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Welcome



Golf's Time Bomb

An excellent three part report in Scotland's Herald newspaper, written by Douglas Lowe, highlights a growing problem in Scottish golf clubs, which is just as pertinent to the rest of the country.

Headlined "Time bomb" the piece examines the long established culture of 65 and overs receiving subsidised golf, or free, golf.

Douglas admitted that until recently it was a set-up that worked reasonably well with few objecting to supporting the poor pensioners, but that the dynamics were changing fast.

"The baby-boomers, the ones born in immediate post World War II, are due to hit 65 in unprecedented numbers. Anecdotal it is reckoned that this tsunami

of seniors could form as much as a third of golf club membership in five years time. It is a demographic time bomb."

Douglas goes on.

"The trouble is that the system is self-perpetuating. At annual or extraordinary general meetings, where subscriptions and membership policies can be altered, seniors aren't likely to vote to increase their own subscriptions. Moreover, they are the ones with time of their hands to turn up at such meetings en masse to preserve the status quo.

"Beleaguered committees will find it increasingly difficult to balance the books and the first casualties will be the course and the clubhouse – the very assets that need to be in tip-top order to attract new members."

Douglas added that seniors justified their right for subsidised golf because they have supported the club by paying full subscriptions while they were working and unable to play golf much more than once a week and view subsidies as "payback time".

However, from the perspective of the younger working man or woman "the idea of playing an entry fee and a full subscription to subsidise the 'Last of the Summer Wine' brigade is abhorrent. The sums don't make sense to them especially when the seniors are the ones who are playing the most golf by far."

Those of you at members' clubs will probably recognise the above and have similar fears, particularly for the impact it will have on the golf course.

One of the answers is to run clubs on much more business grounds with management teams rather than committees taking decisions for the good of the business rather than self-interest. Many clubs have already gone down this route but there are still many stuck in the old fashioned one member one vote systems.

Another answer would be for members to be issued with tokens at the start of each season and use them to "pay" for each round – 10 tokens for a Saturday morning and seven for a mid week game, for example. If vouchers run out – by seniors playing four times a week - more can be purchased from the club, perhaps at a subsidised rate, while if they are not all used up they can be exchanged for goods in the Pro Shop.

It's an idea which I know works at some clubs in the country and which may help to resolve a problem which is weighting golf very heavily in favour of the elderly and, more worryingly, against the younger golfer coming through.

It is potentially a huge problem for the game and it is well for golf clubs to take action even if that action is not to everyone's taste.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

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GOLF BUSINESS FORUM

KPMG recently announced that its sixth annual Golf Business Forum will take place at The Celtic Manor Resort, Wales, May 4-6, 2009.

The conference, firmly established as the leading, golf business event for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMA), will bring together major players from the golf, real estate, finance and tourism sectors at the venue for The Ryder Cup in 2010.

"The Golf Business Forum is a significant event for the golf industry and has become the major annual meeting point for golf's most important businesses, brands and executives," said Andrea Sartori, Head of KPMG's specialist Golf Advisory Practice in EMA, and founder of the Golf Business Forum.

"The Celtic Manor Resort is an ideal venue for the Forum and we look forward to welcoming our friends, clients and industry professionals from all over the world. Sixteen months before the world's best professionals face each other at The Ryder Cup, the golf industry's biggest players will have their opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, do business, and even to play The Twenty Ten Ryder Cup course."

PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABLE GOLF COURSE

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC), in association with The R&A, will be hosting workshops for staff working at the GTC Approved Training Providers during 2009 to ensure the programme to promote the sustainable golf course is promoted to all levels of greenkeeping students.

David Golding, GTC's Education Director, commented on the special project: "It is the GTC's responsibility to ensure the turf lecturers and guidance officers working at GTC Approved Centres are supported with the relevant information in order that not only today's Course Managers but the future Managers fully understand the benefits of the programme to maintain and manage in a sustainable manner.

Steve Isaac, the R&A's Director – Golf Course Management, added, "In order to get the message across to as many greenkeepers as possible, it is essential that Training Providers understand what sustainability means for golf course development and management and that they are comfortable with the concept. The R&A is delighted to be working closely with the GTC to achieve this aim."



GOLF'S X FACTOR-STYLE 'TALENT HUNT' PICKS WINNERS

A nine year old girl from Oldham and a 12 year old boy from Lymm, Cheshire, have won the world's first ever X Factor-style search for young golf stars.

Katie-Jane Stanley and Jake Williams wowed a panel of celebrity judges at the Playgolf Manchester complex as 13 youngsters competed in the grand final of 'Talent Hunt' - a competition which had scoured the North West for the most promising natural golf talent in the region.

