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Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Welcome



A Special Week Awaits

Eight years after feeling the heat of the media spotlight and the wrath of a few players, Carnoustie

Links Superintendent John Philp and his team are gearing up for another Open Championship this month.

The narrow fairways, severe rough and high scores brought about a renaming of the course in some newspapers to “Carnasty” last time around and took away from the great work John and his team had done on the areas he describes “as the areas the players were supposed to be playing from”.

This time round John has already had to face the media again as they looked back at the last Open and quizzed him on his preparations. He handled himself well when faced with a barrage or questioning and took the wind from the sails of one journalist who, hoping to highlight John’s lack of knowledge of the game, asked if he played golf and, if so, of what handicap? John was able to say that, while he doesn’t play so much now, he did once play off 1.

I was lucky enough to catch up with him a few weeks later to talk about the preparations in a more detailed and measured manner and can honestly say that a couple of hours in John’s company is as refreshing as it is exhausting. I came away with my head buzzing full of the ideas and philosophies of a man whose passion and knowledge for turf management. It’s a genuine privilege to spend time in his company.

This time around the rough won’t be as penal – the weather conditions over the last 12 months or so have seen to that while the fairways are a little wider so hopefully more players will appreciate the work that has gone into giving those who play golf as it should be played – finding the short grass from the tee then the green – every chance to control their golf ball.

Those of us who were at Carnoustie in '99, and had the unforgettable experience of cheering home a home grown winner in Paul Lawrie from the side of the 18th green, would have been staggered to learn that between then and our return to the Angus town there would have been no British winner, not to mention European winner of a Major Championship. While the Ryder Cups have proved easy meat over the last few years, 31 Majors have passed with a series of American, South African, Australian, New Zealand, even Fijian winners.

That run will come to an end sometime but, if truth be told, there is no-one exactly holding up their hand and declaring themselves a contender. But the beauty of golf is that you never know and a new hero is likely to burst from the dark shadows at any time.

Let’s hope so, just as we hope John Philp and his team have a wonderful week full of praise for a magnificent links in magnificent condition.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

Why not drop us an email with any news, press releases or new product updates you have –
Send them to Melissa (melissa@bigga.co.uk)

SUPPORT TEAM FOR BRITISH MASTERS

The Belfry have kindly offered BIGGA five places on their Support Team at the 2007 Quinn British Masters, to be staged at the Belfry from September 20 to 23, 2007.

The five BIGGA Support Team members will work alongside the main crew led by Superintendent Kenny Mackay. Kenny is looking for greenkeepers that are competent machine operators, as the work of the support team will consist of mowing of all cut areas of the golf course along with bunker maintenance. Also a valid driving licence would be of benefit. All members of the Support Team will need to arrive on September 16th and stay until the 23rd. Free accommodation, food and soft drinks will be given to all Support Team members during their stay.

All applications to be made to Kenny Mackay, Director of Golf Course & Grounds. Tel: 01675 470301 or email: kenny.mackay@thebelfry.com

TONY JACKLIN DESIGNS MAJOR NEW GOLF DEVELOPMENT



Tony Jacklin, the most successful European Ryder Cup Captain, has been contracted to design a new golf course development in Cyprus.

The man regarded as ‘Europe’s first golf superstar’ is also in discussion with golf course developers in the Middle East, continental Europe and the Caribbean – all of which follow his recent collaboration with Jack Nicklaus on the vaunted new ‘The Concession’ course in Florida, USA.

Tony, aged 62, has made a conscious decision to concentrate on golf course design, and is looking forward to taking a unique, hands-on approach with his projects – which will bear all the hallmarks of The Open and US Open champion.

He said: “I have decided only to take on a limited number of design contracts at any one time, as this gives me the opportunity to get personally and deeply involved in each of the projects.

“I hope that my signature design courses will be my legacy in Europe, where I learned the game, made many friends and enjoyed many of my finest moments in the sport.”

By becoming personally involved in each project – from the very first preliminary design meetings, right through to the official opening – Tony hopes to forge an enduring link with the golfing community. And he is determined that each and every one of his Tony Jacklin Signature designed golf courses will be a very special place for golfers to learn the game, play and most of all enjoy their golf.

