



Anthony Freeman, of the Surrey Section, receives his Longest Drive Prize for the second successive year



The Lincsgreen 1 team of, L-R, Rob Welford, Graeme MacDonald, Phil Wilkinson and Les Howkins were piped into second place



Elaine Thomas presents Rigby Taylor 1 with the Neil Thomas Memorial Cup



Richard Barker grabbed the Putting Competition award after a dramatic playoff against Andrew Corns



Nearest the Pin went to Kevin Kinzer of Alpha Amenity



John Pemberton and BIGGA Guardian Mark Dobell collect third prize for the Chief Executive team



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Stiff Challenge Ahead

Gareth Jones previews the BIGGA National Championship at the home of Robin Hood.

The event of the year for golfing greenkeepers and trade members is now less than two months away. The BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobson, is once again here and all roads point to Robin Hood country, as Worksop Golf Club and Sherwood Forest host the 2005 competition in October.

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Sherwood Forest GC

Section and Regional qualifiers have been played out across the UK during the summer months and they have witnessed many a success and failure as greenkeeper and trade members alike fought it out for limited automatic qualifying places. The scene is now set for the battle to commence to find the 2005 BIGGA National Champion.

Like Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham competing for the hand of Maid Marion, it was Graeme MacDonald and Noel Crawford who brawled for the 2004 title. Still in the balance until the final holes at Alwoodley GC, it was the Newark Course Manager Graeme who overcame his adversary to lift the BIGGA Challenge Trophy, forcing Royal Country Down's Noel to settle for the Scratch Championship.

Such drama is bound to be seen again this year as Head Greenkeepers Barry Lax, Worksop GC, and Kim Kirkham, Sherwood Forest GC, and their merry men set up their picturesque, challenging courses one last time before the winter weather takes hold.

Worksop, which will host the first day of the Championship on October 3, has had a busy season. Its dry, sandy based land has resulted in the course remaining open for the majority of the year and the summer has witnessed the course host the entire programme of Nottingham golf events. From the Nottinghamshire School boys to the Nottingham Match Play Open, Barry and his green staff have been kept busy preparing a top track week on week. If that wasn't dominating enough of the greens team's time, they have also been working on a heathland regeneration programme. However, all this wouldn't put Barry off producing a challenging course for BIGGA's finest.

"We'll set up Worksop the same for the National Tournament as we do for all the rest. In fact we don't change the course too much for competitions as it is set up day to day for the members, as it is already a tough challenge. Worksop is very tight with the fastest greens in the area, the 18th green has a 12ft fall from one side of it to the other," said Barry,

who will have been at the club for 35 years in February 2006.

Day two, October 4, of the BIGGA Tournament will move to Sherwood Forest. Kim Kirkham, fresh from taming Aldwark Manor's course during Rigby Taylor 1's march to victory in the BIGGA Golf Day, will have his course in its typically testing condition. It's been a demanding summer for Kim, but that wouldn't stop the heathland course from being very tight in October, with rough looming at every turn ready to snaffle any stray balls.

"We've let the rough grow more for this season, so the course is even tighter. We've also concentrated on keeping the speed of the greens up and the normal high standards expected by the membership," said Kim proudly.

"I'm looking forward to hosting the National Tournament. It's always nice to have your peers come and play your course and hopefully appreciate it. We've held Section and Regional events at Sherwood before and they have always been very enjoyable. BIGGA events are always a great chance for greenkeepers and trade of all levels to socialise together."

So the BIGGA competitors have been warned, Worksop and Sherwood Forest will take no prisoners, golfers will need to be on their game to survive the two days. So, can the two Headmen offer any tips to help?

"The 9th, 10th and 12th are the biggest tests at Worksop. The period between the 8th and 15th is where scores must be kept together and it's here that will make or break your round," stated Barry knowingly.

"I think the Sherwood Forest back nine will play a major part in determining who wins the National Tournament. If the wind gets up and blows in a certain direction it can be a very different last 9," said Kim.

There is still time to book your place in the BIGGA National Championship. To do so or for more details contact BIGGA's very own Maid Marion, Sarah, at BIGGA HOUSE on 01347 833800 or via email, sarah@bigga.co.uk.



Worksop GC

It Had To Be

With The Open returning to its Spiritual Home something extra special just had to happen at the 2005 Championship. Not surprisingly when at St Andrews there was more than just one extraordinary, memorable element. There just had to be.



