



## Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

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For details, please contact Ken Richardson on 01347 833800 or via [ken@bigga.co.uk](mailto:ken@bigga.co.uk)

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# Education Update



Ken Richardson discusses the department's latest projects

The dust has finally settled from Harrogate Week 2007 and Sami and I are looking ahead to Harrogate Week 2008. We are planning a few changes to take into account the feedback received this year and to make Continue to Learn 2008 even better. We are spending a great deal of time on the BIGGA/AGCS Safety Management System that is due to be released at the end of this month, as well as working on the TORO Student of the Year Competition and on the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, Scotts, Syngenta and Course Care and we have also made some progress on the BIGGA Management Training Scheme.

We are pleased to say that we can start to award Higher Education Scholarships again following the receipt of more funds from Ransomes Jacobsen.

We are also subsidising a range of training course in the Sections and Regions as well as supporting Regional and Section Conferences thanks to contributors to the Education and Development Fund.

## The BIGGA/AGCS Safety Management System

This Internet based resource will allow golf clubs to produce safety management systems for their golf club. It is an interactive resource that contains not only a full set of downloadable documents ranging from policy to review but it also contains model risk profiles for each part of a golf club and model risk assessments that link to the risk profiles. It also contains a 'hazard file' that contains detailed information on more than 100 hazards with links to other appropriate web sites.

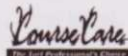
It sounds easy doesn't it? All you have to do is press a button and a safety management system appears. If only it could be that easy! You and other managers at your club will have to do some work to make sure that the System applies to your club and that you have included all risks and hazards.

It will make the task of producing a safety management system much easier, it will lead to a common system throughout golf, it will make golf clubs safer for employees, golfers and visitors and it should help to reduce insurance premiums for golf clubs.

## Student of the Year Competition

Following a very successful Competition in 2006 that saw Mike Emptage selected as the Winner, with Abi Crosswood and James Billington the two Runners Up, TORO are continuing to sponsor this high quality competition. Competition details and Competition Entry Forms will be sent to Training Providers throughout this month. The closing date for entries is 4 May 2007 and the Regional Interviews will take place during the week commencing 2 July. Competition Entry Forms can also be sent by e-mail. Contact [sami@bigga.co.uk](mailto:sami@bigga.co.uk) for details.

## BIGGA Golf Environment Competition



Details on how to enter the 2007 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition will be sent out during April. Remember that your club could win a Scotts Weather Station and a cheque for £2,000, but perhaps more importantly, gain credit for being environmentally friendly.

## The BIGGA Management Training Scheme

We hope to launch the BIGGA Management Training Scheme in the autumn. The Scheme will give greenkeepers the opportunity to learn about management, to gain in-depth knowledge and to develop the management skills needed by golf course managers. Greenkeepers and golf clubs will be able to select the Unit or Units most appropriate to them allowing future managers to prepare for their future management roles, for others to refresh their management knowledge and allow others to extend their knowledge. Watch out for further details in future editions of Greenkeeper International.



Vanessa and Gemma would like to welcome 14 new members to the Association and this month talk about renewals

