



RIGHT: The greenkeeping team

INSET BELOW: Course Manager, David Everett

collector had already ensured that the town had another reason for people to visit. It also has World Heritage status

David has thoroughly enjoyed his time at Lyme Regis and has nothing but praise for the club's approach to progress since he joined from Chipping Sodbury Golf Club, as a 27-year old Head Greenkeeper.

"The club has been brilliant. When I came down here I was really quite ambitious and believed that I'd do five years at Lyme Regis and move on. But the club's attitude has always been progressive – in a small, affordable way – that I've been happy to stay."

David has always been a hands-on greenkeeper and that approach has gelled well with the club's desire to carry out projects cost effectively and in-house. That approach reaped real dividends when the new irrigation system was installed three years ago.

"We chose Ocmis, partly because they are a local company based just along the road and partly because they came out best in the tendering



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process. Chris Aplin, the MD at the time, suggested as they were particularly busy the club could save some money if we did the reinstatement work and worked alongside the two Ocmis guys.

"I had a chat with our guys and they said they were keen. It meant 12 hour days all through the winter while the work was being done – arriving in the dark and leaving in the dark – but while it was very hard, it was also satisfying, work

and a big learning curve for us. We did the work to a very high standard and were delighted with the Ocmis guys who worked to a very high standard as well.

"We knew we were inheriting it so probably went over the top but the guys really excelled themselves and the club recognised this and paid them overtime rates and gave me a bonus.

"Chris Aplin said to me afterwards that it was a pity more clubs



“It’s not the longest course in the world but the greens are small and you have to play well to score well.”

Course Manager, David Everett

couldn’t adopt the approach we’d taken as it had saved us an absolute fortune.”

As previously mentioned Lyme Regis is famous for its Officer and a Gentleman connection and for being on the Dinosaur Coast, a Mecca for fossil hunters from all over the world.

The course has a bit of links, a bit of heathland and a bit of parkland

but David likes to describe it as a clifftop course.

“It’s not the longest in the world but the greens are small and you have to play well to score well. Donald Steel said that he looked at the yardage for our 9th which is a par-4 just over 250 yards and think it should be easy but it’s a small green and well guarded by bunkers and the wind factor makes it quite a challenge,” said David, who worked closely and well with Jim Arthur, when he was the club’s agronomist.

Such is the beauty of the spot it is easy to feel that Stuart Broom, winner of the 2009 BIGGA Photographic Competition, sponsored by Syngenta, had a head start over most of his fellow competitors and it is fair to say that Stuart’s winning picture was a very worthy winner.

“Stuart has done very well since he joined us a couple of years ago and we’re all very proud of him. He has thrown himself into the job and is interested in all aspects of the work and the golf course. He also takes an interest in BIGGA. He didn’t tell me he’d entered the competition but when he did and it won he was thrilled and we were all thrilled for him.”

David is delighted with his current team of five including himself.





Photography Competition

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"My Deputy, Peter Connett, and Simon Rattenbury have been here for 18 years and Stuart and Jamie Hughes, who arrived recently, took over from guys who had been here for over 20 years. So the club must be doing something right."

He does have concerns about expectation levels at some clubs.

"The job is getting ever more stressful. Golfers' expectations are getting more and more unrealistic, with the budgets that are around, and most clubs are running with a staff of four or five – six or seven at some clubs – and they are being asked to obtain the unobtainable.

"If clubs worked more closely with their greenkeepers I think it would improve things. I like to think that here we have a very close working relationship with the management committee. We don't have a Green Committee – the key staff are myself and my deputy, the Secretary/Manager, the Bar Manager and the Pro. The Chairman told me recently that the club pays us the correct money to do the job and that they are there to oversee and keep an eye on us. They don't pay lip service to that – they genuinely do."

Lyme Regis and its golf club is a very special part of the country, even though it seems to be disappearing bit by bit.

ABOVE: Irrigation on the 15th

Calling all budding photographers! Are you proud of your course? Do you catch yourself admiring it in a certain light?

The BIGGA Photographic Competition, supported by Syngenta and back for its fifth year, creates an opportunity for greenkeepers to display their artistic flair, while also earning some publicity for their club.

The winner will receive a full course profile in Greenkeeper International and a special prize, while the 12 best pictures will be selected for the 2011 BIGGA Calendar.

Photographs will be accepted in three forms. Prints, transparencies, or digitally.

Digital pictures need to be high resolution, at the largest size capable by the camera, as it may ultimately be scaled up to A3 print size (42cm wide x 29.7cm high).

