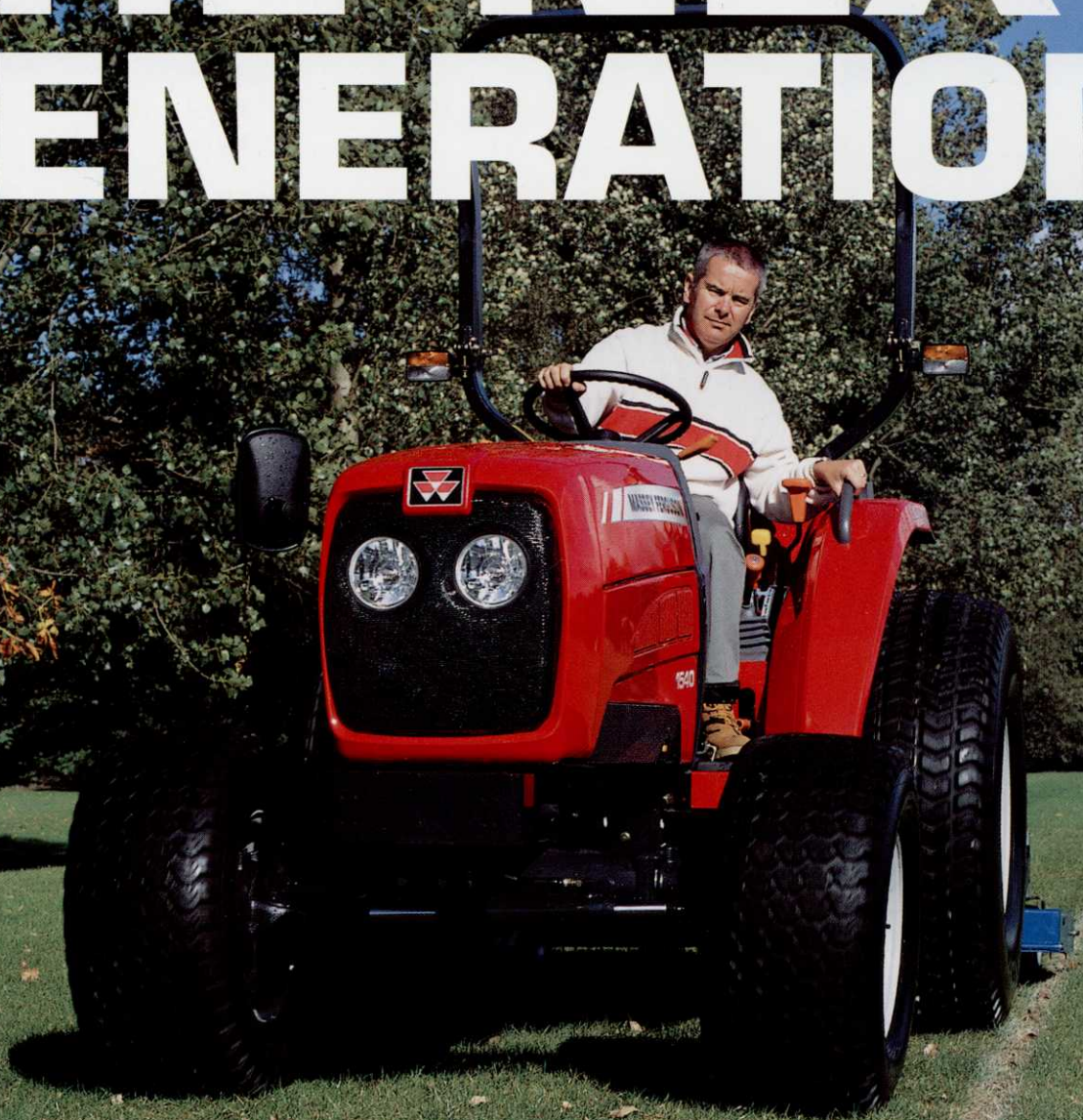


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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

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As a new generation graduates into the world of golf, it's not all plus fours, bright green grassed courses and strict clubhouse etiquette they crave, as Gareth Jones found out.



Welcome

10 LONG YEARS

Having been dragged out to York on a shopping expedition last weekend I caught sight of a bloke reflected in a shop window. He looked alright I suppose, not quite as athletic as he'd no doubt wish to be, a little grey haired and generally a little worn round the edges. All in all a fairly bog standard middle aged guy. I looked again and it was me.

