



# Chairman's Word

**BIGGA National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the new year**

## 25 more years to celebrate

**As you read this, I hope you have all had a good Christmas and are off to a good start in 2012.**

As I write this, my 12th column, I find myself trying to think ahead and plan for what will be happening and where we will be.

In these changing times this is something that is harder for everyone now, across every part of society. However we must learn to look for and exploit all the opportunities that such an environment creates. There is no point in dwelling on the difficulties. We need to be able to adapt, and sometimes think outside the box to find ways of dealing with what we face.

I believe that Greenkeepers are naturally good at this, as we are constantly managing an environment in which some of the aspects change rapidly, outwith our control, yet the standards demanded by our customers is ever higher. We have always been innovative in finding solutions to meet these demands.

That all sounds easy on paper doesn't it? The reality is a much more difficult situation, and one which is not easy to face alone. Many mistakes are made along the way, lessons learned, difficult consequences faced, but hopefully we get through those and come out stronger on the other side.

To me this has been the main benefit of my membership of BIGGA. I always have someone to turn to and will find someone who can shed some light on a problem I'm facing, has been there before, got the T-shirt and can help me find a solution, or at least the best way forward in dealing with any issue I have. In what can sometimes seem a lonely job, that extra support goes a long way!

I have spent some time reflecting on my time as Chairman over the last year, and it has not been without some significant challenges and major changes, as well as many highlights. I'm honoured to have had the privilege of serving the Association.

As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary this year at Harrogate we will reflect on the many successes of our members and supporters and the impact they have had on the Golf Industry in which we all work. We have learned a great deal together, all of which

will be put to good use by the Board, the CEO, and the Staff as they focus together on the future of the Association. We are engaging with the Sections and Regions to ensure we align our resources and efforts to the benefit of all Greenkeepers. I'd like to recognise and thank everyone for their commitment to this work.

It naturally impacts on wider stakeholders, the beneficiaries of your labours – the golfers, the clubs, proprietors, and their associations and professional bodies. We are communicating with them all, looking for ways to ensure we work together effectively in ways which are mutually beneficial. It has been reassuring to hear their recognition and respect for the significant part we play in the success of Golf, and I'd like to thank them all on behalf of the Association for their co-operation and support.

I'd also like to sincerely thank the team here at Elmwood who have been unstinting

innovations that the trade have brought to market, enabling me to make informed buying decisions on behalf of my employers. Every year I've learned something new, and been given ideas that have helped me do my job better. Socially, I've enjoyed the company of some of the finest people you will ever meet, who I am lucky to now call friends. It's re-charged my batteries and set me up each year, enthused, focussed, and ready for another year of challenges and opportunities. I can't recommend it highly enough.

My trip to China this month to teach Superintendants for a week was another great experience. I learned as much as the students, and it was great to see them interacting and learning from one another. It was not without incident, I locked myself out on my balcony one evening, and tested my powers of sign language to the limit trying to explain to security, (my Chinese

## **As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary this year at Harrogate we will reflect on the many successes of our members and supporters and the impact they have had on the Golf Industry in which we all work**

in their support during the year ensuring that my time spent on BIGGA matters has not resulted in a diminution of quality at my own facility.

We all need to reflect occasionally. We also need to rest and re-charge the batteries, and I hope you at least got a short holiday during the festive period to do just that. But we also as individuals need to re-energise and focus our forward direction also.

Every year, since I came into the Golf Industry, I have attended BTME at Harrogate. I can say with no hesitation it has had more impact on helping me than anything else.

My knowledge has grown due to all the education I've undertaken. I've made fantastic contacts who have shared so much experience and knowledge with me. I've kept abreast of all the developments and

is limited), why I was about to climb down some drainpipes. I nearly made the four minute mile, running between terminals at Guangzhou Airport, and narrowly avoided arrest after forcing my way to the front of check-in to catch my flight home. Cardiac arrest was on the cards at this point, but some help from a friendly Chinese couple smoothed the unrest and I was thankfully last on the plane and on my way home. Such are the joys!

I'll be at Harrogate Saturday 21st through to Friday 27th, and I hope to see many of you there.

