



NEW HOLLAND GROUND CARE

Whatever the job, we've got it covered.

To meet the differing demands of landscaping, grass mowing, general turf maintenance and horticulture, the New Holland Groundcare Range offers a vast selection of machines with outstanding levels of performance and operator comfort. From the GT 75 mower and the newly launched 31 and 35 hp mid-range TCD-A's through to the 90 hp four-cylinder TN95D-A, including the award winning 76 hp TN75SA (arguably the ultimate turf machine), New Holland can cover your needs.

www.newholland.com/uk - free phone 0800 015 0105



NEW HOLLAND

Your success — Our specialty



A guide to who's who at BIGGA

President
Sir Michael
Bonallack, OBE

BIGGA Board of Management
Chairman - Richard Whyman
Vice Chairman - Billy McMillan
Past Chairman - Kerran Daly

Board Members

Raymond Day
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,
Aire, 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: Melissa Toombs
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833801
Email: melissa@bigga.co.uk

Design

Design and Production Editor: Marie Whyld
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833802
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: kirstin@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
Tel: 01778 391000 Fax: 01778 394269

Greenkeeper International:

Contents may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission. Return postage must accompany all materials submitted if return is requested. No responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials. The right is reserved to edit submissions before publication.

Although every care will be taken, no responsibility is accepted for loss of manuscripts, photographs or artwork. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Association, and no responsibility is accepted for such content, advertising or product information that may appear.

Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £42 per year, Europe and Eire £55. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.

ISSN: 0961-6977

© 2006 British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

August 2006

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by September 7 2006.



16 The changing role of technology



29 Drainage Installation



35 Tiger gets ready to roar!



48 Sustainability

REGULARS

4,5,6,8,9

News

10 GTC News

11 Educaion

Ken Richardson explains why the Education Department have been so busy this last month.

12 Membership

15 In the Shed

Greenkeeper International's puzzle page.

16 Continue to Learn

The Changing Role of Technology in Golf Course Equipment.

50 New Products

52 News from the Chief Executive

52-58 Around the Green

66 As I see it...

National Chairman Richard Whyman, asks members to give some thought to their Sections AGM.



FEATURES

18-22 Course Feature

Scott MacCallum visits Burton-on-Trent Golf Club, in the run up to the National Championship 2006.

24-25 Turning Japanese: Part Two

Laurence Pithie MG, concludes his insight into managing golf courses in Japan.

26-27 Who'd be a Greenkeeper?

Paul Cook tells us why he loves his job.

29-31 Lateral Thinking

Rob Donald makes a case for the installation of drainage at a time when standing water seems like a luxury item!

32-33 BIGGA Golf Day 2006

Scott MacCallum looks back on this years event.



35-39 Feelin' Hot, Hot, Hot

BIGGA's Open Support Team felt the heat at Hoylake.

43-45 ATVs

James de Havilland weighs up the pros and cons of ATVs.

48-49 Where are you on the sustainability ladder?

Steve Isaac of the R&A asks the question.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

Cover Photograph by Brad Anderson



Welcome

A JOB WELL DONE

I'd like to start this month's column by paying tribute to Craig Gilholm and his team at Royal Liverpool Golf Club, who produced an Open venue in the true links traditional of the Championship.

What struck me when I arrived was the colour. The course was the colour of straw while the tightness of the fairways would have given handicap players nightmares. Obviously the weather has a huge part to play in producing this but it takes someone of genuine links pedigree to harness the conditions and produce the goods.

Craig only took over as Head man last June and it is a credit to him that he was able to carry on the work of Derek Green in such a seamless fashion. Sure, Craig did things his own way but he was only able to do so because of the foundations put in place during Derek's tenure.

The R&A were delighted with what was produced, as they were with the work of BIGGA's Greenkeeping Support Team, which had to work like never before. It was the first time that the team had prepared bunkers before the start of play as well as divoting at night and while it put everyone involved under additional pressure, the pleasure of seeing a job well done, was all the greater for everyone involved.

The Open now has a larger rota than even before with more recent venues like Turnberry now joining with the older venues like Carnoustie and Hoylake, which have returned after periods on the sidelines. These three have never all been on the rota at the same time.

