



Dave Bowles finding "just the right position"...

Perfect Posture

Some 25 members of the South West Section recently attended a half day Manual Handling safety course.

The course was delivered by Dave Bowles, Director of the HS Dept Ltd, and was aimed at increasing greenkeepers' awareness to chronic back and other muscular & skeletal injuries, caused by poor working practices.

The course was deemed by most as "extremely useful" and the Section hopes to repeat it in the future'.



Retirement

Earlier this year Neil Maltby decided that this would be his last year serving on the Sheffield Section committee. Neil has been involved in Greenkeeping and in the Sheffield Section for over 50 years and has served many roles including Chairman and President.

Neil has been a great ambassador for BIGGA over the years, he has represented our Section at many events and has been a real figurehead for the Section, attending The National Championship and BTME many times. His advice has been invaluable over the years. He has been particularly helpful to members coming on to the committee by offering them the benefit of his experience.

Neil retired from greenkeeping in 2004 where he was Head Greenkeeper at Wheatley Golf Club, Neil still enjoys playing golf at Wheatley where he is a member.

Despite his retirement from the committee, Neil will still continue to support the Section at many events

On behalf of everyone at the Sheffield Section and everyone at BIGGA headquarters I would like to thank Neil for his hard work and commitment over the past 50 years and I hope he continues to enjoy his retirement.

James Stevens

Triumph for East of England

The third Midland Region Inter Section Golf Tournament, sponsored by Whitemoss Eco Supplies Ltd, was held this year at Burghley Park Golf Club in October.

On a beautiful Autumn day with a light wind all players thoroughly enjoyed a course superbly prepared by Course Manager, David Salisbury, and his staff. The format was once again a three man team from each Section playing aggregate

handicap medal.

Once again the scores were close; the winning team was the East of England Section, represented by Rob Welford, Rob Bemment and Ash Cox, with a combined score of 226; 2. Midland on 231. 3. Mid Anglia on 232 and 4. East Midland on 247.

Our thanks are extended to Burghley Park for allowing us to use the course and facilities, where everyone was made to

feel very welcome by staff and members.

Also, the Midland Region would like to thank Andy Law of Whitemoss Eco Supplies Ltd for his continued sponsorship.

The photo shows left to right: Alan Walker, Section Chairman and Starter; Ash Cox, Rob Welford; Rob Bemment and Paul Wilkinson, Captain of Burghley Park, who presented the trophy and prizes.



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Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Peter Todd, gives his thoughts for the month

Over the past few weeks we have seen some wild weather conditions, particularly on the West side of the country.

Not only has this been devastating for the people going about their daily lives but will have further impacted on golf clubs income following on from the wet summers over the past three years.

The changing pattern of weather was one of the topics presented at the recent South East Regional Seminar and provided some useful food for thought. It was highlighted how over the past 40 years the number of days of frost has reduced by a third with an increase in average temperatures between October and December. At the club we have experienced daytime temperatures averaging 14.4 degrees C in October and 7.7 at night this year.

In contrast to having to deal with the problem of flooding and incessant rain on



A Flexible Approach Required

the West side of the country, the South East corner suffered from a continuous lack of rainfall this year. The amount of rain that fell in Cumbria in one day during the floods in November was similar to that recorded for eight months this year in Kent. From March to October we received only 343mm of rain against a 12 year average of 523mm at the club. As a result of this we had to postpone scarifying fairways until late September and also the overseeding work which followed on.

The unpredictability of the weather is changing many aspects of our work including the incidence of disease, the planning and timing of operations and being geared up to deal with intense rainfall patterns. When rain does come it can often fall as intense bursts that cause washouts to bunkers and course flooding.

It seems as though wherever you are in the country, time and money spent investing in ways to cope with high intensity rainfall patterns will soon be recouped in being able to resume play sooner after the rain stops. This may involve additional drainage work, reshaping areas to shed water away from putting surfaces or topdressing areas with sand. Opening up greens that are surrounded by trees that have been encroaching for years might be just what is needed to allow air movement and sunlight to aid drying.

