

## Threat to Edinburgh's Public Courses

The Scottish edition of the Daily Mail has reported that Edinburgh City Council is considering turning their underused municipal golf courses into allotments to meet the demands of the city's gardeners.

The Mail reported that "Thousands of gardeners are waiting for allotments while the city's six municipal courses lie empty for much of the time."

The paper went on to say that a recent council audit had suggested that there were too many public courses which take up a quarter of the capital's green space but that the potential move is sure to raise eyebrows among traditionalists as Scottish golf faces one of its biggest crises in more than a



century.

"Golf is the biggest participation sport north of the Border after football, with as much as 12.7% of Scotland's adult population playing the game at least once a month.

The article closes with a quote from SGU Chief Executive Hamish Grey who warned that "public courses are vital in encouraging youngsters to take up the sport."



## Sales Team Back up to Strength

Jill Rodham, who joins the Association as a Sales Executive, is BIGGA's newest recruit.

A direct replacement for Sharon Price, who left the Association at the end of July, Jill brings with her extensive sales experience, having worked as an Account Director for a Telecoms Company and, more recently, in recruitment, where she was based in her home town of Harrogate, as well as Leeds.

Recently married, Jill, and her new husband, Simon, honeymooned in Chicago and the pair enjoy hill walking, particularly in the Lake District and skiing on the slopes of Val d'Isere one of their favourite destinations. She is also an enthusiastic tenpin bowler and socialiser.

"From what I've been told this is a lovely industry to work in and I'm looking forward to learning about the industry and getting to know the people who work in it," said Jill.

## BB&O Visit DLF



Home counties and southern greenkeepers heard how turf care innovations to be unveiled next year could transform the method and cost-effectiveness of sowing and overseeding.

Members of BIGGA's B,B&O Section were the guests of DLF Johnsons Seeds at its turf-growing demonstration centre in Inkberrow, Worcestershire, for a training day in early October

Included in the schedule was a conducted tour of DLF's turf development plots showing examples of the seed producer's leading cultivars, including bents, fescues and ryegrass, as well as a tour of the production plant where seed is mixed and bagged ready for delivery.

Amenity Sales Manager, Derek Smith, assisted by Martin Townsend, Turf and Amenity Manager of distributor, Countrywide Farmers, presided over the day, revealing some of DLF's plans for 2010, which he said would

be a watershed year for the seed producer, after several years of trialling turf grass seed treatments at sites across Britain.

"The day was a most valuable one for BIGGA members," said Simon Marsh, Course Manager of Harleyford Golf Club, in Marlow, who helped organise the event.

"It offered an opportunity for greenkeepers of all ages to converse on issues that affect them throughout the year. I'm excited about the new generation that are coming through now and the impact that they will certainly have on the industry."

Derek Smith added: "We were heartened to attract nearly 20 BIGGA members, some of whom travelled long distances to attend the day. Greenkeepers rarely have a chance to see our demonstration areas close up. They certainly proved an eye-opener for some, who went away with firm ideas about how to tackle their day-to-day turf issues."

## Scottish Package

The Scottish Region is pleased to offer the following package for the Holiday Inn, Harrogate. The accommodation is from Monday 18 January.

Three nights Bed & Breakfast in en-suite rooms on 18, 19 and 20 January, 2010.

To obtain a booking form for the accommodation contact the Regional Administrator, Peter J Boyd on; 0141 616 3440/07776242120 or email; [pj.boyd@btinternet.com](mailto:pj.boyd@btinternet.com)





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Chris Lomas (opposite) is the Course Manager at The Berkshire GC

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# Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Peter Todd, gives his thoughts for the month

**For many years BIGGA has been working away at raising the profile of the profession but it can't do this without all of us playing our part in the process.**

We all wish to be treated as professionals in our specialist field by players, owners, senior management, committees etc with our ideas, suggestions and views sought in decision making. Raising our profile and gaining wider recognition for our work is very much down to us and the effort we put into shaping this by our own actions.