It means that with St Andrews established with its five year cycle, we have Muirfield, Royal Troon, Carnoustie Turnberry, Royal Lytham and St Annes, Royal Birkdale, Hoylake and Royal St Georges likely to rotate on more or less a 10 yearly cycle.

That provides the variety golf supporters enjoy and also gives more Course Managers the opportunity to prepare a golf course for the greatest annual golf event on the worldwide calendar.

It would be nice to see that rota extended still further but the demands of an Open Championship grow and grow and certainly push quality golf courses like Royal Dornoch, Saunton, Royal Porthcawl and Royal County Down out of the reckoning. The compromises that would be involved in hosting an Open there would be too much for television, sponsors, players and spectators, never mind BIGGA's Support Team, and render then unsuitable.

Hoylake was certainly stretched by these demands, with the exhibition tent on two sites within the golf course and parking at a premium and it was only through the desire of Wirral Council and the local people who embraced the Championship like never before, that make it a success.

And with Tiger Woods emerging as the Champion the course can claim to have identified the best golfer and that is all you can ask of a golf course.

So well done Craig and the guys. You deserve all the praise that has come your way.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

The second series of seminar/demonstration days organised by SISIS Equipment Ltd, takes place in September.

Best of Both Worlds, aims to consider the benefits of both natural and synthetic turf playing surfaces, and how to get the best from them.

An interesting day is guaranteed with keynote speakers Martyn Jones and David Rhodes talking about: Achieving Effective Soil Aeration and Planning and Maintaining Synthetic Sports Surfaces.

The programme also includes: Choosing the Right Grass Cultivars and Mixtures, Turfgrass

Nutrition, Artificial Turf – Another Option. Working demonstrations of the newest techniques in the mechanical maintenance of natural and synthetic turf surfaces will be presented by SISIS Equipment and TYM Tractors.

Dates and venues: September 19 - Radley College, Abingdon, Oxon; September 20 - St. Albans School, Herts and September 21 - HSBC Sports Club, Beckenham, Kent.

The day is free of charge with a light lunch provided. Details are available from Lynn Hilton: publicity@sisis.com or phone: 01625 503030.

DROUGHT STRICKEN GOLF CLUB

As have many golf clubs in south east England, Woodcote Park GC has been hit by a drought order. The club takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and has invested in a Course Care ClearWater washpad recycling system, a road tanker and extra water storage tanks.

Secretary Adrian Dawson, explained that water needed for the course is being brought in from an approved grey water source using the tanker. The washpad area was not a concern however as the Course Care ClearWater system, recycles water and can be used throughout the drought order to provide effective wash-off for all the greens machinery.



GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY

Northern Region Golf Management Trophy day was held at Sandiway GC on July 11.

26 golf clubs entered the competition, which was played in beautiful, sunny conditions, on a testing course, which had been superbly prepared by Course Manager Brian Taylor and his staff. The hospitality of the staff at Sandiway was excellent, and all had a very enjoyable day.

The format of four man teams, comprising of a greenkeeper - who is a member of BIGGA and three

golf club officials playing a Stableford, with the best two scores on each hole to count, has proved a popular event for many years. The winning team was Gay Hill GC with 82 points, led by Course Manager Paul Woodham. Close runners up were Fairhaven and Bury GC's with 80 points - with Fairhaven claiming second place on countback. Nearest the Pin was won by Mark Nelson, Course Manager at Renishaw Park GC and Longest drive by Bob Thompson, Secretary at Fairhaven.

TOP OF THE CLASS

Former Plumpton College students are to feature in an article for the Times Education Supplement after finding successful employment.

The students studied agriculture and are now employed within the farming industries, having gained relevant qualifications and work experience, while still at College.

For college enquiries call: 01273 890454 or visit: www.plumpton.ac.uk



COLLEGE PREPARES ELAINE FOR MALE-DOMINATED ROLE

Female greenkeepers are a rare find but Hadlow College, near Tonbridge, is well on the way to helping Elaine Kelley to achieve her realistic ambition. Elaine always knew she wanted an outdoor career and is about to complete a work-based learning course, which should result in an NVQ level 3 in Sports Turf Management.

This is not the first time Elaine has turned to Hadlow College, Kent's leading land-based college. She originally enrolled for day release courses in agriculture, and then worked in the dairy farming industry in both the UK and New Zealand.



