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A guide to who's who at BIGGA

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April 2007

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24-26 **Honey I Shrunk the Grass!**
One of the new "tools" which the modern day Course Manager has at his or her disposal is the growth suppressant. Slowing down the natural rate of growth is great for cutting down on mowing, but are we messing with nature and is there a downside? Greenkeeper International spoke with six top greenkeepers with differing but equally interesting views on the subject.

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Welcome



LIES, DAMNED LIES AND STATISTICS

There are, so the saying goes, "Lies, damned lies and statistics." and it might well be right.

We've been running a poll on your new website about Augusta Syndrome on the question, "Does Augusta Syndrome have a big impact at your club with members demanding Masters-like conditions?" – and, as I write, the voting stands at:- A Lot 21%; A Little 41% and Not at All 38%.

Now you can read that in several ways. You could say that only one in five Course Managers experience real grief because of Augusta Syndrome and that two out of five Course Managers see no impact at all.

Alternatively you could say that three out of five Course Managers are affected by the phenomenon known as Augusta Syndrome and, of those, one in five see it as a major issue.

One interpretation makes it appear a minor concern overall while the other presents it as quite a significant issue for the majority of you every April and May.

Statistics. Don't yah just love 'em.

I think that what it does indicate is that Augusta Syndrome certainly exists up and down the golf clubs of Great Britain – although, admittedly, the poll may have been entered by some non-British based Course Managers – to some degree or another.

That is a little sad because if the average golf club member can't differentiate between the resources levels at Augusta and their own clubs, nor indeed the weather conditions early in the year in Georgia, and certain parts of the UK, they do have a problem indeed.

Can't they just enjoy the spectacle of the Masters – the magnificent azaleas and rhododendrons, the stunningly difficult putts that can be left and the superb shot making – for what it is, without trying to compare it to their own course?

It's a little like season ticket holders at, I don't know, let's say, Preston North End, complaining that their facilities are not as good as those at the New Wembley. Sure, both have a pitch surrounded by seating, but I'm sure the Directors of Preston North End have invested significantly less on Deepdale than the FA have ploughed into the New Wembley.

That's not to say that the facilities for Preston North End season ticket holder are, and I'm guessing here, never having visited Deepdale, any less suitable than they should be, it's just that we are talking about two facilities operating in completely different markets with different demands, expectations and budgets.

So let's be thankful that out of five of you have no pressure imposed upon you by members around Masters time but we really need to work on those golf club members who still think that they should be facing 30 foot putts with 25 feet of borrow on greens which stimp at 16 to win their Sunday morning bounce game.

Don't, however, let any of this interfere with your own enjoyment of The Masters nor let you stop admiring, albeit from afar, the magnificent work of the Augusta greenkeeping team.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Daniel Rounding joins Terrain Aeration as Representative/Operative, returning to an industry and aeration system, which he knows well. Having previously worked with Director Lynda Green when they were both with Colin Pryce Terralift, Daniel brings a wealth of experience to the post including first hand knowledge of deep, compressed air de-compaction treatment.



DEALER NETWORK IS STRENGTHENED

LMS Lincoln Ltd of Wellingore near Lincoln, the family-owned grounds care business, has been appointed the Wiedenmann UK dealer for the region. Their territory encompasses all of Lincolnshire, from the Humber in the north to the Wash in the south, and strengthens the dealer network in the east of England.

A well respected name in the area, they represent numerous well-known industry brands including Ransomes Jacobsen, Atco, Allen, Hayter, Honda, Mountfield, Ryobi and Stiga.

SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WITHIN EUROPEAN GOLF

Syngenta Professional Products has become the first Technical Member of Golf Environment Europe and the first sponsor of GEE's Environmental Innovation and Technology Network.

Through these agreements, Syngenta sets out its commitment to support environmental education and information exchange within European golf. Syngenta's support of the Innovation and Technology Network will facilitate practical projects across a wide range of environmental topics.

The Network will collate and disseminate information across a wide range of environmental issues, including; turfgrass management, pollution prevention, water resource management, ecology, waste management, energy efficiency, renewable energies, climate change, landscape and cultural heritage conservation.

BIGGA WINS!

BIGGA has grabbed runner up position at the Membership Development Awards 2007.

The judges thought our entry showed an Association that is genuinely concerned for its members and understands what they want from their organisation.

Congratulations to the membership department!