GENTLEMAN DON: 1938 - 2007

It's with great sadness that a true friend to greenkeepers all over the West Country passed away suddenly on Monday, May 14, 2007.

I first met Don when I was a young lad starting on my career path at Saunton GC in North Devon. Don at the time had his own Company based at Bovey Tracey in Devon making and selling topdressing across the South West, his Company also sold fertilisers and course sundries.



First and foremost Don was a family man who loved his wife and daughters and later on his grandchildren. West Country greenkeepers and groundsman both young and old were an extension of Don's family, he always had time to have a chat and always asked about the family before turning to the topical sports story of the day.

Don lived life to the full with his positive attitude that rubbed off on everyone he met, he would always see the good points in people and encourage them with his positive manor.

During recent times Don has been working for Roffeys as their representative in the Devon & Cornwall area, he was also the Section's events organiser for Devon and Cornwall where he continued to drive the Section forward.

I'm sure Don would like us to remember him with a smile, many of you will have your own memories of gentleman Don, my most fondest memory has to be Don taking an order for materials on the back of a cigarette packet and losing it before he could place the order back at his desk.

Richard Whyman, BIGGA Past Chairman

BMW SUPPORT TEAM 2007

Once again a team of volunteer greenkeepers were on hand at The Wentworth Club for the BMW PGA Championship, held at the end of May.



Some of this year's BIGGA Support Team with Chris Kennedy and winner, Anders Hansen.

A small team were on stand-by duty on the Thursday and Friday of the event in case of bad weather. Fortunately the weather was kind on these two days, and glorious sunshine was experienced by all with only our Chairman, Billy McMillan, suffering with a touch of sunburn on his visit to the Course!

A rapid change in conditions meant that the full contingent of 40 volunteers were armed with squeegees as well as bunker rakes for the last two days of the Championship.

With the help of Chris Kennedy and his greenstaff, the West Course stood up well to a day of incessant, and at times, very heavy rain with no delays in play on the final day.

Once again this year competitors had to negotiate a few subtle changes and modifications to the Course instigated by Ernie Els and Chris.

The winner of this year's event was Anders Hansen who beat Justin Rose on the 1st extra hole of a play-off.

Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator

COMMENDATION AWARD

The Altonwood Golf Group based in Godstone, Surrey has been given a Special Commendation at South East Learning Skills Council's (LSC) inaugural Employer of the Year Awards. The company collected the commendation in the medium employer category. Employing about 100 people, five of Altonwood's young employees are on work-based Apprenticeship programmes with Kent-based Hadlow, one of the UK's leading land-based colleges.

The awards ceremony was hosted by former Olympic athlete Colin Jackson CBE who also presented the prizes. Speaking on behalf of Altonwood, Matt Macklin said 'The commendation means a lot to us. As a result of taking on Apprentices, we have invested in the development of young people and now have a quality, enthusiastic confident, qualified staff and increased staff retention. We aim to take on more Apprentices in the future.'

STUDENT RETURNS AS TEACHER



George Pitts at the Cannington Golf Course

George Pitts, a former top golf course management student at Cannington (Somerset), has recently returned to Bridgwater College's Cannington Centre for Land-based Studies to inspire future generations of students, as the new Programme Manager for Sports Turf and Greenkeeping.

George studied at Cannington between 1997-2000 for an HND in Golf Course Management, for which he received a Distinction – and awarded the Top Student prize, the BIGGA South West Cup, for his Dissertation.

He has been involved in the golf industry for 12 years, working at various golf courses including: St Mellion International – Cornwall; Pallazzo Arzaga Club - North Italy; Sherfield Oaks – Hampshire; Bovey Castle – Devon.

George said: "I'm very passionate about the golf industry and the quality of our courses in particular. I've enjoyed training employees and seen the benefits it can achieve not only to the sports surfaces but also to a persons self-esteem and confidence. I've made many contacts and many close friends within the Greenkeeping industry.

