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Photograph by Richard Jenkinson



A classic summer links test

An extraordinary final round 66 by Phil Mickelson to clinch the 2013 Open Championship at a sun-drenched Muirfield will live long in the memory of all those who witnessed it.

Great shot-making, ball striking, considerable patience and a quite brilliant putting display combined to produce a round that is already being talked about as one of the top ten major winning final day performances. It capped a superb Championship played on one of the world's greatest courses in absolutely immaculate condition. Course Manager Colin Irvine and his team presented a classic summer links test, the greens were firm and fast but utterly true, the rough was long but the test was fair.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case these days, there was a hint of controversy. Stronger than forecast winds on day one drew some of the moisture from the putting surfaces meaning that green speed increased as play went on. This led to some criticism of the pin positions but also to some of the players being asked to give their views on the actual condition of the course. Indeed the eventual champion opined after round one that some parts of the greens were actually dying! It is a concern that the watching public can take such comments at face value. But the following three days showed vividly that the course was in fact being beautifully managed by Colin and his team, with support from both the local support team and the additional greenkeepers that the R&A now bring in from fellow Open Championship venues. The loud cheers for the greenstaff at the final presentation spoke volumes for the overall presentation of the course.

For the 29th successive time the volunteer BIGGA Support Team played their part, and it was a great privilege to have the opportunity to spend the week with this year's selected few. The variety in age and experience is vast but the

enthusiasm levels are consistently high and I'm pleased to say that was true right up to the end - even though all four rounds were played out in energy sapping heat.

As always at this event there are a myriad of tales to tell, many of which are captured in the Review (pages 20-25) but one of the highlights for me was hearing of the generosity and welcome shown to our visitor from the US Sean Sullivan. After scheduling a few additional days in the area before the event, Sean utilised the BIGGA Bulletin Boards to contact greenkeepers in Scotland to possibly give a course tour or contribute a day or two's free labour. The response was extraordinary with BIGGA members offering him bed, board and travel. Part One of his two-part account of a memorable trip is on page 66.

The Open Championship also provides a fantastic platform for BIGGA to engage with the many golfing bodies that govern and support the game of golf in the UK and beyond. The Chairman and I took the opportunity to meet with the Home Unions, the R&A and numerous other golfing associations during the week and productive discussions were held on topics as diverse as golf management education pathways, sustainability and golf development.

I would like to publicly congratulate Colin Irvine and his team for a job well done and to thank the R&A for continuing to work with us to provide such a quality support team to the world's greatest golf tournament.

The Open is not the only show in town this month; hearty congratulations are due to Les Howkins and all at The Richmond Golf Club for winning Golf Inc's prestigious 'Renovation of the Year' title against a strong field of competitors sporting many times their budget. A profile of the work - which involved a major overhaul of the course - begins on page 34.

Enjoy the read.

Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

AUGUST 2013

FEATURES

16 The final eight

Find out who has won through to the final of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year award

20 Behind the scenes at The Open 2013

How this year's Open Support Team survived a red-hot Muirfield

26 Visit the States

Apply to be a part of the next Bernhard's BIGGA Delegation

28 A double edged sword for soil moisture management

We put Qualibra through its paces at Kings Hill Golf Club in Kent

34 A Rich reward

How Richmond Golf Club won a prestigious award

40 You've got the power!

How to get the most from PowerPoint presentations

42 Brushing-in top dressing...the options

Laurence Pithie examines methods used past and present for working top dressing into the turf surface

46 Hands on with ATT INFiNiSystem

The verdict on the new greens mower from ATT

56 How well do you know your greens?

How the Greenstester can help you monitor the performance of your greens

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2013

The final eight

The finalists for the annual Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year competition, held at BIGGA House, have now been chosen. Here's the shortlist...

Here are this year's finalists for the overall Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year prize, who will all be taking part in the final at BIGGA HQ next month.

Who will succeed Thomas Fildes? Thomas has already enjoyed a trophy for the States and secured another job since he was the award last year - although when a boost it can be for your career.

Even being nominated is an achievement, so congratulations to the candidates. The final consists of two intense days during which there will be asked to complete a written task focusing on the golf course here at Ashurst Manor and interviewed by a panel of judges from Toro and BIGGA.

The winner and two runners-up will then be selected. The winner will travel to the USA on an all expenses paid trip courtesy of Toro. This will be the right to see and include a week study course at the University of Massachusetts.

They will also get the opportunity to visit the GCMA's Golf Industry Show in Orlando (shown right) and report back to the conference. The runners-up will receive a paid trip to the Conference for Learning Education programme at BTME 2014.

To be eligible for the next award, candidates should be a greenkeeping student studying for a qualification up to Level Three. Students are nominated by their course tutor.

