

Letters



LIFE MEMBER

Dear **BIGGA**,

It is with great sadness that I write to inform **BIGGA** staff and members of the passing of Richard 'Dick' Dugan at the beginning of April.

Following a long term illness Dick passed away on Saturday, April 4. A well respected and fully committed greenkeeper and member of **BIGGA** he will be particularly missed by all at Glencorse Golf Club. Dick remained active at Glencorse for many years after his retirement, combining his Course Ranger duties with helping myself and the greenkeeping staff on the course. He will be remembered most for his larger than life personality and his enthusiasm for all that he did. I'm sure I speak for all that knew him in saying that he will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with his wife Helen and his family.

Kind regards
 Ian Bell
 Head Greenkeeper
 Glencorse Golf Club

Please email your letters to Scott MacCallum, scott@bigga.co.uk or Melissa Jones, melissa@bigga.co.uk

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In the Shed

ANSWERS

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QUIZ ANSWERS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Maureen O'Sullivan in Tarzan The Ape Man</p> <p>2. Jimmy Wales</p> <p>3. CQD - CQ was a general call to all ships and D signalled Distress</p> | <p>4. Basset hound</p> <p>5. Poet's Corner</p> <p>6. 20/20</p> <p>7. To pawn (weasel was a shoemakers tool)</p> <p>8. Red</p> <p>9. Seven (one represents Scotland)</p> |
|--|---|

MONSTER SUDOKO

5				F	B	4	8		A	7				
	B			6				A	5	7	0			
D	2								0	6			1	
		F	E	A	5	7	C	1		8	D			
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	C	8	A	6	7	5	9			0		1	2	
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SQUIGGLY SUDOKO

6	4	9	1	7	5	2	8	3
7	2	3	8	4	6	1	5	9
1	5	8	9	3	2	7	4	6
2	9	1	5	6	4	8	3	7
3	7	4	2	8	1	9	6	5
8	6	5	3	9	7	4	2	1
4	1	2	6	5	9	3	7	8
5	3	7	4	1	8	6	9	2
9	8	6	7	2	3	5	1	4

BUYERS' GUIDE



Dealing with grass wear problems

Improvements in seed and fertiliser have reduced grass wear on golf courses and other active grassed play areas, but there are still problem areas that require assistance, particularly pathways, standing areas, goal mouths and tees.

A recognised treatment for pathways is Crown III, a patent particulate rubber crumb, that is either tined into the sward using a verti-drain or mixed into the root zone prior to seeding or turfing. This improves the grass life by at least three times providing that at least 6 kilo s/sq/m is employed. At a cost of £2 per square metre the compaction is reduced and the aeration and drainage is improved giving the increase in grass life.

Where there are wet areas that take time to dry out leading to muddy conditions, or a high degree of erosion due to a stony substrate or excessive foot traffic a more robust system is required. Other methods of mesh, grids and cells made from plastic all have failings for one reason or another.

The most satisfactory system for a golf course or other heavy foot traffic areas, that fall into this category, is the Rubber Grass Mat. These large rubber Mats 1m x 1.5m and 1 inch thick are full of hole through which the grass can grow. They are inset into the surface and the grass grows through the hole. The crown of the plant is protected by the collar of rubber. Hence after a few weeks they disappear from view.

Artificial turf is often the last resort, but is useful for pathways, steps and Tees. The Pathturf is a 24mm fibre in a rubber backing that is filled with a mix of sand and rubber crumb. For sleepers and other wooden areas Top Turf No 4 can be used, straight onto the steps with an adhesive

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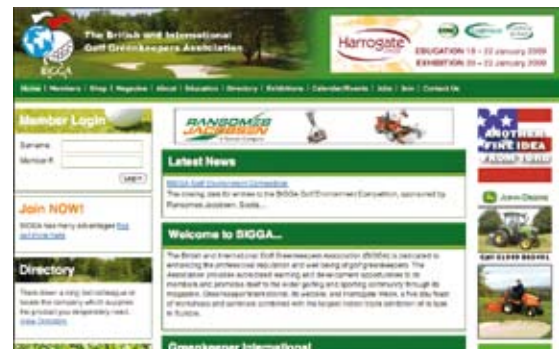
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Chairman's Column

DRIP DRIP DROP LITTLE APRIL SHOWER?

It is not often I look forward to April showers but this year they followed a dry end to March and the rain arrived just when it was needed to kick off some consistent grass growth. Spring renovation of greens and tees on The International Course in early April benefited from the improved conditions with core holes growing over completely in two weeks. Golfers are out playing on the firmer surfaces unaware of the disruptive work that has recently been done and the turf is in better condition to withstand this season's play.



There are just five weeks left to prepare The Heritage Course before The European Open at the end of May and making the most of the growing conditions as early as possible now becomes really important. Verti-cutting too early can easily set the greens back but with limited time available to apply light topdressings every opportunity to get this done in the dry has to be utilised.

Lowering winter heights of cut on fairways and approaches is timed well in advance of the event with a further drop nearer the tournament. Bottom blades on the fairway mowers will need to be changed to allow greater flexibility on cutting height in varying conditions. Tournament

time highlights the work done by the workshop technicians when they are flat out re-grinding cylinders and preparing every piece of cutting equipment.

The work involved in maintaining golf course equipment properly, demands the skills and experience of trained staff together with an adequately equipped workshop. Many clubs rely on dealers and outside help whilst some see in house facilities as essential to the smooth running of their operation. Whatever is appropriate, workshop facilities need to be clean, well organized working environments to attract the right staff and allow them to do a good job. Unlike the car industry

where the service bays these days look more like the showrooms with not a drop of oil to be seen, golf course workshops remain a less clinical environment but that doesn't stop us making the best of what we have to offer.

There is a need to continue to interest young people in this side of the business, as well as greenkeeping, to ensure we have the skills and experience to maintain all the equipment that we all rely on so much. Salary levels reflect the demand for those with good skills and experience to fill these positions and when compared against the values of the equipment fleets being maintained represent a very worthwhile investment.

Turning to Association matters, the board has discussed improving the way the sub committees operate and to include non board members in the Membership, Learning & Development, Communications and Environment meetings. This change will allow more BIGGA members up and down the country the opportunity to contribute their suggestions and ideas to the running of the Association.

The current financial climate is causing most of us, both at work and at home, to review finances and see where economies can be made. The same belt tightening process has been well underway at BIGGA and wherever efficiency savings can be made they will be.

The previous recession in the 1990's affected many clubs and caused them to take a long hard look at their operations and strip out the 'nice to haves' and pare down to just the essentials. As course managers we only directly control the expenditure side of the balance sheet however clubs also had to refocus on what they needed to do to create more income. It was an experience and exercise that left those involved in a much better position this time around to make the right decisions at their clubs.

Strong competition has been the result of the rapid expansion in the number of courses built during the 1980's and 1990's. This coupled now with a downturn in the economy and the disappearance of most membership waiting lists means the market for golfers is likely to remain highly competitive. Unlike the last recession when the new proprietary clubs bore the brunt of its effects, members clubs are now feeling the pinch to a much greater extent.

What does this mean for all of us in the industry?

It provides a challenge for us to produce courses that attract golfers to play at a price they are willing to pay for. It also means that more will be asked of us at a time when there will not necessarily be any more resources. Deciding on priorities and making choices is a skill we all have to learn and put into practice and those that can grasp this and help steer their clubs through the downturn successfully will emerge better for it.



Peter Todd
National Chairman

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