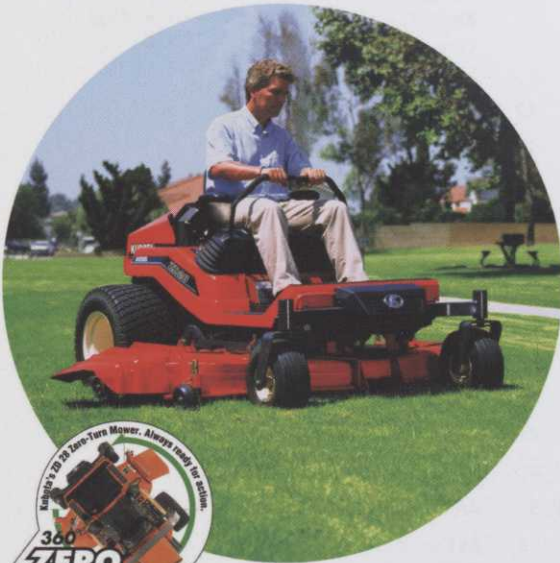


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President
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BIGGA Board of Management
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Board Members
George Barr
Jeff Mills
Gavin Robson
Iain Macleod
Bert Cross
Walter Woods BEM
Mark Dobell

Chief Executive: John Pemberton
Email: john@bigga.co.uk

Deputy Chief Executive
Education & Training Manager: Ken Richardson
Email: ken@bigga.co.uk

Communications Manager/Editor: Scott MacCallum
Email: scott@bigga.co.uk

Sales Manager: Rosie Hancher
Email: rosie@bigga.co.uk

Membership Services Officer: Rachael Palmer
Email: rachael_p@bigga.co.uk

Contact us

You can contact The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association in any number of ways:

Post: BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark,
Alne, York, YO61 1UF

Email: reception@bigga.co.uk

Website: www.bigga.org.uk

Tel: 01347 833800

Fax: 01347 833801



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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

Editorial

Communications Manager/Editor: Scott MacCallum
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833801
Email: scott@bigga.co.uk

Assistant Editor: Gareth Jones
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833801
Email: gareth@bigga.co.uk

Design

Design and Production Editor: Marie Whyld
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833802
ISDN: 01347 830020
Email: marie@bigga.co.uk

Advertising

Sales Manager: Rosie Hancher
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833802
Email: rosie@bigga.co.uk

Advertising Sales Executive: Kirstin Smith
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833802
Email: Kristin@bigga.co.uk / sales@bigga.co.uk

Sales Assistant: Karen Russell
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833802
Email: karen@bigga.co.uk / sales@bigga.co.uk

Printing

Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings,
Manor Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
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Welcome

RESPECT

I have uncovered some new found respect for greenkeepers.

Sure, I've marvelled at the condition of your golf courses; your ability to make a lot out of budgets which, like belts after a large meal, are just a little bit tight, and problem solving skills which would make you prime contestants for that cult Channel Four show "The Crystal Maze" but last month the pedestal beneath your feet seemed that bit taller.

We moved house about a year ago and there was one area of the garden which wasn't quite right. The previous owner had used it for her garden furniture and had put down polythene and gravel, but with no furniture there and the black polythene sticking through the gravel it looked a tad unsightly.

No problem thought your intrepid landscaper I'll just return it using the knowledge I've gleaned over the last 10 years.

I set out with great gusto, clearing and bagging the gravel and pulling up the polythene before spending time preparing the ground, adding top soil in a bid to level it up with the rest of the lawn. It took hours and I certainly won't lie to you and tell you I was fresh as a daisy afterwards. I sweated like a pig in a sauna and muscles, previously used to the cushy life of getting a journalist from A to B, thought they'd been transplanted onto Ricky Hatton.

Then for the maths. I had to work out how much turf I needed. Not an easy task when the area was not a conventional square or rectangle. Now it's ages since I did geometry at school but, for the life of me, I couldn't recall measuring semi circles. From what I remember it was all straight line stuff you could do with a 12 inch ruler. But erring on the side of too much being better than too little I got there.

At this stage a little panic set in. How was I going to cut the turf round corners? How was I going to make it look neat? I have to admit the job stalled a little and having done the initial hard work it was two months before I plucked up the courage to see it through.

