



BIGGA Board Team One; Paul Worster anticipates the putt by Duncan Bagshaw, clearly unphased by the pressure of the camera



The pleasant surroundings at Aldwark GC, with the departing Scotts team in the distance



Clive Higginbotham shows the Scotts team how to tee-off!



The Northern Region team, driven away by David Golding



The Northern Region team, runners up overall



The team at Warners crouch for a shot as professional as the magazine they print, Greenkeeper International!



Swinging in the rain...BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, tees off just before the storm



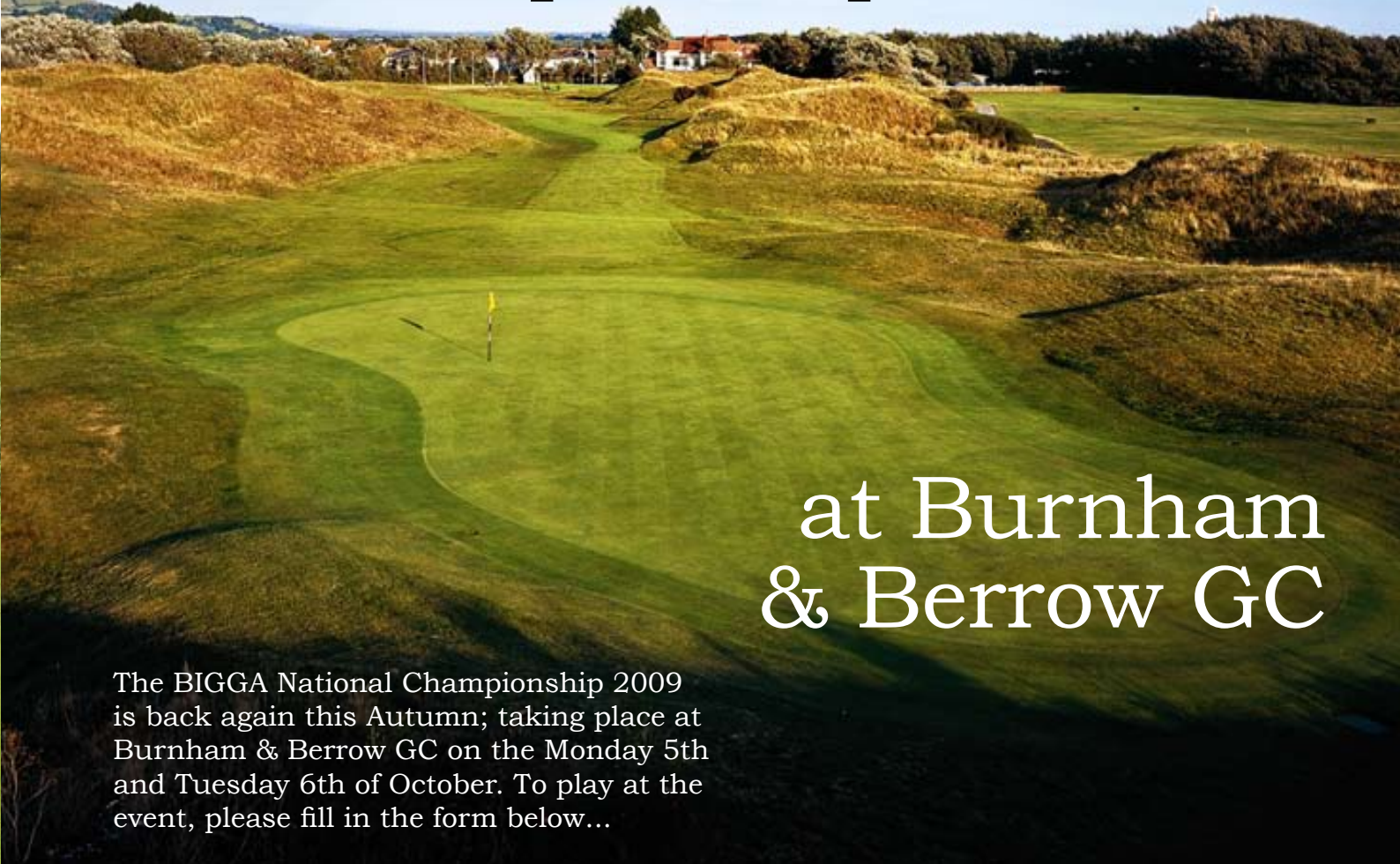
MAIN ABOVE: The tricky par-5 14th welcomes some more potential victims

INSET ABOVE: Aldwark Manor Course Manager, Richard Gamble, chomping at the bit

LEFT: The John Deere team display fine-form off the tee



The National Championship 2009



at Burnham & Berrow GC

The BIGGA National Championship 2009 is back again this Autumn; taking place at Burnham & Berrow GC on the Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th of October. To play at the event, please fill in the form below...

