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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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10 members of the BIGGA Delegation will be travelling to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in Anaheim, thanks to Bernhard & Co. Melissa Toombs reveals the chosen ones.

Cover photograph by Melissa Toombs



Welcome

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Here we are - 2007. It doesn't seem so long ago that such a date seemed to belong to the realms of science fiction and not the real world. Indeed I'm old enough to remember when 1984 was some time in the future. Back then you'd have put money on us all owning personal jet packs in 2007 and thumbing through holiday brochures which included the delights of back packing in Mars; sailing down the spectacular canals of Venus or even an all inclusive, once in a lifetime, trip to Saturn's rings. That's all probably been pushed back to the 2030s by now.

So what will 2007 have in store for us?

Well, top of the agenda, as always, is Harrogate Week. If the Week goes as well as all the indicators we have had prior to it have shown, it is going to be a fabulous occasion. The range of training and education on offer supersedes anything we've ever had before at Harrogate, with career advancement opportunities for all levels of fine turf professional in whatever sphere of turf management they happen to work. Then there is the Show itself, with a guarantee of busy Halls, full of stands offering products and solutions designed to make your professional life that bit easier. Oh, and how can you forget the unique après show atmosphere of the grand old North Yorkshire spa town itself. Can there be a more convivial location in which to unwind after an action packed day?

It always provides a superb launch pad to the new year and the new season. But what will that season have in store for us?

Hopefully 2007 will be a little kinder on those areas which suffered drought last year. There can be few circumstances which render a turf professional more helpless than watching his parched sward die off when drought orders are in place preventing even the shortest of drinks.

It is something that is going to become more prevalent as the years roll on, and an issue which will tax everyone from Governments down to ourselves in the humble fine turf management business. We are all well aware of the problems but it would be nice if we didn't have to deal with the consequences every single year.

The push towards sustainable golf offers some answers but not for everyone, not in the short term anyway. Geographic location and soil structure make moves towards sustainable golf more difficult for some courses than others, while the not-to-be-underestimated inner workings of club politics is another factor which would make some Course Managers tread carefully if considering a back to fescue regime.

As ever, communication and education is the key to progress, but both require people to approach change with an open mind.

No doubt we'll still be talking about the same things in 2008, but in a few years I would like to be jet packing myself home for lunch and booking that trip to Saturn.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR GOLF?

This year's South West and South Wales Regional Seminar, held in association with the R&A, was a great success with near capacity attendance. The line up of speakers included Steve Isaacs, The R&A; Dr Keith Weatherhead, Cranfield University; Howard Swan, Golf Course Architect; Keith Adderley, Secretary Temple Golf Club; Richard Whyman, Chairman of BIGGA; Phil Weaver, PGA Chairman and Billy McMillan, Vice Chairman of BIGGA. Chairing the day was Michael Barratt, Advisory Member of the golf course committee at

the R&A. Each speaker gave a presentation on their view of sustainability and how they see the future for sustainability on the golf course. The day was enlightening and educational and it was good to see several Club Secretaries, Chairman of Greens and Club Captains in attendance, together with their Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers. The feedback from both members and club officials attending has been good with praise for the speaker's informative and interesting presentations.

EMERGENCY LANDING!

The pilot of a light aircraft on a flight over north east Fife was praised for his cool response to an emergency after he made a forced but perfect landing on Elmwood Golf Course, near Cupar.

The drama occurred when photographer David Cation, who had been flying the single-engined Cessna Skyhawk to Dundee, suffered a complete engine failure in the skies just west of the course.

After sending out a Mayday message which was picked up by air traffic controllers at RAF Leuchars, Mr Cation picked out a spot on the course and touched down on the seventeenth fairway before coming to rest on the edge of the green.

Mr Cation has an aerial photography business called Air Images.eu, and he usually operates from Kirknewton Airfield, near Edinburgh.

He had been flying to Dundee when he suffered complete engine failure, and after speaking to RAF Leuchars he realised that he would not have enough gliding height to reach the base.

He said that the first part of the golf course he thought about landing on had golfers playing, but he had then managed to pick out a clear fairway.

Mr Cation said that this sort of incident is what all pilots practice and train for, but what happened "certainly gets the blood pressure up."