The basics of keeping firm playing surfaces with careful management of thatch and an effective aeration programme certainly help by allowing these to dry out quicker but more is often needed if we are to be able to re-open courses quickly following these downpours.

Keeping healthy putting surfaces through good turf management practices remains the best way to combat disease but may not always be enough to eliminate all disease pressures. With the increasing temperatures being experienced in the autumn period, coupled with high humidity, having to use fungicides may still be necessary at times. However, by selecting the right active ingredient and mode of action to get on top of disease pressure at an early stage, it should be possible to minimise their use.

Having set dates/times of year when trolleys, powered trolleys and buggies can and can't be used on course doesn't work with the unpredictability of the weather. In contrast to wetter autumns, this year we allowed buggies to be used on fairways right up to the start of November.

The club has always left the judgement on these matters to the greenkeeping department to determine and so being mindful of the need to keep this revenue stream flowing as well as protect the course when making decisions, we have demonstrated that this

responsibility has not been misplaced.

When designing courses or making alterations to existing sites golf course architects need to bear in mind the changing climate in all aspects of their schemes including slopes, watershed patterns and drainage designs etc.

Capturing surface water run off in winter through a drainage system leading to a holding reservoir may well prove a worthwhile investment for many courses on the drier east side of the UK to make use of these intense rainfall patterns.

In some cases where no bore hole licences are available it may be their only viable option as when drought orders are put in place, mains water will not be available to them.

This whole subject of adapting to changes in weather patterns will continue to be a much discussed topic. Some argue that climate change and the causes of it are not just happening.

Wherever this debate leads will not alter the fact that we need to plan and manage a programme of work that has to be more flexible in its timing, respond to these climate related pressures and communicate this effectively.

Peter Todd
National Chairman



Greenkeepers Training Committee



David Golding, Education Director,
with a monthly update from the GTC

Anybody with their “ear to the ground” hears the worrying message that 2010 will be worse than 2009 for many golf clubs as even more golfers look to relinquish their membership preferring to become a casual golfer playing occasionally and on different courses.

This maybe is how today’s golfer is looking at his or her pastime but we must be pleased that we still have golfers during the ongoing recession whenever and wherever they choose to play.

It is difficult to generalise the state of play for golf, as there will always be those clubs who have a loyal membership.

Equally, the increase in proprietary courses and clubs during the nineties certainly has given golfers a choice and with it the need for owners and committees to work that little bit harder to attract members, visitors and where appropriate tempt them to become members.

Retaining members is also all about maintaining the product.

For several years I have been a casual, or, as we often are referred to today, a nomad golfer, and from my own experiences, I have to say, in visiting more courses you certainly look at the “package” offered both in terms of on and off course facilities.

I also know that more and more Course Managers, as part of the management team, are aware that it is the “whole experience” offered at the golf club that has to be attractive and it is therefore so important that we look to promote training in business management within greenkeeping courses and qualifications.

We will always ensure at the very heart of greenkeeper education and training are the best agronomic principles and practices however we must continue to promote the management training courses offered both through our approved providers and BIGGA on a regional and local basis as well as during Harrogate Week.

The GTC works to ensure the range of greenkeeping qualifications all include the skills and knowledge a golf club employer would require from the greenkeeper to Course Manager but during these difficult economic times, training can often be suspended or even cancelled, which still amazes me when so much training attracts subsidies.

From a greenkeepers perspective, the options to continue to access learning in this climate has never been better with on the job, distance learning and on-line learning as well as short courses being available.

Back to the golf “experience” few will argue that any golf clubs greatest asset is its course albeit we have to acknowledge the off course facilities are also important but let us continue to focus on ensuring that “our” side of the golf experience is as good as it can be given the resources made available to the Course Manager and the greenkeeping team.

Golfers have and will continue to compare the condition of courses and with the current mood it is more important than ever that your course is better than the competition.

This may be easier said than done as budgets vary, along with ground conditions from club to club as do human and physical resources that are available to you. But let us remain positive, as there are already tremendously talented individuals and greenkeeping teams on many golf courses but please take up every opportunity for continual professional development, as it could be your skills and professionalism, which gives, assists your employers business.

