

**The 2008 John Deere Team Championship, at Turnberry Hotel, proved to be an occasion everyone lucky enough to be in attendance will remember for a very long time indeed.**

None more so than the members of the Rotherham Golf Club team, who emerged victorious on a day when the rain stayed away and the sun shone over the Ailsa course the very same course that will test the world's best at The Open Championship next July.

Rotherham, in the shape of Club Captain, Peter Smallman; Chairman of Green, Peter Daughtrey;

Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Andy Unwin, and John Deere dealer, Adrian Holroyde, of Bob Wild Grass Machinery, of Hedben Bridge, topped the leaderboard and took away the John Deere Team Championship Crystal trophy, to keep for the length of their reign, while each member of the team was presented with a pewter replica of the Open Claret jug. They also received a voucher for a round on the Ailsa's sister course – the Kintyre.

"I've never been treated so well at a golf event as we were at Turnberry and congratulations have to go to John Deere for the organisation. The tournament, the course and the hotel, everything

was just spot on. I can't think I've ever done anything in golf that betters it," said Peter Smallman.

"We knew we'd made a good score, but we didn't know it would be good enough to win the tournament. We managed an eagle at one par-5, which was probably a clincher, but we didn't know we'd won until just before the announcement was made at the presentations. It came as quite a shock to hear Rotherham's name read out," added the delighted Captain.

Rotherham's nett score of 54, 15 under par, in the modified Texas Scramble, was just one better than Kennay Golf Club, of Aberdeenshire.





Third place went to Donaghadee, from County Down – making them the top placed team from Ireland, on countback, after tying on 56 points with Bandon Golf Club, from County Cork.

For many proceedings had begun the previous day with a number of the 24 official, and five guest, teams having a practice round over the course – again the weather defied the forecasts and meant the waterproofs, so carefully packed for the event, stayed folded up in the golf bags and people were actually applying sun cream!

The opportunity to play such an iconic golf club, not long before it closed in preparation for The Open, ensured that everyone who attended felt like a winner just from teeing up and the buzz at the dinner confirmed that everyone left the course with their own personal memories and stories to tell... and retell!

I was lucky enough to play as part of the Media team superbly captained by Henry Bredin, of John Deere. The golf we produced left us in danger of losing our Olympic Funding and it would be fair to say that it was much quicker to check our scores from the bottom up on the leaderboard rather

than the top down but all four of us who played took something from the visit.

Me? Since you asked. It was the 6-iron from the hanging lie on the edge of a fairway bunker to four feet on the 18th hole during Wednesday's practice round in the company of Rob Surgey, of Burhill Golf and Leisure and Joedy Ibbotson, of John Deere. That birdie three will be remembered long after Tiger Woods is more than satisfied to make par next summer to clinch his fourth Open.

Others who deserve mentions in dispatch were David Hart, of John Deere, who single-handedly eagled the 17th for his team with a crunching drive, a superb fairway wood and deadly putt while his colleagues could only watch in admiration, and his colleague Joedy, who followed up a monumental 300 yard plus drive on the 10th during the practice round with the Nearest the Pin on the 11th during the event itself. All from a 22 handicap would you believe!

But the man who can still take on all-comers was George Brown himself, who played some great golf to take the lion's share of the money on the practice day and was still firing on all cylinders

when it counted. He also had the audience in stitches during the post dinner presentation with a well chosen selection from his back catalogue of hilarious anecdotes.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of a cheque for £7,380 by John Deere UK Managing Director Richard Johnson to BIGGA Chairman, Kenny Mackay. The figure represented £25 for each team who had entered the competition with the money going to subsidise BIGGA Learning and Development initiatives.

The evening had begun with a Nearest the Pin Challenge on the Putting green outside the hotel with one attempt each at a 100 foot, curling downhill. It was won by Shaun Sturrock, Course Manager at Betchworth Park GC, who showed great touch to get within 18 inches.

The evening ended for a few guests at least in Turnberry's legendary Whisky Bar, where the knowledgeable barman spent as much time educating his willing pupils as he did pouring. The knowledge gleaned during the early hours session surely justified the eye watering figures that appeared on so many bills later that same morning.



Richard Johnson presents Kenny Mackay with the cheque for £7,380, with the money going to subsidise BIGGA Learning and Development initiatives

# Tuesday Night is Fun Night

**Harrogate Week has a new event for 2009**, which will ensure that the evening of **Tuesday, January 20**, is one you will remember for a very long time indeed.

The Social Evening, in the Majestic Hotel, will have something for everyone - whether member or not.

Those who like a little flutter can take to the casino tables and, with chips provided by BIGGA and a prize for the person who gathers the most by the end of the evening, you won't be facing a January night in Harrogate minus your shirt!

For the more agile, there is a Bucking Rudolph - a cuddlier version of a Bucking Bull - and a Ski Machine, while there will be an array of arcade style games, some of which you won't have played since your childhood. Remember Pacman and Space Invaders? Also included are a Saloon Bar ShootOut, a Golf Challenge, Twin Driver Sega Rally, one armed bandits, Pinball machines, table football, pool table and many, many other attractions.



Oh, and if you're looking for someone to impress, there will be a couple of Las Vegas-style Showgirls wandering through the rooms. That'll make you try that little bit harder on Bucking Rudolph!

Look out for more news, including ticket prices and available food, on this great new event in forthcoming Biggazines, Greenkeeper International and the BIGGA and Harrogate Week websites. But keep the date clear in your Harrogate Week diary.

**STOP PRESS...BIGGA has negotiated a special deal with Black Sheep brewery for its Riggwelter beer to be sold at £2 per pint!**





# GOLF ON A HUGE SCALE

*Scott MacCallum visits Woburn where new Course Manager John Clarke has a big job on his hands.*

**Pay a visit to Woburn Golf Club in Bedfordshire and you will immediately be struck by the sheer scale of the operation. As one of the country's leading golf venues, it is centrally located within a unique historical setting of the Woburn Estate; home to the Dukes of Bedford for over 300 years.**

For a start there are three superb championship courses, each with their own individual characteristics. The Duke's, the Duchess' and the Marquess' have hosted prestigious European Tour, Seniors' and Ladies tournaments, as well as an array of top amateur events.

Woburn has witnessed some great golfing moments. Among those who have triumphed at

Woburn are some of the greatest names in golf:- Graham Marsh, Greg Norman, Lee Trevino, Sandy Lyle, Nick Faldo, Seve Ballesteros, Ian Woosnam, Justin Rose, Helen Alfredsson, Patty Sheehan, Liselotte Neumann, Catrin Nilsmark, Laura Davies and Karrie Webb who all have their name on the honours board. In addition, Ryder Cup hero, Ian Poulter, is the Club's Touring Professional.

It's a roll call that would be the envy of many and is all the more remarkable when you consider that the first of the courses, the Duke's, did not open until 1976 and the Marquess' in 2000. The courses are all stunningly beautiful and Woburn Assistant, Michael Cunningham, made the most of that when he won the BIGGA Golf Photography Competition with an excellent picture of the Duke's course last year.

Recently appointed Course Manager John Clarke, joined Woburn in March and was well aware of the scale of task he was taking on. However, it was the annual staff verses members match which really brought home the size of the Woburn Golf Club operation.

"I'd been used to these matches at previous clubs being eight or even twelve on each team, but at Woburn it's 44 a side, course closure with a shotgun start. It's one of the biggest matches of the year," said John, as we sat in Woburn's Morning Room, an excellent restaurant just beside the Club Reception.

The size of the greenkeeping operation would send shivers down the spine of many. John has 38 people who report to him, including Course Attendants, Gardeners, Irrigation Technicians,



Mechanics and three full teams each led by a Head Greenkeeper, and Deputy. Together they look after nearly 700 acres of prime Bedfordshire estate.

“I have maintenance bases, two miles apart and work between the two,” John explained.

“However learning the location of holes proved more difficult,” he joked.

‘If someone said they’d meet me on the 4th of the Duchess’, I’d really have to think about the best way to get there. I felt like a homing pigeon, getting around by following landmarks!’

John learned he’d got the Woburn job just around the time of the Harrogate Week earlier this year and his feet have barely touched the floor since he started work. He took the precaution of warning his friends and family before he started

that they wouldn’t be seeing much of him until winter and brings considerable expertise to Woburn. After attending Myerscough College, he attended Ohio State University and worked as an intern at Winged Foot Golf Club.

“I latterly spent nine years at Marriott Hanbury Manor, the last four as Golf & Estate Manager, and I also looked after the Director of Golf activity for six months so the role at Woburn was a fabulous opportunity,” said John.

“I needed a multiple course venue for my next step and the logistical challenges that this brings, both elements that I really enjoy about the job.”

John took time to chat with each of the Head Greenkeepers and walk their course with them before he took over officially, so had an

opportunity to discuss working practices and agree on maintenance approach and greenkeeping philosophies.

Top of that list was a vigorous aeration programme.

“Almost as soon as I started we scheduled two days of closure on each course in August for aeration,” said John.

“We are well aware of the needs of the business and the August aeration programme was thought through and planned with military precision. However, the greenkeeping team worked hard to ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum and the processes are seen as a positive situation!

“In August, with the school holidays, there isn’t the same level of member rounds or corporate



business and we've got high soil temperatures and great recovery rates. We closed the Marquess' for two days and had total recovery within five days, while members could play the Duke's or the Duchess," continued John.

"When they came back to the Marquess' the following Monday the work was barely apparent, but we'd cored thousands of holes and dressed over 60 tonnes of sand into the greens. We did the same with the other two courses and the hard work has certainly paid off," he added.

"With the right levels of communication we have provided our members with the information necessary to understand our operations and gain an expectation level we can meet and exceed," John explained.

"This means we can make August aeration an annual event, scheduled in the members' fixture list. The courses will benefit greatly and the fact that there are three courses means golfer disruption is kept to a minimum," revealed John, who also added that the work had been done while August experienced six inches of rain!

Another of John's early decisions was to call in agronomist, Robert Laycock who brought in some genuine agronomic back-up.

"He'd been at Woburn about 15 years before and had some very good baseline data from then. We agreed some issues that needed to be tackled quickly, including the aeration and hollow coring and he produced a detailed report including species mix, rooting depths etc which was extremely

useful when discussing maintenance needs with the Golf Club Management."

John has always been extremely strong on communication and his team are always on hand to answer questions.

"We provide regular updates through the club newsletter and we have large plasma screens in the golf shop and reception on which we detail the work we are doing on that particular day together with the reasons why.

We also talk with the membership at every opportunity while we brief Starters, Marshals, Receptionists and everyone in the Pro Shop via e-mail every morning to ensure that we get accurate information out to the members," said John.



Some of the Greenkeeping Team



Course Manager, John Clarke

The Travis Perkins plc Senior Masters was held at the Duke's Course in August. While each of the courses has its own dedicated team, the Duke's had additional resources from the other courses from two weeks before the tournament, which was won by Gordon J Brand.

"We had a team of 28 preparing the Duke's and then in the afternoon they'd go off and prepare their own courses. It was a huge logistical operation but a real buzz for the team," said John, who gets out and involved wherever possible – always respecting the need to be even handed with his time over the three courses.

John is currently busy planning for the year ahead with a focus on a rolling machinery replacement programme. "Within the first three

or four weeks we were reforecasting our spend for the year and producing a 10 year rolling machinery replacement programme. It's only a forecast, but there are certain vehicles which we've used more than expected and have also performed better than expected so with that information to hand I can change our plans."

"We have a huge stock and lots of machines which do one job and we are in the process of trying to reduce the number of machines we carry on our asset register and replace them with machines which will do a variety of jobs.

This includes a rough mower which will also collect leaves for example or rather than have a sweeper, a hoover and a rough mower use something which will cover more than one base."

John is keen to develop the skills and expertise of his Head Greenkeepers and is already exposing them to budgeting. "I've got very good Head Greenkeepers and Deputies on each course and I want to ensure they have technical back-up and business knowledge to succeed."

Gary Leadbetter runs the Marquess' Course; Simon Trotter, the Duke's, and Steve Tompkins the Duchess' but John has been impressed by the entire staff who have shown a desire for hard work and to learn during his six months with the club. It is this hard work with a mix of innovation and sound traditional greenkeeping that John is positive will be key in contributing to the future of Woburn golf club.



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# HAND ARM VIBRATION (HAVS) RAISING AWARENESS FOR GREENKEEPERS

By Herbert Barker

Over the next few months Greenkeeper International will be working in conjunction with vibration testing services Fivesquared to discuss the implications of Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS), Whole Body Vibration (WBV) and Noise.

We start the series this month with Hand Arm Vibration and the measures you can put in place to try to prevent vibration white finger.

## OVERVIEW

Hand Arm Vibration is a subject that has become 'high-profile' in recent years since the introduction of specific legislation in 2005 to control and manage vibration in the workplace.

In 2002, the European Commission introduced legislation 'harmonising' vibration levels in the workplace for all member states, and gave each state three years to bring it in to effect.

The UK 'version' became law in 2005 as the 'Control of Vibration at Work Regulations (2005)' and this details the responsibilities and obligations of employers and employees to monitor and control the effects of vibration in the workplace.

## HAND ARM VIBRATION IN GOLF CLUBS

Research shows that a relatively small percentage of Golf Clubs have implemented systems for the management of vibration and taken the subject seriously for their greenkeeping staff, while others know of the legislation but have done little, sometimes due to budget constraints. Some clubs however, have decided that Hand Arm Vibration doesn't affect them and have 'shelved' any action to help protect their greenkeeping staff.

Claims have been issued and won against golf clubs for failing to protect their employees from VWF (Vibration white finger). With claims averaging £10 - £20,000 across all industries, can the greenkeeping sector afford to ignore the legislation any longer.

This article is designed to give a brief overview of the problems of HAVS and the solutions.

## WHAT IS IT?

HAVS is a widespread recognized industrial disease affecting tens of thousands of workers. It is a disorder which affects the blood vessels, nerves, muscles, and joints, of the hand, wrist, and arm. It's best known effect is vibration-induced 'white finger' (VWF)

It can be caused through the use of vibrating hand held power tools for long periods, (hours, days, weeks, or years.)

Tools and processes likely to be hazardous are numerous and include tools such as:

- Hedge Trimmers • Chain saws • Mowers
- Blowers • Strimmers
- Hammer Drills • Pistol Drills • Jigsaws
- Hand-held (or hand fed) circular saws
- Concrete Breakers • Chipping Hammers
- Vibrating Pokers
- Pedestal & Hand-held Grinders
- Rotary burring tools
- Vibratory Compactors • Scabblers
- Jigger Picks

This list is not comprehensive and where people regularly work with tools or processes such as these for prolonged periods, there is likely to be a risk of injury. It is safest to regard regular prolonged use of any high vibration tool or machine as suspect.

## HOW DO I RECOGNISE IT?

Exposure to Hand Arm Vibration can result in various symptoms collectively known as Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome, and more commonly known as 'Vibration White Finger'. The condition can affect nerves, joints, muscles, blood vessels, and connective tissues of the hand and forearm. The

symptoms may appear separately or simultaneously and usually start to occur in cold weather.

### Tingling 'Whiteness' Or Numbness In The Fingers. (Blood Vessels And Nerves)

This may not be noticeable at the end of a working day, and in mild cases may affect only the tips of the fingers. As the condition worsens, the whole finger down to the knuckles may become white. Feeling may also be lost.

Any vibrating tool, or process, which causes tingling or numbness after 5 to 10 minutes of continuous use is suspect.

### Fingers Change Colour (Blood Vessels)

With continued exposure the person may suffer periodic attacks where the fingers change colour when exposed to cold. Initially the fingers rapidly become pale and feeling is lost. This phase is followed by an intense red flush (sometimes preceded by a dusky bluish phase) signaling the return of blood circulation to the fingers and is usually accompanied by uncomfortable throbbing or pain.

### Loss Of Manual Dexterity (Nerves & Muscles)

In more severe forms; attacks may occur frequently in cold weather, not only at work, but during leisure activities, such as gardening, car washing or even watching outdoor sports; and may last up to an hour causing considerable pain and loss of manual dexterity and reduced grip strength.

### Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (Muscles And Nerves)

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome affects the nerves and muscles of the wrist and hand and can be due to conditional twisting of the wrist. It can

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