This I did in one weekend with a final, desperate all out blitz. Two journeys with a turfed filled boot, a pair of topiary shears and I was in the middle of a green and hairy jigsaw - snipping here filling a hole there. I know you pros use lasers but outside of a lot of trial and error how do you get it completely level? Exhausted, I left the finishing touches to my better half with her well honed attention to detail and between us it was looking quite good.

But then it was out with the watering cans morning and night to keep it from dying off.

The stress and responsibility is not something I was used to yet it's a nothing job you guys knock off in a couple of hours before moving on to more important matters.

Respect!

Scott MacCallum, Editor

GREGORY MOVES TO MASSEY



Colin Gregory has been appointed as Massey Ferguson's UK and Ireland Sales Manager for Grounds Care and Utility Vehicles. In this new role he will be responsible for MF's expanding range of

equipment aimed specifically at this sector.

Colin, a well-known figure in the industry, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. After starting work as an engineering apprentice at Ransomes he transferred to sales for the company before moving to Lely, ending up as Sales Manager for Lely Iseki. Colin was then appointed Managing Director of Hardi (UK) and

more recently has worked for Port Agric for the past few years.

"I am very pleased to be now working for Massey Ferguson, which is a large and progressive company. I am really looking forward to the interesting challenge of helping to expand the grounds care business. Grounds care is becoming an increasingly important sector of the market and I will be working closely with Massey Ferguson dealers to ensure our machinery gets the attention and sales it deserves," said Colin.

David Sleath, MF's Sales Director said: "Colin has a great deal of experience with grounds care equipment that will help Massey Ferguson and our dealers progress in this specialist sector. Indeed, we will also be appointing two new product specialists, who will work with Colin to provide the highest levels of product support to this important part of our business."

BOBCAT ON THE BORDER

Bobcat has confirmed the appointment of Gwent based Border Bobcat as the new authorised Bobcat dealer in south, west and mid Wales. Part of Border Industrial Services Ltd established in 1986, Border Bobcat is now responsible for sales, service and spare parts for the Bobcat range of equipment in the counties of Gwent, Glamorgan, Dyfed and Powys.

Jointly owned by Sales Director, Huw Edwards, and Operations Director, Cliff Cookes, Border has substantial experience dating back well over 20 years in the skid-steer and mini-excavator markets in Wales. Huw is a specialist in sales and marketing in this area, while Cliff Cookes manages the parts and service back up for Border customers. The business is located close to Newport at the Birds Industrial Estate on Commercial Street in Risca, Gwent.

"We are delighted to be chosen to represent the Bobcat brand in south,

west and mid Wales. Our specialist experience in the markets for skid-steers, excavators and associated attachments was particularly attractive for Bobcat," commented Huw.



Cliff Cookes, left, and Huw Edwards of Border Bobcat

AGREEMENT RUBBER STAMPED

To avoid conflict in the top dressing of natural grass with rubber crumb for wear resistance and reinforcement market place, Dunweed Ltd of Ellesmere Port and Tebbutt Associates have agreed to cooperate in the selling and distribution of the product. Dunweed Ltd will handle all the retail inquiries from Garden Centres, Nurseries, shops, mail order, etc, while Tebbutt Associates will handle all non retail or commercial inquiries from golf, football, rugby, National Trust, large gardens,

Local Authorities, etc.

Tebbutt Associates have been selling the Crown III product for the prevention of wear and reinforcement of natural grass for five years. Dunweed Ltd produces Plain and colour Mulch from recycled tyres for as weed suppressant, path and playground material, along with rubberised top dressing for wear resistance. These are to be sold through retail outlets throughout the country.

AN OPEN FIRST

Take a close look at this picture. It was shot at the remarkable 134th Open Championship on the Old Course, St Andrews. While Valderrama has done it over the years and it has also been seen in the USA, it's the first time greensmowers have been used to cut fairways at The Open, according to Toro. As can be seen, the mowers were used in formation to crosscut the fairways.

Behind this picture lies the story of the great lengths to which St Andrews Links Trust went to create a playing surface that would provide the world's best players with one of golf's supreme tests. The whole team were out mowing at 4am, joined by Toro's Christian Grisard-Van Roey, to get the course ready ahead of the players' round. Before the Old Course was closed ahead of The

Open, to allow all final preparations to be made, the greenkeeping team tried out their Toro Greensmaster 3250-D riding Greensmower on cutting the ancient fairways to keep the fairways fast.



