



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

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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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Education Update

Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, details the extensive Continue to Learn Programme at Harrogate Week 2006.

As 2005 draws to a close, Sami and I are looking ahead to Harrogate Week, when we present Continue to Learn, the largest, targeted education experience in Europe for those in the fine turf and golf club management industries. We are also planning the launch of the BIGGA Training and Development Manual and a new initiative on leadership and management training.



Many greenkeepers have now booked their GTC supported Continue to Learn Workshop Sessions, although you could still book your place if you contact BIGGA HQ before the January 11 booking deadline.

The two-day and one-day workshops have been designed to meet the needs of specific groups of greenkeepers and they are as follows.

Two-day: Basic Health and Safety for Greenkeepers, The Greenkeepers Guide to Project Management, Taking the Fear out of Financial Management, An Introduction to Golf Course Design (Sold Out) and the Knowledge Element of the A1 Assessor Award.

One-day Workshops are: Customer Care, Managing Water, Managing Performance, L12 Coaching Award and an A1 Assessor Update.

The Continue to Learn Programme continues throughout the BTME & ClubHouse Exhibition, commencing on Tuesday January 24 with the Presentation of BIGGA Awards, followed by a motivational keynote presentation given by Colonel John Blashford-Snell. This is followed by the first Continue to Learn Seminar, presented by Brin Bendon. Brin will endeavour to show you how to influence others through better communication.

Thanks to sponsorship from Ransomes Jacobsen, we have introduced a series of half-day workshops during BTME & ClubHouse, beginning on Tuesday January 24 with Environmental Management and, running at the same time, The Basics of Microsoft Word. Wednesday January 25 will see the introduction of a day of seminars aimed at golf club managers, golf club secretaries, and golf club officials.

These seminars are presented jointly with the English Golf Union and the Association of Golf Club Secretaries. Running alongside these Seminars will be two more Ransomes Jacobsen sponsored Workshops, The Basics of Microsoft Excel and Media Skills and Strategy Training.

Thursday January 26 will be the busiest Continue to Learn Day, with three Seminars - Managing Poa Annua, An Holistic Approach to Disease Management and The Competent Person. The third half-day Microsoft Workshop, The Basics of Powerpoint, will also be running. Thursday afternoon sees the start of the conference and debate on Maintaining the Sustainable Golf Course that is presented jointly with the R&A. The Conference continues on Friday morning with an open discussion.

Hopefully by now, you will have noticed a massive increase in the amount of education available during Harrogate Week. However, it does not end there. Thanks to the introduction of the Queen's Suite at Harrogate International Centre, the location of all of the above sessions, we are able to present a wide variety of fringe session that will be open to all visitors free of charge.

Details of all of these sessions will be included in the fringe events brochure that you should have received with your copy of Greenkeeper International.

FRINGE SEMINARS

Half hour fringe seminars will be presented on Tuesday January 24 by Toro, WBB Minerals, Headland, Rigby Taylor, STRI, Sheltons, Complete Weed Control, Otterbine, Lloyds of Letchworth and Scotts.

On Wednesday by Toro, Tower Chemicals, Vitax and Even Products. On Thursday by Fairway Credit, Briggs & Stratton, Circle Insurance, WRAP, Symbio, Grovewood Publishing, OptimizeGolf, Terrain, Headland and Toro.

STUDENT FORUM

Thursday January 26 is a special day for students. Not only will they be able to gain entry to Seminars free of charge and attend a Toro sponsored Student Forum; they can also attempt the Student Quiz and win a first prize of an Apple iPod.

Two old favourites return for 2006 when the Careers Fair and Job Shop, sponsored by Toro, run throughout BTME & ClubHouse and the Women's Forum takes place on Wednesday January 25. There is definitely something for everyone at Harrogate Week 2006. It is bound to be a popular event and places on Workshops and Seminars need to be booked early.

ACCOMMODATION

An indication of the popularity of Harrogate Week is that BIGGA has sold all of its allocated accommodation. Anyone wishing to book accommodation for Harrogate Week should contact our appointed accommodation agent, Reservation Highway, at www.reservation-highway.co.uk, using the access code 'bigga'. They can also be contacted by telephone on 01423 525577.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Another BIGGA member has reached the required standard for the award of a Diploma in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Congratulations to Iain MacLeod, Course Manager at Tain Golf Club.