Please select the relevant category:

- Greenkeeper Member
- Associate Member

The entry fee of £80 includes all golf fees, lunch both days and dinner on Monday evening. Please note that there is no accommodation provided.

Name

Address.....

.....

..... Post Code

Mobile

E-mail.....

Membership Number

Handicap

BIGGA Section.....

Payment method (please tick)

- I enclose my cheque made payable to 'BIGGA' value £80
- Please debit my Mastercard / Switch / Visa / Delta card with the fee of £80

Card number

Start Date

Expiry Date.....

Last 3 security digits.....

Issue No. (Switch/Delta only)

Signature.....

Date

Or E-mail your details to: **sandra@bigga.co.uk**
Ensure you receive confirmation of entry by return E-mail.

Deadline for entry is 11th September 2009.



Completed entry forms should be sent to:
BIGGA National Championship, BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF

The main tournament for the Challenge Trophy will be played over 36 holes, medal play, with the best overall gross score producing the BIGGA National Champion, who must be a greenkeeper member. The greenkeeper player with the lowest nett score will be presented with the BIGGA Challenge Cup.

There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd over 36 holes in both the nett and gross categories, additionally after each day of 18 holes there will be prizes for winners of handicap divisions. The BIGGA Regional Team Cup and prize will be calculated from the 8 best nett scores over the first day of play. If you have a poor first day an alternative Stableford competition will be held on the second day of play.



Candid in Camera

Candid *adj.* frank, not hiding one's thoughts
In Camera *adj. or adv.* phrase. In private.

There are many things you'd like to say, but can't because of the potential consequences. Greenkeeper International is offering you the chance to be a little more free with what you say, safe in the knowledge that your identity will be protected. The first Course Manager to be Candid in Camera has some extremely interesting things to say about dealing with staff and golf club members...

I'm employed by my golf club to manage the course and enable us to bring in revenue. I use my staff to do that and I believe that I have to have to keep a certain distance between me, as a manager, and the staff.

I have a great laugh with my staff but they know I'm not going to go on nights out and come in rolling drunk with them at 2am. However, I will fight to make sure they get the best equipment to do their job and we all have Gore Tex waterproofs and boots etc.

It's vital that as a Course Manager you remember who pays your wages so when it comes down to a tough decision you have to side with the club. A lot of Course Managers have a fear that if they side with the club their staff won't appreciate them or want to work for them.

That's where a skill in management comes in. I am a Manager, not a Shop Steward and, in my position, I have to be the one to break the news that they're not going to get a pay rise because the club can't afford it. I also have to tell them that I support the decision and that I full agree with it... even if, on balance, I don't.

If I were to say, "I don't agree with the decision and I'll fight to get you a pay rise." and it got out, the management would quite rightly be unhappy with me for not supporting their decision.

You have to remember that the green staff are not going to pay

your mortgage if you get sacked.

I had to make a very difficult decision recently and make a guy redundant. He was a really nice bloke, but as a responsible manager I decided that, as we were not going to undertake any projects over the winter because of budget cuts, we had too many staff and I could make a significant saving for the club. Would I have been able to make that decision if I had been really friendly with him? I reckon I'd have said "He's a good lad. I'll keep him on". But if I had I wouldn't have

been fulfilling my contractual obligation to make the most of the resources and the budget. If the club had overspent on the year would I have been able to say that I'd done everything I could to prevent it? I don't think so.

I would advise young greenkeepers to work hard and to appreciate that there is a big gulf between the job a greenkeeper does and the job a Course Manager does. It's a long hard road to cross that divide and you've got to decided early in your career if you are going to work hard for the five or six years it takes to be able to progress - often perhaps not feeling that you are getting

anywhere. That is what you need to do to put yourself in a position where you can ultimately manage a Turnberry or a Wentworth..

I've learned from some of the best Course Managers in the business and at a young age was taking in how things were done - good and bad - and have put those lessons to good use on the courses I have managed. I'd say watch, learn and take on board.

Don't be disruptive and argumentative. I must admit I was guilty of this a few times when I was younger. When I thought

A lot of Course Managers have a fear that if they side with the club their staff won't appreciate them or want to work for them

the Head Greenkeeper was doing something wrong I found myself saying, "At college they say you should hollow tine twice a year..."

By all means ask your manager why something is being done, or not done. You can ask his reasoning but don't question his decision making. Don't say, "What are you doing that for?" Much better to say, "Why are you doing that?"

I truly believe that there are very few bad Course Managers out there. Nine times out of ten what sets a not-so-good golf course



off from the rest is ground conditions – how well it drains etc – and the resources that are available to the Course Manager.

You could go to a course at the poorer end of the scale, one which everyone says is bad, give the Head Greenkeeper £200,000 and tell him to buy what he needs and do what he wants.

I guarantee that he'd do as good a job as the next Course Manager.

My budget is half of that at a club a few miles away and they pay their staff more than us and are able to carry out additional work. Just because they overseed four times a year and I can only afford to do it twice doesn't make me the poorer Course Manager. However, a young greenkeeper might think that I'm not doing my job properly until he asks "Why aren't we doing more overseeding?" and I can explain the full picture.

One of the main problems we face is difficult staff and sometimes we have to take the tough decision to go down the performance management route.

A member of staff might be causing you so much grief and trouble that he drags everyone down for 12-18 months. Standards could drop as a result and it could conceivably end up costing you your job.

Someone first advised me to go down the performance management route when I had

a problem member of staff and I must admit I thought that I hadn't got the time to do all of what was required – it would be a year before I would have enough evidence to sack him. But it is the only way that the law is on our side and if we have a problem member of staff we shouldn't be frightened to take the long haul.

It can also have positive results. I started performance management on one guy and he soon became my best member of staff. It gave him a kick up the backside and stopped him coasting.

It made him ask himself if he wanted the job and when he did start working effectively he realised that he quite liked it. You may also find that the person who has been giving you problems hasn't been given any real direction.

If you're performance managing someone they might still be off "sick" for 50% of the time but at least during the 50% they are in they are performing to a standard you want.

If you do things by the book ACAS and the law will back you up. Don't be frightened.

When it comes to the club members despite the fact that I may come across as quite aggressive, people are amazed at how polite I can be to members when they have done something wrong. If, for example, I see a member not replacing a divot I may say to my staff, "I'll have him" but I'll go over and say, "Excuse me Sir, but

would you mind replacing your divot.

It really does help the greens staff and saves us a lot of time and effort which we can then put into other areas of the course."

By saying it in such a way it gives them nowhere to go. They can't very well say that they don't want to help us produce a good golf course.

A lot of greenkeepers would go up to the guy and say along the lines of "What am I? Your slave? Put your bloody divot back." If you take the "Get off my land" approach you will soon alienate 20 or 30 members and they will tell their friends and all of a sudden you'll have the entire membership against you.

At the first sign of something going wrong you'll have real problems.

If you've been firm but respectful towards them they are more likely to say that our Course Manager has got a bit of disease but he knows what he's doing.

What I believe I've achieved since being at this club is a feeling of "Don't mess around with him. He knows his stuff and you can talk to him as long as you don't try to tell him what to do." I've heard them saying "Hello. Head Greenkeeper's about. Careful where you leave your trolley." That's what I want.

A lot of it is creating the environment where members are helping and working with us to produce a top standard golf course.





Green Credit Where it is Due

Greenkeepers everywhere are under pressure to do more with less. The summer of 2009 is expected to feature heatwaves, water shortages and cash-flow problems. The Golf Environment Organisation (GEO) can't promise quick fixes for the major issues of the day, but it is empowering Course Managers everywhere to keep environmental performance on the agenda through difficult times.



With the launch of its new site - www.golfenvironment.org - GEO has firmly established its position as the leading source of free environmental knowledge and guidance for industry professionals. But while the organisation has served up useful websites in the past, this time around something is very different.

“Connecting golf course managers with technical information has only ever been half the story. While industry publications, award schemes and educational events do an excellent job of raising awareness within the sector; we’re all guilty of failing to represent our good work to the rest of the world,” said GEO Chief Executive, Jonathan Smith.

“People within golf, and those close to it, are fully aware that baseline environmental performance in the sector is extremely high, certainly far in advance of that which is appreciated by the general public, and often golf club members themselves.

“With the launch of GEO Certification this is all set to change. Greenkeepers everywhere now have access to an efficient and user-friendly tool that enables them to clearly communicate exactly how they are managing their natural resource. This creates a brand new opportunity to improve dramatically

the reputations of individual clubs, and with widespread participation, the industry as a whole.

“And the best news is that registering with the programme – and putting your golf facility onto the GEO Certification map – is completely free of charge,” explained Jonathan.

Archie Dunn, Head Greenkeeper at Auchterarder Golf Club published his Registration Report in June 2009.

“After taking a few minutes to set up an account, our management team spent an hour here and an hour there answering GEO’s simple registration questions. We also uploaded an environmental policy document and received some writing assistance from our long-time environmental adviser. All in all this process took around five hours over the course of three weeks,” said Archie.

“The questions we had to answer progressed clearly through issues such as nature, landscape, water, turf, waste, energy, education and management planning. The information and resources available on GEO’s website are also structured in the same way. It was very easy to find answers for any of the questions we had.

“After pressing the button to submit our application, someone from GEO’s certification team double checked our answers for

The Certification Process



ACTION	TIMESCALE	COST
Register on-line	½ day	FREE
Improve environmental management	Up to 3 years	Staff Time
Apply for certification on-line	1 day	€150
Evaluation from Accredited Verifier	1 day	€600 - €1400
Apply for re-certification	Every 3 years	Same as above

completeness. The application was then accepted and a great looking report was automatically generated. It's available for anyone to read on GEO's website and will remain there until June 2012, or until we become fully certified and it's replaced by our certification report.

"Since completing registration we have received a "Certificate of Participation" which is now framed and displayed in our clubhouse. We also adapted a template press release from GEO and have distributed it through local media, advising the local community of our participation in the programme.

"All in all the feedback has been great and our members are very interested in the programme. In fact, many of them have visited our page on GEO's website and voiced their surprise at all the huge variety of expertise required to maintain our golf course to the standard that we do.

"Considering this was all free of charge, and took around half a day to complete, it has been a really worthwhile project so far," added Archie.

While preparing The Twenty Ten Course at Celtic Manor for tour-

Certification Outcomes

Accepted

Certification report published; verifiers report published; certified status promoted on GEO website

Pending

Verifier / GEO provides feedback on improvements necessary for award of certification. Re-verification visit required only in extreme circumstances.

Rejected

Legal non-compliance or failure to meet published criteria. Nothing will be published. GEO's objective is not to name and shame.

nament play presents a different challenge, Director of Golf Courses, Jim McKenzie, also found the registration process rewarding.

"After setting up our account we decided to separate the Celtic Manor golf courses into two applications: one for The Twenty Ten Course, and another covering the Montgomerie and Roman Road courses. GEO will actually certify up to 54 holes under a single application, but given the European Tour status of The Twenty Ten we thought it would be best to maintain two separate certifications.

"Although the standards of environmental management across The Celtic Manor Resort are already very high, registering The Twenty Ten Course has been an informative process. GEO has clearly spent a great deal of time fine-tuning the structure of the programme and has helped my team focus on priority issues and avoid expending time and effort on less significant activities.

"Effectively communicating our environmental performance is very important to Celtic Manor. We're offering a great product, and setting out to achieve the standards required for GEO Certification will only make it better. Our customers want to know that their enjoyment of the game does not carry hidden environmental costs. Promoting ourselves as a GEO Certified golf facility lets everyone know we're managing our environment responsibly, and if they're interested, lets them see exactly how we're achieving that."

Having worked with the website during its preview stage, Stig Persson – General Manager of Ljunghusens Golfklubb and Chairman of FEGGA – has seen the system mature into a polished product.

"Representing Ljunghusens' environmental work through GEO's website was remarkably efficient. It enabled our management team to constructively collaborate and integrated into our workflow with ease," said Stig

"We applied for certification in mid May and appointed Marten Wallberg, a GEO Accredited Verifier based in Sweden to come out and evaluate our work. During the course of his one-day visit we received a great deal of valuable insight and have established achievable targets for re-certification in 2012.

"No matter the sophistication of any existing environmental programmes, working through GEO's free registration process will certainly help greenkeepers and club managers to structure and prioritise their work - a significant benefit in difficult economic times.

"We've been actively promoting our GEO Certified status in the local community and have been directing people to view our page on GEO's site. The award has actually generated a great deal of interest around the country."

Benjamin Warren, GEO's Director of Communications, is receiving a great deal of positive feedback from clubs that have completed the registration process.

"More often than not environmental management is common sense



www.golfenvironment.org/auchterarder
www.golfenvironment.org/thetwentyten
www.golfenvironment.org/ljunghusens

ABOVE: Celtic Manor have put themselves on the environmental map

ABOVE LEFT / PREVIOUS SPREAD: GEO Certification makes sense of managing complex environments

BELOW LEFT: Not just on-line - registered and certified participants receive certificates from GEO

management. GEO Certification has been carefully crafted to enable course managers to quickly identify the strengths and weaknesses of their existing programmes, drive on with cost saving initiatives and easily identify priority areas for improvement," he said.

"Whether a golf club is fortunate enough to receive free advisory through bodies such as the Scottish Golf Environment Group, or is retaining the services of an independent environmental consultant, simply working through the system will help to ensure that any support is engaged as effectively as possible.

"While some of the registrations on the site are very comprehensive – Loch Lomond and Celtic Manor, for example – this should not be considered intimidating. It's only natural that high profile, complex sites will be publishing large and complex registration reports. The key is just to create an account and get started. Publishing an environmental policy and making a simple commitment to responsible management is the first step. GEO will not be refusing registrations on the basis that existing environmental programmes lack sophistication. These published reports can actually be used to raise awareness amongst members and co-workers, frame further actions and drive on performance.

"We can state with complete confidence that GEO Certification is the most efficient, most credible and most cost-effective environmental certification for golf. This truly is an opportunity for course managers everywhere to put their golf club on the environmental map."



The Opportunity of a Lifetime

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year,
Matthew Wormald, describes his time
in America, enjoying his prize