18-hole golf course, not far from her home at Caterham, Surrey.

Much of Elaine's NVQ level 3 training is project and assignment based. Elaine attends courses at the college's main campus in Hadlow that will qualify her to use pesticides in accordance with the Environment Protection Act.

After four years, she still hasn't met another lady greenkeeper! This has, however, certainly not put her off. "Lady members of the golf club seem to enjoy having a woman on the greenkeeping team and they often want to chat and ask questions in a way they never do

with the men", she explained. "I would eventually like to be Head Greenkeeper at a nine-hole golf course or Assistant Head at an 18-hole course. Meanwhile, I would describe my job satisfaction as being 100%!"

Visit Hadlow College at: www.hadlow.ac.uk

MANAGEMENT OF DROUGHT STRESSED TURF

Following a successful seminar in May entitled "Stress Management in Turf", two seminars, one at Bishop's Stortford GC, Essex and the other at Hoebridge GC, Woking, Surrey, on "Management of Drought Stressed Turf" were held in July.

With the continued drought, particularly in the South East, joint organisers, Avoncrop Amenity Products and Scotts Professional, wanted to provide turf managers with up to date ideas on how to manage drought stressed turf.

With temperatures reaching the 30s during the run up to the seminars, they attracted delegates from all types of sports facilities - predominately golf clubs - along with local authorities, bowling and football clubs.

The presentations were designed to help people understand how to develop grass plants with the best chance of survival in drought conditions. Chris Briggs stressed how important it is to ensure the plant develops the largest possible root system, enabling the foraging for water but also for starch storage for use during recovery.



With water restrictions currently in place in some areas it is imperative that all precipitation that falls onto the ground enters quickly before it evaporates, wetting agents such as H2Pro help to make soils very water receptive - maximising water utilisation.

Fertilisers with high salt levels can exacerbate drought intolerance of the turf plant by raising the salt levels of the soil solution, causing the plant difficulty in absorbing water and nutrients into the roots. Foliar feeds are better suited to drought conditions and applied little and often.

Scotts Professional and Avoncrop Amenity Products, are keen to see these types of seminars are ongoing in order to help turf professionals cope with drought conditions by providing practical solutions to turf management.

NEW DEPOT MANAGER

Richard Steele has been promoted to Rolawn Depot Manager at Birtley. Richard, 27, joined Rolawn as Depot Assistant at their York branch one year ago.

Prior to Richard joining Rolawn, his previous experience included working within the retail and hospitality sectors. Richard enjoys playing cricket, snowboarding and following most sports.



CLEARING UP FAST

Helping to reduce the time and staff needed to de-thatch the greens at the Worcestershire GC by more than 50 per cent, Turfmec TM1 walk-behind vacuum collectors use a rotating brush and powerful vacuum to get results.

Nestling peacefully in the lee of the Malvern Hills, Worcestershire GC was founded in 1879, making it the oldest club in the county and one of the five oldest in England. Although a number of the greens on the parkland course have been rebuilt over the past 50 years, six date back to the early years of the last century.

While offering a challenging finish to their respective holes, the greens at Worcestershire GC have no underlying drainage system, resulting in the build-up of compaction and thatch over the years, which is now being actively tackled by Head Greenkeeper Graeme Clarkson and his staff.

"Previously, it took five men around five days to complete the work across all 19 greens. There was one man on the Graden, two with back-pack blowers and two picking up and disposing of the removed thatch. Following the arrival this spring of the new TM1, we are able to finish the job in two days using just two men," said Graeme.



The TM1 clearing scarified material from the 16th green at Worcestershire Golf Club

NEW RECRUIT IN SALES

Sam Honeyborne has joined Countrywide Farmers (CWF) as Turf & Amenity Area Sales Manager, covering South Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset.



Having previously worked for CWF as an Agri Trade Sales Specialist, Sam has extensive knowledge of the full range of CWF products and services, featuring agricultural, energy and country lifestyle products, including clothing and footwear.

NEW WEBSITE

Tycrop Manufacturing, have launched a new website designed for turf maintenance professionals.

Dedicated to Tycrop's turf maintenance equipment for golf courses, sports turf and playing fields, the website provides an in-depth look at each of their five flagship products.

