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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Looking for Solutions

I have just enjoyed what was my 15th Harrogate Week and, despite some apprehension leading up to it on account of the weather, it wouldn't be stretching the truth to say that it was one of the best we've done since my first way back in 1996.

There were many highlights. The “2 mil Debate” was a big hit, with tickets more sought after than for Led Zeppelin at the O2, and this despite a new larger venue, brought in as numbers grew. It was fantastic to see a debate, on what was a pure greenkeeping issue, proving to be such an emotive and talked about event.

Other highlights, other than the reassuringly high decibel level of the legendary “Harrogate Buzz” in the Halls, included the Association's Wild West Night on the Tuesday.

BIGGA had moved its official Hotel to the Old Swan, which gave a freshness to the whole week, and the Old Swan staff; Wild West Night organisers; Ransomes Jacobsen's, who sponsored the event, and our own Sandra Raper did a superb job in created an evening that will be remembered for quite some time.

Having enjoyed a successful week, BIGGA can now look ahead and tackle the next 12 months, knowing that the tough times currently being experienced will undoubtedly afflict our sector of the industry for quite some time yet.

On the issue of golf's problems, it has been interesting to follow the recent series “Golf Timebomb” in Scotland's Herald newspaper, written by Douglas Lowe. Aware of the problems the game of golf is experiencing in the Home of Golf, Douglas profiled some clubs which are looking at schemes to attract or retain younger members - to counter an average member age of 54, while he also interviewed David Roy, a former prominent

BIGGA member, and now President of the Scottish Club Managers Association of Europe, and Managing Secretary of the Crail Golfing Society.

David described the pressures on Club Secretaries, with many clubs seeking to hark back to the days of the Past Captain taking on the role of Honorary Secretary.

“I've heard people say: ‘We managed fine with an Honorary Secretary. I don't understand why we're employing this guy. What does he do anyway?’” said David, adding that the workload for every club has increased markedly.

“Now there's health and safety, employment law, licences, fire protection and insurance and child protection policies to look after...”

“There can be no doubt that the practice of employing unqualified people is harming golf,” he declared.

While he was talking predominately about inside the clubhouse, we are all aware of the pressures enthusiastic amateurs – often in the shape of Captains and Chairmen of Green - have put on Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers over the years and how their “interfering” has had such a detrimental effect on so many of the country's golf courses. We can all point to a Captain's ornamental conifer half way down the 1st fairway, which sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb.

Fortunately it is becoming rarer but the message must still go out - if golf clubs are to get the best out of their facilities.

“Leave the professionals to get on with their jobs.”

Scott MacCallum
Editor

FEBRUARY 2010

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Scott MacCallum meets Matt Plested, Course Manager at Muswell Hill GC, a man who had a tough start to his new job

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The new BIGGA National Chairman's personal introduction to himself and what he hopes to achieve during 2010



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Phoenix from the Ashes

Muswell Hill Golf Club suffered a horrendous arson attack just before Matt Plested took over as Course Manager. Since then, as Scott MacCallum found out, things have got a lot better...



There can be few more stressful experiences in life than changing job or getting married so you're a thought for Matt Plested who combined those two activities in the space of a couple of weeks two and a half years ago.

While 1 soldier on the certain knowledge that a wave of "No what" will be the response of many who have been in a similar position, let me give you more information which might just make you a little more sympathetic to Matt.

While he was serving his notice at Old Ford Manor Golf Club, in north London, and about to march down the aisle with his beautiful bride, Matt got a phone call from the Chairman of Green at Muswell Hill Golf Club to say that the Maintenance Facility had burnt down.

"It was a real shock. When I asked him what had happened he told me, 'It's a shame' said Matt, as we sit in his fantastic new facility, is that the fact that the burning started to his nose at Muswell Hill was not to last too long into his married life.

"As well as every machine, all the paperwork - change and irrigation records - went, and we did indeed have nothing but a charred shell."

