

Here comes the rain...



Although the Drought Order is still in place in many counties, as we went to print, golf courses all over the nation suffered from torrential rain, and many became unplayable. Aldwark Manor GC, situated by the side of BIGGA HQ, proved a handy resource for these pics!

IRON MAN JOSH TO BIKE TO BARCELONA



BIGGA Member, Joshua Webber, is taking part in the Barcelona 'Half Ironman' Triathlon on 27 May in order to raise money for Cancer Research UK.

This charity is close to the hearts of many at Josh's club, Portmore Golf Park.

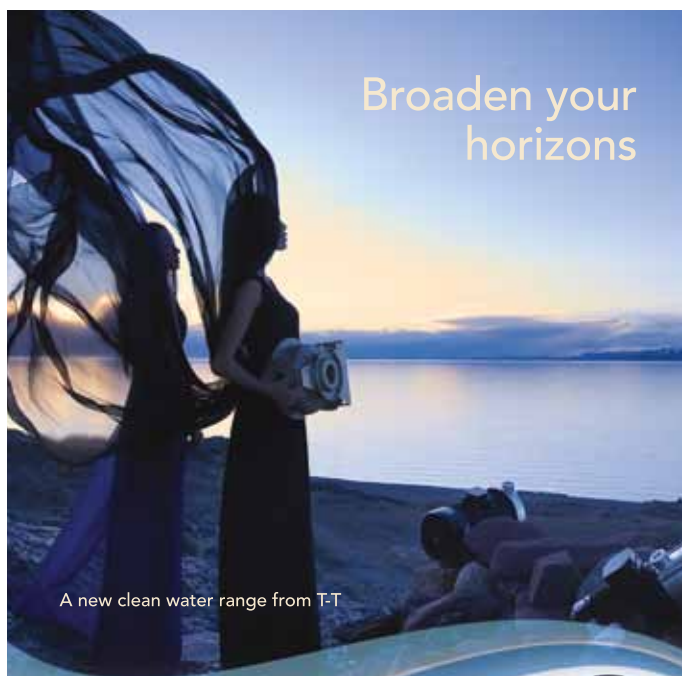
His Half Ironman will consist of a 1.2 mile sea swim, a 56 mile bike ride and a 13.1

mile run. Joshua adds:

"My training has been going well, however the heat is the main thing that worries me, as I'm pretty sure Barcelona has a little more sunshine than the West Country!

"It would be great if anyone could help me out with sponsorship, it really will make a difference to peoples lives."

Broaden your horizons



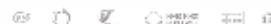
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Playing Consistent, Staying Consistent

Greens smoothness is everything when it comes to giving golfers a better playing experience, according to STRI agronomist, Henry Bechelet when speaking at the 'Playing Consistent - Staying Consistent' spring seminar series, organised by Everris, Ransomes Jacobsen and Syngenta.

He highlighted results of the Syngenta Golf Player Survey that had identified smoothness as the top demand for player satisfaction, with out-and-out speed the least important factor in performance of greens.

The seminars, supported by BIGGA, attracted CPD credits for members who attended the events, which took place at Marriott Dalmahoy Country Club, The Mere Golf Resort and Robin Hood, John O'Gaunt and King's Hill Golf Clubs.

"BIGGA's CPD programme is a valuable, structured process that can maintain and enhance the competence and professionalism of greenkeepers and that's why we - Syngenta, Everris and ourselves - linked this series of seminars to the CPD programme," said Gina Putnam, Marketing Manager at Ransomes Jacobsen.

Speaking at the John O'Gaunt

Golf Club event, Bechelet said that he believes getting it right on the greens can elevate a golf course from simply being good, to being something really special.

"If the focus is on smoothness, it means that we don't have to destroy our greens for the sake of pace. We can work on good agronomy and management that is geared around turf health, and producing surfaces that perform every day, all year round."

The seminars' innovative format consisted of morning presentations and afternoon practical workshops, during which the significant impact of mower set up and adjustment in delivering consistent smoothness of greens was demonstrated as was the importance of balanced turf nutrition, while the problem of dry patch was also addressed.

