Claymore Grass Machinery is now importing the Shibaura SR525 fairway mower into the UK. It will be a tough call for the company to break into a sector dominated by the 'big three', but the new machine will certainly have its followers. Powered by a Shibaura 4-cylinder 27.9 kW (38 hp) 1,662 cc diesel, the SR525 has automatic or full time 4WD and can be specified with a choice of 7 inch reels with 7, 9 (standard) or 11 blades. As guide, the unit weights in at 1,280 kg.

What's *your* Number?

Name: Peter Lloyd
Company: Korec
Position: Business Development Director

How long have you been in the industry?
"Not that long, around 18 months."
How did you get into it?
"We sold a GPS and mapping software to a golf club and decided to make a special product from that – the Trimble GPS."
What other jobs have you done?
"I'm a Civil Engineering graduate and have been employed by Korec for 17 years. I was previously involved in the selling of surveying equipment."
What do you like about your current job?
"The variety of solutions you can provide for customers."
What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?
"I've not been in it that long so not that many – The acceptance of new technology by greenkeepers and course managers."
What do you like to do in your spare time?
"I don't get too much spare time. I play golf – but not very well. I have two children – a son of 15 and a daughter of 17 – so family life is important. I'm also a die hard Manchester United supporter."
Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?
"I would like to see golf club's adopting new technology to work efficiently and more productively and I would like to have been a part of that."
Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?
"I wouldn't like to name names."
What do you consider to be your lucky number?
"7."
Pick a number
"7 of course."
You've picked Roger Hargreaves, from SISIS, do you know him?
"He is not known to me."

HOBBIES

Our new feature, finds out what greenkeepers get up to in their spare time. Here's something you didn't know about me...

Name: Tim Gee
Club: Mundesley Golf Club
Position: Head Greenkeeper
Age: 39 years old
Hobby: His hobby and part time job is firefighting

Tim's girlfriend, Victoria Hinks, contacted GI as she wanted to make readers aware of the good work that he does on a day-to-day basis.

What exactly does Tim's hobby/part time job entail?

"He's on call for the fire service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if he gets a call while he's working at the golf club he'll take the quickest route through the golf course to get to his car with his alerter going off! He's been a firefighter for just over 20 years, he's a Crew Manager and is now due to receive his long service medal."

What is it about firefighting that you think appeals to him?

"Firefighting is definitely in his blood he's so devoted to it, he's done it for half of his life now. I'm sure it's the mix of adrenalin, excitement and the love for it that appeals so much to him, the fact that he is such a caring person and would go to any lengths to help people helps!"

The chosen ones enjoy refreshments during a seminar. Left to right: Stephen Privett, John Gubb, Glenn Kirby, Andrew de Wet, Barry Crawford, Paul O'Kane, Mark Henderson, Rob Welford, Roger Neale and Ian Somerville.

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Lucky BIGGA delegate, Rob Welford, gives his take on the 2007 GCSAA Show

With the jet lag finally subsiding and the reality of the British weather hitting me once again it is time to reflect on what was a fantastic experience for us, the 10 chosen ones, who travelled to Los Angeles and to the 2007 GCSAA show in Anaheim courtesy of the BIGGA delegation, sponsored by Bernhard & Co.

So there we were 8.30 on a Sunday morning at Heathrow, standing in line, bags in hand ready to check in like school children on an activity weekend. To say that we were all excited to various extents was obvious. The only downside was the 11 ½ hour flight looming ominously before us.

