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# Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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

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## Welcome

### RYDER CUP TIME AGAIN

Here we are in September already and the vast majority of the golf season is now behind us. We've had the Majors, although, as I write, the USPGA, on that brute of a course in Wisconsin, has only just begun.

Whistling Straits is over 7500 yards long. Two par-4s are reputed to be over 500 yards long and there are, count them, 1400 bunkers. Yes, that's 1400. We gather Bunker stats each year at The Open, and Royal Lytham & St Annes is the course with the most bunkers on the Open rota with a mere 197.

Collectively they trapped 1585 balls at The Open in 2001. The mind boggles about what might happen at Whistling Straits. If you divide 1400 by 18 you get an average of 78 bunkers per hole. How would you fancy being sent out to rake those at the beginning of a day? All in all it's a typically brutal Pete Dye golf course and one which, I for one, would feel I'd been sent to Hell if I had to play every day in life.

But while the Majors will be finished by the time you read this the most significant golfing event of the year is just around the corner. The Ryder Cup at Oakland Hills, Michigan, will again dominate the sports pages at a time when everyone has just come up for air after the Olympics.

The Superintendent at Oakland Hills is Steven Cook MG, CGCS. Many of you will know him from 2003 when he came over to Harrogate and I'm sure everyone on this side of the pond will wish him well at this particularly stressful and high profile time.

It is a tough old job being in charge of a Ryder Cup venue. I remember talking with the guys at the De Vere Belfry before the last Ryder Cup and they were saying how closely they had worked with Europe's Captain, Sam Torrance, on ensuring that the fairways were narrowed just about at the driving distance of the longer hitting Americans and the greens slowed to regular European pace. I know Bevan Tattersall recalls proudly being publicly acclaimed by Sam during the victory celebrations.

Giving the home side an advantage without appearing to be underhand or unfair is a delicate balancing act and I'm sure I can speak for all on this side of the Atlantic when I say we'll forgive Steven if he's set the course up in USA's favour... but only if we win!

Seriously the Ryder Cup is a truly great event. There hasn't been a dull one since I don't know when and the last one which was anything other than in the balance well into the Sunday was in 1981 at Walton Heath, when the Americans had what was generally recognised to be the greatest team ever assembled.

So good luck for this year's Cup match, Steven, and good luck to Europe.

Scott MacCallum  
Editor

### SPORTSTURF DRAINAGE

The next in a popular series of LDCA Sportsturf Drainage Days will be held on Thursday October 28 at the Yorkshire Event Centre in Harrogate.

Now in its seventh year these Sportsturf Drainage Days, organised by the Land Drainage Contractors Association, are the UK and Europe's only specialist Sportsturf drainage events.

The days combines a morning of presentations from well known leading figures in the sportsturf world, with an afternoon of working demonstrations from sportsturf drainage contractors.

The morning presentations cover the principles of sportsturf drainage, drainage systems, installation methods, as well as turf establishment, aftercare and maintenance. The live demonstrations will show a wide variety of different types of equipment, installing piped drainage systems with porous backfill, secondary treatments of sand slitting and gravel banding, decompaction, renovation and overseeding of turf, together with static displays of turf related equipment and materials.

The purpose of the event is to raise awareness and highlight the importance of drainage in sportsturf, to provide information on drainage systems and techniques, and to demonstrate good current practice. BIGGA Members will also be eligible for BASIS points and BIGGA credits.

Further information can be found at the LDCA website, [www.ldca.org](http://www.ldca.org), or Tel: 01327 263264.



### TURF CONSULTANT IS REAPPOINTED



Leading independent turf consultant Robert Lycock has been appointed to provide agronomic support for a fourth consecutive year to the 11 Course Managers responsible for 16 golf courses at Marriott Hotel and Country Clubs throughout the UK.

In addition to providing technical advice and assistance on all aspects of turf and soil management, Robert's role also involves the provision of detailed soil and plant analyses as required by the individual Course Managers.

Announcing the reappointment David MacLaren director of golf operations for Marriot UK commented, "We have seen a sustained rise in the year round standard of all 16 Marriot golf courses over the past three years. Much of the improvement is down to Robert who has provided us with first-class technical and practical support, working in harmony with our course managers and their staff, all of whom do a superb job.

Kenny MacKay, Senior Course Manager said, "We regard Robert both as a partner and a great help to the individual course managers. His regular targeted assessments of course quality enable us to keep a close eye on progress year on year."