Using the Jacobsen eclipse delegates were shown that too low a clip rate could lead to a rifling effect that slows ball roll. As the clip rate increases smoothness generally improves, but if it gets too much then the smoothness can begin to decline.

The Ransomes Jacobsen team were able to practically demonstrate and compare the difference in smoothness produced on a single green cut at three different

clip rates by an Eclipse 122 pedestrian all-electric mower.

A green was divided into three sections, each mowed at a different clip rate (3.33mm, 2.71mm and 1.61mm) with each adjustment taking less than a minute.

Physical measurement of the resulting green's smoothness was made using the STRI's Trueness Meter™, which measures and records lateral and vertical deviation.

"BIGGA's CPD programme is a valuable, structured process that can maintain and enhance the competence and professionalism of greenkeepers"

Gina Putnam

tion in the turf's surface by means of a golf ball-sized roller moving across the surface.

The results showed that the 2.71 mm clip rate setting brought the greatest improvement (20 per cent) in smoothness, a result that will translate in practice into putts which bobble and deviate less from the golfer's selected direction.

Dr Simon Watson of Syngenta commented that the company's Golf Player Survey could be instru-

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mental in helping greenkeeping teams secure investment in the course.

“The findings of the independent survey are now freely available on the GreenCast website, in a format that greenkeepers can use with club secretaries and Green Committees to argue their case,” he said. “It can help focus efforts on key areas that really influence golfers’ choice in where they play, and the satisfaction that will keep them coming back.”

He highlighted that the new Syngenta wetting and water conservation agent, Qualibra, will have an important role in maintaining consistent playing surface quality this season.

“As an effective water conservation agent, it holds soil moisture deep and evenly and that enables healthy roots to grow more vigorously and it achieves more efficient irrigation use.”

Watson reported trial results have shown that Qualibra is more effective in getting soils back to optimum soil moisture and with significantly less irrigation than other wetting agents tested. A major additional benefit is that it avoids holding too much water that could adversely affect turf health or playability.

Lewis Blois of Everris reinforced the message that relieving stress on turf plants is key to Integrated Turf Management plans that will help maintain more consistent playing surfaces.

He urged greenkeepers to have soils regularly sampled for their nutrient status and to tailor fertilizer applications accordingly. “The aim is to provide a consistent and even supply of nutrients that matches plant growth and demand. Improving efficiency, with more of the nutrients taken up and utilised by the plants, minimises leaching, run-off, lock-up and waste.”

“Avoiding peaks and troughs in nutrient availability with a balanced slow release of nutrients also encourages healthier turf plants, which are more able to withstand stress, wear or disease and will maintain better playing surfaces, he added.

Blois reported results of Everris trials where a SierraformGT slow release fertilizer programme resulted in a 27% reduction in disease infection, compared to just 8% reduction with a conventional fertilizer programme. Furthermore, when a wetting agent was also added to further reduce stress on the plants, the disease reduction was over 46% better than untreated.

A Worthwhile Experience for a BIGGA Member



“My entire team and I attended the seminar and found the content informative and thought provoking. Each presentation stimulated a lot of discussion amongst the attendees which was great because it gave us the views not only of the presenters but of other course managers/greenkeepers.

“It was great for my team to meet the people behind some of the companies we deal with, to interact and learn from people with industry experience. The trainees especially enjoyed the day as they were not aware of what was involved in bringing out new products and innovative solutions to the industry.”

Andy Wood, Robin Hood GC



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

Rain or shine, come what May?

Well another strange year underway, very challenging in various ways for our members in different parts of the country. While hosepipe bans have been spreading throughout the country imposed as a result of very low water levels in most areas, the weather has turned a bit nasty in April, and the sunshine we had in March has all but disappeared. The impact is very varied across the country, some would be happier to see it drier (North), while some are happy to get some rain, given that they are prohibited from using mains water (South).

BIGGA will endeavour alongside the other golf bodies to represent your interests and ensure that the impact on our businesses is made clear to those in power that make these decisions.