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Anyone wishing to enter should email them to:

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Growing success



A one in a million trip

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the year, Rhys Norville, made the most of his prize – an eight week study trip to the United States

Firstly, I would like to start this article by thanking everybody who made this trip possible. Peter Mansfield and his Secretary, Christine, from Lely, have been very patient with all my questions and queries and helped to make the trip run very smoothly.



Also, the support from the staff and members of Newport Golf Club has been second to none, especially from my Head Greenkeeper, Paul Handy, the Club Secretary, Russell Thomas, and all of team I work with.

As I sat in Heathrow airport early on Monday, January 4, it was all finally starting to come true, so much planning had gone into

the trip and the time had arrived. The extensive security checks did increase the nerves but as I boarded the plane I was nothing but excited.

After a long day of travelling I checked in at the Comfort Inn ready to attend the University the following day, and I didn't really know what I should expect. Classes started at 8am and I didn't have the slightest clue about how I was going to get to the University. Luckily for me I managed to get a ride from a fellow student who was staying at the same hotel. Arriving at class we were greeted by Dr Pat Vittum, the organiser of the Winter School course at the University of Massachusetts, as well as teaching

the Entomology course. She gave us our timetable for the week and, to all the students' delight, we had eight hours of lectures a day, five days a week, I was expecting a lot of hard work but this proved to be a lot of information to take on board.

The course was divided up into ten sections which included; Turf Grass Physiology, Turf Grass Management, Turf Grass Disease, Weeds, Entomology, Turf Grass ID, Calculations, Water Management, Golf Course Design & Irrigation and Arboriculture, for all of which we had to take exams, and for some we had to complete mini projects. These projects included growing a plot of grass from seed and conducting an ID stating what you believed the

grass species to be. Also, we had to conduct a project on a selective herbicide, listing its uses, where it could be used and where it could not and, most importantly, what it actually controlled.

My favourite topic was Turf Grass Physiology. I found this most informative as we learnt the process the plant goes through when it experiences photosynthesis and respire, so when factors reduce the plants production what can we do to continue to get the quality growth which we strive towards. It was also fun to learn about things such as the Rubisco enzyme and its role during the Calvin Cycle and how to identify disease pathogens through a microscope, so, not only could we identify the disease, but we could notice how it was spreading and how the best way was to control it.

We were also taught how to identify grubs and insects by looking at their anal slits through a microscope, which wasn't for the faint hearted. In the three years that I have been a greenkeeper I have learnt so much, but this course helped me to take my knowledge to another level as lectures went into a lot more detail.

We also received a lot of talks from various Superintendents, the highlights were definitely a talk from Bill Spence, who is the Superintendent from the Brookline Country Club, which held the 1999 Ryder Cup (the one where the Americans ran all over Olazabal's line of putt!) He stressed how important planning and communication is, not only through the staff but to members as well and how important it is to use your budget wisely. Might I add that his budget is only \$2 million. We also had an insightful talk from John Garcia, Superintendent at the Patterson County Club. He gave us a step by step account of how he went about a \$4 million revamp of his course which included 18 new tees, the conversion of his greens from push up clay to USGA spec and the removal of over 4000 trees.

The students who attended the winter school program were not all just from America. Also on the course was Wade Williams, the Australian award winner, (who had never seen snow before this trip) a Canadian, and four other Europeans. Both inside and outside of the class room we Europeans has some interesting debates about Turf Grass Management, as all the American seem to know how to do is water, feed, cut and spray. It was incredible to hear about some of the budgets from the students' home



Students enjoy a rare break

“I have learnt so much, but this course helped me to take my knowledge to another level as lectures went into a lot more detail”

golf courses, many of them spent more on fertilisers in a year than our whole budget at Newport.

I also learnt a lot from my other peers about how they go about tasks, it was very interesting to talk to Marek Zubert and Dorota Cwil who have been working in Ireland. They had some fascinating stories about working at the Irish Open. You can learn so much for what others have experienced. I also had the pleasure of visiting James Ricci. He is the second biggest individual lawn mower collector in the world, he showed me equipment from as long ago as the 1870's. I discovered so much about the history of the industry and it helped me to understand how we got to the equipment that we use on the golf courses today.

The novelty of staying in a hotel room for eight weeks soon wore off and I ended up following a lot of the American sport. The University of Massachusetts has its own arena which seats nearly 10,000 people for its college basketball and ice hockey teams, that is more than

my home town rugby stadium can seat! The atmosphere at the games was amazing, and it's not just the students who attend the games, fans come from all over which really surprised me, I didn't realise college sport was so big.

While I was in America the Super Bowl was taking place and it seemed as if the whole of America shuts down for Super Bowl Sunday. I was invited to stay with one of the students over the Super Bowl weekend as he was having a Super Bowl party in his basement, which had been converted into his own sports bar with memorabilia lining every single wall.