# Membership Update



## BIGGA Welcomes

SCOTTISH REGION		
Stewart	Brown	North
Stuart	Harley	Central
Stuart	Speirs	East
James	Wilson	East
Derek	Young	West
NORTHERN REGION		
Dylan	Cammack	North West
Robert	Hill	North East
James	Mccarthy	North East
MIDLAND REGION		
Stuart	Collar	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Peter	Gotheridge	East Midland
Ian	Gough	Mid Anglia
Christopher	Horsler	Mid Anglia
Mark	Lloyd	Mid Anglia
Brendan	Searle	Berk/Bucks & Oxon
SOUTH EAST REGION		
Mark	Shuter	Sussex
Joe	Simpson	East Anglia
Craig	Sisson	East Anglia
STH WEST & WALES		
Andy	Fincher	South Coast
Christopher	Payne	South West
INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS		
Henk	Stuyvem	Belgium
Marc	Vandevijvere	Belgium
Michal	Engler	Slovakia
Christian	Pilon	Canada
STUDENT MEMBERS		
Danny	Partridge	Scottish Region
Neil	Plenderleith	Scottish Region
Robert	Corlett	Northern Region
Richard	Drake	Northern Region
Martin	Bird	Sth West & Wales Region
David	Daw	Sth West & Wales Region
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS		
Hugh	Fraser	Scottish Region
Nicola	Gemmell	Scottish Region
Christine	Hunter	Scottish Region
Brian	Inglis	Scottish Region
Douglas	Shearer	Scottish Region
Phil	Allen	Northern Region
Steve	Barnes	Northern Region
Stewart	Brown	Northern Region
Julia	Campey	Northern Region
Craig	Fort	Northern Region
Jean	John	Northern Region
Andy	Law	Northern Region
Jon	Mentell	Northern Region
David	Newton	Northern Region
Lee	Ashcroft	Midland Region
John	Briggs	Midland Region
James	Buckholt	Midland Region
Miranda	Chambers	Midland Region
Keith	Collingwood	Midland Region
Richard	Fortmuller	Midland Region
Simon	Harrison	Midland Region
Eddie	Bullock	South East Region
David	Cole	South East Region
Sheena	Shah	South East Region
Charles	Worsfold	South East Region
Alex	Burnand	Sth West & Wales
John	Daniel	Sth West & Wales
Alan	Boyd	N Ireland
Denis	O'regan	Rep of Ireland
Jonathan	Mcnally	Dubai
CORPORATE MEMBERS		
Graham	Purse	South East Region
Vic	Purse	South East Region
Bill	Stimson	South East Region

## Keep in touch

We would like to be able to keep in touch more with our members and because regular mail is very time consuming, slow and pricey we would like to email you all more often. If you want to receive more regular updates and we don't already have your email address then email us on: [vanessa@bigga.co.uk](mailto:vanessa@bigga.co.uk) and we'll add you to our list of contacts.

Time's running away. Don't forget to get those renewals in as soon as possible if you don't want to lose the BIGGA membership benefits you are currently getting.

If your membership expired in November or December 2006 or at the beginning of this year it is not too late to renew your membership. If you've lost your renewal form just ring us and we'll send you a new one.

If you don't want to pay your subscription fee all in one go you can pay us in five or 10 instalments by Direct Debit. If you want a Direct Debit Instruction form get in touch with us on: 01347 833800 and we'll get one to you immediately.

Also, don't forget that if you are paying your own BIGGA Membership subscription fees you can apply to the tax office for a refund of 23% of the subscription amount. If you are a Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager paying £117 then this could save you nearly £27.

This is because BIGGA is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a legitimate professional body. Membership fees to such bodies are eligible for tax relief. All you need to do is get a form from us and send the completed form to your local tax office.

If you are retiring or leaving the trade, you don't have to say goodbye to your BIGGA Membership. There are many different types of memberships that BIGGA can offer you. For retiring greenkeepers BIGGA has a Retired Membership with full benefits or a Retired Membership with limited benefits. Just give us a call for more information. If you are leaving the greenkeeping profession, why not join BIGGA as an associate member so you can still be a part of the Association?

## Message for the Section Secretaries

At BIGGA Headquarters we would like you to send us your dates so that we can update the website. Please email them to: [vanessa@bigga.co.uk](mailto:vanessa@bigga.co.uk) along with any other information that you would like us to publicise on the BIGGA website.



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All equipment used to carry out work within any organisation must always be safe to use. Some equipment is subject to statutory inspections and maintenance at varying frequencies. Other pieces of equipment e.g. kettles, microwaves, mowers, strimmers etc. should be checked visually for damage before use and are advised to be formally checked for continued safe usage on a routine bases (generally annually).

Each business should have a Work Equipment Register detailing the items of equipment they have and that the equipment has been at least visually inspected once per year for continued fitness for use. Items failing the inspection should be repaired or removed from service.

Complex pieces of equipment will require more than a visual examination and should be inspected and maintained by a competent person to ensure that they remain safe to use.

Work equipment should be maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions and frequencies. Records of maintenance visits and any repairs carried out should be retained on site.



