



A Long Time Coming!

For the first time in its 10 year history, a Scottish club has won the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition. Brighthouse Bay GC near Kirkcudbright in Galloway, have scooped this year's prize with one of the most holistic and deserving entries ever. Lee Penrose reports...



Brighthouse Bay Golf Club, Dumfries and Galloway

The course forms one of the principal attractions within the larger Brighthouse Bay Holiday Park and is managed by a team of only four greenstaff under the guidance of Head Greenkeeper, Richard Davis. Owned and managed by Tom and Evelyn Gillespie, the overriding policy for the whole site states; "We at Brighthouse Bay Holiday Park are endeavouring to become the most environmentally sustainable tourist resort in the United Kingdom." Having already achieved the 'David Bellamy Gold Award' for sustainable tourism 10 years in a row, they can't be far off!

Overall Winners	Brighthouse Bay Golf Club, Dumfries and Galloway
Runners up in Winners Region	Reay Golf Club, Caithness
Northern Region Winner	St Annes Old Links Golf Club, Lancashire
Midlands Region Winner	Notts (Holinwell) Golf Club, Nottinghamshire
South West and Wales Region Winner	Royal St. Davids Golf Club, Gwynedd
South East Region Winner	Rookwood Golf Course, West Sussex
Best Newcomer	Guildford Golf Club, Surrey
Best New Initiative	The Grove Golf Centre, Herefordshire
Highly Commended 2006	Beaconsfield Golf Club, Buckinghamshire
	Bude & North Cornwall Golf Club, Cornwall
	Budock Vean Hotel Golf & Country Club, Cornwall
	Caldy Golf Club, Merseyside
	Dunnerholme Golf Club, Cumbria
	Farnham Golf Club, Surrey
	Manchester Golf Club, Gtr Manchester
	Marriott Worsley Park, Gtr Manchester
	Montrose Golf Links, Angus
	Newbury & Crookham Golf Club, Berkshire
	Newport Golf Club, Gwent
	Ratho Park Golf Club, Mid Lothian
	Royal Porthcawl Golf Club, Mid Glamorgan
	South Essex Golf Centre, Essex
	Stocksfield Golf Club, Northumberland
	The Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, Muirfield, East Lothian
	The Pines Golf Club, Dumfries and Galloway
	Wilmslow Golf Club, Cheshire

The club have previously been the recipients of two BIGGA Scottish Regional Winners Awards. These prizes have largely been awarded for the progressive environmental management throughout the clubhouse and associated complex, in addition to the excellent outreach and communication with the surrounding communities. Recently completed and ongoing projects in these areas include; construction of a reedbed for wastewater treatment, use of solar panels on clubhouse/leisure club, onsite production of compost from green waste, use of grey/recycled water for course irrigation, energy transfer technology in clubhouse/leisure club, creation of environmental signs and booklets for visitors and a comprehensive recycling programme involving almost all arising waste streams.

2006 saw a tremendous improvement in the nature conservation side of the Club's application with a significant number of habitat enhancement projects on the course. The 18 hole course nestles beautifully into its dramatic clifftop setting and appears to be timeless in character despite being only seven years old. The development of appropriately sited and managed deep rough grassland contributes to its air of naturalness while providing home to breeding skylark, adder and a host of other wildlife. Gorse has become a dominant feature of the