HARROGATE WEEK TEES OFF



Harrogate International Centre was the venue for BIGGA's unveiling of Harrogate Week - the new umbrella branding for the BIGGA event, which occurs every January and includes the BTME & ClubHouse Exhibition and Continue to Learn Programme.

The new branding has been created to encompass the vast array of events that occur during the whole week, of which BTME & ClubHouse is just a part, and to reaffirm that it is not just a three day Trade Show but an entire week of events and happenings that makes BIGGA's Harrogate Week so special.

Both existing and potential Exhibitors attended the Harrogate Week Open Day at the Centre, where Europe's leading indoor Sports Turf Exhibition is held annually. The new Queen's Suite facilities, which will be used for the expanded Continue to Learn Programme, were shown off and the Open Day was used to relay BIGGA's vision for the future of Harrogate Week to the Trade. Presentations were provided by

BIGGA Chairman, Kerran Daly, Chief Executive, John Pemberton, Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, and Sales Manager, Rosie Hancher, along with members of the Harrogate International Centre's Management Team. There was also an opportunity for Exhibitors to express their views regarding BTME & ClubHouse.

The Open Day was hailed a success from all sides and the build up to a no doubt thriving Harrogate Week, which occurs January 22 - 27 2006, is now well underway.

"While BTME & ClubHouse is the crucial part of Harrogate Week, it is certainly not the only element. What makes this event so unique is all the other things that happen during the whole week, from Sunday to Friday. It isn't just a 9-5 Exhibition, which is why we have introduced the new branding and why we have held this Open Day to get that message across. We are committed to running an annual Show and we aim to make the 2006 Harrogate Week even more successful for all concerned, from Exhibitors to visitors," said John Pemberton, BIGGA's Chief Executive.



GOING SEPARATE WAYS

Allen Power Equipment and National Mowers have announced that they have reached a mutual agreement to relinquish the UK and Ireland distributorship of National Mowers - which Allen have represented for the last 30 years.

Commenting on the announcement, Allen's Sales & Marketing Director, Colin Gale, said: "We have been in discussion with Stan Kinkead for seven months now on the best way to make this change, to the benefit of both companies. We are saddened to relinquish the distributorship, one that has provided our dealers and us with profitable business since 1974. However, we understand the need of National to change direction in this important market and wish them well as they take this new step forward.

"The recent acquisition of Hustler ground care machinery represents our direction as a company and will continue to become a major franchise within our organisation, together with the Walker Mower distributorship," he concluded.

SISIS GET REILLY



Sisis Equipment Ltd have appointed Shaun Reilly as Territory Manager for the whole of Scotland, excluding Grampian and Highlands which will continue to be covered by Farm Services Ltd. Shaun will be

supported by Demonstrator Ewen Wilson, who is well known to Sisis customers.

Shaun has worked in the turf industry for 10 years, latterly as Operations Manager for Allett Mowers. He is a single figure handicap golfer and played soccer in his younger days. The appointment follows the retirement of Ian Mackay.

STRI PASS THE TEST

STRI's soil laboratory has retained its accreditation status to carry out independent testing of rootzone materials as specified in the construction of USGA golf putting greens.

A full audit was conducted by an A2LA assessor in April this year. The next review, which will involve assessment of quality procedures and ASTM - American Society of Testing & Materials - compliance, is due in two years. STRI is one of only two USGA approved laboratories outside the USA.

REGIONAL SEMINARS

NORTHERN AND MIDLAND

Two Regional Seminars are planned for November. The Midland Region Educational Seminar is planned for Thursday November 17 at Brampton Heath Golf Club, Northampton, while the Northern Region Educational Seminar is scheduled for Thursday November 24 at Penrith Golf Club. A Northern Region Educational Seminar will involve discusses on Employment Law and how it relates to the Greenkeeping Profession with Maggie Lawton, from the BIGGA Legal Helpline; Health & Safety Update by Jon Allbutt; Golf Club Policies and Management by Tony Smith, Course Manager at Teesside Golf Club; and The Need for Healthy Soil with Martin Ward, from Symbio.

The Midland Seminar will include similar topics with Employment Law and how it relates to the Greenkeeping Profession by Maggie Lawton, from the BIGGA Legal Helpline; Health & Safety Update with Jon Allbutt; The Need for Healthy Soil with Martin Ward, from Symbio; and a Course Walk at the adjacent Northampton County Golf Club, an Open Qualifying Course, with the Course Manager David Lowe, all included in the day.