Just as in the TV talent show 'X Factor', the finalists went through a nerve-wracking audition in front of judges, hitting golf balls and explaining what they'd learned during four weeks of intensive 'boot camp' golf training with the Professional instructors at Playgolf Manchester.

Judges including Setanta Sports TV presenter, Charlotte Jackson; Chairman of Selectors for GB&I junior golf Peter McEvoy OBE; Playgolf Manchester General Manager, Craig Whitfield; and event organiser, Andy Hiseman, then had the difficult job of picking two winners – finally opting for St Mary's RC School, Failsworth, pupil, Katie-Jane and Lymm High School pupil, Jake.

The winners each received a year's scholarship to Playgolf Manchester awarded under R&A amateur status guidelines, plus the opportunity to play regularly at local golf clubs.

"It was a stunning event. We have proved that this is a magical formula to unlock junior golf talent, wherever you are in the world," said Andy Hiseman.

"Searching for a golf star in this way has proved to be an innovative and highly emotional experience for all concerned. Competitions like X Factor are ingrained in modern society and 'Talent Hunt' has proved to be a great way to make golf contemporary with young people."

'Talent Hunt' began with open auditions when more than 550 youngsters faced the judges in September. 66 talented young golfers progressed to 'Boot Camp' – four weeks of intensive tuition at the Playgolf Academy, based at Playgolf Manchester, during October and early November.



NEW SOUTHERN AREA MANAGER

Landini has appointed David Parsons to support its retail sales and service dealer network supplying Landini and Valpadana tractors to the groundscare and landscaping industries.

Covering an area that extends from Landini UK's Doncaster base to the south coast, David joins the business from BSG Supplies, where he worked for many years importing tractors and agricultural machinery from a number of countries in Europe.

"David brings a wealth of experience to the post, having been involved in agricultural machinery all his working life," said Landini UK Sales Manager, Adrian Winnett.

"His energetic and enthusiastic approach will stand him in good stead as Landini's sales and market presence continue to grow."



NEW FACE AT KAWASAKI

Kawasaki has strengthened its UK power products operation with the appointment of a new manager to co-ordinate business growth throughout the country.

Chris York joins the Japanese manufacturer as Product Manager, Power Products UK and will be responsible for developing existing dealer relationships and building new areas of growth.

Based in Northampton, Chris knows the groundscare industry well both from a practical and professional perspective. He grew up the son of a groundsman at a local cricket club and has been working with machines since the age of 10 and remains an ardent cricketer today.

Having worked in the industry for more than 20 years, Chris knows the turfcare sector well in every capacity from assembly through to sales and after sales. It's this breadth of experience in the sector and a passion for the business that he intends to bring to Kawasaki's power products range.

SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2009 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Carnegie College, Dunfermline on Tuesday 3 March, 2009.

This year's speakers include Steve Isaac, Director Golf Course Management, R&A; Mark Hunt, Technical Director, Headland Amenity; David MacIndoe, Course Manager, Killarney G&FC, Ireland. Other speakers include Laurence Pithie, Group Golf Courses Manager, Crown Golf; Stuart Staples, International Technical Manager, Scotts International, and finally, David Cole, Superintendent/Estate Manager, Loch Lomond.

Tickets cost £34, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking form will be posted to all members in Scotland and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J.Boyd, Regional Administrator on Tel: 0141 616 3440 or: pj.boyd@btinternet.com.

UK DISTRIBUTOR

Rochford Garden Machinery has been appointed sole UK Distributor for the Aztec range of pedestrian sprayers. The sprayers formerly known as Walkover are designed to apply liquid fertilisers, pesticides, weed killers and fungicides easily, cleanly and accurately.

Four models are featured in the range all operating on the same principle.

The Yardmaster has an 18in (45cm) spray width, the Turfmaster 24in (60cm) working width, Rambler a 40in (100 cm) and the Greenkeeper (60cm). The Greenkeeper model also features a hand held spray lance. The distribution agreement is with immediate effect.

SOUTH EAST REGION ANNUAL GENTLEMAN'S DINNER

The South East Regions Golf and Gentleman's Dinner will be held at the Walton Heath Golf Club on Friday, March 6.

This event played at a Club that has been the venue of many major championships including the Ryder Cup in 1981 and the first, of many, European Opens. This year the Club will again be hosting the European Qualifier for The US Open. To be played over both the Old and New Courses in June.

We will, once more, be having a three hole start enabling all to finish together with no long waits before the evening meal.

Entertainment has already been booked for the after dinner spot. This combined with a superb test of golf and the wonderful hospitality of Walton Heath Golf Club should ensure a splendid day.

For more information and entry forms please contact your Section Secretary or Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator on: 01737 819343 or mobile: 07841 948410, email: cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk.

LISTEN UP MEMBERS!

The BIGGA AGM will be taking place during Harrogate Week, Europe's largest indoor turf event that combines both elements of turf and clubhouse management, in the Queen's Suite on Wednesday, January 21 at 5.15pm.

The importance of your attendance cannot be voiced enough. By now you should have received a letter containing the Agenda for the AGM and information regarding a change to the Association's constitution. If you haven't received your letter you can contact BIGGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833800 or visit the BIGGA Website www.bigga.org.uk

THE DISTURBANCE THEORY & MEASURING SUCCESS

BIGGA South West Region invited a team from STRI to deliver a seminar day entitled 'The Disturbance Theory & Measuring Success'. The day was held at Cannington College on 20 November 2008. Attendance was very high with 187 delegates down to attend, with approximately 170 attending on the day. This was the most attended seminar in the South West so far.

Henry Bechelet introduced the day and Richard Windows delivered 'The Thrill of Real Golf', which described the history of golf and greenkeeping over the past century and how influence from America changed the character and golfing strategy of our courses. Henry then gave 'The Fundamentals of the Disturbance Theory' in which the science of plant growth strategies was described and how this understanding can be used to favour the development of the finer grasses.

The morning session then concluded with Henry and Richard delivering 'Greenkeeping Through the Phases', which described how the Disturbance Theory can be used in a practical way to favour the development of the finer grasses without compromising on playing quality. There was plenty to ponder over lunch.

Peter Hickling the General Manager of High Post Golf Club then started proceedings in the afternoon with a presentation on the economic, environmental and playing quality benefits of going through a sward species transition. John Lockyer followed with a presentation on 'Managing Organic Matter', which centred on the need to implement regular laboratory testing to accurately monitor organic matter accumulations. Andy Cole then delivered the progressive and exciting 'Measuring Success', which described the use of objective tools to measure the improvement in performance and quality of the greens. The day finished off with a Case Study on Eastwell Manor, by Steve Gingell, where the Disturbance Theory was used to establish a dominance of the finer grasses in new sand based constructions.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with the delegates finding the day very enjoyable and interesting. The Four Phases of greenkeeping received the most praise. To find out more on this subject, check out the article Pride & Joy on www.stri.co.uk.

The STRI are staging a workshop at Harrogate Week on the subject of Measuring Success on Sunday, January 18, 2009.

<http://www.harrogateweek.org.uk/education/seminars/60/measuring-success.html>

Due to the positive feedback and the ongoing demand for these presentations, STRI hope to organise more events in conjunction with BIGGA through 2009. If you would like one in your area please contact Richard, Henry or Andy at disturbance.theory@stri.co.uk



SOUTH EAST REGION SEMINAR

The South East Regional Seminar was hosted by the London Section recently at the Sandy Lodge Golf Club.

Section Chairman, Rob Phillips, introduced the excellent speakers who covered a varied range of subjects on what proved an interesting and informative day, with some wide ranging and valid points being made during question time at the end of the day's proceedings.

John Pemberton and Tracey Maddison started the day with their presentation on current BIGGA affairs and the recent proposals, for consultation, on changes to the Constitution.

Andy Wight's subject, Pathway leader for Greenkeeping and Horticulture at Oaklands College, was Current Funding for Greenkeeper Training and the proposed changes to education that are planned for the next few years.

Courageously battling with a slight technical hitch with the projector, Tom Malehorn, from Aquatrols, then discussed with us the role of "Surfactants in Turf Management".

Ian McMillan, Course Manager at Walton Heath Golf Club, guided the delegates through some of the many challenges he has encountered, with great success, in his career in Golf Course Management.

After lunch Nigel Church, from Ransomes Jacobsen, described the background and research that goes into the development of machinery for his subject of "Health and Safety Built In".

The last speaker for the afternoon session was Peter Jones, from PJ Associates Ltd, who talked about Bunker Renovation. It was demonstrated that with good planning and work practices, bunkers could be greatly improved during the renovation process.

In conclusion, after question time, the Chairman thanked all the Speakers for their presentations. He also thanked members of the Trade who had supported this and many other events in the Region and Sections, and the Sandy Lodge Golf Club for looking after us so well on the day.

Clive Osgood
South East Regional Administrator

Why not drop us an email with any news, press releases or new product updates you have...

– Send them to Melissa
(melissa@bigga.co.uk)

NOSTRADAMUS?

A superb year of predictions has seen golf writer, Paul Trow, collect two major prizes.

Paul won the season-long 'Pick Your Pro' competition in which golf writers select a different player to win each of the main tournaments over the course of the year, while he also won the 'Great BIGGA Bunker Competition' by being closest in an estimate of how many bunkers were found by the players in The Open at Royal Birkdale.

In winning the latter competition, kindly sponsored in 2008 by Ransomes Jacobsen, Paul won a superb Callaway Golf bag, which BIGGA Communications Manager, Scott MacCallum, presented to Paul at the AGW Championship, held at Wentworth in late November.

Scott congratulated Paul on his Nostradamus-like qualities and thanked Ransomes Jacobsen for kindly sponsoring the competition, while Paul said he had been attempting to win the 'Great BIGGA Bunker Competition' since its inception in 1995 and knew it was a very popular competition among the golfing media.

BIGGA's Communications Manager/Editor, Scott MacCallum (left) with winner, Paul Trow.



A vertical advertisement for Mascot Grass Seed. The background is red. At the top, the word "MASCOT" is in white on a green rectangular background. Below it, "GRASS SEED" is written in large white letters. Underneath, the slogan "The best start for a perfect finish" is written in a smaller white font. A large, stylized green and red logo resembling a 'W' or a grass blade is in the center. Below the logo are five horizontal panels showing different golf-related scenes: a green with bunkers, a field of colorful flowers, a golf course with a blue sky, a golf course with people, and a golf course with trees. At the bottom left, the "RT" logo for Rigby Taylor is shown in green, with "rigby taylor" in white below it. Further down, the text "Freephone: 0800 424919" and "www.rigbytaylor.com" is written in white. At the bottom right, a white text box contains the text: "Rigby Taylor is a seed agent and a major supplier of high quality grass seed mixtures for all amenity situations."

UK WITHDRAWAL OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Scotts Professional has received confirmation that the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health voted for non-inclusion of dichlobenil resulting in the withdrawal of authorisations for plant protection products containing dichlobenil.

The Scotts products affected are: Casoron G, Casoron G4, Midstream GSR, Scotts Dichlo G Micro and Scotts Dichlo G Macro.

So that these products can be removed from the market in an orderly fashion, there is now a period of six months to move existing stocks of product into the market place followed by a further period of 12 months for storage and use by any person. The final product use by date is March 18, 2010.

Details of all affected products, together with the relevant technical information is available on the Scotts Professional website at www.scottspromotional.co.uk. Please contact your distributor or Scotts' Customer Services Department on: 0871 220 5353 if you require any further information.

OPENING OF NEW DEPOT

Sherriff Amenity has announced the opening of a new depot in Scotland and Kenny Archibald joined the company last month as Scottish Sales Manager.

Commenting on the move, Agrovista UK Managing Director, James Robertson said: "Part of our five year strategic plan is to have a national amenity business trading under the Sherriff Amenity brand. This is another step towards achieving this goal."

NEW INSTRATA WINS INNOVATION AWARD

Syngenta's new turf fungicide, Instrata, has won the IOG Innovation Award.

The Award, for the best new fertiliser and pesticide product, recognised Instrata as a significant step forward in helping groundsmen tackle difficult turf diseases and maintain high quality playing surfaces all year round. Instrata contains the exceptional long-lasting residual control of fludioxonil - the first new contact active ingredient for turf diseases control for over 20 years.

Receiving the Award from IOG Chairman, Alex Millar, Syngenta Professional Products Manager, Simon Elsworth, said: "Instrata is a genuinely innovative new fungicide, with properties of immense value to turf managers. New fludioxonil protects on the leaf, in the thatch and at the soil surface, giving outstanding efficacy and making it especially useful in high disease pressure situations at any time of the year."

Alex Millar (left) presents Simon Elsworth (right) with Syngenta's award.



BROWN'S LAST LANDMARK YEAR TO INCLUDE THE 138TH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

George Brown, Golf Courses & Estates Manager at Turnberry, is to retire from his role following next year's Open Championship after more than 23 years at the top of his profession. George, who will step down at the end of July 2009, will remain at Turnberry in a consultative role after his retirement and has appointed Euan Grant as his successor.

Euan joined the Turnberry team in November after previous roles as Golf Course Manager at Machrihanish Dunes and former Head Greenkeeper of The Old Course at St Andrews (27 time host of the Open Championship, most recently in 2005).

Recognising George's hard work and dedication to the Greenkeeping profession, the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) has recently bestowed George with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

A prestigious accolade that acknowledges an individual for their lifetime of service and achievement in the game of golf,

George will be only the fourth person to receive this award after Sir Michael Bonallack OBE, Walter Woods BEM and Jack McMillan MBE.

See profile on George elsewhere in this issue.

The Turnberry Hotel is currently undergoing a multi million pound renovation project following its recent sale to Leisurecorp.

The 101 year old hotel will be restored to the vision of original architect James Miller, by renowned British interior designer, Mary Fox Linton, and will join Starwood's prestigious Luxury Collection portfolio of hotels when it reopens in advance of the Open Championship in July 2009.



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- Advance warning of turf diseases
- Integrated turf management plans
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