My very best regards for 2012,

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# Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director,  
with a monthly update



**Happy New Year everybody. Those of us lucky enough to be in employment and returning to work after the festive break, will no doubt face ongoing difficult times as the UK economy still seems to be stuck in a deep economic rut.**

We hear more and more golf clubs are struggling to stay afloat and some radical measures are having to be taken to keep the business going.

The GTC sincerely hopes that employers look to maintain and improve the standards offered at their clubs by investing in staff development.

At the majority of golf clubs, certainly in Europe, a small team of multi-skilled operatives, led by a qualified competent Course Manager has managed to work its way through previous recessions (showing my age now!).

The British greenkeeper education and training system supports those employers willing to invest in staff skills with Government funding being available through the Apprenticeship Scheme and other funding initiatives.

The Scottish and Welsh Governments have introduced schemes to support employers considering recruiting new apprentices and more recently the UK Government has proposed a Youth Contract, which again is designed to give employers funding to support the employment of apprentices.

Scotland has Employer Recruitment Incentives and Flexible Training Options available and while it is often difficult to keep track of new initiatives such as these and they are often subject to change at short notice we do encourage employers to contact their Quality Assured Centres for the most up to date information.

Greenkeepers themselves can also apply for funding for Scholarships and Bursaries available through organisations such as BIGGA and The R&A as well as individual funding initiatives such as the ILA in Scotland.

I hear more and more stories of

professionalism by Course Managers when developing their course maintenance and development budgets for their employer to consider.

"Making the case" for new equipment, materials and staff isn't easy at the best of times but all of these skills can be gained through training and a well presented case can engage an employer especially when they see the projected benefits from the proposals.

While we would always prefer golf club employers to recruit sufficient full time staff to maintain and managed the golf course to the highest possible standards we also have a tradition of using part-time and volunteers to aid the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper.

The standards now expected at the majority of golf clubs are at levels which put demands on both employers and their employees have never been greater.

Why have standards been set so high? Clearly golf courses chosen for the televised tournaments ensure adequate resources are provided for their staff to present excellent playing surfaces for the leading golfers in the world to show off their skills, but without knowledgeable skilled greenkeepers, the game at all levels would undoubtedly suffer.

The GTC has maintained a career structure which can be used for apprentice greenkeepers to progress but also every other person employed or volunteering to play their part on and off the golf course.

I know many of today's top Course Managers have had to learn so many skills far beyond the apprenticeship and together, with helpful comments from those Course Managers who have stepped up to becoming General Managers, we must now ensure our Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers support the next generation, with quality education and training courses aligned to the National Occupational Standards recently agreed for the sector.

How can we ensure these training courses are available?

The National Occupational Stan-



The GTC is funded by:



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dards cover craft, supervisory and management skills and the knowledge required and are written in a format which can be transferred into short training courses or full qualifications.

The GTC promotes both formal and informal education and training for both greenkeepers and golf club employers.

The National Occupational Standards are sometimes better explained as UNITS and all can be delivered through training courses but to date are mainly used to cluster Units together to make up the vocational and college based qualifications.

So whether you are an apprentice, assistant or deputy greenkeeper, Head Greenkeeper, Course Manager, volunteer or Chairman of Green, the GTC can assist you to have a meaningful contribution to supporting your golf clubs business aspirations.

The GTC Quality Assured Centres are available to assist employers access all of the new Government funding from Apprenticeships, Youth Contracts to other schemes as they become available to assist trainees develop their skills and knowledge and for employers to employ "more hands"

Check out the National Occupational Standards and the GTC's Quality Assured Centres and Training Provider network on the GTC's website [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk).



# Learning & Development

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

**Happy New Year! I can't believe another year has passed – where did 2011 go? Rachael and I wish you all health, wealth and happiness for 2012.**

The focus this month is firmly on Harrogate Week and specifically, for the L&D department, the Continue to Learn education programme.



## Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week

Harrogate Week kicks off the year in grand style with the Continue to Learn education programme running from Sunday 22 to Thursday 26 January. For those of you that haven't booked yet – fear not, you can book up to Wednesday 11 January 2012.