Risk assessments may be required for work operations utilising certain pieces of work equipment which pose particular hazards. The range of work equipment available to green keeping staff is wide and varied and may range from:

- **Tractors with associated PTO and Non-PTO attachments**
- **Mowers – both ride-on and rotary handmowers**
- **Scarifiers, Slitters and Spiking equipment**
- **Groomers**
- **Brushcutters, Brushsaws and Strimmers**
- **Chain-saws**
- **Fertiliser Spreaders and Pesticide Sprayers**

Important aspects in ensuring that machinery is used safely with minimum risk of serious injury include:

- **Training**
- **Competence**
- **Maintenance**
- **Correct use**
- **Safe Systems of Work**

Training provides staff with information on safe working practices and machinery should only be used by someone who has been trained and is competent in its use. Competence is developed through correct training and experience. To prevent unauthorised use, all machinery should be secured when not in use

and only authorised employees should have access to the equipment.

Proper maintenance of machinery is essential. Safety devices, brakes, controls etc. need regular inspection and maintenance. Guards are designed to prevent operators and others from coming in contact with power driven components of machinery when in use and MUST NOT be removed until components have come to rest and have been deactivated. Machines should only be used if all guards are in place – it is a safety offence to do otherwise.

Machinery in use on golf courses can suffer a build-up of grass/debris around engine/transmission areas. This debris can absorb fuel, oil etc and eventually become a fire hazard. The machine should be deactivated before removing any debris and thereafter debris should be washed off or removed to cut the risk of the material catching fire.

Most machines used on golf courses are driven by petrol or diesel fuelled engines. To help prevent injuries and fires it is essential that all staff are adequately instructed in the safe use, transport and storage of petrol and diesel. Fuel should only be stored and transported in approved containers which are marked with the fuel type.

Care should be taken when decanting petrol that all ignition sources have been removed. A funnel should be used to obviate spillage and the machine switched off (and allowed to cool) before filling commences.

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## OHIO ARTICLE

My name is Jack Critchley from Royal Jersey GC in Jersey CI. I have just recently gained my NVQ level 2 in Sportsurf with Myerscough college.

I want to thank you for the excellent article you published recently about Pinehurst. This is exactly what I need in my career, as I can not find that level of management, pressure and training (6 Courses) on the Island of Jersey. I am really keen on getting recognised for this as

I am the first person to be enrolled on the program from Jersey CI And think something like this would be extremely beneficial!

I have since been accepted by The Ohio State Program and they are placing me at a very famous course, Scioto Country Club, home course of Jack Nicklaus when he was growing up in Columbus Ohio. I met the Superintendent at your conference in Harrogate, as he was over for your show, which I flew up from Jersey to attend, and I really enjoyed it.

Thank you again for your help and would be grateful to hear from you in the near future.

Kind Regards  
**Jack Critchley**

## THANK YOU

Dear Editor

As a past member of BIGGA and former Langland Bay Golf Club greenkeeper, I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to all club members, especially Mrs Gifford, Lady Captain 06 and Mr S Jones, Club Captain 06, for such as generous donation to the Ann Conroy Trust charity. Your support has been superb.

Yours sincerely  
**Paul Houlton**

## Course Feature

### Chance of a Lifetime

The Ohio State University Turfgrass Intern Programme, has brought together seven interns from the UK for hands-on training at The Pinehurst Resort, North Carolina.

Robert Lucas - Course 3, Niall MacDonald & Tom Freeman - Course 4, Craig Hay - Course 5, Jaime Smith - Course 6, Stephen Bregan - Course 7, Neil Kennedy - Course 8 give you an idea of what life is like on an internship at Pinehurst.



Left to right, back: Thomas Freeman, James Smith, Neil Kennedy, Stephen Bregan, Front: Niall MacDonald, Craig Hay, Robert Lucas

The aim is to equip the interns with the skills, experience and knowledge they need to succeed in the Turfgrass Maintenance Industry worldwide. The programme is also a great opportunity to have fun, learn, and make contacts with people who can extend your support network, both professionally and personally, from around the world.

Our visa allows us to undertake work based practical training for 12 months with the option of extending for another six months.

Accommodation is arranged by Pinehurst Resort and we live together in the same apartment complex, only five miles from the golf courses. There's lots to do when not at the course. We are all really keen golfers and spend most of our spare time playing. At Pinehurst employees, we get free use of the golf courses and practice facilities - the only cost is \$2 for a golf cart.