"That was the first time I had experienced something like this for real, but you just do the best you can."

He added that he was sorry that he caused some damage to the course, but the staff there had been terrific, and he would be offering them some free aerial shots.

One of those on the ground was eyewitness Paul McAlister, a pro shop assistant, who said that he had been "gobsmacked" by what happened.

"I was on my lunch break and on my way to the practice range when I saw the small plane coming in really low.

"It started to go down as if to land, and disappeared behind the clubhouse, and I realised



Elmwood Golf Course Manager Andrew Mellon (centre) with greenkeeper Matt Baird (left) and Mechanic Hayden Chambers who helped to recover the plane from the course.

that it was totally silent and the engine was not working.

"The plane landed on the 17th fairway, bounced up and down a couple of times, and came to a stop up at the green. The ground was quite soft, but fortunately the wheels didn't dig in."

"No-one was hurt and there was only very limited damage to the course, but the landing was amazing."

This view was shared by Course Manager Andy Mellon, who said that he had spoken to Mr Cation after the incident and he said that his engine had cut out as he passed over nearby Ladybank.

Mr Mellon said that the landing had been perfect, and the plane had been brought to a halt within 100 yards.

Describing how the plane had been handled, Mr Mellon applied a highly appropriate description for a golf course. The Cessna, he said, had "landed, spun, then rolled on to the back of the green"

A spokesperson at RAF Leuchars said that Mr Cation had been taking the plane to Dundee, and had stopped at Glenrothes airfield on the way.

He had indicated that he was in difficulty after suffering engine failure at around 2500 feet, and air traffic controllers had helped as best they could before it was decided that the best plan was to head for Elmwood Golf Course.

The Cessna was recovered from the course by staff at the course, and was last night awaiting inspection.

Thanks to the Courier newspaper

AERATION SYSTEMS ELIMINATE POTENTIAL ALGAE PROBLEMS

It is widely understood that lakes and ponds require on-going attention to lessen the likelihood of algae growth and to maintain an active and healthy environment for living matter. Queenwood GC in Surrey were well aware that the process of aeration would be the best method of achieving this when developing the course's four strategically positioned lakes. They were also aware of the many options currently being offered to perform this function, varying from floating surface aerators with impressive fountain displays to bottom diffusers using an air compressor; neither approach being seen as totally ideal for installation at Queenwood as both needed a power source adjacent to the lakes. The aeration system offered by Kristal Klear appeared to provide a truly viable solution. This belief has now been

proved correct with eleven units currently installed across the four lakes. Course Manager, Cameron McMillan comments: "We commissioned Kristal Klear to install aerators in two of our lakes initially. After seeing them working we had no hesitation in installing further aerators in the remaining two lakes. Algae growth is being greatly controlled."



DRIVING INTERNATIONAL GOLF EDUCATION

Myerscough College, in association with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), has launched the International Institute for Golf Education, providing a range of specialist courses and research opportunities aimed at giving students a career pathway into the global golf industry through academic qualifications and work experience.

The institute provides opportunities for study in a range of related subjects, from golf course management through to golf technology, science and psychology. Qualifications available include

GNVQs, national diplomas, foundation degrees, bachelor degrees and post-graduate qualifications.

David Grecic, Section Leader for Golf at Myerscough College, comments: "With Golf becoming increasingly popular in the UK, there is a growing demand for qualified people to work in all aspects of the industry. The International Institute will equip people with the skills and qualifications required to take up these posts in both the UK and internationally. Never has there been a better opportunity for people to forge a successful career in something they love."

A CONTEMPORARY TWIST TO AN ANCIENT EDIFICE

David Harber Ltd, one of Britain's leading designers of sundials, has just installed a highly contemporary Pillar Dial as a centrepiece for the main Walled Garden at Loch Lomond GC.

Historically all major Scottish gardens contained a complex sundial, and evidence suggests that the main house at Loch Lomond GC had such a sundial in the 18th century. David Harber's Pillar Dial is a comprehensive time piece incorporating 20 different

sundials and was designed to embody the essence of the original dial and yet to stand as a striking modern focal point.



BALI NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AWARDS

Rolawn is celebrating being the first choice for some of the country's top landscapers at this year's BALI National Landscape Awards.

