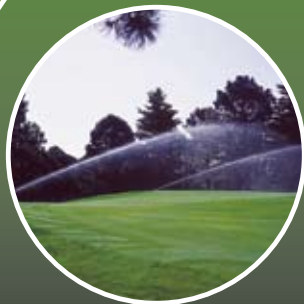




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Welcome



Bulging Bellies and Dodgy Tans

Driving into work this morning it was great to see the sun shining, blue sky and minimal cloud cover. I know we've had similar in early spring in recent years and it fizzled out very quickly but surely, surely, this will be the start of a decent spell of weather for us all.

It may not be pretty, but the sight of polo shirts and shorts struggling to contain bulging bellies, on our fairways over the next seven or eight months will be unbelievably welcome because it will mean that weather has been conducive to a successful golfing year.

As I write, I've played half a dozen times this year at my own club and I'm quite pleased to have been quite so active. However, only once has the temperature nudged above zero and each time I've gone out I've resembled Nanook of the North wearing about four different layers, a silly hat and those big mitts which look like you're sporting a pair of flippers.

I'm now longing for one of those stupid tans that only golfers sport in the summer months – one brown hand and one white; brown bands around the legs; brown neck, and brown arms from six inches below the shoulder!

With the sun shining, golf courses are very attractive places to be, and whether it be members, their guests, fee paying visitors, members of societies, or those lucky enough to be invited to a corporate day it all means money coming into golf clubs in terms of green fees, over the bar or in the pro shop.

The other good news recently is the return of the Tiger. He may not have won either of his first two events back but, once he's up to tournament speed he shows every sign of being as good as he ever was. We've missed him. Pdraig Harrington may still have won The Open and the USPGA if he had been in the field, but there would have been much more excitement if the Irishman had had a Tiger on his tail.

I return to the subject quite a lot in this column but golf does owe Tiger a huge debt of gratitude. Not since the 60s, and Arnold Palmer in his pomp, has golf possessed the biggest name in all sport and that can only be good for us all. As an aside, how many of us in the 60s and 70s played Pro-Shot Golf - operating a six inch tall Arnold Palmer to swing at little polystyrene balls and aiming at a foam green that would never lie flat? Is Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 for the PS2, progress? Perhaps...

The one downside with Tiger though is a fashion point. Tiger has changed the golfing look. The collarless shirt has become acceptable in golfing circles and the materials used for a shirt are very similar to those adopted for gym wear – lightweight, breathable etc. They look brilliant on the muscular, wide shouldered, flat stomached athletes who now play professional golf but not quite so splendid on those men and women with the aforementioned bulging bellies!

Scott MacCallum
Editor



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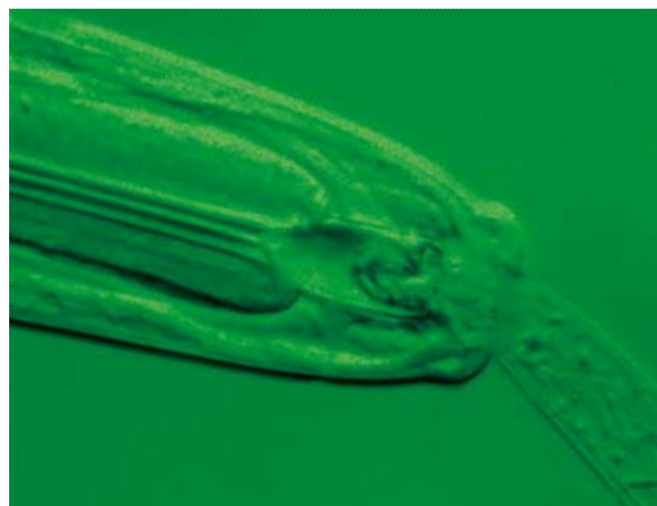
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LELY'S ON COURSE

Lely UK has further expanded its provision of training initiatives with its recent accreditation as a Landbased Technician Accreditation (LTA) training provider.

The LTA scheme aims to provide a nationwide means of benchmarking, monitoring and assessing the competence of technicians working in turf machinery engineering, while the course recognises and develops the diagnostic and technical abilities of engineers together with their customer service and technical mentoring skills.

“Ongoing and high-quality training is the lifeblood of any industry and I’m delighted that Lely is once again at the forefront of its industry in

joining with other manufacturers in the creation of this new LTA scheme,” commented Ian Sumpter, Lely’s Toro Training Manager.

“Not only will it develop the skills of our Toro-approved technicians, but it will also further increase customer confidence in the service they receive from their local dealers and service centres.”