Tiger Woods winning his second Open Championship, his 10th Major in total, with a consistently exceptional performance, is a distinctive image that will live in the memory for many years to come. Bar a slight wobble during his third round, the world number one never looked like losing the form or the lead that he had established from what seemed like the 1st tee on the opening day.

Jack Nicklaus, the world's greatest ever player said his goodbye to The Open. The sight of the sensational golfer, who won three Open Championships, standing on the famed Swilcan Bridge on his way to play his last ever Open hole, on the second day, was a moment when the thousands of fans who were clambering for a decent view can say I was there. Historical sporting moments like that don't occur very often in this now money driven professional world and will have been savoured by every person watching around the world. Many left the Old Course with a tear in the eye and a lump in the throat when thinking back to that enduring image.

The so close, yet so far for the perpetual bridesmaid, Colin Montgomerie, as another Major past him by sticks in the mind. We were all gripped by his meteoric rise during the weekend's action. Written off by most, Montgomerie proved the doubters wrong, but it was just his poor fortune that when he played his best Major round since 1997, Woods was in such a zone. Everybody hoped, everyone believed and one and all will remember what could have been.

For the 2005 BIGGA Open Support Team it was a memorable

Championship for so many reasons. Working at the Home of Golf, witnessing one of the most dramatic final rounds in recent Open history, walking the hallowed course inside the ropes and generally being part of the whole BIGGA team was an experience of a lifetime. The Open also had one more landmark as the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition came full circle at St Andrews, as it celebrated its 10th birthday.

Started in 1995 at the Home of Golf, the prediction competition returned to the Old Course once again to record vital bunker statistics for both the competition itself and for information requirements for the Press and Media at The Open.

All the talk before the Championship was about the lengthening of the Old Course. The question that was on everyone's lips was would the increased size of the course bring into play more of the 112 bunkers littered across the Links course? The stats, collected by the Open Support Team, highlighted emphatically that the course's extension indeed has brought those deep, feared traps into play.

In total 676 bunkers were hit by the cream of the golfing world during the entire 2005 Championship. That compares to a final figure of 448 when The Open was last at St Andrews in 2000. The 2005 figures were dramatically higher for each day of the Championship than 2004. For example, just 148 bunkers when located in the first day's play in 2000, while 252 were put to use for the corresponding day in 2005.

Tiger Woods may have lifted the Claret Jug for the second time, but he could not repeat his 2000 feat at St Andrews of evading all of the Old Course's 112 bunkers. In total the world number one was forced to escape from the sand four times.

The 14th was the golfer's major enemy during the Championship. As well as catching the most balls, 31, on Day Two, the Long Hole's bunkers were visited more than any other during the whole Open, totalling 83.

The 3rd, Cartgate (Out), was the hole with bunkers that caused the least agony to the top golfers. Its bunkers were invaded just 10 times during the four days, with the hole also being the only one not to steal any balls on a single day, that was day two. The 1st and 18th on the Old Course are absent of any bunkers.

So many historically moments, numerous special memories, frequent fun filled times all added to a wonderful Championship and a once in a lifetime experience. It just had to be.

THE UPDATED STORY... 10 YEARS ON

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	St A's	Lym	Troon	B'dale	C'stie	St A's	Lym	M'field	St G's	Troon	St A's
Bunkers	112	185	84	117	115	112	197	148	106	93	112
Rd 1	214	501	344	355	539	148	557	359	388	393	252
Rd 2	201	577	272	406	468	164	547	372	405	371	203
Rd 3	130	269	107	226	202	65	224	175	149	148	100
Rd 4	156	271	136	153	265	71	257	169	181	185	121
Total	701	1618	859	1140	1474	448	1585	1078	1123	1097	676

BIGGA's Golden Nuggets

There was plenty of interesting tales that occurred throughout The Open, here are just some of the stories collected by BIGGA Open Support Team Members and staff during the four days.

Stig Persson was the lucky Open Support Team Member who went out with Jack Nicklaus on his final ever Open round. The Swedish greenkeeper was right there when Jack crossed the famous Swilcan Bridge for the last time.

"It was very special. To be that close to it all was very good indeed. You could see all the emotion of the moment and I was honoured to be out there," said Stig.