Rolawn's famous Medallion turf and Blended Loam (a premium topsoil) have been incorporated into a number of award winning entries at the 30th BALI National Landscape Awards 2006.

The award winning Landscapers who featured Rolawn are: Brambledown Landscape Services, Ground Control, Hambrook Landscapes, The Land Design Partnership and Tony Bengier Landscapes.

Cedric McMillan, Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director commented: "The fact that so many leading landscapers choose Rolawn is an accolade in itself as we are very aware of the extraordinarily high standards expected by the judges. We feel very proud to have played our part and are delighted with their success".

NEW RECRUIT

Toro Irrigation distributor Lely UK, has appointed Robert Jackson as Field Sales Manager. Robert has overall responsibility for sales and new business development in both the golf and residential/commercial sides of the business.



Commenting on his appointment, Robert said: "I am very excited to be working with Lely and Toro. My aim is to move the irrigation business forward by supporting both the contractors and end-users to ensure continued confidence in the Toro brand."

Robert joins Lely from Toro Irrigation contractor LS Systems Limited, in Preston, Lancashire, and previously worked for TIS Sandbach. He has over 11 years experience in the irrigation business and has been involved in both contracting and creating design specifications for golf courses and other sports installations.

ANNUAL SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2007 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline on Tuesday, March 6.

This year's speakers include Kerran Daly, Course Manager, Gog Magog Golf Club; Ian Butcher, International Golf Development Officer, Elmwood College and Gordon Irvine, Consultant Master Greenkeeper. Other speakers include, from America Jim Turner, Brian Robinson of Rigby Taylor and finally Graeme Francis, Lakes & Greens Ltd.

Tickets cost £33, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms will be posted to all members in Scotland and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator on Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440 or: pj.boyd@btinternet.com.

THE BUSINESS OF GOLF

Several diverse elements of golf were brought together to discuss the game and future initiatives designed to improve its popularity, at the annual Business of Golf conference organised and run by the Golf Consultants Association at Celtic Manor.

Among the issues discussed were restructuring golf club memberships to make them more attractive to potential customers; improving customer service, improving golf club management; on-line tee time booking schemes

as well as raising finance and maximising profits to increase the potential sale value to golf clubs.

An audience of around 70 attended the two-day Conference ably chaired by GCA Chairman Mike Shields, of Welby Golf Advisory Services, and featuring a dinner in the Celtic Manor clubhouse with guest speaker, John Stirling.

The opening session looked at the development of Cape Verde, one of the world's largest golf resort developments, through the eyes of Tom Sheehy, of Cape Verde Development, and Keith Haslam, of PGA Management, while Russell Bragg delivered a paper on optimising the returns on golf resorts through master planning.

Following a break Stephen Proctor, of Sports Marketing Surveys, looked at preparations for the 2010 Ryder Cup, to be held at Celtic Manor, and the research programmes behind it, and Roger Pride, of Visit Wales, looked at how a Ryder Cup can raise a regional and national profile.

The afternoon saw a talk from Norman Jackson and Gordon Miller, of Sunningdale Corporate Finance, on



the questions that must be answered when trying to raise finance for a golf project and the pair stressed the need for well presented proposals - 80% of business plans are rejected on the first read through - and employing professionals to assist with any project. They also said a common mistake is to wildly underestimate how much time is required to secure finance.

They were followed by surveyor, Mark Smith, who stressed the importance of maximising a golf club's EBITDAs - Earnings Before Interest Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation - to maximise a sale value on the open market. Mark explained that the average EBITDA at a proprietary club would be around £150,000 and that an average freehold golf club would be worth between six and nine times EBITDA and a leasehold between five and eight times. A prestige club like Wentworth sold for 25 times EBITDA and The Belfry for 15 times. He stressed that sales were market driven rather than product driven.

Following a break Howard Swan, of Swan Golf Design, gave a detailed description of the time spans and complications of dealing with European planning laws in countries where golf was still becoming established.

Howard was followed by Norman Jackson, who described Indoor Golf and outlined the benefits to the golfer and the golf operator.

The second day was launched by David Rhodes, of Rhodes Consulting, who entertained and informed the audience with his views on agronomy and course management. He expressed his reservations at blanket spraying and at clubs that didn't possess a scarifier. He also made known his own preference for hand cutting wherever possible and that good agronomy shouldn't cost a lot of money. "In fact you don't often see the

combination of high expenditure and good agronomics."