Full details of Lely’s customer training courses, including its NPTC Mower Operator Training and Spray Technician courses, are available in a new training leaflet for 2009 – email Ian Sumpter at: isumpter@lely.com to request your free copy or call: Lely on 01480 226800.

SOUTH WALES SPRING SEMINAR

The South Wales Section Spring Seminar 2009 will be taking place on Thursday, April 23, at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club with the focus on getting greenkeepers talking about greenkeeping.

The speakers for the event are: Lee Strutt MG, G West Development, Perthshire ‘The Growing Pains of a Grow In’; Allan Patterson, Castle Course, St Andrews ‘Castle Course St Andrews - The Story So Far’; Greg Evans, Ealing Golf Club, Surrey ‘The Short Cut To Better Greens’; Gareth Roberts, Hankley Common, Surrey, ‘Hankley and the Heath’; Richard Blizzard & Mark Atkins, Soil Harmony ‘The Life Beneath Your Feet’ & ‘Finding The Balance’.

Each of our speakers will be giving presentations based on their own theories and management practices of both turf grass and site specific issues.

There will also be live demo’s from charterhouse of aeration equipment, over seeders and top dressers.

Cost of the day is £17.50 for members and £20 for non members including tea/coffee and two course buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms will be sent out to Section members, any other interested parties can contact Steve Chappell for further details on: 07970 980899 or: chappell124@hotmail.co.uk.

GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE MANUAL

This manual was devised and written by Laurence Pithie MG then supported and produced by the English Golf Union. It is now available for sale, but only from The Club Services department of The EGU. The retail price is £150 and comes complete with a disc for downloading various files.

The manual consists of 28 different sections and covers virtually all aspects of setting up a maintenance system for managing a golf course.

It is not a manual for growing or maintaining fine turf but it is a series of documents, work sheets and records that will help the person manage their course in a more effective and professional manner.

The contents include the following: A ‘generic’ policy document, varying examples of standards including course & equipment, man-hour studies,

budgeting worksheets and working ledger, capital expenditures, training workbooks, staff appraisals, course audits, inventories, equipment & golf cart information, fertiliser & chemical data, job descriptions, winter play guidelines, reports and newsletter examples, various turf tips & course data.

The purpose of this manual is to act as a reference workbook and to assist others in setting up systems that are simple to use, having being designed specifically for maintaining golf courses.

It can be used in conjunction with more sophisticated software packages although most of the required data is already within this manual.

For the first time, there is now a complete maintenance system that is readily available and can easily be amended or adapted to suit any individual course, large or small.



Laurence Pithie MG

TECHNICAL MANAGER SIGNED UP

Simon Watson has joined Syngenta UK Professional Products as the new Technical Manager. He joins the Syngenta team from the Sport Turf Research Institute, where he has been Turf Agronomist for Scotland and north east England for the past six years.

Simon has a strong science background, combined with the practical application of his knowledge on golf courses, sports pitches, stadia and racecourses with the STRI. He obtained his degree in Environmental Sciences at Coventry University, followed by a PhD and post-doctoral studies, specialising in weed science, at Reading University.

“With the rapidly increasing number of Syngenta products for the turf and amenity industry it is an exciting time to be joining the business,” reports Simon.

“There has always been a significant benefit for turf managers in using quality products, and in developing the optimum ways to get the best results within Integrated Turf Management programmes, which we will seek to further enhance and grow.”



TRAINING COURSE DATES ANNOUNCED

The IOG has confirmed the dates and venues for its training course on the maintenance of synthetic surfaces and facilities, now in their ninth year, in conjunction with Technical Surfaces, the UK's largest synthetic maintenance specialist.

Courses entitled ‘The Maintenance and Management of Synthetic Sports Surfaces’ will be held throughout 2009 at the following venues: Bristol University, Avon on September 24, Birmingham University, on October 29. One will also take place in Sussex with the venue and date to be confirmed.

The IOG has developed this one day course to ensure that those responsible for synthetic

surfaces understand the care and maintenance requirements of the surface and to aid in the provision of a better and safer surface for all non-turf games.

The aim of this course is to explain how the surfaces are constructed and demonstrate the various methods of maintenance for artificial and synthetic surfaces. Synthetic surfaces are now available to all sports and therefore the course is suitable for groundsmen from all sporting disciplines.

For more information contact the IOG on 01908 312511 or visit www.iog.org

GREENS MOWER RIDES THE HIGH SEAS

Ransomes Jacobsen has supplied one of its newest state-of-the-art walk-behind greens mowers for an unusual application – mowing an extensive area of natural grass lawn on Celebrity Cruise Lines latest cruise ship, the Celebrity Solstice.

The 122,000 tonne luxurious cruise liner had its maiden voyage in November last year. One of its many amenities is The Lawn Club, an innovative new country club environment featuring a 2,130 square metre natural lawn situated between the ship's funnels on the upper deck. Guests can play bowls and croquet, practice their putting, picnic with a basket of wine and cheese, or simply feel the grass between their toes, while sailing the oceans of the world.

Celebrity Cruise Lines specification for a mower demanded that the machine would produce minimal noise, so that it would not disturb guests relaxing in the area. Their facilities management

company, Green Roof Services, then had to source an appropriate mower and contacted The Turf Care Co (TTC), Ransomes Jacobsen's distributor in Germany.

TTC provide the Jacobsen Eclipse 122F which features electric drive to the traction cylinder and the cutting unit, but with a choice power units, - a 4.6hp Honda petrol engine powering a 48-volt genset or a 48-volt drop-in battery pack. Green Roof Services selected the drop-in battery option, giving the on-board greenkeeper the perfect solution to his mowing requirements.

For the technically minded, a special porous lightweight growing medium is used instead of soil. It consists of 90mm of heat expanded calcium clay, crushed to provide an open structure and blended with sieved and washed volcanic pumice. A Polypropylene Geo grid is added to stabilize layers and withstand foot traffic.



RECREATING HISTORICAL VALUE

Quite literally hot foot from a successful grow in of Minthis Hills Golf Club in Paphos, Cyprus Phil Helmn MG has taken on the role of Estate Manager at the prestigious Heythrop Park Hotel situated on the outskirts of the beautiful Cotswold countryside.

The new 18 hole Championship golf course has been commissioned by Mr Firoz Kassam, who also owns the Kassam Stadium, home to Oxford United.

"The golf course is going to be one of a kind, it is totally unique with the history of the estate fused into every aspect of the new layout," enthused Phil.

"White Horse Contractors, who are undertaking the construction, under the supervision of Nigel Ely, are doing a first class job and with guidance of John Angus and Nilu Kanani, the Firoka directors, it really is a team effort," said Phil.

The golf course, designed by Tom Mackenzie, is due to open in September this year and is developing well with many strong holes that make the most of the estate's many natural features - its trees, valleys, ridges, lakes, streams and woodlands.

A series of natural springs have been utilised to create pools with moss covered Cotswold stone hand picked from site.

The golf course project centres around recreating the historical value of the estate, restoring it back to its former glory days of 1707.

The formula forms just a small part of the painstaking process the team have undertaken, mapping and re-planting trees and shrubs, trying to re-create the original historical planting schemes including beech and lime tree avenues along with historic orchards and vistas.

The golf course will be a memorable test that can be played at more than 7,100 yards for the more adventurous golfer or if required more modestly at 6,500 yards.

APOLOGY

Our apologies to John Deere this month, in the last issue of GI a news item appeared on page 8 entitled 'On Course For Great Things'.

Due to a mix up the wrong caption was placed with the picture that accompanied this story.

The actual picture was of Killeen Castle, its greenstaff and a fleet of John Deere equipment supplied by Dublin Grass Machinery.

SCOTLAND'S TOP HORTICULTURAL STUDENTS SWEEP AWARDS

The elite of learners from Scotland's land-based industries were recognised by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, in a glittering Awards Ceremony at Crieff Hydro recently.

Horticultural students came out on top winning both the overall Land-based Learner of the Year and the overall runner up prize.

Top learner, Paul Carella, of Bellshill, who completed a SVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture with Gosta Training in June 2008, was presented with four prizes. In addition to the 'Overall Winner' prize, Paul was also awarded the 'Scottish Enterprise Area Learner of the Year' and 'Modern Apprentice of the Year'. He won the 'Horticultural Learner of the Year Award, sponsored by the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), and received £550 as a cash prize and the Peter Alexander Perpetual Trophy.

Paul enrolled with GOSTA Training in 2006 completing his SVQ Level 3 in Amenity Horticulture in June 2008. He was nominated for the Toro Student of the Year where he was runner up for Britain.

"I aspire to do the best I can in all aspects of life and I eventually want to become a Course Manager of a Championship golf course. I study very hard and try to learn as much as possible about Greenkeeping. I feel this makes me a good candidate for the land-based Learner of the Year



Danny Logue, Operations Director of Skills Development Scotland with winner Paul Carella (right).

Award," enthused Paul.

Runner up prize was awarded to Colin Smith from Eccelsmachten, By Broxburn who is studying at Amenity Horticulture and Landscaping at Oatridge College. While he was at the college he reached the UK finals of the Skills for Landscaping competition.

The sixth annual Lantra Land-based Learner of the Year Awards were attended by some 150 guests, including new entrants, key stakeholders, employers, farmers, crofters, land managers, training providers and members of Scottish Parliament. A total of 24 awards were presented with winners aged 14-46 from across Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland with learndirect scotland for business were the principal sponsor of the awards this year with major sponsorship also provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Forestry Commission Scotland and the Cadogan Trust. The annual awards are also sponsored by key stakeholders, training providers, employers, farmers and land managers, demonstrating the commitment of industry to training and the awards.

RECYCLED PLASTIC BOOSTS MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Moray Golf Club at Lossiemouth has been using recycled plastic planking supplied by Fusion Marine, to reinforce the sides of a 700 yard long ditch that cuts across the course. Anti-slip grooved recycled plastic planks have also been used to form the boardwalks to all of the bridges crossing the ditch. Replacement benches have also been made from recycled plastic.

The club is considered to be one of the finest links courses in Scotland, with its old course featuring deep bunkers, undulating gorse lined fairways and smooth fast greens. The shorter and tighter new course is equally challenging.

According to George Paterson, Golf Courses Manager, using recycled plastic as part of the course maintenance programme offers several advantages over more traditional materials such as wood and steel.

"Recycled plastic is very durable and will stand the test of time, whereas other materials will rot and corrode," he said.

"We opted for the material because it is environmentally friendly and very strong, which is virtually maintenance free, with the colour not fading over time."

LECTURER SPEAKS AT CZECH REPUBLIC GREENKEEPING CONFERENCE

Will Bowden, Programme Manager and Lecturer in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management at Cannington Centre (Bridgwater College) was recently invited to present two lectures at the annual Czech Republic Golf Greenkeeping Conference, in Prague.

Representing the college and Schrickel and Partners Design, Bowden presented lectures in line with the conference theme of golf course design and construction: 'Design and management of water hazards on the golf course' and 'Enhancing the biodiversity of your golf course'.

"The experience was fantastic, I was honoured to be invited to speak at the conference and the welcome I was given was second to none. It is always exciting to visit other countries and learn of the challenges and issues they face as an industry. These experiences always enrich personal knowledge and open doors that I am sure our students at Cannington will only benefit from in the future," said Will.

The conference was staged over four days, with International Golf Course Architects attending and giving presentations. There were representatives from the UK, Germany and the US at the show.

"The golf industry in Czech Republic is booming, many of the world's finest designers are involved in projects across the country. This is undoubtedly an excellent place for young, qualified British greenkeepers to explore and make the most of the opportunities available. The Greenkeepers Association of the Czech Republic is putting together a strong educational system and we look forward to working closely with them on developing this. In such difficult times for our profession its refreshing to see some countries thrive," said Will.



THE INTEGRATION OF SPORTS TURF GROUNDS CARE STAFF INTO BIGGA MEMBERSHIP



Following on from last month's piece, some more facts

- BIGGA is a progressive professional body that is capable of representing anyone employed in the maintenance of sports turf
- Greenkeepers and groundsmen have a great deal in common when it comes to managing sports turf
- The better any one organisation can represent the sports turf industry then the more effective that body can become
- If BIGGA does not take the initiative then somebody else will, resulting in a more divided industry that will only be to our detriment
- An increased membership base should improve commercial opportunities for the benefit of all members

There are a number of greenkeepers that are not interested in career development or networking and see no point in joining BIGGA. Changing their view is a marketing challenge.

- A stronger BIGGA should allow for better national and international representation
- There are a great number of groundsmen who do not belong to a professional body because they are either precluded from doing so or do not place enough value on their current options

Anyone who wishes any further information regarding the above should contact John Pemberton at BIGGA HOUSE.

SOUTH EAST REGION - GENTLEMEN'S GOLF & DINNER

After quite a severe night's frost over 80 competitors enjoyed some glorious weather on a golf course superbly presented by Ian McMillan and his team at Walton Heath Golf Club in early March.

Considering that, even on the day before the event there had been a light covering of snow, everyone that played was appreciative of the conditions after the long hard winter.

After the excellent dinner the Captain of Walton Heath, Richard Champion, presented the prizes to the day's various winners.

Jason Hunt, from Addington Palace Golf Club, was the winner of the Ray Day Memorial Trophy - narrowly beating the holder, Ron Christie, and Gareth Roberts in the scratch category.

The South East Region is grateful to the following companies who generously contributed to the sponsorship of this event and many others throughout the year: Avoncrop Amenity Products, C.M.W. Equipment, Complete Weed Control, Ernest Doe & Sons, Headland Amenity Products, Rigby Taylor, The Scotts Co. (UK), Speedcut Contractors, Sisis, Tacit Golf Equipment, Vitax.

ESSEX SECTION EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

The Essex Section Educational Seminar was held at Stock Brook The Country Club recently. The day was well attended with 43 delegates including seven sponsors.

After registration and coffee the seminar was opened with Section Education Officer, Paul O'Kane, welcoming the guests and running through the scheduled programme of events.

The first speaker was Richard Parmee who is Project Officer for the River Colne Countryside Project. He gave a very interesting talk on various aspects of conservation that could be used on golf courses to promote a greener approach and to encourage flora and fauna and wild life onto the golf course. His presentation was well received and sparked a number of enquiries from delegates at the interval.

The second speaker was John Farrell, from Baileys of Norfolk Ltd, who very kindly stepped in at the last minute to present the topic of The Importance of Seaweed in the Soil Medium. This presentation was originally to be given by Ian Somerville, Course Manager and Soil Scientist, Brocton Hall Golf Club, who broke his ankle on the previous Monday. So all credit to John who gave a very interesting talk, pointing out the benefits that seaweed gives us when applied as either a fertiliser or as part of a top dressing.

After our second speaker we all enjoyed a break when a full English breakfast was served. This gave delegates the opportunity of networking.

After breakfast we moved onto our final speakers who were Ben Taylor and Steven Nixon,

both from Bernhard and Company. They gave a very interesting talk about the importance of grinding and its effect on our golf courses. This was quite a lengthy and in depth presentation which gave rise to many questions from the delegates.

When Ben and Steven had finished their slide presentation all delegates were invited to join them and Gary Woodward, Bernhard's Territory Manager, in the greenkeepers' shed where they had set up a grinder for a practical demonstration on how to achieve the perfect grind.

The seminar finished at 1.30pm and we

have received quite a lot of feedback from the delegates. This has enabled us to be confident enough to start organising similar events for next year, hopefully using the same venue.

We would like to thank Terry Peachey for the use of the facilities and the staff of Stock Brook for all the help they gave.

Our thanks also go to, Richard Parmee, John Farrell. And to Ben Taylor, Steven Nixon and Gary Woodward for the thought provoking presentations they delivered.



In the main centre photo from L to R: Paul O'Kane, Ben Taylor, Don Clark (Chairman), Richard Parmee, and John Farrell.

BCPC CHALLENGES EU COMMISSION'S 'BLACKLIST'

The EU Parliament's adoption of the new pesticide regulation on January 13 has led to controversy over claims by the EU Parliament's Rapporteur of a 'blacklist' of 22 active substances which would be banned, starting this year.

"Apart from the unscientific basis of the legislation, we have an immediate issue with the so-called 'blacklist'," said Dr Colin Ruscoe, Chairman of the British Crop Production Council.

"The new regulation does not contain a 'blacklist' of substances, merely the requirement for their evaluation using new guideline studies and assessment criteria. Whether these substances will be withdrawn depends entirely on this further evaluation – which will only just be starting in 2009."

While Green Rapporteur, Hiltrud Breyer claims that the new regulation "is a win-win situation, not only for the environment, public health, consumer

protection but also for the European economy," there are serious concerns about the loss of key products and implications to farmers, growers and those in the amenity sector. As well as the UK, it is likely that Ireland, Spain and Hungary will also oppose the regulation at the forthcoming Council of Ministers.

"In the run-up to the EU Parliament vote, considerable effort was made to highlight the negative impacts and move the legislation on to a more scientifically-based footing," explained Dr Ruscoe.

"Following the Parliamentary vote, it was to be hoped that debate would focus on rational and practical aspects of implementation. It is therefore disappointing – and indeed dangerous – that disinformation by the Commission Rapporteur refers to a 'blacklist' of products," he said.

"The problem we face is that this list will

be widely publicised and people will be misled," warned Dr Ruscoe.

"Agrochemical stockists will be reluctant to supply the products believing that there are safety issues. Food retailers may put them on their 'redlist' of products not to be used by their suppliers. And farmers and growers will not want to use them if it could affect the supply of their produce. This could result in the removal of key products, proven to be safe under the existing stringent risk-based regulatory regime, which have been used for many years by farmers and growers to ensure high quality production of key arable and horticultural crops," he added.

"To obviate this danger we are calling on the Commission to make it absolutely clear that no such "blacklist" exists, and that all products will be evaluated properly against the provisions of the new legislation," he said.