they tell me that it’s not as good as they are going to get it. It is fantastic,” said Club President Michael Herriot.

His rueful comment that previously some of the greens could be described as being like carpets - not attached to the earth.

A quote from this year’s STRI report reinforces his belief that the club is now very much on the right lines.

“It is very pleasing to note that the general playing conditions at Henley are improving year on year. That is now well ameliorated and under control, root depth on virtually every green examined was greater than previous years and the bentgrass percentage is starting to increase.”

Michael was elected President five years ago and he has overseen the modernisation of Henley as a golf club. Drawing on experience as a top executive with a blue chip company, coupled with times spent on Henley’s committee he recommended that the club scrap the old 16 strong committee and introduce a slimmed down version of eight – four committee members plus the four officers of the club.

“It is run much more like a Board than a committee and through careful nomination we ensure that you get the right people with the right skills to look after the various sub committees. Then the Chairman can co-opt into his sub committee people who have specific skills. For example we have people who are involved with interior design on the House Committee,” explained Michael.

Henley Golf Club is a traditional out and back layout laid out over a relatively tight acreage with several roads close by and crossing the course and it was a “near miss” which proved to be the catalyst for change.

“That resulted in the Green Committee having to do a Health and Safety plan and we involved a member, Simon Barrington, who had worked for the PGA at one time.



The team with Mitch Stewart, extreme right, and Head Greenkeeper Steve Shaw, insert.



Before and after on the 6th taken two days apart.



“Simon had a great interest in golf course design and had done a lot of research into health and safety issues,” said Michael, who revealed that James Braid himself had struck a steam roller which had been trundling along a road at the side of the course not long after the course had opened.

Simon produced what was to become known as the Centenary Plan, designed to ensure that when the club reached its 100th birthday in 2007 the club had a course of which to be extremely proud.

“We presented the plan at the AGM four years ago and this was passed with the proviso that as far as the members were concerned they would approve anything that was done on the golf course and that we would get professional advice for everything that we chose to do,” explained Michael, among whose more ingenious plans for the course was the introduction of plastic birds of prey to some of the trees to scare off the noisier birds.

“What we put in place was exactly the same as how my business life had been. If I don’t know how to do it myself I’m going to get someone else to tell me how we should and then we are going to do it that way without deviation. If it then doesn’t work we have some come back to the



Hard work is common place at Henley.

professional to whom we'd paid money."

Another of the key figures in the development of the club has been Dennis Oliver, the current Chairman of Green and another retired executive with a lot of business expertise.

"The budget has increased. We've invested over £400,000 on a new irrigation system for a start and the subs have gone up quite significantly as a result. But our subs were below the average by quite a bit and we'd been getting our golf on the cheap. If we wanted to make Henley one of the best clubs in the area within its class we were going to have to invest," said Dennis.

"Running in parallel with the health and safety issue which drove the centenary plan was a clear recognition that the market was changing. The number of golf clubs in this area has probably doubled in recent years but I doubt whether the number of people wanting to pay golf has doubled so it has turned from being a suppliers' market 10 years ago to a buyers' market today.

"Waiting lists are shrinking or disappearing so we have got to supply a product to our customers/members/guests/visitors that they will come and enjoy. The investment in the course and the investment in the clubhouse is all designed to try to make Henley Golf Club your club of choice if you like," said Dennis.

"I come from a business background and I have to be a little careful as this is a members' club and not strictly a business but I have to see it through a business person's eyes. All we are doing is responding to the market place and the market place is demanding more. Henley was never built to be played in winter so it didn't matter if the greens flooded or it became boggy. Now we have to be open 365 days a year and the course has to look immaculate. People's knowledge and expectations have increased and we have to respond to that. An example of this is the fact that greens are now hand cut."

The main health and safety issues involved the roads surrounding and crossing the course and principally the 3rd, 10th and 18th holes and the goal was to turn the fairways away from the road and have play directed into the golf course rather than down the side of the road.

The club is particularly proud of the 3rd, a par-5, which had involved a tee shot directly over a road and which often offered a tempting second shot to the green which invariably ended in anguished shouts of "Fore" and a prayer that no vehicle would be in the direct line of fire.

The tee has been brought to the other side of the road, although the club hopes to retain the back tee for Medals with a strict procedure for play involving player look-outs, with a new bunkering system which ensures the hole becomes a genuine three shotter with no value to taking on the green in two. So pleased are the club with the finished result, which was all accomplished through the endeavours of the in-house team, that they have put the project forward for a "Golf World Greenkeeping Achievement Award".