The entire 2005 BIGGA Open Support Team

As well as staging a superb Open Championship, Old Course Head Greenkeeper, Euan Grant, and Links Superintendent, Gordon Moir, had something extra to be smug about after receiving a special gift. The pair both had the rare, newly released Scottish edition of the £5 note with Jack Nicklaus on the face. That memento became even more special when the two greenkeepers had the notes signed by the great man at a Dinner during the Championship.

American Richard Matteson had his club to thank for him being part of the BIGGA Support Team for the second time. His club, Pendleton GC, held a golf day to raise money for his travel costs to St Andrews. Despite his members helping with his funds, Richard still set up the course as hard as possible in tribute to the US Open, as it was hosted on the same Sunday as the Major. Half of the money raised from the golf day was given to the Superintendent, which was in the region of \$1,200.

"Entries were given two extra shots on their handicap if they were wearing anything resembling a kilt," said Richard smiling, who made the most of his St Andrews experience during the week, once he got there that is.

The 'Dam Yank', as he has now been named, left Tony Smith and Ian Holoran waiting at Darlington Train Station for five hours. The north east pair had agreed to pick up Richard on their way up to St Andrews, but delayed trains and planes resulted in the mammoth wait and the new endearing nickname for the American.

Former Board Member Ian Semple had one of those fearful moments. Like a true professional Ian got onto the first tee in plenty of time for his second round match. He enjoyed chatting with various members of his group until he realised, just before the players were to tee off, that there was a problem. He had forgotten to pick up his rake at HQ and had to race back to fetch his weapon. Information supplied by Robert Hogarth.

Maarten Lafeber's caddie had a tough final few holes on Day One. His bag strap snapped while leaving the 16th tee. He was forced to manage without the strap for the remaining three holes. Information supplied by Jimmy Richardson.



A support team member removes footprints in the bunker as Miguel Angel Jimenez looks on

Another caddie having a bad first day was Tom Watson's. As Watson threw his ball for cleaning, on the 11th green, his right hand man stepped back and fell over backwards and rolled down the green, bag and all, with his course planner blowing in the opposite direction. Information supplied by Billy Merritt.

The 5th captured all three members of game four on the first day. Amateur Champion, Brian McElhinney, Jerry Kelly and Craig Parry all landed in the same bunker from their tee shots. McElhinney and Parry then repeated the feat on the 12th, again landing in the same trap from the tee. Information supplied by Richard Blackburn.

After raking the Road Hole bunker at the 17th, Open Support Team Member Mark Lewthwaite was asked to go back and rake one of the fairway bunkers as two ducklings had fallen into the trap. The R&A Official rescued the birds and Mark was safe to rake both the Official's and duckling's prints out of the sand. Information supplied by Mark Lewthwaite.

HOLE	PAR	PLAYER	SCORE
17	4	WOODS	66
17	4	HENSBY	67
17	4	COUPLER	68
17	4	IMMELMAN	68
17	4	LOLAZABAL	68
17	4	LONARD	68
17	4	SCHUSTER	68
17	4	RAMSAY	68
17	4	VERPLANK	68
17	4	GOOSEN	68
17	4	DONALD	68
17	4	RILEY	68