### RANSOMES JACOBSEN DISTRIBUTION

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd has confirmed that its distribution agreement with Scottish Grass Machinery Ltd (SGM), for the sale of Ransomes Jacobsen products in Scotland, will come to an end on November 7 this year.

An announcement will be made shortly regarding future arrangements for the sale of Ransomes Jacobsen products in Scotland, but SGM will remain an authorised distributor until 7 November.



Terry Lord (right) receives his valuable certificate from David Blackmur, Head of Horticulture and Sportsturf at Plumpton College.

## LORD OF THE GREENS

Terry Lord, of Westerham Golf Club, has received a Highly Commended certificate from the City and Guilds in their Medals for Excellence scheme.

Terry, a mature student who studied at Plumpton College, commenced formal studying as he approached 50 years of age, as he wanted more commitment and a more challenging post. A passion for greenkeeping and personal recommendation meant he approached Plumpton College.

Plumpton College is set in a 600 hectare estate at the foot of the picturesque South Downs, near to Brighton and provides full and part time education and training in a wide range of land based

subjects. The College has been awarded status as a Centre for Rural Business Education (CoVE).

Terry proved a model student, finishing his Level 2 course in just eight months, then he started his training in Level 3 Horticulture, specialising in Sportsturf.

He showed to be ideal at his subject, as he was awarded a prize as top student at the graduation ceremony.

Since Terry has been employed at Westerham GC he has been promoted to the post of Head Greenkeeper and he immediately set about vastly improving the course, which opened in 1977 and which now offers superb playing conditions.

## EUROPEAN PESTICIDE REVIEW

The R&A have funded STRI to carry out a review of the main European pests and diseases and how they are controlled, in order to establish knowledge gaps to prioritise future research.

The availability of plant protection products in different EU states has also been investigated.

Dr Ruth Mann, Turfgrass Pathologist for STRI, is conducting the research.

The Pesticide Review, listing current protection products used on golf courses in different EU states, is now available on-line at [www.stri.co.uk/currentresearch](http://www.stri.co.uk/currentresearch).

Details of the European Pests and Disease Review is available on-line from The R&A website, access via the 'Links' page or go to <https://www.bestcourseforgolf.org/>.

## INDUSTRY AWARDS SCHEME LAUNCHED

Several Associations within the turfgrass industry have been working together to introduce a scheme which will give recognition to individuals and companies that have promoted and advanced the standing and image of the British turfgrass industry.

The BRITIR Awards - BRITish Turfgrass Industry Recognition Awards - will be accorded to those who have demonstrated a dedication to and support of the Industry, beyond the parameters of their normal work-related duties and responsibilities. It will be particularly relevant where their talents have significantly raised the standards and perceptions of the British Turfgrass Industry.

Presently, the Institute of Groundsmanship, British Association of Golf Course Constructors, the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Association, the Turfgrass Growers Association, the British Rootzone and Topdressing Manufacturer's Association and the National Turfgrass Foundation have joined in the initiative and it is hoped that others will also wish to participate.

The BRITIR Awards Reception and Gala Evening will be held at the Southport Floral Hall, in December, during which a variety of trophies will be presented to the winners of the awards.

While the purpose of the evening is to recognise the contribution to our industry by the nominees, the event will have a fun element with a dinner and entertainment.

Presentations will be given in three categories: The Media Awards will consist of two sub-categories, the Technical Article Award which goes to the author of the best technical article in a UK printed or electronic magazine. The Non-Technical Article Award, which is received by the author of the best non-technical article in a UK printed or electronic magazine

The Corporate Awards. The Innovation of the Year Award is given to the company or Association who produces the most innovative introduction of the year. The Corporate Care Award is awarded to a company that excels in promoting the British Turfgrass Industry, its image, education, and opportunities.

The Individual Awards. The Celebrity of the Year goes to an individual who has been outstanding in promoting the turfgrass industry, professionalism, education, etc., and is an example to his/her peers and a role model for young people entering the industry. The International Celebrity Award is presented to an individual or individuals from outside the UK who have unselfishly assisted the development of the British Turfgrass Industry. Finally, the Industry Achievement Award is received by the individuals who have unceasingly dedicated themselves to the further development of the British Turfgrass Industry.

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▲ The Show team: L-R Chard Spicer, Phil Sharples, Ian Benison, John Hall, Mark Price and Richard Murray.