DEMONSTRATION DAYS

Sisis Equipment Ltd is arranging a series of demonstration days in South Wales/S.West England: Best of both Worlds, April 17 Coombe Dingle Sports Centre, Bristol University - Learn the secrets of creating and maintaining quality playing surfaces, whether natural turf or synthetic. Working demonstrations and presentations.

Tee to Green, April 30, Glamorganshire GC, Penarth; May 1, Minchinhampton GC, Stroud; May 2, Burghill Valley GC, Hereford. See a working demonstration of the Sisis Aer-Aid System and other recent introductions to the range of Sisis turf machinery designed to maintain your course from tee to green.

The events are free. Please contact Jane on: 01625 503030 or: jane@sisis.com for details.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

VEGAS WEDDING

Adam Turner, Head Greenkeeper at St Michael's Golf Club, whisked fiancée Jane off to Las Vegas to tie the knot on the bridge of the Star Ship Enterprise on Valentine's Day. (The bridge is a full size mock up and is at the Las Vegas Hilton.)

"We thought it would be a laugh as we didn't fancy all the fuss that goes with a white wedding, plus we're not religious so it seems a bit of a waste of time having it at a church. There was a Klingon at the ceremony which was a bit distracting!" said newly wed Adam.



YOUNG GREENKEEPER IS NAMED STUDENT OF THE YEAR



Michael Wannell, named Student of the Year 2006 by the South West England Regional Committee of the Institute of Groundsmanship

A Duchy College student has been chosen as Student of the Year 2006 by the Wales and South West England Regional Committee of the Institute of Groundsmanship. Michael Wannell, age 21, from Chagford, was presented with his prize at the institute's Annual Conference at Newcastle.

Michael is employed by Bovey Castle in Devon, and was previously a National Trust warden at Castle Drogo. He is studying with Duchy College, part of Cornwall College, for an NVQ 2 Apprenticeship in Greenkeeping and was competing against many other under 25 year-olds undertaking a career in groundsmanship. Judges were looking for the student making the greatest progress, while nominated entrants also submitted a 500 word essay on the subject: 'What do you consider are the most important issues facing the next generation of groundsman/groundskeepers?' and were interviewed by a panel of judges from the institute and from industry.

CELTIC MANOR CEMENTS RELATIONSHIP

World-class golf and leisure destination, The Celtic Manor Resort, has cemented its long-standing relationship with Toro by signing its first partnership deal with the company for both course machinery and irrigation.

Director of golf courses and estates management Jim McKenzie said: "We have had an informal agreement with Toro since 1993, which has been underpinned by the quality of their machinery and support. Signing an official partnership agreement is a step forward and the next stage in our relationship.

"This five-year deal will enable us to plan the needs of our courses and other areas of the estate far in advance. We hold the Wales Open here every year, and of course there's the Ryder Cup to prepare for in 2010 – the biggest event that Wales will probably ever see. Continuing our association with a market leader like Toro is also very important for us. Support is key, too, and we have a very close relationship with our local dealer Ted Hopkins, who provide us with superb service."



Front: Mark Colcomb, right, vice president of finance and support, and Toro's Bob Buckingham. Back, left to right: Trevor Chard, Lely; Andrew Brown, Toro; Graham Dale, Lely; Russell Phillips, vice president of facilities and development; and Jim McKenzie.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Winners from the recent Groundsman and Greenkeeper Competition, run by DLF Trifolium, can look forward to an all expenses paid trip to Denmark this Spring.

Nick Hargreaves, Assistant Greenkeeper, Woodhall Spa Golf Club in Lincolnshire and Colin Ashman from Millfield School in Somerset will be visiting DLF Trifolium A/S, the parent company in Denmark, where they will see the grass breeding facilities and extensive trialling grounds.

As well as finding out more about the complexities of grass breeding, the two winners will visit sporting venues of interest and may even have time to see a few tourist attractions in Copenhagen.



Winner: Colin Ashman

RECORD FAST RECOVERY OF STOLEN A-PLANT COMPRESSOR



Stolen compressor

A-Plant believes it has created an industry record by locating one of the company's hire compressors within 15 minutes of it being stolen from a customer's site in Surrey.

The compressor is protected by the Enigma security system which is employed throughout the A-Plant fleet not only on compressors, but also other equipment such as dumpers, rollers, excavators and telehandlers. The swift recovery of A-Plant machines protected by the Enigma security system ensures that the hire customer is not additionally charged for the stolen machine.