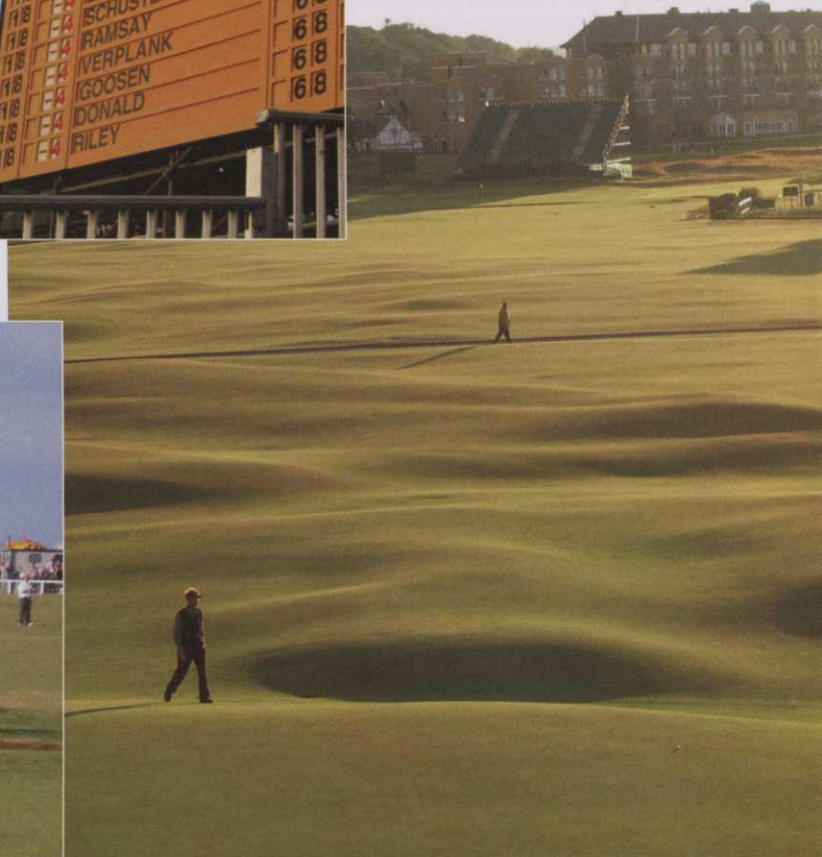


Colin 'Bob' Denny shows off his glove signed by Patrik Sjoland

Woods never relinquished his first day's lead



Jack Nicklaus crossed the Swilcan Bridge for the final time



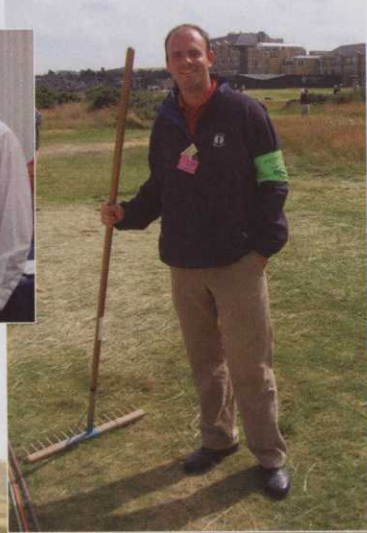
The BIGGA Team learnt how the bunkers should be raked for The Open by the superb Old Course staff



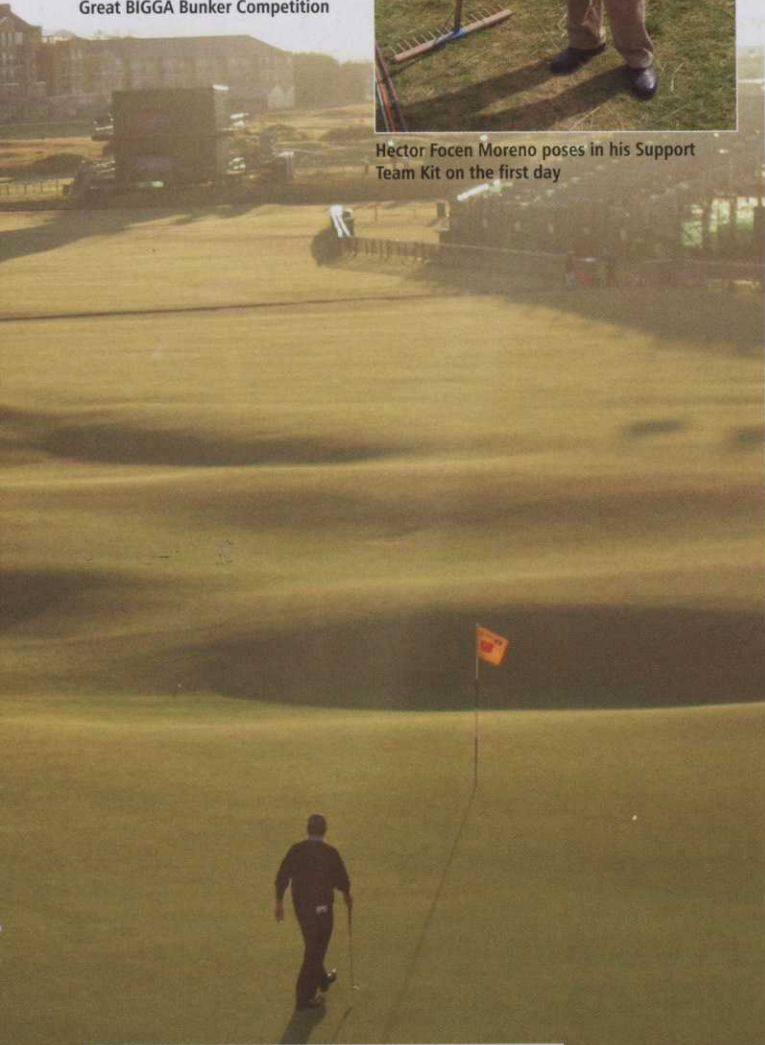
(L-R) Ian Holoran, Andy Campbell, Mark Lewthwaite (kneeling), Tony Smith and John Keenaghan with the three Jacks



