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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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Every year there is pressure on to ensure Harrogate is as successful as possible and it's a genuine relief when everything comes together for the week.

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Peter Jones, made the most of his Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship and many nights of hard study was rewarded with a Master of Science Degree in Sports Surface Technology.



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Now you can keep warm while you work when wearing this superb, rain resistant, padded Bodywarmer with zip fastening and press-stud storm flap.

'THE TURFTIME TEASER'
DETAILS ON PAGE 57



Welcome

MANY THANKS

Well, thanks for that. Another Harrogate week has come and gone and from what we hear from those who attended - exhibitors, visitors, speakers, press - a great week was had by all. And I say "thank you" because without any one of the human ingredients in the mix, Harrogate wouldn't be the success, you have told us that it has been.

But how do we judge success? In this day and age, with accountants perusing the bottom line with fiendish enthusiasm, how do you come to an assessment that something has been worth doing, and will be worth doing again whether you are an exhibitor or in one of the many categories of visitor?

Of course, there is the anecdotal evidence, by far the most interesting to everyone. Tales of successful deals struck; of successful friendships struck indeed; packed halls; answers to agronomic problems uncovered, all provide the sort of gossip we love to hear. But while we are always delighted that "the mood in the Halls and seminar rooms is positive", it is very much a subjective measure, not likely to sway the bean counters in Accounts Departments or Golf Clubs up and down the country.

No, what is needed are hard and fast facts to make a persuadable, unambiguous case for the success of BTME & ClubHouse, the Continue to Learn programme and all that surrounds Harrogate in the third week in January.

Well, we can oblige thanks to information gleaned from the statistics gathered during the week. Sure, filling out the forms can be a pain but it does let us come up with facts that are relevant.

- The international flavour can be highlighted by the fact that 25 different countries, excluding the home nations, were represented, travelling from five different continents.
- 25% of visitors attended Harrogate for the first time.
- The breakdown for British visitors was South 23%, Midlands 24%, Scotland 15% and North 38%, indicating that Harrogate attracts people from all corners of the UK.
- Other than golf, 15 industries were represented, including local authorities; farms; private estates; theme parks; showgrounds; football; racecourses, tennis clubs and polo fields.
- 35% of those who attended had the power to approve and purchase while a further 26% were in a position to influence approval.
- 10% of those who attend spent up to 25% of their annual budget at the Harrogate show. 15% spend up to 10% of their budgets while a further 38% spend up to 5% of their annual budget.

Compelling figures, I'm sure that you agree. We're particularly delighted that the work we have carried out to widen the visitor base and attract more decision makers to Harrogate is beginning to reap rewards.

That can only strengthen BTME & ClubHouse in the years ahead, thus ensuring that BIGGA can continue to fund the education, professional development and general benefits for its membership.

Of all those who did attend Harrogate 2004, perhaps the most welcome visitor was Neil Thomas' wife, Elaine, who despite Neil's serious illness, managed to maintain the family link to the week.

Thank you for coming, Elaine.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

R&A'S BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES WEBSITE LAUNCHED

The R&A's new website offering best practice guidelines for golf course management throughout the world is to be launched this month. There are to be two events marking the launch of this major development for the world of golf; one in the UK on Wednesday February 18 at The Belfry and the other the following day in Brussels. Access details to the new site will be posted on the R&A's website, www.randa.org, to coincide with the launch.

The R&A's golf course committee has developed the website which offers best practice guidelines on all aspects of golf course management and development, from the clubhouse and management

structure to construction and maintenance.

This professional advice and information, which is provided free of charge, will be of great assistance to golf associations and federations, golf clubs, greenkeepers, architects, planners, government agencies, non-government environment agencies and other relevant groups, and is supported by extensive links to expert organisations who can provide further assistance to those in search of help.

For further information contact Steve Isaac, Secretary to the golf course committee on 01334 460000 or e-mail steveisaac@randagc.org.

ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Avoncrop Amenity Products Limited, suppliers of Turf Management Products,

based at Sandford, Winscombe, North Somerset and Bracknell, Berkshire have been granted the honour of a Royal Warrant of Appointment as a Tradesman to The Queen.

"We are very proud to be associated with this award having supplied The Royal Household for over five years with Grass Seed Mixtures, Fertilisers, Composts and other Horticultural products for the Gardens and Lawns," said Rod Feltham, Managing Director.



PHIL JOINS ALLEN



Following their recent take over of IBEA Power Products Limited, Allen Power

Equipment have appointed Phil Price (53) as Product Manager for the IBEA range and Area Manager for all Allen

products for North Wales and the Western side of central UK.