A Diploma in Continuing Professional Development is awarded to those members of BIGGA who have been awarded five consecutive Certificates of Continuing Professional Development. A Certificate of Continuing Professional Development is awarded to those members of BIGGA who have earned a minimum of 10 CPD Credits in the calendar year July to June each year. Credits are awarded for a wide range of education and training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences.

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR BIGGA SUPPORT TEAMS

THE OPEN

ROYAL LIVERPOOL GC (HOYLAKE), JULY 20-23, 2006

This is your opportunity to work at the first Open Championship to be played at Hoylake since Argentinian, Robert de Vicenzo, won in 1967. As a member of the BIGGA Support Team you will assist Course Manager, Craig Gilholm and his team, in the preparation of the course before and after each day's play and be a part of the on-course team which accompanies each match ensuring bunkers are raked in a correct and professional manner.

It will be your responsibility to get to the venue but after that transport to and from the golf course, accommodation and meals will be provided during the Championship. You will be expected to report for duty by 5pm on Wednesday, July 19, and be available until the close of play on Sunday - bed and breakfast will, however, be supplied for the Sunday evening.

This year we are also looking for a team of drivers for the four mini buses used during the week. So please indicate on your application if you are able to be a nominated mini bus driver. To do so you must have held a full driving license for three years and be over 25 years of age.

This opportunity is open to full BIGGA members only.

To apply write to: Scott MacCallum, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO61 1UF. For further information contact Scott on 01347 833800 or email scott@bigga.co.uk.

Closing Date for applications for The Open Team February 1, 2005.

BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

THE WENTWORTH CLUB, MAY 25-28, 2006

BIGGA will also be providing a Greenkeeping Support Team for the BMW PGA Championship at The Wentworth Club, May 25-28.

As a team member you will be involved in walking with a match and raking any bunkers found by the players as well as aiding Chris Kennedy and his staff, should adverse weather occur.

You will be responsible for your own transport arrangements to the course while there is no overnight accommodation provided.

Being a member of this team will not be detrimental to your chances of making The Open Championship team.

Applications should be sent to:

Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator, 34 Howard Close, Walton-on-the-Hill, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20 7QF.



Rachael and Gemma would like to welcome 34 new members to the Association and wish all our members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Membership Update



BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

David Anderson, East
Andrew Barrett, West
Ian Butcher, Central
David Williams, North

NORTHERN REGION

Gareth Evans, North West
Daniel Fairfax, North West
Michael Ridley, Cleveland
Lee Rimington, Northern
Gary Thomas, North West
Iwan Williams, North Wales

MIDLAND REGION

Andrew Brassington, Midland
Nicholas Cooper, Midland
Simon Hart, Midland
Christopher Stilgoe, Midland

SOUTH EAST REGION

Simon Humphrey, Sussex
Darren Jones, Surrey

SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

Darren Burfitt, South Wales
Stephen Chappell, South Wales
Thomas Day, South Coast
Christopher French, South Wales
Spencer Giffard, South Wales
Raymond Meakin, South Coast
Brychan Phillips, South Wales
Tim Steel, South Coast
Scott Taylor, South Coast
Marcus Weaver, South Wales

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Kenneth Andersen, East Scotland
Robert Baker, London
Nigel Coultish, Northern
Nigel Lloyd, North Wales
Mike Finney, Sussex
Graeme Francis, Surrey

STUDENT MEMBERS

Neil Davey, North West
Chris Hodgkinson, North West

Membership Renewals

Everyone with a December renewal should have received their renewal packs, so please call us for a replacement if you haven't. The January packs are due to go out shortly and again if you have not received yours by Christmas then please give us a call.

We have decided to remove the golf club stamp requirement from the renewal forms so this should make it far easier for everyone to renew. The Regional Administrators will instead be doing random checks to ensure that everyone renewing greenkeeper membership is still working as a greenkeeper.