The hours we do and the amount of overtime varies throughout the year. During spring, summer and autumn we start at 6am and finish at 3pm, Monday - Friday. During winter we start at 7am. Weekend duty is compulsory and, although you are only asked to be on duty every other weekend, most interns go in every weekend for the experience. We do a lot of overtime during the summer months, it's not physical work but it is very responsible and an important duty - "walk watching" and spraying greens (more later).

Interns are trusted with a lot of responsibility because we have all been to college and have a qualification. We also use machinery and equipment that we had never used before and carry out topdressing, aeration,

irrigation, spraying fungicide, herbicides, to insecticides and fertiliser.

The Pinehurst Resort is the largest golf resort in the US, with eight golf courses and three hotels in 1900 Donald Ross came to Pinehurst and stayed for 48 years, during which time he re-designed course 1; was the architect for the world famous course 2, which opened in 1907, and Course 3 which opened in 1910. Course 5 was designed by Ellis Maples in 1961. Courses 4, 6 & 8 were the work of Tom Fazio. Course 7 was designed by Renee Jones in 1986.

Pinehurst has mild winters, allowing for a long golfing season so golfers from the northeastern states use it as a winter retreat. It is on sandy soil which provides great drainage all year round.

In 2005 it hosted the US Open Championship won by Michael Campbell with a score of even par.

The climate of North Carolina is mild winters and very hot summers which means Pinehurst is in a transition zone. They use warm season turfgrass during the summer months and cool season turfgrass during the winter months, which is a great experience for us to be exposed to from a management perspective.

#### PINEHURST THROUGH THE SEASONS

##### SUMMER

Summer temperatures frequently hit 80°C so bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) is used as the warm season turfgrass. A hybrid bermudagrass called Tifway 419 is used because it has a finer leaf blade, produces a tight sward and is more drought and shade tolerant than common bermudagrass. It grows on the tees, fairways, roughs, collars, and approaches.

We started to notice "green-up" and recovery of bermudagrass in late February when night temperatures remain above 15°C for several days, soil temperature also needs to reach 18°C at the 10cm depth. By the last week in June 99% of the ryegrass had wilted out of the golf courses.

The greens are cut everyday during the summer, the other areas such as fairways, rough, tees, collars and approaches are cut every other day.

The greens at Pinehurst are seeded with Penn G-2 creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) because it provides a high quality putting surface and year round colour. We cut the greens very low - 3.1mm is the usual cut height.

G-2 is a very heat tolerant cool season turfgrass so is able to tolerate the high summer temperatures, but only if a lot of effort is made to cool the greens by syringing to replace lost water from the leaf and reduce the temperature of the canopy.

We are given the responsibility of syringing the greens, which involves hand watering areas of the greens that begin to wilt. These areas are called "hot spots" and are syringed over and over all afternoon usually from

## ASTHMA UK

My name is Andy Reason. I work at Sunningdale Golf Club, Surrey, as First Assistant Greenkeeper and I have suffered from Asthma all my life (26 years now). I am just one of 5.2 million people in this country that suffer with this condition, one person dies every seven hours from asthma. When I was younger I was often in hospital with the condition and I am very thankful for all the research that had been done, and continues to be done, that allowed me to be treated.

So that is why I have decided to help by running the Flora London Marathon 2007 in aid of Asthma UK, along with my friend Steve Richardson who also works at Sunningdale as a Head Greenkeeper.

We have been training for a couple of months now, but before we actually take on the 26 miles we have to reach another finishing line, our fundraising target of £4,000. Yes, it is a lot of money, but we are committed to the challenge and we are getting there. However we still have along way to go and this is the reason for this letter. I would be grateful if BIGGA could print this letter in Greenkeeper International asking for sponsorship from fellow members and companies, to help Asthma UK continue to improve people's lives with Asthma.

I know you must get letters like this all the time but I do hope that you will be able to make a contribution towards our goal of £4,000 no matter how small, every penny counts. If you would like more information about the race or the vital work of Asthma UK just visit the website at [asthma.org.uk](http://asthma.org.uk) or call the charity on: 020 7786 5000. If you want to contact me directly to discuss this further or maybe just tell me that we are crazy to run 26 miles please feel free to call me on: 07725954411.