Please feedback to HQ or myself any input on this matter, including any ideas or ways you have minimised the impact of little or no water for irrigation.

We can collate and share the information with all the members and the other golf bodies.

I attended my local Central Section Spring Outing at Crail, to help with the Prizegiving. My work schedule prevented me from playing, but the course looked fantastic and the feedback from all attending was excellent. Jim Croxton and Tracey Maddison were in Fife to interview for the Regional Administrator position, accompanied by Peter Boyd at his last public appearance in his role before his retirement.

The event was very well run, and all those present were a credit to the Association, commented on by the Club Captain, Richard Clifford and David Roy (CMAE) and Managing Secretary of Crail Golfing Society.

This month sees the retirement of Peter Larter, who has acted as Regional Administrator for our Northern and Midland regions and been with BIGGA on and off for 16 years. He has been a fantastic servant to the membership and we wish him well.

Work has been very busy as usual, as well as looking after the course we have opened a new pro-shop and been busy



Aldwark Manor GC

BIGGA will endeavour, alongside the other golf bodies, to represent your interests and ensure that the impact on our businesses is made clear

sorting out our Driving Range and putting out new course signage.

I also organised a trip for a group of visiting Finnish greenkeepers, who were fortunate enough to see St Andrews, The Castle Course, Kingsbarns, Auchterarder, Gleneagles and Ladybank. I wish I'd had time to join them, but they were overflowing with praise on the condition of all the courses and the diversity of styles on offer. Thanks to Gordon Moir, Alan Patterson, Innes Knight, Archie Dunn, Scott Fenwick & Steve Chappell and Colin Powrie respectively for showcasing British Greenkeeping so well.

At HQ Jim Croxton and his team have been busy working on and implementing the business plan agreed by the Board.

This involves a period of consultation with the staff as we look at the structure and ensure that we have the best resources in place to support the delivery of the plan and ensure the success of the Association.

This has taken place while we are also in the process of recruiting two replacement Regional Administrators and also continuing with the day-to-day business. I'd like to thank the staff for their excellent teamwork in managing the workload during this time.

Going forward the Association has to ensure it harnesses the necessary resources to provide you with the best

support especially in the area of Learning and Development, which lies at the very heart of BIGGA's mission in serving its members.

The methods of communicating with members are becoming more diverse and modern social media and its role is increasing. We have to ensure that the Association is capable of delivering on all these fronts and we will be increasing support in these particular areas.

In order to do this we also need to ensure that the Association operates a sustainable business model, able to fully understand and operate successfully from a commercial perspective.

The consultation will ensure we best match existing skills, knowledge and experience and identify what skills or roles we need to develop within our staff.

This is a very important stage in this process, ensuring everyone understands what their roles are, how important a part they play and focussing in on the main objectives which will ensure the Association understands and meets the needs of you, its members. We will update you more fully on this as the situation progresses.

Remember if you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact me.

**Andrew Mellon, 07780 995602
amellon@elmwood.ac.uk**



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Learning & Development

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

When looking for inspiration for my May column I decided to Google 'May'. I now know, and so do you, that May is when the Eurovision Song Contest takes place, it's Skin Cancer Awareness Month* (suntan lotion at the ready please), May's birthstone is Emerald and most importantly, it's a great month for Bank Holidays!

CPD

Continuing Professional Development

Are you signed up to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme?

CPD is a process that is used to maintain and enhance competence and professionalism and is achieved by accumulating credits for undertaking education and training that is relevant to your role as a greenkeeper.

The CPD Scheme is free of charge to all Full and Associate Members and offers benefits to the individual and employers alike:

Benefits for the Individual

- Opportunities for career advancement
- Personal development
- Proficiency
- Confidence
- Engagement with the wider industry
- Networking
- Recognition
- Quality standard
- Adapt outdated skills
- In touch with changes in legislation

Benefits for the Employer:

- Professional staff
- Proficiency
- Efficiency
- Confidence in staff ability
- Updated and informed staff
- Motivated team
- Valued team

What activities are CPD credits awarded for?