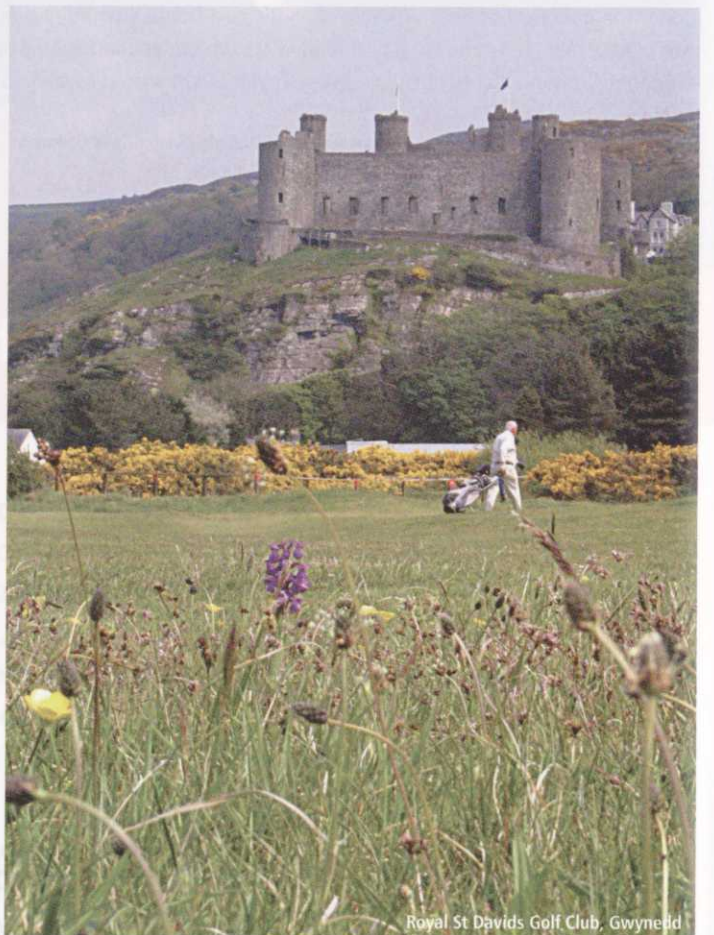
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Reay Golf Club, Caithness



St. Annas Old Links Golf Club, Lancashire



Royal St Davids Golf Club, Gwynedd

central section of the course in recent years as it has developed into a mature to degenerate plant and marched aggressively through the high quality acid-grasslands. A strong gorse management programme has now been put into place in order to retain good quality specimens in the correct places while restoring grassland where appropriate.

Complete species lists of all flora and fauna (including a comprehensive mollusc list) have been professionally compiled so as to provide a basis for ongoing management and a record of the value of the course for local wildlife. The club have also engaged the services of the Scottish Golf Environment group to undertake an 'Appraisal of the Landscape and Cultural Heritage' of the course which recognises and provides management advice on all aspects of archaeological interest. One of the most important features highlighted within is the extensive network of dry stone walls (known locally as dykes) which provide outstanding habitat for specialist birds, reptiles and several types of lichen.

The most northerly golf course on mainland Britain is the proud title held by the Runners Up in the Winners region, **Reay GC**. Managed by a 'team' of one greenstaff (plus an extra man in the summer!), the traditional link course sits adjacent the sea 12 miles to the west of Thurso in Caithness. Do not be fooled, however, into thinking that such a modest club only contribute to the environment by accident. Proactive grassland, stream and dune management, composting and scrub removal are all excellent on course projects that are emphasised to the local community and tourists by nature walks and wildlife leaflets available. Perhaps Reay's best asset however is the minimal input approach to the whole site. Traditional greenkeeping and maintaining the status quo mean that this course is one of the most truly 'sustainable' in the UK.

In the North of England, **St Annes Old Links** were successful in only their second application to the competition in securing the regional title. An excellent individual project in the creation of a large practice tee utilising waste spoil from other onsite work was the highlight of this year's entry. As with all other winners in 2006, a holistic recycling policy is well in place with other important projects such as relict heathland restoration and scrub control on the golf course. Down into the Midlands; **Notts (Hollinwell) Golf Club** secured the regional title for the third year running. The club are widely recognised for their extensive heathland creation and specific habitat management on the golf course and have been highlighted in previous years of the competition for the construction of reedbeds for wastewater treatment.

Royal St Davids GC, in Harlech, have won the South West and Wales Region in their first year of entry, and staved off some very stiff competition this year in historically the weakest region. Working closely with The Countryside Council for Wales and STRI in maintaining the Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) which covers some 95% of the course, the club are undertaking extensive grassland management trials in order to develop the most appropriate techniques in maintaining a good quality sward for both wildlife and golf.