David was followed by Alan Prickett, of Ransomes Jacobsen, and Ian Henderson, of Golf Finance who between them outline the machinery that was now available to golf clubs and gave ways into which it could be funded.

Following another break Gill Wilson, of Rye Hill GC, described her unit based membership scheme where a golfer could purchase a certain number of units to be used at the club against rounds - differing numbers for weekends and weekdays and for 18 holes, 10 holes or five holes which she said was an option many of the lady members appreciated.

The scheme meant that people felt they weren't wasting money if they weren't playing and made them more inclined to both remain with the club and spend units or money at the club. A big advocate of relaxed, open to all, golf she is also introducing a Golf Parc for children complete with plastic trees and hazards to introduce them to the game.

Ian Bulleid, of Impetus Golf & Leisure, talked about "locking on" rather than "locking in" members that involved golf clubs becoming confident enough in their customer service to backing themselves against their competition. He talked about the 10% or peoe who hate you're the 10% who love you and the 80% floaters and suggested that they were the people to look after, as the others wouldn't change their opinions.

Peter Townson, of 360 Golf, looked at the seven virtues of golf club management, and gave examples of what can go wrong at golf clubs including poorly considered and designed clubhouses.

Paul Heeney, of On-Line Tee Times, had the best saying of the week. "You don't buy a drill because you want a drill. You buy one because you want a hole." He was referring to the software required for his new internet-based tee booking scheme which he had launched in Ireland and which he is bringing to the UK and the revenue that it generates. He explained that the tee times between 7.30am and 9.20am between April and September at a greenfee of 20 Euros were worth over 100,000 Euros to a golf club and that more could be made of them.

Adam Lawrence, Editor of Golf Course Architect, then gave some advice on dealing with the press.

The Conference was concluded by its Chairman, Mike Shields, posing the question your neighbour - Competitor or Partner and providing some interesting answers.

BROTHERS WIN BIG NAME BUSINESS

Brothers Wayne and Crispin Cole, of Cintec Machinery, based at Bisley in Gloucestershire, have recently been appointed to sell the long established and well known Massey Ferguson range of Professional Groundcare Machinery in Gloucestershire, North Wiltshire, Bristol and Bath areas. The enlarged range of Massey Ferguson products encompasses AgTV's (including the new MF700D Diesel) and Compact Tractors currently from 16.5 - 46hp.

Cintec Machinery was started in April 2004 utilising the brothers' background in agricultural machinery and has now grown in size to four employees.



LEADING THE WAY FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Broome Manor Golf Complex, part of Swindon Borough Council's leisure facilities, recently upgraded their equipment wash-off area by installing a Waste2Water Recycling Wash-Off System. "Along with the majority of golf courses our wash-off area was well overdue for improvement", commented David Buckingham, General Manager. "As a local authority owned golf course we feel it is very important to be taking a lead in environmental consideration and ensuring we are complying with the new Groundwater legislation."

The Waste2Water system was the perfect answer as the maintenance yard naturally slopes, enabling the system to be retro-fitted using the existing wash-off pad with minimal cost and disruption. Additional space was also allowed for installation of a new Diesel Fuel Station so that any refuelling spillages are treated by the Waste2Water system.



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CELEBRATION

Plumpton College is celebrating achieving full status as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for Horticultural Technologies.

Plumpton College is the Collaborative Partner with leaders Chichester College, Brinsbury Campus and Writtle College. The award has brought with it substantial investment from the Learning and Skills Council to the colleges involved.

The college has invested in a training centre which enables the College to deliver bespoke and flexible courses and seminars tailored to Horticultural needs.

In response to research with rural businesses, most of the short courses and seminars offered are one-day or half-day sessions, which can also be held at the employers' own workplaces.

Des Lambert, Principal of Plumpton College said "This CoVE has been an important development in helping to move forward Horticultural Technologies at the College."

SEEDS OF CHANGE



Stephen Denton took on his new role, as Grass Seed Development Manager for leading seed agent Rigby Taylor, last month.