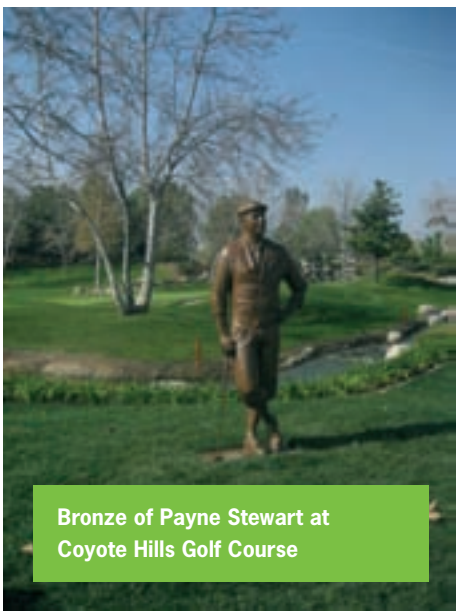
Some good fortune was bestowed upon us with the flight being only half full, so some quick seat swapping ensued and everyone had legroom aplenty. The flight was relatively mundane except for the landing at Los Angeles, where we thought the captain of the plane turned into the 'Stig' from Top Gear, gentle oversteer in a 737 is not funny. Getting through US immigration was a breeze for most of us (they asked for Barry Crawford's guardian to make themselves known) and there we were, Los Angeles, sunshine, 20oC and short bus ride to the hotel awaited us.

Bernhard & Co had done us proud; we were staying in the Anabella Hotel which was located next door to the Anaheim convention centre and directly over the road from Downtown Disneyland. We had the rest of the afternoon to settle in and acclimatise to the eight hour time difference, familiarise ourselves to the surrounding area and look forward to the busy schedule that had been prepared for us.

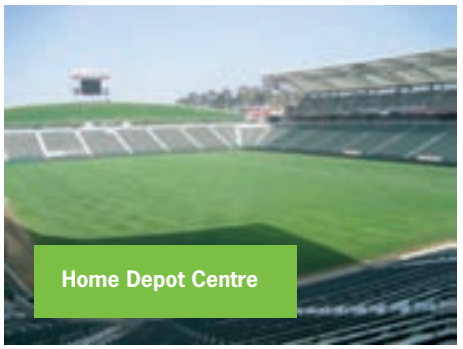
Monday morning arrived with an early morning wake-up call which prompted the need for food, and soon we were all assembled for the cross town ride to Los Angeles Country Club. Upon arrival we were greeted by Bruce Williams, Course Superintendent. LACC is one of the most prestigious private members courses in LA to the extent that the USGA in the 1980's were begging them to hold the U.S Open and it is currently ranked 18th in the top 100 US private golf club listings. Originally built in 1897 but substantially remodelled in the 1920's LACC is a 36 hole facility which consists of the North and South courses.

The South course is divided by Wilshire Boulevard which is a six lane freeway and facilitates the need for all machinery to be taken across the 'road' (usually early in the morning), although golf carts of which there are many can use the very narrow tunnel.

The courses are Bermuda grass which was dormant at this time of the year and unusually for the area they only overseed the tees. The greens on the north course are Penn A4 creeping bent and were initially handpicked to minimise poa annua while the south course greens were poa, creeping bent mixture. The total number of staff for both courses was 50 all year round, this also included gardener for clubhouse lawns and flower beds (all clubhouse flowers and plantings inside and out are grown on site). The membership cost for LACC is $150,000 joining fee and roughly $1,200-$1,600 per month! The annual operating budget is $4,000,000.



Bronze of Payne Stewart at Coyote Hills Golf Course



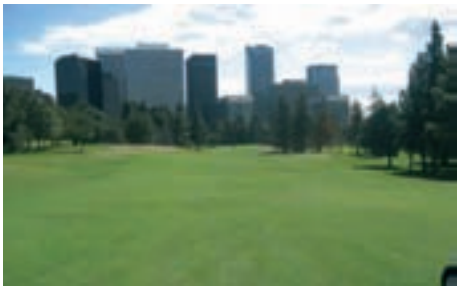
Everything at LACC is on a grand scale with the irrigation tank having a massive 1,000,000 gallon capacity drawn from wells and during the summer 800,000 gallons are applied every night. After being shown around both courses we were entertained in the clubhouse which again is a sight to behold.