The first call concerning the theft of the compressor in Surrey came into A-Plant at 13.16. The machine was immediately tracked by Global Positioning Satellite via the Enigma system and its progress was relayed back to computer screens at A-Plant, showing the speed it was travelling and its current location. The compressor was eventually left down a side road in Croydon, some 3 miles from where it was stolen, and the exact location was pinpointed by aerial photography supplied via the Enigma system. With the help of the aerial photograph, A-Plant staff were able to arrive quickly to begin recovery of the compressor at 13.30.

The Enigma system is centred on a mobile GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) device, fitted to A-Plant equipment, which provides internet tracking by communicating with host servers with bespoke software running to decode the incoming data. One of the unique aspects of the Enigma system is that it was developed with security as the principal requirement and, as such, provides A-Plant with a wealth of information about the status of every piece of plant equipped with the system.

BOOK REVIEW

Heather and its Management
By Bob Taylor and Lee Penrose
Published by the STRI



Any greenkeeper who manages heather, wishes to introduce or reintroduce heather or just has an interest in growing heather on a golf course, should read this compact booklet written by Bob Taylor and Lee Penrose. This update of the 'original 'heather book' incorporates data gathered from an STRI 2002 survey into the status and distribution of heather on golf courses. It is packed full of useful practical hints and tips that are well illustrated by a wealth of colour pictures. The booklet shows that heather becoming a scarce resource and shows how golf can help to preserve this important habitat resource.

The booklet is available from the STRI Bookshop or on-line at www.stri.co.uk/bookshop

Review by Ken Richardson, BIGGA Education and Training Manager

NEW APPOINTMENT

Martyn Jones, founder of the National Turfgrass Foundation, has been appointed President of the recently formed Independent Greenkeepers' Association.

NEW NATIONAL SPECIFICATION MANAGER

Rain Bird has announced the addition of Paul Roche to its Golf Division in the role of National Specification Manager. In this position, Roche is responsible for the development and management of key relationships with architects, irrigation designers and contractors serving the golf market. In addition, Roche is involved with the further development of Rain Bird's valued service offerings for both its customers and business partners.

Roche brings to Rain Bird and its customers over 20 years of irrigation experience. For the past 14 years, Roche has led the Golf Irrigation effort for SV Moffett Company in Rochester, NY - a well-respected Rain Bird Golf irrigation distribution partner. Roche is well versed in all aspects of golf irrigation including design, installation, and maintenance of modern sophisticated irrigation systems.

PROMOTION



Mark Rayner

Scotts' Mark Rayner has been promoted from Area Sales Manager for the Midlands to Key Account Manager. In the new national role he will be looking to develop business for the company throughout the UK.

Mark has been with Scotts for three years and has over 25 years' experience in the Turf & Amenity market covering local authorities, contractors, turf growers, sports and golf.

TOP OTTERBINE PRIZE



Topturf's Colin Clark (second from left) receives the Otterbine Contractor of the Year award from Lely's Robert Jackson. Also pictured are (left to right): Rob Callaway, Topturf, Reg Varney, Otterbine, and Roger Lupton, Lely.

Topturf Irrigation (Service) Limited has been named Otterbine Contractor of the Year for 2006 by distributor Lely. They were presented with their award by Robert Jackson, Otterbine sales manager at Lely.

He said: "The high level of sales, service and support Topturf offers its Otterbine customers in an increasingly competitive market made them a clear winner for this award. Their product knowledge and technical expertise on the company's range of aerators and aerating fountains is second to none and they deserve to be recognised."

Topturf Irrigation (Services) Limited was formed in 2004 as a specialist service support company for irrigation and aeration products. It is the only company in the UK to have US factory-trained Otterbine engineers. Its core business is golf, but it also works in a wide range of other markets such as sport, local authority and residential.

HEAVY DUTY MOWERS

Adding to its recently acquired range of DR mower/trimmers, RochfordGM has now announced it is now the sole UK distributors for the DR Field and Brush Mowers. These machines are renowned for long grass mowing and control of weeds and brush and are arguably the most powerful walk-behind brush mower on the market.

Powered by Kawasaki or Briggs & Stratton engines, the DR Field & Brush Mowers offer the option of cutting widths from 22in (56cm) to 30in (76cm) and electric start models. They are also fitted with heavy-duty tyres with aggressive tread for maximum traction and are liquid filled to prevent punctures and leaking.

For further details visit www.drproducts.co.uk



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OVER 120 DELEGATES ATTEND

Avoncrop Amenity Products organised two seminars, one at Whitchurch Golf Club near Cardiff and the second at Maidenhead Golf Club in Berkshire. Over 120 delegates attended the two days, which focused on managing turf stress and the problems associated with extremes in the weather.