If you have any further queries as to why the stamp was removed then please consult your Section Secretary or Board Representative, who have been kept fully informed. We have also developed an email renewal form so if you have lost your form and would like one emailing then please contact us via phone or email rachael_p@bigga.co.uk or gemma@bigga.co.uk.

Privilege Card

The privilege card benefit is discontinuing at the end of December due to lack of use. Please do not use your cards after this date.



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 a Digital FM Scan Radio/Alarm. The radio can stand alone or can be clipped onto a belt with headphones for when your on the move. Our congratulations go to Nick Miles of Market Harborough Golf Club.

Quick Guide to Parental Leave

WHAT IS PARENTAL LEAVE?

Parental leave is a right for parents to take time off work to look after a child. Parents can use it to spend more time with their children.

WHO CAN TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE?

Parental leave is available to employees who have or expect to have, parental responsibility for a child. Employees need to have one year's continuous service with their current employer.

HOW MUCH PARENTAL LEAVE CAN I TAKE?

Employees get 13 weeks in total for each child. Parents of disabled children receive 18 weeks.

WHEN CAN PARENTAL LEAVE BE TAKEN?

- Parents can take leave up to their child's 5th birthday.
- Adoptive parents can take leave up to the 5th anniversary of the date of placement (or the child's 18th birthday if that is sooner).
- Parents of disabled children born after December 15 1981 can take leave up to their child's 18th birthday.

CAN I RETURN TO THE SAME JOB AFTER PARENTAL LEAVE?

An employee is guaranteed the right to return to the same job as before if the leave was for four weeks or less. If a longer period of leave was taken then the employee is entitled to return to the same job but if that is not reasonably practicable then he is entitled to a similar job, which has the same or better status, terms and conditions.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Employers and employees can agree their own procedures with a workforce or collective agreement or an individual agreement. These agreements will only apply if they are part of the employee's contract of employment. If there is no written agreement then the following provisions apply.

- In most cases leave must be taken in blocks or multiples of one week, except parents of disabled children who can take leave in blocks or multiples of one day.
- A maximum of four weeks leave in a year can be taken for each child.
- 21 days notice must be given.
- The employer can postpone the leave for up to six months where the business would be particularly disrupted.
- Leave cannot be postponed when the employee gives notice to take it immediately after the time the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.

IS PARENTAL LEAVE PAID?

The right to parental leave does not include any statutory pay. However agreements can be made between the employer and employee.

This information should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. For further information go to the department of work and pensions website www.dwp.gov.uk.

Need a Check Up?

One of the best investments a greenkeeper can make is the investment of time - time to review the performance of the golf course's existing irrigation system. By taking time to inspect and evaluate the irrigation equipment, a greenkeeper can learn what works and what doesn't, and what needs repair or adjustment. Necessary repairs or replacement - preventive maintenance - can be carried out and the irrigation system should perform to its full potential.

Preventive maintenance consists of improvements that can be made to any course at any time. The goal is to maximise what you have and minimise (or prevent) what could go wrong. What follows is a review of the equipment and what to look for when inspecting each element.

SPRINKLERS

Sprinklers, which have numerous items to be checked, are extremely important as they must operate at their peak to provide the best performance and results. Look for sprinklers that:

1. Are too low (they have sunk below grade)
2. Are tilted (and should be raised and made flush)
3. Are not popping up all the way
4. Have leaks
5. Have bad or inconsistent rotation (which means the sprinkler should be disassembled, checked for damaged parts or excessive debris, then cleaned or repaired)
6. Have nozzle problems. These can include plugged or worn nozzles, or broken stream straighteners that cause visibly poor nozzle performance and should be examined, cleaned and, if necessary, repaired.

Poor nozzle performance may lead you to find other system issues that require repair, such as low pressure or pump problems. Sprinklers are the items that most commonly require maintenance.

Check the items listed above every three months during the watering season, and at the beginning and end of the season if your climate includes a winter season. Conduct a visual check and watch a sprinkler complete a full rotation.

VALVES

If control valves don't work, then sprinklers cannot apply water. Fortunately valves are simpler than sprinklers. They must open, close and not leak.