There are many things that help us to achieve a higher level of professionalism and project this to others -communication, image and appearances, technical and managerial expertise etc. Getting all these right requires a continued effort. We are facing an increasingly competitive world with a constantly altering work environment - changes in technology, legislation



## CPD demonstrates commitment

and scientific understanding in our field. To meet these challenges we need to regularly update our skills and knowledge through what is commonly referred to as Continuing Professional Development (CPD). By adopting this approach it is possible to keep up to date with the latest developments and help inject enthusiasm and ideas into your club.

CPD will benefit you personally in your career development, helping you to gain a competitive advantage as well as your club's business. For those seeking higher rewards CPD allows you to demonstrate your commitment to continual improvement. 'Raising the bar' is what it is all about and by delivering higher standards and greater professionalism you are in a much better position to seek rewards that reflect this. Along with the financial benefits CPD will also improve self confidence and help to raise your profile in the industry.

Accreditation schemes linked to membership categories are commonplace in many professional bodies. Different terms such as Class A or Fellow can provide a series of stages that allow members the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to CPD and their level of achievements. The current Master Greenkeeper certification is different in that once achieved it is not an ongoing learning scheme. Moving to link CPD with our membership structure would send a

stronger message about the level of professionalism of members and that Learning and Development is the keystone to BIGGA. This topic is firmly on the agenda for the next sub-committee meeting and your input to the discussions would be welcomed.

Aside from CPD what else can you do to help project a more professional image? - Like it or not people do judge by appearances. It really boils down to looking businesslike and conducting yourself accordingly, if you really want to be taken seriously.

Writing reports isn't a familiar task in a mainly hands-on working environment and an experience that doesn't always come naturally to some when required to do this, so training can prove invaluable. Documents that are submitted for approval such as budgets, recommendations, technical reports etc will carry far more weight if they are carefully worded, well laid out and presented.

Meetings and presentations all require verbal communication skills and offer an opportunity to get your message across. They should be seen as a chance to show how well you have prepared, know the facts and inevitably will display to others your level of confidence on the subject matter. There is no doubt that doing your homework is paramount but equally learning the skill of presenting effectively can make

a difference. If this is an area you would like to improve on then take advantage of the presentation workshop available at Harrogate in January.

Computers and the internet have made the job of working in a more professional manner so much easier - searching for information, corresponding, on line learning, constructing documents and keeping records. For those still trying to manage without an internet connected computer in their workplace it will prove much more time consuming and less likely that you can achieve the same results. It is now a tool that has become essential to do your job professionally and this message needs feeding through to those who can speed up the provision of facilities to your office. BIGGA is providing on-line courses to assist with training in the use of computers at very modest costs to members and I hope these prove useful.

Helping members to be viewed by all concerned as true professionals continues to be an important objective of BIGGA. Gaining that recognition will only result from working together to raise standards across all aspects of our work and demonstrating this by actions. Take full advantage of all the learning opportunities available on a regular basis for you and your colleagues to keep up to date, improving and ahead.



# Greenkeepers Training Committee



**A message from the Chairman of the GTC, Donald Steel**

**If experience (better than old age) has one benefit, it is in allowing you to draw comparisons. Where greenkeeping is concerned, the conclusions are invariably that what goes round, comes round.**

However, one e-mail last week from America talked of Superintendents looking for ways of trimming costs in the light of a weaker economy.

The suggested method was a drastic reduction in the use of water, fertilisers and chemicals. How are the mighty fallen?

One means of astonishing Golf Course Superintendents in America is to mention the average annual budget for British courses allied to the number of greenkeepers commissioned to look after them.

It prompts open-mouthed disbelief but therein is contained the contrast in philosophies.

British regimes have always been more austere, a formula geared to a different climate and a largely different interpretation of how courses should play.

One of the problems arises over here when Clubs are misguided enough to want to copy the American approach by having everything green and heavily watered but, in spite of consistently higher temperatures, it is surprising in the Southern States how little water Bermuda grasses need.

