

Significant improvements in water infiltration rates have been achieved on a previously poorly-draining green at Kent's Sittingbourne & Milton Regis Golf Club, following applications of Everris' Greenmaster Topdress Z.

Trialled initially by head greenkeeper and BIGGA member, David Horn, the product - a fine particle (0.5mm - 1mm) granular material with an open-cage structure designed for use as a top dressing and as a soil amendment in new rootzones, has enhanced the porosity of the soil, leading to noticeably faster downward movement of surface water while simultaneously boosting the soil's nutrient-holding capacity.

"The improvements in drainage and nutrient retention were rapid and clear, creating a far better turf-growing environment and a greener, firmer playing surface within days," commented David. "As a bonus, the upgrading of the soil's structure means that moisture is retained for longer in dry weather, helping combat drought and the restrictions now in place on water use. Very clever."

Following the impressive results achieved with his first application, David treated the same green again last September and is planning another treatment shortly.

Both previous applications of Greenmaster Topdress Z have followed hollow coring of the affected 11th green, one of four par 3 holes on the 6,295 yard parkland course.

"Although we verti-drain all of our greens regularly, the course has nine older push-up greens dating from 1929, eight of which have benefited from additional treatment in the form of Whizz Wheel trench drainage," explained David. "The remaining green has clay pipes lying too close to the surface for mechanised drainage, leading to the poor water infiltration that has been cured now with help from Everris."

David says that the green also dries out in less than a day (instead of three days or more following periods of heavy rain).

"Within a year, the 11th green has gone from being one of the poorest on the course to one of the best," he concluded.



Further Support for SGU

Jacobsen, together with its golf car partner E-Z-GO, have signed a three-year agreement to sponsor the Scottish Golf Union (SGU) and boost the governing body's role in supporting clubs.

The new partnership, a first of its kind for SGU, will see Jacobsen become its preferred and recommended supplier of golf course maintenance equipment, while E-Z-GO will support the SGU's national events programme, through provision of a vehicle fleet to assist with the running of the governing body's 15 national championships.

Worth £30,000 over the next three years in addition to in-kind support, the sponsorship is the latest addition to the SGU's growing portfolio of blue chip partners, joining Scottish Hydro and the Paul Lawrie Foundation who were announced earlier this year.

The SGU works closely with Scotland's course managers and greenkeeping fraternity, a key audience for Jacobsen. It is hoped the new partnership can help clubs improve the condition of their courses and deliver financial savings.

"We are delighted to be launching our new partnership with the SGU. We have many synergies with governing bodies, nationally and globally, providing support to many golf clubs," said Ransomes Jacobsen's UK and Ireland Sales Manager, John Quinton.

Speaking at the announcement during the opening day of the Scottish Stroke Play Championship at Kilmarnock (Barassie), SGU Chief Executive Hamish Grey added:

"Jacobsen and E-Z-GO are both leading brands and our sponsorship agreement highlights the growing profile of the SGU among key players in the golf industry. We aim to use this partnership to further our commitment to supporting clubs during these challenging times and enhancing our club education programmes."



MJ Abbott upgrades The Grove

The Grove has upgraded its golf practice facilities with a new all-weather practice tee and access pathway installed by specialist sports turf and groundworks contractor, MJ Abbott Limited, to design specifications prepared by original course architect, Kyle Phillips.

"The replacement of individual mats with a full-length synthetic

practice tee will help ensure that the facility can be used successfully and kept clean and looking pristine all-year-round," said manager, Phillip Chiverton.

Alongside the tee improvement, MJ Abbott was commissioned to replace a short wood-chip access path with a hard-wearing synthetic pathway spanning the full length of the practice tee.

NEW PRODUCTS

The latest products on the market reviewed



The current harsh economic climate has seen councils forced to reduce their mowing frequency.

This has resulted in the requirement for grass cutting equipment to withstand more demanding applications and longer grass.

