



## Uk & Ireland Golf Market Shrinks

A new golf industry survey has revealed a 4% decrease in the number of players in the UK and Ireland over the last year.

The survey reveals Europe's golf market as a whole has experienced significant growth since the 1980s and the number of golfers has more than tripled in the last 25 years, with golf course supply doubling in the same period.

However, across Europe, while the number of registered players grew by 5% annually until 2005, KPMG's research suggests that since then, demand growth has slowed down in the second half of the decade to 1-2% per year, and the current global economic pressures affecting many European countries have taken their toll, with nine countries suffering a decrease in participation over the past 12 months.

The report also recommends the need for more playable courses, six and nine hole developments, which will comfortably sit alongside championship-length courses to encourage new entrants to the game and offer affordable, accessible family-friendly services.

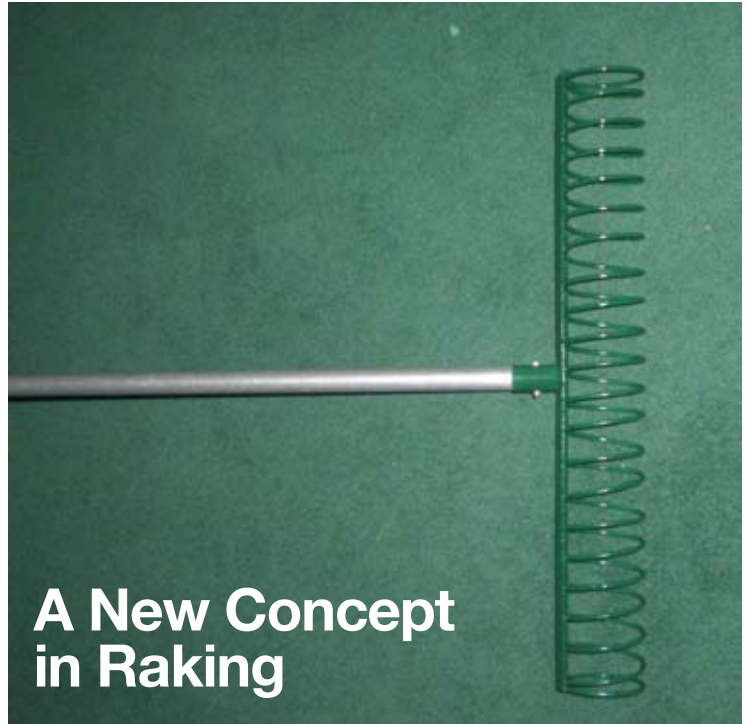
Turkey is highlighted as one of Europe's success stories where a 'Junior Golf League' initiative has proved so popular over the past three years that more than 3,000 additional juniors have been registered.

The country now boasts a growing golf population, 51% of which are juniors.

Other highlights from the survey include:

- From 2000 – 2010, the number of golfers in England and Wales decreased (-63,800 and -14,500 respectively).
- In absolute terms, the leading countries in golf participation growth were Germany (+254,000 = 74% growth), the Netherlands (+204,000 = 146% growth) and Spain (+187,000 = 124% growth).

Download the survey at [www.golfbusinesscommunity.com](http://www.golfbusinesscommunity.com)



## A New Concept in Raking

The Sandglider rake was conceived by Terry MacKay after his many frustrations with the standard of rakes on his frequent visits to bunkers around the world. Rakes were often broken, bent, missing teeth and generally pretty awful. Being a design engineer and former owner of a precision engineering company, Terry decided to design a rake which would address all the problems he had encountered. Almost five years later, SilverTree Products Limited is ready to launch Sandglider onto the market.

"There are many advantages to the rake; its stainless steel construction means years of useful life while retaining a pleasing appearance after exposure to all types of weather," said Terry.

"It is easy to use and can be

pushed or pulled to equal effect. Dry sand is effortless to work and the surface finish superior to a conventional rake. Heavy wet sand is always a problem for a flimsy rake but Sandglider copes," he explained.

A final redesign of the rake head has virtually eliminated any build-up of sand in the coil and in any event a tap on the ground clears the build-up immediately. The surface finish on wet sand is superior to that of a conventional tined rake. Having no teeth means Sandglider will not damage bunker membranes.

Sandglider will be priced much the same as any good quality rake available from reputable outlets; under £20 but with a longer lifespan.

For further info contact Terry MacKay on [tdm@silvertree.co.im](mailto:tdm@silvertree.co.im) (Tel. +44 (0) 1624 852183)

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\*Dependent on chosen longevity.





# Chairman's Word

As he writes his final column as BIGGA Chairman 2010, Paul Worster audits his motivations and aspirations

A momentous year comes to a close

**The year 2010 was rather a momentous one for me - as it may have been for you. Some of you started the old year with a steady job and prospects, but unfortunately may not be starting the New Year in the same happy situation.**

For many greenkeepers the old year was a year of change and adjustment; a year of difficult challenges but also, I hope, some welcome support.

**I am grateful to my family, and my friends in the industry**

This past year I have cause to be very grateful to my wife and my two sons for their support. I am grateful also to my good friends in the industry, my fellow BIGGA Board members, the hard working BIGGA staff and all our wonderful volunteers.

I am particularly grateful to Minchinhampton Golf Club for permitting me to have a considerable amount of time away over the last two years, and of course I want to thank all my staff for their hard work and support in 2009 and 2010.

At the AGM in 2010 I spoke from the heart in my acceptance speech. My personal view, after a year as Vice Chairman, was not a completely positive one. I felt the weight of accusation that the Association was somehow out of kilter with the aspirations of its members.

Like others on the Board I had heard criticism that nothing would ever change, and I had also heard a suggestion that once elected to the Board, ambitions to make change happen appeared to diminish.

**I knew that this was unfair criticism**

If this was true, then all Board members, volunteers and hard working HQ staff could be open to the further accusation that they were doing nothing, for example, to combat perceived apathy about

CPD in the profession.

I knew that this was unfair criticism, but I had to acknowledge that once such an impression had combined with the impact on our members of the worst recession in living memory something had to be done. Where then to start?

How about BIGGA's core values and mission? I was particularly concerned that our Association, which exists to advance the profession through training and CPD, was only actually able to train and develop a relatively small minority of its members over most past years.

Now some may argue that because we offer training and development to 100% of our members, our job is somehow done.

However, our mission is to 'strive through education and training for standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession'.

**Focus on the things that will make a difference**

Looking back over 2010 I hope that I have been reasonably successful in dispelling another notion - that the Board is a clique made up of individuals with limited interest in the needs and aspirations of the rank and file BIGGA member.

If you have any doubts about the ambitions of Board members I just ask that you give us a fair chance to prove otherwise. This month, for example, sees the first Development Seminar for Assistant Greenkeepers FOC at Harrogate Week. If successful, this will be run out in the Regions.

In 2010 I have also been motivated to help the Board that I serve to focus on the things that will make a difference, and I am hoping my successor will allow me to support him to deliver on a number of fronts going forward. Currently on my ongoing agenda:

1. Our relationships with our trade partners and other Associations

2. Member engagement in our services, particularly through uptake of CPD

3. Support for our volunteers

4. The CEO Succession

5. Governance of the Association

6. Re-alignment of the organisation

7. Advancement of the greenkeeping profession

**So what is now happening in BIGGA HOUSE?**

I suspect that many of our members will have concerns about staff changes at BIGGA HOUSE. Let me assure you that all of the hard working members of the HQ team and the Regional Administrators are highly valued by the Board.

Indeed HQ staff are already making bigger contributions to Board meetings. In doing so they are enlarging their contribution to BIGGA's delivery of its mission.

Meanwhile, the CEO and Board are working very closely together to manage the transition period to ensure a smooth and comprehensive hand-over of the business. This is a very important phase which will require John's full focus. To that end, Tracey Maddison (Currently Head of Membership Services), will take the role of Acting General Manager until such time as a new CEO is appointed.

There will be a huge "farewell" for John Pemberton at Harrogate 2011, and I hope members will take the opportunity to personally visit the Show to thank John for his contributions over the years. Keep an eye on the website for details.

**The subject of Trade Shows continues to catch the eye**

The subject of Trade Shows continues to catch the eye of the industry press.

Let me again assure you that the BIGGA Board continues to be at the very centre of discussions about the future of Harrogate Week.

*Continued on page 55*

## Crashing Pilot Hits Bunker

Barely an hour after he crawled out of a damaged plane on a Corona golf course, pilot Richard Hammerschlag said his otherwise safe emergency landing fell victim to a hidden sand trap, reported US newspaper, The Press-Enterprise.

"I was trying to avoid the green but I couldn't see the trap coming up (as I rolled) up an incline. It snuck up on me," said the 63-year-old.

The plane landed on the undulating sixth fairway, which crests just before the green -- and the sand trap.

When Richard turned to avoid the green, the little two-seater literally fell into the trap.

The emergency landing avoided the two-story homes that border both sides of the fairway. The damage to the golf course was minimal, a club spokesman said.

"He was the most courteous crash pilot: He managed to avoid the green altogether," said General Manager, Mike Kim.

"We sustained a little damage to the sand trap, but nothing that can't be repaired."



## JCB WINS ORDER TO SUPPLY BRITISH ARMY

JCB has been awarded one of the largest British Army machine orders in its 65-year history.

The order for 236 machines will be delivered by the end of this month.

The contract is for 138 JCB 4CX backhoe loaders and 98 JCB 436eHT wheel loading shovels. The backhoe

loaders are made at JCB's World HQ, Rocester, and the wheeled loading shovels at JCB Earthmovers, Cheadle.

The machines will be predominantly commercial with minor enhancements such as NATO green livery, personal weapons stowage inside the cab, convoy lighting and increased wading ability.

## Contact+ On Target for Effective Disease Control

The bio-inspired Syngenta Contact+ fungicide active for turf, fludioxonil, will offer a novel action that effectively explodes targeted disease spores.

Syngenta Research Biochemist, Dr Andy Corran, says that new fungicide mechanisms of action are incredibly rare and extremely exciting, with the opportunity to develop new disease control strategies.

"Originally inspired by the naturally occurring antifungal compound of some soil bacteria, fludioxonil works in an entirely different way to the strobilurin and triazole fungicides -- which opens up new opportunities," he told greenkeepers and agronomists during a turf disease briefing at the Syngenta Jealott's Hill

International Research Centre, in Berkshire.

Andy explained that, when fludioxonil locks onto targeted disease spores, it upsets the osmotic balance within the cells and effectively tricks the pathogen into absorbing water. The result is that the spore rapidly swells until it - quite literally - explodes. This happens so quickly there is no time for the spore to develop mycelial growth into the leaf, thus preventing damage to the surface.

He also highlighted that fludioxonil only binds to a specific protein of targeted turf disease spores, so beneficial soil microbes that have different protein structures will not be affected.

Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson, added that



fludioxonil not only targets disease pathogens on the leaf surface, but has the same effect on Fusarium disease spores in the thatch layer and the soil surface.

"The disease threat is ever present in the thatch layer, living on decaying material and roots and waiting for the right conditions to flare up," he warned.

"The additional thatch and soil activity of fludioxonil, compared to standard contact fungicides, explains why it's described as contact+.

"Fludioxonil will change the way we think about disease control, by reducing disease spore numbers and lowering the risk of infection," added Simon.



# Greenkeepers Training Committee



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

## How does the GTC intend to engage more employers, in what, for many, is a natural ongoing process, staff investment and development?

Maybe for readers, it would be timely to remind you of who is represented around the table of the GTC and why there is a GTC, when there is BIGGA.

BIGGA clearly represents the greenkeepers and the Home Unions, EGU, SGU and GUW collectively represent over 2300 British golf club employers.

With a representative from the four bodies above plus Donald Steel, as the independent Chairman, and John Holliday as its Finance Director, it is a relatively small Board and one which is committed to promote greenkeeper training at every opportunity.

The GTC also has financial support for its work from the PGA European Tour and a special project grant from The R&A.

A closer relationship with organisations including FEGGA, CMAE, PGA and the GCMA has to be good for the game and this partnership will strengthen as the Home Unions look to establish Golf Education Groups.

The meetings I attend to discuss greenkeeping qualifications and apprenticeships are all driven by employers and employment needs.

To represent a sector where we have the employers and employees involved in the development and review of qualifications as well as promoting the various courses, workshops and seminars, is such an advantage when seeking approval from the accreditation and awarding bodies.

I don't intend to bore you with detail of how even those of us working in education get totally perplexed as policies seem to change from week to week!

The GTC believes it is still right to work within the Governments education policies for qualifications as funding support, albeit reducing, has been of great benefit too employers and greenkeeping students for many years.

Given that BIGGA will continue to promote greenkeeper education through its flagship award Master Greenkeeper, National and Regional Conferences, workshops and seminars, the GTC will develop and promote its new network of Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers.

One of the major roles of the GTC, having developed the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for greenkeeping, is to direct employers and greenkeeping students to Centres including colleges and Training Providers who offer formal and informal courses for our sector.

Quality has to be the benchmark we all aspire to, hence the launch of the GTC Quality Assured Scheme.

It would be a sheer waste of everybody's efforts if having developed a range of qualifications (standards) only for the delivery of these is of poor quality.

It is a challenge for the GTC to maintain the Assured Scheme but with BIGGA and the Home Unions totally committed to the scheme we will be promoting those Centres and Training Providers at every opportunity.

It is the Home Unions, through their Golf Services Committees, who are now making great strides in educating the golfer on the important work Course Managers, Head Greenkeepers and the greenkeeping staff carry out.

Articles written by Master Greenkeepers are now appearing in the newsletters of the Unions and County Unions will also be better informed of the options for greenkeeper training which can then be shared with the clubs within their county.

We can promise you that there will be an increase in promotional materials and information to both employers and greenkeepers explaining just what is available.

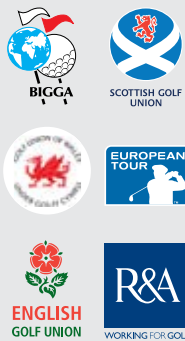
The GTC website will be maintained to give all the latest information on standards, qualifications, apprenticeship schemes, courses and the Quality Assured Scheme.

[www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)

## In Brief

David looks forward to the New Year and how the GTC will be looking to promote staff education and training to employers as an ideal tonic during the winter months and at a time when many golf club businesses are still reeling within what appears to be a never-ending recession.

The GTC is funded by:



One important area of training the GTC is keen to promote more during the New Year is that of short courses or "bite-size learning" to use a slice of education jargon.

Qualifications will be delivered by the QA Centres but we see an increasing role for the QA Training Providers, who offer short courses and workshops aligned to the National Occupational Standards (NOS).

A menu of bite size learning options will be prepared, from which employers and greenkeepers will be able to choose the course or workshop to meet their needs.

Some well respected names and companies have already met the GTC's QA Criteria including Jon Allbutt Associates, Laurence Pithe MG Turf Master One and the STRI. We trust more will come on board shortly as the QA Training Providers will compliment the work of the QA Centres.

In summary, refer to the GTC website for all the latest information on qualifications and opportunities to learn through Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers.

Call the GTC on 01347 838640, email [david@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:david@the-gtc.co.uk) or is it really 12 months since many of us made the annual pilgrimage to Harrogate?

Please come and speak to us on stand C12



*I understand we will see a reduced number of exhibitors from last year in attendance at this years event but at least it appears the education programme, including a new conference has exceeded all projected registration numbers.... education, education, education!*

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# Learning & Development

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



**January 2011 and a whole new year to go at! A new year always promises new starts and new opportunities. The Learning and Development Department's resolution is to roll with the changes. What will your's be?**

 **Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week**

Harrogate Week gets the year underway with the Continue to Learn programme running from Sunday 16 to Thursday 20 January, delivering almost 150 hours of education. All indications are that Continue to Learn is going to be busier than ever, with record numbers of bookings received for the workshop programme.

Much interest has been shown in the Seminar Programme, especially The Ryder Cup and The Open Championship, both of which show all signs of being standing room only.

**Tuesday 18 January**

- Update on UK Proposals for Implementing the EU Sustainable Use Directive
- Efficient Nutrient Technology
- STRI - Part of the Winning Team at the World Cup
- Wills and Estate Planning
- Improving Turf Quality
- Update from the R&A
- The Future of Turf Management
- Integrated Lake and Pond Management - Innovative Aquatic Solutions
- Ryder Cup Cymru

Why Electricity Generation Makes Economic Sense for Your Business

Preparing the Old Course for the 2010 Open Championship

Fulvic Acid the Biostimulant that Extends Early and Late Season Growth

Fludioxonil Providing Innovative Disease Management and Application

Bunker Erosion: A Sustainable Solution to an Age Old Golfing Problem

**Wednesday 19 January**

- Linking Fuel Savings to Reel Maintenance
- Overseeding with Bentgrass the Pros and Pros
- The West Course at Wentworth
- The Three Steps to Transition
- Coated Seed Delivering Species Transition on the Golf Course!
- Course Manager to Club Manager
- The Challenges
- Aeration on Golf Courses
- Green Up Your Greens
- Integrated Management of Dollar Spot
- Environmental Management of your Golf Course with the Latest Technology in Chemistry

- Nature's Solution to Greenkeepers' Problems - Soil Fertility Explained
- Demystification of Synthetic Sports Surfaces
- Turf in the Sustainability Era
- Working on Your Own at a 9 Hole Course

**Thursday 20 January**

- Woodfuel Energy that Grows on Trees
- Sustainable Golf Course Maintenance



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.

The New EU Water Directive and its Impact on Golf Courses

Utilising Foliar Fertilisers to Optimise Putting Green Programming

Energy Efficient Irrigation

Simplified Access Control for your Golf Club

For full information visit [www.harrogateweek.org.uk/education/seminars](http://www.harrogateweek.org.uk/education/seminars)


The Continue to Learn programme is supported by the Gold and Silver Key contributors to the Learning and Development Fund, those supporters are listed at the bottom of this page. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continued support.

 **Personal Development Zone**

If you are looking to further your career or just gain more advice on how you can improve your personal development then a visit to the Personal Development Zone at Harrogate Week 2011 is a must. An invaluable resource for any sports turf professional who is looking to gain careers' advice or inspiration. Featuring experts in the field of greenkeeping, careers assistance and consultancy there is a wealth of specialist advice available.

Find the Personal Development Zone on Stand C22 on Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 January.

Rachael and I look forward to seeing you in Harrogate and wish you health, wealth and happiness for 2011.



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## IOG INDUSTRY AWARDS HONOUR UK GROUNDS EXPERTISE

Almost 300 of the UK's and Europe's leading grounds care experts from both the professional and volunteer sector and guests honoured the expertise, dedication and passion of the country's grounds profession at the (IOG) Industry Awards.

The ceremony at Cardiff's SWALEC Stadium recognised leadership, innovation and outstanding achievement across every aspect of grounds care – from grassroots pitches to professional stadia, including all types of public and private sports venues, and it highlighted the progress of young/student grounds professionals as well as product development and employer considerations.

**The main winners were:**

**Professional Football Grounds Management Team of the Year – the Alex R Millar Award:** Manchester City Football Club,

**Groundsman's Groundsman of the Year:** Iain Main, Surrey University's Surrey Sports Park

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** Keith Boyce

**Most Promising Sports Turf Student of the Year:** Nicholas Staff, Otley College, Suffolk

**Young Groundsman of the Year:** Nick Phillips, Tottenham Hotspur FC

**Professional Sports Ground Management Team of the Year:** Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, London

## “Reel-Good” turn out for Crocodile Open Day

Crocodile Golf Products held its most successful Open Day so far, when over 40 greenkeepers, agronomists, service engineers and students toured the factory to see the quality and manufacture of its growing range of cylinder mower blades and bottom blades.

Greenkeepers were able to leave the temporary greens behind and meet for coffee before being introduced to the manufacturing capabilities of this long-established engineering firm.

Originally starting out in 1874 as a manufacturer of sugar cane harvesting knives and farming machetes, the company has developed the same 'cutting-edge' technology to make cylinder lawn-mower blades, bottom



blades and rotary blades to fit original equipment as well as a whole range of replacement parts to fit both greensmowers and fairways lawn mowers.

Managing Director, Ian Marshall, commented that 'the demise of the automotive industry within the West Midlands has required considerable diversification and the manufacture of this type of product has provided a perfect opportunity for growth, particularly at a time when everyone is trying to make savings!'



## Bucking the Trend

Norwich-based, P&R Hydraulics is bucking the trend of manufacturing and distribution companies struggling to achieve growth during the current economic climate.

P&R has experienced significant growth in the last 12 months of trading. Since taking the decision to purchase Hydraulics Direct in January of last year, the company has not only seen a considerable increase in its revenue but also its export business.

“Many small companies would not choose to acquire a new business during the worst recession we have seen for a generation. However, the opportunity presented itself to us and despite the obvious challenges

we felt the time was right for us to grow our business and expand into a new market sector, turf care equipment,” said Sales Director, Richard Howard.

In addition, the company is expanding by taking on additional floor space for its manufacturing and repair operations in Norwich. There are also plans to increase the current workforce during 2011 to ensure customers continue to receive excellent service and support despite the increased workload.

Members of the P & R Hydraulics team from left to right, Glenn Jordan, David Elliott, Justin Gill, Richard Howard and Maria Barham-Brown’

## BAR Trio from Barenbrug

New from Barenbrug is BAR Trio, a 100% fescue blend specifically designed to provide the superior salt tolerance required by links courses.

Part of the 2011 BAR Range, this latest product launch is the result of Barenbrug’s extensive research and development commitment to finding a salt-tolerant fescue blend especially for golf users.

Following a pilot project in 2009 at Northumberland course Goswick Links, the BAR Trio mixture synergy has been perfected in trials across the UK and Ireland in order to provide the shoot density, plus disease and salt tolerance, that links courses so often struggle to achieve.

BAR Trio contains a blend of Barenbrug slender creeping red fescues – 40% Viktorka, 30% Barcrown and 30% Barpearl



## What’s your number?

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

**Name:** David Golding  
**Company:** The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC)  
**Position:** Education Director



**How long have you been in the industry?**  
 40+ years....and it seems like only yesterday.

### How did you get into it?

I was a keen young golfer in the mid-sixties playing for the county colts in Derbyshire and working in the Pro’s shop during my spare time. I left school to become an Assistant Professional but soon realised that I was not going to be good enough to make a living out of playing the game. My home club, Buxton & High Peak offered me an Apprenticeship as a Greenkeeper. The rest as they say is history....my career progressed to becoming a Head Greenkeeper and Course Manager, while also being a volunteer within the BGGGA and from 1987 an RA for BIGGA. I joined BIGGA in 1989 before becoming the GTC’s Education Director in 1993.

### What other jobs have you done?

Apprentice Greenkeeper to Golf Courses Manager and for the past 21 years privileged to work as an education administrator within the greenkeeping sector of golf.

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

Representing the greenkeeping sector at high profile meetings to ensure there are opportunities for all ages of greenkeepers and leaving employers no excuses not to invest in staff development.

### What changes have you seen in the industry?

The professionalism of, and respect for, the majority of greenkeepers has improved tremendously. I would like to think as a sector we have education and training courses for everyone, thanks to BIGGA and the ongoing support we have from other golfing organisations.

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

Spend time with the family and watching sport, especially Man Utd who have given me so much pleasure, and very occasional heartache, since I was a little lad.

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

Retired, and who knows back playing as much golf as I once did. This time it will be in sunnier climes rather than the bleak High Peak!

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

I would like to think after a lifetime in the industry, most greenkeepers, and many other individuals who I have met since the 60s.

### What do you consider to be your lucky number? 7

*David has picked Fiona Gebbett, of Pan Publicity*

# Turfgrass management

Micah Woods gives an insight into a different type of turf management



**At Bangkok, the average high temperature never drops below 31°C, and the average low temperature is always more than 20°C. As I write this, it is the end of this year's rainy season, when in an average year about 1200mm of rain will fall at Bangkok from May to October.**

At Singapore the average annual rainfall, spread more evenly throughout the year, is closer to 2400mm! Compare that with London and its 600 mm average

annual rainfall, or Glasgow with its 900 mm, and one quickly realizes that Southeast Asia may be a salubrious location for a holiday, but it is quite a different (and challenging) place to manage turfgrass.

When I first visited Southeast Asia in 1999, I saw that there were many golf courses here, but essentially nothing in the way of greenkeeper education, or turfgrass research, or independent advisory services for greenkeepers or golf clubs. In 2006 I started the Asian Turfgrass Center with the goal of providing some of

those services, and I also promised Scott MacCallum that I would write an article about greenkeeping in Southeast Asia. Greenkeeping in Southeast Asia is so different than in Britain, and I thought a description of some of these differences may be of interest to the readership of Greenkeeper International.