Chairman Kerran Daly presents Iain Barr with his prize for winning the second day of the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition



Hector Focén Moreno poses in his Support Team Kit on the first day

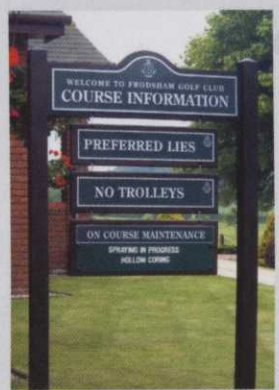



Richard Matteson was at St Andrews thanks to his members



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Matthew Jordan on his debut at The Open



Some of the boys relax after their round

Matthew Evans performs his duties admirably



John Keenaghan during his round on the second day



Sergio Garcia was in a mischievous mood before starting his second round. Knowing that Mr Starter, Ivor Robson, had been standing on the 1st tee without a toilet break all day, the Spaniard started to pour his water out of the bottle, in front of Robson, to make a satisfying and relieving splashing sound. Information supplied by Ian Semple

Talking of toilet breaks. Ian Poulter opted to pop into the bushes when nature called, while his caddy used the loo on the 8th. Information supplied by Richard Matteson.

After a long second round, Thomas Bjorn finally snapped on the 18th. He hit his tee shot out of bounds and responded by smashing one of the tee markers to pieces. Information supplied by Billy Merritt.

The 13th was definitely unlucky for Scott Drummond. After pushing his second round tee shot into a bunker, the player then reached down to grab his bottle of drink and cracked his head on the tee marker. Information supplied Richard Blackburn.

S K Ho weekend appearance at the Championship is owed as much to Open Support Team Member Paul Jenkins' eagle eye, as it is to the skill of the actual player. The Korean lost his ball in the rough on the 2nd, resulting in a mad scramble to find the golfer's ball before his allotted time of five minutes was up. Just as the Official was to call time of this search, which would ensure a two stroke penalty, Paul found the ball and Ho could go on his merry way. The Korean made the cut by two shots, a feat not possible if he had incurred the penalty. Information supplied, unsurprisingly, by Paul Jenkins.

It's a hard life for the Rules Officials. After already completing two days play, the Official in the Paul McGinley/Rod Pampling match was struggling by the 3rd hole. So tired was the Official that he decided to get out his little umbrella seat and have a deserved sit. The only problem... he did it right in the middle of the 3rd green. Information supplied by Kevin Hobbs.

Finally, always looking for a souvenir, an American spectator asked Justin Leonard for his golf ball on the 6th green on Day Three of The Open. "Sorry, but I'm still using it," was the reply from the golfer. Information supplied by Richard Holmes.



What's in your Top Dressing?

Mick Higgins and Sasha McCann explain exactly what a top dressing consists of and how careful selection of the right material is essential.

Historically, top dressings for fine turf areas were produced on site by the greenkeeper using local sands and soils. These complimented the rootzone of the greens' construction as they were made from the same, or similar, materials. Over the years the game of golf has developed to the extent that courses are now expected to produce fine turf areas that can withstand play 52 weeks of the year. Hence, the vast majority of construction rootzones are now designed and produced by external specialists such as Rufford and Pro-Sport. As top dressings should match a rootzone profile, they too need to be designed and manufactured to the same high specification.



Sand grains under the microscope

However, whereas we have recommendations and guidelines for putting green rootzones from the United States (USGA) and later this year from the UK (STRI), there are no similar guidelines for top dressing materials. There have been numerous articles written on the subject of top dressings over the years, about how and when to use them. But do you actually know what goes into a top dressing and the measures taken to get it right?