It is genuinely depressing but it's reassuring to know that it happens to us all - the growing gap between the age we feel and the age we look but it still brings it home to you. Do you ever look at pictures of people in newspapers, whose age is listed as the same as your own, and think they look positively ancient?

But time does march on. I was shocked when thumbing through my diary recently to work out that as of April 24 I'd been with BIGGA for 10 years. It seems to have gone in a flash but thinking back a lot has happened in that decade.

For a start John Major was the Prime Minister when I started; back in '95 when someone mentioned Big Brother people thought of George Orwell and not Jade Goody; Chelsea were one of English football's also-rans while a young amateur by the name of Tiger Woods paid his first visit to the UK in the Walker Cup at Royal Porthcawl.

The shape of the industry has also changed markedly since April '95. Companies which once stood toe to toe in competition are now merged and sharing a hymn sheet. Some, sadly, are no longer with us while there are others which have come and gone within those 10 years. The latter represent a demonstration of the widely held view that the golf business draws people to it in the belief that the fairways are paved with gold only for the nagging realisation to kick in that it is a relatively small industry with an unfeasibly large number of people attempting to feed off a cake too small for the purpose.

Through all of this the Association has grown in stature on all fronts during the period when I have aged so depressingly. Education has developed through the work of our own Education Department and the superb relationship we have with the GTC to take account of the demands of a modern fast moving profession while membership benefits and services have also adapted to cater for the particular demands of people working in a singularly quirky industry.

I can also remember my first Harrogate week in '96 and marvelling at the sheer scale of it all. However, in today's terms the '96 version would be considered small and the numbers which delighted exhibitors then would be regarded as no more than "steady" now.

No, I may no longer be the young thrusting 30 something who joined the Association those 10 years ago but at least a lot has been achieved in that time.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

PROMOTING EDUCATION ABROAD



Left to Right: Ivie Davies, Radio Presenter and Golf Writer, Rafael Gonzalez-Carrascosa and Mark Ellis

Greenkeeper Mark Ellis has been busy in Spain appearing on radio broadcasts on Spectrum Radio promoting the importance of greenkeeper education. Mark has been joined in his crusade by Rafael Gonzalez-Carrascosa, the Course Manager at Alicante Golf Club.

The topic of the programme mainly focused on the differences in greenkeeping between Spain and

Britain. In Spain the majority of greenkeepers come from an agricultural background and due to the changes in farming in the country many farm workers are now moving into the amenity sector. Despite the vast number of golf courses in Spain it lacks any greenkeeper training courses according to Mark.

"I shall be seeing Rafael in a few days, he wants me to help him with regard to greenkeeper training. It would appear that many assistant greenkeepers in Spain are illiterate. I explained that if he made learning more enjoyable for them, they would soon start to enjoy what they are doing on the golf course," said Mark, who also took the opportunity to explain about the work that the GTC and FEGGA do.

Rafael and Mark will be doing more radio work in the coming months in the hope of further promoting greenkeeper training and they will also be covering topics such as Health and Safety, the use of chemicals and ecology on the golf course.

COLIN WHITE 1955 - 2005

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that Colin White, 50, passed away after a short illness on Saturday March 26 2005. Colin was a much-loved member of our industry, known to most as 'Chalky'. He could always see good in everything he saw and brightened up the day for all his customers. He will be truly missed by all his family, work colleagues and customers alike.

He started his career as Groundsman at Southampton FC's Old Dell Stadium before taking over at Tottenham Hotspur FC in 1976. During his nine years White Hart Lane staged many great games, including the UEFA Cup Final in 1984. As always Colin created an excellent surface, the then Manager, Keith Burkinshaw, often described the pitch as: "The best in the country."

Colin left Tottenham Hotspur in 1985 taking on a sales role with Rigby Taylor and in 1995 he joined Avoncrop Amenity Products as Technical Sales Manager for Essex, later moving areas to cover Hampshire, Berkshire, parts of Dorset and Buckinghamshire, continuing to make many new friends in the course of his work. Colin will also be



Chalky, far left, with members of the South Coast Section remembered as an ardent Saints supporter, as a life long season ticket holder, he missed very few home games.