Phil will bring to his new role many years experience in the industry and his unrivalled knowledge of IBEA products will ensure he is in great demand from his new dealer base.

Phil is married with two daughters and lives in Shrewsbury.

MOVING NORTH

In a bid to offer a nationwide service White Horse Contractors has launched White Horse Contractors (Northern) Ltd with an office in the North Yorkshire market town of Thirsk.

This expansion of the company's operations will provide the opportunity to tap-in to a real and attractive market much more cost effectively. The new company is a subsidiary of White Horse Contractors which means they will be able to maximise the skills and resources of the Head Office which has been operating for over four decades.

Jim Crabbe, a senior Contracts Manager will be leading operations at the company's new office. Since joining White Horse, he has proved his ability

in the development of new markets.

Thirsk was chosen as it is within easy access of the A1 and exactly 200 miles from the company's head office in Abingdon, allowing good strategic and logistic links.

The new company has identified key markets such as local authorities, local education authorities, sports clubs and golf clubs not to mention private clients.

It will undertake all sports turf construction, earthworks, drainage and maintenance as well as environmental works and water engineering.

White Horse Contractors (Northern) Ltd can be contacted Tel: 01865 736272.

NEW WEBSITE FOR GREENKEEPERS

Established in September 2003, golfmanager.co.uk is website/portal aimed at greenkeepers, club secretaries & managers.

The site provides a quick, easy and comprehensive alternative to the many books, fliers, papers, magazines and mail-outs that the club's decision-makers have to wade through, in order to locate a product, service or information.

The core of the site is a comprehensive suppliers section which has contact details and links to websites of many companies for both golf course and clubhouse.

There are also over 200 additional links to golf/information websites and portals – all accessible with one click from the Home page.

The screenshot shows the 'GOLF MANAGER' website interface. At the top, there are links for 'Contact Us', 'About Us', and 'Terms & Conditions'. Below this is a main heading: 'Welcome to a new Website/Portal for golf's decision makers and administrators. Managers, Secretaries, Greenkeepers & Committee members can access many pages of suppliers details, golf web links and general information. Please contact us if you have any ideas or information that will enhance the site.' Below the main heading are several categorized sections: 'General Golf Links' (listing various .co.uk, .net, and .org domains), 'Media' (listing BBC, Sky, etc.), 'Clubhouse Suppliers Directory' (listing Accountancy Software, Aerial Photos, etc.), 'Websites & Links' (listing various golf-related websites), 'Associations' (listing The Royal & Ancient, etc.), and 'Course Suppliers Directory' (listing Mowers, etc.).

WELL DONE DENNIS



A presentation was made recently to Northern Section President, Dennis Cockburn, for services to the Section and importantly the Northern Section Committee for over 20 years unstinting service.

After trying his hand at a number of different careers he settled on greenkeeping, during which time he served as Head Greenkeeper at Courses

such as Branshaw, Keighley, Colne and Silsden Golf Clubs.

Dennis has helped and trained many greenkeepers under him over the years and it is no surprise that quite a lot have gone on to be head greenkeepers themselves.

They all owe him dearly for the invaluable knowledge and skills that he passed on to them (and he reminds them of this all the time).

Dennis is well into retirement, however he still continues to be active within the section and it is for this which he has been honoured.

A WELCOME RETURN

John Deere have welcomed back Alec McKee who is returning as Managing Director of their UK and Ireland operations.

Having joined John Deere in the UK in 1972 as a trainee territory manager, Alec has successfully undertaken a succession of increasingly important positions within the organisation. At the end of 2000, he was appointed as Vice President, Worldwide Marketing, based in Kansas.

During 2002, Alec transferred to Moscow, and was responsible for establishing a presence in the market and implementing John Deere's strategic

business plan for Russia.

He replaces Clay Sherrill, who is returning to the Deere Company's world headquarters to take up a key position, responsible for implementing the company's customer focus initiative and to support strategic planning activities.



NEW ROLE FOR SIR MICHAEL

Sir Michael Bonallack is to succeed Mark H McCormack as the new Chairman of the Official World Golf Ranking. The Official World Golf Ranking was devised and created by Mark H McCormack who was Chairman of the World Ranking Board until his death last year. His company, IMG, has been responsible for managing and producing the weekly Ranking, which is now endorsed by the four Major Championships and the six Professional Tours making up the International Federation of PGA Tours, since the Ranking was first introduced in 1986.