The work on other holes have included the re-shaping of fairways and the introducing of humps and trees to try to prevent balls flying from one

fairway to another, thus protecting people on the golf course.

The major construction work will be completed this year with tidying up work being carried out the following year so everything is as it should be by 2007 and the centenary celebrations.

The next phase is a tee audit as they are seen as a weakness, being too small and not offering sufficient rotation.

One of the recent highlights at the club was a Goldsmith Charity Day just after The Open Championship at Royal Troon which attracted among others Paul Lawrie, Barry Lane and the man who could quite easily have won that Open, Thomas Levett.

"I spoke to Thomas at The Open and arranged to caddy for him at Henley," said Mitch as he showed photographs of the day.

"He was a great guy and made time for everyone. He also had a putt for a course record on the final green which he didn't thank me for making him aware of," he laughed.

On the course, Mitch is responsible for ensuring the construction work is carried out and is keen wherever possible to use local labour and local materials. That way he ensures a good deal by missing out the middle man and that work remains in the local area.

He is also a little jealous of the younger members of the team who find themselves involved in high level work at an early stage in their careers.

"When we started for the first three years we raked bunkers, flymowed, trimmed and made tea," said Mitch, with another of the more experienced members of the team, Justin Robinson, in full agreement.

"The great thing about this place is the fact that they trust us to do what we are paid for. At the last Greens Committee a new member asked what the policy was on closing the course. He was told that it was in the policy document which states that it is down to the green staff to decide. That is just as it should be," said Mitch, who, as well as Steve, has been a regular on Frank Newberry's Management training courses.

That has seen a big board introduced to the Mess Room upon which every job for the forthcoming week is listed alongside the person responsible for carrying it out.

"We have General Maintenance; Non Weekly Maintenance; Special Projects and Outstanding Tasks, with the latter two being fitted around the first two when time permits," said Mitch.

Golf may never rival rowing when it comes to thinking about Henley but such is the work being done at the golf club Henley does have a golf club to be proud of. Indeed Sir Steve Redgrave is an Honorary and Matthew Pinsent a full member of the club.

Machinery Inventory

Amazone Multi Purpose Sweeper
Charterhouse Vertidrain
Coremaster 12 Multi Purpose Aerator
Cushman Truckster
Ford Ranger
Hardi Tractor Mounted Sprayer
Huxley Multi Depth Aerator
Kubota 38HP Mini Tractor
Kubota Front Loader
Kubota Backhoe
Marston Tipping Trailer
Massey Ferguson 62HP Tractor
Ransomes AR250
Ransomes TM80
Ransomes Fairway Slitter
Toro GM3000D
2 Toro RM3100S/w
Toro RM6500
Toro GM3250
4 Toro GM100s
Turfco Topdresser
Turfmech Leaf Blower
Woods Tractor Back Blade
3 Allen 218SI Flymos
Bosch Electric Drill
Bosch Angle Grinder
Bosch Electric Sander
Draper Air Compressor
Clarke Arc Welder
Cooper Pegler Knapsack Sprayer
Edge Pressure Washer
Echo Hedge Cutter
Hunter Relief Grinder
Farmura Walk Along Sprayer
Ryobi Electric Drill
Scotts Had Fertiliser Spreader
Sealey Lifting Bench
4 Sthil Stimmers
Sthil Hedge Cutter
3 Sthil Blowers
2 Sthil Chainsaws
Truecraft Battery Charger
Zenoah Bunker Edger



Construction work on the 6th green.