## **What Grasses Are Used on Golf Courses**

The primary grasses used here are hybrid bermudagrass, (Cyn-



# in Southeast Asia

**For someone accustomed to the grasses of more temperate regions, these tropical grasses appear quite coarse, but these are the grasses that are adapted to regular mowing in this type of climate**

odon spp.), manilagrass (*Zoysia matrella*), seashore paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*), and broadleaf carpetgrass (*Axonopus compressus*). For someone accustomed to the grasses of more temperate regions, these tropical grasses appear quite coarse, but these are the grasses that are adapted to regular mowing in this type of climate. One doesn't find much in the way of open meadow in Southeast Asia. The climate vegetation here would be a tropical rainforest, so to maintain turfgrass on golf courses takes

a different mentality than in other parts of the world. The goal here is actually to keep a vigorously growing sward. Because of the climate, if the growth of the grass is allowed to slow, other plants will invade, and quickly.

The amount of water and fertiliser used on courses in Asia is considerably more than would typically be used in Europe. This is because of the different grass types used, the twelve month growing season, and the need to keep the grass growing to prevent it being overtaken by less

MAIN PHOTO: Blue Canyon in Thailand

desirable species. For nitrogen, in Southeast Asia, the average golf course would use 400 to 600 kg N/ha on greens, and perhaps 200 to 400 kg N/ha on fairways and roughs. And when it comes to water, there is a high evapotranspiration (ET) rate because of the sun intensity close to the equator, and during dry weather the daily ET is about 7 mm per day. Some types of grass can survive with deficit irrigation at less than full replacement of ET, but when that happens growth will slow, so only a very skilled



**ABOVE: Rain or shine?** Umbrellas are used here to protect the caddies from the heat of the Thailand sun

greenkeeper can manage the turf under those conditions, carefully controlling the growth rate of the desired grass species while carefully monitoring the potential invasion of weeds that could overtake the turf if it is allowed to stop growing.

**Average Crew Sizes**

When it comes to the number of employees working on the maintenance crew in Southeast Asia, I don't think there is much relation to the numbers at golf courses in other parts of the world. There would tend to be at least 30 or 40 people working at the average 18 hole facility, with it not uncommon to have more than 50 people working at one course. In August I visited a course at Vietnam that had 70 employees on the course maintenance crew. And you may be aware that many golf courses in Asia require the players to take a caddy.

Micah Woods, examines some trial plots, is Managing Director of the Asian Turfgrass Center ([www.asianturfgrass.com](http://www.asianturfgrass.com))

Each course may then have 100 or more caddies, and these caddies are sometimes used to supplement the work of the maintenance crew, perhaps pulling weeds or collecting leaves or other debris from the course during times when they are not otherwise engaged.

**Cost for Golf Course Maintenance**

The money required to maintain a golf course is quite variable, but it would tend to be more than in temperate climates due to the year-round growing season and consequently more mowing and fertilizer and Labor and irrigation required. Labor costs vary considerably, with minimum daily wage at Thailand being about £4 per day, and with a Head Greenkeeper at Thailand drawing a salary of about £900 per month. The Labor costs on a golf course in Southeast Asia would

tend to be relatively low, but the fertiliser costs and fuel costs may be high, because golf course owners like to see the entire grounds green and trimmed and cleaned.

**The Environment or Golf?**

There is certainly a different perspective on the environment from Europe to Asia. I was at a pub in Edinburgh a few years ago and I somehow came into conversation with someone about my employment in the golf industry. And the conversation soon turned to something along the lines of "but don't they use a lot of chemicals on golf courses, and don't they use a lot of water, and aren't the golf courses located in rather remote places, and don't people drive large vehicles out to the golf courses, and aren't the parking lots of the golf courses filled with so many large vehicles?" That type of concern is, I think, somewhat prevalent in Europe and also in North America, but in Southeast Asia the mentality is different. In Thailand or Vietnam or the Philippines, where only a small percentage of the population owns an automobile, the wish to have an automobile and the convenience that would provide certainly trumps any concern about the environment. At an average golf course in these countries, there would be perhaps 40 employees working on golf course maintenance, and three of them would own an automobile, with the rest going to work on foot or by bicycle or motorcycle.

The climate of Southeast Asia is great for a holiday, but not for a

**There would tend to be at least 30 or 40 people working at the average 18 hole facility, with it not un-common to have more than 50 people working at one course**



A different kind of spectator can be found by the courses of Singapore