There is no better place than the annual gathering for our sector in January at Harrogate to catch up on all the latest news, products and education.

Please take a look at the education programme and I know there will be something for you which in turn will benefit your employer so don’t delay plan your Continual Professional Development for 2010

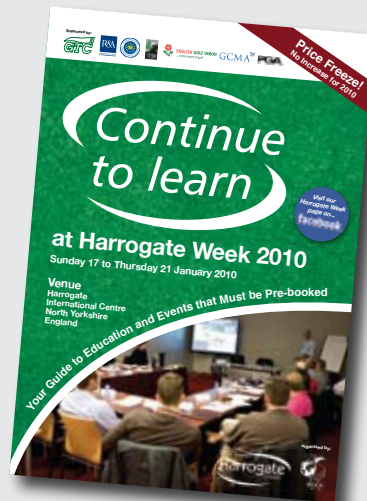
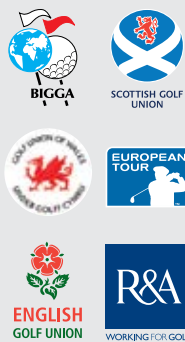
In Brief

David continues to be positive as all the rumours seem to be that many golf clubs are going to have an even a tougher 2010 than 2009

now starting by looking at the Continue to Learn programme.

On behalf of the GTC I trust you enjoy the festive season, we can all look forward to meeting up at Harrogate in the New Year, as the greenkeeping community is still one we should all be proud to be part of.

The GTC is funded by:



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Learning & Development

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development,
with an update on education issues



All the Christmas trees and lights that have been adorning shops, bars and hotels since August are finally coming into their own, as the festive season is just around the corner – in the L&D department the Christmas shopping is done and the cards are written! The lists we're working on are all to do with Harrogate Week and making sure that Harrogate Week 2010 is a resounding success.

Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week 2010



The Fringe Sessions were introduced on to the Continue to Learn education programme in 2007 and have proved to be a very successful addition. The Fringe Sessions are presented by companies who are exhibiting at the BTME and Club-House Exhibition and by BIGGA. The sessions are open to all visitors, free of charge and on a first come first serve basis.

This year's Fringe Sessions feature subjects including:

- Enhancing the Biodiversity of the Golf Course
- How do I Choose my Wetting Agent Programme?
- Sustainable Aeration and Drainage for Golf Courses, Trees and Winter Sports Pitches
- Redevelopment of the Outfield at Headingley Carnegie Stadium
- RESCUE: Using a Selective Ryegrass Killer on Golf Courses
- The Centre Court Roof
- False Economy in Grounds Management
- Growing Turf for the West Course at Wentworth

For a full list of the Fringe Sessions please go to www.harrogateweek.org.uk/education and download the Fringe Seminars document. Further information on all of the Fringe Sessions can be accessed on the website. More events are being added – keep up to date with what's on by visiting the website regularly.

Please note: the Fringe Sessions are extremely popular – if there is a specific session you wish to attend it is advised that you turn up 10-15 minutes prior to the advertised start time.

A series of half-day workshops are also available:

- Basic Electrical System Maintenance
- Golf Club Marketing
- Water Feature Management
- Good Soil Chemistry and Biology
- Carbon Auditing, Energy and Waste
- Master Greenkeeper Certificate
- The Rules of Golf and Course Set Up for PGA Events
- SUDS and Water Harvesting
- Green Roofs and Walls

PGA Professional Development

The PGA is presenting a range of courses that are open to BIGGA members. As part of the Golf Club Management Partnership, BIGGA members will be eligible to pay the Members' price for any of the courses.

For further details please visit the PGA National Training Academy website – www.pganationaltrainingacademy.org.uk or contact Andrea Kelly on 01375 470333.



The funding provided by Golden 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 Golden and Silver Key Sponsors.



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Master Greenkeeper

Congratulations go to John Ross, from Laleham Golf Club, in Surrey, and Eric

Foerster, from The Ironbridge Golf Course, in Colorado, USA, on achieving the Master Greenkeeper Certificate. John and Eric are the 50th and 51st greenkeepers to achieve the Certificate.



Higher Education Scholarships supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

The most recent scholarships have been awarded to:

- Benjamin Brookes – HNC Golf Course Management
- Kerr Hunter – On Line Foundation Degree – Sports Turf
- John Maree – NVQ Level 4 Sports Turf

BIGGA Library

One new title has been added to the BIGGA Library in the last month:

Essential Soil Science, A Clear and Concise Introduction to Soil Science – Ashman and Puri

(In an effort to save costs, this book was purchased second hand and does have some passages highlighted).

Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors



Golden Key Individual Members: WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.

Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Iain Barr; Hamish Campbell; Steve Dixon; Paul Jenkins; Robert Maibusch MG; Richard McGlynn; Stephen Pope; Jason Sarna; Steven Tierney; Neil Whitaker; Graham Wylie



Scotts Victorious at Villa

Aston Villa's Head Groundsman Jonathan Calderwood says that his Scotts iTurf programme keeps Villa Park's 98% sand pitch in top condition.

"We have great results from Scotts products and excellent technical back-up from Mark Rayner, our key account manager," says Jonathan, who oversees a team of 10 ground staff – three at Villa Park and seven at the training ground, which comprises 14 pitches.

Four of them are built to a similar high sand-based specification as the main stadium pitch.

One is an exact replica of the Villa Park pitch, complete with full Desso system, and the ground staff team mirror the treatments of the stadium surface to achieve similar results.

Even though it has none of the shade problems of Villa Park, it has identical rootzone and drainage.

"The problem with our main pitch is that water just goes straight through it," Jonathan explained.

"We put around 60 tonnes of sand on it every year which makes it even more free-draining. We have a fertiliser programme that works very well for us because it is very difficult to keep grass growing well on pure sand - we use the pop-up sprinklers constantly."

"From September to March we use a moving system of UV lights rigs which makes the pitch even drier, but does keep the grass growing," said Jonathan, who was recently voted 'Groundsman's Groundsman of the Year'.



Aerators in Demand

Long Ashton Golf Club has taken delivery of its third Wiedenmann Terra Spike deep aerator in six years.

Course Manager, Jim Braithwaite, has just welcomed the latest Terra Spike GXi6

The club has earned a first class reputation for its consistently high standard of greens and fairways and pro-active approach to preparation and maintenance.

In 2003, the club bought a Wiedenmann XP 160 specifically to deep tine the course. Six months later it was the first purchaser anywhere in the UK of Wiedenmann's Terra Spike XF, the ultra-fast aerator which revolutionised the speed of deep tine aeration.

"We have had no problems at all with either our XP, or our XF. We've used them systematically to cover the course quickly and efficiently; the XP using its deeper tines on the fairways and the soil-based greens and the XF has been used everywhere," said Jim.

Noticeably in the last year heavier and prolonged rainfall has affected some of Long Ashton's clay-based greens; two of which – the 8th and 15th - have just had new drainage installed.

After discussions with groundscape sales specialist, TH White at Knockdown, a deal was struck to part exchange the five year old XF for a GXi6.

New Role for Wembley Man

ServiceMaster Ltd has appointed former Wembley Head Groundsman Steve Welch to manage its TruGreen lawn care franchise network.

As TruGreen Network Manager Steve is tasked with helping to grow and develop the professional lawn care business further.

He comments; "I've

joined TruGreen at a really exciting time. Having made a name within the industry as a leading provider of domestic lawn care we now feel confident that we can provide an equally impressive service to other markets.

My background in the sports world will obviously be a benefit to me here in



terms of technical expertise and I am looking forward to the challenge of helping the business explore new fields."

RJ in force at Luton Hoo



Luton Hoo Hotel Golf & Spa is maintained with a selection of Ransomes Jacobsen equipment supplied by local dealer, Ernest Doe and Sons. Facilities at the five star resort include an 18-hole golf course, a magnificent spa and over 1000 acres of parkland and gardens created by Capability Brown. The Head Greenkeeper, Avon Bridges, oversaw the grow-in phase and the course opening in the spring of 2008.

He manages a team of five greenkeeping staff, but there are no bunkers on the course due to the Grade 1 listed status of the estate, making maintenance slightly less demanding. However, there is more rough than normal and it encroaches close to the greens, requiring precision placement of approach shots. To manage the rough, the greenkeeping team use a Jacobsen AR522 rotary mower.

Sittingbourne's Central Park greyhound Stadium Manager, Andy Chetram, has taken delivery of a new Massey Ferguson 1547 compact tractor.

Towing a Sisis Quadraplay frame equipped with loosening tines, grooming rake and levelling blade, the 46hp tractor helps remove paw prints from the previous race while simultaneously smoothing and firming the surface to provide the optimum conditions.

Every seven to 10 days, Andy uses the tractor with a power harrow to break up surface compaction and hard spots. A further regular task for the tractor is guiding a specialist grading blade around the track to maintain the camber necessary to help racing dogs negotiate safely the long bends at the end of each straight.

Massey on track



First Bobcat at Willmar Hire

Kidderminster-based Willmar Hire has bought the first Bobcat E32 mini-excavator in the UK. The 3.2 tonne E32 conventional tail swing mini-excavator is a completely new generation machine.

Formerly an agricultural engineering company, Willmar Hire has been hiring out plant for more than 18 years. Today, the company splits its activities between plant hire and groundworks. The hire fleet at Willmar Hire includes excavators, dumpers and a 453 skid-steer loader from Bobcat.

"We have always been impressed with the performance of excavators from Bobcat. We saw the E32 for the first time at this year's SED exhibition and I am really pleased with what it has added to our fleet of excavators," said Mark Godsall, Managing Director of Willmar Hire.

"The E32 offers so much power for its size and, as we've purchased the longer digging arm version, this gives users extra digging depth for work on structures such as septic tanks, which are a bit deeper."





In Peak Condition

Scott MacCallum meets up with Pete Smith, who has taken to life at Cavendish Golf Club, in Derbyshire, like a duck to water





Buxton's Cavendish Golf Club, deep in the heart of the wonderful Peak District National Park, in Derbyshire, is bucking the trend by increasing its membership numbers over the last two years - by around 15% - while visiting societies and casual green fees are also on the up.

It would not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that within the membership packs issued to those new recruits, information suggesting that wellies would be of more use than soft spikes at certain times of the year!

Cavendish may be one of the most beautiful golf courses to be found anywhere, but it is also extremely wet!

"You don't expect to get Buxton Spring Water in a place that's dry, do you?" joked Course Manager, Pete Smith, who moved to Derbyshire from the cosy south two years ago to take on the challenge of a Dr Alistair McKenzie-designed course which was in need of a bit of a boost.

"The national average rainfall is between 700 and 800 ml a year. Up here we generally get around 1400 ml, which makes it about

50% above average. Coupled with that we are built on a six inch layer of peat, which sits on top of the limestone and slows any drainage, Basically we sit on water."

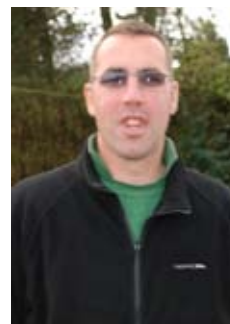
The night before my visit there had been half an inch of rain and when I arrived the course was puddling up.

"On other courses that sort of rain wouldn't have made an impact at all, but because of our soil structure and topography it is anything but an average situation," said Pete.

Not long after he started he and the Board walked out to the 14th, the course's only par-5, to look at the fairway, which was incredibly wet, and they asked him if he would drain it.

"I took one look at the soil profile, the underlying conditions, the natural fall of the site and the very flat fairway. Then I looked at the hill, one of the many the Peak District is named after, overlooking the fairway, and from which water runs on to the surface and sub surface. I told the committee that there was no point.

"To attempt to drain an entire site would be expensive and resources would be well and truly stretched, with very little end



Course Manager Pete Smith

BELOW: The Shelton System 25 after two weeks on the 6th green