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 Head Greenkeeper
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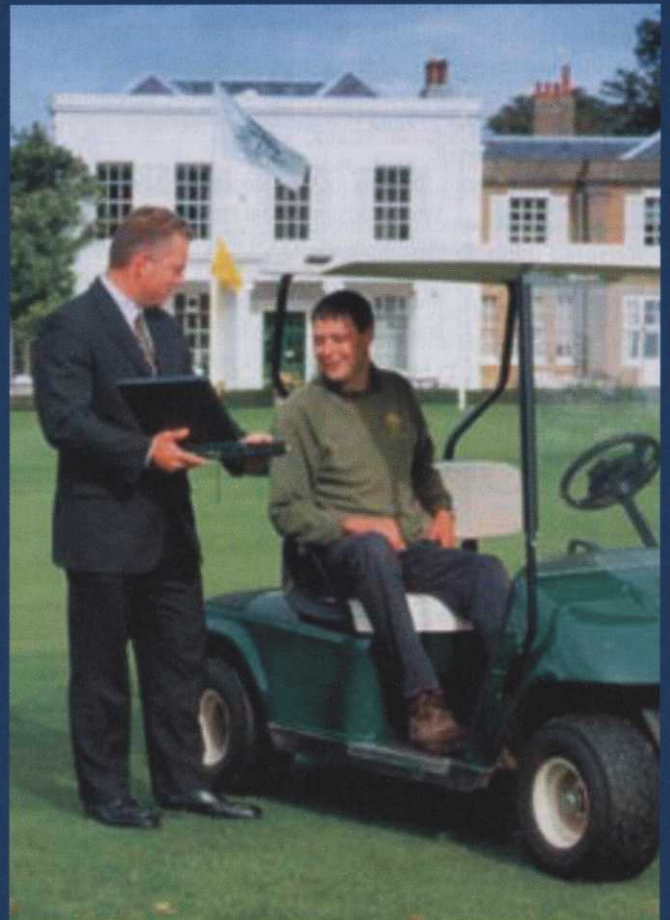
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And the winner is...

Lee Penrose reveals the winners in the 2004 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition – which saw Minchinhampton Golf Club take the overall title.

Well, it's the December issue again and, true to form, the results of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition are now (just) in. I am writing this article on a Sunday morning on the day before the deadline for the December issue of Greenkeeper International.

This is not because we couldn't be bothered before, or even that we have been busy doing other things, it's simply that the judging and decision making for the 2004 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition has taken up so much discussion, debate and deliberation that the final results were not decided upon until late into Friday evening with minutes to spare before the results were given to Ken and Sami at BIGGA to announce to the world!

You can probably imagine then, that the competition this year has been the toughest yet. Bob Taylor and I carried out all of the judging, visiting golf clubs ranging from Reay Golf Club, in Caithness, (the most northerly golf club in mainland Britain) down through the length of the UK to Worthing Golf Club, in West Sussex, which lies 734 miles to the south!

Such was the quality of the initial entry forms this year, which included PowerPoint presentations, photographs, ecological and environmental management plans, letters of recommendation from Wildlife Groups and a host of other imaginative supplementary information, that choosing the allotted 20 clubs to receive a judging visit was impossible.

Therefore, after much deliberation and some creative timetabling, we managed to decide upon 27 clubs that would each receive a visit from either Bob Taylor or myself.

This year the generous sponsors for the competition, Scotts UK, Syngenta Professional Products and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), have allowed us to distribute the most prizes to date, thus ensuring that interest and motivation for environmental issues has been tremendous. New prizes for this year include the 'Best use of recycled products' and a new position of 'Overall runner-up'. Ten prizes have been allocated in all and the results are listed below.

Sponsored by:



The level of dedication to maintaining all ecological habitats on the course combined with a progressive attitude toward environmental management gained Minchinhampton Golf club the coveted title of 2004 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition **Overall Winners**.

- The Overall winner was Minchinhampton Golf Club, who receive £2,000 and a Scott's Weather Master Station.
- The overall runner-up was Hankley Common Golf Club, who receive £500.
- The five regional winners, also receiving a £500 prize, were; Scotland: Brighthouse Bay Golf Club; Northern: Fulford Golf Club; Wales: Garnant Park Golf Club; Midland: Notts (Hollinwell) Golf Club; South-east: Thorpeness Golf Club.
- The £500 prize for the Best Newcomer went to Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club.
- Most Impressive Initiative went to Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club.
- The Prize for Best use of Recycled Products was won by Bath Golf Club.

What are the judges looking for when assessing entrants to the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition?

The first consideration has to be the overall quality of the application submitted and in particular the detail of information provided.

Given the high numbers of entrants, a cut off point must be determined to give a manageable number of clubs to visit for further assessment.

The quantitative score sheet used by the judges to assess applications determines this score, which must be achieved to progress further.

This year saw the highest quality of applications to date with some clubs providing very eloquent dossiers covering each of the questions asked. Others, particularly those who have entered previously, tended to just resubmit the application form from the previous year with minimal information.

It should be noted however that any additional information previously included may actually still be held



by BIGGA. This does however create some difficulty because the judges must retain an unbiased stance, scoring the quality of the application submitted.