Tuesday and Wednesday gave us the chance to experience education the US way which consisted of an all day seminar on the Tuesday entitled 'Taking Control of Green Speed'. The seminar lasted from 8am to 5pm and was hosted by Michael D. Morris CGCS (Superintendent at Crystal Downs) and Tomas D. Nikolai Ph.D. The seminar looked at all the possible factors that affect green speed, starting with a history on green speed and the stimpmeter, and progressing onto golfer expectations. From there we looked at the effects of weather on green speed such as rainfall and humidity, and then onto heights of cut, types of mower (triplex vs. pedestrian), frequency and type of blade sharpening, topdressing practices, irrigation, grass species and finally rolling at which point we ran out of time, and we still had fertility and plant growth regulators to discuss!

Well what did we learn from all this? Firstly, that both the hosts were passionate and very knowledgeable on the subject as all the data was collected from various studies some lasting five years or more. Secondly, that American Superintendents seem to have more pressures placed upon them with regards to green speed by their memberships, (not saying that this doesn't happen in the UK) and finally don't sit a the front if your English as John Gubb, was asked every question under the sun during the day and spent the rest of the week in hiding. On a more serious note we all came away with ideas to try on our own courses back home, and the scale and depth of the education provided is something that BIGGA should strive for during Harrogate Week.

Wednesday was the 'Turfgrass Field Seminar' which consisted of visits to three local golf courses and the Home Depot Centre (home of the LA Galaxy). The first course we visited was Alta Vista Country Club which is a private members club where the main topic of discussion was salt management on poa greens. The Superintendent, Jorge Morales, talked at length about the problems of using effluent water for irrigation and showed us a demonstration of a TDS-meter which he used for monitoring the salt levels in his greens. He uses the results from the TDS-meter to determine the amount of irrigation required to flush through (leach) the salts.

Our second course of the day was Coyote Hills Golf Course where we met by Superintendent, Elliot Weber, who has been at the course since 2004. Coyote Hills is the only course that was jointly designed by twice US Open champion, Payne Stewart, and to commemorate this a bronze statue stands outside the clubhouse. Another interesting fact about Coyote Hills is that on the course are 200 oil wells which produce 300-500 barrels of oil a day (nice little earner). Here we looked at the pros and cons of overseeding dormant Bermuda grass fairways and roughs. After a brief look at the fairways we had a tour of the maintenance facility which in typical American fashion was spotless.



Next we visited Westridge Golf Club where we looked at the problems facing this high volume (50,000+ rounds per year) public course which was originally established with cool season grasses, using creeping bent on greens and perennial rye in fairways and roughs. The Superintendent is currently fighting the transition of the greens to poa and is purposely trying to transition roughs and fairways to a warn season turf with common Bermuda grass.

Last, but not least, was the highlight of the day for many of us 'soccer' fans a tour of the Home Depot Centre (read B&Q Trafford). This is home to multiple sporting events such as two major league soccer teams (Chivas USA and LA Galaxy), tennis, athletics and cycling and of course the 'Dave Beckham Academy'. We were privileged to be invited onto the pitch for a team photo although the atmosphere was lacking compared to what it will be like when Beckham plays in front of a 27,000 capacity crowd.

Thursday came and finally it was time for the show. The show here is 2½ days and attracts as many as 27,000 visitors. Well what can I say? Awesome. You cannot believe the size of this show, although I was informed that this year was one of the largest yet. Everyone is catered for with such features as an international lounge, bookshop and merchandise store. Each of us did our turn manning the BIGGA stand and we were

well received by all that passed by, stopped and chatted. I was impressed with the number of BIGGA members that were present at the show and this was a truly international affair and a result for Anglo-US relationships.

As well as the above we indulged in some extra curricular activities such as the Bernhard & Co Prestige Club Reception, the Official Opening Reception for the Conference and Show, Reception for the outgoing GCSAA President as well as the Opening Session where the Old Tom Moriss Award was presented to Charlie Sifford, which included a video message from Tiger Woods. The keynote speaker was golfer and commentator Johnny Miller. Bernhard & Co also gave us an exclusive audience with Gerry Byrne, from the K Club Ireland, where we looked at the processes and problems he faced holding the 2006 Ryder Cup.

