



Chairman's Word

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

Moving forward

As you will know (if you read the website and the last magazine) our new CEO Jim Croxton is now in post as of May 31.

Jim's extensive knowledge of the Golf sector, his managerial and commercial experience will I'm sure be a great asset in assuring we utilise fully the potential of our members and the great team we have at HQ, and in the field through our Regional Administrators, and Sections.

We were fortunate in having many great candidates to choose from, and Jim was able to demonstrate to the Board, how he had the necessary qualities and leadership to take BIGGA forward.

(Nothing like a little bit of pressure Jim?)

Myself and Sami Collins, on behalf of BIGGA attended a meeting at the Belfry with the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) and The Golf Club Managers Association (GCMA), as the group collectively known as the Golf Club Management Partnership, (GCMP).

The immediate reaction may be, "Oh, not another group", but this is not simply a talking shop.

The group's purpose is to explore positive ways of collaborating between those who represent the majority of people employed to work at Golf Facilities.

That collaboration will seek to ensure that resources we commit to providing education and other services are used most effectively and that we avoid duplication, especially important in tough economic times such as these.

The added benefit is that each Association achieves a better understanding of the role their respective members play, and by gaining a mutual respect for each, can encourage and demonstrate the benefits of closer team working within our workplaces.

The meeting was very positive and I look forward to sharing with you soon examples of how this group's work will benefit you.

I was also asked to speak on behalf of BIGGA at the Golf Environment Organisation (GEO) Symposium.

Federations from all over Europe and all the Golf industry bodies were in attendance

and it once again demonstrated the benefit to be gained from close collaboration between everyone working in our Industry.

There is so much great work taking place, so much good practice, and innovation, and GEO can be a great conduit for sharing that work.

As you know we entered a strategic agreement with GEO at Harrogate in January, with a view to improving the services available to you.

Many other countries in Europe are taking full advantage of their services.

I would encourage you to discuss with your club and register on their website.

www.golfenvironment.org

In a very brief process you can upload some basic information which will produce an action plan, demonstrating how you can progress forward to achieving recognition for the great work taking place on most golf courses, and help to improve the image golf portrays in the wider world.

This is vital in ensuring that UK Greenkeepers remain at the forefront of developments of this type in Golf.

In conjunction with this I would also encourage you to make use of the benchmarking and self assessment tools available through the R&A on their website, www.bestcourseforgolf.org

Both sites have excellent case studies and a wealth of information to help you in managing the Golf Course.

Words can be extremely powerful, and it's important that you don't take everything you read or hear as fact and take time to look further.

If one were to believe the writings in a certain editorial from an industry magazine, then you would have seen Harrogate 2011 portrayed as "poor".

BIGGA won't be bullied! It's easy for those sitting on the side, with solely their own commercial interest to consider, not their members, to make such casual unsubstantiated speculative remarks and attempt to force a rash decision.

The facts, as correctly reported by BIGGA, speak for themselves on the outcomes of Harrogate, and the members proved that it was a success.

2012 is already well on the way to being a huge success with bookings very buoyant.

But we are not complacent; we will seek to properly research the correct solutions going forward which will benefit us all in a sustainable manner.

We have spoken with many customers, and there is "no one size fits all" solution, but that makes the continuing work even more important in ensuring we make informed decisions about how to move forward.

We have a very good relationship with IOG, and are actively seeking to recommend each others' Associations and recognise the value we both bring to our members.

We will continue to collaborate when that is of mutual benefit.

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Our members are the arbiter of our success.

We are currently investigating fully and planning to survey our stakeholders, alongside IOG, to ensure we get the necessary information to ensure sensible decisions are made.

Please contact me if you wish to share opinion on this matter.

It will get a hearing at the Board.

Finally, I took advantage of a week off at Easter for a quick break in Cornwall with the family.

It was good to switch off briefly and recharge the batteries for the season ahead, and make sure the kids still recognised me!

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Greenkeepers Training Committee



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

Unsung hero is often a tribute bestowed to somebody who has quietly gone about his or her business with a quiet professionalism not seeking recognition or payment.

Well our sector may have many Unsung Heroes, but one very special man has to be mentioned in this category: W.N.S Bisset, or just Nick to so many of us, who sadly passed away, somewhat ironically on St Georges Day, April 23.

A proud Scotsman with an incredible sense of humour, a smile which he will be most remembered for and, not forgetting the wearing of his kilt at every opportunity - Nick will be missed by so many.

His wisdom and knowledge over many years has helped so many, including me personally, as he has been the Chairman of the GTC's Technical Committee in recent years.

Older greenkeepers will remember first registering as an Apprentice with Nick in the days when the GTC had no funding but who could forget the address: 66 Old Orchard, Haxby, York..... Nick, his wife, Pat, and family eventually moved from that address, but for years it was known as the home of apprentice registrations!

The registration scheme then did not require any formal training but Nick always had the vision that one day all trainee greenkeepers would receive due recognition for their skills and knowledge with a Government approved qualification.

Having attended school in St.Andrews, his love of golf and golf courses commenced on the Links and having studied at the Edinburgh College of Agriculture he took up a job as a salesman in the wheat and barley trade. This didn't last long but the connection did give him a love of good whisky!

Nick applied for a job at the STRI, in Bingley, and was appointed agronomist covering his beloved Scotland and Norfolk!

He made some great friends and colleagues during his nine years at STRI before moving into education as Greenkeeping tutor at Askham

Bryan College, York, in 1976. Initially employed on a one-year contract, Nick stayed there for 29 years!

From his early days as an STRI agronomist in Scotland, he always had a great empathy for greenkeepers and mainly through his work as a turf lecturer at Askham Bryan College near York, he orchestrated change from both behind the scenes through his work for the GTC but also at the delivery end of courses related to all levels of greenkeeping.

A gentle man, but never afraid to stand up for the principles he was Administrator to the GTC when a per-capita levy on male golfers was introduced in the 1980's with the support of the four Home Unions, The R&A and the then three greenkeeping Associations. When I first met Nick he was administering the GTC with donations from various golfing bodies totalling then £1000.

The introduction of a 2p per head levy from male golfers who were members of affiliated clubs was a major breakthrough for greenkeeper training and to this day albeit now an annual grant from the British Home Unions it has allowed so much development from a voluntary enrolment registration scheme for greenkeepers in the 60s to a Government approved structure of qualifications recognised by employers and greenkeepers throughout Britain.

At the same time, the only formal training was the week at the STRI, Bingley, but it was all about to change.....

Nick and a small band of volunteers set about identifying skills and knowledge that would make a greenkeeping qualification. City & Guilds and Scotec were born in GREENKEEPING, not Agriculture or even Horticulture.

Through the 80s and 90s a limited number of land based colleges were identified to provide greenkeeping courses aligned to the City & Guilds and Scotec Phases with supervisory and management levels added, giving us today's acknowledged career path from Apprentice to Manager.



In Brief

David pays tribute to Nick Bisset who sadly died aged 66, following a fight against cancer, and looks at a legacy of greenkeeper education and training left by Nick through his years of dedication to improve the plight of greenkeepers.

Nick was the GTC's number 1 assessor when N/SVQ's were introduced by the Government. He was also co-author of the GTC's internationally recognised Training Manual and Learning Materials and a BIGGA Master Greenkeeper advisor and examiner.

I am sure his former colleagues at STRI and Askham Bryan have many fond memories of Nick as well as the many students who passed through under his caring watch over many years.

Nick always enjoyed helping students especially those who, while being practical, struggled a little with the theory.

He was particularly proud when an Askham Bryan College student, James Braithwaite, won the Student of the Year award in 1995. This success allowed Nick, together with James to travel to the States, a trip he thoroughly enjoyed.

Pat and children, Scott and Catriona, have very fond memories of being on holiday and no matter where they were in the world, Nick was "just popping in to see a former student" who was now a Course Manager at a course which just happened to be where they were staying!

Nick was a judge for Yorkshire in Bloom and fully involved with his village Church and while knowing he was poorly my fondest memory of him was that he was determined to attend Harrogate 2011, carry out Stand duties for the GTC as Chairman of the Technical Committee meeting and asking if he could spend some time to view mowers suitable to mow the church grounds!

A true legend in our industry and a person who truly, quietly went about his life with a smile and having left us with a legacy of greenkeeper education and training in which he played a major role in establishing, we will miss him.

Our thoughts are with Pat, Catriona and Scott, daughter in law, Sally, and his two grandchildren, William and Edward.

On behalf of greenkeepers and greenkeeping, thank you Nick.

The GTC is funded by:



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Learning & Development

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



'Seven Days in Sunny June' by Jamiroquai is one of my favourite summer songs, however, I am hoping for more than seven days of sunshine this June!

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the passing of Nick Bisset. Nick was a great supporter of BIGGA and The GTC.

He was instrumental in the development of the original Master Greenkeeper Certificate and right up until his passing, was one of the examiners for the Certificate.

His passion for education was unwavering and this was reinforced by his role as the Chairman of The GTC Technical Committee.

I am fortunate to have known and worked with Nick for 18 years, also sharing a trip to the GCSAA show in Orlando back in the 1990's.

All those whose lives he has touched will miss him.

CPD

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing Professional Development

For those of you active on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme, it's that time of year that the reminder letters will land on your doormat reminding you that the CPD year is coming to a close on 30 June.

With this in mind, you need to forward any outstanding CPD credit claim forms to Rachael, so that she can update your record and your CPD Certificate for 2010/2011 can be produced.

For those of you heading towards your 5th or 10th consecutive Certificate it also means you'll be getting notification of receiving your Diploma for Continuing Professional Development.

If you have any queries regarding CPD, please contact Rachael on 01347 833800 (option 3) or by email to rachael@bigga.co.uk.



Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2011

Entries for this year's Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award closed last month.

We will see 31 student greenkeepers competing for a place in the National Final and ultimately for their chance to win the Toro Scholarship to the Winter Turf School at the University of Massachusetts and a trip to the Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas. Local interviews will be taking place in early July. Details of the finalists will appear in this column in the August magazine.



Safety Management System

Work is continuing on the new look Safety Management System. There have been a few challenging moments (!) but Gill Bridle from the Golf Club Managers' Association and myself are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Bear with us, we promise there will be a new system available soon!



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.



Harrogate Week 2012

The Harrogate Week 2012 programme is slowly developing in my mind. A great many calls will be made over the next few weeks to begin confirming speakers and sketching out the Conference, Workshop and Seminar schedules. I always liken this process to doing a jigsaw – usually it resembles one of those that have 1000 pieces all with baked beans on! Watch this space.



BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

Supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

There are funds available for those members who are applying for, or undertaking a Higher Education course. For further information on the application process, visit www.bigga.org.uk/education/resources/higher-education-scholarships



Master Greenkeeper Certificate

I am delighted to announce we have two new Master Greenkeepers: *Mike Bush MG - St Mellion Hotel & Country Club, Cornwall* and *Dan McGrath MG - North Foreland Golf Club, Kent*
My congratulations go to them both



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Thank you to our Gold and Silver Key Sponsors



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John Deere to Reign at The Open, The Walker Cup and The Solheim Cup

John Deere and its dealers Godfreys, Alpha Plus Groundcare and Dublin Grass Machinery are the exclusive suppliers of golf course maintenance equipment in 2011 to The Open Championship at Royal St George's, The Walker Cup at Royal Aberdeen and The Solheim Cup at Killeen Castle, which will also host The AIB Ladies Irish Open again this year.



NEW ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY SOIL IMPROVER

Ultra Soil Solutions Ltd has added GYP-FLO liquid gypsum to its range of environmentally friendly soil improvers.

Used for rapid improvement of clay soils, improving poor soil structure, increasing nutrient and moisture availability and increasing calcium levels in root zones, GYP-FLO has undergone many years of trials prior to its availability in the UK.

It improves soil structure leading to better drainage during the winter, saving money and improving sports turf performance. It also improves water holding capacity during dry weather, which reduces hardness and cracking of compacted soils, minimises water usage and encourages root and plant growth.

GYP-FLO can also be used in soil injection systems such as used with the GWAZAE Deep Probe Aeration process. The high availability of calcium has proved highly effective at flocculating the soil and ensuring the decompacting action of air injection remains beneficial for longer.

For more information visit www.ultimateagri.com.au

On Course with Biodiversity

British Wild Flower Plants' 'Golf Guide to Wild Flowers' is now available to download.

MD and owner Linda Laxton has drawn on her 25 years experience of growing nothing but native species, to guide Turf Managers interested in preserving wildlife towards biodiversity.

From simply planting wild flowers in the rough to creating a natural grey water filtering system the guide pinpoints areas that can become important wildlife habitats just by changing the planting.

Filled with such gems as 'don't forget that Holly and Ivy planted together will provide vital food for the Holly Blue Butterfly' and 'the larvae of the Champion Moth that lives in the Red Champion's seed heads is a valuable food source for Blue Tits' the Golf Guide to



Wild Flowers, although written primarily for Greenkeepers is also relevant to anybody in charge of a green open space.

To download the guide visit www.wildflowers.co.uk



One Brand for New Venture

Following the merger of the manufacturers Tunnissen and Saalen Industrie within the S.E.E Group, the two companies have joined forces under one brand: TS INDUSTRIE.

The new brand TS INDUSTRIE™ hopes to develop their products with an emphasis on environmental preoccupations: to put green waste to good use.

With the new wood chippers and multi-vegetation chipper, tree and branch lumber will no longer be considered as 'waste' and can be put to good use through modern techniques such as mulching, composting and fuel for heating.

TS Industrie™ products are distributed in the UK exclusively by Eric Hunter Ltd.

For further information, please contact Eric Hunter Ltd on 01628 778 644 or visit www.erichunter.co.uk

BOOKITEE: THE WORLD'S FIRST FREE TO USE AND MOBILE ENABLED ON-LINE BOOKING AND TEE-TIME MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

With mobile devices becoming the medium for digital commerce and recent research suggesting over 70% of on-line tee-time bookings are made outside of office hours, it pays to incorporate a mobile enabled booking system at your club.

Bookitee is a new player on the booking system market which promises increased revenues, member retention rates and analysis and reporting tools. It features Multi-lingual iPhone, Android and Blackberry compatibility with additional Facebook integration.

Designed by a golfer for golfers, Andrew Mackintosh, Bookitee's founder explains:

"As a keen golfer in the UK, I couldn't help notice the continual declining demand for memberships of our courses. I wanted to create an on-line booking system, to really help struggling golf clubs attract visitors, introduce new types of membership options and increase the satisfaction of current members so clubs not only stay alive, but thrive.

Bookitee, has an inventive payment structure, including a version entirely free to golf clubs, by utilising an ad-funded approach where we display discrete promotions on the booking system."

For more information and details on Bookitee's risk free evaluation process for clubs as well as a free newsletter, '10 Steps To Use Facebook To Increase Your Clubs Revenue And Service.'

For more information www.bookitee.com

What's your number?

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

Name: Charmian Robinson

Company: ABR Publicity

Position: Press and Public Relations Consultant

How long have you been in the industry?

I have been a PR Professional in Agriculture for eight years and 12 years in Sports and Amenity



How did you get into it?

By pretending to be experienced, applying and getting a job as a Publicity Officer for a machinery importer and then finding out I was actually pretty good at it!

What other jobs have you done?

After studying for an HND in Marketing and Business I au paired, waitressed, clerked, researched – you name it I seem to have done it, until I discovered this wonderful 'Outdoor Industry' and have been a part of it ever since.

What do you like about your current job?

I love being able to combine working from home with visiting a lot of different places and meeting a wide variety of people.

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

The biggest changes have been in the way we communicate the information to the press. It's changing ever more quickly now in ways we couldn't have imagined even ten years ago.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Cooking, gardening and riding a tandem so I can chat and look at the view while my partner gets fitter.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

Still writing but maybe having a little more time to travel and see some of the wilder places in the world.

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

I have been privileged to be able to count many of the clients I have worked for as friends. Having been through some tough times there are people in the industry who have shown me true friendship. They already know who they are so I won't name them.

What do you consider to be your lucky number?

2

Pick a number 22

You've selected Neil Thompson from Border Sports

Irrigation's Latest Sprinkler Launch



Toro Irrigation's latest sprinkler launch is the T7 Series Rotor, a rugged rotor specially designed to provide maximum watering efficiency and precision while withstanding the rigours of golf tee applications.

The T7's Smart Arc easy arc-adjustment feature is a simple dial on the top of the sprinkler allowing an adjustment of the arc from 45 to 360 degrees for dry arcing upon set-up and in field.

Available with a sturdy stainless steel riser, the T7 Rotor is robust than most and benefits from a five-year warranty. Its heavy-duty retractable spring and water-lubricated

gear drive, together with wiper seal to reduce sticking and leaks, add to the sprinkler's durability.

The T7's nozzles deliver both precise watering and long distance of throw. In particular, a single port design ensures water is evenly distributed across the spray pattern without putting too much water near the head, which can otherwise cause seed to wash away.

The T7 Rotor's nozzle tree offers seven nozzles for maximum flexibility and ease of maintenance."

www.toro.com



LOW-COST SECURITY

The Block Stem security system is suitable for tractors, construction plant or any other self-propelled machine with an exposed power steering ram.

Imported from Italy, the Block Stem system costs from £240 plus VAT, and is available with a five-year warranty and a money back guarantee.

Manufactured in two sections from very heavy-duty steel, the tamper-proof Block Stem simply slots together over the hydraulic steering axle ram of any self-propelled machine, and is locked in place with a unique key when the wheels are at full lock.

Once fitted, the unit not only acts as an effective visual deterrent; it also means the vehicle can only go round in circles, thus preventing the vehicle from being loaded or driven away, even if the thief has the ignition key.

[+44 \(0\)1902 744475](tel:+441902744475)

A Cut Above



Ransomes Jacobsen has produced the first 15-blade cutting cylinder, designed to provide increased productivity, a superior quality of cut and optimum turf health.

The new Jacobsen Classic XP 15-blade cutting cylinder provides increased benefits for the Jacobsen range of Eclipse greens mowers - the Eclipse 100 walk-behind F-series and the new Eclipse 322 ride-on series.

All Eclipse mowers feature independent electric motors

which control the traction and the cutting cylinders.

Using electronics it is possible to maintain frequency of cut independent to operational mow speed.

By utilising the new 15-blade cutting cylinder the desired FOC and cutting cylinder speed can be maintained, while operating mow speed can be increased up to 36%, substantially increasing productivity.

The additional blades provide a tighter FOC,

reducing stragglers, yielding a smoother surface and delivering the ability to raise the height of cut without compromising ball speed.

Jacobsen conducted thorough testing of these new cutting cylinders at numerous golf courses around the world.

One of these was the Quail Hollow Club in North Carolina, which hosted the recent Wells Fargo Championship in May

www.jacobsen.com



NEW ACTIVE IN HAMMER HERBICIDE

New Hammer from Scotts Professional is a rapid action total herbicide containing a brand new active ingredient.

The combination of Pyraflufen-ethyl and Glyphosate was developed by scientists at Scotts Research & Development in France and the UK, and trialled over the course of two years at the company's Levington Research Station.

Pyraflufen-ethyl acts rapidly causing the visible signs of destruction of the aerial part of the plant within 24 hours by inhibiting the enzymes that drive photosynthesis, while the systemic action of Glyphosate, completes the total kill.

Applied post-emergence, Hammer is ideal for application between April and September when weeds are actively growing. Once applied, it's rainfast within six hours and effectively controls a broad spectrum of annual and perennial weeds, including the tough brush weeds bramble and bracken.

It's registered for use on natural surfaces not intending to bear vegetation, permeable surfaces overlaying soil and to control weeds around ornamental trees and shrubs.

www.scottsprofessional.co.uk



Ride-On Rotary Mower New from Lastec

Lastec has launched a new model in its Articulator ride-on series of rotary mowers, with a cutting width of 3m that is believed to be the widest of any Zero Turn ride-on mower on the market.

The extra cutting width of the new Model 4520 makes a significant improvement to productivity, cutting 20% more grass compared with the company's previous largest Articulator Zero Turn mower which had a cutting width of 2.5m.

The 4520 has five articulating decks that flow over the contour of the ground without

scalping high spots or leaving hollows and dips un-mowed.

It has a side reach of 685mm (27in), which means it can trim closer to ponds, over the edges of banks and ditches and under low limbs of trees - areas that otherwise often need to be finished by strimming or with small pedestrian mowers.

The decks fold at the push of a lever, leaving the mower at road legal width or for carriage on a flatbed truck or trailer.

www.lastec.com

New Power Unit from Sanli

Sanli has extended the number of pedestrian mowers in its range available with the choice of a Sanli or Briggs and Stratton power unit.

Originally available only on the self-propelled LBP46 18in steel deck rotary mower, Briggs and Stratton's DOV 750 5.5hp petrol

engine is now used also on the Sanli LBP513 3-in-1 20in steel deck rotary mower. The DOV 750 engine comes as standard on the top-of-the-range Sanli LBPA56 22in rotary mower with aluminium cutter deck.

Depending on model, the difference in price can be as much as £100 in favour of the Sanli 550 OHV engine.

As well as its pedestrian mower models, Sanli also offers a choice of Sanli or Briggs and Stratton engine on a number of its ride-on machines including its zero-turn radius and rider mower models.

www.sanli.co.uk



A rising star

Castle Stuart has been open less than two years but, as Scott MacCallum found out, you wouldn't know it, and next month it is hosting the Barclay's Scottish Open



Looking out of one of the many huge windows in the superb Art Deco clubhouse at the magnificent Castle Stuart links it is easy to visualise Harry Vardon striding majestically down the 9th fairway in his Plus 4s; Tom Watson drilling a 2-iron into the 18th green, or Seve taking the acclaim, having got up and down from an impossible spot on the 3rd to save par.

In fact, it wouldn't be too difficult visualising any one of the golfing greats pitting his wits against a course which looks like it has been around for a 100 years plus. But the fact is that so far none of them have, as the course, close to Inverness in the Highlands of Scotland, with the stunning Moray Firth as a backdrop, is virtually brand new.

Moreover, when it hosts the Barclay's Scottish Open next month it will have been open for business less than two years.

Indeed, a mere four years ago much of Castle Stuart consisted of potato and carrot fields, but it is a tribute to the work that has been

done in the building, growing-in and establishment of the course that a flagship European Tour event like the Barclay's Scottish Open could even be considered a possibility.

The inspiration behind Castle Stuart is American developer, Mark Parsinen, who had originally been one of the investors and founders of Kingsbarns.

In 2001 Mark decided he wanted to create a golf course of his own and began an extensive search of Scotland to find suitable land.

It was when he was looking at a stretch of Highland real estate that he happened to glance over and spot a bank of gorse on land which offered the elevation that drew comparisons with the fabled Royal Dornoch links not too far away. His search was over.

Mark then persuaded Stuart McColm, Course Manager at Kingsbarns, to become Project Manager for the new course with the promise of the position of General Manager once the course was up and running.





“I saw a news report on the television that planning approval had been granted for the new Castle Stuart course, and I actually wrote a letter of application there and then”
Chris Haspell, Course Manager



Chris Haspell, Course Manager

One of Stuart’s first appointments was Chris Haspell, who was drawn away from an excellent job in Denmark to become Course Manager.

Together with American architect, Gil Hanse, the newly-created Project Management team set about creating a golf course which will undoubtedly become one of the finest to be found anywhere.

“I was actually at Askernish doing some volunteer work with Gordon Irvine, when I saw a news report on the television that planning approval had been granted for the new Castle Stuart course and I actually wrote a letter of application there and then from the hotel,” recalled Chris, who had no idea at that stage that Stuart, who he’d met on a number of occasions, was involved in the project.

“Stuart called me and we met on site in May, 2006 and the site really did sell itself. He phoned me later to offer me the job, the stipulation being that I start within a month. I was very grateful to my old boss for his understanding in letting me go on the proviso that I return three times the first year and twice the second to advise on my old course.”

The work of turning agricultural fields into world class golf course began in earnest on June 26, 2006, with the earth moving to create a rough outline of the holes. The entire first year was spent shaping.

“Just over half the site was on pure sand and we began to sand cap the rest of the site, to a depth of 40cm, with sand quarried from elsewhere on the site.

“I would say that it began to look like a golf course in May or June

2007,” said Chris, who managed a construction team of 10.

“We were working to a schedule of a hole a week – which involved sandcapping, installing irrigation, seeding and final prep and we finished in November of ’07.”

Nothing was left to chance and quality was the watchword with the work carried out with Mark Parsinen on site permanently to ensure that his vision came to fruition.

An example of the attention to detail shown came on the 13th, a dogleg par-4, which boasts a wonderful view of the Kessock Bridge over the Moray Firth.

“Mark was adamant that when you play the course you should have it to yourself and that there should be seclusion on every hole. On the 13th he wanted to be able to