## REASEHEATH HITS THE SPOT

The Reaseheath Sports Turf Machinery Show has received wholehearted praise from its exhibitors, who were impressed by its interactive formula and voted that the Show should become a permanent event in the turf professionals' calendar.

The demonstrative event, held in the realistic setting of Reaseheath College in Nantwich, Cheshire, attracted 57 national manufacturers and suppliers with several choosing the venue as a national launch pad for new machinery.

This year's show was almost three times as successful as the 2003 inaugural event, with demand for demonstration areas exceeding expectations. Millions of pounds worth of cutting edge equipment was demonstrated in the real working environment of the college's varied sports turf facilities, attracting potential buyers from across the North West, Wales and the Midlands.

National exhibitors included Toro, Ransomes Jacobsen, Sisis, Fleet line marker, BLEC and many others.

Research and training bodies included the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA), the National Turfgrass Foundation, Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG), BALI, The NPTC and the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI).

Event team member Ian Benison, a Reaseheath horticulture programme leader said: "We felt we could fill a void in the industry by offering a 'hands-on' opportunity for companies to display their equipment or materials in a real working environment, and judging from the positive comments we have been proved right.

"Feedback from exhibitors was that they had enjoyed a friendly event which had attracted quality buyers. Many said that they had developed positive contacts and new links.

"We intend to improve the show still further next year, ensuring it offers even better value to those attending. The show is still very much in its infancy and we are confident we can build on it."

## THE HARRY DIAMOND QUAICH

The Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich was played over Belleisle Golf Course on Sunday July 11.

This year the Quaich clashed with the Open at Troon and the Scottish Open at Loch Lomond. Harry would have been very proud to know this – being up there with the best.

Unfortunately, there were no Greenkeepers taking part in his competition. This was due to the fact that a good number of the Ayrshire courses were involved with the qualifying for the Open. Greenkeepers, being what they are, assisting "frae a' the airts o' Ayrshire", hence the exceptionally demanding week for the Ayrshire lads, where their personal pleasures were put aside to assist in these great events.

The players entering the Quaich were down from last year, 104 turned out. The numbers in no way deterred the enthusiasm of the golfers who, as usual were of all ages, were from courses all over Ayrshire. It was a pleasure to see them all standing in teams of 4 on their respected tees awaiting the shotgun start to the Stableford Competition.

The weather all over Scotland had not been very good but at Belleisle the sun was shining on a well presented course thanks to the special efforts of Billy Fulton and his Greenkeeping staff.

Everyone said what a fine day it was, quite a change from the usual slogging medals and serious competitions they normal take part in.

The prizes were presented by Harry's brothers Hugh and Neil, and Jessie, Harry's wife, who had the pleasure of handing the Quaich to the winning team of Donald Kemp, Andrew Thomson, Alison Thorburn and Ronnie Penman.

The organising committee, including family members, would like to thank South Ayrshire Council for allowing the course to be used for Harry's Quaich, also to all the sponsors, and a special thanks to Westin Turnberry Resort for their continued support.

## FORTY NOT OUT

Rob Mayers, Production Director of Bernhard, has been presented with a token of appreciation to celebrate 40 years of service to the company.

Rob joined the company, then called Atterton and Ellis, on August 4 1964 from school as an apprentice in general engineering under the guidance of Foreman Jim Chapman and Directors Jeff & Ken Boardman.

Rob's major duties were focused on the development of both lawnmowers and grinders. At this point this was only a small part of the business and he concentrated on lathe work, pipe work, general maintenance.

His work in the fitting shop was described as excellent, and he quickly moved over to the grinder side of the business as it developed.

Rob took an active part in production and development, and thus became instrumental in the increase in sales.

Rob, married with two children, has been with the company his entire working life and he is planning to continue his hard work as Production Director for years to come.



▲ Rob Mayes (left) is rewarded for 40 years service to Bernhard by Managing Director Stephen Bernhard.



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# Education Update

Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, promised to provide more information on the free training being provided by the Learning and Skills Council at a number of locations around England. He is true to his word.

## Information on the Employer Training Pilots

From September businesses across more than a third of England will be able to benefit from the groundbreaking Employer Training Pilots (ETPs), which offer a flexible and managed route to training staff. Operated by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the pilots were launched in September 2002 initially in six local LSC areas. Due to the success of the approach, an additional 12 areas have been added.