Following the success of a similar seminar programme last year, Avoncrop Amenity Products in partnership with Barenbrug, Scotts UK, Syngenta Crop Protection and WBB Minerals, gave presentations on symptoms of stressed turf and problems that can be expected. Solutions and management practices that could assist in reducing the level of pressure were highlighted.

Simon Barnaby of Syngenta explained how stress manifests itself in turf, in many cases as disease, saying that the extremes of climatic conditions have brought different problems and far more aggressive disease outbreaks. Pest problems have increased with Chafer Grubs, which until a few years ago have never been reported in Scotland, it has to be asked is global warming causing new problems.

Over the two days of seminars Nick Martin John Noyce and Michael Fance delivered the Scotts presentations. They covered the subject of turf stress management both from the principles involved in the selection of the correct product technology as well as the practical implementation of sound turf management practices.

Jayne Leyland after lunch covered advances in turf species breeding to cope with both drought and water logging which is so topical at the moment. Further research identifying cultivars that offer low or high temperature germination to extend the renovation window and to offer solutions to climatic change were also highlighted. WBB Minerals Technical Manager Mick Higgins, explained the principals of rootzone drainage and the importance of matching existing rootzones with compatible top dressings. Mick demonstrated how a mismatched top dressing applied to a properly constructed rootzone rendered it totally useless due to root break. Chris Briggs of Avoncrop Amenity Products

says we will continue to organise these seminars as there is a huge wealth of information and knowledge that can be drawn upon for the benefit of turf managers, from what ever discipline they come from be it golf or small sports clubs.

CUSTOMERS GET MORE THAN JUST BAGS OF SEED



Left to right: Duncan Allan and Alison Allan, Don Valley; Billy Nimmo, Barenbrug; Elizabeth Wilson, JA Humphrey; Jayne Leyland, Barenbrug; and Andrew Allan, Don Valley.

Underlining its commitment to its network of BAR range distributors, Barenbrug has recently completed a series of technical training days aimed at keeping distributors up to date with the latest in research and development, new cultivars and mixtures.

The company's UK Research and Development Manager Jayne Leyland, who ran the training sessions, included sections on the impact of climate change and the solutions to these challenges which are emerging from Barenbrug's breeding programmes. She also revealed the latest results from the company's cool temperature germination trials, which show that selected cultivars can extend the renovation window by germinating in cooler temperatures, and others which can germinate in warmer temperatures and so help with re-instatement following combined heat and drought damage.

TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW INCREASED

Scotts has further increased its technical expertise across both its professional Ornamental Horticulture and Turf and Amenity businesses with the appointment of key personnel.

Stuart Staples returns to the UK as Technical Manager for the Turf and Amenity division, with specific responsibility for fertilisers. Stuart has worked for Scotts for a number of years, initially as research and development trials officer at the UK-based Levington Research Station, and more recently as international technical manager at the company's International headquarters in Holland. He will continue to fulfil the responsibilities of international technical manager alongside his new role.

Nia Frost has been appointed as Technical Sales Manager for both the Ornamental Horticulture and Turf and Amenity businesses, with particular responsibility for controls products. Nia has a great deal of expertise in this field; she holds a BSc in plant biology and spent nine years working for Bayer in a variety of R & D roles.

NEIL THOMAS MEMORIAL GOLF DAY

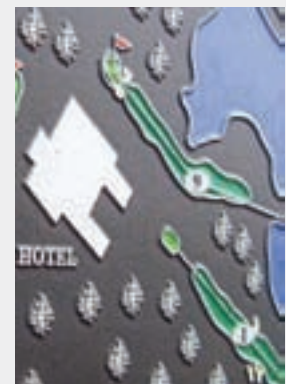
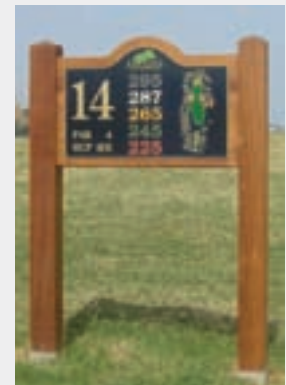
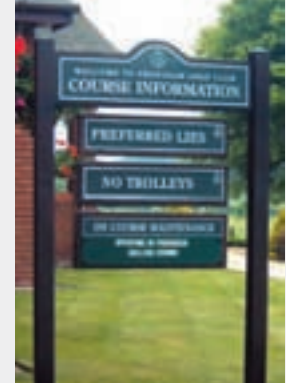
Anyone wishing to enter a team in the annual BIGGA Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day taking place on Monday, June 18 should contact Sarah at BIGGA House, tel: 01347 833800, or email: sarah@bigga.co.uk

This year the Chairman's nominated charity is The Rainbow Trust and profits from the day will go to this very worthy cause.