One of the other spin-offs from experience is saying the same thing in a different way, a subtle exercise in trying to disguise the nature of the contents by means of fresh packaging.

Sustainable golf is the new war cry, "optimising the playing quality of the golf course in harmony with the conservation of its natural environment under economically sound and socially responsible management".

It is a subject that has led to my delving into my old Press cuttings in order to make sure I am not missing anything but,

having worked closely with Jim Arthur over a couple of decades or more, and been the recipient of countless of his oral and written exocet missiles, I don't think I am. At last, I can hear him saying, somebody may be listening.

One item that comes to mind surrounded the time in 1975 when no sooner had the R&A announced that Turnberry would hold its first Open Championship in 1977 than the Ailsa course was reported to be in poor condition.

Alarm bells rang and a magic potion was brewed by Jim consisting of something of a return to nature, a reduction of inorganic feeding, regular aeration and scarification; and a tight hold on water. Does any of that sound familiar?

It also highlighted other lessons. Firstly, that the course is a Club's greatest asset, its sole reason for existence, and that it should receive priority over everything else; and secondly, years of proper management can be swept away in months by heavy-handedness- a clear message that prevention is so much better (and cheaper) than cure.

It was a year or so later that the British Association of Golf Course Architects drew to public attention the need for formalised greenkeeper training of which Jim was also a strong proponent.

The architects were among the first to see the futility of building a host of new courses with only a handful of qualified men to look after them.

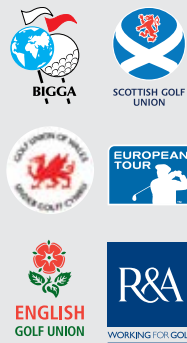
They realised the total dependence of architects on high class maintenance in order to achieve their desired aims.

Today's healthy situation, as far as the excellent standards of greenkeeping are concerned, stem from around that time but so, too, does The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' involvement with golf.

## In Brief

Donald Steel praises the work of the UK's greenkeepers, and how Jim Arthur would be delighted at the current move towards sustainable golf.

The GTC is funded by:



They have recently collaborated with the R&A on a book making golfers aware of the value of golf courses in providing safe havens for birds but, as I wrote in the Sunday Telegraph in March 1976, "golf course architects have been trying for years to convince doubters that courses are a natural blend with the countryside and that their aim is to create and maintain natural habitats".

It followed The RSPB's appeal to "Save a place for Birds" launched by its then Director, Ian Prestt.

By way of celebration, they organised a "Save a birdie" competition (how long did it take to think of that title?!) in which every golf Club was invited to take part.

In spreading the word, they were greatly assisted by an entirely unplanned television transmission of an Open when a mother and her young pheasant chicks were spied by an observant cameraman evading the hordes of spectators.

It struck such a chord, in fact, that no programme was allowed to start without a progress report on the birds and their welfare.

In 1987, Sir David Attenborough joined forces with the Royal Society for Nature Conservancy by announcing a new Club tournament, the British Wildlife National Golf Classic, maintaining that "golf courses have always, and will always, provide splendid wildlife habitats for whatever reason they are conserved".

Many golfers play the game as much for its aesthetic delights as its challenge and they and nearly every greenkeeper require no prompting in supporting such a worthy cause.

It has always struck me that sustainability and wildlife preservation go together and that all birds are welcome- except perhaps the Canada goose.



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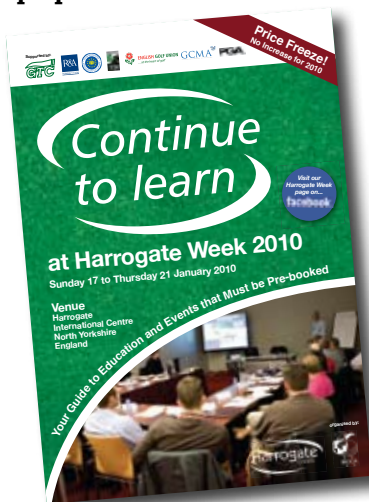


# Learning & Development

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development,  
with an update on education issues



**I can almost hear Santa's little helpers making all the toys and I think it would be quite useful if some of them could come and help Rachael and I out with the Harrogate Week preparations!**



## Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week 2010

Bookings are coming in fast for the Workshops and Seminars that must be pre-booked.