For more information on Tycrop visit: www.tycropturf.com

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Bio-tech solutions company Symbio, have pulled off something of a recruitment coup by bringing Kevin Munt back to the Turfgrass industry as Sales Manager. With a 25 year history in golf maintenance, development and operations, Kevin's past employers have included industry luminaries: Royal Dornoch GC, The Wentworth Club, John Jacobs Golf Associates, Kajima (UK) Engineering and Buckinghamshire GC. In 1985 Kevin was a member of the steering committee for the formation of BIGGA.



Munt commented: "I have been considering a return to the golf course maintenance industry but wanted to ensure that it was with a company that worked in support of greenkeepers and sustainable course management practices. Symbio meets those criteria and I am looking forward to helping them aid the movement to greater sustainable golf in the UK and Europe."

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES

The Cannington Centre for Land-based Studies at Bridgwater College, one of the UK's premier centres of vocational excellence for greenkeeping and sports turf management, has signed an agreement with equipment manufacturers Ransomes Jacobsen, to suit the requirements of the college.

Over £200,000 worth of equipment has been delivered and will be used by the grounds staff team to maintain their nine-hole, 18-tee golf course; the college gardens and by students in the sportsturf faculty. The equipment includes walk-behind mowers, ride-on greens, tees and fairway machines; diesel-powered turf utility vehicles, tractors, an aerator and a turf cutter.



Ransomes Jacobsen will be sponsoring two student awards: one further education and one higher education, providing branded clothing, as well as participating in student development by supplying workshop manuals, operator training materials and undertaking tutorials both at the college and at their training facilities in Ipswich.

HEAT TURNS SAHARAN

Omar, a single-humped camel, shocked golfers as he lolloped across the course at Bletchingley.

Making a document about the drought, Channel 4 had transported the camel from a zoo in Chipping Norton to help illustrate the programme.

Although Bletchingley has its own private reservoir, the Surrey greens were still showing signs of scorching from the sun as Omar was led across the course.

DEALER DINNER

This year's Garden Machinery Dealer Dinner will be raising funds for the Wood Spoon Society. The raffle, with prizes donated by Briggs & Stratton, Countax, Hayter, Honda and Stihl, is expected to raise between £2,000 and £3,000 for the Charity, which supports children and young people challenged by mental, social and physical disadvantages.

COMPOST KEEPS PLANTS DISEASE FREE

A report has concluded that compost made from recycled garden or food waste can protect plants and turf against soil-borne diseases.

The review involved study of recent research into 49 different turf and plant diseases, and was carried out over a four month period by the University of Warwick, for WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme). The review focussed both on container based and field based experiments. It found overwhelming evidence that the addition of compost made from garden or food waste can suppress a range of wilts, rots and turf grass diseases.

Using data from previous container experiments, the study highlights that mixing compost into soil or peat to a level of 20 per cent or above enables good microbes to fight off common pathogens. 74% of the data reviewed, demonstrated a suppressive effect and showed that the average level of disease suppression was highest for wilts caused by *Fusarium oxysporum* ff.sp.

Examining field trials data, there was also evidence foliar pathogens, such as bacterial leaf spot on radish (*Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *armoraciae*) and powdery mildew of barley (*Erysiphe graminis* f. sp. *hordei*), can be suppressed by amendment of peat or soil with compost. The research illustrated that compost amendment can

successfully suppress diseases caused by *Fusarium* species, provided that compost application rates of at least 100 tons/ha are used.

The study also shows that different types of composts are effective against different diseases of turf grass. For example, top-dressing with green waste compost has been shown to control *Pythium* damping-off and *Rhizoctonia* brown patch, and may give control of dollar spot but is less effective in controlling red thread. Furthermore, the review highlights a possible trend that composts intermediate in age (about 12 to 15 months after composting started) appear to be more reliably suppressive than 'immature' (less than six months old) or 'very mature' (more than two years old) composts.

The report concludes there is a large potential market for compost in vegetable and ornamental crop production, turf grass top dressings and amateur gardening, providing end-users in those sectors can be convinced of its reliability as a weapon against plant disease. Demonstrating such benefits will also help reduce dependency on chemical fungicides – a significant selling point for professional growers and amateur gardeners.