Invitations will be sent to all BIGGA Northern and Midland Region members during September, but if you don't get one and want to attend, contact Peter Larter (Regional Administrator) for an application form at "Tamarisk", High St, Corby Glen, Grantham, Lincs, NG33 4LX or phone: 01476 550115; office/mobile: 07866 366966 or by email at petelar972@aol.com.

SOUTH EAST

The 2005 South East Region Seminar is to be held at Benton Hall Golf Club on November 9 2005.

The day promises interesting, entertaining and informative subjects and lively debate. For more details and to book your place contact Clive Osgood, Regional Administrator, on 01737 819343.

SOUTH WEST/WALES

This year's South West and South Wales Regional Seminar will take place on Tuesday November 22 2005 at Cannington College, Bridgewater. The theme for the Seminar will be the use of fungicides and pesticides in golf course presentation and the effects of future legislation.

The speakers for the day are Euan Grant, Head Greenkeeper at St Andrews; Kenny MacKay, Course Manager at The Forest Of Arden; Frank Ainsworth, Head Greenkeeper at Hilton Templepatrick, Belfast; Andy Campbell, Head Greenkeeper at Carden Park; Jay Dobson, Agronomist. These speakers will make the day both informative and interesting.

Booking details and information will be sent to Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers in the Region. Should any of you require any further information you can contact Jane Jones, Regional Administrator, on 01454 270850 or mobile 07841948110.

VERULAM VICTORY

The annual Midland Region Golf Management Trophy Day, sponsored for the eighth successive year by Scotts UK Professional, was held at Brickendon Grange Golf Club recently.

20 golf clubs entered the competition, which was played on a testing course, superbly prepared by the Course Manager, Trevor Booth, and his staff. The hospitality provided by Brickendon Grange Golf Club and all of the staff was excellent and even the weather wasn't too unkind.

The format, four man teams comprising of a BIGGA greenkeeper and three golf club officials playing a Stableford with the best two scores on each hole to count, has proved a popular event for the past eight years. The 2005 winning team was

Verulam Golf Club, in their Centenary Season, with 82 points. The team was ably led by Course Manager, Geoff Smith, who retires at the end of November after 30 years at Verulam Golf Club. Close runners up were East Herts and John O'Gaunt Golf Clubs with 81 and 80 points respectively.

Nearest the Pin prize was won by the Midland Region Chairman, Gerald Bruce, the Course Manager at Berkhamsted Golf Club, and the Longest Drive was won by Alan Pountney, the Chairman of Green at Porters Park Golf Club.

The picture shows the entire cast of the Golf Management Trophy Day. Next year's event will be held at Verulam Golf Club, so watch out for details if you want your club to enter.



STILL GO STRONG

By its very nature deep aeration is very demanding on the equipment used for this very important soil management task. The effective working life of these machines can be anything from four to eight years, so that's why Portstewart Golf Club's Wiedenmann P160 aerator is quite remarkable. It's been working on the 54 hole mixed links and parkland golf complex on the Causeway

coast of Northern Ireland for the past 13 years.

"The P160 has been an excellent workhorse for us here at Portstewart. We use it extensively during August and September on the greens to its full depth of 300mm and then again in February to 150mm with minimal heave. It's still going strong and that's a testament not only to its build quality but the skills of our mechanic, Derek McMorris,"

said Bernard Findlay, Head Greenkeeper.

Portstewart Golf Club has three courses, each with their own unique character. The 5752 yard, par 68 Riverside runs alongside the River Bann, while the Strand, opened in 1907, is the jewel in the crown, a classic links course with towering sand dunes and stunning views. The Old Course is situated on the site of the original course, where golf was first played at Portstewart as far back as 1889.



Bernard Findlay and Derek McMorris with their faithful deep aerator

ENVILLE'S NEW WOOD



Enville Golf Club, in Staffordshire, has appointed Jonathan Wood as Course Manager of its two 18 hole courses.

Jonathan joins Enville from Ross-on-Wye Golf Club, where he was Course Manager for more than eight years. He brings some 20 years' experience as a professional greenkeeper to Enville, where he will have full responsibility for the management of this heathland/woodland site and a team of 10 greenkeeping staff deployed across Enville's two courses, Highgate and Lodge.