DAVID WHITAKER MG



Sports Turf Consultants UK Limited is a new company headed by David Whitaker MG.

David started his career as a trainee greenkeeper in West Yorkshire in 1977, and quickly worked

through the ranks to head greenkeeper before moving abroad to gain experience in Europe.

He returned to the UK in 1989 to take up the post of Course Manager at the prestigious Wisley Golf Club where he achieved Master Greenkeeper Status and remained for 13 years.

"I have been concerned for some time by the ever increasing challenges and demands placed on our younger greenkeepers, and the lack of available support within the industry," said David.

"While there are several reputable agronomists with specialist skills, I intend to offer technical assistance based on 25 years of practical experience."

David can be contacted on 01932 700609 or dave.whit@ntlworld.com

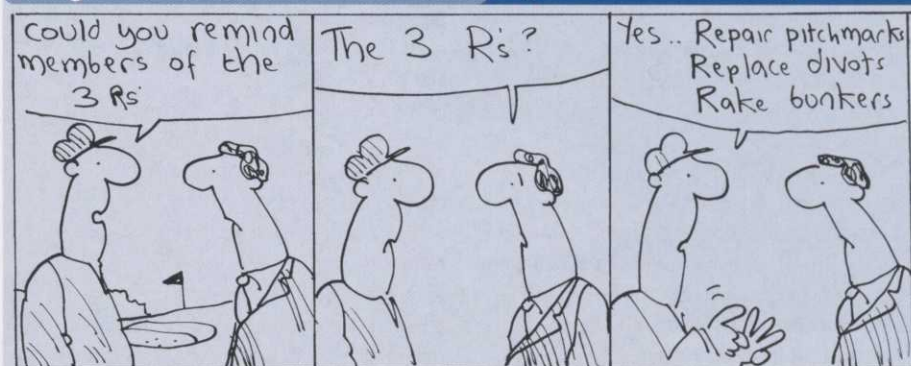
NEW NAME

As from this month Boughton Loam Ltd will be trading under the new name of Boughton Turf Management. The company will still be part of Boughton Loam Ltd, but the change of trading name is designed to bring the three depots that the company now operates in Kettering, Iver Heath, and Derby under one common trading name. Previously, the Iver Heath and Derby depots had traded as 'Turf Management Systems'.

This decision is designed to build upon expansion of the business during 2003, following the acquisition of the turf care maintenance division of 'Mitchell Hire Ltd', and the planned expansion of the Iver Heath and Derby operations during 2004.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

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



NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR ETESIA

In order to facilitate the growth and expansion of its UK business, Etesia has made changes to its management structure in this country and has also taken on two new area sales managers.

The new UK team is headed by former Area Sales Manager, Les Malin, who has been promoted to UK General Manager based at the company's headquarters in Warwick.

All matters relating to management of the UK operation will come under his control and he will be responsible for overseeing the planned growth of the company in this country through increased turnover and expansion of the product range.

Taking over the position of UK Sales Manager is Colin Plumb. Having worked on territory for Etesia for six years, Colin's vast knowledge of the company's range, plus his experience in building a solid dealer network, provide a firm foundation for his new role.

Two new personnel join Etesia's UK team. Ian Collington has been appointed Area Sales Manager in charge of the North of England and the Midlands. while Richard Williams, joins the company as Southern Area Sales Manager.

NOEL MACKENZIE



Noel MacKenzie has launched his own golf course agronomy and management consultancy.

Sports Turf Consulting is an agronomy and golf course management consultancy seeking to promote advanced

greenkeeping techniques for the benefit of greenkeepers and their courses/clubs.

Noel has a proven career record being one of the few agronomists with significant hands-on experience in sports turf/greenkeeping combined with an academic training in agronomy, ecology and management.

He has worked for record ADAS, STRI, Grass Science and TurfTrax.

Sports Turf Consulting will offer a range of bespoke systems to assist clubs on this front to support greenkeeping personnel and their managers. The scope of this support is multi-faceted involving technical agronomy and, where required, management system analysis.

Sports Turf Consulting, Tel/fax: 01285 641825 nm@sportsturfconsulting.co.uk www.sportsturfconsulting.com

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

IOG CONFERENCE

Celebrating 70 years since its formation, the IOG has chosen Dublin to host its National Conference from April 2-5, 2004.

The choice of Dublin is exceptional for the IOG in that it is its first venture outside the UK. The conference venue in Malahide to the north of the city is close to Dublin International Airport as well as major road and rail networks.

