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Get yourself to Harrogate

Happy New Year. We may be in the depths of a recession which is showing no signs of ending but 2012 does contain some highlights that should keep us all interested.

Aside from the London Olympics and the European Football Championships, closer to home, BIGGA celebrates its 25th birthday – a quarter century of providing education and raising the professional profile of greenkeepers.

The Silver Anniversary, along with an Exhibition to mark 100 Years of Greenkeeping Associations, will be celebrated at Harrogate this year. Look out for our new Anniversary logo.

The Continue to Learn programme this year is exceptional and if you are still undecided on whether or not to attend I would urge you to get pre-registered and along there. I've never met anyone who has regretted going to Harrogate.

The phrase "Lifelong learning" is one which you hear increasingly these days, but there can be few people to whom it is more relevant than Paul Mitchell, Head Greenkeeper, at Harrogate Golf Club.

Paul was a junior member of the club, who began working as a greenkeeper when he left school. He became Deputy Head Greenkeeper in the mid 80s and made sure he was attending BIGGA training courses and keeping himself educated and up to date. When the Head Greenkeeper retired Paul wasn't automatically given the job but had to go through an intensive interview process. Not having had an interview since he was a 15 year old, it was the BIGGA training courses and the fact that he was in tune with current greenkeeping developments that gave him the skills and belief to do well and he was offered the job at the ripe old age of 50.

Having been given that vote of confidence Paul has gone from strength to strength and, as you can read this month, so has Harrogate Golf Club.

On the same theme, we have an article on how technology has impacted on the greenkeeping industry with smart phones being almost as vital a greenkeeping tool as a hole cutter. It goes to reinforce the need to keep up to date with the requirements of the job. Whereas an ability to mow a straight line would be enough for you to stand out as a young apprentice at the beginning of a career, dealing with Spreadsheets, computerised irrigation systems and Safety Management Systems – you can also see news of this in this month's issue – to mark you out as a top Course Manager.

There can be few jobs where the jump between initial requirements of the job and those later on in a career as quite so vast and that is where BIGGA offers so much help. The training courses that the Association can provide ensures any gap in education can be filled at a fraction of the cost of similar courses in other industries, thanks to the support that BIGGA receives from its industry partners in the Gold Key Learning and Development Fund.

I hope you do have a successful 2012 and that I will have the opportunity to see you in Harrogate

Best wishes
Scott MacCallum
Editor

JANUARY 2012

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The updated Safety Management System is launched this month.

The rise of digital technologies in greenkeeping

Jim Cook looks at how the greenkeeping industry has embraced new technology

In most areas of modern life, digital technology does seem to be king. Be it at home with the internet and also the recent digitising of television, travelling with the aid of satellite navigation systems or communicating with smartphones, it is high on impossible to spend a day without coming into contact with digital technologies in some form or another.

The internet has been used for greenkeeping. We have all kinds of digital devices from small digital timers which make scheduling for machinery maintenance a breeze, through digital thermometers, to the big new digitised irrigation systems.

Another common use is greenkeepers using smartphones to make certain tasks less tedious. Some take pictures of broken machinery parts while out on the course and send an email of the photo to the manufacturer and have a replacement part delivered as soon as possible. Some use them to book out such things as further equipment, calculate and send a note to just have a glance at the weather forecast.

It would be hard to deny that using such methods can be a real time-saver and the benefits with regards communication are obvious.

So then, the question could be asked: is digital technology on the golf course another fad, even just part of the modern day greenkeeper's armoury or is it the grand scheme of things, a fad as history tells us, that will pass quickly than some new phones' batteries?

One greenkeeper who makes full use of digital technologies is Karl

Parry, Course Manager at Denbigh Golf Club, in North Wales. He says: "I use my technology and gadgets and try to incorporate this into my job as much as possible. It makes my life easier and helps everything run smoothly on the golf course. I use a tablet so that when I'm out of the office, in seminars or at home, I can do such things as updating the daily diary, upload pictures onto our Facebook page or communicate with our Chairman."

"One of the best uses I have for the tablet is going Green Connect for meetings. I can have captions and graphics on the wide-screen television, in our clubhouse. By playing on the tablet we can make it more interactive and it's a great way to get to people who may be unable to come along. I can have captions on screens in pictures, when we do a show we do it and how long it took us," he added.