So that was that with the only spare time coming on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, where with heavy hearts and some heads too we boarded the, this time full, flight bound for London Heathrow and the real world.

We would like to extend our thanks to all those companies and organisations who fed and watered us, and especially those where lasting friendships were forged.

Finally I would like to round things off by extending a huge thank you to everyone how made our trip possible at Bernhard & Co especially Kim, Sam and Stephen as well as those involved from BIGGA for giving us ten chosen ones a week that we will never forget. To all of you who have read this article and got this far (without falling asleep), let me remind you that to enter for this trip was free and I would recommend it to anyone.

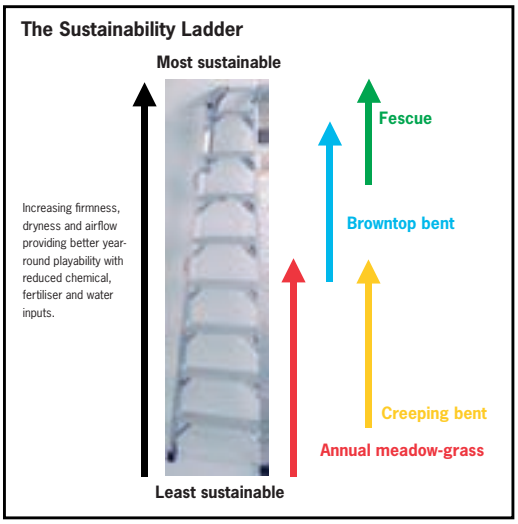
PREVENTING DISEASE – IT'S A LIFESTYLE CHOICE!

By Steve Isaac, Assistant Director of Golf Course Management, The R&A

Your initial reaction?

"How much disease could be prevented through better management of our environment?" A quote from The R&A Golf Course Committee? No, it is actually taken from the World Health Organisation's website but it is an excellent way to introduce the subject of preventing turfgrass diseases because it focuses attention on the key issue. If you were asked how to prevent disease on your greens, what would your immediate response be? Hopefully, it would not be straight to the fungicide bottle. With so much information and education available to turf managers these days, including our best practice website www.bestcourseforgolf.org, everyone should be aware of the many approaches that should be considered before considering the chemical one. The thought process to preventing disease should begin by looking at the environment in which the turf, and its potential nemesis, is growing.

Dry, firm and airy



Remember the sustainability ladder - see the August 2006 issue of Greenkeeper International - This describes the route to increasing sustainability through improvement of the growing environment. Climbing away from thatchy, soft, wet, shaded and disease-ridden turf at the foot of the ladder is dependent on improving drainage, firmness and air movement. The range of growing conditions represented by the rungs of the ladder can be related directly to the requirements of grass species.

No matter what grass you are growing, as you climb the rungs and promote a better environment you will see less disease. When you reach a rung beyond the comfort zone for a species, it will either become less common or be prone to an increasing array of fungal attacks. Of the grasses commonly seen to northern European greens, annual meadow-grass is the one that will be most prone to disease within and, even more so, at both ends of its range. To soft, wet and thatchy greens you will see more microdochium (that's fusarium to our more mature readers) and anthracnose. Above its comfort zone, you will have created such a dry and lean environment that meadow-grass will be under stress and prone to the same diseases, plus others such as dollar spot. However, if you have worked on improving the environment to this degree you will probably be seeing the quantity of less susceptible grasses increasing on the greens, either through natural re-colonisation or via overseeding. So, grass species and where your greens are on the sustainability ladder will reflect the number and severity of disease outbreaks you will witness.

Reduce the risk of disease by:

- Developing a healthier growing environment.
- Good thatch management – think firm and dry.
- Minimising shade – turf prefers consistent growing conditions and heavily shaded greens become cookers in summer, freezers in winter, which promotes weak turf.
- Climbing the sustainability ladder.