"At Bridgwater College's Cannington Centre, where we have a 9 hole, 18 tee links-like golf course, we are concentrating on promoting equal opportunities by offering courses to suit all situations. We are raising awareness in nearby schools by promoting sports turf careers. We invite industry professionals to contribute to our courses to ensure the courses are as industry specific as we can.

"We will also be offering a new NVQ Level 3 in Sports Turf, starting this September, which will be run in conjunction with BIGGA South West and BIGGA South Wales regions."

BUSHEY HALL GOLF CLUB

One of Hertfordshire's golfing gems, Bushey Hall GC, has just appointed Neil Fergie as the new Course Superintendent to take the course to new levels of excellence. Neil (37) who heralds from the home of golf, East Lothian in Scotland, brings to Bushey Hall 17 years of world-class expertise.

Neil's impressive international career includes five years working at Muirfield in Scotland – one of the world's most prestigious courses. Muirfield has hosted the Ryder Cup and 'many Open Championships. Neil was part of an eight-man team responsible for bringing the course to such a high standard that it could hold major tournaments at any time of year.

Neil has also worked as Greenkeeper and Superintendent on courses in Moscow, Russia and as far away as Trinidad and Tobago in the West Indies at Tobago Plantations Beach & Golf Resort. It was here that Neil was responsible for the overall management of 72 staff. During this time Tobago Plantations hosted the European PGA Seniors Classic Tours 2000 – 2005. This event was televised worldwide and the course was widely acknowledged as a first class championship golf course.



When asked about Bushey Hall Golf Club, Neil responded; "I initially visited Bushey Hall as a consultant, I was immediately impressed by its beauty and the extremely friendly atmosphere both on the course and in the clubhouse. I'm very proud and excited to be working at Bushey Hall. I'm very ambitious for the course; my goal is to make the course the best it has ever been and to be one of the best in Hertfordshire. In 1–2 years I would love the course to be ready to host tournaments for adults and juniors at amateur and professional levels.' Neil added, "my message to anyone in Hertfordshire interested in joining a golf club would be, come and join Bushey Hall Golf Club and be part of the English golfing paradise that's about to happen – watch the old become new."

NEW EIGCA PRESIDENT

Scottish course designer Ken Moodie has been elected President of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA), succeeding Mark Adam, who has held the position for the last three years. David Krause has taken over as Vice-President. Moodie said: "During my presidency, I'm especially keen to work on strengthening our relationships with the other professional bodies in the field, such as the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the Society of Australian Golf Course Architects (SAGCA). We are planning a joint world summit on golf course architecture in 2010, which will be a great opportunity to share our thoughts on the global development of the profession and the game of golf."

Education is a key part of EIGCA's remit, and Moodie is committed to strengthening the Institute's training programmes. "Our diploma course is continuing to grow, but we must keep improving it," he said. "We also plan to expand the areas of research we already support and carry out, including – learning more about the impact of club technology on course design – so that our members are better placed to design golf courses that will be playable long into the future."

Seven EIGCA members form the Council – the President, Ken Moodie, and six members, each of whom have responsibility for chairing a committee, as follows: David Krause, PR & Promotion; Thomas Himmel, Professional Development; Rainer Preissmann, Membership; Howard Swan, Education Board; Peter Fjallman, Finance; and Mike Wood, Environment.



ARCHITECTS EXPERIENCE GOLF THE OLD WAY

The men and women behind some of the newest golf courses in the world recently tried golf the way it was played a century ago. Members of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA) – who were gathered in Portmarnock, Ireland, for their annual general meeting – took the opportunity to play several holes of the Portmarnock Links golf course, built in the 1990s by architect Stan Eby and signature designer Bernhard Langer, using hickory shafted clubs from the 1920s and earlier and reproduction vintage golf balls.

Gavin Bottrell of Timewarp Golf provided the hickory clubs. “I think the EIGCA members found it an interesting experience,” he said. “Different players react in different ways to vintage clubs – some find them very stiff, to others they are very whippy. I believe this is because all of these clubs were tailor-made for individual golfers. But I do try to match the clubs to the ability of each player.”