The application form itself contains a number of questions relating to the degree of commitment and awareness of the green staff and the golf club. Clearly the golf club must be supportive of the green staff if the projects are to receive long-term sustainability.

Other important topics relate to whether the golf course and the management being given has improved the quality of the wider landscape and would the golf course satisfy a critical conservationist looking for areas of negativity?

There are always likely to be areas or issues that could be improved but what is the club doing about them, are these issues recognised and are they being considered within the longer-term project?

The judges will look for gradual improvements to both habitats and species and these are scored over a range of 0-5.

Ecological training in particular is an important criteria; while many of the greenkeeping staff are well trained in pesticide use for example, relatively few have received specific training such as through the various BIGGA or STRI courses that are run annually. Also, few have received training to a specified level as directed through the GTC or other college scheme.

Communication is an area where golf clubs can score highly. This is an important area but again needs to be well embraced by the golf club as a whole if the green staff are to be allowed to manage outside the boundaries of the principal cutting and playing surfaces. Newsletters can be an effective way of informing the membership.



A number of clubs do include regular snippets on features of ecological interest such as the 'fly agaric mushroom, its toxic and other interesting properties' or 'How to age a hedgerow' – members do tend to find these small features of particular interest.

At many clubs newsletters are being phased out, being replaced by the club's internet website. As well as potentially reaching a much wider audience this approach will help reduce paper consumption.

The level of outreach and liaison with statutory/non-statutory organisations and the wider public is also an area of interest to the judges.

A good start here would be to develop the website to cover ecological and environmental issues so that when, for example, trees are being removed or areas of potential damage created, the general public, by logging on to the website, can appreciate why such work is taking place.

The waste and energy efficiency policies are increasingly being met with as much interest as the nature conservation policies.

Such is the quality of ecological course management being undertaken that these environmental issues are often becoming the deciding factors in judging the competition.

A number of clubs have been in communication with the local authorities, possibly in some cases becoming local recycling centres.

The level of waste produced by the golf industry is considerable and this clearly ranges from papers to packaging in the clubhouse through to tyres, batteries and oils in the maintenance complex and organic wastes collected during routine maintenance work on the golf course. Very few golf clubs have a totally committed waste programme but most are at least striving towards gradual improvement.

The efficient use of energy, although receiving specific interest from the judges, is at many clubs being thought about but rarely taken forward in any serious manner.

While some clubhouses have been designed with energy efficiency in mind, others are being gradually improved with energy efficiency being at the forefront of the design criteria.

Such measures are relatively easy to quantify simply by calculating the annual costs and building in the perceived savings following the cost of installation of any equipment necessary (motion sensors for example on

On Course
Deep rough is maintained for the diversity of wild flowers and grasses, with scattered gorse and hawthorn. The rocky knolls are used by nesting Skylark.

Landscape and Cultural History
Open grassland with gorse knolls, broad views of the sea with the site of Man 30 kilometres to the south, defines the landscape character.
The drystone dykes and the remnant of Galloway dyke – a unique combination of low wall and Hawthorn hedge – were probably built by dykers from the time of Man 260 years ago. People have been in the area much longer, as the Bormess fort confirms. This promontory fort site, made up of a series of ramparts and ditches, is around 3000 years old.

Wetlands and Ponds
At the heart of the course is the Reed Bed water treatment system by the first green. It is a breeding site for the Sedge Warbler, and rich insect habitat. Pond margins are feeding and bathing areas for Oystercatcher and other birds.

Brighouse Bay Golf Course
Nature, Landscape, History
The Whole in One

Butterflies such as the Northern Brown Argus feed on the yellow Rock Rose; the Wall sun, wings open, on bunkers and paths.

Brown Hares abound on the rough: sheltering, feeding and chaffing. Look out for leverets near the gorse knolls.

Thanks to:
The Scottish Golf Environment Group and Scottish Natural Heritage for their support in the production of this information.

Design and Art work by Brian Arnell Environment.

Brighouse eco plan of course – This superb poster from Brighouse Bay Golf Club is a tremendous communication tool and also a good example of supplementary information included with the application.





The competition is increasingly taking into consideration environmental issues such as recycling, composting, energy efficiency and water management.

urinals or motion sensors on switches for lighting).

Possibly the first step for any golf club to consider would be to engage Envirowise (www.envirowise.gov.uk) to undertake a full energy efficiency audit for the golf club. Energy audits are being undertaken free of charge and will provide a series of recommendations that could be progressed over time. This clearly would be given favour by the



judges and would score quite highly.