To inspect a valve, first remove the lid from the valve box and do a visual inspection for static leaks. Next, operate the valve manually and automatically to check for leaks. Then, check for proper operation and closure in both manual and automatic modes.

Any existing problems are usually visible during these simple observations, and the steps to resolve an issue are: disassembly, cleaning, repair or replacement of any failed components. Check valves at the same intervals as sprinklers.

FIELD CONTROLLERS OR SATELLITES

First perform a visual inspection for external physical damage, water damage inside any compartments or to any exposed components. Next, do a functional test by verifying the operation of each feature and each station or zone of sprinklers.



For these items, you may need to contact a product manufacturer for assistance in resolving issues. These may require you to troubleshoot whether it is a controller, wiring or valve/sprinkler issue, in terms of turning on and off.

Then check the electrical connections. First, look for anything 'not normal', then, with power off, ensure each wire is tightly connected. Any worn or frayed wires or wires with degrading insulation should be replaced or repaired.

GROUNDING EQUIPMENT

Most semi- and fully-automatic systems have specifications regarding the level of grounding required for the system to be safe and to maximise lightning and surge protection. Grounding and its connections to the system will degrade over time.

First verify that the 'earth ground resistance' of your grounding system still meets the manufacturer's specifications and has not degraded since the last check. Correct any problems immediately. Depending on the type of system, there could be several grounding points or just a few.

Once the earth ground resistance has been tested and approved, all connections and wiring back to the controller should be checked. Loose, frayed or corroded elements should be replaced. Grounding equipment should be checked at the same intervals as controller elements.

WIRE AND WIRE SPLICES

Realistically, wire buried underground either works or it doesn't. When it stops working, employ normal troubleshooting techniques to locate and repair problems. Also conduct basic system tests for voltage drop and resistance on A) power, and B) communication cables. With the power on, test available voltage at the farthest point of the system to learn whether the load or resistance is increasing. If it is, a failure condition may be developing, even if it is not yet evident.

With power off, measure the same points for resistance. If annual records are kept, you will identify the start of a trend toward a potential failure. Look for voltage declines or increases in resistance.

PIPE

You should always stock an adequate supply of repair couplings and a few lengths of pipe in each size used on your golf course. One test that you can perform is a pressure leak-down test. Place a gauge on the system (preferably at the highest point) and pressurise the system.

You'll be able to read any drop in pressure hourly. While one data point may not be significant, this information, accumulated year after year, may help you locate and repair a problem before catastrophic failure.

Kenne James explains what to look for when closely inspecting an irrigation system.

LATERAL AND MAINLINE ISOLATION VALVES

These are specialty valves that must open, close and not leak. First, inspect them visually for leaks. Each valve should then be closed completely, checked to ensure that flow has stopped, then opened. It is extremely important that valves undergo this testing at least twice a year because they spend 99.9 per cent of their lives in the 'open' position, and may become prone to not closing properly.

Finally, the correct position for a valve left 'open' is actually about a half-turn from full open. Take the valve to 100 per cent open, then turn back slightly. This will help prevent the valve from getting 'stuck' in the 'open' position.

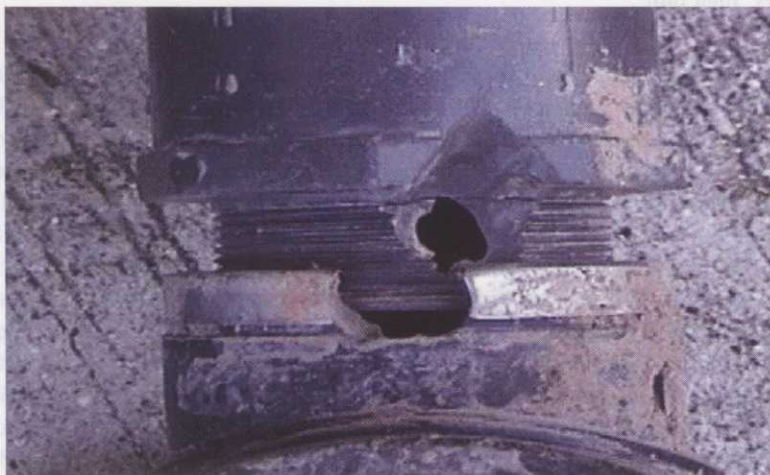


An example of good wire splices made using waterproof splice kits. Now they need to be placed in a valve box for protection and so they can be easily located later for troubleshooting if necessary