Karl has developed a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which allows him to manage other things, to make his club's NPK notes.

"It is a simple one which I export out as a report document, what NPK rate was coming out of the ground using various products from different companies. It makes it a lot easier to compare with what we are using and it just makes the application process easier with us now," says Karl.

Alongside his Excel spreadsheet, he also has a handy application calculator for free. If you haven't got a smartphone, Karl had a link to download both handy applications from karparsyservices.com and he will send you the details.

Karl also had the forward thinking idea of installing QR codes in his workshop where the machinery is stored. Instead of the current

laborious method of writing down what machine was used and when, the code would be scanned each time a machine is used. This would send a message to an online database and Karl would know everything he needed to know about that machine. The idea of fitting barcodes and binary systems was one which Karl has developed and made sure it is ready and fit for use with the aid of digital technology.

On the golf course, Karl said his touch-screen smartphone to keep in touch with all the pictures there is a problem around the course.

It helps things run efficiently on the golf course. When I'm out of the office, in seminars or at home, I can update the diary, upload pics onto Facebook or talk with our Chairman

Karl Parry, Denbigh Golf Club

Another digital tool utilized at Denbigh is the online two-tar booking system by Steve Cook.

"I've set up an administrator on the system so that every Monday morning, I can check my phone to see what times are booked in and if there are any cancellations, then we can set our work schedule around that. It really helps me manage myself and my staff and there has never been a moment where we can't deal with a job," says Karl.

Steve's Green Connect phone application was sourced by Karl. "It gives us the ability to open windows of opportunity and often helps things to give you the best timing possible for spraying fungicides. Because fungicides are so expensive, this helps us to save money as well as effort."

Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn continue to grow but are not used with each other in every situation and for professionals they can be an important method of communication.

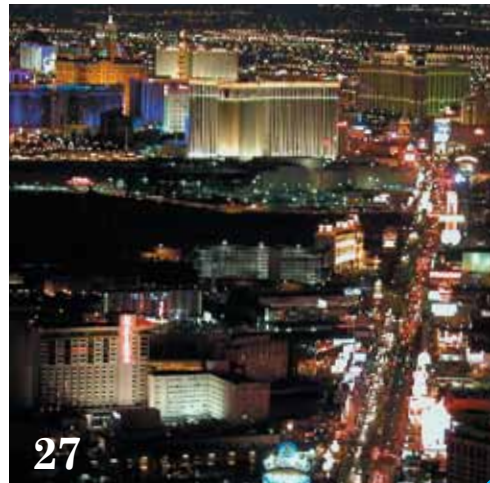
"We have just set up a Denbigh Golf Club maintenance page on Facebook and all the jobs we do around the course will have pictures taken and sent. It's updated straight onto it. It's like a news bulletin page, so everyone knows what we're doing," Karl added.

He ended by saying that he was looking into getting a new irrigation system that can be controlled from a phone.

This deserves a closer look. Irrigation systems have come a long way. The beginning of the road to digital can be traced back to the 1960s. The first electrical control systems appeared on the market in the 1960s and allowed greenkeepers to control watering schedules electronically with an on-course handset. Even though how they now may seem, it was revolutionary in the industry at the time and paved the way for more sophisticated innovations through the following decades.

During the 70s hand-held devices opened a system that could control up to several hundred sprinklers from a central base. What followed next was the shining light in irrigation technology and what is seen in a modernised form, the standard on many courses around the world, computer controlled irrigation systems.

Now, a Mobile Internet (MI) controller by Rain Bird allows the user, on-the-fly ability to control and monitor your systems from anywhere, as long as you own a smartphone and there is a mobile phone or wireless signal. It can be set up so you can monitor your





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

Remember, Remember the Moustaches of Movember

The results of the moustache growing activity of staff at two clubs during Movember can be now assessed.

Staff at the Buchanan Castle Golf Club, near Glasgow, and the Roehampton Club, in London, put away the razors for the month and attempted to cultivate their best moustaches.

The Movember charity, which raises money for testicular cancer, is gaining in popularity hence the number of rugby players, growing moustaches, of varying qualities, through the month of November.

"I got the idea last year when I picked my daughter up from the child minder and her husband had a big Mexican moustache. He explained that he was growing it for charity and I thought that this would be a good idea for our greens staff to get involved with as we have quite a large membership who are potential sponsors," said Mark Cummine, First Assistant at Buchanan Castle.

"When I put the idea to the rest of the guys they were all up for it and were counting down to the following November! We also thought we could have a play on words and call it MOWvember!" said Mark, who added that, thanks to the Buchanan Castle members, they raised over £700.

A few hundred miles south, staff - including one lifeguard - at the Roehampton Club were also working away on their facial hair and they too raised a considerable sum for the charity.



ABOVE: Buchanan Castle GC after and INSET LEFT before Movember



ABOVE: the Roehampton Club

JOHN DEERE LEAVES THE IRRIGATION MARKET

John Deere has announced that the company is withdrawing from the turf irrigation business, which has been developed over the past six years in partnership with US manufacturer Signature Control Systems Inc (SCS).

SCS will sell existing and new irrigation products through its own distribution network, which may include selected John Deere dealers worldwide.

Under the terms of the agreement, irrigation products will no longer be a part of the John Deere range, but the company will continue to support all customers who have installed its irrigation systems and parts.

This strategic realignment will enable both John Deere and SCS to focus on their core equipment competencies in the worldwide golf and turf markets.

"John Deere's existing irrigation customers will continue to receive our support," said Gregg Breningmeyer, John Deere's Global Golf Segment Manager.

"In addition, our European Parts Distribution Center in Bruchsal, Germany, will continue to stock and provide replacement parts across the region for the foreseeable future."



Lifetime Achievement Award for Richard Campey

Richard Campey, Managing Director of Campey Turf Care Systems of Macclesfield, has won the Lifetime Achievement Award at the IOG Industry Awards at the Reebok Stadium, Bolton.

Richard has spent the past 25 years promoting a strategy of best practice in sports ground renovation and maintenance, which has not only enabled him to build a successful company but importantly also help ensure that young people especially have the best possible playing surfaces at their disposal.

In addition, Richard's 'natural instinct' for the turf care business has also earned him a reputation as someone who sets industry standards – he was, for example, the person who introduced, in 1997, the Koro machine to this country.

The impact this has had on the way sports pitches are managed today is profound – and koroing is now a recognised generic term in the industry.

The Award was presented, in Richard's absence, to Campey Turf Care Systems Sales Director, Simon Gumbrell, by Richard Walton from category sponsor Everris

and Richard responded via a video and skype link.

"I am surprised and delighted to receive this award and would like to thank the IOG and all those who voted for me." said Richard

"I have been in this industry for 35 years, 25 running my own business.

"I learned a lot in those early days but I owe thanks to two people in particular, both Head groundsmen at the time; Archie McTaggart, of

University of London Motspur Park and Bert Flack from Old Trafford.

"I have never forgotten how they taught me the importance of instilling your knowledge in the next generation.

"Educating the young in the methods of 'best practice' is as important today as it was back then, and this is integral to the way we operate at Campey Turf Care.

Thanks again to everyone for their recognition."



James Snow Retires

James T. Snow, National Director of the USGA Green Section since 1990, has announced his retirement effective at the end of this year.

Jim began his career with the USGA Green Section in 1976. He served as an agronomist in the Northeast Region from 1977 to 1982, and then as director of the Northeast Region from 1982 to 1990.

In 1990 he assumed his current role as national director. During his tenure, his numerous responsibilities included overseeing the Turf Advisory Service and a staff of 18 agronomists, the Construction Education Program, the Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program, and the Green Section Education Program. A prolific writer, he also guided the Green Section Record magazine as its Editor.

One of Jim's strengths is fostering partnerships. In 1991, he vigorously supported the creation of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Under his direction, the USGA contributed more than \$1.5 million since the program's creation to assist its growth in becoming an award-winning education and certification program that helps golf courses protect the environment and the natural heritage of the game of golf.

He also secured a \$1 million grant from the USGA to help fund and support the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) at Michigan State University, the largest turfgrass database in the world. He has been a longtime advocate of turfgrass research issues concerning golf turf. Thanks to Jim's leadership, since 1983 the USGA has provided more than \$31 million to fund turf and environmental research across the country, effectively impacting golf courses around the world.

SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2012 BIGGA Scottish Conference will take place at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Carnegie College, Dunfermline on Tuesday, March 6.

Speakers include Grant Moir, Director-Rules of Golf, The R&A; Robert Smith, Souters Irrigation Services Ltd/Graeme Francis, Revaho UK, and Les Howkins MG, Course Manager, Richmond Golf Club.

Other speakers include Robert Patterson, Course Manager, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, David Vrooman, The Anderson's, Turf &

Speciality Group, and John Philp, MBE, Course Superintendent, Carnoustie Links.

Tickets cost £35, which includes tea/coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms will be posted to all members in Scotland and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J.Boyd, Regional Administrator.

Tel 0141 616 3440
or pj.boyd@btinternet.com.

Myerscough College Technical Seminars 2012

Next year's Myerscough's seminars start with a comprehensive programme of technical seminars aimed at professional greenkeepers and groundsmen.

With topics covering irrigation, root zone technology and soil science; there is plenty of opportunity for professional development and stretching your sports turf knowledge in 2012.

In January and February the regional seminars will cover the North East, South Yorkshire and the Midlands, and with guest speakers from RainBird, Irritech and Symbio there is certain to be excellent presentations on the latest research, technologies and biotechnologies from the sports turf industry.

These are opportunities for career development, in terms of networking with peers from across the world and accruing BIGGA CPD points, as all these seminars are a GTC Quality Assured.

For Myerscough College enrolled students all these events are free to attend. Non-students can attend for a fee of £15.00. If you are interested in attending any of the Technical Seminars please book online at www.tinyurl.com/myform2011

A list of all events can be accessed at www.tinyurl.com/myercal

Golf and Dinner Day for South East Region

The South East Region's Annual Golf and Dinner Day, at Walton Heath Golf Club, is being held on Friday March 9. It is one of greenkeeping's longest running events and is always well supported.

For more details please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk Phone 01737 819343 mob 07841 948410

LONDON SECTION SEMINAR DATE SET

The London Section Seminar will be held on February 14, at Oaklands College.

The programme includes Chris Wood, English Cricket Board's Pitches Consultant; Charles Henderson, of the STRI; Gareth Roberts, Course Manager of Hankley Common GC, and Cameron McMillan, Course and Estates Manager at Queenwood GC.

Cost: £12 in advance (including VAT). Cost includes lunch & refreshments. Places are limited to 140.

Please make cheques payable to Oaklands College and send to Andrew Wight, Oaklands College Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL4 0JA.

For further information contact andy.wight@oaklands.ac.uk or call 01727 737735



ALBATROSS FOR ANDY

Northern Section Secretary, Andy Slingsby, looked to be just out of the running at a Stableford Competition at Baildon Golf Club when he came to the par-5 18th.

Two shots later and he'd pipped the clubhouse leader on countback with 41pts.

"I hit a great drive and had 230 yards to the hole. I then hit a 3-wood which pitched 10 feet from the hole and went in," said the 13 handicapper.

"It was an albatross 2 and with the shot I had on the hole it was a six pointer!" said Andy.

It is the second albatross scored by a BIGGA member this year with one made by Gary Burgess during the BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota, at West Lancs GC in October.



Retirement

Arthur Bayfield has retired from Buchanan Castle Golf Club after 48 years at the club.

He started work in September 1963 aged 16 years 8 months and has completed 48 years and four months to date. He was his third apprentice under a new scheme brought in by the SGA.

He worked under Bill Bradford until he died in 1969. When Arthur's father became Head Greenkeeper, he then became his father's First Assistant. When his father became ill, Arthur worked as 'Acting' Head Greenkeeper until his father retired in 1979. Arthur then became Head Greenkeeper.

Son, Stuart, is now a third generation greenkeeper working at Loch Lomond Golf Club.

Despite retiring Arthur will continue to work at the club during the Summer months part-time to look after the Academy Course and to continue to assist Ronnie Myles and the Team.

Volunteers wanted for BIGGA Support Team

Volunteers are once again required for the BIGGA Support Team for the BMW PGA Championship, The Wentworth Club, May 24-27.

Volunteers are wanted to help Chris Kennedy and his team at The Wentworth Club on the above dates. All or any one day would be greatly appreciated. Bunker raking duties on the last two days.

A great chance to see at close hand the Course preparation for the European Tour flagship event on the West Course at Wentworth.

For more information please contact:

Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk Mobile 07841 948410 or 01737 819343.

NEW GUIDE AIDS TURFGRASS CULTIVAR CHOICE

The new Turfgrass Seed 2012 guide, published later this month contains all the information needed to help professional users assess the suitability of different cultivars for a range of applications, and to determine which grasses best suit their particular needs.

The guide provides comparative information based on the results of comprehensive trials designed to test suitability in three key areas of application:

- *Winter sports pitches and municipal recreation areas*
- *Lawns, summer sports pitches, tennis courts, turf and general landscaping*
- *Intensive, close-mown surfaces such as golf and bowling greens*

A wide range of characteristics are assessed to test and score the performance of different species and cultivars, ranging from physical attributes such as colour, fineness of leaf and sward density to agronomic factors such as disease resistance,

re-growth rate and recovery from wear.

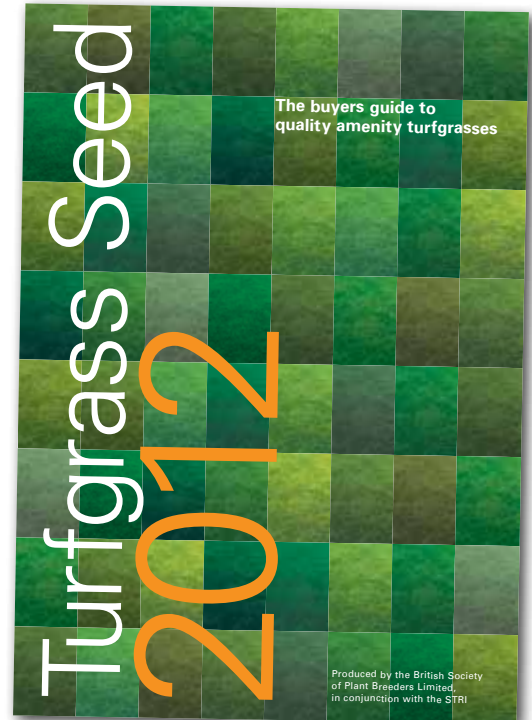
"Breeding new improved grass cultivars is a costly and time-consuming business, taking at least ten years of crossing, selection and pre-commercial trials to reach the market. For professional amenity users, making the most of the investment and innovation by plant breeders requires expert guidance and advice in cultivar selection.

"Turfgrass Seed is the best available source of reliable and impartial data on high quality amenity grasses, based on trials conducted by the UK's leading independent centre in turfgrass research," said Robert Jackson BSPB Trials Co-ordinator.

The new guide will be available online from 24th January 2012 at:

www.bspb.co.uk/news.html.

Alternatively place your order for a hard copy (priced at £4 per copy) via Robert Jackson at BSPB - robert.jackson@bspb.co.uk or tel. 01353 653202.



BIGGA Director to be Club Captain

Vale of Llangollen Golf Club Course Manager and BIGGA Director, Jeremy Hughes has been elected Vice Captain, and will be the 2013 Club Captain.

"I was honoured to be approached by the Captain's Committee to become Vice Captain of the golf club firstly from the view that it shows that the club respects me as the Course Manager as an employee and as a member of the golf club," said Jeremy, who has been a member of the golf club for 31 years.

Jeremy was offered a job on the green staff in April 1987 and progressed to take over as Course Manager in 1995.

"I will be one of the youngest Captains to hold office at the club and it will be interesting wearing both hats on general day to day events and then sitting on the Board as greenkeeper and Captain.

Kawasaki Expands Dealer Network



Kawasaki, is expanding its Power Products dealer network with the appointment of Northallerton-based Brian Robinson Machinery. The company will supply Kawasaki's full range of Power Products to professional customers located throughout Teesside, Durham and North Yorkshire.

"We are delighted to add the Kawasaki range to our portfolio of grounds care and estate management equipment. The products are renowned for their excellent build quality, legendary reliability and strong warranty back-up, just what our customers have been asking us for," said Sandy Ellis, General Manager of Brian Robinson Machinery:

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