



QUALITY ASSURED SCHEME



In his latest article David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, explains the introduction of a GTC Quality Assured Scheme for Centres, Colleges and Training Providers.

Regular GI readers must have noticed that during recent months this column has continued to remain positive despite the trend of negative publicity both within the national media and the golfing press.

Like many organisations, the GTC now has to operate within a much reduced budget but I guess we are fortunate, we are still in business!

This is still very much down to the continued support from our supporters (shown on this page) but I only hope that during the next few months and years the GTC can now focus on what the "game" often takes for granted - well maintained golf courses.

I suppose it is credit due to many people that we have a worldwide respected structure of training, education and qualifications for greenkeepers – a structure that has something for everybody, whether you are an employer, greenkeeper or somebody considering entering the profession.

A key role of the GTC is to direct employers and students to those Centres and Training Providers who have met criteria designed to ensure that quality turf education and training programmes, are available.

It is important to understand that many colleges, organisations and individuals offer turf education, training and qualifications but the new GTC Quality Assured scheme with its own logo will increasingly become a benchmark for quality.

The introduction of a GTC Quality Assured Scheme is the result of a period of review, by the GTC's Technical Committee, of the current criteria by which a network of Approved Training

Providers has been promoted to employers and greenkeepers.

The entire current network of Providers has been invited to join the Quality Assured Scheme and from April 1 you should be looking out for the new GTC Quality Assured logo as this will be a sign that the Centre or Training Provider has met the GTC's new criteria.

The GTC will be updating its approved network of providers. There will be Centres who have met the new criteria where formal greenkeeping qualifications are offered. There will also be Training Providers who have met the new criteria introduced for companies and individuals, who offer training courses mapped to the national occupational standards but not offering nationally recognised qualifications.

The review of the Provider network will ensure the GTC in association with its supporter organisations, direct employers and students to those Centres and Training Providers who have met the revised criteria.

It should be noted that there will still be many establishments and organisations offering both qualifications for greenkeepers and informal training courses, but the GTC will promote only those who are committed to working with the GTC.

Work-based training, an apprenticeship scheme and academic qualifications including B.Sc and M.Sc are now all available, offered by a network of private providers, Colleges and Universities throughout Britain.

The fact that the GTC has continued to work within the Government guidelines on education allows us to have a major input into the national standards for greenkeeping from which the range of qualifications are developed.

The GTC, while being involved in standards and qualifications, are still working to try and ensure funding support is available to make training affordable.

We regularly see new schemes introduced to hopefully allow the Government to meet its targets for the Skills Agenda but all of this spin relies on industries, such as the GTC, with its Centres buying into the current system.

The Higher Education sector has increased fees for academic qualifications and I can only say that, while the GTC supports the Centres seeking to offer the HE courses, not all employers see the benefit of these types of qualifications.

During the last 12 months one of the GTC Centre's has recorded a dramatic increase in student numbers for the Foundation Degree (HND in Scotland) and this is encouraging as it is an excellent qualification designed to give students the opportunity to study for a HE qualification part-time while remaining in work.

The costs for this course are subsidised by the Government but nowhere near the amount of funding given to meeting the Skills Agenda.

It is therefore down to employers to support employees seeking to study but the ongoing Bursaries available through BIGGA and the R&A have helped many students.

That's all for this month folks, coming next month news on The R&A – GTC project involving Approved Centre turf staff through "S Factor" workshops throughout Britain starring the Gingerbread men, among others.

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Industry Update

INDUSTRY UPDATE



The site at Cropvale

NEW TRIALS SITE AT CROPVALE

Specialist grass seed breeder Barenbrug has established its own UK amenity research site at Cropvale, in Worcestershire.

Barenbrug already operates an extensive UK trials programme in conjunction with the STRI backed up by global trials conducted by the Royal Barenbrug Group. However, this new site will strengthen Barenbrug's ability to test new and innovative cultivars specific to UK conditions as well as respond to market and climatic requirements more quickly.

Sowing on the 15-acre site will commence in spring this year, with the synergy of mixtures being one of the key areas for study, as Jayne Leyland, Barenbrug UK's Research and Development Manager explained: "The expansion of our UK trials programme into our own dedicated research site is an important development for us. Cropvale will demonstrate first-hand the synergy of mixtures that include both new, existing and 'in-development' cultivars, furthering our understanding of effective grass seed blending."