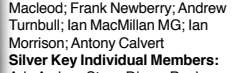
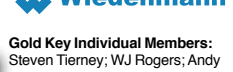


## NEW FEATURE for 2012

The Showfloor Theatre, located next to the BIGGA Stand, will be unveiled for the first time. Presentations and Awards will take place at the Showfloor Theatre, attendance is free of charge and open to all attendees. I hope you will take the time to attend some of the events that are taking place:

### Tuesday 24 January

Edwin Budding Award  
STRI Ecology Awards  
Want to be an R&A Greenkeeper



**Gold Key Individual Members:**  
Steven Tierney; WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Frank Newberry; Andrew Turnbull; Ian MacMillan MG; Ian Morrison; Antony Calvert

**Silver Key Individual Members:**  
Ade Archer; Steve Dixon; Paul Jenkins; Richard McGlynn; Sam Langrick; Neil Whitaker; Graham Wylie; Michael Beaton; Douglas Duguid; Derek Grendowicz; Jaey Goodchild

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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### Scholar?

How to Write Your CV and Prepare a Cover Letter  
Presentation of CPD Diplomas and Master Greenkeeper Certificates  
Experiences of the Ohio State Internship Programme  
Proactive Job Search Tips for Greenkeepers

### Wednesday 25 January

Photographic Competition Awards  
Experiences from the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award  
Managing the Business of Sustainability  
GEO Certified™ - Making Your Sustainability Efforts Easier, More Credible and More Visible  
Practical Interview Skills for Greenkeepers  
Multifunctional Golf Courses – An Underutilised Resource  
How to Negotiate Your Salary Package

### Thursday 26 January

Experiences of the Ohio State Internship Programme



## Continue to Learn Seminars

An extensive range of Continue to Learn Seminars are being offered in the Queen's Suite. These seminars are free of charge and available to all visitors on a first come first serve basis:

### Tuesday 24 January

Suppression of Fusarium Patch By Phosphite in Cool-Season Amenity Turfgrasses  
The Biology and Effects of Parasitic Nematodes in Sports Turf  
Managing Winter Kill in West of Scotland?  
Understanding Cutting Unit Performance  
Activated Microbial Turf Man-

### agement

Use of Plant Growth Promoting Rhizobacteria for Healthy Turf  
Important Health, Safety and Pesticides Updates  
Use of Synthetic Turf in Golf  
LinkedIn – A Masterclass  
Organic Matter - Friend or Foe?  
Redefining IPM; Reduced Chemical Management of Golf Course Turf  
Perceptions in Greens Management – What's Most Important? You Decide  
Tier 4 – How Will it Affect You?

### Wednesday 25 January

Achieving Smooth Golf Greens  
Being a Professional and Living It  
The Ultimate Renovation Package  
BASIS Contribution for the Future of Amenity Industry  
Control of Earthworms on Golf Courses  
Let's Re-build 20 Greens in 10 Days - Mission Impossible  
A New Approach in Wetting Agent Technology for Enhanced Turf Health, Consistency and Playability  
From Grazing to Scottish Open Status in Five Years  
Sustainable Golf Course Management and the Impact of the Cutting Unit

### Thursday 26 January

Secrets from the Sandman  
Bunker Construction - The Way Forward  
Using an Integrated Management Approach to Eliminate Turf Disease on Fine Turf Surfaces  
The Rescue Club

## BIGGA Greenkeeper Training Listing

On page 66 the December 2011 issue of this magazine the advert for Oaklands College should have shown the Greenkeepers Training Committee Quality Assured logo. Oaklands College have been a GTC Quality Assured Centre since September 2011. We apologise for this error.



## John Deere Enhances European Parts Service

John Deere's European Parts Distribution Centre has inaugurated its new deconsolidation and packaging facility, a 23million euro investment, which will create additional employment for around 80 people.

The new operation was established within just ten months and will help to streamline parts logistics and further enhance the supply of parts to John Deere dealers and customers throughout

Europe, the CIS, Northern Africa and the Near and Middle East (EAME).

"In light of the rapidly growing range of John Deere machines in all equipment divisions, we must continue to improve our supply of parts and merchandise," said Fritz Rheindorf, Director Parts Operations.

The new 16,000 square metre deconsolidation and packaging complex in Bruchsal will serve as a hub

for incoming parts, which will either complement outgoing parts shipments or be forwarded to storage areas at E-PDC.

Due to logistics and handling improvements, the company expects to reduce delivery times even further, especially in peak harvesting seasons.

The Bruchsal E-PDC currently stores more than 200,000 part numbers in a 62,000 square meter area.

## Double Promotion

Rolawn has promoted Jonathan Hill to Sales and Marketing Director and Emily Kirkland to Customer Service Manager. Jonathan was previously National Sales Manager, has been with the company for over eight years.

"Jonathan's appointment as a Director is a key part in achieving the demanding objectives we have set as a company. We are all enthusiastic about the way the company is developing in these challenging times and Jonathan's experience and enthusiasm will be invaluable in achieving our objectives," said Paul Dawson, MD.

Emily worked as both a Sales Administrator and Customer Services Co-ordinator.

"Our policy of internal promotion for staff members who demonstrate outstanding skills and an excellent work ethic is perfectly summed up by Emily's promotion. We are delighted that she has taken on this important position, which is vital in the way we support our customers," said Jonathan Hill.

## Inturf Fullfills Green Promise

In 2009 Inturf signed up to 10:10 to signal its business commitment to doing something about climate change.

The business aimed to cut its use of energy by working more efficiently and so achieve a 10% cut in its carbon emissions in the process.

In fact, through dramatically reducing its use of electricity, heating oil and diesel Inturf

has cut emissions by 18% in the first year.

"We've taken a close look at how we use energy in every part of the business," says Alex Edwards, Joint MD.

"Every stage of turf production from sowing to harvesting has been made more efficient. We've redesigned our delivery systems too so diesel use – a substantial part of our costs – has been greatly reduced."



## Lone Britannia

Ecosol Turfcare was the only British exhibitor at GreenExpo, held in Bordeaux in November 2011.

Operator of the Drill n Fill/Deep Drill aerators and sportsturf maintenance and renovation systems, Ecosol has just returned from a highly successful visit to the French Greenkeepers' Association exhibition, taking place over three days at the city's lakeside venue. Ecosol MD, Bretton King was impressed by the quality of the visitors. "We've seen increasing numbers of European golf clubs booking us for Drill n Fill contract work and machine sales over the past few years," he said, "so a personal presence on the Continent was a no-brainer."

"We had a lot of informed interest in Drill n Fill from the major clubs, some of whom made definite bookings and there was evidence that smaller clubs were co-operating to book the system between them. In addition it was great to meet several satisfied customers, from management to greenkeeping staff."

## TURFCO iPad WINNER

Graeme Lorimer, Course Manager at Bishopsbrigg Golf Club on the north eastern outskirts of Glasgow, has won one of the six Apple iPads offered as prizes in Turfco's promotional campaign celebrating 50 years of topdressing.

Turfco, the Minnesota-based manufacturer and inventor of the first mechanised topdresser, have been running the competition since the February 2011.

At the end of the year, a Grand Prize Draw will be held with the winner receiving a Turfco WideSpin 1540 EC topdresser.

Graeme was presented with his prize by John Quinton, Ransomes Jacobsen's UK and Ireland sales manager,



during a visit to IOG Scotsturf early in November.

"I can't believe it, I'm not normally very lucky when I enter competitions, so when I was notified that I'd won, I was absolutely astounded," said Graeme.

## What's your number?

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

**Name:** John Coleman

**Company:** Advanced Turf Technology

**Position:**  
Owner

**How long have you been in the industry?**  
24 Years

**How did you get into it?**

I was a fairly keen golfer as a junior and thought that getting a job as a greenkeeper, because of the early starts, would allow me to play golf after work. After the first week however I thought my legs were about to fall off with all the walking I was doing! You could say Frank Scullion, my first boss saved me the ignominy of many a frustrating Saturday medal. Thanks Frank!

**What other jobs have you done?**

At the moment I'm almost exclusively working at ATT but in the past I've spent a lot of time with golf course construction, primarily with RTJ II in Scandinavia, although I still do some advisory work.

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

I enjoy the challenge of bringing new concepts through to actual usable products.

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

In many ways the fundamentals of decent greenkeeping have stayed pretty much the same. There have been some significant improvements in the arsenal of chemicals that are now available such as PGR's.. The biggest change that I can see is golf itself. It appears that there are significantly fewer golfers and too many courses vying for the same business. I believe, it will end up with more management companies running multiple courses to lessen overheads.

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

I try and take part in a few triathlons in a season and also a few open water swimming events of about a couple of miles in length. I enjoy a nice bottle of wine of course so it's not all nut case stuff!

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

That's an interesting question in these times of uncertainty. I'd like to have a sound solvent business obviously. I'm also hoping my knees hold out so I can keep on with the nut case stuff!

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

With 24 Years in the business I'm lucky to have a lot of good friends. For fear of leaving anybody out I'll limit my list to one very good friend, Iain MacPherson

**What's your lucky number?** 8





# Moving on up

Scott MacCallum visits the golf club of a town synonymous with greenkeeping and meets a man who is relishing the opportunity to make an impact on the course





**When Harrogate Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper announced his intention to retire, the club started the process of looking for a successor. They advertised widely and pulled together a strong short list of candidates who were then put through an arduous interview process.**

The club was delighted with the final decision, they had appointed a man with vast experience with a vision to take the course forward.

That man was Paul Mitchell, but there was no need for a long induction programme, or introductions to the rest of the staff, as Paul had been a member of the club since 1972 and been Deputy Head Greenkeeper since 1985!

"I was really pleased that the club went through the interview process and that I wasn't just handed the job. It meant that I was able to demonstrate that I was going to move the club forward and that I got it on merit. If I'd said that I was happy just to keep it ticking over I certainly wouldn't have got the job," explained Paul, who was 50 when he took up the post.

"During the interview I high-

lighted some of the issues – woodland management, rye grass on the greens, bunker drainage and a thatch problem and explained what I would do to resolve it. I was also told at the time that the aim was to produce a higher quality golf course, but with a reduced budget and I was to operate with one member of staff fewer than before."

Paul had been attending BIGGA training courses over a number of years and felt ready to take the step up to be Head man.

"It felt less of a daunting prospect than when I became Deputy, because then there were guys on the team much older than me, who had been at the club for a long time, and I had to issue them with orders.

"Over the last four or five years I had had a major input on the projects we were doing, as well as in the day to day running of the course, so it wasn't so much of a jump when I got the job."

The first task Paul and the team tackled after he had been appointed was the bunker drainage.

"As with most clubs there was a complaint about the bunkers, and the fact that they were holding water. We checked them all, and if

new drainage was needed we put that in, as well as some upside down turf because we had a problem with stones coming up through the clay. Some of the members thought we bought sand with the stones already in it," joked Paul.

"We completed four holes in that first month which showed everyone what we were capable of," he said, adding that they also cleared some scrubland at the back of the 16th which opened the view up to the next hole.

"Straight away I heard people commenting on the fact that they could see Green staff working out the course. I've always wanted to finish any job we start, because there is nothing worse than a guy

**"As with most clubs there was a complaint about the bunkers holding water. If new drainage was needed we put that in, as well as some upside down turf because stones were coming up through the clay"**

Paul Mitchell

BELOW: Team is Keith Emery, Deputy Andrew Preston, Paul and Stuart Robertson. Ken Ward who was ill when the photograph was taken

ABOVE: The 4th green in splendid sunlight  
INSET RIGHT: Bunker work and TOP RIGHT: Reshaping the bunker on the 9th with new mounds  
FAR RIGHT: reshaping upside down turf on the 17th fairway







greens using pure water. Confident that he was applying at the correct rate, and happy in his own mind with the approach, he sprayed all 18 greens, the extra green which is used in the winter, and the putting green.

“At first I didn’t think anything was going to happen but then it kicked in and it has done a great job and it has got rid of 90% of the rye. I’ll look to do it again next September,” said Paul, who made sure the membership was kept informed of what was going to happen through the Green News which he introduced and the noticeboard.

Paul has also been using Primo Maxx on tees and greens and has been delighted with the results.

“We often have club matches in the evening and the player asked us to double cut as they were not playing until 5pm and the greens were a little slower but the Primo has meant that single cutting has been sufficient, again reducing the amount of hours required.

The organic matter issue had been something Paul had been aware of for some time – he could smell it – and he had hollow tined three times in the space of seven months but, by his own admission, only got rid of 5% of the problem at best.

“Henry had it analysed and found that the problem was in the

who plays on a Saturday morning coming back the following Saturday and not seeing any obvious progress having been made.”

Having made his initial splash Paul and his team of four set about the next phase, which was to improve the greens.

“We’d had a ryegrass problem in the greens for many years, while there was also an organic matter issue,” he explained.

“I did some research on Rescue, reading about it and going on BIG-GA’s Bulletin Boards and decided to do a trial on our 4th, which is just

beside our sheds. That proved successful and following discussions with Simon Watson, of Syngenta; Simon Hardcastle, of Scotts; our agronomist, Henry Bechelet, and another local Course Manager, who’d carried out the same work the year before, we agree that we should go ahead. The feeling was that if we didn’t do it now all we’d achieve is putting it off for another year.”

To aid accuracy Paul borrowed a pedestrian sprayer, worked out that he needed 25 litres for 500 square metres and carried out tests on two



top 40mm. He recommended that we use the Graden, which I'd seen at the STRI's Turf Science Life the previous year with Keith Kensett. I'd also had a short demo of it here. I was very impressed."

Paul had changed the top dressing from a fine grain to a medium and the Graden's ability to insert this straight into the soil profile was another plus.

Prior to hiring the Graden in from Kensett Sport, Paul enrolled half a dozen members – including his brother-in-law – to help with the filling of the hopper.

"The whole process took two days including doing the 3rd green twice as it was particularly soft. It was extremely hard work but fortunately the members know me and were prepared to help. We vertidrain and pencil tined ahead of the Graden pass and it took an hour to do each green and followed up with a core harvester and drag matted each green three times. We put temporary greens in place but within two hours the greens were back in play."

And the work has paid off.

"The members have been saying that they have never seen the greens so good. Ideally we should do them again but that will come down to whether the club can afford it," explained Paul, who is also a three time Club Champion.

The club is currently waiting on a report carried out by architect, Jonathan Gaunt, specifically on bunker redesign, but also with a broader remit of creating a template

for the next five to 10 years.

"I said in the Course Policy Document that we should only carry out alterations to the golf course if we bring in a professional architect. Jonathan was here all day and was very positive about some of the things we've done here. I'm looking forward to reading his document."

Paul has been delighted with the support he has had since taking over as Head man.

"I would like to thank Green Chairman, Neil Ormondroyd, the club Council and the members for their encouragement and positive comments since I became Head Greenkeeper. I'd also express my thanks to the rest of the Green-keeping staff whose efforts I greatly appreciate," said Paul, who added that his daughter, Tori, had helped out by working 15 hours a week in the summer and a day a week during the autumn and winter.

Paul has been a BIGGA member since day one of the Association and has taken full advantage of what the Association has to offer.

"I've attended Management Courses and did the Design course at Harrogate about four years ago while, as I've said, I find the Bulletin Boards a great source of information. I posted about a soil moisture meter recently and got over 1000 views and 15 replies which I thought was really good.

"I also contacted Paul Worster about staff appraisals through the Forum and he very kindly sent me some information. It's very rare that I contribute but I do read it a lot."

While many people travel thousands of miles to attend BTME and the Continue to Learn Programme Paul has it much easier. He lives a 10 minute walk away and can always return to his own bed at night.

"The seminars and workshops are excellent and I enjoy nipping into see some of the free ones. The half hour ones can be very good. I'll take the lads for a curry and meet up with people there. You can learn so much just by sitting in a pub having a few beers."

"It comes at a good time of the year and it's the ideal place for it."

Paul may have had to wait to step up to Head man at Harrogate but he is making sure he makes the most of the opportunity.

ABOVE: The 16th Green with the 5th Tee in the background

BELOW: Deputy Andrew Preston clearing 1st green after The Graden

