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**BIGGA Chief Executive Officer**  
Jim Croxton

**BIGGA General Manager**  
Tracey Maddison  
traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

**BIGGA Learning & Development Manager**  
Sami Collins  
sami@bigga.co.uk

**Contact Us**  
BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York,  
YO61 1UF  
info@bigga.co.uk  
www.bigga.org.uk  
Tel – 01347 833800 | Fax – 01347 833801

### GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the  
British and International Golf Greenkeepers  
Association Limited.



**Production**  
**Design & Brand  
Executive**  
Tom Campbell  
Tel – 01347 833800  
ext 513  
tom@bigga.co.uk



**Editorial**  
**Communications  
Executive**  
Steve Castle  
Tel – 01347 833800  
ext 510  
steve.castle  
@bigga.co.uk



**Advertising**  
**Business  
Development  
Executive**  
Jill Rodham  
Tel – 01347 833800  
Fax – 01347 833802  
jill@bigga.co.uk  
ext 519

**Printing**  
Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor  
Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH  
Tel – 01778 391000 | Fax – 01778 394269

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advertising or product information that may  
appear. Circulation is by subscription.  
Subscription rate: UK £50 per year, Europe and  
Eire £65, Rest of the World £95.  
The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA  
members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf  
industry, libraries and central government.



ISSN: 0961-6977  
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Greenkeepers Association Limited



Delegates enjoy the South West Assistants Development Programme

## Looking forward to 2013

**As the rain pounds down outside and much of the UK experiences yet more flooding I think it is safe to say this has been one of, if not the toughest years in living memory for greenkeeping.**

Many of my conversations with members recently have centred on the importance of communicating clearly with employers, members and visitors to ensure they understand the true extent of the challenging conditions and the impact they have had (and are continuing to have) on course maintenance.

With the weather being so discouraging to golfers it is likely that revenues are down bringing further pressure on the greenkeeping team to get courses open and playable.

Never has it been more important for Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to be able to effectively put across facts and figures in a way that is not seen as making excuses, and also to work with their employers to find ways of ensuring there is some revenue generation possible.

**It is challenges just like this that has led BIGGA to endorse the Future Turf Managers Initiative that is being funded by Jacobsen (more details on page nine).**

This initiative recognises that there is so much more to being a Turf Manager of any kind than agronomic knowledge.

The Initiative is looking to identify those with the desire and fundamental skills to make a career in the field of Turf Management and supplement those skills with high quality management training and mentoring by senior Course Managers who have themselves made the journey from apprentice greenkeeper.

The Initiative compliments our own Assistant Greenkeeper Development Programme, which has begun so successfully these last few weeks.

We genuinely believe, as do Jacobsen, that investing now in the future success of our membership is good for the golf industry and for the Association.

**Many of you will have followed, as I did, the recent debates on the BIGGA Bulletin Boards about Soil Microbiology and Compost Tea programmes.**

The threads generated over 7,000 views and at times opinions were heated.

The crux of the debate was the search for solid, scientific proof that the biological approach does benefit the turf so that a Course Manager has suitable grounds for asking their employer to invest in such a programme.

In this month's edition we feature a Course Manager in the SW (page 28) who has put his faith in the approach and like many is delighted with the results.

Next month and beyond we intend to continue the theme, we will feature scientific research and follow up information from the proponents of Compost Teas and the nay-sayers where available.

**I would like to congratulate Alan Kite (page 16) on his extraordinary feat of 50 years' service at the same golf club and wish him a relaxing and enjoyable retirement.**

May I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Harrogate for BTME 2013.



**Jim Croxton  
Chief Executive**



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December 2012

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LAD FEATURE

## 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



UK is fast approaching complete self-sufficiency in Christmas trees. Picture courtesy of CIMA

Options and choices for the clubhouse Christmas tree have changed out of all proportion over the last twenty years, in the range of trees on offer, country of origin, method of production and even in the method of marketing.

Childhood Christmas tree memories for those the other side of fifty will be of Norway spruce, the traditional and often gangly conifer that dropped its needles en masse as Christmas moved into the New Year. Norway spruce is still used to today and continues to take a healthy slice of the lower end of the Christmas tree market, but has long been overtaken by the Nordmann fir. Nordmann fir is a much more compact and better looking tree and providing it has not been harvested too early will retain its needles when taken inside for decoration.