The conference programme will interest a wide range of delegates with the papers and study tours featuring pioneering venues and diverse topics.

The subjects represent many of the challenges facing our industry with papers on increasing pitch playability in The Netherlands, creating a seedbed at 1000m above sea level in the Cairngorms and are synthetic surfaces the way forward?

The study tours are also of great interest with visits to Croke Park, the GAA National Stadium; the



Kildare Golf and Country Club and the parks of Fingal County.

For further information visit the following websites www.thegrand.ie and www.visitdublin.com

For delegate bookings please telephone the Institute of Groundsmanship on 01908 312511.

LELY APPOINTMENT



Lely UK has appointed Simon Squires to manage its Toro Irrigation and Otterbine water management products business.

He takes over from Graeme Francis, who moved to become

managing director of Toro contractor Par 4 Irrigation, in Ripon, Yorkshire.

"I'm delighted to be given the opportunity to head up the Toro Irrigation and Otterbine team at Lely. It's an exciting challenge," said Simon.

"My priorities are to develop relationships with

new and existing installation contractors and explore new, untapped markets."

Simon is responsible for all sales, service and warranty-related business for both company's product lines. He is already working closely with Lely's contractor group and is continuing to develop their alliance to achieve greater market penetration of the products.

With 13 years' experience in the irrigation industry, Simon joined Lely in 2002 after its appointment as distributor for Toro Irrigation. Lely was subsequently also appointed as exclusive UK distributor for Otterbine water aeration systems, fountains and other associated water management products in 2002.

URI TAKES DELIVERY

"It's the best tractor we've ever had," said paranormal practitioner and TV personality Uri Geller, about his recently delivered 24 hp John Deere X495.

Equipped with a 48 inch mid mounted rotary deck, rear 3-bin power-flow collector and Lewis front end loader, the tractor is used around the grounds of Uri's house in Berkshire.

According to the Doomsday Book, the house is located on an ancient spiritual site. This tradition is carried on today with a pyramid-shaped retreat within the grounds.

Each year, many people arrange to visit Uri to gain inspiration and motivation from the power of positive thinking. With such a high throughput of visitors, the grounds around the

pyramid have to be maintained to a professional standard.

Uri's household received operator training from Wokingham-based John Deere dealer Golf and Turf Limited.

Uri takes his turn using the tractor and says, "It's easy to drive and well built, and the green and yellow colour combination is strong but relaxing."



Education



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

Unlock the doors to progress through BIGGA's Education and Development Fund - the key to a great future for greenkeepers, golf clubs and the game of golf.

Golden and Silver Key Membership is available to both companies and individuals.

For details, please contact Ken Richardson on 01347 833800 or via ken@bigga.co.uk

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Another Harrogate week has gone by and if any of you attended the AGM, you will have heard me talk about the successes that we are having with Regional Training. I explained that for the very low price of £30 per day (plus VAT) you could attend excellent training courses local to your home/golf club. This is all possible thanks to the contributors to the Education and Development Fund (as shown on this page). Each day of training is currently subsidised by approximately £80. Therefore, attend just two days of training per year and your annual membership is more than covered.

Courses for spring 2004

FEBRUARY

18	Fire Safety and Manual Handling	Lingdale Golf Club, Loughborough
24 & 25	Next Steps in Management Skills	Wokefield Executive Centre, Reading

MARCH

16 & 17	Communicating with Committees	Shirley Golf Club, Shirley Warwickshire
25 & 26	The Influential Manager	De Vere Carden Park, nr Chester

APRIL

14	Integrated Pest Management	De Vere Carden Park, nr Chester
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Remember to ask your Section Secretary about further subsidised training in your Section.



Golf Environment Competition

BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Despite losing the support of the R&A for this year's BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, I am pleased to say that thanks to the continued support of Scotts UK Professional and by Syngenta Professional Product, plus support from the STRI, the Competition will continue to reward golf clubs that are committed to good environmental management. Further details will be sent to all golf clubs in Great Britain, later this month.



▲ Austin Sutton, of Syngenta, and Matt Reed, of Scotts, present Geoff Henderson and Ian Shepherd, of Kenwick Park GC with the BIGGA Golf Environment Trophy, watched by George Brown and Bob Taylor, Senior Ecologist with the STRI.



YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

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

New Way Forward?

Recently I have been reading with interest various articles about the new way forward in cutting, namely non-contact mowing and the relief grinding of cylinders.

Have I missed something as relief grinding and non-contact mowing was "sold to me" in 1992 when our Hunter Grinder was installed at our new facility and since then has been our preferred way of grinding and mowing!

