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# Learning & Development

Sami Collins, BIGGA Learning & Development Manager, with an update on education issues

As we approach the festive season (which seems to start earlier each year!) let's take your mind off fighting to grab that last Tracy Island or deciding if it's acceptable to watch the Great Escape on +1.

So curl up with your Continue to Learn brochure in front of a roaring fire with a glass of port and plan your education at BTME.

Continuing the overview, this month we'll concentrate on the Turf Managers' Conference and the workshops.

## SUNDAY 20th JANUARY/ MONDAY 21st JANUARY

Once again the workshop programme is proving very popular and is a highly valued educational experience for those who have attended in previous years.

### Two day Workshops

So You Want to be a Golf Course Manager, Peter Jones & Kevin Munt  
Moving into Management, Frank Newberry

Irrigation System Management and Design, Adrian & Dennis Mortram

Business IT, Jacky Lowe

### One day Workshops

The ABCs of Putting Green Maintenance, Thom Nikolai

The Turfgrass Plant, Paul Miller  
Basic Golf Mechanics, Hanfried Sievers

How to be an Outstanding Manager Pt 4, Shona Garner

Health and Safety Documentation, Jon Allbutt

Basic Budgeting and Golf Course Finances, Jerry Kilby & Duncan Ritchie

Soils for Fine Turf, Paul Miller  
Diagnostics and Problem Solving, Hanfried Sievers

How to be an Outstanding Manager Pt 2, Shona Garner

Pesticides Update for NPTC Certificate Holders, Jon Allbutt  
Business IT, Jacky Lowe

## MONDAY 21st JANUARY

The Turf Managers' Conference takes place at the Crown Hotel this year.

We have a wonderful line up, with



**Gold Key Individual Members:**  
Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS  
Ian MacMillan MG, Ian Morrison  
Andrew Turnbull, W J Rogers  
Sam Langrick, Espen Bergmann,  
Nick Gray

**Silver Key Individual Members:**  
Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn  
Douglas Duguid, Jaey Goodchild,  
Graham Wiley, Michael Beaton,  
Paul Jenkins, Justin Cheung

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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presentations from Lorna Sheldon from CWI International on how to make Professional Presentations and How to Manage Politics in the Club from David Bancroft-Turner, The Academy for Political Intelligence.

We also have Kate Entwistle, from The Turf Disease Centre, discussing new cool season diseases.

Finally, Dr Thom Nikolai of Michigan State University will be presenting two papers.

Firstly, the Top 10 Reasons for Lightweight Rolling.

Thom has been leading the research into its effects for nearly twenty years.

His second paper will be on surfactants, covering soil science, hydrology and concepts including 'plant available water'.

This is a must-attend conference for all managers of fine turf.

### REGIONAL CONFERENCES

The month of November has been a busy month for conferences, with four of the regions holding theirs across the country.

They were really well attended and thanks go to all those who came, the speakers who gave up their valuable time to share their knowledge and experiences and the organisers, without whom, these events could not take place.

Please spread the word about the conferences and how valuable

a resource they are to members.

Plus all those who attended and signed the CPD register will receive two CPD points.

### LIBRARY

The library has now been re-categorised and the database updated to include all the new books that have been recently purchased thanks to John Deere.

If you would like to view the library you can see and order online or you can arrange to visit BIGGA House and browse at your leisure.

### BIGGA HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Four scholarships have been awarded this month to;

Peter Collins – NVQ Level 4 Sports Turf Management, Guildford College

Phillip Worth – Foundation Degree (online), Myerscough College

Craig Sanderson – Foundation Degree, Askham Bryan College

James Parker – HNC Sportsturf Management (online), Elmwood College

Haydon Drinkwater – Bsc Sports Turf (online), Myerscough College

### FINALLY...

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from your Learning and Development Team!



# BIGGA Membership

The membership team reflect on current news and affairs affecting you, the BIGGA member

## Lifestyle Counselling Helpline and Online Support Service - upgrade service to Members and their families.

Lifestyle Counselling Helpline and Online Support is available to all BIGGA Members and members of their immediate family living at the same address.

This upgraded service can help with a range of problems from practical everyday matters to sensitive or emotional issues.

Specialists will help members deal with personal relationship problems, problems with colleagues in the workplace and other issues affecting their general wellbeing.

Counsellors and information specialists are also trained to help members with practical problems like debt.

The helpline is complemented by a comprehensive online information and support service, through which members can access information and advice on a range of issues and problems which often impact on everyday life.

Topics are diverse and include relationships, childcare issues, consumer issues, stress and health and fitness.

Information is updated regularly by a team of experienced counsellors and information specialists.

For details on how to contact the Lifestyle Counselling Helpline or connect to the Online Support Service via [www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst](http://www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst) please log in to the members area of the BIGGA website and select Member Services and Lifestyle Counselling Helpline & Online Support Service or contact the Membership Services Team.

## BTME 2013 - Register NOW and avoid the queues

Visit [www.btme.org.uk](http://www.btme.org.uk) and click on the register now button, the BTME website also includes bags of information about the big week including who's exhibiting, travel tips and a product guide.

## For Your Eyes Only.....

Come along to the BIGGA James



Bond evening to be shaken not stirred, with fantastic entertainment.

Further details coming soon...

To be held ~ Tuesday 22 January 2013 @ 7pm to 10:30pm at THE OLD SWAN HOTEL, Swan Road, Harrogate, HG1 2SR.

Tickets ~ £25 each including Carvery & Arrival Drink

Dress Code ~ Smart/Casual

To purchase tickets please call Elaine Jones on 01347 833800 (Option 1) or email [moneypenny@bigga.co.uk](mailto:moneypenny@bigga.co.uk)

## BIGGA Stand - Hall B stand 23

Come and see us on stand B23.

The stand will be packed with lots of information about BIGGA, meet the Membership Team, Tracey and Elaine, and pick up information about education and training.

Come and find out how BIGGA is split into five regions and 26 sections around the UK and meet your Regional Administrator, John (Scotland), Sandra (Northern and Midland), Clive (South East) and Jane (South West/South Wales).

We will also be selling BIGGA logo jumpers and windproof tops.

## Showfloor Theatre 2013

The Showfloor Theatre, a new initiative for 2012 is making a popular return in 2013, keep an eye on [www.btme.org.uk](http://www.btme.org.uk) or [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) for information and news on what will be happening in this area.

## BIGGA Regional Conferences

Congratulations to Sandra Raper and the Northern and Midland Regions on putting on a splendid regional conference in both regions this year.

Clive Osgood and the South East Region ran an excellent regional conference at Thorpeness Golf & Country Club followed the next day by Jane Jones and the South West and South Wales Region running a fantastic and well-attended regional conference in Highbridge, Somerset.

We've had great feedback on all of them already and next year will be even better, watch out for dates so you can pencil them in your diary.

If you have any suggestions for topics to be discussed at the conferences please contact your Regional Administrator, or a member of your section or region committee or of course you can contact any member of the BIGGA headquarters team.

## Keep up to date instantly with Twitter and Facebook

Keep up to date with all that's happening BIGGA wise on Facebook and Twitter.

You can find us on Twitter on @BIGGALtd and search for British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Ltd (BIGGA) Facebook group.



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You can follow BIGGA on Twitter @BIGGALtd

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John Young Sandra Raper



Clive Osgood Jane Jones

## OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

Personal Accident Helpline  
02075 603013  
Greenkeepers Legal Assistance  
0800 177 7891  
Greenkeepers Support Services  
0800 174 319  
Debt Counselling Helpline  
0800 174319





## TORO SPRINKLERS CLINCH DEAL FOR WINDSWEPT LINKS COURSE

With its spectacular clifftop course regularly subjected to strong coastal winds, it's no wonder finding sprinklers that could cope in these challenging conditions became a deal-breaker for Royal Cromer Golf Club when choosing a new irrigation system – and course manager Mark Heveran has plumped for Toro's Dual Trajectory (DT) Series golf sprinkler.

The 18-hole North Norfolk coastline course has been installed with DT35 sprinklers across its greens, tees, approaches, fairways and walkways as part of an irrigation system upgrade to Toro's new Lynx control system software with Golf

Decoder Controller (GDC) field hardware.

DT Series sprinklers feature a clever 'selectable trajectory' that allows simple adjustment of the main nozzle to either 15 or 25 degrees so as to better withstand wind or avoid obstacles.

More flexible, advanced and durable than competitor models, its nozzle has also been designed to ensure uniform coverage.

Available in two types – full-circle-only or full- and adjustable part-circle – customers can opt for the most cost-effective solution for their course conditions.

For example, a full-circle-only sprinkler is more suited to fairways, where part-circle

capability is not needed.

Better yet, conversion assemblies are available so that existing systems can be upgraded to this far more efficient technology.

Commenting on the sprinklers, Mark says: "The real clincher for us was the adjustable trajectory sprinklers – they're vital in our windy conditions."

The course gets battered by the wind and, without effective irrigation, the most exposed areas just go bare because we can't get the root development to keep the fescue grasses alive.

But the way the DT35s throw against even the strongest gusts is so impressive."



## BAYER LAUNCH TURF DISEASE MOBILE APP

As part of their planned series of new innovations Bayer has launched a dedicated smartphone app for the turf and amenity sector. The Bayer TurfXpert app has been specifically developed with turf professionals in mind and has been designed to help identify turf weeds, diseases and insects whilst in the field.

Bayer's Product Manager Claire Matthewman explains that this particular application is an evolution of Bayer's very popular turf weed, pest and disease wall chart. "We've taken all of the valuable information that our turf wall chart displayed, added in a simple to use weed and disease identifier tool and turned it into an interactive smartphone application."

"We had positive early feedback when we previewed the app to greenkeepers in September at STRI Research event, and so now we're working on a version for the iPad which we plan to launch at BTME in January next year."

We're confident there will be good take-up." The Bayer TurfXpert app is now available free of charge from the Apple App store; simply enter 'Bayer TurfXpert' into the Search facility.

An Android version will soon be available.

**BTME is back** for its 24th year at the HIC, 22-24 January 2013

Visit [www.btme.org.uk](http://www.btme.org.uk) and click the **Register Now** icon



## POLARIS MEETS THE BOSS

Polaris owners here can benefit from The Boss technology with its introduction by Farmquip, the UK and Ireland's sole distributor. The Boss set the bar in creating ground-breaking technology to make snow ploughing fast, easy and efficient.

The specially engineered plough for Polaris UTV and ATV use is built to the same standards as the full-size Boss ploughs and offers a tough, contractor grade solution to handling snow removal.

The hydraulics are enclosed to protect against corrosion and freezing, with a chainless lifting system to reduce snowplough bounce

during transportation.

A revolutionary hitch system makes the plough easy and incredibly fast to attach to a UTV. Teamed with a Polaris Ranger Diesel for example you have the traction and power to deal with the most extreme terrain and conditions, with in-cab control.

But clearing snow with the plough is only part of the story. The Boss TGS 800 tailgate spreader is quickly attached to the rear of the Polaris. The rotary 'paddle action' makes the spreader a true gritter, so you can spread rock salt, grit, sand and other de-icing materials to provide traction.

## FANTASTIC FAIRWAYS WITH MULTIGREEN



In 2010, Telford Golf Resort Course Manager Matt Robbins was unhappy with the fairways. "We were using liquid feeds but getting poor results, and soil samples suggested that the fairways needed more nitrogen." Discussions with Headland Amenity's Area Manager Adrian Masters pinpointed Multigreen 425 as the ideal solution, giving a long lasting nutrient boost from a single application using Headland's temperature controlled release technology.

The 28:0:0 + 3MgO formulation gives a steady release of nutrients throughout the summer, boosting growth and vitality without the risk of flushes. The release of nutrients from Multigreen is solely controlled by soil temperature, giving a long lasting response from a single application, vital as fairway fertilisation is costly in terms of the amount of materials used and the labour involved.

"A contractor applied 140 bags to the 18 fairways using a tractor mounted spreader in April 2011, and the results were superb," comments Matt. "The fertiliser lasted all through the summer, and although the growth tailed off in the dry autumn, as soon as the temperatures and moisture levels improved this spring, we saw the effects of the fertiliser once again. So we gained almost 12 months' action from a single application."



## NEW FACE AT EVERRIS

Everris has appointed Simon Taylor as Product & Business Development Manager, Grass Seeds, EMEA.

He will join the international marketing and business development team from January 2013.

Grass seed is an important part of Everris' product portfolio and an essential part of the company's iTurf integrated turf management solutions.

Reporting to Global Vice President of Marketing & Business Development, Joan Verhoeven, Simon will drive the growth of this category and the positioning of Everris' seed portfolio in the European turf & amenity business.

Simon has more than 20 years' experience in the grass seed sector in which time he has strongly driven the development of turf grass seeds mixture sales and marketing in the UK and Ireland.

Simon began his career studying an HND in General Agriculture.

In addition to being BASIS registered, he is a professional member of the British Association of Landscaping Industries (BALI), and is Chairman of the British Society of Plant Breeders steering committee for the turf grass trials at STRI.

Commenting on his appointment, Joan Verhoeven said: "We are very happy that Simon, with his experience and great grass seed know-how, is joining Everris to further strengthen our service and to enhance the role that grass seeds play in our integrated turf solutions for greenkeepers, groundsmen and landscapers".



# Kite flies off into retirement

Steve Castle speaks to a greenkeeper whose highly eventful working life has all been spent at the same club



*Name: Alan Kite  
Born: Coventry, 2 December 1947  
Marital status: Married to Gill  
with two sons  
Handicap: 20  
Hobbies: Cricket, football, golf,  
walking*

**It's a freezing December morning in 1962 and a 15-year-old boy is pushing his bike through thick snow to reach his first ever job at Sutton Coldfield Golf Club.**

Trainee greenkeeper Alan Kite picked one of the worst ever winters to begin his career – with atrocious weather preventing any real work on the course from December to April. But Alan is now preparing for retirement after spending his entire working life at the same club.

He was just 21 when he became Head Greenkeeper, and during an eventful career he's had to cope with a devastating fire, various recessions and generations of irritating cattle.

The unusual heathland course commands 200 acres of the vast 2,400 acre Sutton Park, which is an SSSI protected site.

Joggers, dog walkers and families mingle with the cattle that roam the park – and the fairways – from April to October.

His tale is fascinating. He can recall a time where four greenkeepers would tine a green by hand over the course of a day, and golfers rarely ventured out in the winter months – and he reveals why he believes half a century in the same job is now impossible.

The biggest influence on his early career was former Head Greenkeeper Jack Toy. Amazingly, he also spent 50 years at the club – and Alan has emulated his mentor's longevity.

"I always wanted to work outdoors, and my mother knew Jack and mentioned I was looking for a job.

"But as soon as I got here, there was snow on the ground until April. It was unbelievable – I didn't see any grass for 14 weeks. I didn't have a clue where anything was – I remember disappearing into a bunker on the 14th when I was trudging round in this deep snow.

"All I did was shovel snow around the car park and I had to listen to these old men boring me about the past and as a young teenager, I didn't want to know.

"But later on I realised it had been the best education I could possibly have had. Formal education was non-existent so they gave me the benefit of all those years of experience.

"When I started we had three Gang Mowers, a little tractor, a spiker and some scythes which were used on the greens at that time. The rest were hand machines.

"The greens were pure fescue, cut twice a week.

RIGHT: Alan in 1968 and  
BELOW: another of the course  
from 1968



Four of us would take a day to tine a green by hand."

By now Alan had thrown himself into greenkeeping, and was determined to further his career.

He even took up golf – having previously never picked up a club in his life – and was quickly playing off a single figure handicap.

"Jack retired and I fully expected to take over from him at 18 – that shows the confidence of youth! I eventually took over as Head Greenkeeper at 21. People didn't pressure you and you learnt as you went along, and I also attended courses at the STI – now the STRI –

which was just starting up."

He was appointed Course Manager in 1979 – but three years before this appointment came the toughest test of his half-century reign.

Blazing hot summers in 1974 and 1975 had left the heathland like a tinderbox – and the famously scorching summer of 1976 triggered a series of fires which raged across Sutton Park, engulfing the course.

"There was no rain whatsoever for 11 weeks up to the end of August, and we'd had small fires here and there.







Alan Parton, Phil Rainsford, Alan Kite, Clayton Lee. Missing is Jim Guest

IMAGES ON RIGHT PAGE show Sutton Coldfield today and BELOW: cows

**“Apart from foot and mouth and the year after the fire, we’ve had cattle on here every year. This year we’ve been picking up half a ton of muck a day”**

Because the ground was bone dry, all it took was one fire and the embers would float off and start more fires.

“We held a big charity amateur tournament with the likes of Nick Faldo and Sandy Lyle, which we got through, but the tournament

ended and in the last few days of August the wind got up, a fire started and that was it.

“All the trees went, all the gorse, the fairways were burnt, it was horrendous. It was lapping over fences and people had to be evacuated from the nearby houses.

“We drew up a battle plan to repair the course, with the main focus on digging up scorched earth and replacing it with new soil. For months after, whenever you went out you would get black legs from all the ash.”

Remarkably it was closed for less than two months – although they were assisted by the scarcity of golfers as autumn turned to winter, something which has altered hugely during his tenure.

“We did so much of our work in the winter. People didn’t play much winter golf then, and they wouldn’t play if it rained because the rubber outfits golfers wore then weren’t waterproof. There’d be nobody out there from November to March, and even in the summer there was no play on Sundays.”

It’s safe to say that Alan has no plans to retire to a farm, or anywhere near cattle, after spending “48 years shoveling cow dung”.

“Apart from foot and mouth and the year after the fire, we’ve had cattle on here every year. This year we’ve been picking up half a ton of muck a day.”

However, Alan harbours a greater dislike of bunkers than of bovines.

“We should have designed inland courses to be without bunkers,

they’ve been the bane of my life. You’re told you’re never raking them properly and in the summer the finer sand blows away. Somebody should have said we’re not on the seaside and we don’t want or need bunkers. You can put other features in like gorse and bushes.”

He believes his generation will be the last to ever have ‘a job for life’.

“There’s no loyalty now either from the club’s side or the employees’ side. You’re not going to get people staying 50 years anymore. It’s not just this industry, society generally is more cut and thrust.”

He has no doubts when asked about the most satisfying part of the job.

“When everyone pulls together for a tournament. We do the best we can with what we have, and on the day the adrenaline’s flowing and it’s a great feeling.

“I do love this course. One of the best things is that it’s open to the public, so it’s not just the same old faces. I’ve got to know so many people down the years.”

Alan was a Midlands secretary for BGGGA – one of the forerunners of BIGGA – and was a big supporter of its 1987 amalgamation with the English and International Golf Greenkeepers Association and the Scottish and International Golf Greenkeepers Association.

“I passionately believed we had to amalgamate, it was common sense. We’d have been in a much worse position without BIGGA, but there’s still a way to go.

“Two things disappoint me. One is the number of Master Greenkeepers who seem to leave the trade.

“These young men are returning to their clubs after this fabulous achievement but aren’t properly rewarded, so they leave to become agronomists, advisers or do contract work. That means they’re not ploughing their knowledge back into the trade.

“Secondly, when I started we were considered as nothing better than a gardener. I have to say that some things haven’t changed.

“When the financial pressure is on, as it is now, some clubs don’t help us and our skills are still undervalued.

“Cutting back on greenkeepers is short-sighted because it will obviously affect the condition of the course long-term.”

It’s been a humbling experience to meet a man who’s poured his heart and soul into the industry and he’s also given me a priceless insight into how greenkeeping has developed over 50 years.

Happy retirement, Alan.









# More market choice for the clubhouse Christmas tree

Dr Terry Mabbett provides some timely advice on selecting the perfect tree to add the festive touch to your club

