



Chairman's Word

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

The times they are a changing - perhaps

So March broke all records for warm weather and lack of rain, certainly in the East of Scotland, and it was so good to be out dealing with irrigation issues, with sun on your back, and seeing all the golfers with smiles on their faces, in warm weather clothing. The course has greened up, it's beginning to look nice and healthy again and growth is filling out the winter wear areas.

I'd like to start by thanking Peter Boyd for his loyal and dedicated service to BIGGA. We wish him all the best in his retirement and I know he will be missed by all who have come to know him as a friend. I'd also like to wish Angela Wilson, from our accounts department all our best wishes as she moves to Scotland, and to thank her for her excellent work during her time at BIGGA.

Feedback from all the National conferences and events has been very positive, and there is definitely a more positive outlook on the golfing front. I attended the one week SGU Management Development Programme Level II Course, excellently hosted by the SGU and SLGA. It has been developed in conjunction with the Club Managers Association of Europe and approved by the Club Managers Association of America, the Industry leaders in this field. I'm glad to report BIGGA played their part, with Jim Croxton, our CEO and Gordon McKie, St Andrews both doing a great job in representing our Association. Well done to all involved! The other speakers were also excellent and the company of the delegates all working at a variety of clubs made for an interesting week.

We are considering the possibility of running such a course at Harrogate. Whether you decide to move into management at your club or not, having an understanding of the full picture and the management issues facing the club as a whole gives you a very good perspective in considering how you manage the course and the impact of all the decisions you make. It also teaches you the vital importance of good communication.

I am planning my next trip to China, on behalf of Elmwood where I will be teaching Golf Course Superintendents. I'll also take the opportunity to further discuss how



The course has greened up, looking healthy again, and the growth is filling out winter wear areas

Woburn Golf Club, by George Little

BIGGA may be of benefit to International members there.

You may be aware that a private members bill was presented to Parliament to consider moving our clocks forward one hour. This has been delayed due to lack of time, but it will surface again as there is a large body of support behind it. BIGGA had previously been opposed to this about 10 years ago when it first surfaced. Our opinion has once again been sought by various bodies. I would ask you not to rush to conclusions and that we work to form an informed opinion of the impact this may have, looking at positives and negatives if we can.

No doubt, it does not rest on our opinion whether it proceeds or not, but others in the industry would be wise to understand the impact before making their own positions clear. For example: in the shoulder seasons (Spring/Autumn), we will have longer evenings, potentially allowing more golf and a useful revenue stream to the golf clubs. Conversely, preparation time in the morning will be limited if golfers are still to get a round in before lunch, and maintenance schedules could be under severe pressure to keep ahead of play. Potentially secure income at present could therefore come under threat. It would be useful to have a wide consultation and ensure its impact is understood.

On another subject, The R&A is working to protect the enjoyment of the game and

to safeguard the financial operations of golf facilities, in a manner which preserves natural environments and enhances community engagement. Their website has a vast array of content which will help and support you to understand this subject better. You can access it through the BIGGA website under the "Sustainability" page under "Resources" or at www.randa.org/en/TheGolfCourse.aspx

I hope you are all excited and as prepared as you can be for the season ahead, whether its dealing with too dry, too wet, too hot, too cold, turf problems, machinery problems, whatever, you can always seek the help of your fellow members on the forum as there will always be someone else reading it who has faced the same challenges.

The dreaded "M" golf major is just round the corner. Although it leaves many of us facing very high expectation levels, on the plus side it drives golf participation, and revenue and I like to think the gap between what we can all produce now with the skills and resources we have, and what they have done for years, has been reduced.

I hope for all of you your season gets off to a good start. Remember to use BIGGA to seek any advice or support you need, and if you have any suggestions on anything you think BIGGA should be considering, then let me know. My best regards.

Andrew Mellon, Chairman 2012
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Learning & Development

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

At last Spring has sprung. The lighter nights are here, the lambs are bouncing about the fields and the promise of some sunny days (and easter eggs!) lifts the spirits no end. I know that many of you are wishing for rain – I hope your wishes are fulfilled, but that the rain falls at night when I'm sleeping!!



Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award 2012

Nominations for the 24th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year are now being accepted. All sportsturf training providers who offer Level Two, Level Three, National Certificates and Diplomas are eligible to nominate their outstanding students. Applications have been sent to all training providers and are also available to download from the BIGGA website (Education area/Awards).

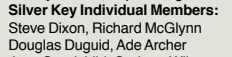
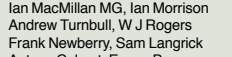
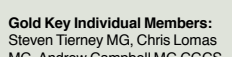
Nominated students will attend a local interview, with up to six candidates being selected to attend the National Final at BIGGA HOUSE in September.

The prizes up for grabs include a six-week scholarship to attend the University of Massachusetts Winter Turf School as well as a trip to the Golf Industry Show in San Diego, California and two packages to attend the Continue to Learn Education programme at Harrogate Week in January 2013.

BIGGA Library

The BIGGA Library is having a facelift over the next six months. We are working with our website providers to incorporate an online ordering facility, a simple search facility, a way to identify if books are available to borrow, and a downloadable library list.

With all the books being reviewed to check that they are in the right categories, whether they are still



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.

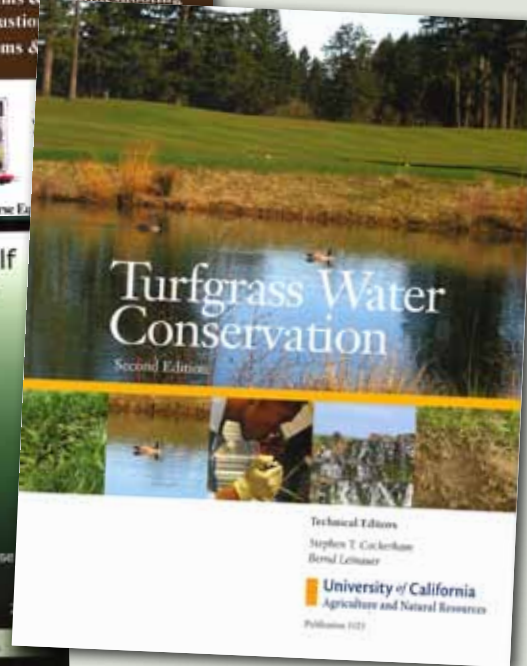
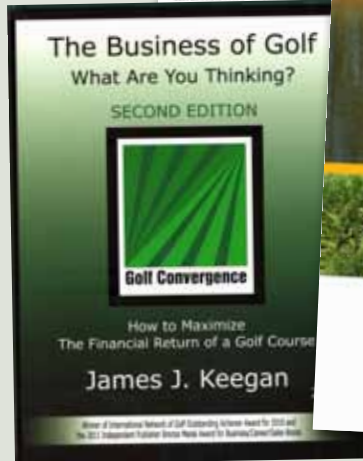


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up to date and if they need to be replaced.

We hope that the library, which is a benefit of membership, will be significantly improved.

Part of the project will include the purchase of new books.

We would like to include books that are recommended reading for sportsturf and management qualifications.

If there are any books that you think should be in the BIGGA library, please email rachael@bigga.co.uk with your suggestions.

We would also like to feature reviews of library books, both on the website and in future issues of Greenkeeper International. CPD points will be available to those members who complete a review on our behalf.

If you are interested in reviewing a book, please contact Rachael.

Our goal is to make the Library a great source of information and an invaluable membership benefit, so please give it some thought and get

in touch to help us improve it on your behalf.

Three new books have been added to the library and are now available to borrow:

- Turfgrass Water Conservation
- The Business of Golf – What are you thinking?
- The IGCEMA study guide – Hydraulics, Electrical, Engines and Drivelines

As a member of BIGGA, you can borrow two books for up to six weeks. The only cost is the recorded delivery to return the books to BIGGA House.

Field Guides

The new field guide additions, Trees & Shrubs on the Golf Course and Golf Course Grasses can now be downloaded from the members area of the BIGGA website, listed under Member Resources. They are also still available from the L&D Department, free of charge to Members.

NEW HOLLAND SUPPORT OPEN COURSES

For the last 18 years, a Ford 1920 with a loader has been regularly used at Royal Troon and, although it has provided outstanding service throughout those years, Royal Troon recently decided it was time to upgrade to a sophisticated new machine.

John Condron, from Lanark-based Bryson Tractors Ltd, was involved in the sales process every step of the way. After a short negotiation, a new Boomer 3050 was delivered in mid January. Its main tasks will include deep-tine aeration and trailer pulling.

John said: "Royal Troon has always been very happy with the service that they received, so once they decided to replace the 1920 tractor, it was a relatively simple process for us to conclude the deal.

It's a great pleasure to see a New Holland tractor used on one of the most famous golf courses in the world.



Keep an eye out for future developments with the kit at Royal Troon!"

However, Royal Troon isn't the only world-class golf club using New Holland machines to maintain their pristine grounds.

Campey Turf Care Systems recently delivered a new T4020 to Royal Birkdale Golf Club. The delivery of the new machine is part of Royal Birkdale's five-year rolling plan to provide its greenkeepers with the very best machinery.



Henrik Lund Joins RJ

Henrik Lund, a Danish national, has joined Ransomes Jacobsen as Export Regional Sales Manager for Scandinavia and the Baltic Republics. Reporting to Sales Director Rupert Price, he will be responsible for business development, equipment sales and dealer support across Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Baltic Republics.

Henrik has a Business and Marketing degree from Handelshøjskole Syd in Esbjerg and began his working life at Viking Lifesaving Equipment in Denmark, rising through the ranks to become Managing Director of the Swedish subsidiary company based in Stockholm.

At present Henrik lives near Varna, with his wife Antoaneta and their three young children. The family will be relocating to Denmark in the near future.

Commenting on the appointment Rupert Price said: "Henrik has wide business experience, as an employee, senior manager and proprietor of his own business. For the past two years he has been marketing our products in the Balkans so comes with excellent product knowledge. He will be yet another great addition to the sales team here at Ransomes Jacobsen, as we look to aggressively target the northern European market, going forward."

Turfmech Appoint New Sales Administrator

Turfmech Machinery Ltd, has appointed Linda Reeves to the position of sales administrator.

Working alongside the company's sales director, Leigh Bowers, Linda's principal responsibility is to provide office-based support to the Turfmech and Allett sales and marketing operations, and to the company's appointed dealer networks for Turfmech grounds care equipment, and Allett professional and domestic pedestrian cylinder mowers.

Bringing to her new post, more than 15 years' experience in sales and sales administration, Linda is now handling dealer and customer enquiries. Information requests ranging from product availability and demonstrations to machine despatch, and the provision of factory support at open days, local shows and events.



BLEC Reports Golf Industry Show Success



BLEC Global reported a highly successful GIS (Golf Industry Show) in Las Vegas. Showing the BLEC Multivator and their Laser Grader on the stand, managing director Gary Mumby said: "The mood was very positive.

"We saw visitors from all over the world and have set up several new distributors to handle our range of landscaping and turfcare equipment in the US. As well as huge interest in the Laser Grader and Multivator we also received a high level of enquiries about our seeding machines – particularly the new close-spaced seeder launched at Harrogate."

Gary was on the stand with wife, Sue. "We had a tremendous response to our specialist sportsturf products," she said.

ALLETT MOWER RANGE PUBLISH NEW BROCHURE

Allett has published its first brochure presenting the newly-extended range of Allett domestic and semi-professional walk-behind cylinder mowers.

Resplendent in green and gold livery, the new Allett mowers complement the long-established line-up of Allett professional walk-behind cylinder mowers introduced in 1965 and used today by groundstaff, greenkeepers and discerning gardeners around the world.

Both mower ranges are manufactured at the Staffordshire factory of Allett parent company, Turfmech Machinery Ltd.



What's your number?

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

Name: Rupert Price
Company: Ransomes Jacobsen
Position: Sales Director



How long have you been in the industry?
 15 years

How did you get into it? I worked at Ransomes while in the 3rd year of my degree course in Business and Technology at Sheffield Hallam University, and then returned to Ransomes after leaving university.

What other jobs have you done? I taught at Woodridge School, Port Elizabeth, South Africa in my gap year. After I joined Ransomes Jacobsen I had held a variety of different positions within the Sales department, including Sales Manager, UK & Ireland. Then in 2011, I was promoted to my current role of Sales Director with responsibility for Europe, Middle East and Africa.

What do you like about your current job? I enjoy building long term relationships with a diverse group of people, right across our unique industry. It's a great industry sector staffed with passionate and professional people who really care about the maintained environment.

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry? Customer expectations of product performance have increased, especially in the last five years. New technologies are coming through, especially the use of electronics for control systems. They are becoming more and more accepted into the industry and will help the turf professional manage individual items of equipment and entire fleets in the future. And, industry education has improved significantly.

What do you like to do in your spare time? I try to keep up with my two children both under 5 years old, play squash and cut grass!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time? With a better Golf handicap than I currently have (those of you who know me on the course will know what I mean)!

Who do you consider best friends in the industry? The Ransomes Jacobsen team and of course all our customers!

What do you consider to be your lucky number? 322!

Pick a number 17

Rupert has chosen Peter van Mispelaar, of Vanmac/Trilo

If the shoe fits...



Next year at Vale of Llangollen Golf Club, Jez Hughes (left) will be Course Manager when wearing his boots, and Club Captain when he dons his shoes. As Scott MacCallum found out, it's a quick change act he is looking forward to making



Last year saw Sir Alex Ferguson acclaimed for his 25 years in charge of Manchester United. He received praise from all quarters for the many trophies he had won during his two and a half decades, and the North Stand at Old Trafford was renamed in his honour.

What it demonstrated, and what many rival clubs failed to put into practice, was the benefits of continuity and consistency. Swapping managers can sometimes bring a short term boost, but rarely long term success.

Jeremy Hughes – universally known as Jez – is celebrating 25 years at Vale of Llangollen Golf Club, in North Wales, 17 of them as Course Manager.

Just like Man United, the course has benefited from the continuity of management, and while Jez hasn't yet had any part of the club named after him, he is being honoured – as next year's Club Captain!

"I'd been a member here since I was 11 but I can remember the first job I had when I came in for three weeks work in November, 1986. It was mixing top dressing so I was putting sand and soil through a riddler.

As it turned out it wasn't good enough, so in the end it was used to help build the 18th tee," recalled Jez, a BIGGA member since 1990.

It was when he was asked to cut some fairways that his potential shone through and Jez began to see a career stretching out in front of him.

"I'd never considered becoming a greenkeeper. I genuinely believed that I would work with my dad in the family timber business alongside my brothers," said Jez, of his father's company which exported wood veneers to Germany and Austria.

"We used to spend a lot of time in Scotland. We spent a lot of time in Kirkcaldy and I learned to play golf in Fife, on courses like Lundin and Leven Links and Elie."

He was given his first full time contract in April 1987, successfully completing a trial to become Deputy Head in 1990 and doing the same prior to being confirmed as Course Manager in 1995.

"I was the only golfer on the team and I think it meant that I looked at things slightly differently. I was interested in how things could be shaped and cut while I was also hot on attention to detail which has now become common practice throughout the greenkeeping team," he explained, as we sat in



"If I've got my boots on, I'm Course Manager; if I've got my shoes on, I'm Captain. But if I've got my golf shoes on, I'm a golfer, so leave me alone!"



the attractive clubhouse which looks over the course.

Since then Jez and his team have worked tirelessly to raise the bar at Vale of Llangollen to the extent that the course is regarded as one of the finest in North Wales.

"We were the first club in the area to install an on-line booking and automated response system which enables us to build a database and receive feedback on the experience people had when they visited the club," explained Club Manager, Bob Hardy.

"Without exception they come back saying that the course was fantastic, the greens were the best they'd played on all year and that they want to come back," said Bob.

"We used to send the reports down to him, but that was before his head became too big," he joked.



“Seriously, though, it’s good motivation for the team. It’s nice to know that what you are doing is being appreciated.

“We’re all proud of Jez here for the work he’s done and the fact that he is a Director of BIGGA,” said Bob.

With approximately 55,000 rounds a year, keeping the course at its best is a task which keep the five strong greenkeeping team busy.

“Over the years, in addition to ensuring that the greens keep to a high standard, an extensive tree management programme has been on-going as well as a bunker refurbishment programme and a tee refurbishment programme”

When he took over there was some thatch issues and Jez began hollow coring twice a year and he topdressed with sand for the first five years.



“We then progressed with some gravel banding in 2000 and then the Shelton 25 system in 2010 on 13 greens to aid the drainage. With the change now in maintenance procedures we have used the Graden sand injection twice in the last 3 years alongside our monthly aeration, top dressing and liquid foliar feed programme.”

The course, which as its name suggests is in a valley, boasting superb views of the hills and, not to mention, the spectacular River Dee running alongside four of the holes, had some dramatic changes 20 years ago.

“We received two tree grants in the early 90s which stipulated how many trees we had to plant, how close together they should be planted and the species we were required to plant – and not all of

them were types we wanted,” recalled Jez.

Since then they have thinned them out to create shape on the golf course as well as joining them up to define some of the holes.

“We have a lot of tree lined holes which does cause considerable maintenance issues with leaf collection, while during dry summers, like last year, they do draw moisture out of the ground.

“I’ve educated the membership now that trees are in essence a crop and that certain trees have certain lifespans.

“Also, that trees have to be removed for the benefit of the course to aid in sunlight and air flow to certain areas.” said Jez.

Two trees which do hold reserved status at the club appear on the 10th fairway. The oaks are the 4th



and 6th oldest in North Wales and the hole is known as "Twin Oaks".

The bunker work is continual particularly when the course falls victim to weekends like the one early last February.

"We were hit by a mini tornado on the Friday afternoon. It tore out the practice net and ripped off the roof of our Halfway House and dumped it 40 yards away narrowly missing one of our guys, and then on the following Sunday day the dam at the reservoir in Bala was opened to let some of the water out, but too much water was released and it flooded four of our holes – the 1st, 9th, 15th and 16th. It was three feet deep at its worst and lay for some 36 hours.

There was a lot of silt and debris on the greens tees and fairways but it completely washed the bunkers out on those holes," explained Jez, who said that it was something which had happened to a slightly lesser degree three times through the years 2000-2004.

Despite having been at the club for such a period motivation has never been a problem.

"As an active member of the golf club I wouldn't want to go out on a Saturday, play the course and have people complaining about the quality of the course. I like to do it right even if I know it's not going to be perfect all the time," said Jez, who has represented Denbighshire county and North Wales teams.

"I was also the Minorcan Amateur Champion in 2005 and my name is on the board at Son Parc golf club over there. I've never won the Club Championship here though," he said ruefully.

He is really looking forward to his year as Captain and has developed an interesting way of splitting his roles at the club.

"If I've got my boots on, I'm Course Manager; if I've got my shoes on, I'm Captain but if I've got my golf shoes on I'm a golfer so leave me alone I'm playing golf," he joked.

He is certainly not one who is going to add a Captain's Tree or a Captain's Bunker to the course.

"I've seen 25 different Captains many of whom have wanted a tree, bunker or a pond put on the course. After my year I'd just like everyone to say that I was a good Captain and that I did a good job," said Jez, who hopes that, at 42, he will be able to encourage a younger feel to the club.

Listening to both Jez and Bob you can't help but agree that the former's year in office will do nothing to damage their on-going working relationship.

"The Captain is just one of the Board here and not in charge of the club. He has a vote along with another six Board Members so invariably only good decisions, for the benefit of the whole club, will be passed," said Bob.

"The days of the Captain coming in and saying 'This is what I'm going to do in my year,' have well and truly gone," he added.

That might just have scuppered one of the current Vice Captain's goals.

"Next year's pay rise might not be as easy as I thought!" joked Jez.

"Seriously, I don't see it being a problem at all. If there are any conflicts of interest which I feel I'd better off not being involved with, as an employee, I'll step back. It wouldn't be worth me getting involved."

The banter between Jez and Bob illustrates just how strong their working relationship is.

"He also knows that the year after he's been Captain he'll be back to normal," quipped Bob, before adding a more serious note.

"Jez comes not only with the respect of being Captain but also with the respect of knowing more than anyone else about the course. He's the expert there."

Jez is looking forward to his "drive in" which will take place on the first Saturday of next January.

"I'll have mixed emotions. I'll be nervous as I'm not playing as much as I used to and I'll want to strike a good one but it'll be quite sentimental as my dad won't be there to see me drive in and he's the man who introduced me to the game."

He may not have part of the club named after him but the continuity and success that Jez has brought Vale of Llangollen Golf Club means just as much to the members as Sir Alex Ferguson means to the Manchester United fans.

That said Jez would like it to be known that despite the references to Man Utd in this article he is a life long Liverpool supporter!

