



MAIN PHOTO: The triumphant BIGGA Open Support Team

FAR LEFT: The Royal St George's Team visit the BIGGA marquee

ABOVE LEFT and ABOVE: Billy McMillan and Gavin Robson rake a bunker on the 6th

LEFT: Chris Holdham enjoying his day

	2004 Troon	2005 St. A's	2006 Hlake	2007 C'stie	2008 Birkdale	2009 T'berry	2010 St A's	2011 St G's
Bnkr	93	112	96	113	123	85	112	104
Rd 1	393	252	352	442	472	272	149	291
Rd 2	371	203	353	482	379	332	200	391
Rd 3	148	100	183	189	219	172	77	175
Rd 4	185	121	204	198	198	185	85	159
<b>Total</b>	<b>1097</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>1311</b>	<b>1268</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>1016</b>



## Blog highlights

Extracts from blogs which originally appeared on the BIGGA website throughout the week

### Anthony Stockwell, Wednesday

On the Tuesday and Wednesday mornings I was on the Prep team and was particularly pleased to be asked to double cut the putting green and chipping green along with Gavin Robson on the Wednesday.

I've just learned that I've drawn the opening match tomorrow so it looks like another early start.

It has been great to meet up with Graham Royden, the Royal St George's Head Greenkeeper. He is very calm and taking everything in his stride. It has also been good to meet the Support Team guys who also arrived early to assist with the Pre runs and I'm looking forward to meeting the rest of the team later today.

### Graham Royden, Saturday

I've not had one complaint during the entire week and the players have actually been seeking me out to comment on the course. I spoke with Tom Watson, who said that the greens were fantastic. Unfortunately it was before his hole-in-one as I would have loved to congratulate him on the feat. It was absolutely incredible and a great story for The Open.

Charl Schwartzel said they were the best greens he'd putted on all year and bearing in mind he won The Masters earlier in the year it was quite a compliment. All the feedback has been so positive.

The BIGGA guys have been absolutely fantastic. There has been a team tending to all the bunkers every morning and they've been immaculate. I've also managed to persuade the team to do some cutting for me.

Since Wednesday they have cut the practice putting and chipping green while, today, I've asked them also to cut the 17th and 18th greens. I've checked the lines and it goes without saying that they were true. This has really helped my guys, especially with the double cutting, as it means we can get ahead of the game. I'm going to get them to do the 17th and 18th greens again tomorrow.

### Bruce Hicks, Saturday

This is my first time on the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support team and I have been one of the mini bus drivers.

I've been to several Opens as a spectator but experiencing from inside the ropes is just amazing. Walking up the 18th fairway with the stands all full must be like appearing at Wembley for the Cup Final. You get the thrill without the pressure.

I did expect to work hard this week but it is much more demanding than I envisaged. The days can be very long but the experience of being here more than makes up for it.

BIGGA's organisation of the event is first class – it virtually runs on rails with everyone knowing exactly where they should be at any one time and what they should be doing.

I will most definitely be applying for the Support Team in the future as it really is an experience not to be missed by anyone with a passion for golf and greenkeeping.

To sum things up I would just say that this is one "Sandwich" that you will never get indigestion from, but just the odd bit of backache!

### Beverly Blair, Friday

I was very nervous but excited yesterday morning when I woke up at 3.40am. I made some coffee, had a shower and got into my uniform for the day.

I was in the third match out with Gregory Havret, Charley Hoffman and Marcus Brier and we teed off at 6.52.

I raked my first bunker of the day, a greenside one by the 1st, and that settled my nerves. Altogether I had five bunkers to rake which I believe was about average.

It was a real honour to be inside the ropes. You put your shoulders back and walk with your head held high. Experiencing The Open this way makes up for every wet, early morning, when your members don't see all the work you are doing out on the golf course.



TOP: Anthony Stockwell with BIGGA starter prepare for the first game of the week.  
 ABOVE: Graham Royden relaxes at The Golf Writers' Dinner.  
 BELOW: Martin Wood is congratulated by Andrew Mellon on winning the Everris BIGGA Bunker Competition



RIGHT: Adam Matthews, with one of the early matches  
 FAR RIGHT: The Sherriff Amenity sponsored internet points proved a huge success  
 MAIN BELOW: Lewis Birch was one of the Support Team members with the honour of cutting the 18th green  
 BOTTOM: Jim Croxton addresses the team  
 BOTTOM RIGHT: The massive 4th hole bunker gets the Support Team treatment



Support team members, Beverly Blair and Vanja Drasler, get some raking practice in on the Wednesday evening





## Open Championship Awards

**The Bad Luck Horseshoe** – Goes to Martin Dearlove, of Stanmore GC, who helped make the draw for the Sunday Matches on Saturday afternoon. The names of those Team members not with a game on Sunday were drawn out first and the first name that Martin drew was, you've guessed it, – Martin Dearlove.

**The Homer Simpson "Doh!" Award** – Goes to Adam Matthews, of Minchinhampton GC, who woke up in a panic on Saturday morning thinking that he'd missed his 5.15am minibus. Showing great resourcefulness he blagged a lift on one of the busses taking security staff to the course, only to learn when he got to Royal St George's that, in fact, there wasn't a 5.15am minibus and that he was scheduled to be on the one due to leave at 7.15am.

**The Nostradamus Prize** – Goes to Martin Wood, of Bedlingtonshire GC, who was only one bunker out in his prediction of how many were found during the week and won the £100 of M&S vouchers in the Everris-sponsored competition. He was so much more accurate than the might of the world media whose champion turned out to be John Huggan, of Golf World, who was 21 bunkers out and won £250 worth of M&S vouchers also donated by Everris.

**The Burghley Park Award of Excellence** – Burghley Park GC greenkeepers, Gary Salisbury and Steve Hopkins, were both on the team - Steve joined the staff after being selected for the Support Team. While raking during the second round both received rounds of applause from the galleries for their professional work, Gary at the 11th when he raked bunkers for Stuart Cink and Francesco Molinari, while Steve got the same when clearing up after Sergio Garcia and Luke Donald.

**The Happy Birthday Cake** – Shared by Golf Monthly magazine, which celebrated its 100th birthday with a party at Prince's Golf Club on the Thursday evening, and South East Regional Administrator, Clive Osgood, who celebrated a significant birthday during the week.

**The Comedy BAFTA** - Billy McMillan for his inspired routine in the University of Kent, Student Union on Saturday night. Billy arranged 20 hydraulic bar stools in a line in front of the bar and loaded up with Support Team staff and some innocent by-standers, facing in alternate directions. He then conducted a reverse Mexican wave as each person released the hydraulics in turn.





## BIGGA Titbits

Nathan Green didn't have to look far for a ruling when he hit his tee shot into the back of a buggy on the 18th during the opening round – it was a Rule's buggy! -

Information supplied by **BIGGA Open Support Team Member, Anthony Stockwell, of The London Club.**

Anthony Kim missed the fairway on the 9th and struck the official who was holding the red and green flags square on the head. With blood pouring from the wound Kim apologised and helped by producing a towel from his bag to staunch the flow of blood.

Information supplied by **BIGGA Open Support Team Member, John Keenaghan, of Chipping Sodbury GC.**

Charl Schwartzel thought he'd missed the bunker on the 14th only for a spectator to head it back in. Painful!

Information supplied by **BIGGA Support Team member, Tony Smith, of Teesside Golf Club.**



TOP: Steve Mason brought home the winner on Sunday.  
 MAIN ABOVE: The team on the eve of the Championship  
 ABOVE: Ransomes Jacobsen rucksacks were as useful as ever  
 LEFT: Early morning cutting of the 6th green





# COVERING THE WORLD'S GREATEST STAGES



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# Toro Student Finalists



The Regional Finals have taken place and the eight finalists for the 2011 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Competition have been selected.

One of them now has the opportunity to become the 23rd Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and succeed Andrew Stanger

**The eight will arrive at Aldwark Manor on Sunday, September 11, in preparation for the Final the following day, which will comprise of a formal interview and the completion of a report, which will only be revealed to them on the Monday morning.**

The winner and two runners-up will be announced around 5pm, with the day concluding with a meal and a relaxed game of tenpin bowling.

The winner receives an eight week trip to the United States, beginning next January. This includes a six week study course at the University of Massachusetts, and trips to the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show, in Las Vegas, and Toro's Californian base.

The runners-up will receive an expenses paid trip to the Continue to Learn Education programme in Harrogate in January.





Name: Robert Mills  
Age: 24  
Golf Club: Sunningdale GC  
Position: Assistant  
College: Merrist Wood College

Robert joined the staff at Sunningdale in June last year having previously worked at nearby Mill Ride GC. Robert was a finalist at last year's Toro Student of the Year and is honoured to be back again for a second time. His father is Head Groundsman at Bishop's Stortford FC and together they have also worked on a voluntary basis to prepare their local cricket pitch.

He was a member of the BIGGA Open Support Team at Royal St George's this year. As a cricketer himself was 1st Team Bowler of the Year, and is a died-in-the-wool number 11 bat!



Name: Miles Todd  
Age: 23  
Golf Club: Rhuddlan GC  
Position: Deputy Course Manager  
College: Deeside College

Miles was promoted to Deputy Course Manager at Rhuddlan just over a year ago and started his NVQ Level III earlier this year. He is a keen footballer having represented North Wales at all age levels and Captain of his club. He was also a member of BIGGA's Open Support Team at Turnberry in 2009, and also a regular attendee at BIGGA events in his Section. In addition to his football he is a keen golfer and mountain biker.



Name: Justin Howard  
Age: 39  
Golf Club: Cranham Golf Centre  
Position: Head Greenkeeper  
College: Myerscough College

Justin arrived in greenkeeping seven years ago, 10 years after working for a major European bank. He became Head Greenkeeper two years ago. He has a desire to keep improving and is studying for his Level III Diploma which will help towards his goal. Out of work he is a keen runner and enjoys watching Brentwood Town FC.



Name: Blair Somerville  
Age: 21  
Golf Club: Helensburgh GC  
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper  
College: GOSTA

Blair started his greenkeeping career at Loch Lomond as a seasonal worker before becoming a full time apprentice and worked on two Barclay's Scottish Opens. He has been at Helensburgh for 18 months, where he completed his SVQ Level II. He is also currently investigating the possibility of an internship in the United States. A 10 handicap golfer he is also a keen follower of rugby and admits to watching most other sports when he can.



Name: Rhys Williams  
Age: 26  
Golf Club: Royal Porthcawl GC  
Position: Assistant  
College: Pencoed College

Rhys has been at Royal Porthcawl since the spring of this year having worked at the Grove GC for three and a half years before that.

As a golfer he plays off 2.5 and won the Grove Club Championship on a couple of occasions as well as a number of club competitions. Prior to that he played international rugby for Wales at under 16 and under 18 level and played semi professionally for Bridgend. He has played alongside current Welsh internationals, James Hook and Andrew Bishop.



Name: Jon Watson  
Age: 32  
Golf Club: Burgham Park GC  
Position: Deputy Head Greenkeeper  
College: Myerscough College

Jon has been in his current position for five years and has been at the forefront of some of the design and construction projects at the club. Indeed he has been involved in design and construction work on other clubs in the area and he is currently spending his winter months working on upgrading another club where he is carrying out shaping work. As a golfer he has represented Northumberland at junior level but now admits to enjoying golf at a more leisurely pace off a handicap of 8.



Name: Benjamin Hunter  
Age: 20  
Golf Club: Garon Park Golf Complex  
Position: Assistant  
College: Myerscough College

Benjamin got a taste for greenkeeping on summer work experience and realised that it could provide him with a long and satisfying career. He has been at Garon Park for just under a year and is pleased to be benefiting from the work based learning available to him.

He is an extremely highly regarded athlete having represented Great Britain in the Youth Olympics over 3000 metres and he has since represented his country as a cross country runner. He continues to train hard and is committed to applying high standards to all aspects of his life.



Name: Matthew Perks  
Age: 28  
Golf Club: Ham Manor GC  
Position: First Assistant/Mechanic  
College: Plumpton College

Matthew has worked at Ham Manor for three and a half years having previously been a Machinery Technician at the Cannington Centre for Land Based Studies in Somerset.

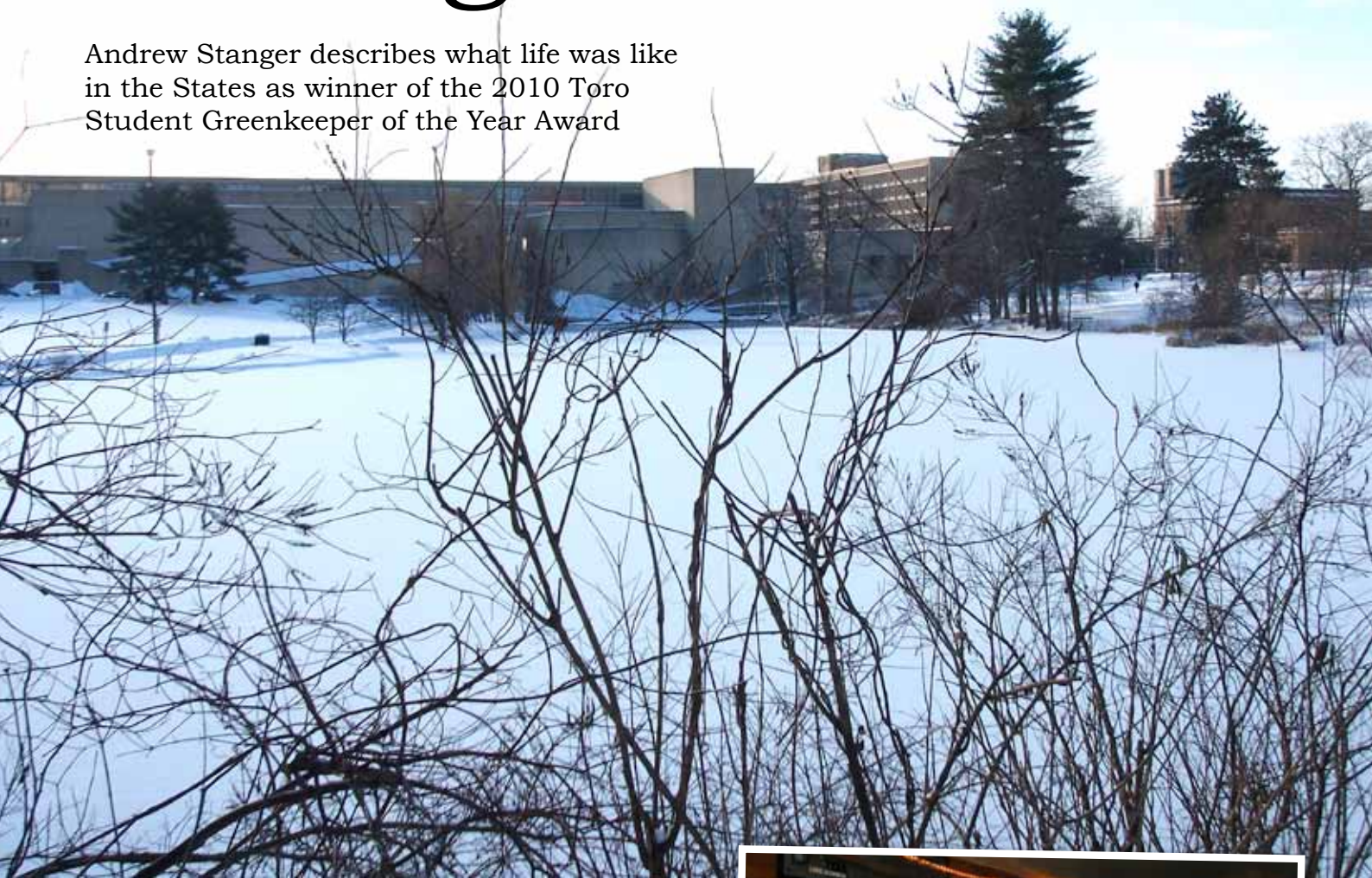
Among his achievements have been Best Recruit and Best Cadet in the Army Cadets, while he was also selected as one of nine volunteer Machinery Technicians at the 2010 Ryder Cup, at Celtic Manor, an experience he says will remain with him for the rest of his life.

Outside of work Matthew has interests in golf, football, darts, DIY and art and design.



# Having a blast!

Andrew Stanger describes what life was like in the States as winner of the 2010 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award



**When I entered the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year competition, I didn't give a single thought to the prize that came with it, so when it was announced that I had won, the realisation hit that I was going to spend two months in a place that I couldn't even point to on a map!**

The previous year's winner, Rhys Norville, mentioned that it can get quite cold in Massachusetts and it might be a good idea to take some warm clothes. Little did I know that the coldest winter in 80 years was heading towards Massachusetts and no amount of warm clothes would protect me from the -28°C temperatures and the 52" of snowfall I was about to experience.

This wasn't my first trip into the unknown as I spent a year in the United States while participating in the Ohio State Programme. That trip taught me to expect the unexpected and this trip turned

out to be no different. I had no idea how I was going to get from the airport to my hotel, which was in a different State; how long it might take or if the roads would even be suitable for driving on but I just decided to leave that to fate. Luckily for me, there were some other students heading up to Amherst to join the 22,000 waiting for us at UMASS.

When I checked into the Comfort Inn I was informed that the Australian winner had already arrived and had gone out for the evening, so I left instructions with the receptionist for him to call by and introduce himself so we could make arrangements to get to our first class the next morning. A few hours went by without a knock and after my long journey I couldn't help but fall asleep. In the early hours the knock finally came, not knowing what day it was or where I was, I answered the door to find two very merry gentlemen that



over the next eight weeks would become friends for life.

There was no time for adjustment, classes started the next morning at 8am and it was clear from the outset that we wouldn't be stopping for breath until the graduation dinner at the end of February. Looking through my induction pack on Day One it would seem that we were going to attempt to complete the equivalent



of our NVQ2 in just eight weeks, a tall order for anyone never mind the students who had no previous education in turf.

The first week hit everybody hard, a lot of information came flying at us in a very short space of time but it wasn't long before things settled down and the nine hour days, with an average of three tests a day, became our routine.

With topics like Turf Grass Physiology, Turf Grass Management, Turf Grass Diseases, Weed Management, Entomology, Turf Grass ID, Calculations, Water Management, Golf Course Design & Irrigation and Arboriculture, there was plenty to keep us busy, both in the classroom and the hotel room at night. The lecturers had their work cut out, keeping a classroom of 40 men, who usually spend all day outdoors, focused, would be no easy task, but they were all fantastic. They were all specialists in their field and were only too happy to show us what they were working on and were keen to get feedback from us as to how we did things out on our own courses.

After a couple of weeks we all knew each others' names and felt that we deserved some social time and the campus had plenty to offer. Tickets were always available for the college basketball and hockey games and by the end of term, me and 'the Aussie' were keen fans. They ran a competition in the interval at the hockey called 'chuck a puck'. You could buy three foam pucks for \$5 and you had to try and land your puck closest to the centre of the ice rink. As a keen cricketer, the Aussie more than fancied his chances and kindly explained to the woman selling the pucks that he would only require one! From half way up the bleachers, true to his word, Adam Shields put it within inches of the announcer's feet and collected the \$250 prize pot! A good night was had by all!

Our projects were progressing nicely and our test averages were high, before long it was time for us to make our way down to Florida for the Golf Industry Show. A little reluctant to leave our new found friends, Shields and I flew out in search of some much needed warmth. As I expected, the show was massive and it was great to see that so many professionals from all over the world had made the journey. I managed to meet up with Greg James and Brad Owen, the Superintendents I had worked for two years before, along with a

few other faces that I've met along the way. Toro kindly took us out for dinner and we got the chance to meet and thank the people that made it all possible. The show was a huge success and I had a great time, it was the rest we needed to prepare us for our final leg at UMASS.

With time running out, we managed to get up to Portsmouth and spend the weekend with the family of our classmate and fellow Comfort Inn resident, Jerry Lachance. It was nice to thank his mother in person for all the meals she'd sent down to us at UMASS. We were welcomed with open arms and fed like her own sons for the weekend.

They took us to their social club that we'd heard so much about as Jerry wanted to pit our international pool skills against his locals. After a 16 game winning streak, Shields and I were rubbed off the chalkboard and politely asked to play darts instead. It was great to meet the whole family, his friends and to see where Jerry grew up, without his trusty truck and his sense of humour the trip wouldn't have been the same.

We made the two hour journey back for our final week and our long awaited, well earned, graduation. Shirts were ironed, shoes were polished and the lecturers couldn't recognise us at the presentation dinner. Some parents had made the long journey to see their son's graduate, It was a very proud moment for all and I felt extremely privileged to be part of it. Celebrations went on long into the night but that sadly meant that our time together had come to an end. I never imagined I would make such genuine friends on this trip and to be quite honest I don't think our time there could ever be replicated. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everybody at UMASS and wish the class of 2011 the very best in their careers.

Things weren't quite over for us Internationals, we had a trip to the Toro Headquarters, in Minnesota, to look forward to as we set out on yet another flight. We landed, not really knowing what was in store for us but all became clear when we were greeted by our personal Toro tour guide, Edric Funk. At this point, I was under the illusion that when you ordered a new piece of Toro equipment, an email was sent to Toro, they built it and sent it to you, so you can imagine the shock when I learnt that the Toro plant works in a three shift pattern that never stops! We saw the raw



Aussie, Adam Shields put the puck within inches of the announcer's feet

steel enter the pre plant that had come from back home in Sheffield, go right through the complex system to become a shiny red TriFlex at the end.

Edric asked us if we had any suggestions on how to improve the mowers based on any problems we've found in the past, I pointed out that cutting unit clips tend to get sand in and stick. Toro had already noted the problem and eliminated them on the new TriFlex. Knowing what they put into it, I'll never look at their machinery in the same way again; it was a huge eye opener.

I would like to thank Toro for giving me this once in a life time opportunity and the friends and memories that came with it. Special thanks must go to Peter Mansfield and his secretary, Christine, at Lely UK, who went more than out of their way to make sure the trip went without a hitch. I'd also like to thank BIGGA, my college lecturer Steve Prinn and Horsforth Golf Club for their continued support in the furthering of my education. Last but not least, the team, Adam Shields, Jerry Lachance, Brian Prescott and Chad Brown. Good luck to all those candidates competing this year and to whoever wins; you're going to have a blast!

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# Come and test yourselves

As a golf club, West Lancs Golf Club has all the weapons to ensure that it will be BIGGA's best golfer who emerges as the winner of the forthcoming National Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota



**West Lancs Golf Club has all the weapons to ensure that it identifies BIGGA's best golfer when the National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota is played on October 3-4.**

There are many fine judges in the game who believe that West Lancashire Golf Club – West Lancs to its friends – is a little unlucky not to have hosted an Open Championship.

Indeed, it has been claimed that if the three existing North West clubs Royal Birkdale, Royal Liverpool and Royal Lytham and St Anne's hadn't been so close by it may have happened, as there is certainly sufficient room around the course to accommodate all that a modern day Open requires.

It certainly has nothing to do with its quality as a course, and those who have succeeded over it in Final Open Qualifying conditions have

found themselves well prepared for the challenge of The Open itself a few days later.

So it is undoubtedly a worthy venue for this year's BIGGA National Championship sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota and the person who is holding the BIGGA Challenge Trophy at the end of 36 gruelling holes will have earned the title of BIGGA's Champion Golfer.

So what it is that makes West Lancs such a highly regarded and revered course?

It is laid out over two loops of nine so you are not playing in the same direction for too many holes in a row.

There are raised greens, sunken greens, well placed bunkers, some stunning par-3s; exacting par-4s all invariably presented in exemplary condition by Course Manager, John Muir and his team. Add to all that the wind which whips in