Many thanks for your time I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully  
**Andy Reason**



# MANAGING BUNKERS FOR SUCCESS

By Tim Butler

**One cannot deny the importance of sand bunkers from both an appearance and playability standpoint in the modern game of golf. Regardless of the golf course, it is likely that at least one golfer believes that the bunkers fail to meet the grade. When we think about golf course management, the green comes straight to mind. However, in reality, many golf course managers and greenkeepers frequently hear complaints about the performance of the bunkers on their course. It is vital to remember that bunkers are by definition a hazard, and this likely adds to frustration from some players.**

Having visited numerous golf courses, I have come across many first-hand that have rebuilt their bunkers because they were performing poorly. Among the main problems associated with bunkers is washout from the sides, flooding of the surface under heavy rainfall, and ball lie within the bunker itself. In many instances, bunker performance has declined only a few years after construction or reconstruction.

More often than not, the reconstruction process failed to address the underlying problems that caused the unsatisfactory condition of the original bunkers on the course.

USGA agronomist Jim Baird has suggested that five areas should be addressed when trying to achieve consistency from bunkers including:

- Architecture
- Construction
- Sand selection
- Maintenance practices
- Etiquette

**Architectural design** is crucial to the success of any bunker and should be consistent throughout the entire course. In the design stage, I have frequently come across problems with inadequate drainage and bunker steepness issues which, without doubt lead to bunker failure over time.

The **construction process** is interlinked with the design stage. Issues with internal and surface drainage, and fabric liner are commonly faced by greenkeepers. Internal drainage is usually achieved by drainage lines which run through the underlying rootzone of the bunker. A herringbone system is commonly employed. Some courses rely on natural drainage through the

rootzone without any internal drainage system. This approach will work when no excessive rainfall events occur, although in recent winters this has not been the case. In the vast majority of situations, some form of internal drainage system was fitted at the construction stage.

Over time many of these drains begin to perform poorly because of migration of sand particles through the rootzone and into the drainage lines. Flushing dye water through the drain line and watching the drain line exit is very useful. In many cases, replacing clogged lines with new drainage pipe is the only option.

Among the most time consuming jobs on the course is the repair of bunker faces that are continuously washed out. This problem is related directly to the amount of water that is entering the bunker from the surrounding area. In many situations, low-lying areas of the bunker are most affected. This is particularly true around golf greens, where the bunker area in close proximity to the green and apron are badly washed out during heavy rainfall, which is often due to the natural fall from the apron edge into the bunker.

Channelling of water before it reaches the bunker is a commonly used approach to rectify washout issues, but this technique requires careful channel placement and the collected water must have somewhere to drain to.

Many in the industry believe that building sand bunkers with flat bases will help to reduce the incidence and severity of washouts. The option of eliminating steep edges in the bunkers, will likely reduce washout problems, but will also change how the course plays.

New types of fabric liners have been introduced to some success, which may help to hold sand in place in steep edges. Much uncertainty exists among turfgrass managers over the use of these materials. Such liners have been used to cover drainage pipes on both golf courses and athletic fields in the past. Some feel that these liners may prevent migration of fine particles into drainage lines, thus reducing drainage pipe blockages, while others believe that such liners may themselves block over time, leading to a reduction in water percolation. Fabric liners are often placed across the entire bunker prior to sand application. This method may aid in reducing stones from the bunker rootzone contaminating the bunker sand. This system



will likely prevent machine raking and this should be taken into account.

New fabrics are available that are designed to attach to the sides of steep bunkers and hold sand in place, although if high rates of watering are entering these bunker sides, it may be difficult for the sand to stay in place. It is very important to realise that washouts will also reduce the quality of the sand within the bunker, through introducing debris from grassed areas and clay and stones from the bunker sides. This is a big problem on many courses, giving greenkeepers no option but to frequently top up the bunker with fresh sand in order to keep the bunker looking clean and playable.