To access a full copy of the report, or for more information on compost, visit: www.wrap.org.uk/organics

SUMMER OFFER

To help you cover up this summer BIGGA have added two styles of cargo beanie hats to its merchandise range.



The Cargo Beanie is made from 100% cargo nylon and has an elasticated draw cord size adjuster with toggle. It also has a towelling sweatband and a mesh lining for extra comfort. This beanie is available in Navy with a Stone trim or Stone with a Navy Trim.

The Textured Pocket Beanie is made from 100% textured cotton and comes with a side pocket. One size fits most. This beanie is available in Stone or Navy.



Both hats are available for the special offer price of £5.99 (normal price £7.99), BIGGA logo hats are available for £7.99 (normal price £9.99).

Your club logo or any other wording can be stitched onto the hats. Ring Rachael Duffy for further details. To order call Rachael Duffy on 01347 833800.



**THE BIGGA LEGAL
HELPLINE NUMBER
HAS CHANGED TO:**

0800 019 2569
with immediate effect

Normal service is not affected

ABERROYAL FROM BSH THE GREENKEEPERS CHOICE



The key to first-class greens without paying a king's ransom is AberRoyal Browntop Bent.



Bred for traditional UK soil-based greens, AberRoyal is one of the highest-rated cultivars in its class for shoot density and leaf fineness according to the STRI listings. You'll see the difference, due to its superb all year round colour and ability to out compete Poa annua.

Because every course is different, our technical advisors are on hand to help you select the best mixtures for your course.

Contact your regional advisor or request a free copy of our golf seed catalogue by calling Freephone **0800 328 8276** or log on to www.britishseedhouses.com

The ABER® prefix is a registered trade mark of Germinal Holdings Limited, the parent company of British Seed Houses Limited.

PARTNERSHIP

Nigel Nangreave, the man behind UK Bamboo Golf Tee and long term Green Tee Campaigner, has recently been offered a partnership as Sales and Marketing Director, for Staffordshire Towing Systems, a company producing a revolutionary multi-positional Tow ball System. A UK invention, UNI-BALL, has had a number of test units ordered out to various organisations.

GOING FOR GREEN



In the run up to The Open Championship, golf clubs throughout England had been working as part of a scheme aiming to bring about real benefits for nature and wildlife conservation.

Established in 2002, the English Golf Environmental Advisory Service (EGEAS) has seen over 180 golf clubs receive specialist ecological advice tailored to suit both the golfing and conservation needs of the course.

Often seen as a selfish and sterile land use, golf courses have previously received little positive attention from conservationists. However, with around 1,900 courses in England covering some 110,000ha of land, they do provide the potential for significant and tangible benefits for the countryside.

Through detailed and practical advice, provided by specialist Golf Course Ecologist Lee Penrose of the Sports Turf Research Institute, the EGEAS has assisted golf clubs in developing over 150ha of new grassland and heathland habitat, planting 16,000 new trees, and restoring or creating nearly 200 new wildlife ponds.

All golf clubs accepted into the scheme have been revisited in order to assess the progress they have made. Those clubs who displayed a real commitment to conservation have been accredited and since received framed certificates from the County Golf Unions.

Greenkeepers and Golf Club Managers, are recognising the positive role conservation can play in developing a high standard golf course that provides habitat for birds of all sorts.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Leven Links played host to the Scottish National Tournament on June 22.

The prize list was as follows: SGGG Challenge Cup - Brian Heggie, Piperdam GC, 69; Friendship Trophy, Best Net - Martin Lothian, Turnberry Hotel, 81-17-64; Ransomes Trophy, First Class - Kenneth Mitchell, St.Andrews Links, 75-5-70; 2. Steve Sullivan, Craigie Hill, 77-5-72; 3. Brian Aitken, Largs GC, 77-4-73; Pattison Trophy, Second Class - William Caswell, Caird Park GC, 84-14-70; 2. Trevor Harris, St. Andrews Links, 81-10-71; 3. Michael Carson, Caird Park GC, 81-9-72; STRI Trophy, Third Class - Scott Davidson, Hazelhead GC, 102 24-78 (BIH); 2. Donald Gardener, Scoonie GC, 102-24-78; 3. Hugh McLatchie, Peterhead GC, 100-21-79; Dick Aitken Trophy, Best Head Greenkeeper - Paul Murphy, Downfield GC, 76-5-71; M & M Trophy, Best Assistant - Kenny Stirling, Kingsbarns,