The fire, in June of 2007, was truly horrific. A total of 55 fire fighters from all over London attended and with a 2,000 litre delivery of diesel that day, and a school just a few yards from the scene frantic efforts were made to ensure that it didn't spread beyond the boundaries of the golf club.

The culprit of this deliberate act of arson, was found to be a 14 year



MATT PLESTED, THE 17TH YEAR OLD MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT, STARTS WORKING AGAIN AFTER THE ARSON ATTACK CAUSED BY THE 14 YEAR OLD BOY.

Harrogate Week 2010 Review



Harrogate Week Never Fails to Deliver

It takes more than a global recession and arctic like conditions to stop Harrogate Week from being a success. Many would crawl over broken glass to get to Harrogate each year and with an attendance of 5883 over the three days - only marginally down on the previous year and well up on pre-show expectations - that was proven to be the case yet again and exhibitors were rewarded with an enthusiastic and committed audience.

HARROGATE WEEK 2010



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– Andy Boyce,
Bath Golf Club

GI GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL
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Harrogate Week 2010 Review
An 8-page Supplement Inside...

ALSO INSIDE: Phoenix from the Ashes (Muswell Hill Golf Course Feature)
Anatomy of a Top Dresser, and Presenting Paul Worster...



The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.

A Stark Reminder to Golfers



Matt Plested, Course Manager of Muswell Hill Golf Club, has come up with a great way of highlighting to members the pitchmark problem which blights so many greens.

By placing a ball in each of the pitchmarks and photographing the results he produced a dramatic image of the impact they can have on a green if left unrepaired which was put on the club noticeboard.

"It was a great away of showing members how many pitchmarks can be left on a green if they don't take time to repair their own and any others they come across," said Matt.

"I think the picture speaks for itself and it has certainly made the point," he added.



Conservative Candidate Visits Sisis

Sisis welcomed David Rutley, the prospective Conservative candidate for Macclesfield, to its factory recently.

He toured the factory, speaking to many of the employees and listening to their concerns about Macclesfield and the surrounding area.

The photograph shows Tom Glazebrook explaining to David, in the assembly area, the SIS AutoSpred, top dressing machine, with Roger and William Hargreaves, Managing Director.

SkyCaddie Now Official Rangefinder of the EGU

A year after its decision to allow Distance-Measuring Devices to be used at all of its 2009 Championships, SkyCaddie has become the Official Rangefinder of the EGU.

This follows the statement from The R&A announcing amendments made to 'Decisions on the Rules of Golf' 2010-2011 edition which also included a joint statement made by The R&A and the USGA regarding the use of DMDs, confirming that the current practice of allowing DMDs by Local Rule remains appropriate.



Horses for Courses



John Deere has signed a five-year preferred supplier partnership agreement with Arena Leisure plc, the biggest racecourse operator in the UK. The agreement covers the supply and after-sales support of John Deere equipment for use by grounds staff on the racecourses, as well as two 18 hole golf courses and two hotel complexes.

Arena Leisure hosts 25% of all British racing fixtures at 7 racecourses across the country – Doncaster, Folkestone, Lingfield Park, Royal Windsor, Southwell, Wolverhampton and Worcester.



Son of Sir Bobby Robson receives donation from Sherriff Amenity

Mark Robson, son of Sir Bobby, receives a cheque for £467.70 from Paul Foston, of Sherriff Amenity, on behalf of the “Sir Bobby Robson Foundation”.

Sir Bobby Robson fought cancer an incredible five times. Sadly, 17 years after his first diagnosis, he lost that long and courageous battle in July 2009. The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation focuses on the early detection and treatment of cancer and the clinical trials of new drugs that will eventually beat it.

The money was collected on the Sherriff Amenity stand over three days at SALTEX, last year.



John Deere in New Partnership with the Ladies European Tour

John Deere and the Ladies European Tour (LET) has extended their original patron agreement for two more years, during which Deere will be designated the Tour’s official supplier of golf course machinery.