Less susceptible grasses

As already noted, the ladder concept can be related to the main grass species we use on our greens, with fescue being the most sustainable and annual meadow-grass the least. This is reflected in the inputs of chemicals, fertiliser and water required to manage these grasses and in their relative resistance to our most common and disfiguring diseases.

Also consider where your grasses come from. The days of European colonialism are rife with tales of indigenous peoples dying in their thousands from diseases imported by the new arrivals who were relatively immune to the effects of what they considered to be common ailments. The reverse also occurred (and still does) as travelers fall foul of diseases their immune system has never encountered before. Could the same happen to grasses? I make the point after seeing a grass trial in Norway in May 2005. Most of the imported varieties were decimated by fusarium coming out of the winter. The grasses that were the healthiest and completely free of disease scars were those browntop bents bred in Norway (see image below and Jorvik sign).

Even within a single grass species there can be tremendous variability in the disease resistance of cultivars. When choosing grasses for overseeding it is worth checking on this as part of the selection process. However, there is little information available on this matter with the "Turfgrass Seed 2007" publication only listing resistance to red thread for all the species under evaluation – hardly the disease likely to cause you the most sleepless nights.

Possibly the best way to assess which cultivars will be most resistant to disease attack on your course is to have a small trial area where you can plant those out which match your requirements, grow them on for a year or two and see for yourself. One course manager I know who does this is Per Rasmussen at Smørum in Denmark, and he has been able to select fescues for overseeding which exhibit the minimum of disease incidence, saving him time and money (above right).

Reduce the risk of disease by:

- Promoting less susceptible grasses.
- Selecting cultivars for overseeding that show greater resilience to common diseases.
- Testing grasses at your site before using them on the golf course.
- Climbing the sustainability ladder.

Cultural management practices

These should be the focus of any integrated disease management programme. Again, they can be related to the sustainability ladder and the premise that drier, firmer turf with decent access to light and air movement is going to be more resistant to disease. So, to minimise disease, implement a maintenance programme that controls thatch, improves drainage and avoids lush turf growth. Excessive application of fertiliser and water will encourage disease.

Over the last few summers, there have been reports of a greater incidence of dollar spot, notably in southeast England (see the article on the main 2006 disease problems in the January 2007 issue of STRI's International Turfgrass Bulletin). There has been speculation that the desirable trend for reducing nitrogen input has contributed to this and that dollar spot is a real threat to those wishing to turn to fescue. Dollar spot attacks all grasses – it is a significant disease of fine turf in the USA and they are not blessed with fescue-dominated golf courses. Perhaps those witnessing this phenomenon have been cutting back on the nitrogen too quickly for the type of turf they are managing? It could be that the combination of stressful summer weather, notably last year's drought, and a significant reduction in nitrogen was the cause but the disease affected those grasses the worst that require higher levels of nitrogen to see off attacks.

Also be wary of too much cultural management, especially when the climate imparts significant stress. STRI's promotion of the principle of "Disturbance" can be used to explain why different grasses require alternative approaches to cultural practices and when they are likely to be under greater disease pressure.

Reduce the risk of disease by:

- Implementing cultural practices that will positively help control disease incidence.
- Avoiding practices which may encourage diseases.
- Climbing the sustainability ladder.

Prediction models

Web-based services, which predict when disease pressure is high enough to warrant fungicide application, may be useful in maximising the efficacy of plant protection products but we need to question what their advice is based on? If the red alert for applying a fungicide is triggered by the most susceptible scenario, and the cynic in me suggests it is, then users of these systems must be aware of this and interpret the warning according to their situation. If you happen to be managing the most susceptible scenario (probably one towards the bottom of the sustainable ladder) then sign up to such a service now! More effective in the long run would be to start planning to climb the ladder. For those not in this situation, don't reach for the fungicide just because the website tells you to. You will have to take this information and interpret the threat in relation to the turf environment you are managing. A red alert for fusarium is unlikely to worry those managing fescue too much.