72-1-71; Souter Trophy, Best Apprentice - Keith Burgon, Goswick GC, 78-5-73; SIGGA Trophy, Best Veteran - Elliott Small, retired, 82-11-71; St.Mungo Trophy, Team Trophy (best four net scores) - Central Section; Brian Heggie, Piperdam GC, 69; Kenneth Mitchell, St.Andrews Links, 70; William Caswell, Caird Park GC, 70; Paul Murphy, Downfield GC, 7 - total: 280.

Patrons - Gordon Howat, Souters Sports, 82-9-73; Qualifiers National Tournament, Scratch - Brian Heggie, Club Piperdam GC; Handicap - Martin Lothian, Turnberry Hotel.



DRAINAGE STANDARDS SET

The Land Drainage Contractors Association (LDCA) launches their informative booklet, 'Guidelines for Sports Turf Drainage Installation', in time for Saltex 2006.

"This booklet is a vital tool for all those looking at installing or upgrading their drainage system," said Secretary of the Association, Bruce Brockway.

For more information visit: www.ldca.org or call: 01327 263264.

KEEPING GREENS GREEN

Reigate Heath GC spent £2,500 on a water tanker to bring 4,000 gallons a day from the nearby Buckland quarries.

A number of other golf clubs have taken advantage of the free, non-drinking water supply from a spring at Pains Hill, Limsfield Chart, as a way of beating the drought.

R&A INVESTIGATE SUSTAINABLE GOLF COURSES

The R&A Golf Course Committee is funding two projects looking into different aspects of sustainable course management.

The first is investigating the firmness of putting surfaces and fairways. Using the Turf Thumper, a device developed by the USGA, at six courses in the UK, the intention is to produce guidelines on the acceptable ranges of firmness for links, heathland and parkland courses. The participating clubs are Royal Troon and Renfrew in Scotland, Conwy (Caernarvonshire) in Wales, Trentham, Ganton and Alwoodley in England. The Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) is managing this project and will report the outcome in autumn 2007. The firmness of a green is one of the most important characteristics contributing to turf health, green speed and trueness.

The second project will be monitored over four years and will consider the process of developing firmer, leaner greens and thereby, improving their sward composition. In the UK, soft, thatch-ridden

putting surfaces tend to be dominated by annual meadow-grass, which is the grass found on golf turf most susceptible to common and disfiguring turf diseases and climatic stresses. Five clubs in England (Cold Ashby, Farnham Park, Knowle, Leek and Wilmslow) have been selected to take part in this project, all having addressed thatch issues (if they were present) and in an appropriate condition to promote the more desirable turfgrasses, i.e. the fine fescues and browntop bent. STRI will assess the species composition of selected greens at each of these courses at the start of the project and at the end of a three year programme of maintenance, which will include overseeding with fescue and browntop bent.

The purpose of these projects is to provide technical support to those managing golf courses and it is intended that, on completion of the research, the results will be written up and posted on The R&A Best Practice website: www.bestcoursegolf.org

TRADITIONAL GREENS RESCUED

A Hertfordshire Head Greenkeeper has seen his 18-hole parkland course televised, less than three years after being advised to dig up his greens.

Neil Faubel, who joined East Herts GC in 1988, becoming Head Greenkeeper in 2003, has watched conditions on his traditional, clay based, push-up greens deteriorate over the years. "When I took over most of our greens were poor quality putting surfaces," he says. "They were not rooting and had

sulphur programme for the whole year, and with Neil's approval, suggested Multi K mini prill as a spring starter applied at the end of March, followed by Greentec Organic applied at the end of April. During the summer we switched to Trisert KS Liquid mixed with Seamac seaweed extracts as our main feed, applied once a month with the last application in August."

Given the history of winter disease problems, Crosdale felt that rather than stop feeding the greens in autumn, which had previously been the case, the sward needed to be strengthened. "At the end of September we applied Multigreen Mini, a controlled release, high potash, low nitrogen formulation, backed by Liquid Turf Hardeners applied in equal proportions in October, November and December."

