

FIRST-EVER BARKOEL COURSE

Barkoel, a new crested hairgrass bred by Barenbrug, has allowed Yorkshire farmer Graham Chapman fulfill his dream of providing top class golfing facilities that everyone can afford. His nine-hole pay-and-play Academy golf course at Towthorpe just outside York opened last year, and is the first ever course to be constructed using Barkoel across most of the playing area.

The course was constructed two years ago by Mr Chapman and his two sons, on mainly light land that had previously grown cereals and grass for livestock. They created features including a large wildlife pond and two raised greens before seeding the entire area with Barenbrug's BAR 40 mixture. As well as Barkoel, this mixture also contains Barcrown, a slender creeping red fescue, and a new drought tolerant hard fescue called Barnova.

The sward was left to establish on its own, with very little inputs and no irrigation.

The resulting fine-leaved sward is dense and very slow growing – reducing the need to mow significantly. During the summer the greens were cut just twice a week down to 5mm. The fairways and roughs were left to grow longer and required even less mowing.

Thatch production has been low so no aeration has been required, and the cultivars have all shown good disease resistance and all-year round colour.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Sherriff Amenity has appointed Lewis Blois as an Amenity Specialist, responsible for sales in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

After leaving school Lewis joined Norwich City Football Club on a three-year apprenticeship and following that on a one-year professional contract.

Lewis said, "I am delighted to be joining Sherriff Amenity and am looking forward to meeting new and existing customers and working to further develop the company's business in East Anglia."

ETESIA EXPANDS UK DEALER NETWORK

Since first launching its ride-on and pedestrian rotary mowers in the UK almost 20 years ago, Etesia has established a path of continual growth. As part of an on-going plan for expansion in this country, the company has recently increased its dealer network.

Sales and service for professional and domestic users in the East Riding and Humberside is strengthened with the appointment of K & M Mowers based near Hull; while new dealer for the Isle of Man, Mowers & Motors, has already moved into top gear selling machines from their winter stock order.

Dorset, West Hampshire and West Wiltshire are now covered by Blandford Forum dealership, C & O Tractors who have not wasted any time in breaking into their local authority and commercial end user markets.

In the Essex area, P Tuckwell Ltd of Ardleigh near Colchester, has taken over an existing territory, selling Etesia's professional and domestic rotary mowers and brushcutters. The company is enjoying great success with their promotion to local authorities and sales representative, Alan Ford has already received an award from Etesia for his outstanding achievements.

FREE SEMINAR

Landscape businesses from across the South West attended a free seminar to learn how training and development can grow their staff and enhance their profitability.

The Get Growing event, held recently at Dillington House, Ilminster, is part of an information campaign developed by Train to Gain, which aims to encourage the environmental and land-based sector to grow by developing their staff.

The event, organised by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the landscape industry, and Train to Gain, was attended by over 60 businesses from a range of rural industries and highlighted the key business benefits of training.

'SIR' LES FERDINAND SIGNS FOR NEW CLUB

Former England, Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United football legend Les Ferdinand has been appointed as an ambassador for Playgolf Northwick Park.

A keen golfer, Les plays regularly at the popular Harrow complex, which features replicas of some of the most famous golf holes in the world and will become London's premier 9-hole golf course this month.

In his new role as ambassador he will make personal appearances at Playgolf Northwick Park and also help to promote Playgolf's other major sports projects in the UK, including its Manchester venue and the Playsport Scotland venture - a £16m golf and multisports complex in East Kilbride, Glasgow.

TOP DEALER REP AWARD

Adrian Gardner's sales expertise has earned him special recognition from Campey Turf Care Systems, having won the company's Top Dealer Rep Award for 2007. Adrian, who is Sales Professional with The Double A Trading Company Ltd of Fife, was presented with his trophy during Harrogate Week in January.

Competition among Campey dealers was intense, and so Adrian's success is a significant achievement, especially as he has only been with Double A for 18 months. During that time he has sold over 25 versatile Dakota Turf Tender machines to golf courses throughout Scotland, among other sales successes.

This is the first time that Campey have presented the Top Dealer Rep Award, which will become an annual event to recognise sales excellence.



Membership



MEMBERSHIP SERVICES OFFICER, JUSTINE DE TAURE PROVIDES AN UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



Hello! My name is Justine de Taure. I would like to introduce myself to you as your new Membership Services Officer.

I live in Harrogate with my two children. In the past I have worked in Product Development, Sales and Customer Care in the Beauty Industry.

I am very excited about my new role, as I have joined BIGGA just as it is embracing new and exciting times. Over the next couple of months we will be implementing new software enabling us to send more information out by email and leaving the department more available to communicate with our members. If you have an email address and have not already given it to us please contact Brad or myself.

The core part of my job is to be available and accessible for you our members. Your opinions are paramount and will help me understand what is happening out in the field. If you would like a chat please feel free to either email me on justine@bigga.co.uk or call me direct on: 01347 833818 (option 1). I look forward to speaking with you!

IMPORTANT UPDATE!

Are You Receiving The Full Benefits Of BIGGA Personal Insurance?

We need to inform our members that there has been a change of telephone number for Greenkeepers Accident Insurance. The number to call is now: 0207 560 3013. Those of you who received their membership cards in March 2008, will have the correct details on the back of your membership card. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

We thought this would also be the perfect opportunity to remind you of the benefits and peace of mind BIGGA Personal Accident Insurance provides:

- Personal Accident 24hrs a day anywhere in the world: Death cover to a sum of £7,500
- Loss of Limb up to £7,500
- Loss of Sight or Speech up to £7,500
- Loss of Hearing up to £3,750
- Permanent Total Disability up to a sum of £7,500

There is a weekly compensation as part of the policy. This covers injury, which temporarily prevents an insured person from carrying out the whole of their Occupational Duties:

- Funeral Expenses incurred as a result of death following accidental

bodily injury up to £5,000

- Hospitalisation and Coma £25- £1,000 (maximum)
- Relatives Expenses up to a maximum £2,500 payable in addition to any person who has to travel more than 10 miles after the insured has been hospitalised for 14 days or more.

Finally, there is Healthline Plus provided for all members, their partners and children. This allows you to get a second opinion on any condition from renowned consultants and remote nursing services.

To get further information the entire policy can be viewed as a download on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk or please feel free to contact the membership department on: 01347 833800 option 1.

BIGGA WELCOMES

MIDLAND REGION	
Craig Nolan	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
John Rowe	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Alan Raymond	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Mark Walker	Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Joel Siddall	East Midland
Kevin George	East Midland
David Taylor	East Midland
Christopher Bates	East Midland
Gary Davies	East Midland
Henry Bredin	East Midland
Christopher Brown	East of England
Gareth Gilmore	East of England
Ian Soper	Mid Anglia
Gordon Butcher	Midland
Timothy Haycock	Midland
George Griffiths	Midland
Trevor Simpson	Midland
Daniel Myatt	Midland
NORTHERN IRELAND	
Alan Shankland	Northern Ireland
Michael Garrity	Northern Ireland
Aaron Small	Northern Ireland
NORTHERN REGION	
Stephen Russell	Cleveland
Richard Pybus	Cleveland
Graham Crowther	North East
Simon Harding	North East
Damian Mitchell	North East
Terrence Maguire	North East
John Maree	North West
Paul Jones	North West
Michael Ewins	North West
Daniel Foster	North West
Aaron Watkinson	North West
Joseph Horrocks	Northern
Thomas Wall	Northern
Ben Rutter	Northern

This month's new members will be continued in the May issue

Learning & Development

Key Sponsorship:

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF GREENKEEPERS

The funding provided by Gold and Silver Key Sponsors is used to produce training and career aids, DVDs, CD Roms, field guides and provide refunds for training fees and subsidised learning and development courses. The funding also helps support seminars, workshops, courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

Many young greenkeepers owe their career progression to the assistance they've had from the Learning and Development Fund. An equal number of established greenkeepers have also been able to access the fund to continue their professional development thanks to the donations of the Gold and Silver Key Sponsors.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING KEY SPONSORS



GOLDEN KEY



Golden Key Individual Members

JH Fry; JH Greasley; WJ Rogers; Chris Yeaman; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Bruce Cruickshank; Frank Newberry; Andrew Cornes; Christopher Lomas MG.



SILVER KEY



Silver Key Individual Members

Clive A Archer; Douglas G Duguid; Robert Maibusch MG; Steven Tierney; Roger Barker; Ian Semple; Paul Jenkins; Robert Hogarth; Nichollas Gray; Trevor Smith; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Alex McCombie; Paul Murphy; Reaseheath College; Steve Dixon; Ian Benison.

SAMI COLLINS, HEAD OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES AN UPDATE



Easter has been and gone, we're all fat from eating too many eggs and hot cross buns! Rachael and I will work off all those goodies by keeping ourselves busy with the many new and ongoing projects undertaken by the Learning & Development Department.

BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2008



The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2008 supported by Ransomes Jacobsen, Scotts, Syngenta and Golf Monthly is launched this month. The application form will be arriving at your golf club soon. This is your club's opportunity to win between £500 and £2000, and a Scotts Weather Station for the ecological work that takes place. As well as national and regional prizes, there are categories for Best Newcomer and for Special Initiatives.

The competition has been raising the awareness of environmental and ecological issues for many years and acknowledges the positive work being carried out at golf clubs highlighting ways in which golf clubs can be more sustainable. It has been run, by BIGGA, since 1997 and past winners include Wilmslow Golf Club, Brighthouse Bay Golf Club, Thorpeness Golf Club, Minchinhampton Golf Club and The Dyke Golf Club.

All that is required is the desire to push your golf club forward in terms of its ecological and or environmental merits and have some evidence to show the judges that your club is heading in a positive direction.

Application forms can be requested from the BIGGA Learning & Development Department or can be downloaded from the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk/education/downloads.

The closing date for entries is Friday, June 20, 2008 - we look forward to receiving yours.

The BIGGA Library

The BIGGA library is an invaluable membership benefit for those studying towards qualifications and for those who have a general interest in all things related to greenkeeping.

The library boasts nearly 900 items including books, videos, DVD's and transcripts, 170 of which are reference items.

All members may borrow up to two items, except those marked 'reference', for a period of up to six weeks. The only cost to members is return postage to BIGGA HQ.

The BIGGA library continues to expand, with the following titles being added recently:

- Golf Course Management for the benefit of Butterflies and Moths – Brian Cornelius and Emma Gardner
- STRI Disturbance Theory – Henry Bechelet and Richard Windows
- Golf Facility Planning – Roger Bennett & STRI
- Handbook of Turfgrass Management and Physiology – Mohammad Pessarakli

An up to date library list may be obtained from the Learning & Development Department.

BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

Supported by:



Higher Education Scholarships have been awarded to:

- Stephen Clark – Foundation Degree Sports Turf and Groundsmanship
- Chris Sherrington – HNC Sports Turf

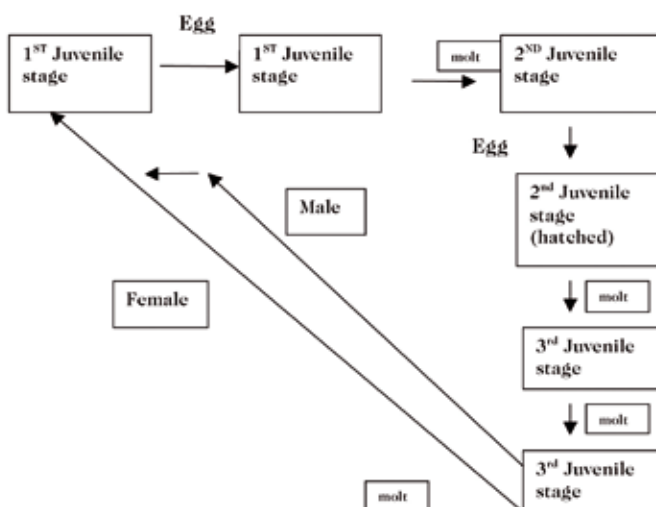
NEMATODES IN TURFGRASS

By Dr Tim Butler

Nematodes belong to the phylum nematode and are invertebrate, non-segmented, soil-dwelling, microscopic round worms that range in size from 1/25th of an inch up to 100 inches (Warner, 2006. Pers. Comm.). There are about 10,000 different species of nematodes, a large proportion of which are beneficial and are being used as biological control agents for insect pests in many crops ranging from mushrooms to turfgrass.

Control of insect pests such as cutworms and armyworms with specific nematode species is being used in the United States. Several types of nematodes exist including algal feeders, fungal feeders and carnivores. However, plant parasitic nematodes are a big problem on turfgrass. About 15 per cent of nematodes are believed to be plant parasites (Wick, 2007, Pers. Comm.). Most plant pathogenic nematodes are less than 4mm in length (Wick, 2007, Pers. Comm.).

NEMATODE LIFE CYCLE – Nematode lifecycles are made up of several stages. Most turfgrass nematodes have about four molts after the egg stage, followed by the adult stage. Sexual reproduction is usually the means of reproducing. It is important to realise that many nematode populations are only female and that females can produce fertile eggs with the male nematode. The lifecycle can last for up to a few months and many hundred eggs can be produced by one female. The common turfgrass nematode lifecycle is given in Figure 1 below.



DISTRIBUTION – From experience, many golf course managers and greenkeepers often say they have no obvious problem on their fairways or roughs from nematodes, but that it is their tees and greens that are affected. This is because many golf greens contain around >85 per cent sand depending on the specification, which is an ideal environment for nematodes. Nematodes are usually found with the top 6in layer of the rootzone and move through the layer of moisture around soil particles. Nematodes can be spread through soil, machinery, water, and wind.

CLASSIFICATION – Plant parasitic nematodes have a styla (mouthpart), which allows them to feed on plant roots by puncturing the plant cell and subsequently feeding on the contents within. Plant parasitic nematodes are often broken down into:

- Root Ectoparasites
- Root endoparasites
- Foliar feeding parasites (Warner, 2006. Pers. Comm.)

A very low proportion of nematodes are foliar-feeding, with endo and ecto parasites making up the vast majority. Ectoparasites feed outside plant tissues and not within, whereas endoparasites feed within the plant tissue (Warner, 2006. Pers. Comm.). Endoparasites can be divided into mobile (migratory) and immobile (sedentary) nematode feeders.

ENDOPARASITES – Root-knot nematodes (*Meloidogyne* sp.) are well known to golf course greenkeepers and can cause a lot of damage to turfgrass. Juveniles enter into turfgrass roots and begin feeding. When feeding, cells form on the grass root as a response from enzymes produced by the nematode and injected into the root of the grass.

It is also believed that the nematode may communicate with the plant in order to build nurse cells by genes controlled by the nematode. Female root-knot nematodes often lay hundreds of eggs in or on turfgrass roots. The eggs are extruded to the surface of the root in a sticky mass (Wick, 2007, Pers. Comm.).

Damage is very common on bentgrass swards, with many greenkeepers feeling the root-knot nematode is one of the main nematode problems. Damage includes irregular yellowing of the turfgrass and in some cases root galls. It is estimated by some that an action threshold for root-knot nematodes is about 100 nematodes per soil and root sample (Warner, 2006. Pers. Comm.).

Cyst nematodes (*Heterodera* sp.) are a big problem on bentgrass and can cause a lot of damage which can be somewhat similar to root-knot damage. These nematodes can persist in the soil for many years and the estimated

action threshold is about the same as for root-knot nematodes.

Lance nematodes (*Hoplolaimus* sp.) are mobile within the turfgrass root, and lay eggs and feed with the root system itself. Damage includes brown, rotten roots and turfgrass thinning.

ECTOPARASITES – Stubby root nematodes (*Paratrichodorus* sp.) cause root tip death through root piercing and subsequent sap-sucking. It is thought these nematodes have a synergistic effect with fusarium.

Sting nematodes (*Belonolaimus* sp.) have a style which penetrates deep into the root of the plant, causing considerable damage. Symptoms include root blackening, die back and cell death.

Ring nematodes (*Criconebella* sp. and others) are relatively small nematodes, which are commonly found in turfgrass in many countries. These nematodes appear not to be very pathogenic to turfgrass and at levels of over 100 per sample, turfgrass may still be healthy (Wick, 2007, Pers. Comm.). Other examples include dagger nematode, stunt nematode and spiral nematode.

DAMAGE SYMPTOMS – Symptoms of nematode damage on turfgrass above ground include chlorosis of the turf in irregular patches which – even after fertilisation – persists, followed in some situations by turfgrass wilting and general poor health of the sward.

Above ground damage is usually more apparent during high stress conditions on the turfgrass, such as found under high temperature and limited water supply. Damage below the surface of swards appears as a short unhealthy root system, with limited density. With root-knot nematodes, the plant may form cells on its roots as a means of feeding the nematode. These cells allow the nematode to feed from a large pool of nutrients within the plant. In time the turfgrass roots become altered due to the feeding nematode and the large cells on the plant roots, and the term knot or gall is then used to describe the condition.

Turfgrass plants suffering from nematode invasion have a reduced ability to uptake water and nutrients and thus excessive applications of both may be required to get some response from the plant. It is important to understand that nematode feeding concentrates on the xylem parenchyma, which transports water and nutrients. Many turfgrass managers do not realise that they have a nematode problem, and associate the poor turf with management practices and in many cases disease problems, when neither are the truth.

Nematode species have specific optimal temperatures from growth and reproduction, although it is well known that moderate to warm soil conditions are generally most favourable to nematode populations. It is generally believed that conditions that favour grass growth, favour nematodes also. During cold weather, nematode activity decreases and many nematode eggs will over winter in plant material or in the dead female body. Nematode damage is usually more prevalent on sand based rootzones, particularly during summer and autumn.

SOIL TESTING – If problems with nematodes are suspected, then field evaluation is critical in order to establish if they are present, species type and numbers in the soil. A commonly used method is to take numerous separate random subsamples from suspected areas and healthy areas,

usually to a depth of about four on golf greens or tees. The subsamples should be subsequently bulked together. Samples should be kept cool but not frozen during storage. In my opinion, soil samples should be taken when the turfgrass is actively growing, and not during cold periods.

MANAGEMENT – Using nematode-free planting material and rootzones is the ideal method of avoiding nematode problems. However in reality it is very difficult to have on a continuous basis plant parasitic nematode-free material. Even when such material is sourced, nematodes over time may still invade rootzones on greens and tees.

Many feel that the best solution is to keep the turfgrass sward as healthy as possible, by ensuring that the grass has adequate access to nutrients and water and is subjected to limited amounts of stress. Proper irrigation is essential, particularly during periods of warm weather, if nematode populations are high, since the turfgrass rooting system may be limited and water uptake severely reduced. Reducing plant stress levels is also vital in order to maintain a relatively healthy sward. In recent years, the application of biostimulant products on turfgrass has gained much momentum. These products include seaweed extracts, humic acids, sugars and microbial inoculants and research has shown that they may reduce stress levels within turfgrass swards. Raising mowing heights is also an excellent way to reduce stress levels on turfgrass plants. In recent years, pressure has increased on golf course greenkeepers to lower mowing heights, which reduces photosynthetic capacity and stresses the plant.

Several plant-derived materials are currently being used on golf courses throughout Europe, with varying degrees of success. Such products include mustard bran, thyme and oils from various trees and shrubs. Mustard bran is gaining much attention at present. It works by releasing allyl-isothiocyanate in the soil, which kills the nematodes through a biofumigation action. This product has been trialled in the USA and shown some promise.

Many microbial inoculant products, containing live blends of bacteria and fungi are on the market, although research looking at specific microbial antagonists for nematodes is also underway. Some inoculants currently available may have some negative impact on nematode populations, although limited if any research is available. The use of resistant germplasm, which could be developed into commercial varieties, may be of use in the future and such varieties may be seeded into existing turfgrass stands. But as yet this is not readily available.

Nematode problems will continue to grow in magnitude on golf courses in years to come. Research is underway and it is hoped that more reliable control will be available in the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Tim Butler is a sportsturf science agronomist and part-time lecturer in sportsturf science and agronomy at University College Dublin. He is an independent expert in all aspects of golf courses including construction, renovation, drainage and environmental management. Contact Tim at 062 55285 or www.irishgolfcourseexperts.ie



Count on it.



A HEATHLAND CRUSADE

Scott MacCallum visits BIGGA's Environment Competition winner and finds a club that has been transformed over the last 10 years

A meeting 10 years ago between Notts (Hollinwell) Golf Club Course Manager and a member of the Sherwood Forest Trust may not have been up there with Stanley catching up with Dr Livingstone or Harry meeting Sally, but the consequences of that encounter have had a hugely beneficial impact on the golf course. So much so that Notts (Hollinwell) are the current holders of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, Scotts and Syngenta.



Phil Stain had been Course Manager for a couple of years and very keen to ensure that the jewel in Nottinghamshire's golfing crown was maintained to the highest possible standard when he met Adam Goodall, of the Sherwood Forest Trust,

"I was approached by Adam, who asked me if I realised what we had at Notts - before adding that we were going to lose it. I was shocked, as I was proud to be working on a heathland golf course and, with a strong environmental and wildlife interest, keen to maintain the course as sympathetically as possible," recalled Phil.

Adam was referring to the fact that the course was being taken over by birch woodland and the distinctive heather and gorse was disappearing. In short, Notts Golf Club was on its way to losing its identity and becoming a woodland golf course.

Phil was genuinely disturbed. He and his team had been doing all they could to maintain the heathland characteristics but resources meant that this work was restricted to the playing areas, while the extensive

land the club owned bordering the playing areas had to be left and was becoming overgrown.

"These areas were closing in and the two main grazing areas – one 27 acres and the other four – were on the verge of becoming birch woodland and closing in on the course itself."

Originally these areas had been grazed by sheep and cattle, which keep the growth down, but when this practice stopped the land, left to its own devices, got out of control.

"Adam offered us a solution and the resources to restore and manage more of the heathland. I was very much in favour and spoke to my Chairman of Green at the time, Ian McLachlan, and encouraged him to come along to a seminar outlining how important it was to retain the remaining heathland in Nottinghamshire," said Phil, adding that Sherwood Forest Trust research highlighted that 95% of heathland had disappeared in the previous 10-15 years.

"Ian was taken aback, just as I had been, and together we felt we had to do all we could to restore and retain heathland at Notts. What has subsequently been achieved couldn't have happened without Ian. I've got huge respect for him because I was getting paid to do a job but he was doing it in his own time because of his love of the golf course," said Phil, who revealed that Ian still provides practical support by personally potting heather seed to produce small plants for replanting on the course.

Signing up to a 10 year contract with Sherwood Forest Trust provided the funding to enable Phil to put added resources to heathland management but it also meant that certain targets had to be met.

To that the club land was split into compartments and a prescription

given for each area. For example, the first 20 yards into woodland could be cleared for golfing purpose but beyond that nature had been allowed to take its course and fallen or wind blown wood left to become potential habitat for the insects. Anything cleared from the outer area also had to be taken into the inner part so it wasn't wasted.

"It might be that Compartment A has a target of 40% of gorse removed by a certain time and a heather bed developed, while in Compartment B they might want to see 20% more heather. It's not so strict that we have to comply down to the exact percentage point, and through time we developed a very close relationship with Sherwood Forest Trust and they know and we've often exceed the targets. So it's a system which works well.

"A lot of it is matched funding but our input comes in the shape of man hours and machinery."

The benefit of the agreement, and they are set to sign up for a second 10 year period with increased funding, is that what the Sherwood Forest Trust and the golf club desire naturally tie in very nicely.

They have taken thousands of trees out during the last 10 years – one small area just in front of the 13th tee involved removing 650 – but the timber is all put to good use in a Biomass boiler and two log burning stoves in the clubhouse which has helped reduce heating bills.

The tree removal has helped the airflow to greens so Phil has found that his putting surfaces are much healthier.

However, with birch clearing, one problem is solved but another three created as the issue of gorse and bracken invasion and self set trees doesn't go away and places constant demands on the team.

"If we hadn't got involved with Sherwood Forest Trust and the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust when we did we would have been predominately a woodland golf course by now. Had we left it much longer to do the work it would have been too expensive and we would have lost the little pockets of flora and fauna which were clinging on including the common lizards and the grass snakes. Fortunately we caught it in time and where bird species were here in small numbers we have much more and brought in new and different species as well."

The Club has featured highly in the BIGGA Environment Competition over the years, winning the Regional prize and the New Initiative prize on a couple of times. These prizes came for the introduction of specialist black Hebridean sheep, owned by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. The sheep, at one stage there were 70 of them, complete with shepherdess, in a throwback to the old days kept the vegetation down on the grazing areas.

"They had to be very hardy as the scrub is very poor quality and the discampsia grass doesn't provide much nutrient. We repeated the project last year with three short legged Dexter cattle, and we're investigating the use of ponies for future use."

The second new initiative prize came for a reed bed filtration project but it was another project, combined with the continuity of environmental endeavour which clinched the top prize this time around.

As Phil has discovered the chain reaction of benefits to wildlife which come about interlinking one project to another are amazing and gratifying.

"Because we had the sheep we have now got little owls, because little owls eat beetles which eat the dung left by sheep," said Phil, who is staggered by the amount of interest there has been in the club since it won the award with many calls from other golf clubs and coverage in local, environmental press, as well as national publications, including



Phil Stain, Course Manager



new media sponsor Golf Monthly, television and radio.

To enable the club to provide a nine hole loop two additional holes were added – 8a and 9a – which return golfers, who would otherwise be heading away from the clubhouse back to sanctuary. The attention to environmental detail on those two new holes is remarkable.

"Year and years ago we used to mow the margins of ponds and streams so balls would fall in but now, and with the new holes, we've ensured that we leave at least a metre around all ponds and water hazards to create little corridors for wildlife to move around.

"In fact, all the new ponds on the new holes are linked by corridors. With streams having two metre corridors, a metre each side, so wildlife can move from one pond to another without the risk of being seen by golfers or predators. We have gone from one pond inhabited by water voles to four – in ponds that didn't exist three years ago."

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Growing success

They also took the unusual step of leaving trees in the newly created ponds as the dead Alder trees provide nesting for the green woodpecker, the great spotted woodpecker, the tree creeper and the nuthatch.

“We’ve lost about 40% of timber through rotting and falling over but there are new trees growing up to replace them,” explained Phil, who also pointed out the sand bank at the edge of one pond in which they had created holes and which is now home to some kingfishers.

That wasn’t a first for the club. A few years ago they created something similar for sandmartins on a small quarry area in one of the non-play area grazing areas on the course.

“We excavated a small wall out of the sand in the quarry and made some holes and sandmartins used it for nesting. We actually featured on Springwatch with Bill Oddie and Simon King. Bill Oddie said it was great and that golf courses could do a lot more, but he’s probably oblivious to a lot of the other great work that does go on,” said Phil.

Despite all the excellent environmental work that has gone on at Notts, Phil is adamant that the priority is always the golf course.

“We’re something special. A heathland course verging on inland links and there are very few like that. People come here because they want to plan traditional golf – fast greens in summer; hard, fast fairways, a bit sparse and a bit wiry going back to the time before people came along with 100s of tonnes of fertiliser and 100s of gallons of water.

“Americans and Japanese come over and want to play this type of golf and the club does recognised that this is its selling point and from a golf course point of view it is a lot more valuable if it retain its heathland status rather than just becoming another parkland course.”

But with Phil and his team of eight working on it there is now no danger of that happening.

“If people come here from a parkland course they probably think we neglect it. Heathland management verges on neglect because we want those wiry tough grasses and we certainly don’t want high fertility fairways, or to be throwing nitrogen or water on it. That wouldn’t be natural and we try and keep everything to a minimum.



“I do get criticism for keeping the greens a bit stressed and hungry but I feel that is sustainable through winter and summer - there are no peaks and troughs. Everything I do is for the long term. I want to be sitting here when I’m due to retire thinking I’ve done my best and that the club has been happy with what I have done,” adding that he is delighted to have such a supportive golf club and hard working and talented staff.

“I can’t imagine a job that would be better than what I’m doing now. I’ve got a bit of office work, quite a bit of health and safety, but I’ve got the golf course and I’ve got the environment. What else is there from my point of view?”

All Course Managers/Head Greenkeeper members of BIGGA should find a copy of the BIGGA Golf Environment competition 2008 application form with this magazine. It can also be downloaded from www.bigga.org.uk/education



UTILITY VEHICLES: TAKE A LATERAL LOOK AT UTILITIES

By James de Havilland

Think of a golf utility vehicle, and it is pretty easy to come up with three typical choices; Cushman Turf-Truckster, John Deere Gator and Toro Workman. No surprises here, although other suppliers to include Club Car, Kawasaki, Polaris and Yamaha should not be overlooked either. But what about something that can go on the road as well?

There will always be pressure to try and come up with a new equipment choice that does the primary target job but, if possible brings something extra with it. In some cases this can lead to buying a compromise that does not do its primary task that well; the phrase Jack-of-all-trades, master of none springs to mind.

So how can you get a utility vehicle to do a bit more without compromising its main duties? The starting issue has to be determining exactly what the main duties are. For a start there is a clear differentiation between a unit that will be used with a top dresser and sprayer and one that will be used solely to ferry materials and people around.

As a simple rule, a manual transmission is favoured for jobs that require a fixed speed. Select a given gear and run the engine at a fixed rpm and you pretty much get an easily repeatable forward speed. When it comes to a simple transport unit, a CVT belt drive automatic has its plusses. With no gears or clutch to worry about, it is just a case of pressing the throttle and away you go.

Now what if you want to have a vehicle that can legally travel on the road? Road homologation is a complicated subject and one that most utility vehicle manufacturers do not get tangled up with. This can mean finding a road legal utility is not quite as simple as it may at first seem.

For a Course Manager there are other important considerations. As soon as you move to a traditional 'pick-up' type of unit, there are issues of VED tax discs and MOTs to consider, not to mention the need to run on white as opposed to red diesel. A pick-up is also relatively heavy and, if it is running on road-orientated tyres, it will be pretty limited in its on course usefulness.



A well-proven utility vehicle will have little that will beat it for all-round versatility...