It is obviously unfortunate that the judges cannot visit and appreciate every golf club entering the competition (financial resources are limiting) but this should not deter individual clubs from continuing with the excellent work that is being undertaken.

Every year the level of entrants varies and, who knows, perhaps it may be possible for the judges to visit a number of different clubs next year.

The judges do strive to provide as much information to those clubs visited as can be practicably accommodated and this in itself is being seen by many clubs as sufficient reason to enter. Those clubs going on to receive prize money clearly see recognition that can be used to further progress the environmental programmes underway.

The judges do recognise that simply by the continuation of this successful competition, the whole of the golf industry is benefiting by the fact that golf clubs are being seen to be aware of environmental responsibilities.

This is well exemplified by the recognition and contributions provided through the statutory conservation organisations and through the generous sponsorship of environmental bodies such as WRAP.



■ An in-depth report on the work carried out at each of the winning clubs will appear in a forthcoming issue.



Why you should enter next year

If you have never entered the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition before, there are many sound reasons why you should do and if you have entered before why you should keep entering.

Probably one of the most significant and important reasons is that, over the past 8 years or so since this competition was taken over and run through BIGGA, there has been a gradual acceptance throughout the general public that golf is a very positive land use, providing important habitat for much of our dwindling wildlife.

English Nature recently quoted that **'golf is good for wildlife and wildlife is good for golf'**.

Mr Tom Tew (South East Regional Manager for English Nature) at a recent EGU Masterclass stated that **'golf courses are good for wildlife because, and not despite, they are golf courses'**.

Such phrases represent a marked change by the statutory conservation organisations which in turn is spreading to the wider public.

This allows for more positive discussions to be held with local and county wildlife groups, local authorities and anyone taking an interest in our industry.

The above, I believe, has arisen primarily due to the passion and commitment of a few individuals working relentlessly to improve the environmental awareness of golf, the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition has been a major driving force of this wide ranging and broad revolution.



Sunshine state beckons for BIGGA Delegation

The 10 BIGGA members who will be part of the 2005 BIGGA Delegation, sponsored by Bernhard, will be jetting off to Orlando, Florida, to visit the first ever GCSAA & NGCOA Golf Industry Show early in the new year.

In previous years the delegates have visited the GCSAA Conference and Show, however 2005 will be the debut of the combined GCSAA & NGCOA – National Golf Course Owners Association – tradeshow, which will witness over 800 companies exhibiting in a 750,600 sq.ft arena.

Both the GCSAA Educational Conference and the NGCOA Solutions Summit will be held during the show, which runs between February 7 – 12.

The entire show provides the opportunity for hands-on access to golf course and facility management solutions for the professional members of the fine turf industry.

The 2004 show was hosted in San Diego, which was the 75th GCSAA tradeshow, and, as well as visiting the show itself, the 10 delegates spent their week attending educational seminars and lectures and touring esteemed golf courses, such as the Golf Club of California, and the Taylor Made and Adidas Headquarters.

"As the week came to an end it was clear that we all took different experiences from the tour.

"On a personal note one of the most memorable experiences for me came on the last day of the show when we attended a seminar focussing on how a golf course should be set up to host a major event," said Will Bowden, a 2004 BIGGA delegate.

All BIGGA members had the opportunity to enter into the selection process for the trip by completing the entry form attached to the August issue of Greenkeeper International.

Once this was done the entrants passed through a two stage selection route.

Firstly a written element, which asked questions of the entrants, BIGGA and what they believed they would gain out of the visit. The second part was an interview.

The 2005 BIGGA delegates are sure to enjoy similar great experiences as previous members have, during their week in the sunshine state.

"This is an excellent opportunity for the 10 delegates. The tradeshow provides an insight into the developments in the industry and foresight into what will be coming into UK greenkeeping in the near future," stated John Pemberton, BIGGA Chief Executive.

"We thank Bernhard & Co for their generous support with this event, which the delegates will find very helpful in the progression of their education and careers."

