



# Chairman's Word

Halfway through his term, BIGGA Chairman, Paul Worster, looks back at performance and forward to success

So far, so good?

**Six months of my term as Chairman have now elapsed and the messages people kindly send to talktopaul@hotmail.co.uk have prompted me to consider where we are now and where we need to be going.**

By way of brief explanation BIGGA has an elected (volunteer) Board who are responsible for policy making and implementation. The Board determines the duties of the Chief Executive (CE) who then administers the Association's affairs under the general instruction of the Board, i.e. the CE produces a Business Plan and supervises the professional HQ team to achieve the Business Plan.

It is an honour for me to serve this Association and to work with the Board and the HQ team. At the AGM in January the members attending indicated that they wanted me to take an active role in the business and gave me their mandate to work with the HQ team and our hard working volunteers to make BIGGA the best membership organisation anywhere (See my March column).

I freely admit - this is a rather 'all-encompassing' vision and one that will need continuous effort and attention. However, six months ago I expressed the belief that we already have the leadership, the professional HQ team and the infrastructure (populated by really great volunteers) to achieve this goal and I still feel the same.

My confidence that we can achieve this aim was reinforced recently by Tracey Maddison at HQ who kindly gave me an excellent brief on how we can all contribute to recruiting more members. Her great ideas, and more, will feature in a later column and I hope will become a major drive for the Association. For now let's look at some success measures and consider what might still need to be done by your Chairman and Board.

At a FEGGA Seminar in February, I gained insights into how successful membership organisations are measured. These measures assess the way an association operates as

a business, and make no mistake – BIGGA is a business – and like any other it needs to be managed well.

## 1: A Customer Service Culture

I am grateful to the Chief Executive for his efforts; particularly the personal example he sets with his customer focus. Our trade partners are also our customers as are our volunteers at all levels.

Let me be clear now – your Board and staff members are deeply committed to ensuring that we continue to improve the ways we offer our services and interact with our members. *Please also see my April column.*

## 2: The Alignment of Products and Services with the organisation's mission

Our mission statement reads – 'BIGGA is dedicated to the continuing professional development of its members and in serving their needs will strive through education and training for standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession'.

Your Board are keen to advance the profession through CPD and, with the expert guidance of Sami Collins, the Learning and Development Sub-Committee are working energetically to expand the take-up of CPD. See my June column.

I will continue to strive to meet this 'take-up' challenge through key activities like: the (soon to be updated) BIGGA CPD Accreditation scheme; and a specific event for Assistant Greenkeepers at Harrogate Week 2011. *See my May column.*

## 3: Data Driven Strategies

I am also grateful to Board members for their often heroic efforts to formulate clear strategies and make wise decisions. I will continue to encourage Board members and HQ staff to gather the key data that our three-tiered structure makes accessible to us.

It is so important that the Board makes informed decisions based on up-to-date information from a wide range of sources.

## 4: Dialogue and Engagement

I am grateful to the Board for all that they do to represent the aspirations of their members at all levels.

I will encourage Board members and HQ staff to ensure that we respond to this key challenge by supporting local volunteers with events like BIGGA Regional Open Days; BIGGA Volunteers Workshop at Harrogate Week 2011.

*Please also see my March, April and June columns.*

## 5: CEO is a broker of good ideas for the Board

I am grateful to the Chief Executive who has not only brokered good ideas but seen their wider potential e.g. expanding the 'Careers Clinic' at Harrogate Week into a 'Careers Fair' complete with Job Wall.

## 6: Organisational Adaptability

Although a small outfit like BIGGA HQ may be vulnerable to sudden skills shortages requiring an up-to-date Succession Plan and cover for key roles - its size means it can move swiftly: - adapt to unforeseen market conditions; - optimise the way it delivers its services.

I will actively encourage your Board to ensure that the Association's organisation and resources, as well as its products and services, are aligned to its mission.

## 7: Alliance Building

I am grateful to the Chief Executive for his hard work over many years to build meaningful partnerships with key trade and sporting bodies.

I will actively encourage your Board to ensure that we continue to form advantageous alliances with organisations in the golf sector.

So far, so good.

In closing let me mention that your Board recently honoured Cecil George with the BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award.