Soil samples are regularly taken in February when fertiliser content should be either non-existent or minimal, with leaf analysis carried out in June/July.

Meanwhile Neil was being advised by various turf consultants to dig up his greens.

"Last year the club were going to dig up four greens and start again which would have cost us around £100,000" he says. "I found that following our new autumn feeding regime the grass stayed in leaf until January or February and as time went on Fusarium was less of a problem. The greens have improved year on year, scaring has grown out over the winter and in spring we've had no marks which meant no over seeding. We've also gone into the winter with better grass quality. I'm not saying this would work with everyone – every course is different, but this year for the first time our club chairman has received letters praising the course."

At the beginning of July, East Herts GC hosted The Western Homes PGA three day event, screened by Sky Sport.



Steve Crosdale (left) and Neil Faubel (right) at East Herts GC

poor grass coverage. We couldn't get through a winter without heavy attacks of fusarium and each spring we had a weak grass sward as a result."

During his first year in his new job, Neil stepped up the aeration regime. "There was a root break four inches down on the sand layer because the roots didn't want to go into the clay beneath," he continues. "We did, and do, a lot of aeration and top dressing, pencil tining every two weeks throughout the year when conditions are right."

Having witnessed widely differing approaches by the two previous Head Greenkeepers, Neil decided to shop around for his nutritional programme. Headland Amenity's Steve Crosdale visited the club and took soil samples from six greens. "Looking at the results, the soil had a very high sulphur content, a very high iron content, and was low on all the major nutrients," he says. "Based on this evidence I put together a reduced

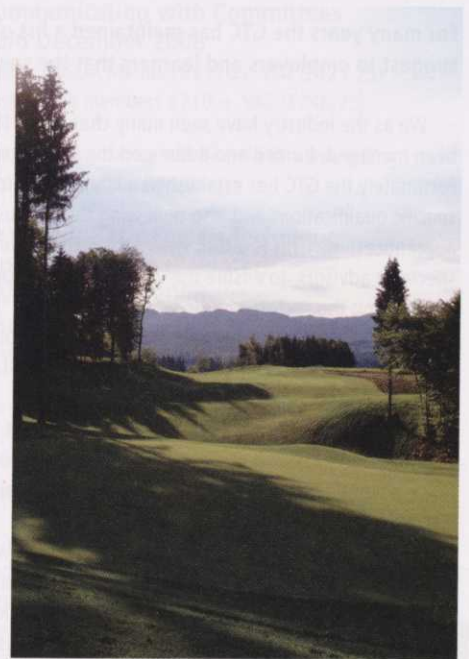
OTOCEC OPENS ITS DOORS

Slovenia's ninth golf course opens its first nine holes for play this July.

Lying in the south east of the country, close to the Croatian border, large greens, stunning mountain views and varied tee locations have created a memorable design.

Designed by Ljubica Jovetic of Swan Golf Designs, Howard Swan's design practice has been strongly represented over the past 10 years in the former Yugoslavia, having been responsible for the design of Croatia's only two modern golf courses.

The building of the second nine holes will commence next year.



PGA EUROPRO TOUR

Peter de Savary's Bovey Castle will play host to golf's brightest young stars this month, when the PGA EuroPro Tour arrives at the club and sporting estate.

Since its major renovation two years ago, the Castle's Old Course has grown in stature and reputation for its beautiful setting on Dartmoor National Park and its challenging championship par 70.

The EuroPro Tour will arrive to give the 'Tiger Woods of tomorrow' the opportunity to gain the necessary experience of competitive golf and the European Tour circuit.

The EuroPro Tour has grown in size over the past four years and in 2005 offered a prize fund of over £1 million.

Bovey Castle Head Professional Richard Lewis said: "This is another feather in the cap for the Old Course - which is now widely recognised for offering one of the most enjoyable yet challenging rounds of golf in the UK."

CONTINUED GROWTH

Grass seed specialists Barenbrug, have strengthened their sales team with the appointment of Neil Pettican.

Neil, who will be based in Norwich and cover East Anglia, joins Barenbrug with a vast array of academic and practical experience having worked in the sportsturf industry for the past ten years. After graduating from Cranfield University with a Masters degree in Sports Surface Technology, Neil worked as a Golf Course Manager and Groundsman.