- Continue to Learn at BTME



Gold Key Individual Members:
Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS Ian MacMillan MG, Ian Morrison Andrew Turnbull, W J Rogers Frank Newberry, Sam Langrick Antony Calvert, Espen Bergmann
Silver Key Individual Members:
Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn Douglas Duguid, Ade Archer Jaey Goodchild, Graham Wiley Michael Beaton, Paul Jenkins

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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- Regional Conferences
- Section Seminars
- Health and Safety training
- Achieving certificates of competence (e.g. Pesticide Application, Chainsaw, First Aid)
 - Work related certificates (e.g. tractor driving, manual handling, fire safety)
 - Formal qualifications (e.g. SVQ/Diploma in Greenkeeping Units, Foundation Degree modules)
 - Master Greenkeeper Golf Course Inspection assessor
 - Presenting a seminar or workshop at a section, region, national or international event
 - Education offered by allied associations
 - Courses, seminars, workshops and training days presented by companies and approved by BIGGA

How do I add credits to my CPD record?

- Sign a register of attendance at the event
- Complete a CPD credit claim form and provide evidence of attendance
- Email evidence of attendance or copies of certificates

A BIGGA Certificate of Continuing Professional Development will be awarded to those BIGGA green-

keeper members who accumulate 10 CPD Credits annually from 1 July to 30 June.

Members who have been awarded five successive Certificates of Continuing Professional Development will receive a Diploma of Continuing Professional Development.

For further information and to download a registration form, or a credit claim form, visit www.bigga.org.uk/education/qualifications/continuing-professional-development alternatively contact Rachael Duffy, Learning and Development Administrator on 01347 833800 or rachael@bigga.co.uk.



Student of the Year

The closing date for Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year applications is 11 May.



BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

Funds are still available for members who wish to undertake a higher education course.

* For info. on Skin Cancer visit the Cancer Research UK dedicated page: www.sunsmart.org.uk.

Are you a Photographer?

BIGGA's Golf Photographic Competition is back for 2012, so if you're a member with an eye for a shot, read on...



By Paul Hope. "I was out taking photos of the sunrise one morning when this young stag just wandered right into the shot," at High Post Golf Club



By Adam Gilver. Early morning strimming creates mist in the sunlight, to beautiful effect, on the 3rd green bank (Devonshire Course) at The Royal Eastbourne GC



By Gareth Ansell. Spectacular cloud formations compliment the surface shadows and bunker layout on the 15th at Son Quil Golf SS, Palacio Palma de Mallorca

The BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition, back for its sixth year, creates an opportunity for members to display their artistic flair, while also earning some publicity for their club.

The winner will receive a full course profile in GI and a special prize, while the 12 best pictures will be selected for the 2012 BIGGA Calendar.

Digital pictures need to be high resolution, at the largest size capable by the camera, as it may ultimately be scaled up to A3 print size (42cm wide x 29.7cm high).

Please label your entries with captions - the name of the course plus a brief description (around 10 words). It would be great if you could also tell us the spec of camera it was taken on too.

Please try to avoid reducing the file size to fit on email as this will reduce the quality of the image.

If the file size is too large to send, we recommend using a compression facility such as winzip or a website such as:

www.mailbigfile.com.

Please note, cropping may occur if photos are to appear in the magazine or calendar. Also ensure digital photos do not show the time/date display!

Anyone wishing to enter should email them to: tom@bigga.co.uk, entering 'BIGGA PHOTO COMP 2012' as the email subject header.

All entries need to be received by July 31, 2012, and only BIGGA members are eligible to enter.





Membership

Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership, provides a departmental update

We are pleased to be able to repeat the tastecard offer exclusively for BIGGA Members (time limited)



BIGGA has once again negotiated an exclusive deal with tastecard, the nation's largest dining club, to give BIGGA members an exclusive discount on annual membership, helping save a fortune when dining out!

A tastecard membership card gives you access to the most incredible deals at over 6,000 dining establishments nationwide. Restaurants range from La Tasca, Pizza Express, Cafe Rouge and GBK to Malmaison and everything in between! Each restaurant featured offers 50% off the total food bill or 2-4-1 across all courses (even for groups of more than two diners in most cases).