We extend our condolences to his family and friends at this sad time. The funeral took place on Wednesday April 6, at Basingstoke Crematorium, followed by a Celebration of Chalky's life at St John's Church, New Alresford, and later at Alresford Golf Club.

Donations in his memory to McMillan Cancer Relief can be sent c/o: R.S. & Partners, 12-14 City Road, Winchester, SO23 8SG.



RADIO GA GA

BIGGA's Assistant Accountant, Steve Coates, was Radio Ga Ga after winning a new car on a local radio station. The final stages involved a number of knock out activities, including pin the key on the car, head to head questions and guess the mileage.

After beating all that stood in his way, Steve was left with a choice of keys, which represented different cars, and the accountant chose the car key to a sparkling new Peugeot 206.

NEIL THOMAS MEMORIAL GOLF DAY

Monday June 27 will host the second Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day at Aldwark Manor Golf Course, York.

As always, the Tournament is open to all, both Greenkeepers and Trade, providing teams of four. The format for the 2005 competition has changed from previous years and will be a four ball best two to count on each hole.

The entry fee is £200 + VAT for each team of four, which includes Bacon rolls on arrival, a ploughman's lunch, BBQ meal in the evening and both team and individual prizes. Tee times will be available from 10am to 1.30pm. All profits raised from the day will be donated to a worthwhile and deserving charity.

The BIGGA competition has been running in various guises since 1997 and was renamed the Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day for the 2004 event after the passing of BIGGA's Executive Director, Neil Thomas. The inaugural Memorial Day raised £1,800, which was donated to St Michael's Hospice, where Neil spent his final weeks. The 2004 Tournament was won by the Surrey Section, who will be keen to defend their trophy from all challengers.

For more information and to enter the Neil Thomas Memorial Day contact Sarah Norris at BIGGA HOUSE on 01347 833800 or sarah@bigga.co.uk.

GRASS GETS A PAINT JOB



April fool's day brings out the devious and cunning side in people and the Daily Record Newspaper couldn't resist the chance of tricking Scotland's golfing public, on April 1, with this story:

One of Scotland's most exclusive golf clubs has come up with a new way to help golfers find the green - by painting them blue.

The five-star St Andrews Bay resort decided to paint all 36 greens on their two award-winning courses blue on the advice of university experts. Because the human eye can pick out blue more easily than green, golfers are now able to tell exactly how they should play their shots. And it is already improving scores by as much as eight strokes a round.

Iain McInally, Director of Golf at St Andrews Bay, said: "A couple of our visitors said they found it difficult to focus on the green while driving from the fairway because they couldn't tell exactly how far away the green was.

"Then one fellow, who happened to be some kind of optical physicist, came over and had a dreadful day out on the course. He explained that if we painted the greens blue then people would be able to make them out much more easily. Of course it sounded ridiculous but he showed us the theory on a driving range and it really does work."

He added: "Players reckon they can home in much better on the green and their shots seem to be falling much better and closer to the target area."

"We are using a special paint, supplied by an American company, that doesn't damage the grass. I wouldn't be surprised if you see

major tournaments using blue greens in the next few years."

Bosses at St Andrews Bay are confident the concept will really take off when it is officially unveiled at this month's London Golf Show in Docklands. The exhibition's Managing Director, Ross Broadstock, said: "It's great that the home of golf has seized on this initiative."

The paint for blue greens is the brainchild of Bluegrass Ltd, a Kentucky-based company in the US. The firm are negotiating with the US PGA to provide 'blues' for tour events.

Spokesman Lol Fapiro said: "We are really excited that our novel 'blues' are going to be used in Europe, especially St Andrews, which is revered by golf fans and the world over. It's a brilliant idea and offers golfers something fun and unique. Everyone who tried it agreed that it doesn't give your scorecard the blues."

We wonder what Neil Ballingall thinks about it all.

GOOD SIGNS

Wentworth Club has awarded the contract for replacing its Tee markers to Golf Tee Signs. After considering all of the options available, the club awarded the company the contract to replace all of the current markers.

"We had been looking at the prospect of finding a Tee marker which reflected the quality of the course," explained Course Manager Chris Kennedy, who had seen the company at the BTME Exhibition. "The markers are made of granite with a polished face. After close consultation with Golf Tee Signs we chose a design that would lie flush to the ground for easy maintenance. The tees were set in concrete and then surrounded with attractive gravel. This means we can mow over them with ease and they will continue to look as good as new indefinitely."