Leicestershire LSC was one of the first of the 12 areas in the country to offer the ETP programme to employers.

Business advisors from Skills at Work, the Leicestershire ETP, are working with more than 600 companies in the County to encourage them to improve the skills of their workforce.

The pilots offer organisations sector specific free or subsidised training tailored to meet the needs of the business as well as improve the skills of the individual.

The training, which can be carried out on-site to suit the businesses operational needs, will also help improve essential skills such as literacy and numeracy and could even lead to a National Vocational

Qualification to Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSEs).

The possibility of the pilots being made available nationally is being considered by Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. How do Employer Training Pilots work?

Step 1 Contact your local LSC to find out more about the ETP in your area.

Step 2 A business advisor will work with you to identify where low skills hamper productivity and performance.

Step 3 Low skilled or poorly qualified employees, eligible for support and training, will be identified.

Step 4 The advisor will help assess individual skills needs and develop a training plan.

Step 5 A training provider will be funded to deliver the training in the workplace.

Step 6 Employees are trained during normal working hours and the LSC refunds all or some of the wage costs.

■ **More information on the Employer Training Pilots, the areas they cover and telephone numbers can be obtained from the BIGGA Website.**

## BIGGA Regional Training Courses

Details of the autumn/winter series of training courses were included with the August Edition of Greenkeeper International.

Places on these Education and Development Fund subsidised courses are going fast, despite the fact that some members did not receive the insert.

Regional Courses with places available are:

Presentation Skills and Powerpoint

28&29 October, Ross on Wye Golf Club

Budgets and Finance

28&29 October, East Kilbride Golf Club

Essential Management Skills

9&10 November, Ross on Wye Golf Club

Communication Skills

17&18 November, Cleethorpes Golf Club

Management Skills for HG/CM

22&23 November, Old Fold Manor Golf Club

Next Steps in Management Skills

25&26 November, Dunham Forest Golf Club

Negotiating Skills

30 November, Exeter Golf Club

Each two day course costs BIGGA members £99 plus VAT (£116.33) and each one day course costs £49 plus VAT (£57.58).

However non-members pay £200 (£235) for two days and £150 (£176.25) for one day, which reflects the massive subsidy from the BIGGA Education and Development Fund.

Attending just one, one-day, course saves the greenkeeper membership fee and attending a two day course saves the course manager membership fee.

For further details of all courses or to book your place contact Sami at BIGGA HOUSE.

## Continue to Learn 2005

The Continue to Learn programme for BTME&ClubHouse 2005 is almost ready to be printed. Watch out for your copy in the October edition of Greenkeeper International.

The extended education and training programme includes five workshops that cover: Irrigation, Soils and

Water, Golf Course Design, Tournament Preparation and Effective Communication and Negotiation.

The Seminar programme includes a wide range of topics for greenkeepers, groundsman, club officials, managers and secretaries. All seminar sessions will be held in Hall D of the Harrogate International Centre.



# GTC News

## David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, explains the GTC's role in maintaining an approved network of greenkeeper training providers.

As we take an in depth look at the GTC's role in ensuring the turf sector has an appropriate range of qualifications we must not forget that it is necessary to 'sell' the need for greenkeeper training to employers.

We must always be mindful of the employer's needs when developing and reviewing qualifications. The GTC believes that, first and foremost, employers want a **skilled** workforce. This is now paramount as more and more golfers are seeking out the best maintained and managed courses.

It is all about standards and the GTC has invested heavily in COURSE MANAGER training and this certainly will continue as more and more employers see the benefit of investing in a competent and preferably qualified course manager.

It is very rewarding to see that the majority of job advertisements in Greenkeeper International request formal qualifications and more often than not the workbased National / Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQ's) are seen as the benchmark for recruitment.

In simple terms the N/SVQs are the qualifications that show competency at the various levels i.e. Level 2 craft, Level 3 technical / supervisory and Level 4 Management. The benefit to employers is that on request they can see the list of skills that a candidate has gained when completing a particular level of an N/SVQ.

Additionally, there is a range of education courses and qualifications, that allow trainees to gain the necessary knowledge, which they can then use to enhance their actual practical skill on the golf course.

These types of qualification are known as work-related and the most popular are the Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or Foundation Degree and the City & Guilds Advanced National Certificate. The work-related qualifications are often college-based, however at least one of the GTC Approved Training Providers offers the HNC through a distance learning option.