BIGGA Members can join for a full year membership at an exclusive BIGGA rate of £29.95 (RRP £79.95). Be quick, as this offer is only available from May 9th until May 23rd 2012.

There are no catches; it is just a great deal, and an opportunity for all 'foodies' to save a small fortune on eating out over the next 12 months.

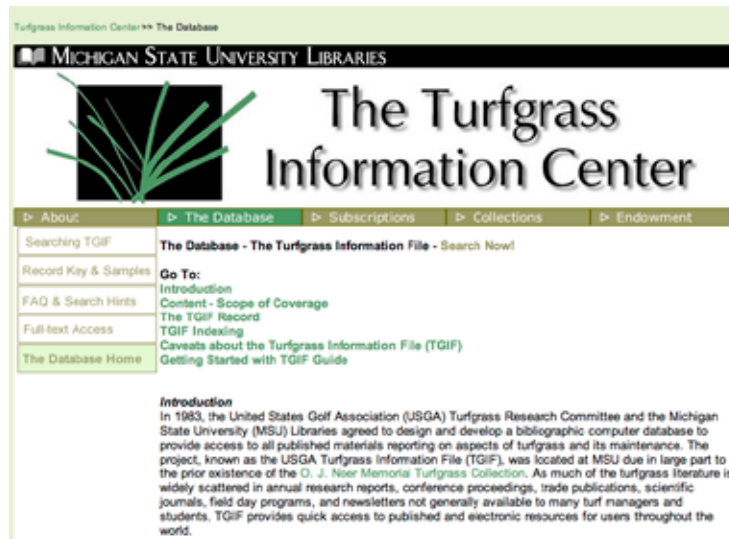
For more information on the tastecard visit www.tastecard.co.uk

How to purchase your tastecard

From May 9th BIGGA Members will be able to purchase a tastecard via the Members Area of the BIGGA Website by paying online or by telephone by contacting BIGGA HQ directly. This exclusive deal is not available directly from the tastecard website.

Turfgrass Info. File (TGIF)

Last month I told you about the agreement BIGGA have secured with the Michigan State University Libraries, whereby *BIGGA Mem-



bers, through the Members area of the website, now have access to a vast collection of turfgrass educational material.

We have already had some great feedback, this is a fantastic resource available to all Full Members and Student Members of BIGGA who are studying at any level. To access the TGIF log in to the members area of the BIGGA website, select 'Member Resources' from the options on the left hand side, scroll down to 'Turfgrass Information File (TGIF)' and download the Getting Started Guide or just click on the link which will give you access to the file directly.

*Access available to BIGGA Full Members and BIGGA Student Members

BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System



Just to remind you about the 'new' updated and more simplified Safety Management System (SMS) sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, which is accessible through the members area of BIGGA's website or the library area of the GCMA's website.

A new area has been added for Fire Safety. It is a legal requirement in the UK for employers to provide a safe and healthy working environment and BIGGA/GCMA have

provided the tools required to help golf clubs establish their own Safety Management System, another great benefit of being a member of BIGGA.

Member Support Telephone Lines

Many of life's demands can cause stress, especially work, relationships and money problems, when you feel stressed it can affect everything you do, how you behave, how you think even how your body works.

Help is at hand; a confidential telephone helpline (your details will never be passed on to any third parties) is available to all Full Members of the Association.

For 24/7 advice ring a freephone line for Greenkeepers Support Services or advice on Finance Difficulties - Tel: 0800 174 319.

A personal thank you...

Peter Larter, BIGGA's Northern and Midland Regional Administrator is retiring on 31 May.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter from the membership department, all HQ staff and myself for being a valuable member of the BIGGA Team, we will all miss him immensely. I would like to wish him and his wife Jan my very best wishes.




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Peter Larter




Clive Osgood Jane Jones

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS
(Full Members only)

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



Diary of Events

Details of your Section's forthcoming events in 2012 can be found here...