Golf Tee Signs have installed all the Tee signs to The Wentworth Club on the West and Edinburgh courses, with the third, the East course due for completion later this year.

NEW WELSH DEALER



Mona Tractors Groundcare Manager, Gwynfor Griffiths, seated, with Dealer Principal John Jones, left, and John Deere's C&E Division Manager David Hart

John Deere has appointed Mona Tractor Company Ltd as its new full line commercial and consumer equipment dealer in North Wales. The new groundcare division is based at Mona Tractors' existing premises in Llangefni, Anglesey.

Incorporated in 1981, Mona Tractors has been a John Deere dealer since 2000 and has sold domestic lawn and garden equipment for the last four years in the same area being covered by its new groundcare division; this includes Anglesey, Gwynedd and Conwy.

Newly appointed Groundcare Manager, Gwynfor Griffiths, heads the new division, and is responsible for sales and demonstrations. Two new specialist service engineers have also been taken on and the dealer workshop will be fully kitted out with specialist grinding and other equipment dedicated to the groundcare business.

Meanwhile, a new building has been ordered to provide extra showroom and storage space for the groundcare division in tandem with the existing premises.



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Growing success

ROLAWN CONTINUE EXPANSION



Anthony Lafferty has joined Rolawn to manage their new turf and topsoil distribution depot at Whitegates Farm, Glazebury, near Warrington.

Anthony, 30, is well known to the local landscape community having spent six years with another turf grower. Anthony is single, lives in Widnes, has three

children and is a keen Everton supporter and golfer.

"Having been previously employed within the turf industry Anthony has an established reputation amongst the local landscape community and has extensive first hand knowledge of the trade. The opening of the Warrington depot represents a significant commitment by Rolawn to its chosen market and will take the number of depots operated by the company nationally to 15 with more locations being evaluated," said Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Snow, beautiful snow greeted us on Monday March 1, the date of this year's Scottish National Conference. At 7am Dunfermline was under snow with a blizzard in progress and things looking rather bleak. On making my way to the Conference Centre I was getting rather anxious with almost 150 delegates due to attend, meals booked and speakers in place. I was apprehensive to say the least.

The Conference was due to start at 9.45am, and we took the decision to start at 10am, come what may. By 10am we had 116 in attendance a tremendous number considering all that was happening round us, and so we decided to go ahead.

Scottish Region Chairman, Iain Barr, opened the morning session by introducing Neil Baldwin, AmegA Sciences, who spoke on 'Winter Maintenance - Control of Fusarium Patch and Black Layer in Fine Turf'. Following Neil, we had Jay Dobson, from PSD Agronomy. Jay's talk was entitled 'Nutrition - Food for Thought'. After the break we had Frank Ainsworth, Course Manager, Hilton Templepatrick Hotel & GC, whose talk was 'Fescue Greens, The Good, The Bad and The Ugly'. To round off the morning session, we had Louise Hollingworth, from WRAP, with her talk on 'Putting the Green Reusing Recycled Products for the Golf Sector'.

After lunch the Chairman had the very pleasant task of presenting the Harry Diamond Quaich to the Student of the Year. This year's winner was Chris Kerr, of Cowglen Golf Club, Glasgow. In accepting the award Chris made a very gracious speech, thanking the Association and his golf club.

In the first session of the afternoon we had Simon Barnaby, of Scotts (UK). He had kindly stepped in for Kenny MacKay who had to call off because of business commitments. Simon's talk was entitled 'The Changing Face of Turf Management'.

Following Simon, we had Bob Scott, of British Seed Houses, on 'Bent Grasses Conversion on UK Greens'. Finally, Douglas Shearer, Head of Golf and Agriculture at Elmwood College, spoke on 'Health & Safety, What Now?'

Special thanks must go to the delegates and speakers who battled through the snow to attend the Conference. Your efforts are appreciated and certainly proved worthwhile in making the Conference such a success. Our thanks to the Chief Executive, John Pemberton, for taking the time out of his busy schedule to be with us and to the Patrons and Education and Development Fund for their assistance in promoting and supporting the Region to provide another successful Conference.

Next year's Conference will be at the same venue on Tuesday March 1 2006.

Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator

POYNTER MEANS BUSINESS AT EAGLE



Dean Poynter has become Eagle's new Business Development Manager for the North of England. With a background in the golf business and a handicap of 8.5, Dean's set to become a real asset to the UK

signage and marketing collateral company.

Dean started his career in golf with Maxfli Golf, leaving to help develop a business supplying granite-based signage systems to some of Europe's best-known golf clubs and destinations, including The Beltry, Wentworth and Carnoustie.

"Dean is a familiar face in the golf club scene and brings an in depth understanding of clubs, the way they tend to work, and how signage can improve their branding and presentation. His expertise in granite products will enable us to complement our existing range of signage, and extend the options we can offer to clubs seeking a top quality product," said Phil McNley, Eagle's MD.

Dean is looking forward to working at Eagle: "I'm very excited about joining Eagle and developing my expertise and my potential. Eagle not only has a very good range of signage for all sorts of courses and budgets, but it also provides many other products that clubs need to project their brand - cards, guides, bag tags, and so on."

NEW MAN AT VITAX



Vitax have appointed Paul Taylor as their new Representative in the North of England.

Paul, a Yorkshire man living in Halifax, brings a wealth of experience to the role having worked in the industry since leaving school. Starting as a trainee Groundsman, he served 17 years in greenkeeping, rising to become Head Greenkeeper before switching to a representative role at Rigby Taylor in 1989.

"Vitax is an established company with a good standing in the trade. The job provides a great way of meeting our customers and distributors and getting everybody involved," commented Paul.

Clive Williams, Commercial Sales Manager for Vitax, who has known Paul for many years, praised his experience and expertise. "Paul is BASIS qualified with a thorough knowledge of the industry," he said.

TURFCARE TAKES TORO TROPHY



Pat Galavan, left, receives his award from Peter Mansfield of Lely

The award of Toro Irrigation Contractor of the Year has been won by TurfCare Irrigation, which is based in County Kildare, Ireland. The presentation was made at the recent GCSAI annual conference at the Radisson SAS Hotel, Limerick.

Simon Squires, Irrigation Manager at Toro Irrigation's distributor, Lely, commented: "The award was given to TurfCare in recognition of their outstanding sales performance in 2004. They worked on a prestigious list of golf installations in Ireland throughout the year, including the six golf clubs Castleknock, Enniscorthy, Limerick, Wexford, City of Deny and Grange Castle.

Pat Galavan, Managing Director of TurfCare Irrigation, said: "We are delighted to be Toro Irrigation Contractor of the Year. I'd like to say a big thank you to Lely, for giving us this award, to everyone at TurfCare for all the hard work they have put in, and also to our customers for their continuing support."

SPRING CLEAN FOR GREENS

Tony Baxby, Head Greenkeeper at Harrogate Golf Club, Jay Dobson, Agronomist from PSD Agronomy Ltd, and David Snowden, from Floratine, have waged a three year war to restore the efficiency of Harrogate Golf Club's heavy greens built on a clay sub base.

"Essentially we had to improve the way the greens performed. There was a lot of thatch, they weren't stable chemically and the grass condition was a lot more variable than it should be," said Jay Dobson.

David Snowden, who has worked with Dobson on a number of courses following the agronomist's utilisation of Analync, produced a soil amendment and nutritional programme based on analysis of soil samples.

"We used CalpHex, a multi chelated calcium, and Pervade, a soil penetrant, to flush out the unwanted elements and fed during the summer months with mainly potassium nitrates and some forms of urea using soil liquids every month to six weeks and foliar feed in small quantities every two to three weeks. We also used Protesyn, which provides essential amino acids," explained David.

Working as a team around Tony's tournament timetable it appears that the three men's efforts have been rewarded. The latest soil analysis taken in January shows a 'cleaned' rootzone devoid of excess elements.

COMPOSTING IS CATCHING ON



Following the launch of their new Compost Makers at BTME, Course Care held a demonstration day at Woodsome Hall Golf Club recently. The five cubic metre Compost Maker was in action chopping, shredding, mashing and mixing its way through hollow tines cores, leaves, clippings, twigs, small branches and cardboard.