The vision of Cecil and people like him (who helped develop formal training for Greenkeepers) continues to help BIGGA to be where it should be i.e. in the forefront of the advancement of the greenkeeping profession.



# Greenkeepers Training Committee



**David Golding, Education Director,  
with a monthly update from the GTC**

**Early indications are that Apprenticeships will remain although the new Government has yet to confirm where funding support, if any, will be focused to benefit employers and learners.**

The GTC has ensured the Apprenticeships at both Levels 2 and 3 include the skills and knowledge required by employers and whilst these frameworks are available for all ages, when it comes to funding support, it is the young 16-19 age group, where priority funding is guaranteed.

I am sure we all agree that funding should be made available to ensure youngsters either receive support through their employers registering them as an apprentice with a Centre, or on a full-time college based course/qualification such as a National Certificate when they are unable to gain employment.

However, what about the over 19's and the mature career changes who would love to follow the apprenticeship pathway? If funding support is not available to employers they might unfairly be discriminated against!

The GTC will continue to raise this matter and Centre staff have to be prepared to react as and when new initiatives are announced.

Ideally we would see funding made available to support apprentices of all ages and funding for short courses using the Units from within the various qualifications.

Regular readers of this page will know the GTC, through consultation, maintains the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the greenkeeping sector from which vocational, apprenticeships and centre based qualifications are developed.

We sincerely hope that the Government continues to support employer led organisations like the GTC who, despite the bureaucracy and numerous hours of meetings, work within the "system" therefore the employers we represent should be supported accordingly.

There are far too many apprentice success stories to list in this article but it is still as important today as it was when I first became an apprentice in the mid-sixties. Not that I am claiming to be one of the success stories!

Let us hope that within all the promised funding cuts, training doesn't receive any and our employers continue to invest in their staff of all ages.

Not only has the GTC continually lobbied for support funding for all formal qualifications but has also encouraged the take up of Continual Professional Development (CPD) by greenkeepers and employers for short courses which must be the next target.

These short courses could easily be funded if the government instructed its funding bodies to allow Centres, including colleges to offer courses using Units grouped together, which can give the learner a certificate of achievement.

In my opinion there has been far too much emphasis on full qualifications and this has been to the detriment of many greenkeepers looking to progress their skills and knowledge in association with their employers.

The GTC, in partnership with the new Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers must be prepared to deliver short courses, as these underpin all of the formal qualifications and National Occupational Standards.

If we could just get the Government to recognise the demand and popularity for short courses and at least put some funding towards this area of training, I am sure we will see the Centres move fairly quickly.

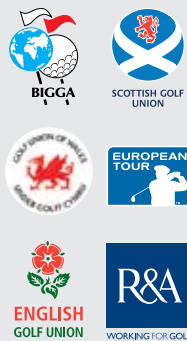
Whether we call it CPD or progression, learners will soon get used to this and the GTC will put its weight behind this matter at every opportunity.

At a very recent meeting I heard that "progression" would become a government buzzword for learners. If it does I have to assume this is just what the GTC has been lobbying for since N/SVQ's were

## In Brief

This month, as the new coalition Government sorts out its priority for funding, one thing is clear as David explains how we all need to work together to ensure golf clubs continue to benefit from the structure opportunities already in place for greenkeeper training.

The GTC is funded by:



introduced in the early nineties.

Employers for their part, through their Course Managers should keep up to speed with the various courses and qualifications, as there is no substitute for having a well trained workforce.

Finally, as from the 31st August there will be a new look to the GTC Approved Training Provider section on the website.

As part of its ongoing commitment to quality the GTC has written to all of its current approved providers with a revised criteria and an invitation to join the GTC's Quality Assured Scheme.

Colleges and Private Companies meeting the criteria and offering the formal qualifications will, in future, be promoted to employers and learners as GTC APPROVED CENTRES.

A new criteria and category for individuals and organisations will be GTC APPROVED TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Watch out for the GTC Quality Assured Scheme logo from September, as it will be the kite mark by which education and training will be measured in the future.