However, there may be issues with roller mower performance in these conditions, which is not surprising as the roller mower was designed as a fine turf

To counter this, Broadwood International have redesigned the popular Wessex RMX 360 and RMX 480 hydraulically folding roller mowers, to allow larger volumes of cut grass to clear the deck quickly and so greatly increasing performance in longer grass applications.

The two machines are available as 3 point linkage mounted or trailed on the popular ProGlider chassis and are ideal for councils, contractors, air fields, race tracks and other large amenity areas. Smaller, rigid models from 1.8m to 3.0m are popular with councils, schools and sports clubs.

Broadwood offer free demonstrations in conjunction with local dealers.

Call 01420 478111. www.broadwoodintl.co.uk

Basis Points

BCPC has just launched its newly designed UK Pesticide Guide Online.

This comprehensive database provides information on over 1,300 pesticides and adjuvants for pest control use in the UK.

"Plantprotection.co.uk provides you with essential pesticide information at your fingertips," advises Martin Lainsbury, editor of BCPC's The UK Pesticide Guide.

"Users can access product, adjuvant and supplier factsheets, search for control measures against specific diseases in chosen crops and access an up-to-date list of SOLAs (now known as Extensions of Authorisation for Minor Uses). There are also quick links to the relevant documents on the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) web site."

Responding to user feedback the redesigned site has simplified navigational options, making it much more user-friendly.

Users now have the opportunity to make more complex searches, and regular updates will be made to the content throughout the year ensuring users have the most up-to-date pesticide information to hand.

12 months subscription to plantprotection.co.uk, which is jointly marketed by BCPC and CABI, is just £60 + VAT.

BASIS members who subscribe to plantprotection. co.uk can gain 3 CPD points with their purchase and all subscribers will have free access to BCPC's Identipest pictorial diagnostic tool identifying



Go Solo With a New Strap-on Sprayer

From cutting back overgrowth, tidying up battered and broken branches or spraying turf for disease, the Solo outdoor equipment range has everything you need to keep your course in top

boast a generous spraying capacity, and even liquid distribution together with a light weight that allows for

Solo state these compact yet powerful sprayers are ideal for an array of tasks: easily and effectively handling pesticides, disinfectants and as wood or concrete finishing

They are easy to operate and

maintain with an ergonomic straps ensure the sprayers fit comfortably against the body. To find out more about

including the 142 and 154 Series brushcutters, and the distributor Lely UK's Roger Lupton on 01480 226800 or email solo.uk@lelv.com.





John Deere's 24hp ProGator 2030A diesel utility vehicle has been improved for 2012 with the addition of hydraulic disk brakes on all four wheels for increased performance, and a higher maximum payload capacity of 1594kg.

This new version of the heavy-duty, two-seater ProGator also features enhanced styling, including a green two-post ROPS frame in common with other John Deere self-propelled machines. It can be equipped with a standard tipping cargo box for use as a general materials transporter, or with specialist turf maintenance equipment for a wide range of applications in the golf & turf and commercial groundscare markets.

These include sprayers (such as the John Deere HD200), spreaders, top dressers (including John Deere's own TD100), materials collection systems

and other equipment capable of utilising the vehicle's factory installed auxiliary hydraulic services.

The ProGator has a five forward, one reverse speed synchronised transmission, now with a tighter gear shifting pattern, and a maximum speed of nearly 20mph.

It offers a choice of two- or optional four-wheel drive plus full front and rear suspension, hydrostatic power steering and a large 30-litre fuel tank.

The tilting steering wheel has five positions for maximum driver comfort.

Cargo box capacity is 876kg and towing capacity at the rear hitch is 680kg, while overall payload capacity with driver, passenger and loaded attachment has increased by nearly a third. An optional cab can also be fitted in place of the ProGator's standard ROPS frame.

New Training Book for Turfcare Technicians

John Deere highlights its award-winning engineering apprenticeship programme with the publication of a new training prospectus, designed to promote training and careers in the turfcare industry.