The GTC continues to try and keep employers and employees up to speed on the Government's thinking in terms of qualifications, and learning programmes. For example, the current introduction of a foundation degree will result in the eventual phasing out of the HNC & D in England and Wales.

The GTC works closely with the Government to ensure that all of the approved qualifications are linked to employment requirements through the occupational standards agreed for each greenkeeping job role.

Once a range of qualifications have been developed for the sector, they are then approved through Government bodies and handed to the Awarding Bodies such as City & Guilds, Ed excel and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). It is the Awarding Bodies responsibility to ensure that the qualifications are offered only by Training Providers - mainly colleges - in the turf sector that can prove that their resources will result in quality provision.

I will explain, in a future article, how the GTC liaises with the different bodies to show how we endeavour to monitor the quality of education provision offered through our network of Approved Training Providers.

Let us now take a look at the role of the Approved Training Providers who serve our sector. The landbased colleges who have served our sector so well over the years have had a very difficult time in the past years, due largely through the various problems agriculture has faced over the last decade or so.

Colleges were encouraged to diversify and many turned to horticulture as the obvious 'complementary' sector to agriculture. However, who was it that said, "The simple answer to maintaining and managing golf courses is to ask a farmer what to do and then do the exact opposite!"

That statement possibly sums up the difficulty the GTC has had to ensure that any provider wishing to join the GTC's approved list fully understands that we may not be a huge sector when it comes to employer or employee numbers but we are organised through the representation on the GTC Board of Management.

The GTC often receives criticism for the number of approved providers it has on its list but it has not been an issue of numbers of providers so much as the **quality** of the provision.

As an example the GTC featured an approved provider in the last On Course newsletter that offers quality education provision in the West of Scotland and, whilst the trainee numbers may be relatively small compared to other providers, the golf clubs and course managers in the area cannot speak highly enough of the centre staff - one man!

It is the GTC's role to work continually with its network of providers to ensure the various qualifications are offered in a variety of methods so that the employer and trainee can choose the most appropriate training course for their needs.

A classic example of the way the GTC has developed the provider partnership is to take forward an initiative to develop a standard set of learning materials, which the providers would use with the trainees on N/SVQ Levels 2 and 3 training courses. This major initiative has received the full support of all members of the GTC, the training providers and the leading industry specialists.

There had been some concerns that the colleges would resist the industry body laying down 'what' they required trainees to be taught but in reality the project received the college's turf representatives' full support.

The GTC's Technical Committee, working with the industry subject matter specialists, produced the Level 2 materials during 2003 and these are not only in use throughout the provider network but also available to purchase in CD-ROM or hardcopy format direct from the GTC. The Level 3 materials will be available shortly. The more enlightened course managers, often those who have achieved their trainer and assessor qualifications, are now taking up the opportunity to train staff in the workplace using the learning materials available. The employers, through their course manager, then choose a provider who will register and support the trainees to gain the relevant N/SVQ or Apprenticeship qualification.

With 94% of greenkeepers in formal training registered on a vocational qualification course it has been vitally important that the GTC has advised its provider network to adjust its delivery of education more towards the workplace and several providers. I am pleased to say we have done just that.

There will be a period of change whilst more golf clubs fully understand the benefits, and system, of work-based training however at least we at the GTC can now support those enlightened employers and course managers by putting them in touch with the most flexible and progressive providers.

There will always be a role for those colleges who do want to work with the GTC, but sadly we cannot see many of the more traditional agricultural colleges surviving if they do

not work closer with the industry.

There are some quality independent training providers now looking to provide the turf sector with the service that the GTC has identified and whether it be short courses in management skills, health & safety or practical skills the GTC will continue to promote those providers who can prove that their programmes match the standards laid down in the qualifications.

In summary please be reassured that the GTC is monitoring continually its approved training provider network and our key objective is to ensure that quality education and training is available through a range of both work-based and work-related qualifications.

Hopefully, our network of providers will offer flexibility in the provision of courses and the employers. Through their course managers, they will be able to choose the most suitable option for their course and trainee. Moreover, continually monitoring the progress of trainees will lead to standards being maintained.

For more information on the GTC Approved Training Provider network, the new N/SVQ Learning materials and greenkeeping qualifications visit the GTC website [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk) or contact David on [david@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:david@the-gtc.co.uk), Tel 01347 838640