Bottrell reckons playing extensively with hickory clubs has helped him realise that, although the best golfers could hit the ball considerable distance with old equipment, the lack of forgiveness the clubs provide is the biggest difference. “Better players play well with hickories – I have seen professionals break par on difficult courses using them,” he said.

EIGCA member Tom Mackenzie echoes Bottrell’s view. For Mackenzie, the day after he won the Institute’s President’s Cup golf tournament, it was his first experience of vintage equipment, although he felt having grown up before the era of big-headed drivers and forgiving irons gave him some inkling as to how the clubs would feel. “I really enjoyed playing with the hickories, but you have to swing the clubs completely differently,” he said. “You can’t be so eager to get at the ball. For some of the young guys who play the modern game of just swinging as hard as possible then it was a much bigger culture shock.”

“I typically carry the ball between 185-190 yards with a hickory driver,” said Gavin Bottrell. “But the ball flies much lower, and when the ground is firm – as it was at Portmarnock – then the extra roll you get means a good shot can travel quite a long way.” Mackenzie agrees, but is quick to point out the other side of the coin. “Poor shots go absolutely nowhere!” he said.

BOARDROOM CHANGES

Sisis Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd have appointed two new directors. Derek Cronshaw will become Financial Director, having previously been Company Secretary. Derek has worked at Sisis for 38 years, in Accounts and Purchasing.

David Harrison was Export Sales Manager and becomes Sales Director with overall responsibility for all Sisis sales. David joined Sisis from college, working in Design & Development and as a Demonstrator, so has much experience to bring to his new role.

Roger Hargreaves becomes Chairman with brother William Hargreaves now sole Managing Director.



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QUALITY GOLF COURSE SIGNAGE

AWARD WINNER

Manor House & Ashbury hotels, Duchy College and the greenkeeping sector are celebrating a significant success after winning an award at the South West Skills Awards recently. The Award, presented by Jason Gardener MBE, Olympic gold medal sprinter, celebrates the achievements of apprentices, learners and employers who have excelled in the region.

The Manor House & Ashbury hotels are a privately owned, family business specialising in Sports, Craft and Golf holidays. The company employs 300 members of staff and the company have worked hard to ensure that every one of their team members has access to training.

Manor House Hotel based in Okehampton won the Large Employer of the Year Award; judges were looking for employers that could clearly show the benefits they had gained from a commitment to training their workforce through apprenticeships.

The achievement of this award is a major one both for the Manor House & Ashbury hotel and for the greenkeeping sector within Devon and Cornwall. The greenkeeping sector has, over a number of years, raised the standard of vocational training through national initiatives led by the British and International Golf and Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA), and through the Greenkeeping Training Committee (GTC). Clubs and head greenkeepers throughout Devon and Cornwall have committed to such training. There has been a further significant element of support in the region from the Devon and Cornwall Section of BIGGA.

Pete Gross, Deputy Course Manager, said; "Before the training programme began, all staff including juniors would complete the task set for them, but now they are much more engaged in what they are doing, the reasons behind doing certain things and the benefits that the different methods will achieve."

Steve Harris, Course Manager, stated, " We are currently building another 30 golf holes, 19 of which opened in March this year, 7 to open in April 08 and the last 4 to open in April 09. On completion we will have 512 courses to maintain to an equal standard. As a company we believe in doing most things in-house; we find that this improves everyone's interest in all aspects of greenkeeping from constructing a golf green to finally presenting and cutting the finished green. We have trained greenkeepers to drive diggers, dumpers and even new methods of installing our new irrigation system. Training in our department is without doubt the best way to help our greenkeepers improve their understanding, knowledge and enjoyment of their job."

"If we look at our greenkeeping department, we have 40 staff members working in this important area, some have already achieved their NVQs, 16 have just achieved specialist NVQs and we have nine ready to start their qualification. There has been a measurable improvement in the standard of work being undertaken and we have worked closely with Duchy College to achieve this." He went on to say, "We hope to follow these training methods by putting two of our Head Greenkeepers through the A1 Assessors course."