**Sand selection** is critical to the success of the bunker. Greenkeepers need to remember that the sand used, should give golfers a fair lie if their ball lands on it. Coupled with this, the sand should hold up to daily maintenance, resist forming plugged lines upon ball impact, withstand rain and wind and allow free drainage.

Selection of sand for bunkers can vary slightly depending on course location, with coarser types of sand frequently used in situations where high winds are a factor. Finer, lighter particles would be more easily blown away and lost under high winds.

Angular sand is usually chosen in bunkers because it can withstand shifting and the 'sinking' effect which on some courses can almost feel like playing in quick sand. Limestone and silica sands are often used as sources of bunker sand, although problems with surface crusting of limestone can occur. This is usually due to the fact that limestone





Edging bunkers is a very time-consuming job that is carried out on numerous occasions on the majority of courses each year. This task can be done physically or mechanically and in many instances leads to large chunks of poorly performing grass on bunker edges being removed in order to maintain the healthy grass that most golfers want to see. In reality, over time this practice can lead to severe changes in the shape of bunkers, coupled with issues such as clay movement into the bunkers from the fresh clay bunker faces.

It is very important that the grass surrounding bunkers is managed in order to resist thinning out as much as possible. This is particularly true in locations near greens, which

receive a lot of play. Many golf courses have specific bunker areas near the green which receive high levels of play, which ultimately means that sand from the bunker is moved onto the surrounding grass surface. This can lead to numerous agronomic problems and deep-rooted grasses are needed to resist serious damage.

Re-sodding and deep aeration are often used in these locations. Some bunker edges must be rebuilt after several years of aggressive edging in order to establish a definition between the bunker face and the surrounding grass and also to reshape the bunkers into their original design. The issue of hand raking versus machine raking is often asked and in my opinion both have their merits and faults.

**Etiquette** refers to the treatment of the bunker area by golfers on the course and usually entails the raking of foot prints when finished playing from the bunker. This practice is essential if bunkers on your course are to be maintained in good standing on a daily basis. It is often useful to inform greens committees of this step and to repeat this message on a frequent basis. Entering and exiting of the bunker should also take place on fairly low areas without steep banks, as this aids in preventing sand on steep banks from collapsing.

Long gone are the days when the green was solely of crucial importance on the golf course. Expectations of all aspects of the course from greens to fairways and out-of-play areas have dramatically changed in

recent years and bunkers are no exception to this. Careful design and management are crucial in ensuring that your bunkers are, and continue to be, accepted by golfers on your course.



#### About the author

Tim Butler is currently studying for a doctorate degree in Sportsturf Science at both University College Dublin, Ireland and Michigan State University, USA. For further information contact Tim Butler at [timmbutler@hotmail.com](mailto:timmbutler@hotmail.com)

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is a soft stone and easily weathered, which can consequently lead to an increase in the number of fines in the sand. This may cause the sand surface to almost stick together and become impenetrable.

In recent years, numerous new bunker sand types have come onto the market, which vary greatly in price.

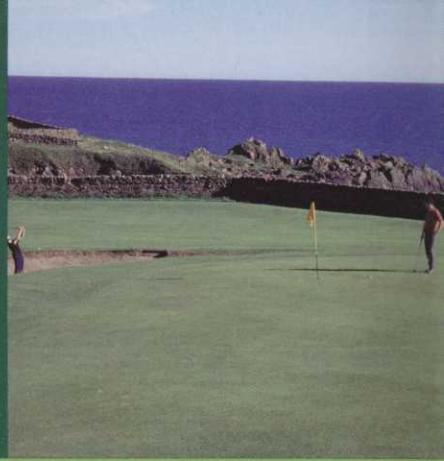
The use of crushed, recycled glass has gained much attention, particularly in the UK, although the colour of this material has been questionable to many. Bunker sand selection is usually influenced by the type of golfers using the facility. Higher handicap players often prefer softer sands more so than harder bunker surfaces which are frequently favoured by lower handicap players.

**Maintenance practices** on golf course bunkers usually consist of raking, edging, debris removal and ensuring that the bunker contains about 4in of sand. Sand bunkers located next to greens are often designed to have a sharp lip of up to 4in on the green side. This lip is used to add to the difficulty of such bunker shots. In many situations, the backside of bunkers beside greens and many fairway bunkers do not have such aggressive and sharp lines in order to give golfers a chance to get a shot in when their ball is located near such edges. However, over time in many situations these less aggressive lips are deepened and sharpened through edging the bunkers and it is important to keep an eye on how your bunker edges are, compared to how they looked when they were originally constructed.