I also managed to get to Boston for a weekend where the view from the Prudential Tower was magnificent. I even had a pint in America's oldest tavern. Boston is full of some great history which I didn't really appreciate before and I also managed to sneak a tour of the Red Sox's baseball ground, Fenway Park.

My trip was split into three parts; the majority of it was spent studying at the University of Massachusetts but I also attending The Golf Industry in San Diego and the last leg of my trip was spent in Minneapolis at the Toro Headquarters. When I got to San Diego it was nice to see some familiar faces in that of Sami and John from BIGGA. Also attending the show was Richard Jenkinson who I had met at the National



about the author

Rhys Norville, Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year in 2009, proudly displays his award (above). Rhys is an assistant Newport Golf Club.

Finals of the award so I was nice to have some British company. I was amazed at how many British people I actually met up with and managed to speak to considering it is an American show but the show was so very extraordinary.

I was overwhelmed by the size of the show which was probably four times the size of Harrogate and some of the stands were very impressive. Richard and I also managed to sneak off and visit San Diego Zoo which was striking. The Americans certainly know how to do things right.

In my final week, Wade and I travelled to Minneapolis to visit the Toro Headquarters and the factories, where we met up with Cameron Kusiek, who was the Canadian Award Winner. We arrived on the Friday night and had the weekend to ourselves. The three of us spent most of our time in the Mall of America, which is the second biggest Mall in the world. In the middle of the Mall there is a theme park with a loop the loop rollercoaster, a water ride and many other attractions. Also, in the basement is an Aquarium, which was so gigantic I didn't think anything like it could ever exist. We also managed to get downtown to watch an NBA game, which was a brilliant experience.



We were shown around the Toro Headquarters, where machinery is designed and prototypes are built and tested. The procedures which the engineers go through was remarkable and we were even able to see some of the stress test experiments which were being conducted at the time. We were also taken to the Shakopee site, where the parts and reels are produced. Again, it was extraordinary to see how things are turned from a sheet of metal and made into parts for the machines. Finally, we visited the Tomah factory where the machinery is assembled and packaged

ready from distribution. We were able to walk the lines as machines were being assembled. The staff were very friendly in answering any questions we had. It was incredible to see how the machines which we use on a daily basis are constructed from start to finish.

The whole trip has been a one in a million chance for me where I have seen so much, learnt a great deal and met some wonderful people. I am very grateful to everybody who made it happen for me and to my girlfriend, Becky, all my friends and family who supported me all the way.



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Overseeding... *The simple way*

Course Manager, Ian Kinley, describes the overseeding programme he adopts at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club

As a believer in the phrase that 'greenkeeping is as simple or as complicated as you choose to make it', it's probably not surprising that the overseeding programme that we employ could be considered as very straightforward.

Creating the appropriate environment for the chosen grass species to survive, then introducing seed into the ground, achieving germination and subsequent seedling establishment and persistence is fairly straightforward.

The greens at Royal Porthcawl have, over recent years, been worked on appropriately to determine that the soil mechanics are considered suitable for supporting the desired fescue/bent turf that typifies a links environment. By this we mean that there is very little thatch present, no drainage issues and the natural growing environment is generally dry and infertile. With no significant amendments to the soil mechanics required it meant that the environment was set to commence a sustained overseeding programme aimed at re-establishing the fine textured wiry turf that once dominated this fine links before excessive fertiliser and irrigation applications caused an unfortunate botanical change.

To prepare the surfaces in anticipation of the overseeding operation, Primomax is applied at 0.25l/Ha to place the existing sward into regulation and thus provide any

emerging seedlings with a competitive advantage. Seed selection was a fairly straightforward process; the initial composition was poa, bent and fescue in varying quantities from green to green and the general remit was to increase the fine leaved grass content and to reduce the poa content. Obviously the reduction of poa would be achieved through sensible management practices over a sustained period; it was the increase in fine leaved grass content that we felt could be positively affected through the

high quality, pure and proven mix and also wanted to introduce as many different high quality cultivars as possible. The idea behind introducing numerous cultivars is very simple, each cultivar has its positives and negatives in terms of various stress tolerances and appearance, by introducing numerous cultivars we'll have a cultivar present that is 'top rated' in every area of seed rating. A combination of Bar Fescue and J Fescue in equal quantities was decided upon and this provides us with eight top rated cultivars of

ABOVE: Playing characteristics reinstated

“Seed selection was a fairly straightforward process; the initial composition was poa, bent and fescue in varying quantities from green to green and the general remit was to increase the fine leaved grass content and to reduce the poa content”

overseeding programme. I doubt that many would argue that in the links environment fescue is the most appropriate species and, with appropriate management, provides the characteristics that are typical of links golf.