Historically Norway was never the main supplier of Norway spruce as Christmas trees and in the same way the Nordic sounding name of Nordmann fir hides the tree's true native origin. The wild native distribution of the Nordmann fir is in the Caucasus where Europe borders Asia in countries like Turkey and Georgia from where the best seed originates.

Denmark was always the biggest producer and supplier of Christmas trees for the European market and is originally responsible for the runaway success of Nordmann fir as a commercial Christmas tree, not only in the UK but all over Europe as well. It was Danish Christmas tree growers who sent into Georgia and collected the seed which started the contemporary Christmas tree industry based on Nordmann fir.

The other big change relates to country of origin. Ten years ago a Christmas tree purchased in the UK, whether Nordmann fir or Norway spruce, would more than likely have been grown in Europe (probably Denmark), and shipped to the UK for Christmas. Today your tree's roots will almost certainly have been embedded in Britain for Irish soil.

The British Christmas tree industry is one of unqualified success with the UK going from dependency on European (mainly Danish grown) Christmas trees to virtual self-sufficiency in little more than five years.

In yet another irony, we have the Doves – and the European Union (EU) – to thank for the UK's ongoing success in producing

Most British Christmas trees are now grown in the British Isles

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An early rise to the top

Craig Booth's Carron Hill in the BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition 2012

The winner of the 2012 BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition is Craig Booth's Carron Hill in the BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition 2012. The image shows a red building on a tall tower in a golf course landscape. The image was taken by Craig Booth, a professional golfer and photographer. The image is a photograph of a building on a tower, which is a well-known landmark at Carron Hill Golf Club. The image is a photograph of a building on a tower, which is a well-known landmark at Carron Hill Golf Club. The image is a photograph of a building on a tower, which is a well-known landmark at Carron Hill Golf Club.





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6 WEEKS TO BTME 2013

**GI GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL**

Celebrating 25 Years of BIGGA

65.20 DECEMBER 2012

**Farewell to 50 years**

Alan Kite celebrates half a century at Sutton Coldfield Golf Club

Gold Key Profile

BEHIND THE SCENES AT TORO

Revealed Inside...

**Top shots**

The results of the BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition are revealed

**si** Craig Boath's Carnoustie shot scoops 1st place

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### Early rise to the top

hot scoops the Competition 2012

has been heavily impacted by Covid-19. The industry really needs more technology in practice - if the club has the right equipment to use it will have been directly in the hands of the club members. In photography, you need quality tools, but the club members are the ones who are responsible for the success of the club. The success of the club is dependent on the quality of the equipment used. The success of the club is dependent on the quality of the equipment used. The success of the club is dependent on the quality of the equipment used.

**PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS**

**si**

3rd



The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.



IMAGE: Left to right Stuart Greenwood, Stuart Taylor, Andy O'Hara, Jim Paton

## ANDY O'HARA TAKES THE REINS IN SCOTLAND

During the recent Scottish Board meeting held at Terraces Hotel, Stirling, Andy O'Hara from Leven Links took over chairmanship from Stuart Taylor. At the same time, Jim Paton was selected as Vice Chairman.

Stuart Taylor said: "I was delighted to hand over the Chairmanship to Andy O'Hara but would like to thank all those in the Scottish section for their help and assistance

over the last two years as I have considered it an honour to serve the region and the association over that period.

Can I also express thanks to Peter Boyd and John Young for their help during this time along with all the staff at head office for their support.

I look forward to the association advancing in stature and professionalism over the coming years as responsibility seems to be in

good safe hands."

Andy added: "I am honoured to be given the opportunity to represent the Scottish region as chairman.

"I follow a long list of my respected peers and feel privileged to be in the company of such greenkeepers.

"I shall enjoy carrying out the various duties involved and strive to further the associations aims as outlined in our mission statement."

## GRAHAM WOOD

It is with deep regret that we have been informed of the death of Graham Wood, BIGGA life member and former Head Greenkeeper at Dunbar Golf Club, at the age of 61. Stuart Greenwood from North Berwick Golf Club has paid tribute to his great friend.

He said: "Graham was Head Greenkeeper at Dunbar Golf Club for over 30 years before he suffered a major stroke in February 2007.

He was a BIGGA stalwart, who had served at Section and Regional level for many years, and at the time of his stroke was East Section Chairman.

He enjoyed nothing better than attending BIGGA golf days and functions, and mixing with his wide circle of friends and colleagues, and enjoying a pint of fine beer afterwards.

"Graham was well respected in all greenkeeping circles and always had the time and energy to pass on his skills and knowledge to future greenkeepers.

He was someone who loved the game of golf and played the game at a very high standard.

His other passion in life was supporting Heart of Midlothian Football Club.

"Our thoughts are with his wife Helen, daughter Lisa, son Paul and all his grandchildren, and I am sure that all his friends within BIGGA and the greenkeeping industry share their sadness following his death."

Everyone at BIGGA echoes Stuart's words and pass on our condolences to all his friends and family at this time.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BIGGA volunteers are once again required to help Kenny MacKay and his team at The Wentworth Club for the BMW PGA Championship between May 23-26 2013.

Assistance will be required for any period of time during the tournament – from all four days to just one day.

The last two days will feature bunker raking.

It's a great chance to see at first hand the preparation for this European Tour flagship event, which will be held on the West Course.

All assistance will be greatly appreciated.

For more information please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator at [cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk) or call Clive on 07841 948410 or 01737 819343.

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



# MICHAEL STARS AT DEAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Golf is a sport of mind, body and soul where we attempt to utilise all our senses to try and outwit the little white ball at our feet.

But how many of you are aware of the golfers who manage to excel at the game we love without having all the attributed five senses?

I am referring to deaf golf and the English Deaf Golf team have just competed in the World Championships in Japan.

One of the stars of the English team was Kent section regular Michael Roberts, a 29-year-old greenkeeper at Knole Park Golf Club in Sevenoaks, Kent.

Michael (shown right) lost his hearing having contracted meningitis when only eight months old but it never stood in his way of forging a superb ability to play golf.

Having been introduced to the game by his father at the age of eleven, Michael quickly realised his potential and joined his local club to compete in their regular competitions.

In order to raise vital funds to represent his country Michael approached the Course Manager at Knole Park, Gavin Kyle, to see if he could earn a wage by carrying out work on the course.

Gavin was only too happy to get Michael out divotting the fairways, and he also worked hard to get his handicap down to 5.5.

A couple of years later Michael became a full-time assistant greenkeeper.

He relishes the regular in-house training sessions that Gavin organises for his staff.

At these events a 'signer' is brought in and some of his colleagues are now quite proficient at communicating in this fashion to ensure he does not miss out.

It's fair to say that Michael's recent trip to Japan wasn't one of his most successful events.

He told me that the Tsu Country Club in Japan was one of the toughest courses he had ever played.

This was probably compounded by the fact that five members of the English team shared one room in their cottage accommodation in order to keep costs down.

Michael is now firmly focused on raising his game again for the 2014 championships with qualifying next year at the Players Club in Bristol.

As mentioned above all funds have to be raised individually and Michael has planned to complete the 'Three Peaks Challenge' to raise much needed sponsorship and he would be very appreciative if his greenkeeping colleagues around the country would visit his 'just giving' page to help his and your country's cause.

For more details please visit [www.justgiving.com/englishdeafgolf](http://www.justgiving.com/englishdeafgolf)  
Rob Holland



## CONFERENCE SUCCESS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Delegates at the South West & South Wales Regional Conference in Bristol

One of November's undoubted highlights was the quartet of BIGGA Regional Conferences held across England. All four were extremely successful and well-attended, with a range of highly interesting and engaging speakers speaking to hundreds of members in Leicester, Rotherham, Thorpeness and Bristol. Luminaries from across the turf industry gave presentations in a forerunner to the educational output on offer at BTME. Feedback from the conferences has been excellent.

Many thanks to everyone who attended, the speakers and of course the Regional Administrators and staff from BIGGA HQ who organised and supported these events.

All who attended and signed the CPD register also received two CPD points – yet another benefit.

Don't forget we've still got the Scottish regional conference to look forward to on Tuesday 5 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. For more information please contact Regional Administrator John Young at [johnyoung@bigga.co.uk](mailto:johnyoung@bigga.co.uk) or on 07776 242120.

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



## NEW COURSE MANAGER AT HOCKLEY

Glenn Kirby has been appointed as Golf Course Manager at Hockley GC. Glenn leaves his position as Assistant Courses Manager at The London Club where he spent nine years managing the Nicklaus designed Heritage course.

He brings with him nearly 20 years turf management experience gained from some of the top golf courses in

England, Europe and America. Glenn said: "Hockley is a fantastic piece of Braid architecture on a great downland site.

"This coupled with the management and membership's professional and progressive attitude seemed too good an opportunity to miss, I believe we can do something very special here."

Marc Dryden, General

Manager at Hockley, added: "We are very pleased to have someone of Glenn's calibre join our team.

"I know he will make considerable contributions helping the club work towards its goal of being one of the very best members' clubs in Hampshire and help place us amongst the very best downland courses in the South of England."

## FREE MONEY FOR GREENKEEPERS!



Graeme Gallimore, Gavin Moore, Martin Cornish

A thrifty bunch of Cornish greenkeepers have claimed money back from the taxman after discovering a loophole online – and you can too.

Graeme Gallimore, Head Greenkeeper at Launceston Golf Club, was browsing Money Saving Expert when he found a page focusing on free uniform tax rebates.

Anyone wearing a work uniform who has to wash, repair and replace it themselves is entitled to a tax rebate.

Graeme and his colleagues filled in a form and received £60 each – well worth applying for.

For full details visit [www.moneysavingexpert.com/reclaim/uniform-tax-rebate](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/reclaim/uniform-tax-rebate).



## BIGGA AGM

The Annual General Meeting of BIGGA will once again be held during BTME on Wednesday 23 January at 5.15pm in the Queen's Suite at the Harrogate International Centre.

## HELP AND ADVICE AVAILABLE TO BIGGA MEMBERS

In conjunction with BIGGA, York Wealth Management, financial advisers, now operates a free e mail financial help line. Simply e mail [admin@yorkfm.co.uk](mailto:admin@yorkfm.co.uk) with your financial question.

We can help you with any issue to do with money.

Be sure to enter in the e mail header FREE BIGGA MEMBER FINANCIAL HELP.

## HELPLINE

The stress and debt helpline has been revamped and is now the 'Lifestyle Counselling Helpline & Online Support Service'.

There is a new telephone number – 0844 770 1036 – and a new online service.

All members and BIGGA staff can access this at [www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst](http://www.arclegal.co.uk/carefirst) - both username and password are BIGGA.

It also features in the Members area of the BIGGA website under 'Member Services'.

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





## JOHN PHILP'S RETIREMENT MARKED

Prior to the Scottish Central Section's AGM there was a presentation to John Philp of Carnoustie to mark his retirement and for thank him for his marvelous efforts in raising the profile of greenkeeping.

John – who was awarded an MBE for his services to the

industry – had the 11th hole of the legendary course named in his honour upon his retirement, and at the AGM he was presented with a picture of the 13th hole from the 1999 Open.

Shown above, past chairman Derek Robson presents the picture to John Philp.



## HUNT AND HARVEY SCOOP SURREY BOWL

After a close fought battle Jason Hunt of Addington Palace GC – a former BIGGA National Champion - and Mark Harvey of Epsom GC managed to beat last year's winners Ian Morrison of The Berkshire GC and Scott McMurray of Wentworth GC in the final of the Surrey Bowl.

A huge thank you to the sponsors Winchester Garden Machinery Ltd, and many thanks to Dave Wyborn and his team at Foxhills Club and Resort for a beautifully prepared course.

## BIGGA ENDORSES JACOBSEN FUTURE TURF MANAGERS INITIATIVE



Some of the most experienced and high profile course managers in the golf industry have signed up to BIGGA and Jacobsen's new scheme to train and mentor the greenkeeping stars of the future.

The Jacobsen Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI) will target the next generation of greenkeepers who demonstrate the ability and drive to become leaders of their profession in the future.

A maximum of 20 students will be selected for FTMI in any one year to attend a three-day residential course in the early part of the year and then be mentored throughout by a high profile course manager.

BIGGA's Assistants Development Programme (ADP) has been rolled out across its five UK regions giving delegates in each region an insight into the key skills they require to move up the greenkeeping career ladder.

The ADP programme includes the 'So You Want to be Promoted' seminars which have already begun featuring presentations by the likes of Murray Long of Sunningdale Golf Club, Stuart Yarwood of Lymm Golf Club and Rob Hogarth of Remedy Oak Golf Club on subjects ranging from people skills to communication to interview skills and CV preparation.

The annual residential course will include hotel accommodation, all meals, half-day workshops presented by the various mentors and Ransomes Jacobsen staff, off-site visits and a round of golf on the RJ National par three short course.

A lunch and presentation of certificates on the third day will close the programme.

It will also highlight some of the other fantastic opportunities open to BIGGA members such as volunteering at The Open Championship, The Scottish Open and the BMW PGA Championship.

Open to BIGGA members who are first assistants and deputy head greenkeepers, candidates can be nominated for this superb opportunity by their general managers, course managers, head greenkeepers and staff at BIGGA HQ.

Candidates will be selected by a panel from BIGGA and Jacobsen, and they will be looking for greenkeepers who show initiative, are actively involved in education and have the potential to emulate their mentors and go on to enjoy successful and fulfilling careers.

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





# Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

## So – You Want to be Promoted?

**November is conference month and I had the great pleasure of attending the Midlands and Northern regional conferences in Leicester and Rotherham respectively.**

They were exceptionally well attended and the content was informative, interesting and entertaining. It's not just the educational aspect of these events that make them so valuable – I always look forward to meeting members old and new. I also attended the BIGGA Midland Team Challenge at Burton on Trent Golf Club.

Gavin Robson did an excellent job in arranging the sponsors, as did Sandra Raper with the running of the event.

It's really important that members across the Sections and Regions support these type of events – I'm well aware that everyone is extremely busy but without your support they will simply be unable to continue.

They also couldn't continue without sponsors - thank you to Toro for providing superb prizes for the winners and also Bearing Transmission and Pneumatics, Inturf, Complete Weed Control and North Staffs Irrigation.

The other main event for me this month was the South Wales Section dinner which was a great night with a considerable number of members in attendance, and an impressive amount of money raised for charity. Well done to all concerned.

We've also seen the 'So You Want to be Promoted' training and education programme begin across the country – see page nine for further details.

I'm absolutely delighted that we are able to support Jacobsen in this fantastic initiative and to get this very important project off the ground. There are many young members out there who want to

make greenkeeping a career rather than it just be a job and this scheme gives those individuals valuable information on how to climb the career ladder.

It's delivered by Course Managers who have trodden the same path so they can offer genuine insight.

Education is our lifeblood and I urge all interested members to find out more about this and other opportunities.

The picture accompanying my article this month shows me in the late seventies (where has the time gone?!) – at that time there were none of the educational opportunities which are available now so make the most of them. At my own Golf Club at Teesside, it's the autumn leaves which have caused

**Education is our lifeblood and I urge all interested members to find out more about this and other opportunities**

all the nightmares this month and I'm sure it's been a similar story for many of you.

There have been twice as many leaves as last year and we've had the additional problem of localised wet spots which we've needed to drain.

We've also had too much rain again throughout autumn. It really feels like we've only had about three days of good weather this year - the promised Indian Summer never materialised did it?

BTME is now firmly at the forefront of everyone's minds and for anyone still unsure about the logistical details, this issue has all the information you could ever



prepared for what I'm sure will be another hugely successful event. BTME offers so many educational opportunities - and places for the seminars and workshops are going fast so book now!

All that remains is for me to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I'd also like to congratulate all members on the all the hard work you've put in this year. We all know it's been such a testing year with the worst summer that many of us can recall.

But together we're a strong association and I'm very optimistic ahead of the new year.

Roll on 2013. Season's Greetings Tony.

### Contact details

Tony Smith  
07988 838956  
tony.smith48@ntlworld.com