PUMP STATIONS

These are probably the single most complicated pieces of equipment on a golf course and among the most expensive. They require attention commensurate with their importance and expense. Here are some basic thoughts regarding pump station maintenance - as provided by ITT-Flowtronex International:

- Pump stations last longer in a building with proper ventilation.
- Heat kills and is a problem in a pump station when the building is not properly ventilated, motors are not positioned to receive cooling air flow and electrical connections are not maintained.
- A pump station's vibration will cause electrical connections to loosen and burn, which can cause catastrophic panel failures, VFD failures and single-phase motor damage.
- Debris entering the pumping system can create premature wear on the pumps. Sand or silt build up in the lake, and will show up in the pump head area. Whatever you pump will be deposited in the pump head reservoir. Keep it clean and when you start moving silt, it will show up.
- Through daily visits to the pump house a greenkeeper becomes familiar with 'normal' sounds and smells. Once any unusual smells or sounds are noted, take action at once.
- Extensive service visits should take six to eight hours on a four-pump station, not including filter replacement. Filters are hard-working elements and must be maintained properly.
- Regular maintenance can extend the life of a pump station by 30 percent.



An example of how a small leak left untreated can turn into a larger problem later. Now the fitting, pipe and valve must all be replaced

BENEFITS OF PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

A good preventive maintenance programme will help you minimise resource costs and repair and replacement expenses. Preventive maintenance also results in improved playing conditions, less ground under repair, more efficient sprinkler performance, fewer wet and dry spots, fewer customer complaints, healthier and more beautiful turfgrass and a more efficient use of your resources - both staff and financial.

Think 'preventive maintenance' rather than 'reactive' maintenance.



A loose wire connection can lead to failure, a safety hazard or expensive fire damage if not repaired. This one caused the failure and destruction of a pump motor, a very serious issue

Kenne James is Senior Marketing Manager - Golf Irrigation, International Business, The Toro Company.



Golf Environment
Competition

Forget the Myths

Andrew Wood summaries this year's hotly contended BIGGA Environment Competition and dispels the myths that discourage clubs from entering.



Creating markets for recycled resources

Congratulations go to Thorpeness Golf Club, near Ipswich, who in 2005 has joined the list of legendary clubs who have won the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Scotts UK, Syngenta Professional Products, Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and Waste-2-Water. For some keen followers of this prestigious award the result could be used to fuel the fire of the most common myth about the competition. This promotes the idea that clubs need to serve a kind of apprenticeship in the competition by entering year on year until it is "their turn".

However though the Thorpeness Club has been in among the regional prize winners for the past six years we can categorically state that the theory that persistence has presidency over performance is nonsense. Anyone who visits the course at Thorpeness and sees just how much work has been carried out in terms of ecological and environmental management over the past year would agree that they are worthy winners.

Greenkeepers at many clubs tell us they don't enter the competition because they feel "they aren't in with a chance of winning". This attitude unfortunately denies many good clubs the chance of winning one of the many prizes on offer. We, as judges, are on the look out for much more than the overall winner, including potential winners of the Best Newcomer Award, five Regional Prizes and a host of clubs that receive 'Highly Commended' status.

Other clubs are chosen specifically on the basis that they may be a strong contender for the 'Best New Initiative' or the 'Best use of a Recycled Product' awards. With these facts in mind the applicants for the 2005 competition were agonisingly whittled down to 27 regional finalists, which Lee Penrose and I felt were well worth a visit.

Another common perception about the BIGGA competition is that if there is a strong club in a region that enters perennially, other clubs within that region may as well not bother. This myth is easily disband; firstly there are a number of additional prizes which are awarded without consideration of which region the club comes from - indeed four clubs from within the South East Region have won prizes in 2005.