In the company's sales division for the past 11 years, Steve, 41, said: "My interest has always been in

the more technical aspects of turf, having been involved in greenkeeping and sports ground management, here and abroad, for more than 20 years."

Brian Robinson, Director of Seed Research, said: "I am extremely pleased to welcome Steve, as I feel his background and experience will make a very valuable contribution to the long-term development of our Mascot mixtures. Our objective is to help clubs set higher standards by providing advice on seed selection and best maintenance practices."

BRYAN BOSWORTH

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that Bryan Bosworth passed away after a long illness, bravely borne, aged 70 years.

Bryan joined Banks Amenity Products as a Sales Representative in 1986, covering the East Midlands, Home Counties and East Anglia, progressing to Sales Manager, a position he held until he retired from full time work in 2001. However, as he enjoyed working in the industry, he continued to work in a part-time capacity until 2004.

Bryan's cheerful, friendly disposition made him popular with customers and colleagues alike, and all who knew him.

We extend our condolences to his wife Joan, family and friends at this sad time.

SUSTAINABILITY FUND FOR GOLF LAUNCHED

Officials of Golf Environment Europe have announced the launch of a new Sustainability Fund for Golf in Europe.

The fund will assist the golf sector in Europe to address the increasingly important issues of environmental sustainability. It will enable Golf Environment Europe, an independent, non-profit body, to support and report on environmental achievements within European golf.

At a special reception to mark the occasion, Tom Garvey, Chairman of Golf Environment Europe said: "Golf Environment Europe was launched by the European Commission in Brussels in June 2005. Since then we have garnered considerable support from within and out-with golf. Our key mechanism, the European Forum for Golf and Environment, has been received with enthusiasm by the entire sector."

"Today we formally establish our sustainability fund - a fund that will enable GEE to work in partnership with many golf bodies, environmental organisations, government agencies and sponsors, towards the common goal of promoting environmental sustainability within European golf."

"We want to acknowledge the European Tour's support in the establishment of the fund, who today make a significant contribution and show genuine leadership on this matter. We also acknowledge our early sponsors - Volvo and Deutsche Bank; and Rolex and Ransomes Jacobsen who are the first official corporate partners."

"We also appreciate the considerable in kind support from other members of the Forum - the European Golf Association, The R&A, the Federation of Greenkeepers, the Institute of Golf Course Architects, the Association of Golf Course Owners, the PGAs of Europe, many national golf federations and research institutes."



Representatives, from left to right are: Alan Prickett, Ransomes Jacobsen; Tchie Kano, Alstom; Patrice Clerc, ASO; Thomas Godfrey, Spring Worldwide; Lodewijk Klootwijk, European Golf Course Owners Association; George O'Grady, European Tour; Jonathan Smith, Golf Environment Europe; Jaime Ortiz - Patino, Golf Environment Europe; Colin Wood, Golf Environment Europe; Maria Strandberg, Scandinavian Turfgrass Foundation / European Forum for Golf and Environment; Stig Persson, Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association; Heinz Fehring, PGAs of Europe; Angel Gallardo, European Tour; Simon Cory-Wright, European Tour; Scott Kelly, European Tour; Mike Wood, European Institute of Golf Course Architects; Tom Garvey, Golf Environment Europe and Richard Hills, European Tour

BIGGEST EVER TURF CONFERENCE IN DENMARK

180 people crowded into the theatre at the historic Torvehallerne venue in the beautiful resort town of Vejle in Jutland, Denmark last October for an education-based two-day conference of the highest international standard - The Danish Greenkeepers Association's International Conference 2006. The DGA noted with satisfaction that no less than 30% of the association's total membership was in attendance. The education conference was preceded on the 24th by the association's AGM and a Greenkeeper Golf Championship.

The DGA started as a social get-together in 1963, but in the last decade it has been transformed into the focal point of the golf industry in Denmark. As others in Europe have discovered, the golf industry's customers expect more and more from greenkeepers and turf care standards have been raised.

It was felt that golf course design and people-management topics would be great themes to attract greenkeepers from Denmark and Norway.

The DGA wishes to record its sincere thanks to all the conference speakers, without whom, the conference would not have been the great success that it has been.

By Søren Nicholson



EGGHEADS OR FATHEADS?