A team of four can be entered for £250 + VAT with the day comprising a bacon roll on arrival, 18 holes of golf at Aldwark Manor Golf Club, a ploughman's lunch, half-way house, a barbecue and the opportunity to win some great prizes.

Corporate entry is also available at £475 + VAT and includes the entry of one team and sponsorship of a tee and recognition within the pages of Greenkeeper International.

The closing date for entries, subject to availability, is Friday, May 18.



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Website: www.eagle.uk.com





SETTING THE STANDARD

In this article David Golding, GTC's Education Director, explains the ongoing work with its Training Providers to ensure greenkeeping courses are to the required standards and available through various delivery options.

Whether you are a student or an employer, the GTC is constantly working with the official authorities, Inspectorates and Awarding Bodies whose job it is to formally police the quality of Government funded training programmes through colleges and Centres.

The programmes include all the popular vocational qualifications, the apprenticeship scheme, Higher Education courses such as the HNC/D and the Foundation Degree.

Inspectors and External Verifiers visit provider establishments to meet with staff and students and to check the human and physical resources available to deliver the various programmes.

What is increasingly important to the providers is the demands put on them to ensure the national targets set by the Government are met.

As a result we are now hearing that centres are having funding withdrawn when success rates are not met.

We can view this news as a positive indication that the funding bodies are only looking to fund those centres that are meeting the targets. However, we must also be aware of the centres drive to ensure students do "pass" and therefore meet the targets.

Quality must never be compromised just to meet targets and I know that there has always been the "bums on seats" issue when colleges have been accused of "passing" every student!

It is a very bold statement and one we all need to consider very carefully especially as so many centres are looking to recruit qualified from within the turf industry and this has to be encouraged.

If anybody should know about quality and standards and the importance of maintaining quality it is these sector competent personnel.

I have to admit we do receive calls and emails from staff within centres frustrated about the system and procedures they have been asked to deliver, knowing these will result in poor delivery and more importantly incompetent students!

We obviously respect the confidentiality of this information but we act on this immediately through the most effective route possible.

I do not wish to portray a picture of doom, but the reality is that there is an increasing amount of pressure being put on all providers to ensure learners achieve and the GTC will continue its partnership approach with its provider network to ensure we are all working together to produce knowledgeable, competent greenkeepers.

One again a reminder that with all vocational qualifications and apprenticeship schemes centres must have the support of the employer and senior greenkeeping staff for the system to work.

Enough said on this matter for this month you will be pleased to hear but these work-based awards must be a strong centre staff - golf course staff partnership.

The more academic qualifications HNC/D, Foundation Degree, B.Sc and M.Sc can now be assessed part and full time and with the increasing demands on Course Managers and Deputies, I am pleased that several providers have introduced more flexible delivery routes to gain these very prestigious awards.

Distance learning has been popular and the part-time often-called twilight shift has been offered at several centres.

By far the most popular route of late has become the on-line learning route, which despite teething problems must be here to stay.

All of the above options do require students to be dedicated to the course, not the golf course on this occasion, that is taken as read, but the training programme as set out by the college.

The on-line learning route has for obvious reasons become popular with international greenkeeping students from countries where no education system for turf students is available.

As an aside, by way of an update, the working group established to develop pan-European standards met during the Harrogate Week. An agreed set of skills (standards) at three levels has been developed and will soon be circulated, as part of a consultation process and more news on this initiative will follow shortly.

If you have concerns about the training programmes you or your staff are registered on, especially when you feel quality is an issue please contact me immediately and we will give it our immediate attention.

The GTC has invited all of its approved training providers to its headquarters in late June when Awarding Body representatives will be present to discuss all issues relating to greenkeeper programmes.

In addition to Awarding Body issues, providers will be invited to debate all current issues facing turf maintenance, as it is important that the GTC ensures that the provider network is relaying the best principles and practices to all turf students.

Much to do but please feel free to contribute if you feel the GTC can assist you whether you are an employer, greenkeeper, turf lecturer et al.

David may be contacted by Email at: david@the-gtc.co.uk or Tel: 01347 838640