Secondly, while some clubs are undoubtedly further advanced in terms of ecological management than others the scoring system is set up so that it favours clubs that have made the greatest progress during the past year. Therefore a club which has a course of a high ecological value but that is not working hard to improve it further will more often than not lose out to one of lower ecological value but which might be working harder to improve matters.

After visiting all the finalists it was decision time. This was a difficult exercise due to the high quality of competition for each award and the sheer number of awards to decide upon - nine in total. This large roll of honour is made possible by the generous support from competition sponsors Scotts UK, Syngenta Professional Products, Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and Waste-2-Water.

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

The competition in the South East region was easily the strongest this year. In the end it was the vast amount of work undertaken out on the course and the dedication of the entire golf club staff that gave Thorpeness Golf Club the title. Course Manager, Ian Willet, and his team have pulled out all the stops this year making large-scale improvements both on and off the course.

Work has included the development and installation of holistic greens clippings composting programme, extensive habitat enhancement - i.e. heather, gorse, grassland management - and a vast improvement in the environmental credentials of the associated clubhouse and hotel. Recording all of the wildlife on the course and the creation of a visitor's wildlife 'scorecard' have assisted in raising the profile of the club locally and now nationwide.

Waste and water management feature as integral parts of all decisions made at the complex with novel initiatives such as the re-useable plastic storage crates instead of traditional disposable ones within the clubhouse kitchen. This makes a small but important contribution to the club's holistic environmental approach.

Rookwood Golf Club came in a close second in this Region, this is a rare species in itself, in that it is owned by the local council and managed by a private company, British Ensign Golf. This club's high ecological credentials are a key part of its marketing strategy, indeed few clubs in the UK promote the greener side of golf in a more positive way.

South Essex Golf Club was a new club to the competition this year and indeed a club that none of the STRI's ecology team had visited before. It was therefore very exciting to add a new name to the growing list of clubs carrying out work which would convince any sceptic that golf courses can, if managed correctly, have a great ecological benefit. The creation of the 'South Essex Environmental Development Strategy' within the golf club gives real focus and definition to holistic environmental management and make the club well deserving of the 'Best New Entrant' award.



L-R, Vic Barnard, Stephen Blake and Stuart McDowell, happy with the progress of Rockwood Golf Club's composting programme



Proof of a successful environmental project as a young Badger is spotted foraging for food

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Great crested newt breeding pond at Caldy Golf Club

NORTHERN ENGLAND

Another new entrant to the competition won the Northern Region title. Caldy Golf Club's entry, compiled by Carl Crocher, Course Manager, impressed the judges from day one. The environmental course policy document gives real cognisance to the sound ecological management of this important coastal site, recognising the value of the course for important wildlife species, such as great crested newt.

The development of a new rough grassland creation and management strategy combined with the re-introduction of the rare but important western gorse were also projects which set this club aside from the rest of the pack.

MIDLANDS

The progress at the Notts Golf Club (Hollinwell) continues at pace through a strong team effort between Phil Stain, Course Manager, and the Club's Green's Committee, Chaired by Ian McLachlan. Tree thinning remains the biggest ecological management task for the club. This work is



Creation of one of five giant hibernacula (hibernation chambers) in land cleared of trees at Notts Golf Club. These are constructed by burying sections of cut trees and brushings with one end being left open at the south side of the mound

to some extent aided by the flock of Hebridean sheep that remain on parts of the course to prevent the invasion of birch saplings in areas of heath previously cleared of trees.

Heather restoration continues although a Koro field top-maker has been found to produce much better results than the scarifier used previously. Off the course improvements have been made in terms of composting, recycling of waste and energy saving in the clubhouse.



The state of the art irrigation system installed at Bath Golf Club will reduce water usage dramatically

SOUTH WEST ENGLAND AND WALES

At Bath Golf Club the Course Manager, Andy Boyce, and his team have got an excellent long term management plan in place to further enhance this already outstanding course. The grassland rough in some parts of the course has been improved to such an extent that the National Trust are now bailing the vegetation following cutting.

The bales are then spread on other local National Trust sites with the aim of increasing the diversity of wild flowers species to the same high standard of the golf club.

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