"This is not only a fantastic opportunity for

me, but also one that presents the chance to play a pivotal role in realising the full potential of both courses at Enville. In addition, Enville is scheduled to host the Open Championship Regional Qualifying in 2007, through to 2011, and is also hosting the English Seniors Championship in 2007. Both these leading events are a great recognition for the club, as well as presenting an additional challenge and focus for the golf course management programme," said Jonathan.

Together with having substantial hands on experience, Jonathan has dedicated time to acquiring the technical knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands placed on a modern and progressive Course Manager. Amongst these academic pursuits, he has studied at Elmwood College in Fife, Scotland, and has just completed the first year of a Foundation Degree in Sports Turf Science from Myerscough College.

"I intend to make the most of my role as custodian of the 36 hole course, and focus my expertise on managing both courses to create an environment that is challenging for its golfers, but also sustainable from an environmental perspective."

THE 10 POINTS TO QUALITY

The LDCA - Land Drainage Contractors Association - has launched a 10 point Quality Assurance Scheme in order to provide clients and customers of LDCA Contractors with an assurance of quality standards.

The 10 points which form an undertaking by all LDCA contractors cover the Specification for Workmanship and Materials, a Certificate of Workmanship, a Warranty, a Completion Plan, Liability Insurance, Health and Safety, Financial, Provision of Information for the Customer, Customer References, and a Complaints Procedure.

The purpose of the LDCA Quality Assurance Scheme is to provide customers with an assurance that when they employ an LDCA contractor, that LDCA contractor will undertake to carry out the work to recognised standards, as a professional, specialist contractor, who is properly equipped, and has the necessary insurance and Health and Safety measures in place.

The Scheme is based around the LDCA Technical Specifications and Guidelines for Drainage Installation that have become established as the industry quality standards. These have been adopted by local authorities and utility companies, many of whom incorporate the LDCA Technical Specifications and Guidelines in their tender documents and stipulate the work must be carried out by an LDCA contractor.

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MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Recycled woodchip is becoming an increasingly popular choice for use as a plant bed mulch and paths and play area surfacing, but a new local authority study has revealed it could have far wider landscaping applications.

Research commissioned by WRAP - the Waste & Resources Action Programme - to explore all potential landscaping uses of the product in a local authority environment has now identified a variety of completely new and innovative uses, such as marking picnic spots under trees, reducing erosion on steep banks and mopping up muddy areas around car parks or by the water's edge.

In research conducted by the University College Northampton it was found that using recycled woodchip for new and other applications brings a variety of benefits. Areas that may previously have been unsuitable for public access become usable, maintenance is greatly reduced due to the product's effectiveness as a weed suppressant and its long lasting properties mean that topping up is infrequently required.

Julia Turner, Material Development Manager for wood at WRAP, said: "This study not only demonstrates to what extent local authorities and golf clubs can use recycled woodchip in traditional uses, but also how they can use the product in previously unconsidered areas."

CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPBELL



In an era of full time tournament playing amateur golfers not many recent winners of the Scottish Amateur Championship have returned to work on the Monday morning after their triumph.

Glenn Campbell, greenkeeper at Murrayshall Hotel's two courses near Perth, bucks the recent trend. But the 77th winner of the title admitted after his 37th hole victory over Ben Shamash that becoming champion would not change his life one bit.

It's not Campbell's first national title - he was Scottish mid-amateur Champion in 1998 - but that tournament does not come close to the status of the Scottish Amateur Championship.

"It has to be the greatest thrill of my golfing life. I would put it right up there alongside playing for Scotland for the first time. I went to Southernness hoping for a good performance to clinch a place in the home internationals team for the third year in a row. I guess I've done that," said the 32 year old Blairgowrie Golf Club member.

AWARD FOR LECTURER

It has been announced that Dr Alan Gange, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Biology at Royal Holloway, University of London, will be the recipient of the National Turfgrass Foundation Research Award 2005. Alan is a well-known scientist and speaker to British audiences. He has wide research interests within the sports turf industry encompassing the quality of playing surfaces and non-playing areas, as featured in Greenkeeper International September 2004.

The latter is specifically targeted at golf courses, where he is interested in the role that courses play in habitat conservation at the landscape level. Alan sits on numerous advisory panels and his innovative work has attracted interest in many corners of the world.

A highly respected expert in the field of turfgrass mycology and bacteriology, he is a regular speaker at conferences and educational events throughout Europe. Dr Gange is best known for his pioneering work on mycorrhizal associations in turfgrasses and has been responsible for establishing a greater understanding of the roles that these root inhabiting fungi play in the establishment, nutrition, and competitiveness of turfgrass species.