Duchy College and, Manor House and Ashbury hotels worked together in a unique way to

achieve the greenkeeping qualifications for a significant number of employees. The training and instruction were delivered by Pete Gross (Deputy Course Manager). This took place totally in the work place, with no college attendance by the candidates, a very unusual system for when a college and a club work together. The college were represented by Bill Pile (retired Head Greenkeeper and life BIGGA Member) who supported Pete in the delivery and assessment process through weekly visits to the workplace. Bill Pile said, "It was very hard work over a concentrated period of time but I was pleased to be able to use my experience to help the individual candidates, Pete Gross and Manor House and Ashbury hotel to raise their greenkeeping standards".

Steve Evans (Devon and Cornwall BIGGA Section Chairman) said, "This is fantastic news for Manor House and Ashbury hotels and a tremendous example to Golf Clubs in Devon and Cornwall. Duchy College are repaying our support for them in this region as this is the second significant award they have achieved for our industry in the last six months. In January Michael Wannell (Greenkeeper at Bovey Castle) achieved The South West Student of the Year Award from the Institute of Groundsmanship. Well done to all".

TRAINING PROGRAMME

John Deere and Brooksby Melton College have launched the industry's first specialist training programme for aspiring parts apprentices.

The new Parts Tech programme will be run on similar lines to the award winning John Deere Ag Tech and Turf Tech apprentice engineering technician programmes, delivered in partnership with Brooksby Melton College of Brooksby, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

The 18-month training programme is based on the existing City & Guilds NVQ course in Vehicle Parts Operations, Levels 2 & 3. It has been tailored to include specific parts training on John Deere business systems, as well as industry training requirements such as forklift truck operation and more generic skills such as merchandising and desktop publishing. Completion of the course will lead to the award of the John Deere Parts Tech certificate and City & Guilds NVQ Level 2.

Further details are available from local John Deere dealers or from Brooksby Melton College, tel: 01664 850850 or 855444.



Achievers and staff at Manor House Hotel and Golf Club: Pete Gross (Deputy Course Manager), Richard Vallance, Paul Adams (Personnel Manager) Andrew Barnett, Stuart Entwistle, Ali Grant, Dave Chammings, David Lawrence, Mike Issac, Stuart Partridge, Jeremy Rumford, Tim Hughman, Ron Skinner (Programme Manager, Duchy College) Steve Harris (Course Manager)

CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2007

The Writtle College exhibit 'How Green is my Garden', which features in the Lifelong Learning in the Garden Section of the Chelsea Flower Show, has been awarded a Silver Lindley Medal.

The exhibit is an environmentally friendly garden centering upon issues such as recycling, water use, sustainable practices and 'garden miles', which determine how far the contents of the garden are physically transported and at what cost. The aim of the exhibit is to educate gardeners about what they can do to improve their environmental credentials. The team used as many recycled products as they could in order to reduce the environmental impact of their own efforts.

Mick Lavelle, Senior Lecturer and team leader for show preparations, said: "I'm really pleased that the exhibit received a Silver Lindley. The students involved were all first year degree students and receiving this accolade is testament to their hard work. This will be the last Chelsea for me, and it's great to bow out with one last medal".



PRESTIGIOUS GARDENS

Rolawn is once again celebrating being the first choice for some of the country's top garden designers at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show.



Leeds City Council: Scent of a Roman

Rolawn's famous Medallion turf and Blended Loam (a premium topsoil) have been incorporated into some of the show's most prestigious gardens and medal winning exhibitors, such as: The Fortnum & Mason Garden, Leeds City Council: Scent of a Roman, Marshalls: The Marshalls Sustainability Garden and The Children's Society: Lust for Life, to name but a few

LAWN SOCIETY AWARDS MEDALS



Mike Seaton, Founder of the Lawn Society

The Lawn Society has awarded its first medals for lawns and grassed areas exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show.

Brian Alabaster received "Gold," The Fortnum and Mason show garden has been awarded "Silver-Gilt," Illusionesques "Silver" and Notcutts, "Bronze" for the use of grass in the company's display in the Grand Pavilion.