Thanks to everyone who entered, including those who did not make the shortlist - there's nothing to stop you reapplying again next year. Good luck to all the finalists - the winner will be announced next month.



<p>JOSHUA THORLEY Born: 17 February 1985 Role: Assistant Greenkeeper Club: The Richmond Golf Club Handicap: 24 College: Myerscough</p> <p>Joshua began his working life as a student but found his true calling as a greenkeeper after joining The Richmond in 2010. He is studying for his level 3 qualification, and is looking to work overseas and gain experience at working as a tournament. He would eventually like to progress to Deputy then Course Manager. He enjoys football, golf and runs his own sports clothing website.</p>	<p>SCOTT ROBERTS Born: 23 September 1990 Role: Assistant Greenkeeper Club: Handley Common Golf Club Handicap: 6 College: Merrist Wood</p> <p>Scott grew up on Handley Common and spent a lot of work experience at Queenswood Golf Club, where he became involved in a project of extending it 21 acres. In 2011 he joined Handley Common where he works alongside his Course Manager. He has joined a series of tournaments including the BMW PGA at Wentworth and has joined BIGGA's Survey committee. Ultimately he would like to work abroad. He enjoys golf, football and cars.</p>
<p>SAE EVANS Born: 13 August 1988 Role: Deputy Head Greenkeeper Club: Oakland Park Golf Club Handicap: 24 College: Myerscough</p> <p>Sae worked for some time at Hoythya Park where he passed a series of qualifications, before recently moving to Oakland Park. He wants to improve his maintenance knowledge and ultimately become a Course Manager. He's had a highly eventful few years as he holds a degree in Sports Management & Coaching and got married last year. He enjoys all manner of sports especially cricket, and is also a fan of football, golf and rugby.</p>	<p>DANIEL HARDY Born: 13 December 1984 Role: Deputy Course Manager / Mechanic Club: Crown Hill Estate Golf Club Handicap: 14 College: Myerscough</p> <p>Kris golfer Daniel started his career as an assistant motor mechanic before undertaking a Motor Engineering course. He then took on his current dual role at Crown Hill Estate and plans to start his Level 3 studies soon, and holds ambitions of not only managing a course but eventually undertaking the Master Greenkeeper qualification. As well as golf enjoy circuit racing, football and cricket.</p>
<p>REN WATERS Born: 23 May 1984 Role: Assistant Greenkeeper Club: Shrewsbury Golf Club Handicap: 12 College: Hasehead</p> <p>Ren began greenkeeping in 2010 after initially working in manufacturing, and after a period of work experience at Shrewsbury Golf Club realised it was the job for him. He has aspirations of becoming a Head Greenkeeper and also would like to work in the USA. He is currently studying a Sports Turf NVQ2.</p>	<p>JAMES WILKINSON Born: 29 April 1981 Role: Assistant Greenkeeper Club: Highlands Golf Club Handicap: N/A College: Plumpton</p> <p>James was working for a landscaping firm when the opportunity of a job offering 40 hours on a local golf course, and being involved in the club as an assistant job was a greenkeeper. He moved on the job before joining the rolling parcel at Highlands. He's enjoyed this role highly and has been supported by the club in his college studies. Outside of work he enjoys fishing, running and watching football.</p>
<p>LUKE TURNER Born: 24 May 1990 Role: Greenkeeper Club: Wimpole Golf Club Handicap: 28 College: Harrogate</p> <p>Luke is currently studying for his level 3. He has regularly volunteered to join the team at Devonshire Park which holds tennis tournaments, while continuing to put all his efforts into Wimpole. He would like to gain international experience at some point in his career. He's always been fascinated by links golf courses and is a keen surfer and rugby player.</p>	<p>PAUL WALSH Born: 5 May 1981 Role: First Assistant Greenkeeper Club: The Royal Dublin Golf Club Handicap: N/A College: Tralee - College of Anatomy Horticulture in Dublin</p> <p>Paul began his career studying Mechanical Engineering but became highly interested in turf care management, and in 2008 began working at Palmerston House Golf Club in County Kildare. He joined The Royal Dublin Golf Club in 2010 and after achieving his FETAC Advanced Certificate in Greenkeeping was promoted to First Assistant. He hopes to progress to Deputy Head Greenkeeper in time.</p>



28



34



40



42



20



46



56

REGULARS

- 3 Welcome from BIGGA
- 6 Chairman's Word
- 8 Newsdesk
- 12 Membership News
- 14 Learning & Development News
- 18 New Products
- 48 Around the Green
- 51 Puzzle Page
- 60 Buyers' Guide
- 66 The Back Nine

Cover photography by Richard Jenkinson, Deputy Golf Course Manager at G West, and a member of the BIGGA Support Team at The Open 2013



The official monthly magazine of
**British and International
 Golf Greenkeepers Association**



Chairman's Word

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

Muirfield signals a year to cheer

A fabulously sunny week at Muirfield marked a year for me as Chairman. The 12 months really have flown by, and now seems the perfect time to take stock of the last year, and look at what the Association has done well on and the things we need to improve.