Details of all the educational events that are taking place during Harrogate Week are available on the Harrogate Week website:

[www.harrogateweek.org.uk](http://www.harrogateweek.org.uk). Bookings can be taken by, credit card, online through the Harrogate Week website, over the telephone by calling the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 and select Option 3 or by completing a booking form.

The Golf Course Design Workshop makes a welcomed return to the programme.

We have updated the workshops Practical Management of a Safety Management System, Preparing and Delivering Powerful Presentations and Finance and Accounting to continue to meet the changes in the responsibilities of today's supervisors and managers.

We are also featuring three new one day workshops - Emergency First Aid, How to be an Outstanding Manager and Basic Golf Mechanics.

The majority of Seminars that are taking place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are Free of Charge to all visitors to the BTME and ClubHouse Exhibition.

Places are limited and are available on a first come, first serve basis. It is recommended that you turn up in plenty of time for the seminars you are most interested in attending.

Information on all of the Free Seminars is available on the Harrogate Week website.

If you have any queries or want to check availability of any of the Workshops, please contact the Learning and Development Department on 01347 833800 and selection option 3.

To view the list of confirmed-to-date Fringe Seminars go to Page 55

## SAPCA Exhibition and Seminars

The Sports and Play Construction Association is hosting a special one-day event that comprises a



The funding provided by Golden 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 Golden and Silver Key Sponsors.

series of informative and educational seminars accompanied by an exhibition featuring the leading constructors of sports facilities, suppliers of related products and services as well as professional consultants offering expert advice on sports facility projects.

BIGGA will be exhibiting at this event. Tracey Madison, Head of Membership Services, and I will there promoting BIGGA and available to answer any questions relating to the Association.

The event takes place on Tuesday, November 24, at Twickenham Stadium, West London and attendance at the event is free of charge. For further information visit the SAPCA website, [www.sapca.org.uk](http://www.sapca.org.uk) or telephone 02476 416316.



## Higher Education Scholarships

Supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

The most recent scholarships have been awarded to:

Matthew Hutchinson - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf  
Geoffrey Fenn - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf

All of the funding that was available from The BIGGA Higher Education Scholarship Fund has now been distributed. Twelve members have benefited in 2010 and over 100 members have received funding towards their Higher Education since the Scholarship Fund was established in 2002.



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Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Steven Tierney; Paul Jenkins; Iain Barr; Richard McGlynn; Steve Dixon; Hamish Campbell, Neil Whitaker, Robert Maibusch.



## BIG NEW FLEET FOR RIO REAL

Rio Real Golf & Wellness Resort, east of Marbella on Spain's Costa del Sol has recently purchased a fleet of 54 petrol E-Z-GO RXV golf cars from local distributor, Green Mowers of Estepona.

"We have purchased these new buggies for numerous reasons; their economy, quality of build and the fact that they are

a new generation of golf cars and have many innovative features. Golf on the Costa del Sol is very competitive and last year we achieved 38,000 rounds; however, this year we are targeting a further 2,000 rounds, which puts an added pressure on the course," said Course Director, Antonio Ortiz Rufino.

"In all of our dealings with Green Mowers they have been very professional and the service levels have been excellent. It helps that they are close by at Estepona, so if we have any issues they can be with us quickly. However, I must say that the buggies have performed very well and we are delighted with them."



## Mowers Prove their Worth

Ellesmere College in rural north Shropshire, with a strong commitment to sport and other extra-curricular activities has just purchased its first ever John Deere machines for the extensive grounds and nine-hole golf course.