The South East Region has previously hailed more overall winners than any other in the history of the competition. 2006 again saw some extremely strong entries from a range of golf clubs. After much deliberation by the judges, the public pay and play **Rookwood Golf Course** in West Sussex were finally chosen as regional winners. Owned by Horsham District Council, the course is managed sympathetically for wildlife with buffer zones developed around all water bodies for breeding water fowl. In 2006 when concerns about golf courses using excessive water for irrigation made national news, Rookwood took it upon themselves to put a few ill-educated pessimists straight and produce a series of signs and leaflets about the strict water use policy on the course. The promotional materials that contain the tag line 'Using water wisely' are professionally produced. What is more, they have been displayed in high profile areas, on the roadside at the entrance to the course, on the



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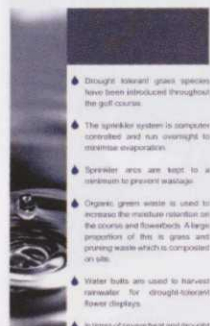
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- Drought tolerant grass species have been introduced throughout the golf course.
- The sprinkler system is computer controlled and run overnight to minimise evaporation.
- Sprinkler areas are kept to a minimum to prevent wastage.
- Organic green waste is used to increase the moisture retention on the course and flowerbeds. A large proportion of this is grass and growing waste which is composted on site.
- Water butts are used to harvest rainwater for drought tolerant flower displays.
- In areas of overheat and drought heights of cut are increased and additional organic dressing is spread to reduce evaporation.
- Flocks and water features are ecologically maintained to ensure maximum collection and storage, whilst encouraging the biodiversity of these natural wildlife habitats.

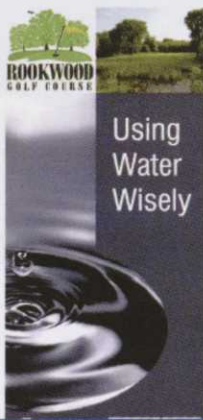
Further Information

Rookwood Golf Course is an exceptional public pay and play golf course. No membership fee is payable. The course is set in an area of gently undulating parkland, providing excellent use of the large number of mature trees with nitrogenous compound greens. The course is rich in wildlife and complements neighbouring Wainham Nature Reserve.

For further information on Rookwood's water-saving measures please contact:

Stephany Blake,
Rookwood Golf Course,
Robin Hood Lane,
Wainham, Hornham,
West Sussex, RH12 3RH.

Telephone: 01403 252123,
Email: info@rookwoodgolfcourse.co.uk
www.rookwoodgolfcourse.co.uk



Rookwood Golf Course,
West Sussex



Why do we need to think carefully about our use of water?

Water conservation is increasingly becoming an important consideration for us all. Drought levels in South East England are at their lowest in 20 years.

As of 2nd April 2006, almost 13 million people have been restricted from using lawnmowers and sprinklers. Under the Water Resources Act 1981, Drought Orders are now being put in place across parts of the South East, to limit water use even further.

Low rainfall continues to put pressure on the region's limited water supply.

How does Rookwood Golf Course currently manage its water usage?

• Using water wisely has always been a high priority at Rookwood Golf Course through its design, construction and on-going management.

• No mains water supply is used for the irrigation of any part of the 18 hole golf course or 9 hole pitch and putt course. The irrigation system only uses rainwater and harvested water.

• This water is collected from the course drainage system and external roadways. This is topped up from the neighbouring millpond but only during flood conditions and over the autumn and winter months. The lake provides an important natural resource (lake). The lake holds enough water for over three years of drought and over seven years at current consumption. The lake provides not only an invaluable water storage facility, but is also a feature in itself offering an attractive habitat for wildlife.



• The use of irrigation water has been carefully monitored over the past few years and has been reduced to under half the recommended maximum, for courses of a similar or smaller size, as recommended by the Environment Agency.

• In 2005, Rookwood Golf Course won the South East England BGGGA (British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association) Golf Environment Award, conservation of natural resources including water contributed to this success.



course and in the pro shop and club house leaving no-one who passes or visits the course in doubt that the club is fully committed to water conservation.

Water use features strongly in the 'Best New Initiative' prize in the 2006 competition also. **The Grove Golf Centre** in Herefordshire (not to be confused with its namesake in Hertfordshire) have recently installed a collection and treatment system, which will capture all water used in the clubhouse and surroundings, in addition to rainwater landing on roofs and hardstandings. The water is treated via an underground series of chambers before passing through a reedbed and into a storage lake and used for course irrigation. This makes the club completely self sufficient in terms of course irrigation and moreover makes each litre of water paid for work twice as hard!

Guildford GC have clinched the coveted Best New Entrant Prize this year for their excellent conservation work on the course. Restoring relict heathland on a presently wooded golf course,

forms a large part of the greenstaff's annual workload and involves assisting in maintenance of a nearby nature reserve in return for heather seed/turfes. An outstanding project emphasised to the judges is the Club working closely with Surrey Wildlife Trust in placing 30 dormouse boxes alongside the 8th hole. Over the last year the Mammal Recording Officer has recorded two mating pairs - pretty good for a species named on the IUCN Red List and the subject of a UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

All in all, 2006 has been another excellent year for the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, Brighthouse Bay finally came out overall winners, however they were pushed all the way to the last by one of the regional winners. The competition is consistently getting harder to judge as the clubs involved in sound ecological management has risen from a small percentage to a majority. The full list of clubs achieving a prize or highly commended certificate is printed below, which I hope highlights the fact the competition is open to all clubs irrelevant of size or history and that no biased is placed on prestige...only effort and attitude.

As always, I would like to offer the sincere appreciation of all involved with The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition to our generous sponsors at Ransomes Jacobson, Syngenta, CourseCare and Scotts. If it were not for the support of these environmentally progressive companies, the Competition would not be sustained as the most prestigious annual environmental event in golf.



Guildford Golf Club, Surrey



The Grove Golf Centre, Herefordshire



Co-sponsoring the competition for the first time this year are Course Care and the company are proud to be associated with BIGGA and sponsor the Environment Competition.

They see environmental issues as a priority and do as much as they can to protect the environment by recycling, taking their environmental responsibilities seriously. They manage a Waste Transfer Station at their Keighley base and are fully licensed by the Environment Agency (licence No. EAWML/65417). They operate in an environmentally responsible way and, for instance, have installed purpose made plant and equipment to process and recycle much of the collected waste. Currently 95% of the waste collected from golf and turf management customers under their Waste Away scheme is recycled. This includes the many thousands of plastic chemical containers. Instead of taking them to landfill, they are turned into chips, which are re-processed and turned into useful rot proof items for use around the course; fence posts, seating, walkway, sleepers etc. Many other products are recycled and include; waste oil, aerosols, filters, fluorescent tubes, batteries, redundant plastic wheelie bins and window frames, old oil tanks, etc.

With the advent of the new WEEE regulations (waste electrical and electronic equipment), they have expanded their waste management services to include items such as old fridges, computers, TV's and monitors, printers, radios and phones etc. They are encouraging waste reduction through recycling and composting by customers too. Their new composting machines will turn grass clippings, twigs, branches, leaves, green kitchen waste and all that cardboard from the pro-shop into compostable material.



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Tyre specialists will typically carry a wide assortment of both new and used tyres, the latter perhaps providing a more economical means of kitting out a little used but still viable item of equipment

What Can A Tyre Specialist Do For You?

You would not ask for seed mixture or top dressing advice from a tyre specialist. So why is it we often ask tyre specialists to supply a tyre as opposed to seeking their recommendations? James de Havilland discusses...

First things first. It is all too easy to assume that a tyre wholesale company or fitting outlet is also a tyre specialist. The reality is that it can take some shopping around to find someone who really understands your needs and can source the right tyres. By the right tyres, incidentally, that means more than just supplying the correct size and tread pattern. Although they all have being round and black in common, tyres can vary hugely in what they can offer.

Buying replacement tyres for an existing item of equipment should be easy enough. A like for like replacement will typically be a sensible choice. This will apply particularly to ride on mowers. Most designs do not really allow for a different size of tyre to be fitted. That is not to say a 'better' alternative brand may not be available, but in most cases the same type and size of tyre to the original will remain the best choice.

It is when looking at other equipment, to include trailed equipment and tractors, that a bit of lateral thinking can help. A good example is an old four tonne capacity trailer used for odd jobs in winter. Fitted with rock hard tyres, the trailer has restricted use. The right wheel and tyre combination, however, could see the same trailer used to ferry materials around the course year round behind a suitable shod tractor.



Modern mowers will typically be supplied with tyres optimised to suit their application, with little room for alternatives. Tyre design and size availability does change, however, so it may be worth checking with a specialist if seeking alternatives, particularly on an older model



You cannot tell which of these tyres will be the best for working on turf simply by looking. Different carcass strengths and construction methods will influence load bearing capacity and inflation pressures. It is better to seek advice than try and become a tyre expert

Buying a new set of wheel rims and tyres for an old trailer may seem a bit extreme, particularly with modern flotation rubber costing as much as it does at present. Weigh up this cost against the cost of investing in a new trailer or alternative such as a utility vehicle however, and the sums can start to make sense. The trick is to see what is on offer.

RADIAL VERSUS CROSS PLY

If a tyre supplier blankly states radial tyres are superior to those with cross ply construction, then you all you need to know is that they are not a specialist. Although radials may well suit modern cars they are not always right for equipment that operates on turf. Indeed the Goodyear Terra Tire, which many would argue set the 'flotation' ball rolling back in the 1970s, was and remained a cross ply until production ceased in 2005. (Goodyear sold its agricultural division in the US to Titan Tire).

Frankly the tyre's construction is not something to be concerned about. What is far more relevant is the tyre's ability to do a specific set of tasks. So instead of asking for a radial tyre to fit a certain make and model of tractor, the better approach is to outline what the tyre will have to do.

SELECTING THE RIGHT TYRE

There are two elements to this. The first is to determine what existing tyre and wheel rim are fitted. If these are not doing what is asked of them, identify what the problem is. In most cases it will be that the tyres footprint and inflation pressures are incompatible with working on certain areas of the course.

At this stage, the solution will seem to be obvious. Fit as large a set of tyres as possible onto the existing rims. As long as the diameter of the tyres matches those of the originals, the axle ratios on 4WD equipment should remain the same. The problem is that this is actually more difficult to achieve than may at first be appreciated.

An alternative approach is to consider what the machine in question is used for. In the case of a tractor, it can pay to retain the original wheels and tyres and take a second approach; purchasing a new set of wheels to go with what may be purpose designed flotation tyres. A good tyre specialist will be able to come up with a broad choice, offering recommendations that could allow a 45hp tractor to have a large enough footprint to safely work on the greens.



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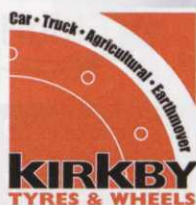
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What Can A Tyre Specialist Do For You?



A wide, small diameter rim is the key to fitting the tyres with the lowest ground bearing pressures. A specialist will be able to come up with a wheel and tyre package to suit specific demands



This well-balanced tractor tyre combination is of little value if used to work with trailed kit without similarly well thought through wheel and tyre equipment. Fitting new tyres and rims to an old trailer can considerably enhance its versatility



It is tractors that will benefit most from the attention of a specialist supplier, the small diameter but wide rim fitted to this tractor obviously allows a tyre choice that would not be possible on standard wheel equipment



Tractor manufacturers will offer a choice of standard tyres, with dealers perhaps offering a further set of alternatives. But it is tyre specialists who may come up with the best package. Before selecting a tractor, see what tyres are available to fit. Remember also that front driven axles need tyres compatible with those at the rear

This level of flotation may simply not be achievable with tyres that will fit the original rims supplied with the tractor. Of equal importance, retaining the 'old' wheels and tyres for other duties, such as loader work, will help enhance the life of the flotation tyres. A set of tyres can easily outlive the original tractor if only used on turf and not hard surfaces.

GEARING UP TO SWAP OVER WHEEL SETS

Although one set of wheels and tyres for a given vehicle may well suit a course where there is enough equipment to be reserved for certain duties, being able to swap wheels to suit a specific task is a viable alternative. A decent jack and air tools can make removing and fitting replacements much easier, perhaps 20 minutes with practice.