The demonstration was witnessed by interested Course Managers from the area and four representatives from the STRI. Woodsome Hall's Course Manager, Jeremy Eastwood, and his Greens Chairman, Roger Wood, witnessed the event. "We have long term plans for onsite composting and believe this is the way forward. The compost maker was hitched to our Kubota L4630 and the machine exceeded our expectations. We were very, very impressed with the compostable material produced and in such a short space of time," said Jeremy.

BUNKERS OPEN FOR BUSINESS



Colin Mitchell starting work on the new Road Hole bunker

They have thwarted the world's top golfers from Nicklaus to Nakajima, and now the Old Course bunkers are once again ready for action. With less than three months until the Open Championship returns to the Home of Golf for the 27th time, St Andrews Links Trust greenkeepers are priming the Old Course bunkers for the new season.

The work means notorious traps, such as the Road Hole Bunker, Shell and Cartgate, are being returned to a state of play following a major

rebuilding programme. In total, 94 of the 112 bunkers have been reverted to counter the effects of erosion and to prepare the course for the 134th Open Championship.

"When the bunkers come back into play, we can concentrate more on turf and course presentation. In the lead up to the Open Championship, we will want the course to be drier and faster, and additional growth will mean the greens will get smoother," commented Euan Grant, Head Greenkeeper of the Old Course.

The Old Course's bunkers often play a starring role in the Open Championship. David Duval, for instance, fell foul of the Road Hole Bunker in 2000 dropping valuable strokes and any chance of the Claret Jug as he pursued Tiger Woods. The sad sight of Tommy Nakajima attempting to escape from the same trap during the 1978 Open will also live on in many people's memories. While Nicklaus famously took four shots to escape Hell Bunker in 1995.

With the stage set for more drama in July, the Trust's greenkeepers are ensuring the bunkers are suitably prepared through sand shaping and the application of additional top dressing to ensure the new turf knits-in properly.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL VOICE

A new initiative to help the European golf sector in the field of environment and sustainable development is to be launched by the Committed to Green Foundation.

The Foundation's new flagship project will be to create and facilitate the European Forum for Sustainable Golf. This initiative will enable a community of stakeholders to participate in discussion and information exchange on environmental and sustainable development issues facing golf across Europe. It is hoped that this mechanism will enhance the dissemination of environmental best practice information to golf facilities, and also enable collective promotion of

local, regional and national environmental initiatives. The Forum will be formally launched by the European Commission in Brussels at the end of June 2005.

Jonathan Smith, the Foundation's newly appointed Chief Executive said: "I am delighted to have this opportunity to take forward the work of the Committed to Green Foundation. It is clear that golf faces many environmental challenges, golf has to adopt, and be seen to adopt, best environmental practices. If it can do so in a cohesive and credible way there is tremendous potential for golf to achieve recognition for its stewardship of the environment."

AGRONOMISTS UNITE

For the first time in the fine turf industry's history, agronomists from around the world came together for a three day conference in April, to discuss a range of issues relating to golf course management and construction. 62 participants took part in an intensive programme, held at the Craighlands Hotel, in Ilkley, which included visits to the trials ground at STRI and Alwoodley Golf Club.

The conference, organised by STRI, following discussions between Dr Gordon McKillop, STRI's Chief Executive, and Jim Snow, National Director for the USGA, was initially arranged as a joint meeting between STRI and USGA staff. As planning progressed, other interested parties from New Zealand, Canada, Italy, Sweden, Scotland, including Steve Isaac and Nick Pan - representing the R&A, were invited. A total of 22 sessions were covered over the three days.



SOUTH EAST GENTLEMAN'S DINNER



Over 100 greenkeepers and their guests teed off at the New Course at Walton Heath, on Friday March 11, for the South East Region's Annual Golf Day and Gentlemen's Dinner.

The greenkeeping team at Walton Heath, led by Ian McMillan, produced a superbly prepared golf course in excellent condition, considering that the whole place was under snow just four days before the event. On the day the New Course was a tough test of golf, even from the forward tees. For myself it was great to get out on the course with Ian's dad, Jack, to look around my old haunts and see some of the good work that the boys have carried out over the past year.

Dennis Smith, with the help of Joe Crawley, helped to get everyone off from the 1st tee. For those who managed to negotiate the heather and deep bunkers, some notable feats included the 300yrd plus drive of Rob George at the 18th, Shaun Sturrock nearly getting a hole in one at the 2nd, and Anthony Freeman and Alistair Cook totally outclassing the rest of the field in winning the greenkeeping and club official event.