The company will also be an official industry partner of The 2011 Solheim Cup match between the women’s professional teams from the US and Europe (captained for the second time in succession by Alison Nicholas), which will take place at Killeen Castle in Ireland.

Through the Ladies European Tour agreement, LET tournaments will be supported by John Deere equipment and irrigation products through the company’s European golf dealer network. Deere officials will also continue to work closely with the LET’s agronomists, with the goal of helping to produce better quality playing surfaces.



ACTIVE LEISURE CONTRACTS COMPLETE LILLESHALL WORLD CLASS PITCHES

The Lilleshall National Sports Centre, a training venue for England Hockey is now home to a Poligras Olympia water based hockey pitch. The Surface was installed by the Kent based artificial sports specialists Active Leisure Contracts.

The project, funded by Sport England, involved laying a high performance insitu rubber shock pad onto which the Poligras Olympia surface was bonded using

a unique full stick porous bonding adhesive. This is the same surface that was used at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and subsequently at other major international hockey facilities across Asia.

The project was completed in four weeks by the Active Leisure Contracts installation team and overseen by a senior Technician from STI who designed and manufactured the surface system.

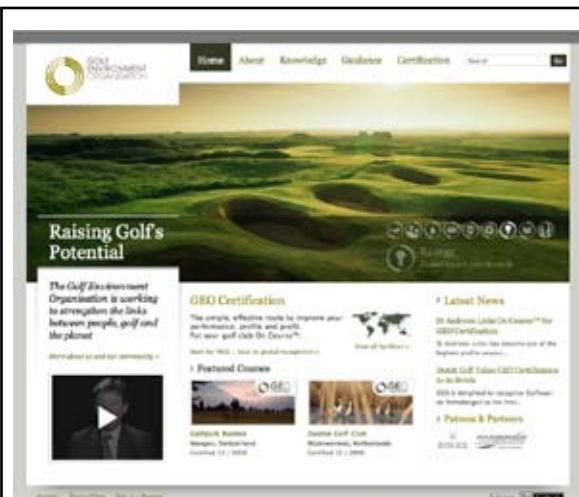
Health and Safety Training

In association with the Health and Safety Executive and Jon Allbutt Associates, BIGGA has prepared four one hour practical talks for delivery direct to staff by Head Greenkeeper/Course Managers.

It can also be expanded and used by BIGGA Sections to deliver locally relevant training to larger groups. The 'tool kit' of notes and posters will be available on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk It is recommended that this training is carried out during the winter months and at other times when convenient; the topics are particularly important as part of a new employee induction programme.

Maintaining high levels of competency is a key factor in an effective safety management system to reduce the risks of accidents when using work equipment on the golf course. The four topics are:

- Belt Up on Slopes – assessing the risks of working on slopes, wearing seat belts where they are provided on equipment fitted with Roll Over Protective Systems, agreeing site specific safe systems of working to reduce risks of roll over accidents.
- Slips, Trips and Falls – assessing risks to avoid accidents, trip hazards in the shed, using hand held work equipment on slopes, working at height using ladders, steps and 'home made' equipment.
- Check Your Machine – a practical guide for greenkeepers on what to look for each day before starting work.
- Watch Out! – a practical guide for greenkeepers on spotting hazards on the golf course, having an effective system for reporting incidents. A managers guide to investigating accidents and dangerous incidents.



Click the link for St Andrews Links

St Andrews Links has become one of the first golf venues committed to achieving GEO Certification, from the Golf Environment Organisation.

The Links has been recognised on several occasions in recent years including receiving the Overall Award at the Golf Course Environment Awards run by the STRI last year.

The new accreditation programme aims to become the hallmark for sustainable golf and measures all aspects of a golf venue's operations from the courses to clubhouses and greenkeeping facilities. It was launched by the Golf Environment Organisation, a non-governmental organisation, at the BMW PGA Championship last May.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links, said: "We place a great deal of emphasis on managing the courses and facilities in as sustainable a fashion as possible. There is a long tradition of sensitive and sustainable management at the Links and, as the Home of Golf, we have a responsibility to take a lead in encouraging the golf industry to take these practices on board.