Becoming Chairman has given me a great chance to get in touch with members I don't see very often. I have been surprised by a few things.

I think the regional roadshows broke down a few barriers, and the regional conferences were also well attended and very successful. One of the disappointments has been the lack of feedback in from members to the roadshows. We knew that members wanted us to go out and see them, which we did, but we haven't had much response from them.

I think one of the reasons is simple – lack of time. I'm well aware that you are all hugely busy on your courses, particularly after the terrible weather last year, and I know this has also been the case when other events have not been as well attended as in the past. I understand the circumstances completely but my message hasn't changed from the moment I became chairman – you get out what you put in and I urge you to attend as many sectional and regional events as possible.

The course at Muirfield was second to none, a true links course and the perfect test for the world's best golfers – which was shown by the fact that only the winner managed a below par score, exactly how it should be.

Our Support Team have again done outstandingly well and made a really positive impression on everyone they met, really showing the Association in the best possible light.

It was a fairly young team this year, along with a few more experienced guys, but their enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment was wonderful to see. Every single one of them did an absolutely marvellous job.

I'd also like to thank the staff from BIGGA HQ who came up to support the event. Rachael and Tracey did a phenomenal organisational job, and



“You get out what you put in and I urge you to attend as many sectional and regional events as possible”

John and Sandra performed a vital role throughout at the first tee organising the guys as they prepared to head out on to the course. It was also excellent to see all the board members in attendance performing hands-on roles – from first tee duties to driving minibuses and match raking. Jim and I had some hugely worthwhile and progressive meetings with, among others, the R&A and the Home Unions, and it's great to see everyone getting together at golf's showpiece event to support the industry and move it forward.

I'd also like to say it's a shame that I just haven't had the time to return to Teesside. But I've heard many people say that it's in excellent condition, and it makes me feel proud that I've left it in the hugely capable hands of Gary Evans and all the team there. I miss it and promise I'll be back soon.

I had the chance prior to The Open to

attend Turf Science Live at Wentworth – this was a brilliant event featuring superb technical briefings. I know I went away having learnt a lot and I'm sure everyone else did too.

I also had a message from my predecessor Andy Mellon who sends his regards to one and all. As he's now based in Qatar he's become more accustomed to the sort of weather we were lucky enough to enjoy at Muirfield. I liked Lee Westwood's interview where he joked that he didn't realise the time he spent in Florida would acclimatise him for the Scottish weather – sums it up nicely.

Cheers
Tony

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JOHN'S CHARITY WHIZZ

John Hall, Golf Course Manager at Tewkesbury Park Hotel & Country Club, is running a half marathon for charity on October 6.

John's best friend has a son with Cerebral Palsy and is restricted to a wheelchair, and has been helped out by 'Whizz Kidz' - a charity who help kids who have mobility issues.

John said: "Seeing the cost of my friend's son's chair really opened my eyes. As well as paying for the chair they had to widen the door frames in their house to accommodate it, and also buy ramps. This charity helps by supplying everything from wheelchairs to toys."

He will be running the Royal Parks Marathon in London and there are various ways to donate. Either call John on 07900 620987, or text kidz96 then £1, £2, £5 or £10 to 70070 to make a donation to this hugely worthwhile cause.



NEIL SALUTES 25 YEARS

Neil Fauble, Course Manager at East Herts Golf Club, has marked 25 years at the parkland course and says he's loved every minute.

Neil joined the club straight from school and served a four year apprenticeship. He continued to work at the course - and his career - before becoming Course Manager ten years ago.

He said: "I used to watch The Masters when I was a kid and marvel out how fantastic the golf courses looked. I thought 'someone's got to look after that, what a great job' and that's how it all started.

"I've loved every minute, the best thing about the job is there is a different challenge every day. Of course it's very, very hard work and there's so much to get involved with, for example today I've been painting fence posts. But when you get great feedback from

golfers it makes it all worthwhile - we recently had a members match versus a local club and the visitors said the course looked superb, which was so satisfying to hear.

"But my main priority is to keep the people who pay their annual fees happy."

He added that members had recently asked him where the club's finances had been directed, so Neil and his team made a point of putting all their machinery on show during a competition.