Darren Anderson
Head Greenkeeper
Abergele Golf Club
Age: 28



Steven Beverly
First Assistant
Cleethorpes Golf Club
Age: 25



Terry Crawford
Course Manager
Clandeboye Golf Club
Age: 41



Mike Gash
Deputy Course Manager
Moseley Golf Club
Age: 39



Graeme MacDonald
Head Greenkeeper
Newark Golf Club
Age: 46



Chris Maynard
Greenkeeper
The London Golf Club
Age: 24



Robert Needham
Head Greenkeeper
Hickleton Golf Club
Age: 50



Tim Rockey
Greenkeeper
Parkstone Golf Club
Age: 48



Chris Sealey
Course Manager
Chippenham Golf Club
Age: 49



Denis Tweddell
Deputy Head Greenkeeper
Turnberry Hotel & Golf Club
Age: 37



The 2004 BIGGA Delegates during one of their numerous golf course tours.

Machinery Rental – Precise Financing for the Latest Machinery

Purchase and ownership are very 'British' concepts. On an individual basis, most Britons aspire to own the house in which they live, whereas in other European countries the majority of properties are rented.

It's much the same in business, particularly among smaller organisations in the UK, where outright purchase is the preferred route, even if this means locking up valuable short-term sources of funds in assets with a longer term payback.

Our European neighbours take a different attitude towards funding assets like machinery and equipment. They prefer to match the source of funds and the payback to the productive life of the asset in the business, simply because it takes pressure off cash flow and makes more sense to them to match payment to productivity.

Ask yourself the question: Does a machine work any harder because you pay cash for it on day one? The obvious answer is 'No'.

So why put valuable resources like cash or the overdraft under pressure by diverting them from the short-term roles to which they are best suited. For example, paying wages, securing additional discounts for prompt payment of fuel or fertiliser bills, etc.

Think cost not price

Maybe one reason is cost, or rather the 'perceived' cost, of borrowing – backed by a faulty assumption that cash is a free resource while a finance agreement attracts interest.

Unfortunately, confusion often exists between the concepts of price and cost.

Take any machine, you know the price on the day you buy it, but you only know what it actually cost on the day you sell it, after you take into account factors like reliability and maintenance, fuel, the sale value and, most important, how well it did the job you bought it for.

That's why it pays to consider all the financing options, when considering new investment, to ensure you choose the one with the best balance of cost and performance.

In every organisation there are competing calls for capital. Even a golf club has to face up to decisions like should we refurbish the locker rooms this year or replace a particular machine.

Inevitably, if the members provide the main source of funds, either the house or the course is likely to be disappointed and important investment deferred.

It's no different in big business. Capital is still rationed although techniques exist to determine the cost and to allocate capital to the projects that offer the best return and also satisfy the priorities of the company.

To cut across this problem of capital rationing, many leading companies that rely on the latest technology and equipment to retain their competitive edge now choose to rent rather than buy.

Rental - designed for use without ownership

Rental, as the name implies, is about use of the latest machinery, not ownership.

'At the end of the rental period the machine is usually returned to the supplier and the hirer enters into another agreement for a new machine to the latest specification'



That's why the structure and terms of an operating lease differ significantly from conventional forms of finance even though it offers a number of similar benefits plus some that are unique (see table opposite).

Because rentals are based on use, they are calculated on an amount that excludes an estimated disposal value for the machine.

For example, if it is reasonable to expect that after 36 months a machine will realise 30 per cent of its original price, this is taken into account in calculating the rentals.

The result is usually a monthly rental that is lower than for a comparable purchase agreement, which is good for cash flow.

Risk-free budgeting

Under a rental agreement, the hirer has no interest in the proceeds of sale, and bears none of the risks if the machine fails to make the estimated sale price.

Instead, the business has full use of the machine, exactly as if it owned it, at a guaranteed monthly rental fixed over the chosen period. This assists accurate budgeting.

Flexible contract options

At the end of the rental period the machine is usually returned to the supplier, normally the agent of the finance company, and the hirer enters into another agreement for a new machine to the latest specification – although the agreement can provide for an extension of the rental period (at a continuing rental) should the hirer wish to retain the original machine.

This means the business or organisation ensures that its machinery fleet is kept constantly up to date and has the capacity to do the job required.

The hirer does have specific obligations under a rental agreement. These include insurance against accidental damage or damage caused as a result of negligence or abuse.

In addition, most agreements contain a set of return conditions. These define the minimum conditions to which the machine must conform when it is returned.

Items that are broken or damaged – for example, cracked lenses on lights – must be replaced and all major systems must function as originally supplied. Although allowance is made for fair wear and tear. Maximum hours worked under the agreement may also be included.

Inclusive service and maintenance

All agreements will require the machine to be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations at the correct intervals.

However, the full cost of service and maintenance can be built into the rentals.

This offers a number of