A YORKSHIRE FIRST

Yorkshire's first Jacobsen AR3 rotary surrounds mower is being used to maintain Parkgate Recreational Services 18 hole golf course in Rotherham.

The new machine was part of a package of equipment purchased by the Corus steel producer's sports club from local dealer, Palmers Groundcare. Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Pat Ashbourne, is using the AR3 to add more definition to the course, leaving a pleasing striping effect between the fairways and the semi rough.

Parkgate's significant investment in new equipment at the Roundwood premises also includes a Jacobsen LF-3800 light fairway mower, purchased to provide better traction and an improved quality of cut from its larger reels.



TAILOR MADE

Specialist groundcare press representatives were recently given a full behind-the-scenes tour of New Holland's factory in Basildon, as well as an insight into the agricultural machinery and construction equipment manufacturer's worldwide production operation. They were also given a hands on demonstration of the latest New Holland models for turf care professionals.

As Paul Kelley, New Holland's Business Director for the UK and the Republic of Ireland, explained, New Holland is a global brand of CNH, manufacturers of Agricultural and Construction Equipment represented by a family of brands including Case IH as well as New Holland. "Between them, these brands represent extensive knowledge and product heritage. We have around 11,400 dealers in 160 countries, backed by the strength and resources of our worldwide product

design, manufacturing, distribution, support and finance organisations.

"Basildon is a centre of excellence for tractor design and production and is a research and development centre for engines, electronics and vehicle technology."



MYERSCOUGH JUST DOING IT

Myerscough College Golf Academy has hit a hole in one with Nike Golf, securing a two year sponsorship deal that will help the College's Golf Academy students 'just do it' like the professionals. The new sponsorship deal complements Myerscough's Americano style commitment to golf and will provide students with official Nike Golf clothing and equipment, ensuring that they will be able to tee off in style.

Garry Wilkinson, Director of Commercial Activities at Myerscough College commented: "Although golf is a widely recognised and well-played sport in the UK, our American counterparts are much more pro-active and effective in facilitating and encouraging youth interest in the sport. "We are delighted that such a well-respected, global and forward thinking brand such as Nike Golf has recognised Myerscough Golf Academy's commitment to golf and is helping support our students."

JUST THE JOB

BIGGA has appointed Kirstin Smith as the Association's new Advertising Sales Executive, replacing Amy Newport.

Kirstin joins BIGGA with a wealth of experience having previously been employed at Barker Brooks Media, where she worked on a legal publication for almost two years. Many BIGGA members may have already met Kirstin as she used to run Harrogate based restaurant, Salsa Posada, no doubt a stop for many greenkeepers during BTME & ClubHouse in previous years.

She is a keen sports enthusiast, taking up golf when living in Stratford upon Avon, while enjoying horse riding and she has also ran the Robin Hood Half Marathon.

"I have never worked in an industry like this before, so it will be a real challenge for me. It is a whole new experience. I'm looking forward to getting out there and meeting both BIGGA members and people within the trade. I'm already finding out that they are a lot nicer than lawyers," said Scottish born Kirstin.



FOREST PINES GOLF ACQUIRED

Leeds based QHotels has increased its portfolio of hotels to six with the acquisition of Forest Pines in North Lincolnshire. The Golf and Country Club Hotel was acquired for an undisclosed sum.

The four star hotel in the heart of North Lincolnshire offers extensive leisure facilities including a 27 hole championship golf course, and a health, beauty and leisure club within 190 acres of beautiful matured woodland. QHotels plan, subject to planning permission, to extend the conference facilities at the hotel and refurbish and upgrade the bedrooms and public areas.

"Forest Pines is a fantastic acquisition to our growing portfolio. The hotel offers great leisure facilities and adds the first golf resort to the group," said Michael Purtill, Managing Director of QHotels.

SPREADING SAND IN THE DESERT

Ultraspreader International, the manufacturers and suppliers of top dressers and grounds maintenance equipment, have just completed their first sale to Dubai. Desert Turfcare has taken delivery of a UP60 high output Spreader.

Desert Turfcare will be using the machine to compliment their existing range of maintenance machinery which they currently use for sports field and golf construction, renovation and maintenance projects across the United Emirates.