Aimed at young people aged 16 to 19 interested in a career in landbased engineering, the prospectus provides details of John Deere's apprentice technician and parts training programmes, managed

by training provider Babcock.

An engineering apprenticeship with John Deere is your stepping stone to a rewarding career

"Apprentice technicians will very quickly find themselves working with highly sophisticated equipment, from computerised controls and satellite navigation systems to advanced, fuel-efficient engines and Formula 1 transmission technology," says John Deere Limited's training manager Chris Wiltshire.

The programmes are based at Babcock's purpose built training facility in Ruddington, near Nottingham. The John Deere apprenticeship is the first landbased agricultural and turf machinery programme with training delivered in the workplace, with assessment and guidance from Babcock's team of expert learning advisers.

Technicians on the programmes work towards City & Guilds or NVQ Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. Turf Tech apprentices can go on to gain the John Deere Diploma and register at LTA Level 2 in the industry's Landbased Technician Accreditation scheme, while starting their adult training within the John Deere University.

Applications are now being invited for enrolment on the next set of courses starting in September 2012.

www.JohnDeere.co.uk or call Babcock on 0870 013 0325; an online application form is also available on the Babcock website at www.babcocktraining.co.uk/info/landbased

XYLEM LOWARA LAUNCH NEW FLOODKIT



Xylem Lowara has launched a new easy to use emergency dewatering kit for light commercial buildings, which are at risk of flooding.

The new kit, called
Floodkit, contains a
stainless steel Lowara
DOC3 drainage pump
which requires a power
supply of 220-240v in order
to deliver heads of up to
seven meters. The pump has
a six meter long flexible hose,
quick coupling to ensure fast
deployment and a float switch
which automatically stops the

pump, once the water level has receded.

The equipment is contained inside a plastic crate that can be used to store the kit when not in use, or as a strainer during operation. The Lowara Floodkit requires no special tools to setup, once the pump start-stop is adjusted and the float switch level is set, the pump is ready for use.

Floodkit provides a quick and efficient solution to flash flooding and is ideal for use in flooded basements, garages or in residential and light commercial buildings, such as shops, cafes and offices. The lightweight kit weighs 8kg for easy transportation and comes with a ten meter power cable for ease of use in hard to reach areas. All materials on the kit are corrosion resistant.

Gary Wilde, Business
Development & Marketing
Manager for Xylem Lowara
UK, comments: "As with
any flood situation, time
is of the essence and the
Lowara Floodkit can be set up
instantly.

www.lowara.co.uk

NEW PRODUCTS

The latest products on the market revi

Husqvarna Turn to Ride-On Battery Power

Husqvarna has announced the launch of its eagerly awaited battery products. A total of seven handheld machines, range of accessories and the flagship of the series - Husqvarna's first frontmounted Rider Battery (below) will be launched in the UK during late 2012 and early 2013.

Although a number of battery products have already been released, this will be the first unified battery range for Husqvarna.

With the same genuine feel and professional results as the petrol range, the battery products will be free from direct emissions and deliver low levels of sound and vibration. The

battery range will also provide finely tuned weight distribution and a special energy saving mode.

An interchangeable battery system between products as well as a highly efficient quick-charge mechanism is also on offer.

Husqvarna now hopes to gain significant presence in the battery segment.

When setting out to design their

first ever battery powered Rider the perfect place to start was its Rider 111B - its lightest petrol driven ride-on lawnmower for domestic use - highly appreciated for its handling abilities, ergonomics and efficiency. The new model builds on the same weight optimised platform, but with completely new technical solutions inside. Made for the environmentally conscious homeowner it offers not only operation - free from direct emissions - but also an extremely low noise level

"Our goal was to reach at least the same level as our petrol driven models. A full tank generally equals about 90 minutes of mowing, which is just what you get from a fully charged battery." explained Andy Eastaugh, Trade Marketing Manager at Husqvarna.