	Positives	Negatives
<b>Hand Raking</b>	Less underlying soil disruption	Time consuming
	All areas of bunker raked	More weeds
	Eye appeal	Bunker edge damage from trafficking
<b>Machine Raking</b>	Fast	Bunker edge damage from entering and exiting
	Less weeds	Introduce clay and debris from underlying rootzone and edges
	Bunkers can be raked more frequently	Expensive machine
		Compaction on the underlying rootzone



# Course Feature



## Golfing First for Scotland

### Scott MacCallum visits the latest club to be crowned BIGGA Golf Environment Champions

**In much the same way as Egypt immediately brings to mind pyramids, thinking about Scotland does the same with golf. Of course the pyramids were in serious need of repointing by the time Allan Robertson and Old Tom Morris started to make golf the popular sport it has now become, but it would hard to claim that golf lacks history.**

**So when something occurs for the first time in the Scottish golfing world it is certainly news.**

But that is exactly what Brighthouse Bay Golf Club has achieved – a Scottish golfing first – in becoming the first Scottish golf club to win the prestigious BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Ransomes Jacobsen, Scotts, Syngenta and Course Care.

What makes the feat even more commendable is that Brighthouse Bay is not one of Scotland's traditional, established golf clubs, set, as it is, in an award winning holiday park near Kirkcudbright, an area which is not regarded as one of Scotland's foremost golfing regions.

"As a relatively new golf club we are more than delighted to have become the first golf club in Scotland to win the Award,"

said owner, Tom Gillespie.

"We are always looking to raise our profile and gain recognition, particularly coming from an area which isn't renowned for top golf courses, and this shows that we have a very interesting course here with a lot going for it," added Tom.

The win has already brought publicity to the club with VisitScotland.com featuring the Trophy presentation picture on its website and it has created quite a bit of excitement in the local area.

"The South of Scotland Golf Association is absolutely delighted about this because we sponsor their juniors while they are very keen for us to pass on some of the environmental expertise we have at Brighthouse to other clubs in the area," said Evelyn Gillespie.

Tom and Evelyn have always been extremely pro-active when it comes to environmental issues and Brighthouse Bay is one of the most environmentally sustainable holiday centres in the UK, having collected a host of awards and certificates - including Gold Status in the Green Tourism Business Scheme; the Scottish Award for Environmental Excellence on Golf Courses; the Pan European Golf Environment Europe certification and Committed to Green, while they recently picked up the David Bellamy Gold Award for the 10th year running.

"A golfing landscape is of huge benefit to wildlife and the fact that it is viewed with suspicion in some quarters is ridiculous. However the BIGGA competition actually turns that on its head and displays to people that a golf course is a fabulous resource, not only to maintain, but to encourage, wildlife. We have had a huge turn around in the amount of wildlife which has come to the area since the development of the golf course," said Tom.

The drive and enthusiasm for environmental issues showed by Tom and Evelyn has been passed on to Head Greenkeeper, Richard Davis. "To be blatantly honest when Evelyn asked me to assist with the entry in the first year I was probably like 70% of greenkeepers out there and didn't give it too much thought. Since then, though, we've taken it on board, run with it and everything has snowballed to such an extent that it culminated with this win," said Richard.

And it would be fair to say that Richard and his team are now fully committed to ensuring good environmental practice is undertaken at all times. And Evelyn is particularly proud to be assisting in the development of the Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers of the future.

"Every decision we make is taken with

***Every decision we make is taken with environmental issues in mind and if something we do affects a particular area of the course we ensure we compensate for that."***

environmental issues in mind and if something we do affects a particular area of the course we ensure we compensate for that. For example the driving range re-development involved an area which had previously been set aside for skylark nesting but we reinstated an area for the skylarks around 100 yards away so nothing

was lost," explained Richard.