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# Learning & Development

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



**This last month the L&D Department has been heavily involved with The Open, the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year regional interviews, the introduction of the new membership benefit, the "How To..." guides. There is no let up in August as the Continue to Learn education programme hits the top of the 'To Do' list!**



## "How To..." Guides

*Do you ever ask yourself these questions?*

- How do I conduct a one-to-one meeting?
- How do I conduct a team briefing?
- How do I prepare for an appraisal?
- How do I recruit the right staff?
- How do I write a job description?

There are now 19 "How To..." guides available to help you answer these questions and more:

1. Cascade Goals to Teams and Individuals
2. Conduct 180° and 360° Appraisals
3. Conduct Team Briefings
4. Develop a Business Plan
5. Develop a Training and Development Policy
6. Develop an Appraisal System
7. Develop and Organisational Training Play
8. Develop Succession Plans
9. Evaluate Individual Training and Development

10. Evaluate Training and Development Against Goals and Targets
11. Introduce Continuous Improvement
12. Plan an Induction
13. Prepare a Skills Matrix
14. Prepare a Training Record
15. Prepare for an Appraisal
16. Promote Equal Opportunities
17. Recruit the Right Staff
18. Write a Job Description
19. Conduct a One-to-One Meeting

The "How To..." guides are short, handy guides providing practical, step by step guidance on the listed subjects. The guides can be downloaded and used to help you develop your knowledge and implement new processes within your workplace.

Introduced exclusively for BIGGA Members, you'll find the guides by accessing Member Resources in the members area of the website.

The 'How To...' guides are brought to you thanks to the continuing support of the contributors to the Learning and Development Fund.



## Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year

The regional interviews for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year have been completed and the eight finalists have been selected, they are:

- Craig Boath, from Carnoustie Golf Links, representing Elmwood College
- Sean Borrett, from Ellesborough Golf Club, representing Myerscough College



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.



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• Sebastian Cavilla from The Manor House Golf Club, representing Bridgwater College, Cannington Centre

• Tom Hayward from Frome Golf Club, representing Bridgwater College, Cannington Centre

• Robert Mills from Sunningdale Golf Club, representing Guildford College

• Gavin Moore from Launceston Golf Club, representing Duchy College

• Andrew Stanger from Horsforth Golf Club, representing Askham Bryan College

• Stephen Thompson from Bearsted Golf Club, representing Hadlow College

My thanks go to our RAs Peter Boyd, Jane Jones and Clive Osgood and to our greenkeeping representatives Euan Grant, Gary Cunningham, Chris Sealey, Tony Smith, Gerald Bruce and Cameron McMillan who, along with the Toro representatives selected our eight National Finalists.

The National Finals will take place at BIGGA House on 12 and 13 September. I'm sure you will join me in wishing all of the finalists the very best of luck.



## Higher Education Scholarships Supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

The most recent scholarship has been awarded to: Andrew Reason – HNC Golf Course Management

## Thank you to our Golden and Silver Key Sponsors



**Golden Key Individual Members:** Steven Tierney; WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Tom Smith; Frank Newberry; Christopher Lomas MG, Lee Strutt MG; **Silver Key Individual Members:** Ade Archer; Iain Barr; Hamish Campbell; Steve Dixon; Paul Jenkins; Robert Maibusch MG; Richard McGlynn; Stephen Pope; Jason Sarna; Neil Whitaker; Graham Wylie, Michael Beaton, Douglas Duguid

## ROYAL CINQUE PORTS STAYS WITH RANSOMES JACOBSEN



The Royal Cinque Ports GC, situated on the narrow stretch of coastline between Deal and Sandwich Bay in Kent, has added further Ransomes Jacobsen turf maintenance equipment to maintain the championship links course.

The club has added four G-Plex III ride-on triplex mowers, two with greens cutting units and two for tees, two Fairway 305s with cabs and an AR250 rotary mower for maintaining the rough, all supplied by local dealer Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd.

Ian Barnard is the Course Manager and a former professional golfer who turned to greenkeeping following a serious injury that curtailed his career.

Commenting on the new equipment he said, "As you would expect from a links course we have a very undulating playing surfaces, both severe and subtle, so we need equipment that delivers a high quality finish, while having the ability to work under these exacting conditions here at Royal Cinque Ports.

The club have opted for a five year operating lease with full maintenance contract, which provides them with a fixed monthly cost and dovetails with their operating strategy.