A cut above...

This new 553 RBX brush cutter, also from Husqvarna, has been developed to deal with the toughest grass and brush-clearing in difficult terrain. Featuring heavy duty bevel gears and a specific grass bevel gear, the 553 RBX is designed to ensure high torque is available and cutting equipment remains

parallel to the ground, helping to achieve the best cutting results.





Clipless

Clipless, a new plant growth regulator from Headland, works by blocking the production of a specific gibberellic acid, a plant hormone responsible for promoting top growth in grasses within the plant leaf, stopping cell elongation and upward arowth.

The pesticide is absorbed by the grass foliage and transported to the growing points at the base of the plants. One application helps shorten the blades of grass for up to 4 weeks. This results in a more compact growth habit. Energy is diverted away from vertical growth towards lateral growth and root development. providing a closer, denser sward.

The result is a turf that not only requires less mowing, but also producing a more robust plant with extra ground cover.

Mark De Ath. **Headlands Operations** Director, concludes: "Not only can it help to create a grass plant more able to withstand all types of mechanical and physiological stress, it also helps produce a higher quality playing surface across all areas."





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An Open return



A good ten years have passed since my first Open and much has and also has not changed. We are probably all more acutely aware and recognise how important our roles are in maintaining golf's green future. The Greenkeeper's role is pivotal, the policies we implement affect the original design characteristics of the course, the playing challenge it presents and the playing strategy adopted by the golfer. Our activities affect the ball and turf interaction: a soft course is a dead course. What

is particularly significant is how our practices enhance and protect the ecology of our green spaces.

The Open Championship is something very special indeed and to be a part of this is a great privilege. It is a challenge that I relish, but one that is not without a headache or two or perhaps the odd broken nights sleep along the way. However, my greatest challenge of all still remains keeping the membership happy. These are the challenges and pressures that we all share in seeking near perfection for that special day on the golfing



calendar, which are not all that different no matter what course you are custodian of.

It is not until the final putt is made and the champion golfer is crowned that we can put our feet up momentarily before resuming normal business. Then we can reacquaint ourselves and spend some quality time with our family and friends. It is not always easy to maintain a work life balance being a greenkeeper and custodians of our precious green spaces. I was once given some sound advice by a wise old greenkeeper as he approached retirement after devoting many









years of loyal service: "Make sure you have a life outside work laddie". And that is what we must all strive to do. Fewer jobs can be quite as demanding but in the same light as rewarding.

The Open Preparation

The preparation and conditioning of the course for an Open Championship is never far from my mind. This work is always ongoing. There is a sustainable ethos to course management and maintenance policies, which are set out with the intent to deliver consistently good standards of play 365 days of the year.

Managing a course in a holistic, sustainable way as close to nature as possible, has always been a challenge for the greenkeeper. Of course it does entail the use of water, fertiliser and chemicals but the art is to utilise these as sparingly as possible to give nature just a little helping hand in presenting a natural course.

Maintaining a consistently good quality course is achievable but delivering perfection is not. With just a little help from Mother Nature and a small amount of man's intervention we can achieve something worthy.

Royal Lytham and St. Annes presents a management and maintenance challenge. The 205 bunkers that we have on the Championship course provide not only a major challenge to the golfer, but also for our team.

Eighty bunkers have been rebuilt during our last phase of the bunker programme, in tandem with general turf reinstatement work. A great effort was made to ensure that this work was completed by Christmas. However, this winter has been a blessing compared to the winters of 2009 and 2010. The conditions have been conducive to completing our winter programme schedule, whilst ensuring that we have maintained good winter playing conditions.

The Build Up

January to February: The course gets a very early and thorough spring clean. Specific activities will include aeration, topdressing and grooming. This is the period when our manpower resources also focus on the careful process of bunker preparation. During a careful bunker-by-bunker review, we will specifically ensure that the depth and angle of sand is appropriate to ensure playability for the

Championship. The angle of the greenside bunkers is set at $65-70^{\circ}$, fairway bunkers are set at an angle of $55-60^{\circ}$. We aim to maintain the angle of the sand at approximately $15-25^{\circ}$. The sand is sourced locally from the beach at St Annes and is screened on site to remove the shell and pebble content. Sand selection and suitability is always a hot topic at nearly every club, but in its 126-year history Lytham has kept to using the indigenous fine beach sand

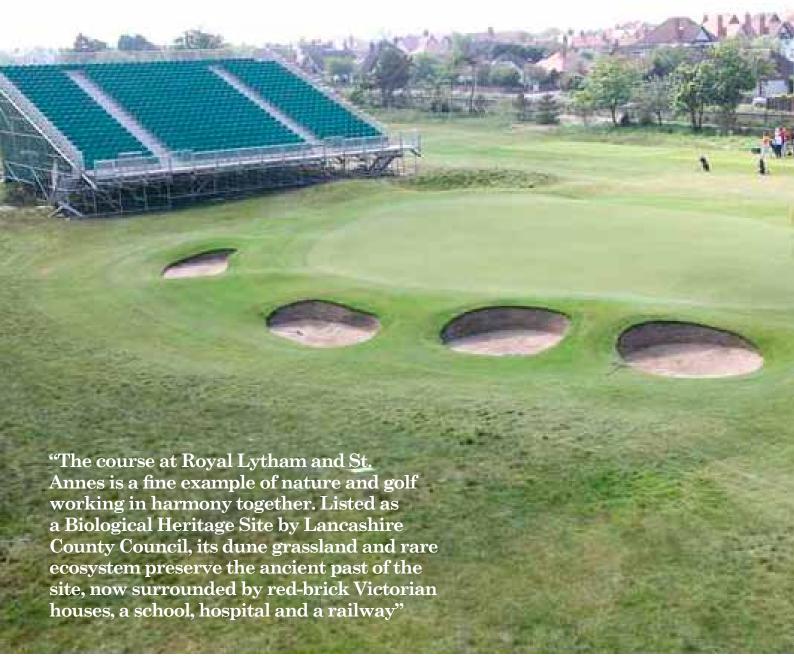
Our aim is to maintain a relatively firm bunker playing conditions that remain consistent, especially near to the face to reduce the likelihood of balls resting close to the bunker faces

March to April: Activities will focus on ensuring that all our turfing works establish successfully, eliminating the development of seams, and guarding against drought damage. A dedicated team assigned to hand watering achieves this. This is paramount and ensures that our water usage is specifically directed to those areas of play that need it. Even with modern day automatic irrigation systems, this is not always achievable. We try to keep returfing to a minimum during the winter before an Open. However with 205 bunkers, which require the faces to be replaced on a regular basis, inevitably an element of turfing work adjacent to the bunker perimeters is required.

The playing surfaces are continually being refined. In tandem with regular sand topdressings, light fertiliser applications and grooming.

May to June: Early May presents another real challenge in presenting the course for the Lytham Trophy, which is an early season leading amateur tournament. This year, the course proved a formidable challenge even playing from forward tees, with little rough. Europe's number one (and the current world ranked number seven) amateur, Daan Huizing, was the outright winner at seven under par, with his nearest rival some 11 shots back.

By the time we eventually reach June and July, most of the specific maintenance schedule will have been implemented and our efforts are then geared towards intensifying our cutting activities, to ensure that the playing surfaces are refined down to tournament standards. It all sounds a simple and straightforward exercise, but it can be anything but if the weather turns against you. We have to be well versed in strategies in coping



with the extremes in the weather these days. High winds, strong sunshine and heavy downpours are all conditions that can affect play.

Throughout our preparations well in advance of the year of the Open, the Sports Turf Research Institute closely monitors playing performance. The frequency of the STRI's visits intensifies as the Open approaches. The objective of these visits is to ensure that specific performance criteria are met which fall within site specific tournament target ranges, which include:

The course is set up no differently for the Open than normal; the challenge remains the same as for the membership. Although it is fair

to say that we would normally be taking greater measures this year to reduce the severity of the rough in places, brought about by the wet spring and summer. The fairway widths vary from 20 to 40 yards, so the course presents a challenge but remains fair and generous in places. We will be maintaining a height of cut of 9-11mm depending on conditions. The first cut of semi rough is 3m wide at 50mm with the second cut also 3m at 100mm.

• Soil moisture: measured as a percentage figure.

Hardness (interaction between the ball and turf) is optimised without the potential to compromise turf health trueness



Factfile

Current species composition	greer
Browntop bent	43
Fescue	27
Poa annua	
Yorkshire fog	2
Perennial ryegrass	
Others	4
a	
Current species composition to	tees:
Browntop bent Fescue	45
Browntop bentFescue	45 24
Browntop bentFescuePoa annua	45 24 17
Browntop bent	45 24 17 ss9
Browntop bent	45 24 17 .ss9
Browntop bent	45 24 17 ss9 1



and smoothness. Our target is 15 - 25%

- Firmness: measured in gravities. Taraet 100 – 120 aravities
- Smoothness: measured by vertical deviation in mm per metre. Target <18mm
- Trueness: measured by lateral deviation in mm per metre. Target <8mm
- Green speed: Target $10-10^{1/2}$

So attention to detail is more than ever closely scrutinised. However, there is an acceptance that these historic natural courses are not supposed to be seamlessly manicured and that the conditions are a reflection of a lifetime of sound environmental, sustainable management polices. Every effort is made to ensure that the playing conditions are consistent and fair which takes a great deal of effort and dedication bearing in mind that three greens are known to have an old clay basin, some greens are more sheltered than others depending on the prevailing wind. elevations vary and temporary structures like grandstands have some small affect again depending on wind direction

The Course Changes

In terms of design, only very carefully thought out changes have been made. If you have a valued masterpiece you are very mindful not to meddle.

The underlying key to the changes was to make the best players think more about their strategy of playing the holes. Fundamentally, this has been achieved by making sure the hazards at the driving areas require the golfers to consider whether taking the driver is the best option. The intention was not to take the driver out of the player's hands but to add a little more risk to the adoption of an aggressive strategy. There was no target set for the overall length of the layout and each hole was considered on an individual basis and to ensure an even balance of lengths of holes throughout the course.

Some of the changes have been minor but others significant. The work has been varied and has entailed the construction of new bunkers, tees and the creation of swales along with the development of new dune systems and the repositioning of the 7th green in 2009.

All the changes are now in play and have strengthened a formidable course. Based on the changes that have been made it should give a sterner test than in 2001. What is really pleasing is how well the changes have blended into the existing links landscape, which has an odd mix of elevation changes of both natural and artificial sand dunes

All in all these varied and subtle changes will only go to strengthen the course further to maintain its modern day challenge.

Ongoing Maintenance post-2001

Royal Lytham and St. Annes is a fine example of nature and golf working in harmony together. Listed as a Biological Heritage Site by Lancashire County Council, its dune grassland and rare ecosystem preserve the ancient past of the site, now surrounded by red-brick Victorian houses, a school, hospital and a railway.

A great effort has been made to improve the dominance of finer grasses. We have embarked on an extensive overseeding programme, which has been in place for some time. Our main objectives have been to reduce the overall content of coarser grasses and reinstate the dominance of the finer grasses such as Red, Chewing's and Sheep Fescues and Browntop bents. These are the indigenous grass species colonising coastal fringes. Unfortunately decades ago there tended to be the misguided use of inappropriate grass species, in particularly Rye grass. At the time this was seen as a solution to wear tolerance issues, but these grasses tended to have higher input requirements and dominated swards at the expense of the finer grasses.

The results from our commitment to a long term overseeding programme have been gradual but we are now starting to see the rewards.