Jose Fernandes, Ultra Spreader's Spanish dealer has continued to impress with another sale. The sale of an Ultra Screen to a Seville local authority backs up sales already made to the La Manga Club and Desert Springs Golf Club and confirms Ultra Spreader's intentions of becoming a worldwide manufacturer and exporter of grounds maintenance machinery.

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Education Director, David Golding, discusses work based training and the incredible pace that it has taken off at.

If you take a look at the job vacancies page in the magazine you will see how the vocational qualifications have become the industry benchmark to recruit for the majority of greenkeeping vacancies. Once again I have to make clear that the GTC is fully involved in the development, review and validation of the more academic qualifications such as the HNC Foundation Degree, B.Sc and M.Sc.

I will feature these awards in next month's GI and those readers who, when leaving school, never dreamt they would ever be at an Awards Ceremony wearing proudly a Cap and Gown then just maybe their dream could become a reality! Exciting times on the education front.

This month I have to again appeal to those Course Managers, Head Greenkeepers and enlightened Deputies who have staff registered at a Centre on either N/SVQ Level 2 or 3 Sportsturf. This appeal also extends to golf club employers who believe they are investing in greenkeeper training by "Sending their staff to college." The best analogy I can give you is that the pace work-based training has taken off in the greenkeeping sector is equivalent to a harrier jet leaving an aircraft carrier.

Sadly the same cannot be said of our colleagues in groundsmanship, horticulture or landscaping, who have not taken the same 'ownership' of the vocational qualification as our sector has and they seem to have an increasing problem in implementing these Industry designed qualifications.

As regular readers know we at the GTC (see below for representative bodies) have always looked to embrace the concept of work-based training and use the existing traditional registration Centres, mainly the colleges throughout Britain. These have been supported by the GTC awarding Approved Status. Golf club employers and greenkeepers have been directed to these Centres as they have 'signed up' to a GTC criterion, which has been very closely linked to resources to deliver the specialist education our sector demands.

With the popularity of work-based training exceeding all expectations many colleges have seen a huge shift from full time greenkeeping students to the part time route, which in the main means that trainees learn both 'on and off the job' while earning a wage. Surely a win-win situation for the trainee?

Credit to several of our Approved Providers who have 'listened' to the industry and have developed more flexible delivery options just to suit our sector. They have the very difficult task to also deliver work-based qualifications to the aforementioned sector of the land base who have often stated N/SVQ's are not for their sector. The GTC believes that whatever the Government of the day chooses to call the qualifications, skilled staff is the bedrock of well maintained golf courses with the academic awards available for those seeking more knowledge on what is happening below the surface. I believe our sector has the best of both worlds in terms of the range of qualifications but this is where we must focus on the role of who is the most important person in the system of delivering work-based training?

Any Centre offering N/SVQ's will all agree that for the system to work efficiently and effectively the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper or Deputy must be involved in the training and assessment process. The role of the Centre is to support the trainee and supervisor by ensuring the knowledgeable learning materials, either by hard copy or online, is available and all parties agree the best method of learning. This coupled to the on-the-job practical training then requires the Centre staff to coordinate the knowledge and practical assessments into evidence, which meets the national standards. When it is left to the Centre to educate, train and assess the trainee it can lead to all sorts of problems, mainly 'fast tracking' the assessment process and this is when questions are asked of the VQ system.

We at the GTC are very aware of the work the Awarding Bodies' External Verifier team are carrying out to support and improve Centres, however we at the sharp end of work-based training know that the golf club must ensure a senior competent greenkeeper takes on the responsibility to monitor the trainees progress by attending all meetings when Centre staff visit the club.

It is at these meetings that training plans are reviewed and agreed to ensure both the trainee and his/her work-based supervisor are working to an agreed programme supported by the Centre staff.

Please do not get left behind, it is easy to climb on board as for many who have recently attended training sessions, to become qualified work-based assessors, have often commented that "We do that as part of our job role anyway." Help your own profession and your own professional development by getting involved in the 'system'.

Training days are now being planned for trainer and assessor awards and these will be held regionally. Also watch out for the BTME 2006 programme which will include trainer, assessor and an update course for those of you who achieved the 'old' D32/D33 award and feel you would benefit from an updating session.

To discuss any issues raised in this article or any matters relating to greenkeeper education, training and qualifications David may be contacted on email, david@the-gtc.co.uk, telephone 01347 838640 or visit the GTC website, www.the-gtc.co.uk.



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