"This latest package, with its combination of equipment, high service levels from local dealer Ernest Doe & Sons and a finance plan that suits our business plan, is definitely the best package us," Ian Barnard concluded.



## Etesia UK on the Move

Etesia UK is celebrating its 15th year of trading with a move to modern, custom built premises at Shennington near Banbury, Oxfordshire. The company required a larger warehouse and in-house training areas.

Etesia UK began in 1995 with only one walk- behind and one ride-on machine but have grown rapidly and now offer a wide range of products, that include a variety of walk-behind & ride-on mowers, and a range of brush cutters. The company is also the exclusive UK dealer for the range of Pellenc lithium-ion battery powered chainsaws, polesaws, pruning shears and hedge cutters.

The move has been brought about by a steady rise in business and an increase in customers and machinery sales since the company was formed.

The contact details for Etesia UK are: Greenway House Sugarswell Business Park Shennington Oxon OX15 6HW. Tel: 01295 680120 Fax: 01295 680852



## EURO GRASS JOINS TURFGRASS GROWERS ASSOCIATION

The Turfgrass Growers Association has welcomed grass seed breeder, producer and supplier Euro Grass BV as a new affiliate member.

Euro Grass is an international company which is active in turfgrass breeding and production in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. New to the British amenity market, its aim, through the recent appointment of Simon Taylor as UK Sales & Marketing Manager, is to offer a portfolio of amenity grasses that provides high level seed cleanliness and unrivalled cultivar performance for turf production. The company

already has a number of cultivars established on the STRI/BSPB seed listings.

Simon Taylor explained: "Our membership is very important as it enables interaction with grower members and to present Euro Grass and its products on a professional level. We are looking forward to working with the Association and turf growers to tackle some of the challenges which face the industry in current times."

Simon can be contacted on 01522 868946 or by email on [simon.taylor@eurograss.com](mailto:simon.taylor@eurograss.com). [www.turfgrass.co.uk](http://www.turfgrass.co.uk)

## Sherriff to be Sole Suppliers

Sherriff Amenity has signed a new extended agreement with De Vere Hotel & Leisure to remain the sole suppliers of chemical, fertiliser and grass seed to their golf courses nationwide.

Mark Pyrah, Sherriff Amenity Director said:

"We are delighted that De Vere have chosen Sherriff Amenity to remain their exclusive suppliers.

"The agreement that has been reached will ensure that De Vere continue to benefit from volume group purchases, a high level of sales support and the latest in new product technology within the amenity arena.

"Sherriff Amenity's industry leading research and development programme allows us to provide our customers with the latest in new technical innovation backed by our unrivalled range of products, selected from regional, national and international manufacturers."

# What's your Number?

*Our regular and random profile of an industry figure continues with this month's lucky number...*

Mike Beardall, of Oakfield Media, answers some searching questions



### 1. What is your position within the company?

Owner and chief coffee-maker.

### 2. How long have you been in the industry?

As a journalist for 42 years. In the sports surface management sector 15 years.

### 3. How did you get into it?

From school as a trainee reporter on a local paper. After various newspaper jobs, joined the Daily Mail for 10 years. Entered horticulture in the 80s while running a six-acre smallholding in West Sussex, and later freelanced on *The Water Gardener* and *Turf Management* magazines, followed by editing *The Groundsman* for 11 years.

### 4. What other jobs have you done?

It's all been journalism and public relations, plus photography – but my family were all farmers so I really feel comfortable when working outdoors. I've done my fair share of cultivating, growing and harvesting over the years.

### 5. What do you like about your current job?

The opportunity to meet so many people who enjoy their work. Greenkeepers, groundsman and gardeners all share a common passion for perfection and are all very friendly.

### 6. What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?

More science, better machinery and an increase in the recognition for people who produce top-notch sports surfaces and excellent parks and gardens.

### 7. What do you like to do in your spare time?

Pottering around auctions, adding to the clutter in my garage, gardening and golf – but not often enough.

### 8. Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

Still working! Unless my lottery ticket comes up and then I'll be on my yacht in the Bahamas.

### 9. Who do you consider best friends in the industry?

Cannot name them all – but they know who they are.

### 10. What do you consider to be your lucky number?

18 – the date of my son and grandson's birthday.