Date	Event	Venue	Contact
MAY 2012			
May 10th	West Section Event	Cardross Golf Club	Fraser Ross email: Karen.ross@tesco.net
May 23rd	Midland Section Event	Chase Golf Club	Andrew Smith email: andysmithace@hotmail.co.uk
May 24th	East of England Section	Cleethorpes Golf Club	Bruce Hicks Tel: 01205 353925 or 07931 714922 or email: brucehicks1@gmail.com
May 30th	South West Section Event	Clevedon Golf Club	Wayne Vincent Tel: 07958 630590 or email: wayne.vincent@cotswoldhills-golfclub.com
JUNE 2012			
June 20th	South West Section Event	Cumberwell Park Golf Club	Adam Matthews email: adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk
June 20th	BIGGA Scottish National Tournament	Ratho Park Golf Club	Rachael Duffy Tel: 01347 833800 or email: rrachael@bigga.co.uk
June 21st	East Anglia Section Event	Haverhill Golf Club	Ian Willett email: info@thorpeness.co.uk
June 21st	South Coast Section v's Wessex Secretaries	Rushmore Golf Club	Alex McCombie email: southcoastsecretary@gmail.com
June 27th	Northern Section Event	Scarcroft Golf Club	Andrew Slingsby email: slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com
JULY 2012			
July 4th	Devon & Cornwall Section Event	Launceston Golf Club	George Pitts email: gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com
July 4th	North West Section Event	Stand Golf Club	Chris Sheehan email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk
July 11th	North West Section Event	Ashley Cricket Club near Tatton Park	Chris Sheehan email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk
July 11th	Midland Section Event	Oxley Park Golf Club	Andrew Smith email: andysmithace@hotmail.co.uk
July 11th	South Coast Section Event	Blackmoor Golf Club	Alex McCombie email: southcoastsecretary@gmail.com
July 12th	Northern Section Event	Meltham Golf Club	Andrew Slingsby email: slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com

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Speedcut Arrive at Leatherhead

Speedcut Contractors are carrying out extensive work as part of a large renovation program at the prestigious Leatherhead Golf Club in Surrey.

The club, which celebrates its 109th anniversary this year, is a fine example of a mature parkland golf course with ancient oak trees lining the fairways.

Speedcut are creating new tees, ditches, streams and ponds, improving bunkers, pathways and drainage on the course, while working alongside the club's architect, James Edwards.

The three-year six-hole renovation program is part of a continuing improvement process.

"James has designed some cracking bunkers and features and they will help make this a good, but fair, test for golfers. Along with the drainage, tee and path works it will enhance the whole experience for members and visitors.

"Speedcut are also working on a number of other golf courses in the south, including Chislehurst Golf Club in Kent and Sundridge Park Golf Club, also in Kent.



'How to' Videos Online

Bayer have announced the launch of their first in a series of concise, free, instructional videos aimed at providing users with useful best practice information relating to the application of their turf related products.

"We're keen for people to get the best out of our products and as a result, we provide a lot of written guidelines relating to best practice as well as safety," explains Bayer's Turf Product Manager, Claire Matthewman.

The first of the videos can be viewed at www.escience.bayercropscience.co.uk

The other videos in the series include Bayer's turf fungicide Chipco Green and their herbicides, Pistol and Finale.

Versatility and Multi Tasking for Open Space Jobs

The Grass Group's MD, Tim Merrell, extended an invitation to the press to visit Trilo's manufacturing facility during their 'Dealer Week'. The first of the more competitively-priced products is the B7 blower.

The Leaf Blower range begins with the pedestrian model that has an Airflow rate of 108 m³/min for the smallest parks and garden leaf clearance, up to the largest trailed version with 385 m³/min suitable for large open spaces and road verges.

Boasting 2 models with either 400 or 600 mm centrifugal fan blades, the advanced design means they create less noise and low resistance. The manually operated collection tube is statically and dynamically balanced for easy operator functionality, and there are a total of 6 versions to suit various collection units.

Versatility comes to the fore with the Vacuum Sweeper units in that material can be drawn up and conveyed into a collection unit in one pass. Volumes of 2 m³ to 18 m³ can be accommodated over 11 models.