All who played greatly appreciated the ample refreshments provided at the 10th tee specially cooked to order by Master Chefs, Neil Pullen and Johnny Beck, of Sherriff Amenity Services, ably assisted by Assistant Chef, James Watson. As it was

Red Nose Day, this year we charged a small entry fee for the Sisis Putting Competition, which raised £100 for Comic Relief.

It was good to see as our guests for the day Jack McMillan, a founder member of the BIGGA Surrey Section and Past National Chairman, and Derek Farrington, still enjoying his wine, who put so much work into the Region as our Administrator for many years.

The Captain of Walton Heath Golf Club, Michael Lunt, kindly presented prizes to the day's many winners, which included: Sisis Putting Competition: R. Dunmow; Scotts Longest Drive: R. George; Nearest the Pin: S Sturrock; 18 - 24 Handicap: 1. S. Hawkins, 2. K. Morris; 10 - 17: 1. T. Holland, 2. D. Fernie; 0 - 9: 1. D. Kelso, 2. D. Child; Shullockie Putter Scratch Prize: 1. R. Day, 2. I. Semple; Guests: R. Stubbings; Trade: M. Ring; Greenkeeper/Club Official: 1. A. Freeman and A. Cook, 2. S. Hawkins and G. Hog.

George Barr thanked the members and staff of Walton Heath Golf Club for making us so welcome, as always, and contributing to a memorable day. The Region is most appreciative of the generous sponsorship given to this event by the following companies; many of these also contribute to the numerous local Section events throughout the year:

Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd, Barreffield Golf Ltd, BSP Landscapes Ltd, CMW Equipment Co. Ltd, Complete Weed Control, Construction Materials Ltd, Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd, ESD Waste2Water Europe Ltd, GEM Professional, Grass Roots Trading Co. Ltd, Headland Amenity Products, John Shaw (Machinery) Ltd, Rigby Taylor Ltd, Saxon Industries, The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd, Sherriff Amenity Services, Sisis Equipment Ltd, Symbio, Tacit Golf Equipment Ltd, Vitax Ltd.

Clive Osgood
Regional Administrator

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

Four new all weather coaching and practice areas have been installed by Huxley Golf at the National Golf Centre, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire. Covering more than 200 sq yards, the four dedicated outdoor practice facilities replace and extend the all-weather surfaces first installed by Huxley Golf at Woodhall Spa some six years ago.

Used by golfers of all ages and abilities, the Huxley premier all-weather surfaces selected by the EGU for the National Golf Centre comprise a nylon turf teaching area, two nylon turf practice tees and a nylon putting green.

"The response to the new Huxley all weather installations has been fantastic. I like them particularly for their low maintenance requirements. This means that all four surfaces can be looked after easily by the driving range staff, leaving the specialist greenkeeping team free to concentrate on the fine turf areas of the course," said Peter Wisbey, Courses Manager at Woodhall Spa.

ROYAL WEDDING

Fred Hartles, Deputy Course Manager at Minchinhampton GC, was an honoured guest at Charles and Camilla's Royal Wedding. Originally from New Zealand, Fred held the position of stockman on the Duchy of Cornwall Farm between 1989 - 1999 before becoming a greenkeeper in 2001.



RANSOMES WIN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD



Stephen Chicken (left) and Simon Barnes, representing Honda, with their Industry Market Leadership awards

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd has won a prestigious industry award from EAST, Environment and Sustainable Transport, sponsored by Lloyds TSB Autolease. Managing Director, Dr Stephen Chicken, received the Industry Market Leadership award at the gala dinner held at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden.

The Industry Market Leadership award was won jointly with Honda and Ransomes Jacobsen was also runner up in two further categories: the Industry Innovative Design category for their LPG powered Parkway municipal triple mower and the Distribution and Service Fleet Operator category with their Cushman Diabline electric vehicle.

"This is a tremendous and remarkable accolade for the company and clearly demonstrates our commitment to Driving Environmental Performance, the business initiative that we have adopted over the past three years. The award emphasises that we are serious about our environmental product offering and to have won it jointly with a motoring industry giant like Honda is a fantastic achievement," said Stephen.

TORR OF CAMPEY



Campey Turf Care Systems has appointed Daniel Torr as Sales Representative.