### 11. Pick a number ...31

*Mike has picked Lee Penrose of the STRI*



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# A gamble pays off

Scott MacCallum visits Donaghadee  
Golf Club which has turned around its  
fortunes thanks to some brave decisions



**Three years ago Donaghadee Golf Club, near Bangor, in Northern Ireland, took a gamble.**

Losing members, with the course not maximising its potential, the club recognised that a change was needed and advertised for a top Course Manager to turn around its fortunes as well as setting aside a significant amount of money to invest in the course.

Local man, Aaron Small, who had been number two at Clondeboye Golf Club for the previous 10 years, was attracted by the prospect of making his mark on the course and took on the challenge. If it was indeed a gamble for both sides, fortune has certainly favoured the brave.

The course is now in superb condition with an extensive bunker programme nearing completion which has transformed the golfing challenge and a new practice facility which will surely become the envy of many others. All in three short years.

“The course was lacking definition to be honest while the bunkers were in serious need of attention – they were old, in the wrong places with inconsistent sand,” said Aaron, who had played the course a number of times both as a junior and a senior team player.

“Basically the course was behind

the times but credit to the club, they appreciated that something needed to be done – the nettle was grasped and money spent.

“I knew, coming here, that it was going to be a challenge but I certainly wasn’t daunted by it.”

Aaron had been honest at his interview, highlighting where he thought the problems were, and that was music to the ears of the interview panel, who knew then that they’d got their man.

“I personally believe that the Head Greenkeeper needs to play golf otherwise it’s like a chef who doesn’t taste his own food. If I’d been a member of Donaghadee I wouldn’t have been happy and I could understand why people were leaving,” said Aaron, a 4 handicapper who hits the ball a country mile.

The first thing he did when he started was, as with most new men, turn the greens around, and the club was quick to honour its commitment with around £80,000 worth of new machinery, which has since been added to by another £70,000 worth of kit.

“Before I started they had one guy stuck on a three unit rough mower and it took him a full week to cut the rough. We now have a seven unit Toro and we get the work done in a day and a half. We were immediately saving three and a half days’ worth

of wages each week which meant that the machine basically paid itself and we got a better quality finish,” said Aaron, who couldn’t believe how busy the course was when he arrived.

“I thought it must have been Open week as we regularly have 600 people out between Friday and Sunday and I’d been used to Clondeboye, which had two courses to swallow up the golfers.”

“The greens are our bread and butter. I took out about 210 boxes of thatch and sanded them straight away to get them running true. It was the best thing for them.”

Having made an impact on the greens and added definition to the fairways Aaron then turned his attention to the bunkers.

“I was grubbing a greenside bunker on the 4th when the Captain came over. I pulled the hand grubber through the first time and it was HS Masters sand. I pulled it through again and it was Wexford White. The third time it was Silica. So basically there had been a problem with the Silica sand so instead of digging it out the Wexford had been put on top and when there was a problem with that the HS was put on top of that. It was good for the Captain to see what we were up against.”

Aaron had worked with architect, Howard Swan, at Clondeboye on



ABOVE: Aaron Small



70 bunkers which had been well received by the members and felt that Howard could make an impact at Donaghadee.

"I'd been in the club around six months before I approached them and suggested that we bring Howard in to take a look and they agreed."