NEW AREA MANAGER

Tacit has appointed Steve Milton as their new Area Manager for the West of England and Wales.

In his new position Steve will be responsible for the development and execution of Tacit's business strategy in West of England and Wales.

Before joining Tacit, Steve has worked in the catering and leisure sectors, delivering a bespoke service to many varied customers.

And for many years has had a rather masochistic hobby of watching his beloved Bristol Rovers.

NEW REGIONAL DISTRIBUTOR IN SCOTLAND

Scotia Plant Ltd (part of the Ballyvesey Group) has been appointed Scotland regional distributor for Terex United Kingdom Limited. They will cover and distribute the full-line range of Terex Construction compact equipment, covering the Scottish borders from Forfar in the East and Fort William in the West.

Product lines on offer will include: Mini Dumpers, Site Dumpers, Backhoe Loaders, Pedestrian Rollers, Vibratory Rollers, Mini Excavators, Midi Excavators, Wheeled Excavators, Wheeled Loaders, Mixers, and Compaction Plates. In addition Scotia Plant will promote the Genie® Telehandler range.

NEW UK DISTRIBUTOR

Countax has been formally appointed distributor of Shindaiwa power tools for the UK.

Shindaiwa's range of brushcutters, hedgetrimmers, power blowers and chainsaws are ideal for domestic and professional use, and are currently available via a network of specialist dealerships throughout the UK. Countax Sales Director, Mark Osborne, commented: "We are delighted to be appointed UK distributor for the Shindaiwa range, and are looking to raise the profile of this exciting range in the market place, as well as extend the availability through a larger dealer network. The Shindaiwa products compliment our current range, and are ideally suited to our customer profile."

NEW GOLF CARS FOR SPANISH RESORT

Valle Romano Golf and Resort at Estepona in Andalusia is the latest Spanish golf club to invest in the electric version of the E-Z-GO TXT golf car. Local E-Z-GO distributor Green Mowers delivered the vehicles to the 150 hectare resort which features an 18-hole championship golf course designed by Cabell B Robinson.

Valle Romano is a luxury, high-quality development lying between the Sierra Bermeja mountain range and the Mediterranean Sea. The golf course, which has a gentle and undulating topography, occupies some 60 hectares.



ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL

It's been a busy year for Hamilton Academical FC – not only did the team win promotion to the Scottish Premier League, but the club also installed a brand new pitch.

The Accies had to replace the artificial pitch with a traditional grass one – and install under-soil heating – after gaining promotion to the Scottish Premier League (SPL). So there was no time to lose at the end of the 2007/2008 season if the club was to ensure it was ready for kick off again at the beginning of August 2008.

Enter Souters Sports, a specialist sports turf contractor offering sports turf construction, reconstruction, drainage, aeration and maintenance of all natural grass playing services carried out the work.

THE ELS CLUB RANKS HIGH

Dubai Sports City's The Els Club golf course has won two prestigious international awards.

The Els Club was named the 'best new international course' by Links Magazine and selected as a finalist in the "International Courses" category of the 2008 Golf Inc. Development of the Year contest.

This prestigious recognition establishes The Els Club as one of the leading golf courses worldwide.

"The Els Club at Dubai Sports City is a golf development that will stand up proudly against the best in the world for decades to come," said Ernie Els, its designer.

"The awards put The Els Club in the company of truly great international golf destinations, having already exceeded my own architectural and operational expectations," added Els.

The Els Club is championship golf course designed by three-time major winner Ernie Els. The course offers a luxury golfing experience combined with five-star service and notable prestige.



Membership

This month
BIGGA welcomes
the following new
members...

AN UPDATE FROM BIGGA'S MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

BIGGA Membership Categories are streamlining

From 1st April 2009 we will be streamlining the membership categories. Currently, a member has from over 20 fee structures to choose from this will be simplified.

Why the change?

To improve administration procedures within the BIGGA Membership Department, to help new and existing members when renewing and joining the Association and to help simplify the administration for employers who pay their employees membership subscriptions.

What are the changes?

1. Full Member

Any person employed in the keeping of the green at a golfing establishment.

Split into: Category 1A = Greenkeeper in a Managerial Role, i.e. Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper
Category 1B = All other greenkeeping employees who have gained a minimum qualification or who hold a minimum of three years continuous relevant experience.

(Incorporating: Category 1A - Course Manager, Head Greenkeeper, Category 1B - Deputy Course Manager, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, First Assistant, Greenkeeper aged 21 years and above, Greenkeeper aged 20 and under and Mechanics)

2. Associate Member

Any person employed in the keeping of the green at a golfing establishment and is not eligible to be a Full Member.

Split into: Category 2A = Greenkeeper aged 21 and over (no minimum qualification, less than three years continuous experience)

Category 2B = Greenkeeper aged 20 years and under (no minimum qualification, less than three years continuous experience)

(Incorporating unqualified aged 21 years and over and unqualified aged 20 and under)

3. Life Member

At the discretion of the Board of Management any Full Member recognised as having contributed in an outstanding manner to the Association or profession.

(Proposals for the election of a Life Member shall be made only by the Board of Management following Regional Board nomination and the election shall be by the Association in General Meeting).

4. Retired Member

Any Full Member who has been a member for a minimum of five consecutive years and has retired from work.

(Incorporating Retired Member (full) and Retired Member (limited benefits).

5. Student Member

Any person studying full-time towards an appropriate qualification in turf management.

(Incorporating full time Students).

6. International Member

Any person employed in the keeping of the green at a golfing establishment outside the UK.

(Incorporating International Course Manager and International Member).

7. Affiliate Member

Any person who does not come within the provisions of categories 1-6 above.

(Incorporating Associate and Corporate categories of membership).

8. Honorary Member

At the discretion of the Board of Management any persons recognized as having contributed in an outstanding manner to the Association or profession.

NOTE: The notes in italics are to clarify the changes to the present structure.

Winners of the Magazine Gift Subscription offer at Harrogate Week

Congratulations to Clive Walton, Calverley Golf Club, Anthony McGeough Richmond Golf Club and Ian Noble, Moors Valley GC, who are the winners of the magazine gift subscription for introducing a member at Harrogate Week.

NORTHERN

Tim Pearson.....Cleveland
Matthew Thompson.....Cleveland
Euan LittleNorth
Shaun Collier.....North East
Peter WroeNorth West
Robert Mann.....North West
Daniel Hall.....North West
Kevin Sweeney.....North West
Tim Mason.....North West
Peter MooreNorth West
Alan MartinNorthern
Steve Gott.....Northern
Roy HaywoodNorthern
Lee CarpenterNorthern

MIDLAND

Greig Easton.....Central
Leigh CarterMidland
Nicholas FallowsMidland
Mark ColeMidland

EAST

Nicola TownendEast
Marc Gentles.....East
Ross Ovens.....East
Brian Hunter.....East
Gloria DeanEast Anglia
Craig Judge.....East Anglia
Simon JacksonEast Anglia
Stephen Willmot.....East Midland
Matthew Farrant.....East Midland

SOUTHERN

Paul Wilding.....Essex
Chris Clements.....Essex
Luke Fitz-JohnEssex
Richard GoodingSurrey
David Cox.....Surrey
Arthur Howel.....Sussex
Paul Kennedy.....Kent
Keith RogersKent
Allen Smith.....South Coast
Christopher Marshall.....South Coast
Daniel GriffithsSouth Coast
David Taylor.....South West
Leigh MordySouth West
Robert CleishamWest
Clive SelbySouth Wales

NORTHERN IRELAND

Jamie McCuneNorthern Ireland

CONTACT US By telephone - 01347 833800 (option 1 for Membership.)

Tracey Maddison

Email: traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Justine De Taure

Email: justine@bigga.co.uk

Brad Anderson

Email: brad@bigga.co.uk

Other useful telephone numbers (for greenkeeper members only)

Personal Accident Helpline 02075 603013

Greenkeepers Legal Assistance 0800 177 7891

Greenkeepers Support Services 0800 174 319

Learning & Development

Key Sponsorship:

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF GREENKEEPERS

The funding provided by Gold 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 Gold and Silver Key Sponsors.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING KEY SPONSORS



GOLDEN KEY



Golden Key Individual Members

JH Greasley; WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG.



SILVER KEY



Silver Key Individual Members

Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Sam Langrick.



Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, provides a departmental update...

At last the mornings are brighter and the evenings are lighter, this surely means that Spring is well on its way? It's bound to snow now!

Spring is a great time to re-evaluate your goals and figure out what it is you want to achieve and in the current climate it is more important than ever. As a member of BIGGA you are ensured our help with any issues that you may have, however, it is important to remember that you hold the key to your future – you are responsible for your own professional development.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)



BIGGA's Mission Statement

includes 'BIGGA is dedicated to the continuing professional development of its members...'. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme run by BIGGA is free of charge to all greenkeeper Members.

The CPD Scheme has several benefits to you, it helps you:

- to keep track of your training achievements
- to adapt out dated skills
- to show your employer that you are a true professional
- to give you a means of showing prospective employers that you have continued to develop your education and training beyond the minimum level
- to update skills and knowledge on a regular basis
- to give you the skills to cope with change

You can gain CPD credits for attendance at a wide range of educational events, Harrogate Week and the BIGGA AGM as well as Section and Region events and AGM's.

It is simple to join the scheme, just download an application form from the education pages of the BIGGA website, complete and return it to the L&D Department. You can claim for any events that you have attended since 1 July 2008. To claim points, you either sign a register of attendance at the event (if available) or send in a credit claim form with proof of your attendance (certificate or signature from the organiser).

A BIGGA Certificate of Continuing Professional Development will be awarded to those members who accumulate 10 CPD Credits annually from 1 July to 30 June.

Once you have been awarded five successive Certificates of Continuing Professional Development will receive a BIGGA Diploma of Continuing Professional Development.

For further details on the scheme visit the website or telephone the L&D Department.

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2009



Application forms for the Toro Student of the Year Award 2009 have been sent out to the training providers in the UK. If you have an outstanding member of staff who is currently on N/SVQ Level 2 or 3, a HNC, HND or Foundation Degree, why not contact their college tutor and discuss nominating them? This also goes for those of you who are studying on any of the courses mentioned. Put yourself forward to your tutor – you could win a life changing experience, a six-week scholarship to the Winter Turf School at the University of Massachusetts courtesy of Toro.

Remember – the nomination must come from the college tutor.

New Library Books



Dictionary of Plant Sciences - Michael Allaby

Fundamentals of Turfgrass Management - Nick E. Christians

Superintendent's Handbook of Financial Management - Raymond S. Schmidgall

Poa Annuua: Physiology, Culture and Control of Annual Bluegrass - J M Vargas

Applied Turfgrass Science and Physiology - Jack Fry

Turfgrass Problems, Picture Clues and Management Options – Eva Gussack & Frank Rossi



PUTTING THE ENVIRONMENT FIRST

Scott MacCallum visits 2008 Environment Competition winner Caldy and discovers a club where environmental management is on every agenda



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FEATURE



When Caldy Golf Club was announced as winner of the 2008 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, Scotts, Syngenta and Golf Monthly, it was the culmination of a dream, not to mention a lot of hard work, for Course Manager, Carl Crocher.

Carl had first entered the competition while at Orsett Golf Club, in Essex, and when he arrived on the Wirral six years ago he found, in Head Greenkeeper, Ian Farrall, a real comrade-in-arms when it came to environmental work allowing the club to move forward at apace.

"At Orsett we'd done some good work with the STRI's, Bob Taylor, and we carried on doing the same sorts of things when I came up here," said Carl.

And it would be fair to say that what has been achieved at Caldy more than marks them down as very worthy Environment Competition Champions.

"We won the Northern Region Award in 2005 and the feedback then was that if we could bring the clubhouse side of things on board we could go even further and not be just also-rans. Our Secretary/Manager, Gail Copple, got on board and made real improvements in the clubhouse," explained Carl, adding that giving environmental issues higher priority and organising yourselves slightly differently was the key.

"We have put our glass recycling processes in place and it was just a case of making a few phone calls. The services are out there at little or no cost to the club if you just take the trouble to investigate," he said.

The on-course work has been extensive with tree management, heather regeneration, and a new reed bed at the forefront, but everything the Caldy team does has environmental considerations.

The Award presentation during Harrogate Week reinforced that commitment.

"I was accompanied by a Past Captain and R&A member who, without any prompting, turned

to me and said that we had to kick on from here. Also BIGGA Vice Chairman, Paul Worster, Course Manager at past winner Minchinhampton Golf Club told us how much the club had moved forward after winning the competition."

Carl has managed to acquire a couple of nicknames at this last two golf clubs which tie in to his tree management strategies.

"When I was at Orsett I was known as Chainsaw Massacre – they even got me a sweatshirt with that on it – but here I'm only known as Chopper, as I haven't been quite so aggressive, but then we haven't needed to be."

Carl took members on course walks to explain the philosophy of tree management to back up the presentations he did in the clubhouse. One of the areas he concentrated on was most apparent from the clubhouse window.

"One of the club's main assets is the estuary but you couldn't see it from the clubhouse because of the Corsican Pine growing on a bank, while there was a big belt of Scots Pine that had been planted



FEATURE



The Caldly Team with Ian Farrall, far left.

to shield an old tip. That tip is now grassed over and is a conservation area itself so the requirement for the pines has now gone."

The common flaw of planting trees and then expecting them to flourish perfectly with no on-going

he said, adding that he knows of clubs where the policy is written in stone that trees should not be touched.

"Conservation not preservation should be the adage," he explained.

"The work was carried out in 2000, the wettest year on record, and many members thought we'd completely lost the course. However, due to the strong character of the Captain, and particularly the then Green Chairman, Tom Dickinson, they carried on not finishing a job they had expected to complete until July/August, when it had been scheduled for completion in March/April, before the main golf season. But a golf course is a fantastically regenerative place and if people were to go out there today they'd struggle to see where the drains are," said Carl, who although not at the club when the work was done has certainly benefited from it.

"That system is the foundation of so many of the things we've done since. For example, we've been able to carry out winter work when before it would have been to wet and I know that whatever we are doing we are never more than 15 metres from a drain," said Carl, looking back at a project which featured in the May 2002 edition of Greenkeeper International.



“When I was at Orsett I was known as Chainsaw Massacre – they even got me a sweatshirt with that on it – but here I’m only known as Chopper, as I haven’t been quite so aggressive, but then we haven’t needed to be.”

Course Manager, Carl Crocher

maintenance is something Carl has seen.

"The pines hadn't been thinned out in 30 years and you can't expect to plant even the correct species and have them manage themselves,"

The club made a huge breakthrough around the turn of the century when it addressed a chronic waterlogging problem and spent around £300,000 putting in a comprehensive drainage system.



Bunker work at Caldy

One of the major innovations introduced in the last two years has been the club's reed bed which they developed in conjunction with the Environment Agency.

"Our reed bed was originally designed to drain into the estuary but the Environment Agency were nervous about it as it is a SSSI and a Special Bird Site. We decided, therefore, to insert a loop and recycle the water back to our sheds for washing purposes. I believe we were the first club in the country to do this and I think it was one of the main reasons for us getting the Award. It has made a massive difference to the club. Also, we had the enjoyment of doing the work ourselves while the club saved money."

As he had done when talking to Phil Stain, at Hollinwell Golf Club, several Course Managers have contacted Carl to ask about the reed bed, taking advantage of the vast amount of knowledge and experience that is at the fingertips of any BIGGA member who just cares to pick up a phone or access the website.

"It's been nice having guys ring us up out of the blue to ask questions and we try to help however we can."

The tee building and bunker renovation programmes are other areas where the environment is considered and Caldy saves money.

"We have tee building and bunker renovation programmes under way and we bought a new turf cutter which follows contours much better than our old one to enable us to re-cycle more turf than we had previously been able to do.

"Two years ago we saved between £1,500 and £1,700 worth of turf when we built three

new tees and that in itself paid for half of the turf cutter and again this winter we have saved another £1,000 worth. Having the right tools for the job is very important to the club and that investment in machinery pays off all the time.

"You can go out and aerate greens when the conditions are right, or do a top dressing pass in two and a half hours and disruption to members is minimal while it saves us time which can be spent on other jobs."

The bunker programme sees around a dozen bunkers being rebuilt or added each winter.

"We had six new USGA spec greens built several years ago and the bunkering which went with them wasn't particularly sympathetic to what was already at Caldy, which is a James Braid design," explained Carl.

"The new bunkers were much more Americanised, with big shapes and lots of sand, and we are a windy course with a lot of sand blow," said Carl.

The club decided to create a Caldy template for a bunker so that new bunkers would blend in with the old.

"We create a revetted shape for a bunker but only bringing the revetting up as high as we can bury with the sand. What that gave us is a solid wall to pull soil over and create firm mounding ready for turf. It means we build much smaller bunkers in keeping with Braid's originals but they also gather the ball making them just as good a strategic challenge as before and we're able to mow right up to the edge. They are connected to the existing drainage."

The cost benefits are there to be seen.

"Some of the bunkers built with the USGA greens required 25 tonnes of sand to fill them. That came down to three or four for the new models while in 2003-04 our top up was amounting to 50 or 60 tonnes a year, now we are down to under 20 tonnes a year and that will come down even more when we've completed the whole programme. With the cost of aggregates, which is not likely to come down, that is a significant saving," said Carl, who added that the course will ultimately have eight bunkers more than originally following the work.

Several years ago Carl heard that Purdis Heath Golf Club had bought a polytunnel with their winnings from the Environment Competition and thought it was such a good idea that, given similar circumstances, he would like one too.

"I thought it was a great idea and we are looking at sourcing one now. It would need to be substantial – eight to 10 metres – and we could grow our own shrubs and continue with our programme of growing gorse and heather from seed."

Another beneficiary of the prize is Ian, who Carl had put in charge of the environmental work at the club.

"Ian lives three and a half miles away, near Royal Liverpool Golf Club, at the top end of the Wirral Way and we've bought him a bike so he can get to and from work in an environmentally friendly manner. It takes him 17 to 18 minutes but with the new bike that time will come down," said Carl.

It's that sort of commitment that has marked Caldy Golf Club down as a worthy winner of the 2008 competition.

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Golden Key Profile

FEATURE



A PEARL AMONG COMPANIES



Scott MacCallum meets up with Dave Roberts, of Kubota, to discuss the company's 30th anniversary and the last five years of developments

In 2004 Kubota UK celebrated its 25th anniversary and the company produced a splendid silver painted compact tractor to commemorate the occasion. Five years on Kubota's 30th anniversary is upon us and Sales and Marketing Manager Dave Roberts is a relieved man.

"I'm not sure there is a colour for a 30th anniversary, but thank goodness because it costs a lot of money to respray tractors so I think we'll be sticking with orange," explained Dave.

However, anyone approaching a 30th wedding anniversary should note that, while Dave can be happy not to have to paint a tractor, wives will be looking for some pearls!

The last five years have raced by for Kubota UK with the company undertaking some major development and change within that time.

"We've had some new products which have really taken off, and they have been into different markets. At one end we've launched ride-on mowers into the consumer end of the market, which is all about volume, and we have had to develop our distribution channels to get the product out. At the other end of the scale is our larger tractor agricultural range which is not so much about volume, although we are building on that each year, but breaking into a very mature and aggressive market which is dominated by a small number of companies," explained Dave.

And that in a nutshell is what Kubota is all about. The company has in Dave's words "many strings to his bow" giving it protection if any one sector of business suffers a downturn. That strategy does involve working very hard to ensure no one sector is ever neglected.

"It takes a lot of energy and resources to work in so many sectors and it is a very fine line

to walk to ensure that we continue to develop new business but also to keep an eye on our core markets," explained Dave, as we sat in his office in Thame, Oxfordshire.

"The backbone of our business is still compact tractors and the markets they serve, grounds care, golf course management and horticulture are key to us and we can't afford to lose that business."

Kubota is market leader in the production of compact tractors but Dave admitted they are a big fish in the relatively small, compact tractor, pool and that it is difficult to expand sales or market share in that area.

"When you look at agriculture we are a very small fish in a massive pond and the potential is huge for us. Even if we grow our share of the market by a single percentage point it can mean a lot of tractors and a lot of money to us."

Kubota launched a range of agricultural tractors last year – the M40 series which offer