Daniel, 27, who holds an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Salford, has for the past five years worked in the

west of Ireland for McHale Engineering. He was involved closely in quality control and PDI checking.

Daniel is delighted to be returning to the area working for Macclesfield-based Campey. He is no stranger to the company having worked for the turf equipment specialists in the past during his summer vacations from University. He is also an enthusiast of computer systems and Internet technology and is looking forward to putting these skills to work within the Campey sales and support operations.

"We all welcome Daniel onboard. His talents will be a real asset to the business," said Managing Director Richard Campey.



David Golding, GTC Education Director, reassures that the GTC has the sector well represented to ensure employers and student greenkeepers have a range of appropriate courses and qualifications to choose from.

There has been much discussion in the national press regarding skill shortages in occupational areas such as plumbing and joinery. Thankfully for once when education and training is on the political agenda Golf Course Management has not figured in the debate.

For many years now the greenkeeping sector, through the GTC, has worked within the Government of the day's policy for education and training. In previous articles I have tried to show how the GTC works with the approved Government body, the Lantra Sector Skills Council (SSC), to ensure the content of the qualifications suit the requirements of both the golf club employers and greenkeepers. However, politicians have been critical of 'Mickey Mouse Degrees' such as Golf Course Management. How dare they?

I cannot think why this qualification always seems to be selected by people, who should do their research before choosing a highly rated qualification endorsed by the industry. I have read and heard college lecturers, agronomists and students having to jump to the defence of this award when it has clearly been accredited through the correct Governmental procedures. The meetings I have attended at Lantra, on behalf of the sector, to review the academic awards always include: "Is there a need for this type of award within the sector." To date the general opinion from our advisory network is yes.

We do however have to show how such qualifications such as the Higher National Certificate or the more recently accredited Foundation Degree fits into the wider occupational standards of turf management. There was much criticism of the number of Higher National Diplomas on offer by the colleges in England and the way they were developed and accredited by the establishments, often with very little consultation with the industry. The GTC agreed with the concern raised by the Awarding Body and now, through Lantra, we are finally starting to control the number of colleges and universities accredited to offer these awards and also through Lantra just what is being included in the proposed qualification.

The old HND in England has now been superseded by the Foundation Degree and with an excellent balance between theory and practical is proving a very popular qualification for the sector. The GTC has to concede to Lantra and the Providers that as a specialist sector we cannot guarantee large numbers of students but with the advent of online learning the FD is accessible via the part-time route as well as full-time. The MSc in Sports Turf Surfaces offered by Cranfield University is again proving increasingly popular and, albeit only a limited number register each year, the GTC believes these Higher education qualifications

attract many young people into the profession when choosing their career options.

So, the message is clear to the politicians, leave the sector to tell you what qualifications we want through the framework of development, review and accreditation you, the Government, have established.

Back to the skills or lack of skills debate for a moment. The greenkeeper, as viewed by many golfers and outsiders at best, are skilled workers who cut the grass. Sorry guys and gals but that perception is still a problem and it is organisations such as the representatives on the GTC, including BIGGA, who must all work hard to dispel this myth. How are we going to do this as quickly as possible?

The GTC believes that greenkeepers themselves can continue to take up every opportunity to gain training on subjects such as image, including presentation skills, which has proved a very successful route for many Head Greenkeepers who, following training, truly operate as Golf Course Managers. It is when these new found skills are put into practice that the employer and the golfers really start to acknowledge the skills of their staff. I know this is a subject all of its own but following a recent training session and feedback from the learners and the tutors we at the GTC know that this is the best route to raise the profile of the greenkeeper.

One common issue soon came out of the first training session and that was how under confident all the group were when it came to communication with their employers, but this was addressed through the trainers and by the end of the course the learners had changed their views on their role and in turn their profile at their clubs has risen dramatically. If

you don't believe me, the learners have indicated they will tell anyone just how their lives have changed following the GTC-ESF funded training courses - names and telephone numbers are available.

Hopefully, more courses will be available in the autumn and I know that BIGGA are arranging similar events, so watch this space. One of the great changes over the last decade has been the dress code of greenkeepers at events such as BTME and this must be maintained if we are to raise the image of this

great profession. First impressions at interviews are oh so important and while most of the greenkeepers skills are linked to maintaining the golf course increasingly the off course skills, say in the committee room, are also vital.

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