Tom and Evelyn were encouraged to take part in the competition by a friend, Ross Lindsay, who had read about it in



“ We were also pleased that the BIGGA competition is so much more about a **passion for the environment** ”



Greenkeeper International in 2002 and who felt that, with all the work Brighthouse Bay was doing, it was right down their street.

In the first year of entry they were Highly Commended and then, in 2004, they became Scottish winners which proved a great boost to all involved.

During the entry process Richard, Tom and Evelyn have built up a close relationship with judge, Lee Penrose, of the STRI, to the extent that they were actively looking forward to his visits and the opportunity to show off their work and pick his brains on future projects.

“In Lee’s role he must be as much an advisor as he is an inspector. It isn’t an easy balance to strike, and I know of many who

have failed to do so in other programmes, but Lee has always done this extremely well,” said Tom.

“We were also pleased that the BIGGA competition is so much more about a passion for the environment and not paper-based involving a lot of box ticking,” added Evelyn.

With a good run of results in the two previous years, Richard and his team went into last year’s competition with hopes high for a good result.

“I’d be lying if I said that we didn’t expect to be in the shake-up, although I perhaps didn’t expect to win,” said Richard diplomatically, too diplomatically for his boss’ liking.

“You’d have been most upset if we hadn’t

won it,” interrupted Evelyn, most indignant. “Ok, We’d have been most upset if we hadn’t won this year,” responded Richard, dutifully. Much of the Gillespie’s environmental thinking can be credited to Tom’s father, who farmed the land before it became the Holiday Park.

“He was a man before his time, who thought outside the box and could have perhaps been described as a bit of a crank,” said Tom, of his father, Douglas.

“He supported the first whole food shop in the UK, which was in Baker Street, in London. Sorry to say that about five years later it went bust but you can see how many whole food shops there are nowadays.”

It pains Tom that when he left agricultural college in the ‘50s and returned to the farm



“The Scottish Golf Environment Group identified that we had nine different landscapes on the course – most courses have about two or three and that’s what creates the interest.”



he had to persuade his father to forgo organic practices for a more profitable approach.

“We couldn’t afford to run the farm organically without some extra support. It was impossible and even nowadays organic farming is heavily subsidised to take the operation through to a finished product. I’m sorry to say that I had sympathy for the organic approach but could see how difficult it was from a practical point of view so had to call a halt to it.”

But as Evelyn points out Tom’s passion for the environment and the responsibility he has as custodian of Brighthouse Bay is undiminished.

“Tom knows every inch of this landscape and loves this land – he would spot if a single tree had been removed.”

“We keep coming back to the word sustainable, but if you are making something sustainable it is actually good business – maximising what you can maximise and minimising the costs of running.

“The other thing you want to do is maximise the resource which is out there. We have the privilege of managing an area and we are duty bound to maximise what it can do for wildlife and for the golfer. It’s all about making life worth living,” said Tom.

Golf became part of the Brighthouse Bay portfolio in the early ‘70s, not long after the Holiday Park opened, as Tom reasoned that the game was a great way to attract visitors in the summer months.

“We produced a fairly rudimentary nine holer but I always felt that the land we had lent itself potentially to a very interesting golf course,” said Tom.

That vision began to edge towards reality in the late ‘90s when Tom, working with local greenkeeper and golf course designer, Duncan Gray, planned the new 18 holer.

“I’d become aware of Duncan as he was from the neighbouring parish and he’d built up a reputation as an advisor and designer both locally and in Ireland. I’d got the impression that he took easily to the natural environment and made the most of the natural topography of the area,” said Tom.

Duncan, a well known BIGGA member, built and runs his own golf club The Pines, near Dumfries, about 50 miles from Brighthouse Bay.

England football legend and former Republic of Ireland manager, Jack Charlton opened the new 18 holes in 1999 and the course has gone on from strength to strength since then.

“The Scottish Golf Environment Group identified that we had nine different landscapes on the course – most courses have about two or three and that’s what creates the interest,” said Tom.

Included among the nine are a wetland landscape; rock shore landscape; cliff landscape; hillside landscape and upper plateau landscape.

With the publicity machine about to spring into action to ensure the rest of Scottish golf and beyond is aware of Brighthouse Bay’s status as the leading environmental golf course in the country, Richard’s thoughts