



Name: Graham Brumpton
Age: 32
Address: Ipswich, Suffolk
Golf Club: Ipswich (Purdis Heath)

Graham is Assistant Greenkeeper at Ipswich GC, Purdis Heath, Suffolk - a position he has held for 15 and a half years, working under the watchful eye of Course Manager, Norman Fenwick.

Having studied at Otley College, Graham has just completed his NVQ Level 3. Graham's hobbies are football, gardening, surfing the net and reading.

"One thing I can guarantee is that whatever happens in my career, I will most definitely keep progressing as far as I possibly can with my training, whether it's a nationally recognised college certificate, attending seminars, or speaking to people that have been in the greenkeeping trade and have learnt through their own experiences because, at the end of the day, you can never stop learning," said Graham.



Name: James Billington
Age: 23
Address: Northwich, Cheshire
Golf Club: Portal Premier Golf and Country Club

James has been Assistant Greenkeeper at Portal Premier Golf and Country Club, Tarporley, Cheshire, for three years, working under Course Manager, Justin Lee's supervision.

Currently studying for NVQ Level 3 at Reaseheath College, James is keen on many outdoor activities, including angling and has recently begun to play some casual golf with friends at the club.

"After studying Environmental Management, I attained employment as a trainee at a municipal course. After one year I felt the urge to progress to a private members course and did so with an assistants position at Portal Premier," said James.



Name: Steven Paul Stroomer
Age: 37
Address: Stevenage, Herts
Golf Club: Brocket Hall

Steven has been Course Manager at Brocket Hall GC, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, for the past 10 months. Steven was promoted to CM of the Palmerston course after two years at the club, completing NVQ Level 2 in Amenity Horticulture and currently studying at Oaklands College for his NVQ Level 3 in Sports Turf.

Club Captain of Datchworth Cricket Club, Steven is heavily involved in the maintenance of the cricket ground and clubhouse facilities.

"I hope to complete NVQ Level 3 ahead of schedule and plan to move to the position of Course Manager of a club of my own in the next five years," said Steven.



Name: Kenneth Gilroy
Age: 25
Address: Shiskine, Isle of Arran
Golf Club: Shiskine Golf and Tennis Club

Kenneth has been First Assistant at Shiskine Golf and Tennis Club, Blackwaterfoot, Isle of Arran, for the past three months, working under the watchful eye of Head Greenkeeper Stewart Fotheringham.

Currently studying NVQ Level 3 with Gosta Training Ltd, Kenneth enjoys football, golf, rugby, music and reading.

"To be recognised for the work you do is very satisfying, so when the college nominated me for Toro Student of the Year, I was ecstatic. The tag 'Toro Student of the Year' speaks for itself...greenkeeping to me is the same as playing golf - the more you practice, spend time at and commit yourself to it, the more you get back and the greater the awards," said Kenneth.

You've heard from all eight National Contenders but who will excel in the Grand Final and win Toro Student of the Year 2006?

Entailing a further interview and the completion of a survey of Aldwark Manor GC, (evaluating nine of the holes), home of BIGGA HQ - there will be tough competition at the September final.

The amazing prize involves an eight week trip to the USA, where, for six weeks, the University of Massachusetts will be home, as the lucky winner completes a residential turf management study course. The trip also includes visits to the Toro Headquarters in Minneapolis, the Toro Irrigation Division and to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in Anaheim, in February 2007.

The two runners-up will be invited to attend the Continue to Learn programme during Harrogate Week 2007. All the finalists will receive a voucher for free entry to the Continue to Learn seminars being held at Harrogate Week 2007.



Name: Stephen Eager
Age: 28
Address: Newtownabbey, Glengormley
Golf Club: Fortwilliam

Stephen has been Greenkeeper at Fortwilliam GC, Belfast, for the past year, where Michael O'Neill is Course Manager.

Currently studying for NVQ Level 2 at Greenmount College, Stephen enjoys playing golf and fishing and won Golfer of the Year in 2005.



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By Henry Bechelet



Henry Bechelet

"If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right."- Henry Ford

KILLING TIME?

I hate articles that start with quotes. This article is about attitude and doing what it takes.

The kind of greenkeeper you are will depend upon your attitude towards things. It will depend on what you care about. Your knowledge, skill and standards will all impact on the condition of the course.

Ultimately, the condition of the turf is a reflection of you.

Attitude is what we think and feel about things. It stems from our values and beliefs and it guides the way we behave. Our attitudes help us form internal goals and they power our drive to achieve them.

OPEN UP

Attitudes can be held about anything. The strength of feeling will depend on the subject. Our attitudes are unique but they can also borrow from those we admire. They can be positive and negative in their outlook and impact. They are formed as we go through life and they can change over time or depending on mood. We can master our own attitudes if we need to, primarily by learning.

Attitudes stem from what we believe and what we value. Our beliefs are what we perceive to be true and they come largely from experience but they are also formed through education. Our values are what we view as being good or right. These are our principles and they help determine our

goals in life. For example, I value the qualities of the finer grasses and believe that it is possible to establish their dominance in golf greens. I am driven to write articles to try to encourage the same attitude in you. While you are still reading I have a chance. I need to tell you that success is not just about technical knowledge it's also about having the right attitude when implementing it.

The relationship between attitude and behaviour is not straightforward. External "intervening factors" can have an impact on our response to feelings. We don't live in isolation. For instance, the situation may preclude the desired course of action (through lack of resources), unforeseen events may have a negative impact (bad weather) and other people may be influencing the situation (golfers!). People also commonly have conflicting attitudes about things that might hamper proceedings. Valuing the finer grasses as well as a verdant green colour won't get you very far with the finer grasses.

Some theories about attitude take into account strength of feeling. Sometimes people judge different aspects of things separately and then average an overall impression. How much we like someone might compensate for deficiencies in results. Be careful if you make important decisions in this way, it may muddle things up.

We need a clear consistency of attitude for action to be properly focused on goal achievement. The greenkeeper needs to be clear in his

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values and beliefs to have a chance of producing the desired results. This works in all areas; course presentation, construction work, surface playing quality, staff motivation etc.

INSPIRATION

Attitude has its biggest impact on motivation. Our internal drive to achieve. Strength of conviction coupled with an objective focus will achieve your goals. Encouraging the finer grasses needs a plan based on sound principles, coupled with a strong will to succeed. A positive attitude achieves ambition then moves you on to bigger and better things. A positive attitude can be inspired from your peers, consultants, articles, books, your successes and even failures, it just depends on your attitude.

ASPIRATION

For UK greenkeeping, the "bigger and better thing" is more sustainable putting surfaces. Progressive thinkers demand the establishment of quality surfaces with the finer grasses. We are talking about putting surfaces comprising an even blend of bents and/or fescues with minimal annual meadow-grass. Establishing this kind of equilibrium gives high quality surfaces with reduced vulnerabilities. They are easier to look after and cost less to maintain. You know the arguments.

To achieve this goal you may have to alter your attitude about turf management. The technique is simple but slightly different than the common belief, so to pull it off you might need to change your ways. Essentially, all you have to do is move the environment away from constant aggressive surface preparations, to one more settled with occasional controlled beneficial stress. These concepts are discussed in more detail in the article "Changing the Nature of your Greens" which is freely available at: www.stri.co.uk. To succeed you will have to stick to your newfound principles for an uncomfortable while, in the face of imperceptible changes. Be clear on this, we are not talking about stressing-out your greens, that theory is now redundant, we are talking about gradual change without deterioration. The transition to the finer grasses can be slow and it can test your resolve. You will need to stay positive and fully focused at all times.

COPPING OUT?

I know 90% of UK greenkeepers already value the finer grasses. Everyone would take a bent/fescue sward tomorrow and be proud to show it off. So why aren't they more commonplace? Where are we failing? This is already a goal for a lot of us and it has been for years.

I don't believe that our past failures are due to a lack of greenkeeper knowledge. All the greenkeepers I work with are very knowledgeable and highly skilled. Maybe it's the way the knowledge is being applied. You might be taking the easy way out. We should not discount the impact of

possible "intervening factors" throwing us off. Golfers who value colour, fertiliser salesmen who value their bonus or advisors who value the easy option may be to blame. Just because we like someone doesn't mean that they are the best person to ask about good greenkeeping. I don't know the answer but there are probably a lot of things at play. I do think that lack of greenkeeper belief is a big factor in our failure to properly establish the finer grasses. A lack of supportive evidence may be a reason for this.

WHO DO YOU TRUST?

If you want to favour the finer grasses you have to believe that it's possible. If you want to know how to go about it there are a number of sources available. There are true believers out there who are willing to help. It might be time to learn from people who know what they are talking about. You will easily sniff-out the charlatans.

WE WERE ALL YOUNG ONCE

A lot of this is about advocating traditional greenkeeping values. Traditional minded greenkeepers who already value and strive for the finer grasses tend to have a no-nonsense, down-to-earth attitude. The intervening factors don't get a look-in. Some greenkeepers in this highly technical age might have the attitude that traditional greenkeeping method is out-of-date and opt for more gratifying methods. Judicious fertilising and irrigating is just not as attractive as the higher input, more aggressive approach. What the new clothes generation might not appreciate is that the traditional greenkeeping values have been hard earned. There is no point getting older if you don't get wiser. At some point we all realise that no matter how good a greenkeeper you are Poa annua will keep on punishing you. It is not a good friend.

HELP!

The two developments in recent times have been; the Danish model of encouraging the fescues; and the move by The R&A to champion a wider adoption of their techniques to promote better and more sustainable surfaces. The Danes are already walking the walk and I'm sure that they'd be delighted to talk to you. The R&A are putting their money where their mouth is and funding research into this area to come up with the proof. Their website (www.bestcourseforgolf.org) is also very informative. If you need convincing, help is at hand. The STRI are at the forefront of all these developments. To do what it takes, start by opening your mind to the possibility of the finer grasses. Now is the time to take your fate for a ride.

Henry Bechelet is the STRI Turfgrass Agronomist covering North and Eastern England. Henry may be contacted by email at henry.bechelet@stri.co.uk or via www.stri.co.uk



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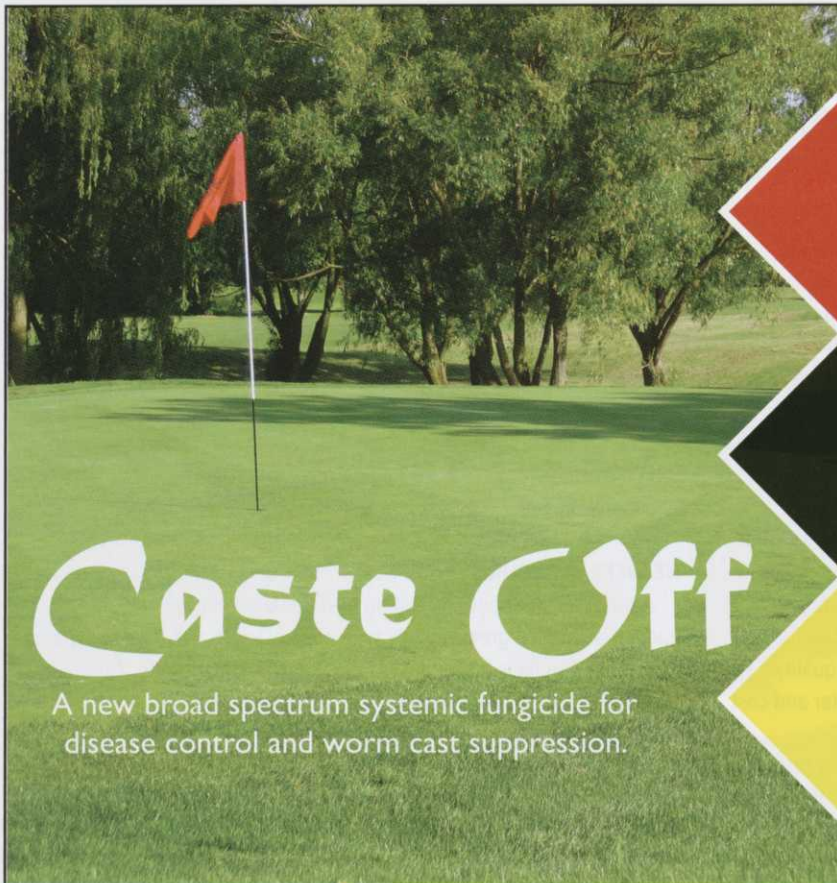
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Available with and without filler, golf course tees need to be professionally installed on a prepared base to produce a consistently level and free-draining surface. Recommended minimum size is 4 yards square (3.66m x 3.66m)

A photograph showing two golfers on a golf course. One golfer in the foreground is wearing a grey shirt and dark trousers, leaning over to hit a golf ball on a green. The other golfer in the background is wearing a light blue shirt and white trousers, standing and watching. The green is covered in a synthetic turf material. In the background, there are trees and a large, multi-story building under a blue sky with some clouds.

All-weather golf surfaces unaffected by drought

Bill Lloyd discusses...

Growing pressure on water supplies is forcing many turf professionals to look closely at ways of reducing their dependency, on what is being seen as an increasingly precious commodity.

The prospect of longer, hotter summers and drier, cooler winters means that economies will have to be made in the way that home owners and businesses utilise the UK's shrinking water resources. If water-saving measures are not adopted voluntarily, then we can all look forward to more hosepipe bans, drought orders and other unwelcome actions designed to reduce the use of non-essential water.

Golf course irrigation systems that have been installed or upgraded at considerable cost during the past 30 years or so will be of little use if there is no water available to pump through them.

Yet, there is a proven and cost-effective way of producing and maintaining good looking, high performing, low upkeep playing surfaces that requires no water and is widely available to all golf courses.

Synthetic turf has made huge forward advances in recent years, moving very close to the real thing in terms of its appearance, its feel and the way that the surface reacts to the striking of a golf ball.

These advances have been achieved through the adoption of new materials, better manufacturing techniques and improved installation methods. A further element is the use of special sand-like fillers, such as Turfill®, to pack the spaces between the fibres producing a free-draining "turf" at depths of up to 2in (50mm). The result is a range of surfaces that deliver virtually all of the characteristics of natural turf, even down to creating backspin on the ball and fully inserting a tee peg.

Top players say that striking a golf ball directly from a professionally-installed synthetic tee feels little different from striking the ball off natural turf. The jarring associated with an unforgiving tee mat or the early rubber-backed surfaces is gone, absorbed by the combination of dense, grass-like synthetic fibres surrounded by a deep, sand-like filler.

One immediate benefit is that the surface does not suffer the costly damage experienced when players take a turf divot in wet or very dry conditions. Even better from the maintenance aspect is that synthetic turf

requires no mowing, no aeration and no watering to maintain its colour, feel or appearance.

An ironic aspect of the synthetic turf surfaces, already in use at many golf clubs throughout the UK and Ireland, is that the majority were installed to alleviate the wear, tear and puddling of natural turf caused during periods of wetter weather by golfers' feet and the movement of trolleys, golf buggies and turf maintenance equipment.

First used more than 10 years ago to create highly-acceptable full size winter tees, synthetic turf surfaces are now in widespread use across the UK. The latest materials can be specified in virtually any shape, size and fibre length (filled and unfilled) to provide an economical, low maintenance, highly realistic alternative to grass, that is totally unaffected by drought.

In doing so, all-weather surfaces are able to complement fine turf both as an alternative playing surface and as an aid to recovery following adverse weather and high wear.

For those who have yet to consider or install an all-weather golf surface, following is a list of potential applications with installation and maintenance requirements.

GOLF COURSE TEES AND PRACTICE TEES

Available in a variety of fibre lengths for use with and without filler, the best synthetic golf course tees and golf practice tees need to be professionally installed on a properly-constructed base that allows free drainage and will remain level and true for years to come.

Filled surfaces are ideal as an alternative to a natural golf course tee because the all-weather synthetic "turf" looks and performs just like natural grass. The depth of filler means that golfers can play off a standard tee peg or hit the ball directly from the surface.



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All-weather golf surfaces unaffected by drought



Installed without filler onto a prepared base, all-weather practice tees offer a durable and rewarding surface that combines excellent ball striking abilities with low maintenance

Professional and low handicap golfers are impressed that they are able to "work" the ball in exactly the same way that they can off top quality natural turf.

Being very similar in playing quality to a normal grass tee, it is most important that an all-weather filled surface is kept free of soil and mud to avoid clogging, compaction and poor drainage. The filler will also need topping-up as it settles down and is displaced by spiked shoes, the action of a metal or wooden club and rain water. An annual "birthday" is highly recommended to keep the surface in prime playing condition.

An alternative for high wear practice tees and other locations where regular maintenance is difficult or uneconomical is to use a surface without the addition of filler. Also installed on a properly prepared base, the latest nylon materials offer a rewarding and durable tee surface that provides excellent ball-striking characteristics with minimal maintenance.

Many golf clubs and teaching academies such as the National Golf Centre at Woodhall Spa have installed large all-weather unfilled practice tees, typically around 25 yards (23m) in length, to improve standards and help speed the recovery of natural grass.

PATHWAYS, CARTWAYS, STANDING AREAS AND LAWNS

Utilising much shorter fibres than those employed in the construction of all-weather tees, the material used for pathways and similar high-wear areas offers a very durable surface that is both attractive to look at and safe and silent to walk on.

Installed onto a properly prepared base to promote good drainage and long-term stability, such surfaces are in use already at many high throughput golf courses helping to combat turf wear and soil erosion in areas of concentrated foot fall such as waiting and standing zones alongside tees, dedicated pathways between tees and greens, and on bridges and their approaches.