Returning to the subject of cultural practices, prediction models may be of value in helping to plan maintenance to avoid work that could encourage disease.

Be honest with yourself

There are plenty of tricks that can be used to mask disease risk and actual outbreaks. I prefer to follow the sage advice of an old Ethiopian proverb: "He who conceals his disease cannot expect to be cured". If you get regular damaging outbreaks of disease it is because you are managing a high-risk situation. Only by accepting this and trying to address it will you find a cure. Better management of the environment to develop healthier turf will significantly reduce the risk of disease, so make your preparations to climb the sustainability ladder and improve your chances of preventing disease.

A tool to groom your bottom line – Toro Financing.

For more than 90 years, Toro has partnered with turf care professionals like you to create the world's most appealing landscapes. Toro is committed to providing innovative, reliable equipment to make your job easier. Now Toro introduces a product to help your bottom line: Toro Financing. Designed specifically for turf care professionals, Toro Financing can help you acquire the equipment you need to create picturesque, playable landscapes – and stay on-budget.

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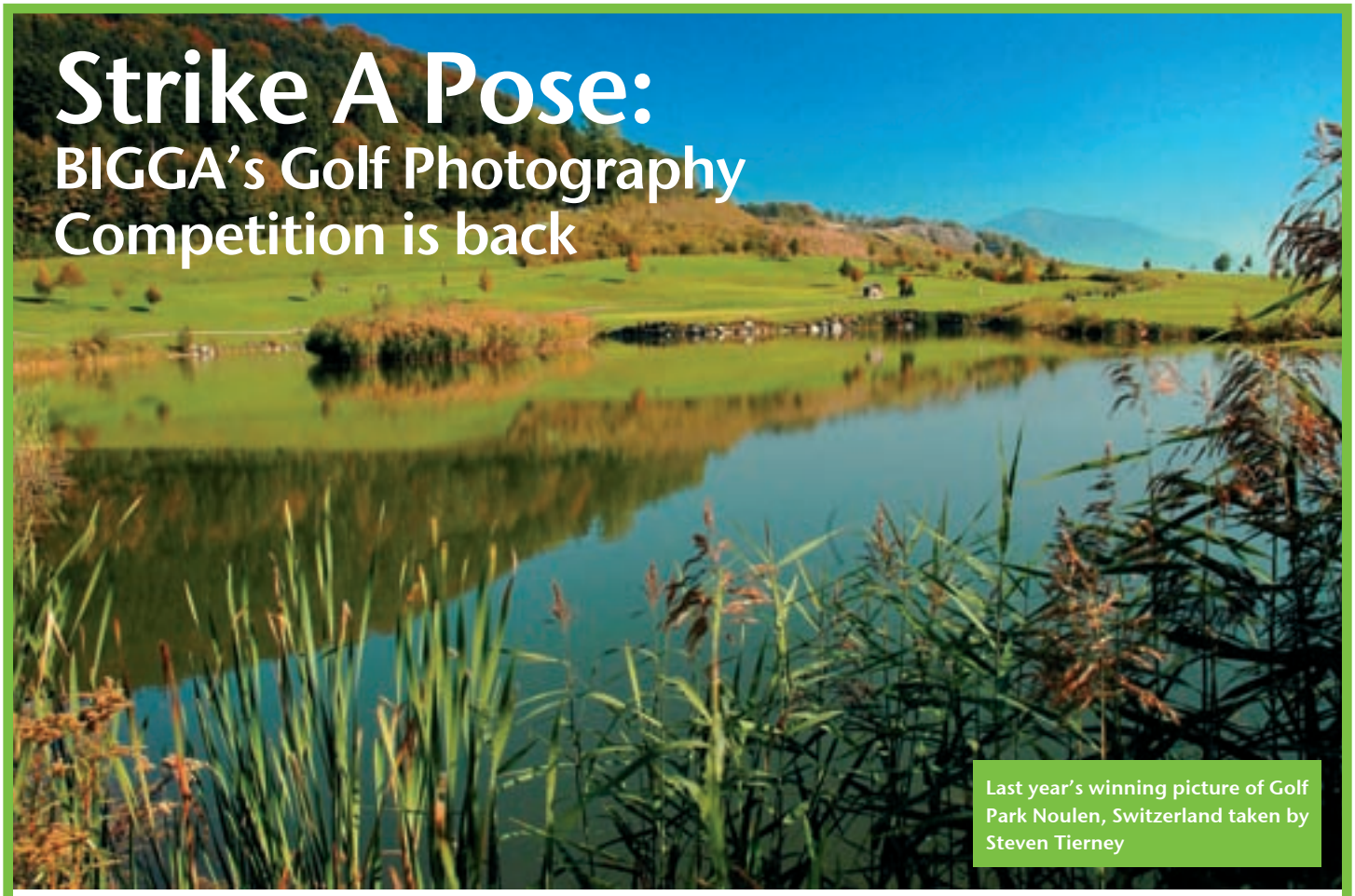
Strike A Pose:
BIGGA's Golf Photography Competition is back