Our greatest success has been the improvement and development of the fairways, which have undergone a treatment of thatch reduction, turf conditioning and sanding. Consequently the fairway surfaces are firmer, more refined and freer draining. We have fewer issues with worm casting and are less productive in terms of clipping yields. Improvement work on the course is continually ongoing.

Since 2001 we have embarked on a progressive ecological management programme developed to enhance the course's Biological Heritage Site status, which supports a mosaic of species; rich dune grassland, heath and scrub. This work has not only improved the ecology of the site but has restored the original open character of the links.

Over the past 12 years the club has been granted permission by the Forestry Commission to clear internal pockets of white Poplar trees and degenerate perimeter specimens. Some of these areas

Browntop bent28%
Fescue44%
Poa annua18%
Yorkshire fog2%
Perennial ryegrass6%
Others2%
• There have only been 10 Head Green
ers in the club's 126 year history

- · Henry Gillet has been the club's longest serving; he served 44 years
- Average annual rainfall 627mm
- Average annual sunshine 1526 hours
- Average day time temperature 12.6°C
- Average night time temperature 6.1°C





have been replanted with gorse and broom, which has had a positive ecological impact. One such impact has seen the increase in nesting and feeding habitat for small birds.

- 1. Linnet (Carduelis cannabina) is a red data species noted nesting within the gorse. They benefit from a variety of habitats; from dune grassland to feed and scrub to nest.
- 2. Stonechat (Saxicola torquata) is an amber data species, which is another uncommon bird nesting within the gorse plantation at the 18th hole.

The general theme of restoring an open links landscape and associated habitat has also seen an increase in and special importance to ground nesting birds including both the skylark (Alauda arvensis) and meadow pipit (Anthus pratensis).

The Open Greenkeeping Team

We have 11 permanent full timers, one part timer working two days a week and a member of staff on a short-term contract to ease the workload this year. However, an additional 24 Open tournament support staff supplement this for the week before and the week of the Open. We also have a small team of dedicated fitters and mechanics supplied by John Deere who are providing the tournament machin-

ery support along with Hunter Grinders. So our numbers swell to 40+ during the week of the Open. And of course we have the invaluable BIGGA Support Team so the level of expertise at hand to help is quite astounding.

For some members of the permanent team it will be their last Open; three of whom Richard Atkin, Phil Medcalf and David Troup have provided the club with a lifetime of loyal and worthy service. Other recent recruits will be experiencing and relishing their first Open Championship. It will be special for everyone involved. One thing for certain is we will all take away some lifelong memories as we witness the most gifted golfers in the world pit their wits against the course, the weather and each other. That should quench anyone's thirst.

Next Month's GI

- The Open Review
All the news and stories
from The BIGGA Open
Support Team at Royal
Lytham and St. Annes



Equipment Inventory
A selection of the machinery used at
Royal Lytham & St Annes

2 x Fairway Mower John Deere 3235C
Fairway Mower John Deere 3235B
3 x Greens Triplex Mower John Deere 2500 E
2 x Utility Triplex Mower Toro 3100D
6 x Hand Mower 18" John Deere 180 B
Hand Mower 22" John Deere 220C
John Deere 8800 rotary
Personnel Utility Vehicle, John Deere HDX
3 x Heavy Duty Turf Utility Vehicle
Personnel Utility Vehicle, Carryall 252 Turf
Personnel electric Utility Vehicle, E-Z-GO
Toro Workman Drop Top dresser 1800
Toro Workman Pro Pass Disc Top dresser
Verti-cut units 480 T Thatchaway
Tractor John Deere 4520 (loader)
Tractor Ford New Holland 3930
Tractor John Deere 4600 (loader)
Trailed Semi-rough Gang Mower, Lloyds
TM80 Ransomes Aerator
TDS/32 Deep Spiker, Sisis
Root Zone Injector, John Deere 700

For the full inventory, please visit www.bigga.org.uk