Carnoustie Links, for example, has made extensive use of synthetic turf to minimise wear on pathways and bridges crossing burns.

Normally filled to provide a resilient and attractive surface that looks just like natural grass, all-weather pathway turf - as it is commonly known - can be used also for patios, pro-shop approaches and as a highly realistic, prestige and low maintenance replacement for lawns and verges.

PUTTING AND CHIPPING GREENS

With hand watering still practised on a number of natural grass putting and chipping practice greens, the installation of a full-size synthetic replacement could be good news for many hard-pressed greenkeepers charged with producing the best possible putting surface on all greens in times of drought (and also monsoon!).



This tournament quality filled putting and chipping surface is suitable for applications including golf club putting greens, teaching academies, golf resorts and home practice

The latest crush-resistant, filled nylon turf putting surfaces look, play and feel remarkably like the real thing, offering a tournament quality finish and a true roll of the ball. The addition of a filler means that the surface also has excellent shot-holding characteristics for those wanting to practise their short game.

All-weather practice greens are now in use at many golf clubs providing members with the same high quality all-weather practice surfaces used by a number of leading European Tour professionals at their homes.

At the golf club or at home, an all-weather putting green will require minimal maintenance and no applications of water to remain good looking, consistent and true throughout the year.

GOLF GREENS

Perhaps the most controversial use of synthetic turf is as a replacement for a natural grass golf green. However, this application is not new and there are many golf clubs in the USA and a number on this side of the Atlantic that have adopted synthetic materials for the overall benefit of the golf course, its members and visitors.

The principle advantages are low maintenance and no requirement for water with the ability to produce a true and consistent playing surface all year round. These plus points make such greens very suitable for commercial pay and play courses and for academies, schools and hotels where the number of qualified greenkeeping staff is low or non-existent.

Laid on a stable, free-draining base, the materials used in the construction of an all-weather golf green are very similar to those employed for synthetic putting and chipping greens with filler helping provide an acceptable putting surface with good shot-holding capabilities.

INDOOR PUTTING GREENS

Ideal as a replacement for a high maintenance, water-demanding natural grass putting green, indoor putting greens are being used increasingly for coaching, for practice and for putter assessment and development.

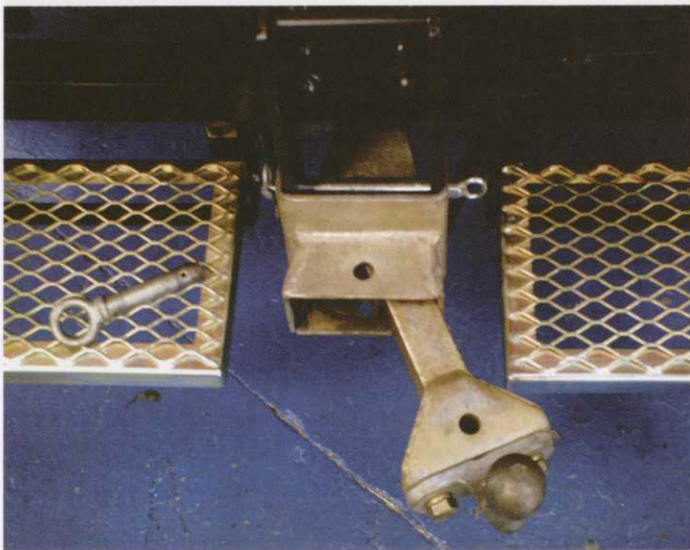
Permanently installed on a timber or solid base - the latter with the option of undulations - or in the form of a quickly-assembled modular putting green, the latest filled nylon surfaces offer a true ball roll, excellent speed and a highly realistic appearance. As a bonus, they can be produced in shapes and sizes to fit just about any space.

*Huxley Golf have provided advice and assistance with this article.
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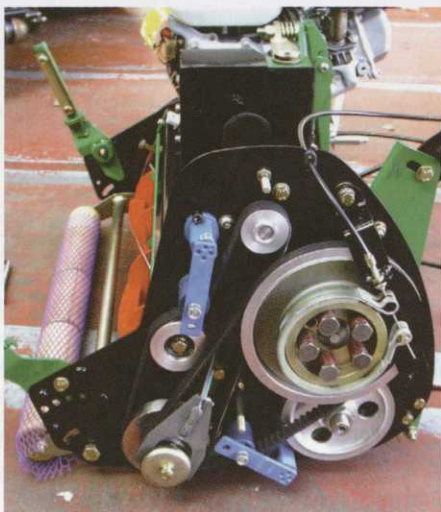
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