Members of the Cleveland and North-East Sections recently took part in a quiz against a team of groundsmen at Mount Oswald GC, Durham City. Horns were well and truly locked in pursuit of winning the Turfcare quiz trophy.

Turfcare Specialists Ltd donated the trophy, now named the David Pearson Memorial Shield, in 1986. It has been played for annually ever since. David was Playing Fields Officer for County Durham Council and sadly died at an early age through cancer. Terry Charlton, Managing Director of TSL remembers Dave as "One of the nicest people I have ever met. He was a lovely man who always attended the annual quizzes until he became ill. We fondly remember him before the start of every quiz".

The quiz is now regarded by many greenkeepers and groundsmen as a tradition, making a fun night out enjoyed by all who make the effort to attend, some travelling from as far as Middlesbrough, Sunderland, Darlington and Consett.



Ian Pemberton of the Cleveland section (Bedale GC) can be seen here 'getting into the spirit'.

Ian enjoys the quiz night as you can see. "It's a fantastic night out with the TSL staff doing us proud. We

share a drink with good friends and colleagues, enjoy a delicious bowl of winter broth and try to answer some very tough questions too. It's not the taking part, it's the winning!"

Barry Walker of City of Newcastle GC, the Greenkeepers team captain for 2006, wasn't bitter. "Unfortunately the groundsmen had all the easy questions this year and gave us a bit of a battering but there's always next year. We'll have Super Kev back for 2007".

Barry was referring to the absence of Kevin Heslop of Brancepeth Castle GC. Kevin, a seasoned quiz goer, missed the quiz as he was attending a special party celebrating his 50th birthday.



Barry is seen here with the winning captain of the groundsmen team, Dick Carter, and Santa aka Terry Charlton, MD of TSL.

Many thanks go to all the TSL staff for organising the night and to Mount Oswald GC for great food and hospitality. We'll be trying harder next year. See you on Wednesday, December 5, 2007!

RETIREMENT

Mike Dodd, Deputy Course Manager at Burnham and Berrow GC Somerset has retired after 44 years dedicated service to the club.

Mick started work at Burnham and Berrow in 1962 after a short spell working with his father.

Mick had two stints totaling about 10 years as Head Greenkeeper but his love of the course outweighed the administrative and political element of the Head Greenkeepers job, he was happy to hand the reigns over so he could concentrate on tending to his beloved links. In 44 years he has seen many major changes to Burnham's layout, from new holes being built on the championship course to the development of the nine-hole course back in 1976, not to mention the development in machinery over this period from push hand mowers to state of the art fairway mowers to name but a few.



Mick (third from right) with Past Chairman Richard Whyman and his fellow greenstaff

NEW COURSE MANAGER



Huw Morgan has been appointed Course Manager at Ashburnham GC.

In his new role Huw will bring a wealth of experience in golf course maintenance. Starting in February, 2007, Huw will be working on projects aimed at both long

and short term improvements and looks forward to liaising with the council and members to make Ashburnham Wales's finest links private members club. Originally from Swansea, Huw studied at college in Pencoed before securing positions at Fairwood Park and Southerdown golf clubs.

In 1993 he moved to The Wilderness Club in Sevenoaks, Kent to improve the course for the return of The "Open" qualifiers. Having had six successful tournaments the club has been awarded the honour of hosting the 2007 English Seniors Amateur Championship.

Huw achieved "Master Greenkeeper" status from BIGGA in 2002 after winning the UK Toro Greenkeeper of the year award in 2001.

Huw and his wife have three boys and lived in Gorseinon for seven years up until 1993. In his spare time Huw enjoys watching rugby, football and playing golf to a handicap of eight.

MULTI-MILLION EURO CYPRUS PROJECT

Irrigation Control Ltd has successfully installed a new 1.1 million Euro automated tee-to-green watering system at Tsada GC, which started the golf boom in Cyprus when it opened in 1994.

The Cheshire-based company was called in to provide blanket irrigation to greens, approaches, surrounds, carries, fairways, semi-rough, tees, driving range and practice greens at the club - which features an 18-hole Championship course near Paphos.

The project required a complete renewal of the existing irrigation system as part of a major modification of the Donald Steel and Company-designed layout - the oldest of Cyprus's three championship courses - by golf course architects Mackenzie and Ebert.