Mike Seaton, a fellow of the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) and founder of the Society, said that the medals were awarded according to the quality of the sward and the suitability of the grass within the overall design. "Brian Alabaster showed not only grass of a very high quality, but the display made full use of the sloping site and the bronze sculptures of children sitting on a grassy bank had been designed to fit perfectly," he said. "The Fortnum and Mason garden showed an effective and imaginative use of small lawn areas – squares of grass broken by stone - within a formal design, and Illusionesques with its grass sculptures showed what could be achieved when grass is used as an art form. The Notcutts Group use of good quality grass under a classical arched walkway of yellow climbers created a contrast adding an interesting dimension for the viewer."

The Society, which was formed to offer expert independent lawn care advice and act as a forum for lawn lovers, can be contacted at www.lawnsociety.org.uk



APPROVED TRAINING PROVIDERS

David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, explains the purpose behind the recent meeting of its Approved Training Providers held at GTC headquarters, Aldwark Manor, York.

The GTC has the responsibility to ensure the employers and greenkeepers it represents are served by its network of training providers by way of quality education, which can be delivered in a variety of ways e.g. part or full time at a college, on the job or on-line.

The choice of delivery is very much up to the student and if employed, the employer.

Some employers still consider it best that the student attends college even when they have registered them on a work-based training qualification.

I still feel there is a great deal of misunderstanding of the modern vocational qualifications and without wanting to bore regular readers I will briefly explain the structure and content of a vocational qualification.

Vocational qualifications include skills AND the related knowledge which are assessed using nationally agreed standards NOT individuals standards!

The VQ's are nationally accredited National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) in England, Wales & Northern Ireland and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in Scotland – NOTE: the content of the N/SVQ's are exactly the same at all Levels.

Groups of skills are agreed and become Units which in turn are grouped into Levels of qualifications e.g. N/SVQ Level 2,3 or 4.

In Sportsturf there are specific N/SVQ Levels 2 & 3 with a Sports Turf Manager qualification at Level 4.

The GTC has a major input into the content of the qualification ensuring the employers either recruiting using the appropriate level of qualification or reviewing staff training requirements can use the VQ's to identify particular staff's skill and/or knowledge requirements.

The crucial element of any VQ is the quality of assessment and I don't think I need to repeat the fact that this is where much of my time is spent ensuring that Centres are delivering the various programmes at to the national standards laid down by the Awarding Bodies NPTC & SQA.

Back to the main point of this article, our providers meeting. The importance of what our providers are teaching turf students has been raised over many years and while the GTC can ensure the content of the qualifications meets employment and employers needs we also attempt to ensure the theory or knowledge is also to a national standard.

The GTC invited speakers to address the provider delegates on subjects, which are today's major issues in terms of golf course maintenance and management.

Each speaker was asked to provide notes, which the GTC can circulate as additional learning materials to turf students over and above the current set of Level 2 and 3 materials through its Approved Centres.

Subjects included, sustainable sportsturf management, climate change, waste management, pesticide thematic strategy, water regulations and environmental management were all addressed.

The GTC, while promoting vocational training, also promotes the college based Higher education qualifications such as the Higher National Certificate/Diploma, Foundation Degree, B.Sc and M.Sc.

No matter which course or qualification a greenkeeping student is registered on the GTC is looking to ensure they get a balanced education where the ideals are balanced with the reality of employer/customer requirements. We need to ensure our providers do teach and discuss all aspects of turf maintenance but at all times be in touch with the current trends in the sector hence the recent GTC workshop.

The workshop proved to be a very worthwhile event and the GTC will continue to work on raising the maintenance issues facing the sport with all parties.

Clearly the Home Unions and BIGGA are committed to the awareness campaign through conferences and seminars but we accept that each golf club has to take the responsibilities for the standards it requires.

The GTC is committed to ensure its provider network teaches best practice in aspects of course maintenance providing qualified turf professionals for the employers.

The best practice information produced for use by the providers is also available within the hard copies of the Level 2 & 3 and will be sent out with future copies of the CD Rom format.

The learning materials are available from the GTC direct –
Tel: 01347 838640 Email: golf@the-gtc.co.uk or visit the GTC website: www.the-gtc.co.uk

GTC is supported by:

