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Head Greenkeeper

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INTERNATIONAL

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Cover photo: East Sussex National Golf Club



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Welcome



Better to Get on with the Job

The Open Championship at Royal Birkdale was a triumph, not only for Pdraig Harrington, who, remarkably, became the first European successfully to defend an Open since James Braid, but for Course Manager, Chris Whittle, and his team who were universally praised for the condition of the course.

Sure it was green, but such were the weather conditions in the run up to the Championship, it couldn't have been any other colour, while the battering it took, particularly on the first two days, tested its drainage qualities to the max. The torrential rain and gale force winds were not ideal for anyone – players, caddies, spectators and greenkeepers – but everyone put in that little bit extra and got the job done.

The BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team was involved in bunker preparation in the mornings and divoting in the evenings, as well as raking bunkers through the day, and such were the conditions they faced, particularly in the mornings, it was wet suits and waders they needed rather than waterproofs. However, the team did a remarkable job and ensured that the bunkers were in perfect shape for the players unfortunate enough to find them.

I know that the R&A appreciate the work that the BIGGA Support Team does at The Open and I also know that our team welcome the opportunity to be involved in the greatest golf Championship of them all.

To all, but a few security guards and cleaners, the early and late work carried out by the Team is unseen and as a result is perhaps unrecognised by some. They are happy with the results and it doesn't quite occur to them how they are achieved. This is very much the lot of the greenkeeper, whether he be at a Major golf event or day to day at his own club.

It will ever be thus. It's the Formula 1 driver who gets all the accolades while his pit crew spend hour upon hour in the garage eeking another fraction of the second out of the engine; the actors get the Oscars, the Baftas and the multi million pay cheques while the men and women who write the words they speak can walk down any street in the world without being recognised - and they are on a fraction of the salary. Let's face it, a film's Director is less well known than its leading man or lady.

But those people in the know do recognised the talents of "back room boys" and know that it isn't some magical waft of a wand that makes everything come together.

In golf, the authorities know that Championships need the expertise provided by experienced turf managers, while it is the golf clubs, who leave their greenkeeping teams to get on with the job which generally benefit from better conditioned courses.

It's probably better to be allowed to get on with the job quietly and efficiently than to get plenty of pats on the back but suffer interference and hassle.

I know what I'd rather have.

Scott MacCallum
Editor



STATESIDE SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS

Ohio State University, in the USA, has become home to Daniel Weston an ex-Writtle College student. After completing his NVQ level 2 in Sports Turf ahead of the majority in his group, Daniel progressed onto his NVQ Level 3 at the College. Daniel has dyslexia and found Level 3 a challenge, refusing to give up and with support from the College he fought against it remarkably and successfully completed the course in 2005. Proving himself still further Daniel went on to secure himself the post as Head Greenkeeper at Epping Golf Club. Daniel, from Epping in Essex, quickly found the desire for his next challenge choosing this time to enrol onto the Ohio state university programme – he has now been there for a year working as an intern at The Pinehurst resort in North Carolina.

The Ohio State Programme brings 19-28 year old greenkeepers from 32 countries around the world. The trainees gain practical training and an opportunity to attend Ohio State for three months of classes related to the turf grass industry.



(L to R) Tom Smart, another intern, Steve Wilson, golf superintendent at Pinehurst and Daniel Weston.

SPONSORING YOUNG GARDENERS

In the knowledge that children are our future, lawnmower manufacturer Etesia UK Ltd has taken the initiative to help an inspired former Local Authority groundsman in his bid to set up school gardening clubs for children in West Yorkshire.

As part of their sponsorship deal, Etesia delivered two pedestrian mowers to the Haworth Primary School where former Bradford Council Landscapes' employee, Steve Thorpe volunteered to set up his first gardening club for the youngsters in 2002.

This first club rose out of problems with vandalism in Haworth, which gave local-man Steve the idea that if he taught children how to garden at a young age they would grow up to respect their environment.

Now, seven years on, the proof of his success is evident in colourful floral displays dotted around the town, outside the fire and railway stations and doctors' surgery – all planted up twice a year by children from Haworth Primary School's Gardening Club. At the school, healthy lunches are on the menu as the children prepare, cook and eat the vegetables which they have grown. They also take fresh produce to the nearby old peoples' home – an enjoyable visit which benefits both old and young alike.

GROW WITH WRITTLE...



New Higher Education Courses in Horticulture have been introduced at Writtle College. One of the new specialist courses is the BSc (Hons) or FdSc Green Space Management.

This course provides the practical and professional training necessary for those seeking positions of responsibility in the management of parks, designed landscapes and urban greenspaces.

This important established sector of the horticultural industry is expanding, and graduates are required to have sound plant knowledge and a full appreciation of both short and long term management techniques applicable to a diverse range of landscapes and amenities. The course also covers important aspects of plant and soil sciences and management studies with scope for students to choose a specialism. These specialisms include conservation management, wildlife conservation or event management.

SEABROOK SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS

The School of Horticulture at Writtle College has just announced Sarah Tull as the inaugural successor of the Seabrook scholarship. Sarah, who has just completed her National Diploma (ND) in Horticulture, will receive £3,000 a year to attend the two-year Foundation degree in horticulture at the College. The scholarship, which was launched back in January this year, has been sponsored by Easy Gardener gardening products. The award has been named after Peter Seabrook who himself attended the College in the 1950's achieving both the College Diploma and Royal Horticultural Society Master of Horticulture degree.

RETHINK ROCKTRON

RockTron made history recently hosting Europe's first zero carbon charity golf tournament in aid of Rethink – two years ahead of the first scheduled zero carbon Ryder Cup.

RockTron, the pioneering mineral reprocessing company hosted Europe's first zero carbon charity golf tournament in aid of Rethink. The event was a resounding success. Over 40 players attended the "by invitation only" event which received recognition from golf enthusiasts and environmentalists alike.

The tournament was designed to raise much-needed funds and awareness for the UK's largest mental health support charity, Rethink, who provide invaluable support for over 50,000 people afflicted with mental illnesses (www.rethink.org). All the money raised at today's unique charity golf day will go directly towards expanding the support provided by Herbert House in Wiltshire to help those individuals who have a mental illness and are expecting a child. The Rethink team help them to fully understand their situation and give them the tools and support they need, enabling them to cope through this demanding period in their lives. Rethink is committed to supporting such families so that they can stay together during a very difficult time and be better prepared for the future.

Careful steps were taken to minimise and offset the negative environmental impact of the day's activities. Players were encouraged to carpool. RockTron also purchased 14 tonnes of carbon credits to offset the total CO2 footprint of the event. They allowed for over 12,000 miles for people travelling to the event – more than enough as many of the players and guests came from the immediate local area.

Winners: 1st Place: Rethought Team: Philip Michael - Captain, Alan Lidgley, Philip Morgan, Terry Lawson. 2nd Place: Mika's Team: Graham Benjamin – Captain, Wyn Turnbull, Michael Douglas, Stuart Fisher. 3rd Place: Laker Ventre Engineering Team: Michael Ventre – Captain, Richard Ventre, Paul Ventre, Stephen Ventre.

HALF-A-CENTURY OF SUCCESS

Etesia has joined its parent company, Outils Wolf in marking 50 years as a leading European manufacturer of outdoor power equipment.

To celebrate the occasion, Outils Wolf staged a highly prestigious two-day event at their Wissembourg headquarters. Day one was attended by dignitaries from notable French governing bodies; representatives from world-wide manufacturers and business partners; plus trade press and TV journalists from across Europe. Company board members and key personnel welcomed guests to a formal reception, at which Elmar Wolf, Chairman of the holding company made a resume of the 50 years history.

Guests were then given a guided tour of the Outils Wolf factory, which since 1958 has produced over three million rotary mowers. In addition they viewed production and stringent quality control in Etesia's separate purpose-built manufacturing plant, which outputs in excess of 10,000 ride-on rotaries a year. Innovative product development and technical advancement that meets stringent EC legislation requirements are fundamental to both the Etesia and Wolf brands. The Research and Development Department site was of key interest to visitors who saw how computer aided design; product development and prototype endurance tests are at the heart of this state-of-the art centre.

On day-two of the celebrations, the Outils Wolf and Etesia factories staged an open day attended by locals plus all members of the companies' 450-strong world-wide workforce and their families, who in the evening were entertained French-fashion with a Moulin-Rouge-style cabaret and dinner.

BIGGA MEMBER ACCREDITED GOLF SUPERINTENDENT

Master Greenkeeper, Lee Strutt (MG), recently joined an elite group of course managers by becoming an 'Accredited Golf Superintendent' (AGS) in Canada.

The CGSA Accreditation Program requires Lee, who is currently working as Assistant Construction Manager at the GWest project near Gleneagles, to recertify every five years to ensure he is retaining the skills needed by an AGS.

"Lee's peers are very cognizant of the fact that he has now proven himself to be deserving of this professional recognition. We trust that BIGGA joins us in saluting his outstanding skills, achievement and dedication to his career," said Robert Burrows, President of the CGSA.

GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY

A Midland Region Golf Management Trophy day, sponsored for the 11th successive year by Scotts UK Professional, was held at St Neots Golf Club on July 3. Teams from 20 golf clubs enjoyed a very challenging course superbly prepared by Course Manager, Paul Crouch and his staff.

Everyone was made to feel very welcome by all the staff and members at St Neots Golf Club. The format of four man teams playing a stableford with the best two points scores on each hole counting proved very popular.

The winning team led by Course Manager, Graham Careford was from Bush Hill Park Golf Club with 88 points.

The team from John O'Gaunt Golf Club came second with 81 points on countback, and third was the team from Brookmans Park Golf Club also with 81 points. Nearest the pin on the 8th was won by Richard Plummer from Ryston Park Golf Club who hit it to 1 foot, and longest drive on the 18th was by Peter Voutt, from Mid Herts Golf Club.

The picture below shows the Bush Hill Park Golf Club team and Mick Fance, from Scotts, presenting the trophy to Course Manager Graham Careford.

The Midland Region of BIGGA thank St Neots Golf Club for hosting the event and Scotts for their continued sponsorship.



WARM WEATHER ATTRACTS ADDERS

More than 30 adders have been spotted by members of Galashiels Golf Club at their course on Ladhope Hill.

Experts believe the hottest May on record has tempted the snakes out into the open.

SUMMER SOLSTICE

Four Yorkshire greenkeeping friends decided they would mark the Summer Solstice this year (June 21) with a climb up the formidable Helvellyn in the Lake District – the third highest peak in England at 3117 feet.

Tito 'Tenzin' Arana (Sherriff Amenity) David 'Edmund' Thackray (Bradford Golf Club) Steve 'Ralph' Heaton (Otley Golf Club) and Jim 'Mallory' Brown (Oulton Hall) planned the climbing expedition over six months ago and conquered the peak just in time to appreciate the views on offer before the rain set in on what was a very wet weekend.

The descent was a particularly wet affair with heavy rain accompanying them down the slopes and all the way to the highly hospitable Keswick where greenkeeping and the world were put firmly to rights.



L to R: Jim Brown, Estate Manager Oulton Hall; Tito Arana, Sales Executive for Sherriff Amenity; David Thackray, Head Greenkeeper at Bradford Golf Club; Steve Heaton, Head Greenkeeper at Otley Golf Club.

NEW RECRUIT

Newly appointed as Customer Manager with professional grounds maintenance equipment company Dennis, Roger Moore, joins the company, at an exciting time.

He brings a wealth of experience from working in both the private and public sector in the midlands and has already been put to good use further developing the website dennisuk.com and refining the contact management system with website integration.

RELIEF GRINDING

Eight out of the nine Open Championship courses now advocate relief grinding and own a Hunter Grinder to keep their courses up to the required standard for hosting the Open.

Royal St Georges Golf Club in Kent will be hosting the 2011 Open Championship and is the most recent club to change from spin to relief grinding, with the purchase of a Hunter fully automatic Jupiter ATI and Amazon bottom blade grinder. Located near Sandwich in Kent, this beautiful links course was established in 1887 and was given Royal status by King Edward VII in May 1902. The Links provides a severe test for even the greatest of golfers and the fact that only three Open winners, Bill Rogers in 1981, Greg Norman in 1993 and Ben Curtis in 2003, have managed to be under par after the 72 holes speaks for itself.

Course Manager, Neil Metcalf, is responsible for preparing the course for the Open and has recently implemented a complete change of grass maintenance policy. "As Course Manager for an Open Championship course, I naturally consider methods of preparation and maintenance operated by other Open venues", said Neil.



PGA AGREES WEATHER DEAL

The PGA has joined forces with Met Office backed www.weatherforgolf.co.uk to provide state-of-the-art forecasting for its entire tournament schedule. More than 400 tournament venues across country - at regional and national level - will benefit from the initial 12 month deal.

Until now the PGA has relied on calls to the Met Office for information on which to base their decisions. But the new system which will go straight to a laptop in the tournament office will provide 30 minute updates all day - the most frequent timescale anywhere.

NEW HOLLAND CRICKET MATCH

The trade press had a notable victory to report at the end of June. As you know the press is not one to blow its own trumpet but as a summer triumph it ranks up there with Rafa Nadal's exploits at Wimbledon and Spain's win in Euro 2008.

It was a cricket match against some of the finest cricketers New Holland could muster at a fine little cricket club near Coventry. A dramatic last ball dash, coupled by a wide, saw the press through, beating the New Holland target of 153 by a single run. The press team was captained by Dick Spencer, New Holland Marketing Manager and an honorary press man for the day, with the New Holland team lead by James Doyle, who has responsibility for the groundcare sector.

The match was the culmination of a full day of machinery testing at Stratford Racecourse where New Holland launched its new T5000 range and showcased a number of its other equipment.

For more than two hours the racecourse witnessed compact tractors, with and without attachments, zero turn mowers, diggers all in the familiar blue livery as well as the new Husky utility vehicle which had just arrived in the country and which is being launched at Saltex.

During the day Dick Spencer explained how the company had changed strategy to work much closer with the customer by working as a team with the dealer network. With its expanded product range New Holland, who has also sponsored a balloon which will be seen across the skies of the UK, hope to secure a larger share of the amenity market.



NEW GENERAL MANAGER TO STRENGTHEN BRAND

Bushey Hall Golf Club, now celebrating its 100th Anniversary, has this week strengthened its management team with the appointment of Glen Halsey who joins as its' new General Manager. Halsey joins from Surrey's Addington Court Golf Centre where he was General Manager for two years.



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SUNNINGDALE TRIUMPH IN PENALTY SHOOT

Twenty enthusiastic football teams made up of greenkeepers from around Surrey, Kent and Sussex braved the rain to contest the JSM Challenge Cup at East Grinstead Sports Club recently. The weather couldn't dampen their commitment and enthusiasm through the pool stages and onto the exciting climax, where one semi-final and eventually the final itself were settled by penalty shoot outs. Sunningdale Golf Club emerged as winners on the day and gained a reputation as the penalty kings – winning both their semi-final and the final following penalties.

A total of 43 games of very competitive five-a-side football, involving over 150 players and travelling fans were followed by a BBQ and presentation. Both semi-finals proved to be very close matches contested by Sunningdale, Hindhead, North Foreland and Addington Palace, with Addington and Sunningdale playing out a tense final itself.



ST MELLION GC HOTEL DEMOLISHED

Crown Golf's £100m make-over of its prestigious St Mellion Golf Club has reached a landmark - when an employee whose family has been involved with the resort since its opening 31 years ago, struck the first blow to demolish its hotel.

The venue's Conference Co-ordinator, Penny Baxter, kick-started the demolition process, which will see the hotel replaced by a new flagship building with 80 bedrooms, more than trebling its capacity.

The redevelopment, approved earlier this year by Caradon District Council, also includes plans for 265 golf homes and incorporates a significant remodeling of the venue's Nicklaus Course, which will host the prestigious English Open from 2009 until at least 2013.



SCOTTISH NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

On Monday, June 23 the Scottish National Tournament returned to Ayrshire after an absence of five years and was hosted by Irvine Golf Club.

Irvine Golf Club was established 1887 and during this time it has hosted many tournaments. On the occasion the Open is held in Ayrshire, Irvine Golf Club is used as one of clubs for the final qualifying rounds of the Open.

Irvine Golf Club has a fine record in producing outstanding players that has included in their ranks three Scottish Amateur Champions and we are delighted that the club has afforded us the facilities of their course and clubhouse.

Head Greenkeeper, Derek Wilson and his staff are to be congratulated on providing a course fit for any championship. With a typical sea breeze, the course proved a stern test for all the competitors and the players were unanimous in their praise for an outstanding golf course.

The Association would like to place on record their thanks to the Captain Ellis Love, Secretary Bill McMahon and the Committee for the courtesy and facilities of Irvine Golf Club.

Prize Winners: Scottish Champion, SGGG Challenge Cup, George Morrison, Largs GC Scratch 74. Handicap Champion, Friendship Trophy, Derek Wilson, Irvine GC Net 69. 1st Class, Ransomes Trophy: 1. Kerr Rowan, Carrick GC, 71pts; 2. Alan Syme, Williamwood GC, 74(BIH); 3. Dennis Tweddell, Turnberry Hotel, 74pts. 2nd Class, Pattison Trophy. 1. Duncan Gray, Pines GC, 75pts; 2. Sandy Brawley, East Kilbride GC, 79(BIH); 3. Paul Tulloch, Irvine GC, 79pts. 3rd Class, STRI Trophy. 1. John Wilson, Irvine GC, 71pts; 2. Brian Ramsay, Glasgow GC, 81pts; 3. John Barr, Cardross GC, 84pts. Best Head Greenkeeper: Dick Aitken Trophy. Mark Pagan, Eyemouth GC, 75pts; Best Assistant M&M Trophy: Douglas Greenshields, Eyemouth GC, 72pts; Best Apprentice, Souter Trophy: Mitch Green, Ballochmyle GC, 78pts. Best Veteran, SIGGA Trophy: James MacCormack, Kirriemuir GC, 80pts. Team Trophy, St.Mungo Trophy Section: Ayrshire. G.Morrison, Largs GC, 68pts; D.Wilson, Irvine GC, 69pts; J. Wilson, Irvine GC, 71pts; K.Rowan, Carrick GC, 71pts = Total 279. Patrons Trophy - Robert T.Bruce, 68pts. Qualifiers National Tournament - G.Morrison, Largs GC and D.Wilson, Irvine GC.

Peter J.Boyd
Regional Administrator



QUALITY EDUCATION



The GTC's annual workshop for its Approved Training Providers was held at Aldwark in late June and the event once again (as you would expect) focused on the quality of greenkeeper education, training and qualifications.

David Golding, the GTC's Education Director gives us a report on the event and explains how this annual event is so much more than a talk shop.

The GTC invited guest speakers from ENTO Direct, Lantra SSC, NPTC/City & Guilds and the R&A to compliment a workshop theme, which always generates debate but concludes with recommendations aimed at ensuring an improvement in the delivery of current courses and qualifications.

The mood for the workshop was set when Steve Hyatt from ENTO Direct gave delegates a timely reminder on the facts within the NVQ Code of Practice (COP).

Steve stated how so many Centres seem to interpret the COP incorrectly and he gave examples which certainly started delegates whispering and before long the questions started and given the importance of the COP, an excellent presentation led us into the next speaker Rod Jones, the Verification and Services Manager for the Awarding Body NPTC, part of the City & Guilds Group.

Rod and three of his External Verifier team are very much at the heart of the standards for the delivery and quality assurances within Centres offering Vocational qualifications including Sports Turf.

Breakout sessions followed when delegates

looked at learner portfolios and discussed all matters relating to the delivery of VQ courses.

So what did this session mean for the future learner on VQ courses?

Rod and the NPTC Verification team agreed that they would certainly be continuing the supportive role to their Centres and portfolios should only contain relevant documents which should be authenticated by assessors with far more use of signposting to where the ACTUAL evidence is and that is on the golf course!

In summary, it is not the quantity of paper in the learner's portfolio it is the quality of the work and a clear audit trail, which does not need to include reams and reams of paper!

Good news or what?

I am sure all the Centre representatives present will be now viewing visits from their External Verifiers with a greater knowledge of how learners knowledge and skill can be shown without a wheelbarrow full of photographs, candidates written statements, assessor and witness testimonies, questions and answer sheets...

A good Internal Verification system is key to any successful system and trust in the assessor paramount - this is often the Course Manager watch this space.

Any golf club with a qualified assessor on site has a great asset and they are key to greenkeeping staff development.

So how could we follow such an interesting session? Easy. Feed and water the delegates let them discuss matters into the early hours (does this sound familiar greenkeepers?) when so much is gained from the informal discussions!

Bright and early next morning we discuss the future of qualifications and Liz Pridgeon from the Lantra Sector Skills Council gave delegates a comprehensive update on how in each country was reviewing qualifications to ensure they met employers requirements and how National Occupational Standards had been reviewed and the GTC had been very pro-active at all meetings held by Lantra to ensure the golf course sector

had a range of qualifications both vocational and academic.

Liz also explained how bite-size learning would also suit some employers and learners who did not require a full qualification albeit it would still be for industry bodies like the GTC to cluster Units into full qualifications to match job profiles e.g. Greenkeeper, GC Supervisor and GC Manager.

Liz continued to encourage the Provider representatives to continue to work with organisations like the GTC to ensure the delivery methods meet industries needs.

In conclusion delegates accepted how qualifications would fit into a credit framework and that a European Qualification Framework would allow for transferability of skills.

Just as Liz was spelling out the future the final speaker Nick Park representing the R&A also explained a new tool to which Course Managers could use to their advantage. A Benchmarking System very much in its infancy is available through the R&A's website www.bestcourseforgolf.org and Nick encouraged delegates to view the site and incorporate the use of the service into all levels and courses of greenkeeper training at their Centres.

Note: Further information on both Liz's and Nicks subjects can be viewed in the latest On Course newsletter, June 2008.

Please visit the GTC website www.the-gtc.co.uk or for a free hard copy contact the office on 01347 838640.

Within the workshop Nick Bisset, Chair of the GTC Technical Committee, and I gave delegates an update on the priorities for the GTC and how everybody with a passion for greenkeeper education and training has the opportunity to influence the future by keeping in touch with the GTC.

For a list of Approved colleges, private providers including BIGGA and STRI visit the GTC website www.the-gtc.co.uk

GTC is supported by:





Industry Update

MATTHEW JOINS BARENBRUG



Specialist grass seed breeder Barenbrug has announced the appointment of Matthew Williams as its new Regional Sales Manager for north Wales, the northwest of England and the Midlands.

Matthew, 42, is an experienced greenkeeper and has worked at a variety of clubs across the country. Prior to joining Barenbrug he was Deputy Head Greenkeeper of the 18-hole Wrexham Golf Club in his hometown of Wrexham. He also has a HND in Horticulture specialising in Golf Course Management from Reaseheath College in Cheshire.

NEW TECHNICAL ADVISOR



British Seed Houses has appointed Tom Fleetwood as Technical Sales Advisor for the South East of England.

Tom has extensive knowledge of both the seed and fertiliser businesses which he gained working in his native New Zealand.

He comes from a rural background and has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree from Lincoln University. For the last four years he has worked as a sales consultant for Ravensdown Fertiliser, based in Christchurch.

NEW APPOINTMENT



Paul Keen has been appointed Club Manager at the newly opened 18-hole golf course at Luton Hoo. He joins Luton Hoo Hotel, Golf & Spa on the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire border after five years at Hanbury Manor Golf & Country Club in Ware. The golf course at Luton Hoo is one of the longest in the UK at 7,107 yards, with the average being 6,400 yards.

Paul, 31, who comes from Dunstable, first picked up golf club as a child and when he realised his game was not going to reach pro standard he set his sights on a career in golf management.

FIRST AREA MANAGER



Kyoeshia UK, the newest name in UK fine turf machinery on UK golf courses, has appointed its first Area Manager

to promote its full line of Baroness brand turf maintenance machinery in the South West. Huw Thomas (48) has spent his working life in the grounds care business having worked previously for a retail dealership and also as a greenkeeper.

NEW TURF PRODUCTION MANAGER



James Mason has joined Rolawn as Turf Production Manager.

Prior to joining Rolawn, James was part of the agricultural management team at Birds Eye Ltd, working with grower organisations through all aspects of production, logistics, research and development.

NEW DEALER

Mawsley Machinery, one of the most established plant sales operations in the UK are the latest to add to the growing Takeuchi team of distributors across the UK and Eire.

The move to add Takeuchi indicates the growing potential in the central region for the leading brand, Takeuchi already maintains a top three position worldwide for its mini excavators.

Mawsley Machinery already has a number of market leaders including Bomag, Compair, Manitou, Thwaites who have been proven successes for Mawsley since the beginning some 28 years ago at Brixworth, Northamptonshire.

RECORD PROFITS

JCB recently announced record pre-tax profits of £187 million for 2007 following the most successful year in its 62-year history. The result was achieved in a year when machine sales rose to more than 72,000 and turnover reached a new peak of £2.25 billion.

JCB Chairman Sir Anthony Bamford said: "2007 saw JCB make great progress and it was our best-ever year. The outlook for the remainder of 2008 does look challenging but I believe we are well-placed to adapt to these difficult conditions."

DEALER NETWORK STRENGTHENED

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd has strengthened its dealer network with the appointment of Bredy Agricentre Ltd as its main dealer for the county of Dorset.

Bredy Agricentre, established for over 20 years and based in Dorchester, has been marketing the Ransomes Jacobsen Lawn and Garden products and the Iseki tractor range, on a non-exclusive basis since March 2007.

PJ Flegg, part of the Medland Sanders and Twose group, who were previously responsible for the Dorset area, will now concentrate on a territory that includes Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.

PRICE DECREASE FOR UK MARKETS

It makes a refreshing change that positive financial success in the USA results in price reductions for the UK. However, JSM Distribution has announced just that for their Sand Storm screening system. Still a relatively new introduction into the UK, the increasing sales in its home market of the USA has led to efficiency gains in manufacturing; put this together with a weak dollar and prices can come down.

Principally aimed at the renovation of golf course bunkers, the sand storm can also handle other materials that may benefit from a screening process. Vibrating screens on the Sand Storm work to remove debris such as leaves, twigs, needles, weeds, stone and clay particles.