Ian Morris, the school's Head Groundsman for the past 30 years, chose a John Deere 500 triple cylinder mower and 220C walk-behind greens mower after a lengthy review of machines on the market, and bought them from dealer Charlies Groundcare at Newtown in Powys.

The school has recently bought another 75 acres and hopes to establish a bigger golf course and an extra 17 acres of sports fields in due course. In addition to the existing golf course, there are three cricket squares, 14 grass cricket nets, up to seven rugby or football pitches and two grass hockey pitches, as well as six hard tennis courts.

"We needed to replace another triple mower that was nine years old, so I spent several months looking at half a dozen or so different machines," says Ian Morris.

"This is used primarily on the golf course surrounds and all the college lawns. We cut pretty regularly so we don't bother boxing off, the grass clippings all go back into the ground, but the mower still leaves a nice clean finish.



# Belfry Chosen for New RT Launch



Rigby Taylor conference delegates gather in front of the 10th tee.

The Belfry was the venue when Rigby Taylor launched a new range of products for greenkeepers, groundsmen and landscapers.

Over 60 staff and guests attended to hear all about the innovative turf fungicide Eland, a new liquid seed coating and a new and improved range of linemarking paint formulations.

## RENEWED AGREEMENT

European Golf Design will be continuing its patronage of the Golf Environment Organisation with the signing of a new three-year partnership agreement. This financial and in-kind commitment will help GEO to continue advancing golf's sustainability drive.

Over the last three years, EGD's support for GEO has enabled considerable progress in enhancing golf's social and environmental role around the world. Patron support fuels core initiatives and projects such as GEO Certification, an innovative on-line programme that helps golf clubs improve their performance, profile and profitability: [www.golfenvironment.org](http://www.golfenvironment.org)

Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive of GEO said: "European Golf Design's continued support is a great boost to GEO. To have the backing of one of the world's premier golf design companies is important to us. It reinforces the fact that GEO's approach is credible, comprehensive, and very relevant to developers, club owners, managers and greenkeepers as well as golf's governing bodies. EGD has recognised the fundamental business value in designing courses and supporting masterplans which generate valued social, economic and environmental outcomes".

Jeremy Slessor, Managing Director of EGD added: "At EGD we take this partnership very seriously. We have already established an environmental policy for the practice, and have begun to footprint and offset our unavoidable carbon emissions. We have been screening projects for their environmental sustainability and training staff in advanced technical disciplines to enable them to make the most informed design decisions."



## First Rescue Delivery Arrives in St Andrews

The world's first commercial delivery of Syngenta's herbicide, Rescue, has arrived in the UK, with the first bottles delivered straight to St Andrews Links. The new selective herbicide has been brought in to help remove invasive weed Ryegrass and enhance the desirable fine Fescue grasses that were sown on the Castle Course.

St Andrews Links Trust was actively involved with the successful registration trials for Rescue, which received full approval for use on greens, tees, fairways and rough areas of golf courses in July this year.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at the Trust, said that invasive Ryegrass spoils the visual appearance and the playing quality of Fescue turf surfaces on many links golf courses.

"Our experience from the trials is that we now have an opportunity effectively to remove Ryegrass and other coarse grasses faster and more cost effectively than traditional cultural practices, without any disruption in play," said Gordon.





The new look 2nd green allows the player to see the entire green from the tee.





# Same Name, Different Course

**It's the largest and most demanding project ever to have been undertaken by a British golf club. Scott MacCallum met up with Wentworth's, Chris Kennedy, to see a remarkable transformation of a famous old course.**



**The decision to dig up, redesign and rebuild, to USGA spec, all 18 greens on Wentworth's iconic West Course has had the greenkeeping industry buzzing since the plan was made public.**

Much of the talk was of how Courses Manager, Chris Kennedy, would be able to achieve such a formidable task within the tight time-frame dictated by the end of one BMW PGA Championship, this May, and the start of the next BMW PGA Championship next May, as well as cope with the fierce examination and high expectations that come with hosting top Tour players.