There is also no reason why certain wheels cannot be swapped between different equipment. A wide set of top dresser tyres could well fit a trailer. The trick is to think how tyres can be mixed and matched.

NO NEED TO STICK TO ONE MAKE OR DESIGN

There is nothing in the rulebook that says it is wrong to mix different brands or patterns of tyre between axles. A tractor can have a set of Galaxy rubber on the back with Titan tyres on the front. As long as the rolling diameters marry up on 4WD axles to prevent torque wind up, there will not be a problem. In some instances, running the 'wrong' tyre combination may be fine if the driven axle up front is not engaged.

FIND A SPECIALIST AND STICK WITH HIM

As mentioned at the outset, there is a difference between a tyre specialist and a tyre supplier. The latter will be able to source and fit tyres you choose. A specialist will be able to offer advice and come up with tyres to meet specific needs. If you know what you want and know what new tyres are coming onto the market, a tyre supplier will be fine. For the rest of us, it is better to ask a specialist to help out.

With thanks to Dick Anderson, R H Claydon Ltd (www.rhc.co.uk) and Les Moreton, Sam Moreton and Son (www.farmerstyre.co.uk).

Paving the Way for the Future

Scott MacCallum looks at the humble cart path and how it can help to transform a golf club.

Perhaps it's as we get older, but it seems as though modern day living involves looking for labour saving opportunities, or it could even be that we're lulled by marketing gurus into thinking that all self respecting golfers should travel in style.



I'm referring to the fact that more and more golf clubs are offering buggies as an option and that as a result more and more clubs are looking to build cart paths to accommodate them and reduce wear on the playing surface.

Paths are what could be described as a necessary evil at modern day clubs. It can be hard to make them look attractive but they do an important job and with buggy hire a potentially lucrative revenue stream for clubs finding a way of integrating them into the layout of the course is becoming increasingly worthwhile.

Not every golf course is capable of coping with a cart path. Space is an obvious issue. Many courses were built even before cars were a popular form of transport never mind buggies to transport golfers around a golf course and with that in mind, space around greens in particular was not built into plans for any future path. Health and Safety issues are also key, with slopes often rendering paths and buggies unusable - courses split by roads and devoid of tunnels or bridges are also not conducive to buggy golf.

If a course is deemed suitable for four wheeled travel as well as the more traditional two legged variety a path is much the best way to ensure damage to the playing areas is kept to a minimum. Giving free rein to buggies can cause erosion in some areas and compaction in others while, although it sounds all too obvious, a path is far in away the best way to ensure golfers stick to a prescribed route.

If a cart path has been identified as an option to explore the next decision is what it should be made from and there again there are several options to look into.

Woodchippings or shell can be ideal for some clubs for footpaths but not so good for cart paths as retaining the materials within the confines of the path is extremely difficult.

Concrete or paving is much more efficient and long lasting but is expensive to lay.

Other options include artificial turf which assists in blending the path into the rest of the golf course.

"Verdeturf is an 18mm open pile artificial grass, which is UV and colour stabilised. The tufted pile of the grass is to be filled to within 2-3mm off the surface with kiln dried sand. This sand holds the grass in place, eliminating the necessity for nails or other fixings. The sand also protects the tufts from spiked shoes and provides a natural appearance to the finished installation," said Beth Lucas, of Verdeturf.

The company also produces Super Verdeggrass which does not require a sand dressing so should be held in place with either all-weather adhesive or galvanised nails. Super Verdeggrass can also be used for covering bridges, where the weight of the sand in the Verdeturf may be too heavy. It is also very popular on areas near the clubhouse, where a non sand filled product is preferred," said Beth.

Tenax tackles the problem of erosion with their GridLock pavers. These are injection moulded cellular structures which hold the stabilising material in place preventing any further erosion.

"Manufactured from HDPE, GridLock is resistant to oil, chemicals and extremes of temperature and has the strength to withstand loads in excess of 170 tonnes per square metre," explained Michael Carr, of Tenax