As a result during the past 12 years we have experienced the benefits of giving extended life to cylinders and bottom blades and also the reduction in fuel, all in all giving less mechanical stress. Not to mention the agronomic benefit to the turf itself.

Jim Campbell, Senior Mechanic,
Westin Turnberry Resort

Re: Sustainable course management

It is most encouraging to read articles such as those on greenkeeping in Denmark (March 2003 and January 2004) and Cumberwell Park (June 2003), which record successful course management through the implementation of sound greenkeeping principles. We believe these pieces reflect a silent majority of greenkeepers throughout the UK and continental Europe who are practicing both environmentally and economically sustainable course management. Those who achieve this while, at the same time, maintaining course quality and playability should be acclaimed and we offer our full support to all who rise to this challenge.

Steve Isaac, Secretary to the Golf Course Committee, R&A Rules Ltd

Reflections of Harrogate

It seems a very crass statement 'it gets better every year' but as far as I'm concerned this was certainly the case this year with BTME. We arrived under very difficult circumstances with Neil Thomas very ill. There was a show and conference for the HQ staff to organise, but always in their minds, and ours, was Neil.

The full programme of workshops and the conference started on Monday. The conference gave us a wonderful range of presentations, Billy McMillan was the highlight for me. His presentation looked at how course management has changed and highlighted what makes greenkeepers so special. Commitment, passion and dedication were just some of those ingredients and it was covered in an excellent presentation which was sharp, witty and very moving at times. Thanks Billy!

Monday night and the conference dinner which was superb. After dinner speaker Jimmy Bright was in side splitting form reeling off so many stories and gags and the top table were the brunt of much of Jimmy's jibes. Tuesday was back to the conference and another day packed with presentations. Kate Entwistle and Terry Buchen were my pick of the day and then it was time for the show.

Wednesday was key note speaker day, always a highlight of the week. I vividly remember Frank Dick, who was our first Keynote speaker. I never thought I would see a better motivational presentation but it was eclipsed by Alvin Law. His very powerful presentation 'No such word as can't' took us on a rollercoaster ride of emotions and experiences. His determination and will to succeed was a lesson to all of us and the standing ovation was inevitable and much deserved. I will remember this presentation for a very long time, I wasn't the only one in the audience found wiping a tear from my eye. Thanks Alvin!

The seminar programme followed with many excellent presentations covering a wide range of topics from stress management to greens construction. The show was bigger and better than ever and was very busy with much positive feedback from the stands that I visited. Wednesday also saw a glimpse into the works of our 'futures committee' during a presentation. They have identified many areas of concern and are currently working hard to shape our associations future as well as address a directive into the concerns over education within the industry. This was followed by the AGM which run very efficiently and professionally and saw the Chairmanship pass from George Brown to Andy Campbell.

Well done, George, for last year and good luck to Andy in his year in office. The whole week was rounded off by the banquet and the sounds of 'Bootleg Abba' I didn't realise so many greenkeepers were Abba fans. We were treated to a collection of their greatest hits and the dance floor was packed all night. Another great night!

Alex McCombie, Parkstone GC

Available for Work

I am in the process of looking for a job in the UK and would like to know if you can help me. Or put me in contact with someone else that can; I will arriving in the UK in mid February.

I'm a fully qualified Golf Course Superintendent and was working on a 18 hole course with 700 members. The course I worked on is in New Zealand and I had worked there for the last six years. During my time at the Feilding Golf club I helped install fairway watering systems, numerous constructions of new tees and greens.

I love the game of golf and I am currently on 1 handicap. At the moment I am working for a company called Irrigation and Turf. This company took me on knowing that I was leaving for the UK and they were willing to give me the extra experience working on different machines. During my time there I have done a variety of jobs like helping fine tuning the first slit drain machine in New Zealand, laser leveling tennis courts and golf tees, turf work, turf advising, installing irrigations and drainage and spending over 100 plus hours on a digger.

I am 23 years old. I am married and my wife is a primary school teacher. We have no children and are looking to experience life and new challenges.

I would be very interested in an assistant superintendent or superintendent job on a course with 18 holes plus. I recently won Trainee of the Year which is the best trainee in New Zealand.

Glen Finlayson, New Zealand, GLENFINNZ@hotmail.com

Special Offer on Household Insurance

Heath Lambert Affinity Partnerships, in conjunction with BIGGA, offer members an insurance quotation service on a wide range of products. For a limited period only household cover is available at 12 months for the price of 11. Cover is available for both buildings and contents with a discount on the overall premium for insuring both the buildings and contents in a combined policy. Cover automatically includes new for old replacements of items and the optional instalment plan means that you can spread the cost of your premium.