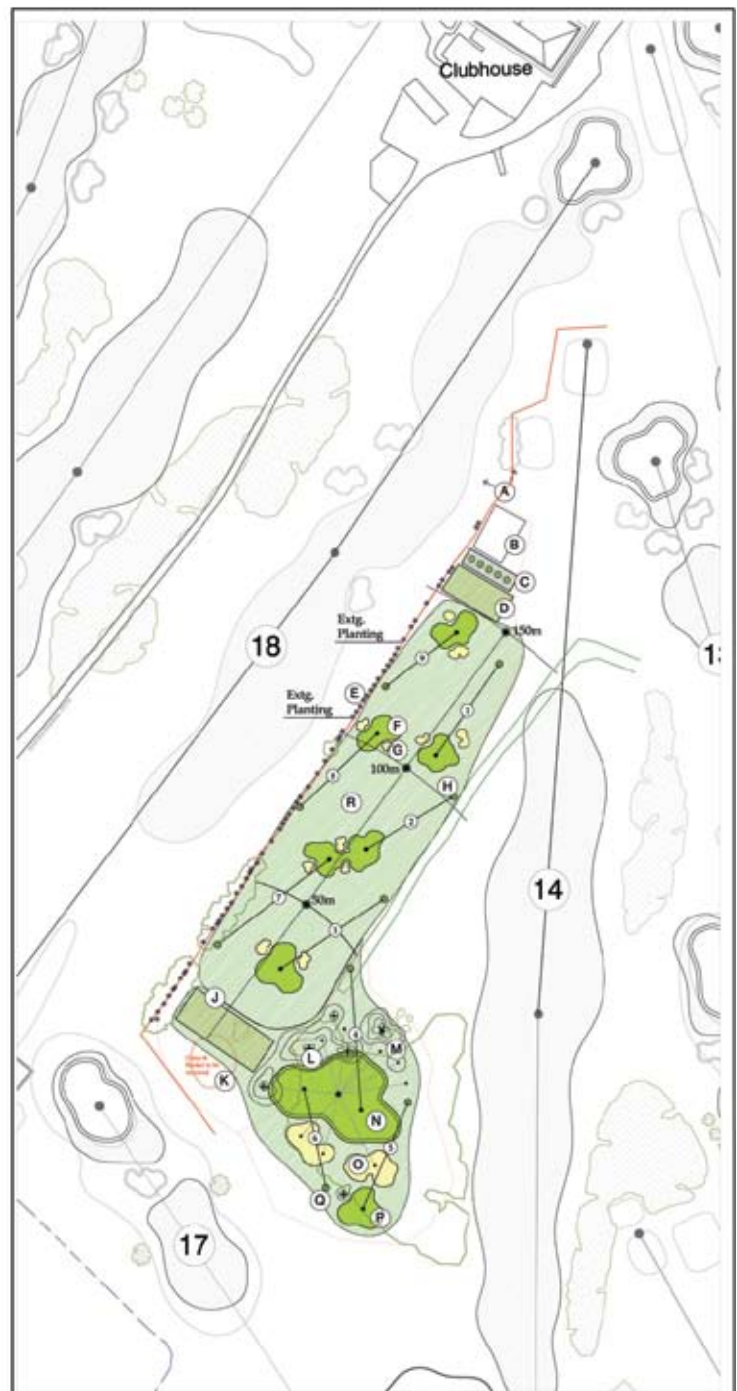
Howard visited and the club agreed that he would look at two holes, the visually appealing par-3 13th and the 18th, the two holes that would make the biggest impact.

"The downhill 13th was a bit unbalanced with one bunker on the front, one on the right and another at the back. Now it looks like a real signature hole with bunkers surrounding the green. With the 18th it meant people left the course thinking what a good golf course it was. The club was over the moon

## Howard Swan's Short-course Plan

### KEY

- A Access to/from Clubhouse to Practice Ground
- B Existing Practice Tee
- C Artificial Teeing Area
- D Grass Tee Area - North
- E Tree Planting/Screening
- F x5 Target Greens, Main Outfield, as part of x6 Hole Course
- G x11 Bunker Hazards to 6 Hole Course
- H Artificial Teeing Mats x9
- J Grass Tee Area - South
- K Existing Chipping Green & Bunker to be removed
- L Practice Mounds Area
- M Practice Hollows Area
- N x1 Main Academy Green doubling up as 3 additional holes
- O Bunker Academy
- P x1 Target Green
- Q Area of Woodland to be removed
- R Range Outfield



**“The club knew that the course was behind the times so the nettle was grasped and money was spent.”**

**Aaron Small**

and the decision to extend it to the rest of the bunkering was easy,” said Aaron, or “Bunker Boy” as some of the members call him.

After that a programme which involved Howard visiting twice in the year, in February and October for three days with two holes being done each time.

“The course is a little below average length wise and there is no way we can make it longer so really the only way we can improve the challenge is to tighten the course up with the bunkering and make sure they are in the correct places.

“We put £20,000 in the budget each year which worked out at £5,000 per hole covering all architect fees; digger man fees, drainage, sand etc. I really enjoy working with Howard because he is on site the whole time and can make amends as we go rather than him leaving plans for us to interpret.”