Last year's winning picture of Golf Park Noulen, Switzerland taken by Steven Tierney

Second prize last year went to Gary Crawford for his picture of Royal County Down.

Iain Barr took third place last year with his shot of Largs Golf Club.

Calling all budding photographers! Are you proud of the hard work you have put into making the most of your course? Do you catch yourself admiring it at its spring finest, or wintry best?

The BIGGA Golf Photography Competition allows greenkeepers to display their artistic talents and creative flair, while also earning some publicity for their club.

The winner will receive a full course profile in Greenkeeper International, a trophy and special prize, while the 12 best will be selected for the 2008 BIGGA Calendar.

Photographs will be accepted in three forms. Prints (nine inch by seven inch), transparencies, or digitally (pictures MUST be at least 300 psi and capable of being blown up to nine inches by seven inches in size).

Anyone wishing to enter should send their pictures to: Scott MacCallum or Melissa Toombs, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO61 1UF (digital photographs should be sent on CD) by July 31, 2007. Alternatively you can email them to scott@bigga.co.uk or melissa@bigga.co.uk

Entries will be judged by Alan Birch, whose inspiration the competition has been; Professional Golf Course Photographer, Eric Hepworth, and Scott MacCallum, Greenkeeper International Editor.

So come on, don't just post your pictures on the website bulletin board...happy snapping!

As Easy as ABC

The Difference between Thatch and Mat

By Dan Prest, Askham Bryan College

Lying beneath the green stuff is a complex world. The dying bits in the soil would more than likely be called thatch, scarifying would probably be your solution. You may, without realising, also have a layer of mat. Do you realise that you will benefit from a touch of thatch and mat?

Thatch is found just above the soil surface and consists of undecomposed plant material. As this material decomposes it is possible that new plant life forms within the thatch layer. This means that rhizomes and stolons could be provided with a useful growing medium. A good amount of thatch would be around 12mm.

Too much thatch could mean that water and nutrients will not get to the roots below the thatch layer, this could cause problems of growth, therefore increasing weed and pest invasion. There a number of ways to control thatch possibly scarification, but also hollow coring and topdressing.

Often confused with thatch is the mat layer. This layer is mixed with the soil surface. It can occur when soil is mixed into the thatch layer. Examples of this would include soil deposits in thatch by worms or topdressing with soil. Mat can be beneficial and is sometimes overlooked. It can provide protection in areas of heavy wear and can also stabilise turf from heavy activities.

Look for the thatch layer from the top of a core sample and it should be easily found (if present). Look for the Mat layer at the bottom and work up the sample with your finger and thumb until the soil layer is easily removed. The Mat layer can be found at the base of that grassed part intermingled with the remaining soil.

ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

Thatch at 5mm to 15mm

Mat at 15mm to around 25mm

25mm+ Rootzone