For example, if you requested a 70/30 top dressing, would you actually know what is in the mix? What type of sand would you be adding in at 70%? Which grade of sand would you require - medium coarse or medium fine? Furthermore, what kind of organic amendment would you be adding in at 30%? Is it a sandy loam soil with low organic matter content or a sedge peat with high organic matter content? All of these considerations are fundamental to the way in which the top dressing, and ultimately the putting green, will perform.

CONSTITUENTS OF A TOP DRESSING

Irrespective of the blend ratio, i.e. 70/30, 60/40 (which is actually by volume and not by weight), the majority of top dressings produced in the UK would typically consist of:

sand (53 or 63 - 2000 microns)*	90 - 99%
silt & clay (<53 or <63 microns)*	0.5 - 7.0%
organic matter content	0.5 - 3.0%

*53 microns is used for American procedures, 63 microns is used for UK.

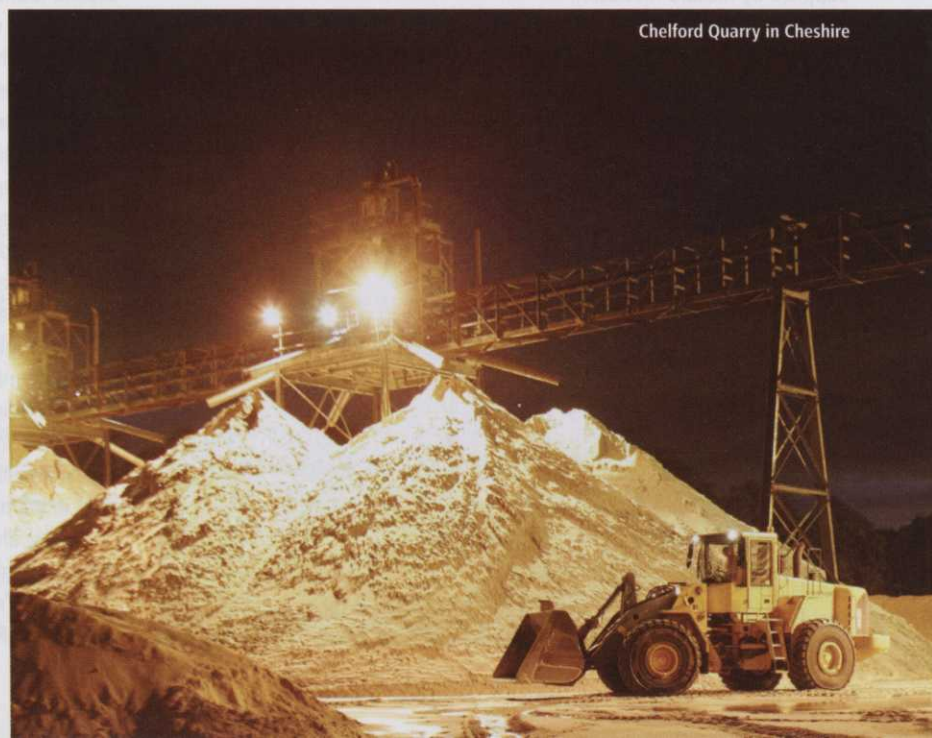
By reducing the percentage of silt and clay, water infiltration rates will increase. Higher silt and clay levels will also increase the possibility of greens being capped. Top dressing, in conjunction with other maintenance practices such as scarification or aeration, will help to control thatch. Therefore, a top dressing with a high content of organic matter will only add to any existing problems with thatch layer. The combined percentages of silt and clay plus organic matter content at 10% or less, results in over 90% of a top dressing consisting of sand.

SAND

The definition of sand is an inorganic mineral fraction between 2000 microns and either 53 or 63 microns (depending on US or UK specification respectively). A point to remember is that any organic amendment containing particles within these size fractions would also be classified as 'sand'. The chemical composition of sand in the UK is predominantly silica (SiO₂). Each deposit has its own unique mineralogy depending on how, when and from which mineral it was formed.

It is important to appreciate that not all sands are the same and, as it is the major constituent in a top dressing, care should be taken to ensure that the sand used has the desired physical properties.

Construction or building sands have a wide range of particle sizes, which can lead to a high degree of interpacking, resulting in poor drainage. Sands used for top dressing should have a narrow range of particle sizes with the majority of particles in the medium sand range, that is between 0.25mm and 0.50mm. This will help to reduce the impact of interpacking and offer the optimum balance for capillary and non capillary



Chelford Quarry in Cheshire