"This accreditation programme is an excellent way of ensuring golf courses adopt this approach in a structured way and we look forward to working with the Golf Environment Organisation."

There are several major environmental projects currently being undertaken at the Links.

A reedbed washdown area was recently established on the 17th hole of the Jubilee Course which enables water that has been used for washing machinery to be fed through two gravel beds which have been planted with common reed. The reeds filter out the impurities, allowing clean water to be discharged to a soakaway.

Other recent projects at the Links include dune reinstatement work, an extensive grassland management programme and soft engineering work for coastal protection of the Jubilee Course.

Jonathan Smith, of the GEO, added: "Decades of strong leadership and responsible, balanced decision-making has positioned St Andrews Links at the forefront of sustainable golf."

The On Course Reports for St Andrews Links can be read on GEO's website at:

- www.golfenvironment.org/oldcourse
- www.golfenvironment.org/new-jubilee
- www.golfenvironment.org/eden-strathtyrum-balgove
- www.golfenvironment.org/castlecourse



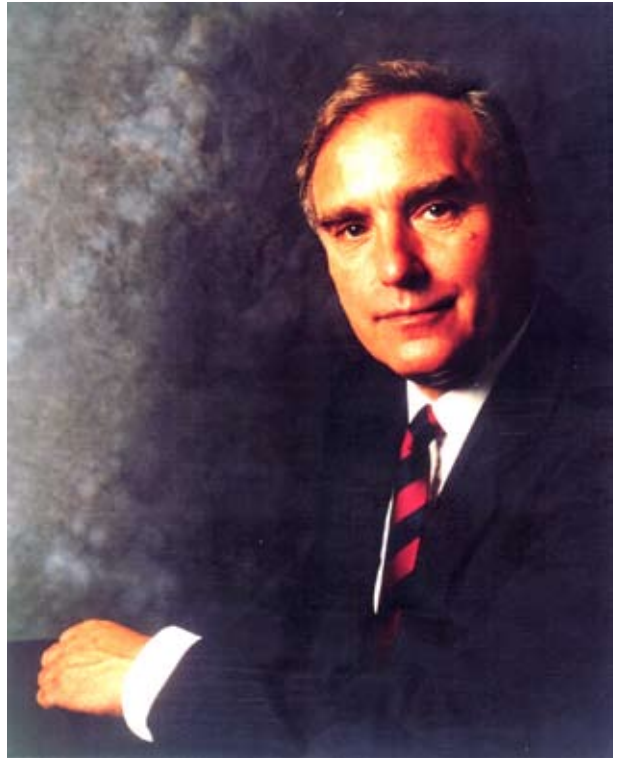
Winter Practice Makes Perfect

While offices and classrooms around the country were abandoned as the white blizzards descended upon us last week, spare a thought for golfers of all ages across the country.

You may have been able to slack off your new years resolution to visit the gym each morning, but for anyone involved in outdoor sports, fitness and skills must be practiced whatever the weather.

That golf practice is 'snow' joke for all those gearing up to the start of the 2010 golf season this April.

Brogan Townend, 15, winner of the U16 global final of the Faldo Series in Rio de Janeiro last November, has been able to continue practising her putting throughout the wintry weather with her own Huxley all-weather artificial golf green.



Bob Dodsworth

Former Chief Executive of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies, Bob Dodsworth, died in hospital in January, aged 73.

He joined the company in 1963 as Chief Accountant and served for 16 years as chief executive until his retirement in 1993.

He was very active in the business community of Ipswich and held several non-executive directorships with the Ipswich Building Society, Ipswich Port Authority, the East Anglian Daily Times Group and the Eastern Regional board of National Westminster Bank plc.

He was on the board of Christchurch Park Hospital for over 20 years, the last eight as chairman.