Barenbrug UK Sales Manager James Ingles (left) and Neil Pettican (right)



MONITORING MATTERS

One of the GTC's main responsibilities is to monitor the delivery of education and training programmes for the greenkeeping sector.

In this article, David Golding the GTC's Education Director, explains how some of his contacts help him to ensure the quality of education and training is to the industries required standards.

For many years the GTC has maintained a list of Approved Training Providers, mainly agricultural and horticultural colleges where we suggest to employers and learners that the specialist greenkeeper courses are best delivered.

We as the industry have seen many changes in the way colleges have been managed, funded and addressed the Governments skills agenda. Fortunately the GTC has established a leading role in both developing turf specific qualifications and also reviewing the various qualifications and apprenticeships. This is a task where the GTC's technical committee adds specialist advisors, to ensure the vocational and more academic qualifications are meeting the sectors requirements.

One overall consideration through all of this groups work, is to make sure the awards relate to employment or occupational standards to use the official jargon!

We are very fortunate to have so many contacts that willingly join us and their input is invaluable. If I was to start naming them I might just happen to leave a name out and that would be unfair, so I would rather just say that the GTC do really appreciate your input.

This working group has to work within a framework established by the Lantra Sector Skills Council and Awarding Bodies such as the National Proficiency Test Council (now part of the City & Guilds Group) and the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA). It is at these meetings that the standards are discussed and now more often than not, approved due to the wide consultation process that our sector has established.

The GTC representing both the golf club employers and greenkeepers can now confidently state that we are in a prime position to ensure the content of the Sports turf vocational qualifications as well as the more college based HNC/D and Foundation Degree are as we require them. What is also very refreshing, is how the colleges, private training providers and Universities, such as Cranfield truly welcome industrial input through liaison meetings. I know that as part of the Inspection process these establishments have to show where they have industry "partnerships" and again these types of liaison meetings have been a feature for our sector since the sixties. There are some excellent personnel working for the training providers who are in regular contact with me often to support our efforts to ensure the standards within the qualifications are maintained. These people are often working either within a college or on the road, trying to implement vocational qualifications, often operating within an establishment system, which they know is far from ideal.

All I will say is that the loyalty you show to the turf sector is certainly appreciated by myself and without your tip-offs, positive feedback and overall commitment to the standards of turf courses my job and the aims and objectives of the GTC would be so much more difficult to achieve.

The GTC does feed your comments into the appropriate meetings and whilst it may take a little time, we more often than not do get a result!

The official verification and inspection of Approved Centres, is firmly the responsibility of the Awarding Bodies and the Inspectorate, but again we have forged an excellent relationship with the key personnel who operate on behalf of our sector.

All in all we do keep our eye on the ball most of the time, however we need you to work with us to ensure quality provision is available and when you feel the GTC can investigate a problem through its advisory network or indeed where excellent provision is available, please let us know.

My work with Ken and Sami at BIGGA also is great assistance, especially when the Student of the Year interviews are reviewed. It is very encouraging each year, when they report that the students who are both enjoying their work and making most progress in terms of qualifications, is when their Course Manager AND employer are involved in their training programme. If only this was the norm! Sadly too many learners on golf courses are let down by their "bosses" who still do not think that it is their job to train and educate staff!

Regular readers will know that while I do have a problem with this negative attitude and while I fully understand the current day pressures on Course Managers, I honestly believe that by becoming more formally involved in staff training you and the employer benefit tremendously and this is borne out by the students themselves. The important factor to remember in the whole concept of vocational qualifications, is that they are designed to be work-based and aimed at training staff to agreed national standards so who better to "control" the standards than Course Manager assessors? So many course managers, having attended assessor-training days, say the A1 qualification only formalises what they have been doing for years! Yes!

Many assessors feed in to me or via the GTC Liaison Officers information relating to the delivery of all the various sports turf awards. This is priceless to the GTC.

Please be reassured that the GTC will continue to work to maintain and where standards slip, improve the system for the benefit of the learner and the employer but please be part of our "honorary" advisory network, as we need your help.

Please feel free to contact the GTC on, Tel: 01347 838640
or email: david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC is supported by:

