

OPEN ALL HOURS



Within this month's article, David Golding, informs readers that the GTC website shop is now open 24/7

One of the GTC's main aims is to make learning available to all and tremendous progress has been made in recent years in partnership with our colleagues in the colleges and private provider Centres.

Whether you are looking at the apprenticeship or formal vocational or academic qualifications, these are all available through a variety of delivery options.

The Centres offer the traditional option of attendance at their college or training establishment or more recently learning on the job has become increasingly popular for some employers and students.

We at the GTC know that through our Approved Centre and Provider network we can ensure there will be a course and if required a qualification for you!

How confident does that sound?

Flexibility is the key and having attended numerous meetings to develop qualifications and apprenticeships, never before have our Centres and Providers responded so positively to our drive to make the delivery of the various programmes more accessible to meet both the employers and students needs.

The GTC appreciates that not every employer or student wants or needs full qualifications and this is where FINALLY the Government has accepted that if they want more people in training they need to put funding into small, or bite size, learning as well as just full qualifications.

You will see this starting to happen with such schemes as Train to Gain www.traintogain.gov.uk and initiatives in Scotland such as the ILA where £250 per individual can be accessed towards training costs, see www.ilascotland.org.uk - Note: Conditions will apply.

Apprenticeships and all nationally accredited qualifications receive Government financial support to encourage employers and students to "invest" in training and this is so important especially during these difficult economic times.

The GTC is currently involved in the review of the apprenticeship framework and NVQ's as well as accreditation panels for the National

Certificate in Greenkeeping in Scotland and a new top-up B.Sc in Golf Course Management, all work aimed at ensuring our sector has something for everybody!

So what about the 24/7 GTC Shop?

The traditional method of acquiring the knowledge associated with maintaining and managing golf courses has been, until recently, attending college. Well as previously mentioned our Centres have developed so many different learning opportunities from day-release courses to distance learning and now courses and qualifications on-line which incidentally is proving an incredible success in terms of student numbers.

The knowledge, based on best practices has been captured in two sets of learning materials to be used with students registered on N/SVQ Levels 2 and 3 but they have become more widely used by greenkeepers, lecturers and Guidance Officers as they cover such a wide range of subject areas.

These learning materials are available to everybody in various formats from the GTC website www.the-gtc.co.uk

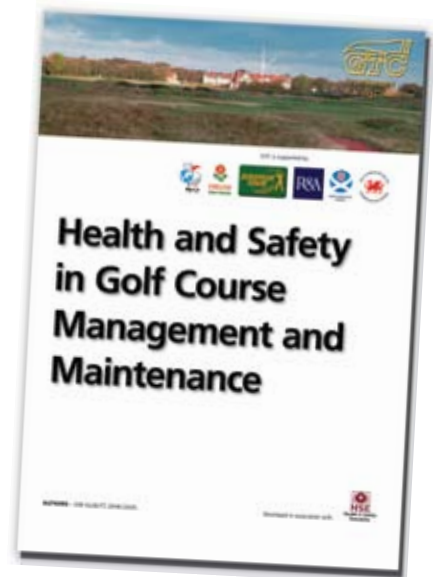
Also available in the GTC shop are the revised Health & Safety Guidance notes together with the essential H&S wall chart which every maintenance facility should have on the wall.

The wall chart is the quick reference on machinery and staff competencies which the enforcement officers look for as an early indicator on record keeping.

A link is also available via the website to the BIGGA-GCMA Safety Management System which is the "tool" to record the more detailed information on staff, equipment and risk assessments required to be kept by employers plus staff responsibilities.

Finally, the highly acclaimed Training Manual which includes the standards of N/SVQ Level 2

GTC is supported by:



Sports Turf and the Awarding Body approved document is to increase in price from May 1.

Previously the Training Manual was available for £25. The new price will be £50 and will include a copy of the Level 2 CD Rom learning materials, which are sold separately for £30. Overall a saving of £5 on the two items.

The GTC Approved Centres using the Training Manual suggested combining the two items and the cost will be incorporated into registration costs (if applicable) for students.

Please have a look at the GTC website and as we take in-house the Content Management of our own website, you will finally see the facility of an e-alerts service aimed at keeping those registered updated with all the information relating to greenkeeper education and training as we receive and develop it.

Finally: Thank you to all those qualified assessors who returned our questionnaire. A summary and recommendations report will follow next month.

You can contact the GTC at:
Aldwark Manor,
Near York
YO61 1UF

...or by telephone on 01347 838640 or
Email golf@the-gtc.co.uk



Industry Update

COURSE RECORD BROKEN

Emmett Curran, Head Greenkeeper at Downpatrick Golf Club, in Northern Ireland, is the first person to break par at the RJL golf course, the company's recently opened three-hole course at the head office in Ipswich.

He was a member of a party of greenkeepers on a visit to the RJ European HQ, hosted by the company's dealer for Northern Ireland, Brodericks (NI) Ltd. Emmett, who was a five handicap player before giving up the game years ago due to arthritis, was amazed at his sub-par round.

"This is a great little course, very tricky due to the pin placements and the final hole, which is almost an island, so I was delighted to get round in just eight shots. This course is a credit to Ransomes Jacobsen and is in excellent condition. We had a superb visit and I must admit that I didn't realise the extent of the manufacturing capability at Ipswich. It was a great experience and the round of golf was the perfect end to a really enjoyable day."



20 YEAR TURF VETERAN JOINS STAFF

Tee-2-Green has appointed former Superintendent, Lewis Sharp, to serve as golf course consultant with primary focus on U.S., Canada and Europe.

"We realise the need for a person like Lew to assist architects, golf course builders and superintendents to serve Tee-2-Green customers," explained Bill Rose, President of Tee-2-Green.

"Lew is a guy who has real-world experience growing in and maintaining the Penn bentgrasses, so he can relate to agronomic and cultural challenges faced by our end-users."

With 20 years of professional turf experience, Lewis most recently worked as Superintendent at Dye's Walk Country Club, in Greenwood, Indiana. Throughout the span of his extensive career, he worked in course maintenance at several Midwest golf courses, and also served as Director of Golf Operations at Valle Vista Golf, also in Greenwood. After obtaining an associate's degree in architecture from Vincennes University in Indiana, Lewis went on to earn a bachelor's degree in engineering and turf management from Purdue University.

NEW COMPANY

Duncan McNab, of McNab Sport Ltd, Kinross, has launched a new company All Sport Consultants to run in conjunction with the existing Sportsturf Maintenance & Supply Company.

All Sport Consultants will offer Health & Safety Advice and Sports Turf Consultancy to amenity outlets throughout the UK.

Duncan holds I.O.S.H & NEBOSH qualifications in Occupational Health & Safety and Fire Safety & Risk Management.

For more information contact All Sport Consultants on: 01577 864206.



CUTTING EDGE TRAINING

Turfmech Machinery has reported strong and positive feedback from dealers' sales staff who attended one of a series of intensive Allett mower training courses held during the first three months of 2009.

Staged at Turfmech's headquarters in Hixon, Staffordshire - the manufacturing and support centre for Allett mowers - the one-day courses attracted more than 50 sales staff representing 15 different Allett dealers from across the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Each day was split into two sessions, the morning being devoted to the classroom where attendees were instructed in the adjustment, operation, maintenance and application of the 14-model range of Allett cylinder mowers and turf-care equipment.

The afternoon was spent outside on a variety of turf surfaces where theory could be put into practice, giving dealers' sales staff the opportunity to set-up and use the machines under actual working conditions.



AWARD WINNING ANGUS

Etesia's Managing Director, Patrick Vives, recently made a special trip from the company's headquarters in France to visit Scotland – his mission was to present Arbroath-based dealer, Angus Chainsaws with an Award.

This accolade came as a result of a 2008 international sales incentive scheme set up by Etesia in which Angus Chainsaws was placed among the top five world-wide retail outlets for 'Sales of Bahia ride-on mowers'.

Ken Wallace, a Partner in Angus Chainsaws, received the accolade on behalf of the company.

At the presentation, Patrick Vives said, "While this is a great achievement, in some ways it is no surprise – over the past 15 years this dealership has consistently excelled at selling Bahia ride-ons and has, during that time, won a number of UK Awards for high turnover.

In addition, in 2003 they were commended for their 'Commitment and Loyalty' and in 2005 Ken Wallace personally came top in Scotland in our 'Best Salesman' category."

Under the sales incentive scheme, winning dealers from all participating countries received the prize of a luxury holiday for two in Cancun organised by Etesia in January. Ken Wallace had been unable to attend – hence his award was presented to him in Scotland.



Ken Wallace (right) receives his award from Etesia UK MD Patrick Vives (L)

FELL BECOMES NEW TGA CHAIRMAN

Tim Fell is the new Chairman of the Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA).

Tim, whose company Tillers Turf has been growing turf in Lincolnshire for 25 years, took over from Robert Adcock when members gathered at the STRI for their spring meeting recently.

He is an active ambassador for turf and is determined to raise further the profile of the association as a body of highly knowledgeable professionals, passionate about their product.

"Members of the TGA are already leaders in the industry when it comes to innovation, quality and service. We want to continue to set the standard for turf production in this country," he said.

"I would like to see the TGA Standards for Cultivated Turf being used universally in any specification for turf."

His two year stint as Chairman comes at a time

of unprecedented challenges for the turf industry. The recession is having a major impact on the income of turf growers, some of whose businesses are underpinned in large measure by the property market. The highly specialist sportsturf market is less affected. Other pressing issues facing turf growers today include the reduction in the numbers of pesticides, and water restrictions.

Tim praised the work of the TGA Council, Chief Executive, Tim Mudge, and the Association's former Chairmen for the substantial progress made in promoting the benefits of turf and addressing matters affecting turf production.

"The TGA has worked hard to raise the awareness of the benefits of turf to the Water Industry and Local Authorities. The message is getting through that turf is the unsung hero of the landscape."



New TGA Chairman Tim Fell (right) presents outgoing Chairman Robert Adcock with a gift marking the end of his two year term.

Membership



TRACEY MADDISON, HEAD OF MEMBERSHIP SERVICES GIVES A DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE...

It's May already...how did that happen so quickly?! It's been a year since I returned to BIGGA and I have thoroughly enjoyed the past 12 months.

I was able to get out and about towards the end of last year and attended many section AGM's and golf events and I would like to thank all those people I met for making me feel very welcome. I hope to do the same again this year and look forward to meeting as many members as possible.

While I am out and about please feel free to chat to me about any issues you may have regarding your BIGGA Membership or BIGGA in general, let me know how we (BIGGA HQ) are doing, whether it's positive or negative your feedback is invaluable to us, it lets us know what we are getting right and wrong!

Valuing Your Section

As you are aware, the 26 sections within our five regions are run by volunteers, a vital part of the Association.

Our Section Teams are involved in many local run activities both social and educational.

Information can be found by reading 'Around the Green' in Greenkeeper International, logging into the members area of the BIGGA Website and selecting 'Region and Section Pages' from the list in the left hand side panel.

Also, many local sections now have their own website pages.

I know we are coming into a busy time for all greenkeepers but please support your local section when you can, local events are a great way of making new contacts, new friends and sharing ideas or common problems!

The Integration of Sports Turf Groundscare Staff into BIGGA Membership

You may have seen the highlighted box in March's issue of Greenkeeper International (Page 9) giving some facts about this topic, which hopefully cleared up any concerns any member had.

If you haven't seen the article have a look back through your copies of Greenkeeper International and have a read.

This article answers many questions which members had about integration of groundscare staff working on sports turf into membership of BIGGA.

This month BIGGA welcomes the following new members...

Scottish Region

Andrew McCrystal, West
Liam McWilliams, West
Calum Morris, North
Ritchie Morrison, North
James Paterson, East
Scott Ribbeck, East
Scott Robertson, North
Stephen Sharkey, Ayrshire
John Stuart, North
Scott Turnbull, West
David Wason, Ayrshire

Northern Region

Alan Chappelow, Northern
Edward Chappelow, Northern
Darrell Crowley, Northern
Simon Dennis, North Wales
Gregory Howsam, North Wales
Stuart Hudson, Sheffield
Mark Hurst, North West
Neil Jackson, North West
Richard Maude, Northern
David Rooney, North West
Richard Spensley, Cleveland

Sam Wardhill, Northern
Simon Witham, Cleveland

Midland Region

Wayne Banner, Midland
Jonathon Deavin, Mid Anglia
Lewis Hackett, East of England
Mark Killingbeck, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Shannon Myring, East Midland
Miles Norton, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Stewart Pearman, Midland
Daniel Perry, Midland
Chris Rossington, Mid Anglia
Neil Smith, Midland
John Sweeney, East Midland
Tim Wood, Mid Anglia

South East Region

Phillip Benn, Surrey
Graham Booth, Kent
Paul Curtis, Kent
James Goold, Kent
Steve Gunner, Kent
Simon Hembling, East Anglia
Ian Hockley, Surrey
Andrew Kinsella, Surrey
John McPherson, Surrey
Michael Newman, Surrey
Danny Perring, East Anglia

Karen Roberts, East Anglia
Stephen Street, Sussex
Neil Waddell, Surrey
Robert Warner-Smith, East Anglia
Adam White, Kent

S West/S Wales Region

Thomas Boxall, South Coast
Robert Chandler, South West
Ceri Davies, South Wales
Gary Denton, South Coast
Ceri Fearnley, South West
Joshua Gibbs, South Coast
Christopher Higgins, South West
David Lacey, South West
Jordan Mein, South West
Ashley Millar, Devon & Cornwall
Gary Rose, South Wales
James Solloway, South Coast
Josh Wall, South West
James Webber, South West

International

Michael Anderson, Slovakia
David Haskell-Craig, MG, Australia
Curtis Tyrrell, USA
Matthew Wharton, USA

Your Vote Counts

Next month every member of BIGGA, who is eligible, will be asked to vote on the integration of sports turf groundscare staff into full membership of BIGGA.

Due to the recent changes in the Constitution this can now be done either in person or by Proxy at the EGM.

A Proxy is someone you choose to attend the meeting to vote on your behalf.

You can appoint the Chairman of the meeting or someone else.

If you appoint a Proxy to vote on your behalf and your Proxy does not attend the meeting your vote will not be counted.

A Proxy Voting Form will be sent to eligible members, during the course of the month, asking them to vote.

Please take the time to complete the form and use your vote.

To adapt Lord Kitchener's well known saying "Your Association Needs You".

CONTACT US



Tracey Maddison
Email: traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Brad Anderson
Email: brad@bigga.co.uk

Tel: 01347 833800
(option 1 for Membership.)

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...

The weather man has assured me that we're going to experience a beautiful summer, he didn't say which summer it would be, but keep your fingers crossed that it is this year's. I think we all agree that it's about time!

BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System



The Safety Management System (SMS), sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, is a proactive tool that is used to identify and control hazards and to reduce risks to prevent injury to golf club members, visitors and employees. Such a system consists of the arrangements used by the Club actively to manage health and safety. Its objective is to provide an easily understood framework for those who manage golf clubs and their employees of how a health and safety policy is formulated and executed.

One of the benefits of being a member of BIGGA is that you can access the Safety Management System via the Members Area of the BIGGA website. Using one, of six on screen Risk Profile matrix, you can easily identify hazards that may be found at your golf club and download sample risk assessment forms.

The six Risk Profile matrix are for Greenkeeping Activities, the Maintenance Facility and the Golf Course (all accessed via Golf Course Management), Clubhouse Management, Kitchen Management and Pro Shop Management.

The system also has an integrated Hazard file that enables you to find out what the hazard may be and in many instances offers hyperlinks to other useful websites.

If you have any questions on using the SMS, or if you have forgotten your username and password, please give me a call.

BIGGA Library



The BIGGA library currently holds over 1200 books, videos, DVD's and even some cassette tapes!

You can help us to keep the Library up to date by letting us know of any books or DVD's that you think would be a good addition. We can then check if we already have them and if not we can try to source them. We also accept donations of books, magazines and any other printed materials to the Library.

The Library service is a benefit of being a member and as such you can borrow up to two items, except those marked 'Reference', for a period of up to six weeks. The only cost to members is return postage to BIGGA HQ. For a full library list contact Rachael.

Continuing Professional Development

CPD

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The current CPD year ends on 30 June 2009. To receive your 2009 Certificate of Continuing Professional Development you need to have gained a minimum of 10 CPD credits since 1 July 2008. Send your completed CPD credit claim forms as soon as possible. If you have any queries about the CPD scheme please contact Rachael.

Both Rachael and myself can be contacted on 01347 833800 and select Option 3 or by email to rachael@bigga.co.uk or sami@bigga.co.uk.

Apology - on last month's page I mentioned that Paul Carella worked at Bellshill Golf Club, this is incorrect. Paul actually works at Bothwell Castle Golf Club, our apologies for this.

THE CHALLENGE SO FAR

FEATURE

Jordan Fairweather describes the challenges he has faced since he left work in one of the wettest golfing environments for one of the driest.



Jordan Fairweather

I have been fortunate to work and volunteer at some of the most prestigious golf clubs in the world, including Loch Lomond Golf Club, where I spent seven years as Irrigation Technician and Special Projects Supervisor.

During my time there, I was given every opportunity to learn (Rutgers University Graduate) and take on new challenges from upgrading the irrigation system, installing two sub-surface aeration systems, re-building fairways and leading a crew of 30, literally anything one could ask for and more. During that time I had often wondered what it would be like to move from a big name club like Loch Lomond and take up a new challenge elsewhere and would it be worth it?

So when the offer of a move to the sun came along, could I really say no? A lot of investigation

was carried out to determine whether this new opportunity had what I was looking for. Would the job fulfil me intellectually? Would I learn new skills to become a better manager? Could I meet the needs of the company who were offering me the job? Well I did take on the challenge and accepted the role of Construction Superintendent for Tanto International Golf.

My role is to manage the day-to-day construction programme for the first 18 hole course at Dubai Golf City. Dubai Golf City will be a five course complex surrounded by a very high end residential complex scheduled for completion by 2012. The first 18 hole course we are constructing is a Tim Lobb design as will be the next three. We have also started construction of the new Kyle Phillips-designed course at Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, which is next to the Formula 1 circuit and scheduled for completion in 2009.



The first challenge I faced when reaching Dubai was the heat, in July and August temperatures reach 55 degrees Celsius with fluctuating humidity. I was amazed how quickly I acclimatised. Having gone from the wettest area of Britain to a place where they accumulated 7mm of rain last year, and all in one day, you would think nothing would ever stop construction, but the weather does! Working regulations state for July and August no staff are allowed outside of an air conditioned cab to work between 12 and 3pm. This just means our day became three hours longer to compensate. Work can also be stopped due to sand storms which can come through daily. During this you can only see as far as 50 yards.

One thing I face daily is the language barrier. English is the first language in Dubai, followed by Arabic. All road signs are in English and in the city there is not a problem. If in a bar or restaurant it

will be mainly Europeans and Americans. There are over 200 nationalities living in the United Arab Emirates. The language barrier that can be a problem is on the job site. Currently we have an American, a Canadian, three Scots and, for my sins, two Englishmen along with our labour force of 128! This is made up of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi nationalities. They all speak Urdu, which is our main language on site. They have been teaching me a few words daily but they seem to be picking up English quicker than we can pick up Urdu.

Along with my Deputy, Richard Crocombe, it can take us up to 45 minutes to ensure all staff are at their locations and fully understand what is entailed. It can be frustrating at times when all you need is someone to go and do a quick five minute job but end up having to drive them there yourself. One point I should point out is that out of

the 128 staff only my two irrigation foremen had ever worked on or been on a golf course before! The task could not have been greater. It helps greatly that Eric and Robert Samells, of Edinburgh Landscaping, lead our finish teams. Every person has to be trained on every job by myself, Richard, Eric or Robert. We had to get them to visualise and understand what we are all there to achieve. We have taken some to visit nearby golf courses, have shown them many pictures on computer and also given layout plans to certain groups.

At times I was unsure what to expect and of what level of understanding I was getting across to them. When we had explained exactly that the holes in the ground were bunkers and we had prepared approx 20 I thought, yes, we have cracked it - green, tee, bunker - only to be preparing a lake for lining to hear from your Group Leader, "Big bunker boss". You do not know whether to



View of the 15th

laugh or cry. At times I had a JCB drive across a newly cut out green cavity and a skid steer loader drive and turn on a tee, but, all in all, 128 people have grasped the fact better than could be expected.

One task I find myself putting a lot of time into is planning. Day to day tasks, material deliveries and trying to achieve the end result in the time frame set to me. This has been tricky in many ways. One is man hours and religious holidays. After losing three hours in the middle of every day in July and August, September is the holy month of Ramadan for Muslims. During Ramadan all staff do not work more than six hours a day. There are also a lot of other religious holidays which are controlled by the moon, so short notice on holidays is not unusual. The weekend in Dubai is a Thursday afternoon and Friday for some companies while Friday/Saturday for others. Along with planning orders which need to come from Europe or USA this cannot be done on Saturday/Sunday means I can have a three day week to get ordering through.

Materials and availability can be a problem

in the UAE. It is always tough to source products when you move to new job but out here there is a difference. Due to the rapid growth of construction the UAE cannot produce and import materials fast enough to keep up, so a payment of 50% on the day you order is required to get your material which may take months. Golf machinery is also non-existent. All the main franchises are here but due to the market not being big enough as at present there are only 11 golf courses, none of them hold stock, not even demonstration machinery so an order of many months can be expected. Many companies tell me this is about to change due to the rapid increase in golf construction in the area.

Day-to-day on the golf course we encounter many new projects and learning experiences, from warm season grasses to managing an eight metre dig with five metres of rock. This was to install three, 32inch pipes to feed the irrigation and circulation system. This was the first major task we undertook and the first thing I learnt was to never assume the desert is all sand! This is as much an irrigation project as construction, as

even well before grass is on site we require water to hold the shaped sand in place. Due to sand storms and the lack of water in the beginning we had constructed some bunkers three times before completion. You could come in the next day to find the bunker gone and the grades completely changed. Along with reading plans, I have learnt a lot about shaping, moving material and being able to visualise what we have to create.

Being the contractor and not the client can also be tough to deal with. You have to build to specification and not preference which means we have to do things that maybe you would do differently on your own course. Sometimes you have what you think is a great golf hole and the architect and client can come along and change the plan, it can be tough to see weeks of hard work put under a Dozer again. I hope to write a second article next year on completion of the first 18 holes explaining more about the construction process in Dubai and how we overcame a lot of difficulties.

At the moment there are 11 golf courses in Dubai with the same under construction. I was



Most of the crew at Dubai Golf City



Green, lake and wall construction on the 12th

told there is planning for approx 90 golf courses between Egypt and Abu Dhabi lodged at the moment. Dubai has started construction of four major theme parks including Universal Studios. They are constructing the world's tallest building and already have plans to beat that by creating one a kilometre high!

I was looking for a new challenge and I have definitely found it, or it found me, as is the case maybe. I am enjoying what every day throws at me and yes it can be frustrating at times but also very rewarding. I am learning more than I could have imagined and already feel no task is too big. I can only imagine that wherever I end up the challenges can be no greater than what I, and the team here, achieve on a daily basis.

There are some drawbacks to Dubai and working abroad, mainly missing family and friends. The time difference trying to keep in contact back home is difficult. There is no VAT on anything including petrol, the traffics is chaos. The town is full of Europeans and Americans, the sun shines every day and if you do not drink your beer quickly it goes very warm.





Damage to a south of England down land course by rooks looking for chafer grubs
Picture courtesy Chris Humphrey, Collier Turf Care