The opportunity to make the changes only came about because the World Match-Play, which had traditionally been held over the same course in the autumn, was moved to Spain.

Well, Chris is currently deep into the project and they are on track to complete in time for next year's Championship, but this isn't the original plan. Oh no, the whole project has grown massively in recent months and it would be fair to say that had what is being done been contemplated earlier it would probably have been dismissed as over-ambitious folly.

The West Course that will confront defending Champion, Paul Casey, and the other 155 players next year at the BMW PGA Championship, will be completely different to the one to which they waved goodbye this May – changes so dramatic they could be compared to a regenerated Time Lord – “He says he's Dr Who, but he looks completely different!” To tweak another sci fi reference – “It's Wentworth, Jim, but not as we know it.”

In fact, only the par-3 5th has remained basically unchanged other than its new green.

Nowhere is that change more apparent than at the 18th hole.

In previous years a potential winner, needing a birdie four to win, would need a drive just inside the bunkers on the left of the fairway then hit a solid approach, either flying all the way to the green or bouncing in, avoiding the two bunkers, leaving two putts on the tricky sloping green.

Faced with the same situation next May, and having congratulated himself on a fine tee shot, the winner-in-waiting will look up and be faced with an eight metre wide creek running down the right side of the fairway with a nine feet high sleeper wall before cutting across

the fairway, in front of a green which has been lifted another half metre above that.

“Originally there were three bunkers on the 18th, and after it was redesigned there were 13, but even then our owner, Richard Caring, said he was disappointed,” explained Chris as we drove around the new look course.

“He said there wasn't enough drama and that he wanted a totally different hole. He then came up with the idea of the creek – we're calling it Richard's Creek – and the elevated green.”

Raised greens is something that Richard Caring – a 2-handicapper who has played on some of the finest courses in the world – is keen on and the new look course boasts several greens significantly higher than their predecessors.

“He has got a fantastic eye and a lot of quality players and European Tour officials have said how much they like the input he has had on the course,” explained Chris. Richard Caring is the owner of Caprice Holdings, whose portfolio includes many top nightclubs and restaurants including Annabel's; The Ivy, Soho House, and Le Caprice, and he has contributed a lot to how they look as well.

The original concept of rebuilding the greens had been under discussion between Wentworth and the Tour, which is based at Wentworth, for some time, in response to certain players who had voiced dissatisfaction with the course's poa greens and subsequently not entered the PGA Championship.

“It was driven by people like Padraig Harrington and Ian Poulter who were unhappy that we couldn't get the greens at the PGA to the standard we had them for the Matchplay, which was played in the autumn. The explanation was that the Matchplay had enjoyed five months of growth whereas the PGA is in May, when we don't have double figure temperatures until three weeks before the event and obviously the first thing that kicks off is the poa seed.

“The greens were still running at 11 and a half and we'd only lose two inches on the stimpmeter between 7am and 7pm, thanks to verticutting and products like Primo Maxx, but unfortunately there are players who have decided that they can't putt on poa greens and won't take time to learn. It's not just us, Pebble Beach, Pine Valley and many big tournament venues are nearly all poa,” said Chris.

However, the decision was taken to change the greens and Chris



Co-project Manager, Jack McMillan with Chris Kennedy

explained to the owner that the turf was not the most important issue – “That's just the carpet on top,” Chris had told him – and that they needed to rebuild the greens to USGA spec so they would all “perc” at the same rate and react the same to the golf ball, which had been a major concern.

Together with the STRI, Jeff Perris and George Shiels, as well as Jack McMillan, who acted as Co-Project Manager with Chris, they agreed to use Colonial Bent, which they'd already used to overseed, on the new greens.

“People have been using Creeping Bent but that creates so much thatch and poa comes in quickly. Apart from that you can't play Creeping Bent greens in winter