

Tour de France Fundraising



South Winchester Course Manager, Alex Hawkes, is taking part in a stage of the toughest sporting event in the world to raise money for two very worthwhile charities.

"The ride I am doing is the Etape Du Tour, which is a stage of the Tour de France, and the idea is that amateurs - 10,000 of them - can ride a stage of the Tour De France under 'Tour Conditions'," he explained.

Alex is riding to raise money for Parkinson's UK and The Alzheimer's Society which are particularly close to my family and I am taking part in the mountain stage, which takes place on Monday, July 11 and will be ridden by the pros as the final and most prestigious mountain, a week or so later.

The stage takes in three of the most famous alpine climbs in the Tour, Le Col du Galibier, Le Col du Telegraphe and, possibly the most famous of them all, the Alpe D'Huez.

"I think the main issues that I will face will be the heat of France in July, the cold when descending at high speed from high mountains, the lack of oxygen at such altitude and the length of the climbs - the Galibier is over 18 km of uphill road on its own," said Alex.

"I am funding the whole cost of this trip myself (or at least my wife is for my 40th) so all the money that I raise will go to the charities, rather than funding the trip itself," said Alex who is writing a blog of his experiences.

The links to Alex's fundraising pages are:

www.justgiving.com/Alex-Hawkes-Alzheimers

www.justgiving.com/Alex-Hawkes-Parkinsons-UK

SPORTS TURF INDUSTRY PROGRESSES WAY FORWARD FOR TRADE SHOWS

Leaders of the main organisations involved in the sports turf industry held further discussions recently to take forward development plans for the sector's trade shows.

The aim is to understand even better the needs of exhibitors, visitors and their representative bodies, in order to find the most cost-effective route to market for all. Senior representatives from the Agricultural Engineers Association, BIGGA, and IOG met under the impartial chairmanship of David Gwyther, of the Horticultural Trades Association. They continued to review the strengths and weaknesses of existing trade shows, including topline data from both the latest Saltex and BTME shows. They also considered in principle the respective visitor and exhibitor profiles and views, and the current show target sectors. It was agreed that some additional market

research was needed to more fully clarify the needs of stakeholders for the future, and to facilitate a development programme for trade shows.

This programme will represent a properly planned route map identifying the right solution to meet the needs of all industry stakeholder groups. The plan will be published later this year to enable solid preparation to be undertaken to implement the programme over subsequent years.

Andrew Mellon, BIGGA Chairman, commented: "As a member organisation we need to ensure that our resources are directed at delivering benefits to our members. We are undertaking a thorough strategic planning process and we will ensure we re-align our resources to that end once complete. We do need to ensure that our decision making processes are fully informed by reliable information, but have a sense of urgency and can

assure all stakeholders that it is at the top of our agenda. We took the opportunity at BTME 2011 to consult with our trade customers, and received excellent feedback. BTME 2012, which will take place in Harrogate in January, has already attracted huge support and we will continue to engage with the trade to ensure we adapt to their needs."

Geoff Webb, Chief Executive of IOG, said: "IOG has listened to others' views on the subject of trade shows and understands the need to adapt and evolve. The discussions we have held with other stakeholders have been constructive and positive. Whilst both confident in, and proud of, the track record of Saltex (despite the economic downturn) we believe the time is right to engage constructively in this review process under the direction of the independent Chairman David Gwyther. In the

meantime we are planning for this year's show - with as ever some exciting innovations - whilst continuing the dialogue with other representative bodies to look at possible future formats."

David Gwyther said: "It was another very constructive meeting on a challenging subject, but one which needs to be properly and professionally sorted in the interests of all involved in the sports turf industry. I am pleased that each organisation confirmed its desire to work together on this very important issue. Participants are all strongly committed to finding the right way to deliver the most effective show programme for their members and their customers. The Group has the professional knowledge and the right development processes to achieve a successful outcome, but will ensure it tests the water with everyone necessary on the way through."



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Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

A wonderful support network

As I finished my last column, I was off for a nightcap with some colleagues at the Irish Conference.

As you might imagine their hospitality, was very generous, and I also enjoyed the company of George Brown who had so many great and amusing experiences to share from a lifetime in Greenkeeping and Golf circles.

We sat discussing our profession and putting the world to rights for quite some time.

On reflection it reminded me of how fortunate I am that I have been able to build a support network within my profession to which I can turn for advice, or even just for a good old chat to cheer me up.

Our profession is not immune to the impact of the worldwide economic crisis and it is having an impact on employment and budgets throughout the country.

At such times our network can be very useful in sharing good ideas, and offering support to colleagues facing difficult times. I've heard of many cases of the greenkeeping teams taking action to ensure they make a positive contribution, as part of the overall team to the difficult challenges clubs are facing.

It struck me that although I am able to access this and we have a large Association with over 6000 members not everyone is as forthright in accessing such support.

I would like to encourage members to make contact with their Section Secretaries and offer their support, in whatever way they can, or to seek support.

You can make a big difference to the Association as a whole, but more importantly it may be that you have advice or experience you can share with your fellow members which will make a huge difference to them.

I would also include our many retired Greenkeepers, who have a lifetime's experience to share, and encourage them to stay involved where possible.

Local meetings can be great for sharing and developing positive ideas to support one another. This goes back to the very roots of why our "Association" formed and why it grew so successfully.

If anyone has any ideas on this they would like to see developed please get in touch at the email address below or by calling me.

As we go to press, I am heading off to be involved in interviewing the shortlisted candidates for our Chief Executive position.

We have an excellent selection of people and I look forward to finding someone with the commitment and drive to continue to grow the Association and build on its strengths. Ensuring that it remains member focussed will be a priority, but also the ability to develop a commercially sustainable business model for the long term future.

At our recent Board meeting we continued to progress some of the work on fostering collaborative efforts with other Golf and Industry bodies.

There is a lot of good potential benefit in this work and we will keep you informed in due course through the website and the magazine.

We also took the opportunity to continue some of the work on strategic planning for the future of BIGGA. The Regional Administrators and all the Staff and Board were involved in discussions which were very useful in gaining a better understanding of where the Association currently sits and in the different perspectives of the members and staff.

We intend to further this work by engaging more with the Regions and Sections to learn more about how you want to see the future of BIGGA, and what you want it to be. Establishing a clear, achievable vision of our future will ensure that we can task the Board, the Chief Executive and staff with developing the correct strategies to deliver that vision.

We have many strengths as I have already said, but the time is right to ensure that we know exactly where we are heading and

that we align our resources in the best way to achieve that.

I have continued to meet with the IOG and the Agricultural Engineers Association and have had discussions with several other companies to date to discuss the subject of trade shows.

We started this process at Harrogate last year and we received very useful feedback which we are keen to develop further.

We are reforming the Trade Member Forum to allow us to gain a better insight into the requirements of our trade customers who support the Association.

At such times our network can be very useful in sharing good ideas, and offering support to colleagues facing difficult times. I've heard of many cases of the greenkeeping teams taking action to ensure they make a positive contribution, as part of the overall team to the difficult challenges clubs are facing

We want to ensure that our decision making processes are based on good information, direct from our customers. It is difficult to be all things to all people, but we need to deliver a good service to the trade if we want to continue receiving their support and this research will be a vital part of ensuring we adapt as required.

Harrogate 2012 is looking very good with bookings already well underway, and the team at HQ are already compiling an exciting Learning and Development programme.

Back at Elmwood our team has been hard at work taking advantage of the fine Spring weather and it has been good to feel the sun on the back again. Roll on summer

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Greenkeepers Training Committee



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

I know the word sustainability has become something of a buzz word but as the GTC moves into a third series of workshops, supported by The R&A, we are looking to share the most up to date information and best practices with invited delegates on all aspects of the sustainable golf club.

The GTC has engaged speakers who have a wealth of knowledge and experience in all aspects of the sustainable golf course and clubhouse.

Clearly, the GTC has a responsibility to promote best practices to maintain and manage golf courses but there are wider issues that we have to ensure Course Managers are aware of.

The workshops will be hosted at clubs who are all committed to maintaining the courses in a sustainable manner and are willing to share their experiences with delegates:

Auchterarder Golf Club, Perthshire – Monday, June 6; Ganton Golf Club, North Yorkshire – Tuesday, June 28; Portmore Golf Club, Devon – Thursday, June 30

In previous years the GTC has focused on ensuring that Quality Assured Centre turf staff, including college lecturers, have encouraged best practice throughout the various education and training courses they offer.

This year, the GTC is looking to invite representatives from clubs, including Course Managers, Club Managers, Professionals to attend a workshop, as the agenda will be of interest to all involved in managing a golf course and/or golf club.

Speakers will include representatives from the host club, the Golf Environment Group (GEO), Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI), Scottish Golf Environment Group (SGEG), The R&A, Quality Assured Centres and The GTC.

If you would like to attend one of the workshops please register by contacting Fiona at the GTC: fiona@the-gtc.co.uk or call 01347 838640

Places are strictly limited therefore early registration is recommended.

Quality Assured Centres and Training Provider Workshop

During 2010 the GTC launched its Quality Assured Scheme, inviting colleges and private training providers to join the scheme.

The current list of Approved Centres and Training Providers is available on the GTC website and this is regularly updated.

The scheme is designed to direct employers and learners to those Centres and Training Providers, who have met criteria based on quality.

Not only are Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers permitted to use the GTC QA logo on all their publicity, representatives are also invited to attend an annual workshop hosted by the GTC. This year the event will be held on June 9 and 10, at GTC headquarters, Aldwark Manor.

The GTC is pleased that City & Guilds Land Based Services has agreed to sponsor the workshop and its CEO, Jack Ward, will open proceedings followed by speakers from the Skills Funding Agency including National Apprenticeship Service, Lantra SSC, Health & Safety updates as well as External Verification standardisation.

Technology is becoming an increasingly popular choice for learning and while hard copy portfolios are still favoured by some learners e-portfolios and e-learning is something we all have to consider therefore demonstrations from Learning Assistant and One File software companies are also on the agenda.

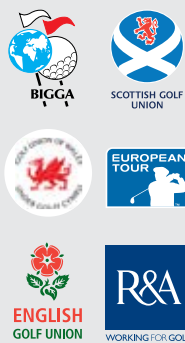
All of the above will assist Centre staff and Training Providers hear from speakers at the heart of funding policies, standard setting bodies and with open forums, give the GTC first hand updates to share with the employers and greenkeepers it represents.

It is also an opportunity for delegates to discuss openly all

In Brief

David explains how the GTC is looking to ensure greenkeeping has embraced all aspects of sustainability through a third series of workshops in association with The R&A and also how a workshop for GTC Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers will focus on ensuring there is "something for everybody" in greenkeeper training provision.

The GTC is funded by:



aspects of greenkeeper training and to ensure that employers and any greenkeepers have access to learning at various levels and through various delivery options.

Finally, I am pleased to report that there has been some progress to report with the European Greenkeeping Education Unit (EGEU).

The R&A has awarded additional funds to a Management Group to move forward, the work to date, by the pan-European standards working group.

John Holliday, the GTC's Finance Director, and I have been appointed onto the EGEU Management Board, as has Dean Cleaver, CEO of FEGGA.

It is hoped the European Golf Association (EGA) will also nominate a suitable representative to join the EGEU Board.

The EGEU will have to show continual progress and with colleagues from the working group we must look to encourage, advise and support countries committed to develop and maintain greenkeeping standards.

A website, www.egeu.eu will be maintained as a portal of information and having recently attended the FEGGA conference and International Summit in Iceland, there is a clear interest, from many countries in adopting EGEU standards. Bespoke qualifications, training courses, learning materials and training manual can all be designed to suit a specific country's needs.

The greenkeeping community is an incredible family which stretches beyond Europe, it is world-wide and wherever we travel, the willingness to share knowledge, best practice and form alliances and partnerships is around every corner and this should be encouraged.

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Learning & Development

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



After all the mayhem of Harrogate Week, the Golf Industry Show, the Scottish and the Midland Region Conferences, I finally have my feet back under my desk and can start 2011!

With many projects underway, it's going to be all go in the L&D Department. Rachael has been manning (or should that be womaning?) the Department while I have been 'gallivanting' around the world. She has spent many hours updating CPD records from all the events that have been taking place around the country as well as assisting (and organising) Scott in the selection of the Open Support Team 2012.

The Learning and Development Fund, which is supported by the Gold and Silver Key members of BIGGA, is a ring-fenced pot of money used specifically to support the activities and projects undertaken by the Learning and Development Department. I am pleased to confirm that those companies who have agreed to support the fund in 2011 are:



Gold Key

European Tour
John Deere
Kubota
Ransomes Jacobsen
Toro
Syngenta



Silver Key

Vitax
Symbio

ARC Legal Assistance
Bernhard & Company
Heath Lambert
Hayter
Wiedenmann
Rainbird

My thanks go to those companies listed who enable us to continue to develop resources for the members.

My main focus for 2011 is the re-development of the Continuing Professional Development scheme, the introduction of an Accreditation system and an update of the Master Greenkeeper Certificate. Further information on the progress of these projects will follow later in the year.

Safety Management System



A new look Safety Management System will soon be available.

Both the Golf Club Managers' Association (GCMA) and ourselves have been working on developing a simpler website that will help golf clubs implement a Safety Management System.

Based around seven areas:
Greenkeeping Activities
Maintenance Facility
Golf Course
Clubhouse
Pro Shop
Kitchen
Fire

Each area will contain download-

The funding provided by Gold 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 Gold and Silver Key Sponsors.

able documents including a Risk Profile, Risk Assessments and Hazards.

The Safety Management System is a membership benefit and is available to members of both BIGGA and the GCMA.

Watch this space for information on the launch of the new website.

BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships



Supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

I am delighted to announce that Ransomes Jacobsen has agreed to continue to support the BIGGA Higher Education Scholarship scheme in 2011. Since its launch in 2002, Ransomes Jacobsen has contributed over £130,000 into the fund and by the end of 2011 will have supported more than 120 BIGGA members achieve a Higher Education qualification.

Any full member of BIGGA, who has been a member for two consecutive years, is working as a full time greenkeeper and is undertaking a higher education course, is eligible to apply for a scholarship.

The fund may award scholarships of up to 50% of the cost of the course however, it will typically be capped at £1000.

For further information or to download an application form, go to: www.bigga.org.uk/education/resources/higher-education-scholarships

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JOHN DEERE



Heath Lambert



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JOHN QUINTON PROMOTION

John Quinton, Ransomes Jacobsen's former Regional Sales Manager for the southwest and northwest of England and Wales, has been promoted to the position of Sales Manager, UK and Ireland.

Reporting to Sales Director, Rupert Price, he will be responsible for business development, equipment sales and dealer support throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

John, a graduate of Harper Adams University College, in Shropshire, where he gained a HND in agricultural engineering, joined Ransomes Jacobsen last year from Hayter.

Before coming to the UK, John farmed in his native, Zimbabwe, and he currently lives in Monmouth with his wife, Victoria, and their two daughters, Sophie and Emma. He will be relocating to Suffolk in the near future.

Commenting on the appointment Rupert said, "John has only been with business for a short while, but in that time has impressed everyone with his drive and determination. His rounded experience of the turf industry will certainly be an added strength together with his undoubted management skills that are a requisite for this demanding post."



Masons Kings of Sale, Service and Support

John Deere dealership Masons Kings has been appointed to take on the sale, service and support of John Deere's full line of professional turf and homeowner equipment ranges in Cornwall, previously handled by Cornwall Farmers Ltd.

Brand new premises have been opened at Winnards Perch, St Columb, in the centre of Cornwall, trading under the new name Masons Kings. All the sales, parts and service staff from

the Cornwall Farmers turf equipment division, previously based at Roche, have been taken on by the new dealership. The new Masons Kings business name now also includes the dealership's main branch at Chudleigh in, and the Kings branch at Dulverton in Somerset.

Masons has been a machinery dealership for 36 years, a John Deere agricultural dealer for over 26, and first established its John Deere professional turf division in 2007.

New Website for Turfgrass Growers Association

The Turfgrass Growers Association has a new website: www.turfgrass.co.uk

The design features a comprehensive knowledge base with a range of helpful fact sheets relating to turf health and maintenance as well as details of TGA specifications and standards.

Visitors can also find information about TGA events, including the 2011 Turf Show, read the latest news articles, find out more about membership, source products and services from affiliate members or locate their nearest TGA grower.





Ice Ice Buggy

Staff at the Eden Project in Cornwall, have been using a Kubota B2230 compact tractor to power an Olympia 250 ice machine used to clean and prepare the ice for skate sessions.

Since Eden's seasonal ice rink first opened five years ago, the organisation had used a golf buggy to pull its ice machine. Unfortunately, both machines were written off during a major flood which caused the ice rink to close for a month last November.

After consultations between the ice rink staff and John Ryan,

the Transport Manager at the Eden Project, it was decided that a faster, more powerful and efficient replacement was needed and the Olympia 250 was chosen.

The new tractor was delivered last December and was fitted with special tyres featuring special ice-studs as a precaution to ensure that it wouldn't skid.

It has since been used to help create an expert surface between every skate session which takes around 20 minutes.

As a result, Eden's ice rink was able to cater for approximately 23 skate sessions every week.



TRAIN THE TRAINER

Toro distributor Lely UK has further strengthened its operator training programme with the launch of a new Train the Trainer scheme, developed in partnership with The Belfry.

For large resorts with a hectic schedule and higher staff turnover, regularly sending greenkeepers and groundsmen for off-site manufacturer training can be a real drain on time, budgets and staff resources.

The Belfry's Director of Golf Courses and Grounds, Kenny

Mackay, certainly found this to be the case.

Kenny put his situation to Lely's training division, leading to the creation of a pilot 'Train the Trainer' scheme. This saw the resort's more experienced operators trained to impart their knowledge to junior colleagues direct and on home turf, instead of having to schedule an on-site course led by the Lely training team and/or attending a session at the company's St Neots National Training Centre.

What's your number?

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

Name: Adrian Handbury.

Company: Intelligent Watering.

Position: Owner.

How long have you been in the industry?

Since 1993 (with two years off for good behaviour!)



How did you get into it?

I was offered the job of Irrigation Manager at the London Golf Club.

What other jobs have you done?

Shelf-stacker, Farm Worker, Farm Manager, Machinery Demonstrator (John Deere), Area Service Manager (John Deere), Marketing Director.

What do you like about your current job?

It is a cliché, but the variety. Through the irrigation industry I have worked on TV sets, national football and cricket stadia and, of course, fantastic golf courses on three continents.

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

Although technology has progressed, what is good to see is that the people in the industry haven't. The majority are friendly and eager to learn. One area that has improved for the better is the appreciation of the environment.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I cook (Finalist in 2010 Britain's Best Dish), and I am reshaping the garden. Also I am looking at doing another degree later this year.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

Hopefully still married, healthy and managing to keep my two daughters out of my wallet. And still in business!

Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?

I don't think that I can single out any single names as there are too many – especially among the irrigation contractors that I have been lucky enough to work with, and also those with whom I worked at the LGC.

What do you consider to be your lucky number?

13 – it is my birthday, and the date that I met my wife.

Pick a number - 13.

Adrian has picked David Cole from JSM

Not so common

That it is called *Hankley Common Golf Club* is a bit of a misnomer. It is one of the finest examples of a heathland course in the country, and Scott MacCallum discovers, as a golf course, it is anything but common



Heathland Splendour on the 6th hole



Located deep in the heart of Surrey, Hankley Common GC has a great feeling of space. This is not surprising as the club owns 860 acres, leasing a large proportion of it out to the Ministry of Defence for training purposes. An extensive woodland management programme also started a number of years ago, which opened the course up again after the pine and birch left its mark.

The programme was hugely successful and led to the club winning BIGGA's Golf Environment Competition in 1997, but the work that has gone on to maintaining the heathland is equally impressive.

At the forefront is Course Manager, Gareth Roberts, a man with mountaineering and photography, as well as an immaculately maintained golf course, on a very full CV.

Gareth had recently joined then Course Manager, Ian McMillan, when the decision was taken to return the course to its heathland roots.

"The course was turning into a tree lined course with a lot of canopy and a lot of shade.

"We'd done some thinning of blocks of pine, regenerated pine and birch, which were so dense you couldn't see through to the next hole," explained Gareth.

Then, in the company of the then Chairman of Green, Peter Green, Ian and Gareth had a meeting on top of Yagden Hill, which overlooks the course, when the decision to really grasp the nettle was taken.

"Peter, who had great vision, said how great it would be if we could clear all the trees and show off the course and from there the wheels were put in motion," he recalled.

The plan was pushed through the various committees fairly quickly and, about six months after the meeting on the hill, contactors came in and the work began.

"We brought in local contractor, John Thorne and his crew, and they took down all the pine and birch and, in all honesty, a lot of rubbish over an area of around 22 hectares, but in doing so we left a screen of trees of around 25 metres deep while the main work was going on," he explained, adding that the work

began in November '96 and was completed the following March.

"There was a committee meeting on Sunday evening and Ian got the call to say we could start removing the screen and, at 6am on the Monday, we started work, dropping all the trees one after another," said Gareth, adding that it did get quite contentious for some members.

"One came to see me in an extremely angry state while I was cutting and asked if I was going all the way up to the corner of the 4th. I didn't have the heart to tell him I was going up the 5th and 6th as well.

"That member was good enough to come back later and apologise.

"We knew there was a viable seed bed within these areas but we also added heather seed/brashings. It was eight months before we saw signs of seedlings coming through, but once they started, the areas exploded with new growth"

Gareth Roberts

He said that now that the trees had gone he could see what Hankley was all about," he said.

The whole process hadn't cost the club a penny as grants from English Nature were available at the time and they were also able to sell the timber.

With such an immediate and dramatic change to the golf course the team did have some concerns that they may have gone too far.

"When we had the fires burning it was something out of the Battle of the Somme and we did think, 'Have we done too much here?'

"We knew there was a viable seed bed within these areas but we also added heather seed/brashings back into these areas. We still had our fingers crossed though. It was eight months on before we saw any real signs of the seedlings coming through but once they started the areas exploded with new growth.

"Some areas were stripped and seeded, some we did by just removing the litter layer and others we added brashings and incorporated it into the litter layer with a tooth bar. The seeded areas came first



Gareth Roberts,
Course Manager

but four years later all the areas looked exactly the same."

Having seen the benefits of all their work, keeping heathland, always in transitional state, is never easy but Hankley Common brought in extra help to ensure saplings were not able to encroach.

"After the heather restoration we actually got in four Old English White cattle to keep the saplings down. They belonged to Surrey Heathland Management Project which also paid for the electric fence round the five hectare plot in which they grazed; all we were required to do was make sure they had sufficient water."

The policy came to an end with the advent of Foot and Mouth, but