Asked to describe a Swan bunker Aaron explains that they fit in well to the landscape and that they are built in proportion to the scale of the golf course.

“Visually they look excellent but they do require a bit of maintainance as they need to be hand raked.”

Aaron firmly believes that bunkers are the toughest element of a golf course to get right and that it is certainly harder to get bunker



ABOVE AND BELOW: The new practice grounds



consistency right than it is green consistency.

“Category One golfers like them to be firm but higher handicappers like a bit softer and fluffier. But we’ve also got to contend with wind blow as well as the fact that some bunkers drain better than others. Then you’ve got to look at the fact that sun facing bunker dry out more quickly, while those that are more in play will react differently to those that are not found so often. It is an impossible task to achieve total consistency.”

With the bunkers on track and due to be completed in another four visits, there is a steady improvement much to the delight of the members, despite the fact that it has made the course at least a shot tougher.

While this has been going on, other areas of the course haven’t been neglected and have seen an upgrade.

“We’ve improved the signage and made money,” explained Aaron.

“We bought some excellent signs from Eagle Promotions which have been cemented in. They are wooden and have a map of the hole painted on them and look great. We got them sponsored for an average of around £500 each for two years – more for par-3s as they are studied for yardages more than others and the 1st is more as well. For the sponsorship they also get 20 rounds at Donaghadee. This brings more people into the club to spend money at the club or in the shop so we benefit



there as well. Some people may also decide to become members having played the course. They were really easy to sell and it means when we come to renew the sponsorships it's all profit having paid for the signage out of the initial deal."

But the really exciting development at the club is the superb, unique, new short game facility, opened last month, which will be a great addition for the Donaghadee membership as well as being a new community facility for school children who will be given the chance to develop a taste for the game.

"It was a very poor area, about the size of a football pitch and you very rarely saw more than a couple of people on it at any one time."

Coupled with a 40 x 40 area of trees which was cleared, on which an Academy green complete with bunkering were built, it amounted to an area of around 1600 square metres.

"Howard designed it for us – to ensure we were eligible for the funding we needed to employ a professional architect – and we have two big natural turf tees at each end – the North and the South – which you can use to play to six of the holes, which have signs telling you the yardage to each hole, while there are also artificial tees for each of the holes. You can play it as a six hole or a nine

hole course," said Aaron, who added that the project was given funding by Sports Northern Ireland.

"There were strict tight deadlines for every stage of the project which, if missed, would have caused the funding to be withdrawn but we met every one."

The new area will be administered by the Pro Shop, with a booking system ensuring that there are not too many people on it at any one time, and schools will be invited to bringing enthusiastic children to the area to receive lessons from the professionals and hopefully ultimately become members.

"It will also be a great warm up for those with a later tee time and we will have matches for the various groups within the club – juniors, ladies, seniors etc. It will help to bring the club closer together while sharpening up our short games, said Aaron.

Howard is extremely impressed by the vision of Donaghadee Golf Club and the commitment that has been required to get it done.

"The achievement at Donaghadee is immense and has been fully supported by the public purse very gratefully and it is excellent news for the provinces golf and golf development that the Government feel it is important enough to support us in this way," said Howard.

**"It was a very poor area, the size of a football pitch, and on a slope - you rarely saw more than two people on it at any one time" Aaron Small**

"It seems to me that many, many golf clubs do not make good use of their practice facilities, however comprehensive they might be, and much comes down to the fundamental philosophy of the club to see new blood coming into the game. Donaghadee has been very enterprising in looking at this innovative approach to swell their membership, both adult and junior, and they have been very successful indeed in doing this on both counts," he explained.

With the new short game facility to manage, which requires hand mowing of the greens, Aaron operates with a team of six including himself with summer help bringing that number to seven.

"I'm over the moon at the way things have worked out and delighted at the way the club has supported me. They gave me the job and let me get on with it which is exactly the way to a successful club. Pay the professionals to get on with the job," said Aaron.

Perhaps it wasn't such a gamble after all for Donaghadee Golf Club.



IMAGES ON THIS PAGE: Donaghadee Golf Club as photographed by Niall Kerr