Irrigation consultants Irriplan Ltd designed a system that incorporated more than 22,000 metres of pipe and cable, 800 sprinklers, a brand new state-of-the-art pumping station, a PC control system, a weather station, a lightning warning and protection system, and a remote control facility. Irrigation Control installed all during the five-month long project.

Irrigation Control Ltd Managing Director, Phil Breakey, said: "Water is a precious commodity in Cyprus and we had to install a system which provides blanket irrigation for the course while

conserving water at the same time.

"Added to that, our team had to ensure the existing system - which was in urgent need of replacement - continued to operate right up until we were able to switch over.

Tom Mackenzie of Mackenzie & Ebert said: "This was a highly complex project where the old irrigation system had to be kept working throughout the installation of the new system during the height of the Cyprus summer. Phil and his team performed well and worked closely with the greenstaff and the golf course contractor, John Greasley Ltd, to hit project deadlines. Cooperation between contractors is vital for the success of every project, especially one as challenging as this."





NEW ERA?

As we move into a new year it can be argued that greenkeeping and golf clubs are moving into a new era! Says David Golding, GTC's Education Director.

The GTC, for its part, will endeavour to ensure that training and qualifications keep learners and employers well served, as there are many issues on the horizon, which must be addressed.

We will work with all the specialist experts to ensure the training courses are available through our approved training provider network but we also need employers and greenkeepers to address the issues, rather than hoping they might go away.

I will mention a few of the issues which have been brought to my attention and so, recently, the GTC's Technical Committee and working groups have been looking to ensure they are covered in all the turf qualifications and courses offered to complement both vocational and higher education awards.

Climate change - drought orders - drainage - water storage and use - course presentation - the sustainable golf course - pesticide use et al.

You might say there is nothing new there and you may well be saying that there are more urgent issues we need to address, fine, but as I mentioned in the GTC article in the December GI magazine, I honestly feel we as a specialist sector are at last working together to address many of the issues facing the sport.

Certainly all the British Home Unions as part of the GTC, the R&A and BIGGA are committed to ensuring greenkeeper training is not found wanting when it comes to having competent qualified staff available to maintain and manage golf courses.

There is so much support available to golf clubs and greenkeepers but there does seem to be a very difficult period ahead for some clubs.

The GTC, having lobbied the Government for years to ensure funding is available to support its apprenticeship and qualifications framework, has some good news for employers and learners.

A more common sense approach to funding is currently being discussed and a pilot programme will soon be offered by training providers where bite-size learning (formally called the Qualifications and Credit Framework) will be tested to see if this is the right approach to improve employer and learner uptake in training.

I for one believe that this must be the way forward rather than assuming all staff need full qualifications and the GTC also will be involved in the development and evaluation of this programme.

In simple terms training courses will be offered on a unit/module basis as well as full qualifications and funding support should make these short courses attractive to employers.

While the new framework above is currently for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) are also involved in the

pilot programme development meetings.

The programme could see an increase in the popularity of the NPTC's Certificates of Competence, which the GTC has promoted as ideal awards and while often specific, can also be appropriate to meet employers staff development needs.

There are many short courses offered by professional bodies including BIGGA, BTLIA (irrigation), STRI, which should, following this pilot scheme attract Government funding.

We are very aware of the level of Government funding directed to further and higher education and these establishments will also welcome the latest test and trial programme for bite size learning so we can all look forward to working together to provide our sector with quality courses and qualifications it requires.

While the Government are looking to direct funding to industries supporting the Skills Agenda we should not expect all courses to be free and this is a very thorny subject when greenkeepers are looking at their personal development.

As this is a subject of debate all on its own, I would suggest that any enlightened employer could have all their greenkeeping staff on continued professional development (CPD) programmes without it costing thousands of pounds.

Course Managers, as part of their day to day work, should know their staff development needs and a programme designed and presented to the committee or owner should be seen as beneficial to both the business and staff moral especially when linked to salary negotiations.

Trained staff has to be the way forward if we are going to address all the issues facing our sport and the GTC will ensure greenkeeping training courses and qualifications look to address all of these issues.

For all up to date information on the GTC visit: www.the-gtc.co.uk or contact David direct on: 01347 838640 or email: david@the-gtc.co.uk.

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