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BIGGA welcomes...

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Liam Grossart, East
Martin Kohler, East
Adrian Mackie, West
Ross Thompson, East
Craig Wilson, East

MIDLAND REGION

Jonathan Haley, Mid Anglia
Matt Sewell, East Midland

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Michael Anscomb, London
Adam Mann, Kent
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Craig Rose, East Anglia
Liam Somers, Surrey
Daniel Walker, Essex
Paul Whitcombe, Kent
Albert Wilsher, London

SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

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Simon Gumbrell, North West
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FEBRUARY'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 a fantastic BIGGA Clock/calculator/calendar and alarm. Our congratulations go to Peter Marsh, Stoneham Golf Club.

Message of the Month Winner

Each month the person who has written the best message on the BIGGA Bulletin Board, which is found on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk, receives an 18 litre Gelert Rucksack featuring a multi function organiser, 2 mesh pockets and a grab handle. (Rucksack supplied may be a different colour to that featured).

Our congratulations go to February's winner, Stuart Stenhouse from Tulfarris Golf Club whose message was posted on January 8th 2004 under the 'Talk about Turf' section.



NEW Additions to BIGGA Merchandise

New to the BIGGA Merchandise range is the "Four Seasons Breaker" a multi option pullover style top with short zip, elasticated draw cord, this breaker zips off in two places to create three different garments, Full Sleeve, 1/2 sleeve or sleeveless top with a mesh lining, available in a multitude of colours and sizes. Priced at £26.00.

When it comes to performance fabric why not try our Dry Gear or Nailhead polo shirts. These garments feature Dry Gear fabric that actively pulls moisture away from the skin for rapid evaporation. In the heat of competition nothing is more important than staying cool and dry. The polo shirts are again available in a number of sizes and colours. Priced at £16.00 for the Dry Gear or £19.50 for the Nailshed Polo.

For further information about the new range or to place an order, why not contact Rachael Foster on 01347 833800.



From
this

To
this

And
even
this!

Course Feature

Meeting the Demands Head On
Scott MacCallum visits Tyneside Golf Club where the pressures on traditional golf clubs are being tackled admirably.



▲ The 11th

These are testing times for traditional British golf clubs. No longer can a Secretary merely cast his eye down the membership waiting list for a new candidate when a vacancy occurs. Golf Club waiting lists are now as rare as gross birdies in the Rabbits' Open while competition to attract societies is greater than ever. In fact every little edge has to be fought for to bring in additional revenue.

On top of that courses are played more regularly in all weathers and Health and Safety officers are no longer taking a relatively relaxed approach to issues at golf clubs.

Yes, the demands facing golf clubs are now more intense than ever but that needn't be bad news. Clubs can rise to the occasion and with hard work, an open minded approach to the job and well trained staff the satisfaction in facing up to these demands and gaining an edge over rivals is certainly there.

Tyneside Golf Club, sitting high above the famous river from which it takes its name and about seven miles from the centre of Newcastle, is a fine example of a traditional golf club which has faced up to those challenges and made the most of its situation.

Course Manager, Dave Simpson, and his team aim to ensure his members and visitors have the best possible conditions for all four seasons of the year. He has worked hard to ensure that the current course, designed by Harry Colt and laid out in 1903 meets the exacting examinations set by today's Health and Safety Executive. The club was actually formed in 1879 and played on a

course which is now Ryton Willows down the hill and closer to the Tyne.

When I visited the club, just after Christmas, Dave and his team were ready, waiting and a little disappointed that a hellishly wet day would not show off their course to its best. But they were well prepared as the first approach to feature Tyneside Golf Club in print was made 30 years ago! The previous Head Greenkeeper, Steve Pope, now enjoying an active retirement, renewed that original request when he met BIGGA's John Pemberton at a Section event last year. John passed on that request so it is the Tyneside Golf Club of January 2004, and not January 1974, which is featured.

"We're keen to produce as good playing conditions in winter as we possible can," said Dave smiling, as we looked out from the clubhouse at rain pounding the course. A golfer with any hint of sanity was finding something else to occupy his or her time on that Thursday morning.

"If we can pick up as much financial benefit as we can during the winter months, the time people would class as the quietest of the year, then it relieves a little of the burden in summer when, of course, we are still trying to maximise