It should be noted that the method of overseeding that was to be employed is in my opinion unsuitable for introducing bent seed anyway so there was really only one option. So fescue it was to be, as far as selecting the actual seed mix is concerned we basically desired a

chewings fescue, slender creeping red fescue and strong creeping red fescue.

Over a number of years the process of overseeding has been tinkered with until we're now fairly settled on the current process which is quick, effective and not too disruptive. Sarel rollers, hollow tining and solid tining have all been experimented with in an attempt to provide the ideal environment for the seed to be introduced into, through each of these we're essentially creating some mini



about the author

Ian Kinley is the Course Manager at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club

'plant pots'. The one thing that has become apparent is that if we place seed into the ground within approx 1" of the surface, maintain moisture levels, that seed will germinate and produce seedlings. The mechanical operation that we have settled upon is solid tining using 15mm tines to a depth of approx 1" at 1.5" centres. Using the Toro Procore 648 we can solid tine a green and collar/apron in approx 30-40 minutes and this machine has transformed the operation from taking up to a fortnight using a tractor and 3 point linkage mounted aerator into being a one to two day process.

“I decided that the spinning disk topdresser was just a bigger version of the pedestrian spreader we were hiking behind”

I don't mind admitting the next part of the process was stumbled upon through sheer idleness! Having created as many holes as possible, we now simply broadcast seed over the surface before working the seed into the holes. Now, on a very warm day on the East coast of Scotland while sweating like a pig I decided I'd had enough of walking round in circles with the fertiliser spreader trying to apply a very exact amount of seed. The rate of seed that we were trying to apply at that time was determined by traditional overseeding rates, anyone who applies seed using a fertiliser spreader will know it takes what seems like forever to empty seven kilo of seed onto a green. I decided that the spinning disk topdresser was just a bigger version of the pedestrian spreader we were hiking behind. A full bag of seed was emptied into the hopper, the door closed down as much as possible, the conveyer belt slowed down to creeping speed and the spinners set to full tilt. After passing over the green 'topdressing' the seed onto it a look behind revealed that it had spat the entire bag onto the green in one pass, a week or so later we had to double cut that particular green every day due to the ridiculous amount of seedlings that were present! That's the reason that we now apply seed by the bag rather than the Kg, as a rough guide we'll apply two full bags of seed to a green and collar/apron (750-1000M²).



ABOVE: Astroturf dragmat

The first thing most people ask when discussing the rate of seed is 'don't you just lift most of it off with the mowers?' and the simple answer is 'No, we'll lift approx 1-2Kg off with the mowers which is minimal when we consider the amount applied'.

I believe that the method employed to work the seed into the holes is part of the reason for the significant success rate that we achieve with each overseeding operation. In the past after applying seed we've either 1) brushed- which unless it physically pushes seed into a hole it 'flicks' seed into the air giving it one more chance to find a hole, 2) drag matted- which I think may move the seed a little more than brushing but again has a tendency to 'flick' seed into the air giving it one more chance to find a hole. We use a drag mat 'sandwiched' with a piece of astroturf, the dragmat provides sufficient weight to determine that the mat will follow the contours well and maintain contact with the turf surface. The AstroTurf is not only very turf friendly [we use the same mat for working in topdressing] it 'works' the seed between the turf surface and the mat essentially meaning there is a much greater chance of the applied seed finding one of the numerous holes in the surface.

Purely for the sake of reinstating surface levels, once the seed has been worked into the holes we will generally top dress the surface and work the applied sand in using the

same AstroTurf mat. As far as the actual overseeding process is concerned finishing the operation with topdressing or not doesn't appear to have any effect on the success rate. It could I guess be argued that covering the seed in the holes with topdressing may provide some protection from the elements. To further reinstate acceptable playing characteristics we will ordinarily mow to remove any debris that is left lying on the surface and roll the surface using a Tru-turf roller to perfect surface levels. It has to be said that once complete, the roll of a ball is virtually unaffected by the overseeding operation.

Following the completion of the overseeding operation we will generally give each sprinkler a couple of turns which will apply approx 2mm of water, no real reason to do this immediately, it's probably simply a 'no time like the present' moment. Once the first irrigation application has been applied, we will apply 1mm of irrigation nightly until seedlings are evident, this will normally take between seven and 10 days. Once seedlings are evident irrigation applications are maintained at 1mm each night for approx one week and then relaxed yet maintained at sufficient frequency so as to avoid the seedlings from being allowed to dry out.

As we know the makeup of a grass seed provides the seedling with its own personal source of carbohydrates for initial establish-

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