In 1988 he was made a Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk.

David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen, commented, "Bob Dodsworth was a devoted family man and was at the helm of the company at an important and successful period in its illustrious history. He will be sadly missed by his wife Hazel, sons, John and Simon, and his five grandchildren and everyone who knew or worked with him. On behalf of all of us at Ransomes Jacobsen I would like to express our deepest sympathy to Hazel and the family."



Great Day for Mark

Mark Day who has worked in the industry for the best part of 18 years has been promoted to Tacit's National Accounts Manager for Great Britain and Ireland.

Mark has helped to establish Tacit to be universally recognised as the market leader in the development, production and supply of golf course equipment.

His brief is to ensure our proven track record of excellent quality and service is combined

with a unique balance of commercial and technical expertise to provide greenkeepers with value enhancing solutions.

"Mark has shown over the years to a fixture of the green keeping industry, his sound knowledge of course equipment and his enthusiasm and larger than life character makes him the ideal person to take Tacit's vision into the future and I have no hesitation in appointing him to lead our sales team," Tim Webb – Managing Director.

JSM DISTRIBUTION DEALER RECOGNITION AWARDS



In what was for most, a very testing season, two JSM Distribution dealers certainly stood out. Product promotion, Brand awareness and subsequent sales orders are all that can be asked of a dealer network.

So JSM had no doubts as to which of their dealers to award their Dealer Sales Recognition awards.

Pictured are Steve Halley, Cheshire Turf Machinery, and

Norman Bartlett, Nairn Browns, Glasgow, receiving their Dealer sales recognition awards from David Timms (JSM Distribution) at BTME Harrogate.

Commenting on the awards, David Timms, Sales Manager for JSM, said "The awards are just a small way of showing our appreciation to the two companies, for their outstanding efforts in promoting our product line throughout 2009."



Two new men for IGCEMA

The International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA), the Association representing professional Equipment Managers and technicians, has welcomed two new members to their Board of Directors.

Chris Minton, left, is the Equipment Manager at The Belfry. Chris studied Agricultural Mechanics at Moreton Morrell College of Agriculture.

Stuart Hall, right, is Equipment Manager at John O Gaunt Golf Club, in Bedfordshire, where he has been since 1987. Having attended horticultural college in Milton Cambridge, Stuart Hall started his career as a greenkeeper until he was given the opportunity to help out in the workshop. Shortly after, Stuart was given the opportunity to attend Shuttleworth Agricultural College where he spent three years learning agricultural engineering.

Stephen Tucker, IGCEMA's newly appointed CEO stated; "It is great to see such a diverse Board of Directors this year. We have members from Australia, United Kingdom, United States and Canada. I think we can really be proud of ourselves for truly making the IGCEMA an International Association."



Cold Weather Helps Training

The recent spell of snow and frost provided an opportunity for local golf club green-keepers to come indoors for training.

Hosted by Oswestry Golf Club and supported by Sherriff Amenity, eight greenkeepers attended a training seminar to learn some of the latest pest and vermin control techniques. This allows them to update their skills whilst gaining certification to meet stringent legal requirements.

The picture shows (left to right) Oswestry Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper, Gareth Woosnam; Greenkeeper, Gareth Jones, and Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Gary Barnfield, with their certificates.

SUPPORT FOR HAITI QUAKE RELIEF

JCB has donating diggers worth \$150,000 to help the disaster relief effort in Haiti following the devastating earthquake.

The gift of two 3CX backhoe loaders is being made by JCB Chairman Sir Anthony Bamford in response to an appeal from relief agencies for foreign aid.

The machines are being made available to the US Government, which is taking a leading role in the relief effort on Haiti which was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter Scale.

"The scale of the devastation is unimaginable and it's heart-rending to see the human suffering caused by the disaster. There is clearly a lack of equipment on the island and I hope our gift of JCB machines will help in some small way to alleviate that suffering and in the rebuilding in the aftermath of the earthquake," said Sir Anthony.