He said: "They generally only see one guy on a mower so they were amazed we had so much kit when they walked past, and began to understand where their membership fees were spent.

"It's all part of communicating with them, because if they don't like the club they will leave, simple as that."

TORO FINALIST SAM IS RADIO STAR

Sam Evans, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Oakland Park Golf Club, appeared on Radio One recently as part of a regular feature called "Here all week".

Early morning DJ Dev seemed fascinated by Sam's job and the fact he is a finalist for the Toro Student of the Year 2013.

But Dev seemed to be under the impression that greenkeeping was a matter of landscaping and occasional hedge trimming...so it was over to Sam to try and educate him! If you've appeared on TV, radio or in newspapers let Steve Castle know and spread the word.

ROUTE 66 WINS SCOTTISH NATIONAL

This year's Scottish National Tournament was hosted by Largs Golf Club on Thursday 13 June and drew an excellent 62 competitors from all over Scotland who benefitted from glorious sunshine throughout the day.

A parkland course, it was originally designed as a 9-hole course before becoming a full 18-holer in 1953. Playing to its full length from medal tees it covers some 6150 yards with a par of 70 and a CSS of 71.

This year, we had our own version of Ivor Robson on the first tee to announce each player. John Sneddon has worked with the PGA on a number of their events and kindly agreed to participate adding a touch of class to proceedings. First on tee at 11.15am was a guest, Gordon Clarke from West Kilbride Golf Club. Subsequent games then teed off every 9 minutes until the very last game at 2.15pm comprising an East/West combination of Gregor Wilson (Turnberry) and Robbie Murdoch (Dundas Park).

The standard of golfer taking part was very high with more than half the field being single handicappers. Indeed it proved to be one of our lowest handicappers that turned in the performance of the day to win the Championship trophy. Gordon Sangster from Cathkin Braes Golf Club produced a magnificent gross score of 66 that included an eagle, 4 birdies and only 2 bogies. Gordon managed to get to the turn in only 29 blows narrowly missing out on a short putt for the 28.

Not to be completely overshadowed by Gordon, Iain MacDonald on his home course recorded a great score of 68 gross and less his 2 handicap won our Friendship Trophy with a nett 66. In addition to winning the trophies, Gordon and Iain will have their entries to the BIGGA National Tournament at Frilford Heath paid for them and will receive expenses towards travel and accommodation.

There was one common theme shared by all competitors on the day, their unequivocal praise of the golf course condition. Our whole-hearted congratulations are reserved for Iain Barr, Course Manager and his team for producing an excellent facility for the competition. Even the tricky position of the 18th flag,



Iain MacDonald

thanks to George Morrison for that one, didn't diminish the players' admiration of the course.

Throughout our day we were treated to a very warm welcome by Keith Howie (Secretary), Andy Fullen (Professional) and the other members of the team.

Andy O'Hara, Scottish Chairman, was on hand at the end of the day to thank the captain Brian Fulton, the committee, Keith and everyone else for the tremendous hospitality that was received and presented a Quaich to the club as a thank you for the courtesy of the course and clubhouse. Keith thanked Andy and reaffirmed the club's delight at hosting this event and for the hard work of all greenkeeping staff required at golf courses throughout the country.

Congratulations to all who took part and we hope to see everyone at next year's championship at Renfrew Golf Club on Thursday 12 June.

John Young



Gordon Sangster

PRIZE LIST

SGGA CHALLENGE CUP (SCRATCH CHAMPION)

Gordon Sangster Cathkin Braes 66

FRIENDSHIP TROPHY (NET CHAMPION)

Iain MacDonald Largs 68 2 66

RANSOMES TROPHY – 1st CLASS

1. Kenneth Mitchell St Andrews Links 77 5 72
2. Dougie McIntosh Cathkin Braes 77 2 75
3. Gary Tough Letham Grange 73 +2 75

PATTISON TROPHY – 2nd CLASS

1. Martin Lothian Turnberry 82 12 70
2. John Watson Downfield 86 12 74
3. Iain Barr Largs 85 10 75

STRI TROPHY (St. IVES JUBILEE) – 3rd CLASS

1. John Barr Cardross 90 16 74
2. John Wilson Irvine Bogside 94 18 76
3. Michael Maxton East Kilbride 98 22 76

DICK AITKEN TROPHY – BEST HEAD GREENKEEPER

Derek Wilson Irvine Bogside 81 8 73

M & M TROPHY – BEST ASSISTANT

David Simpson Crieff 71 +1 72

SIGGA TROPHY – BEST VETERAN

Archie Dunn Auchterarder 79 5 74

ST MUNGO TROPHY – AYRSHIRE SECTION

Iain McDonald Largs 66
Martin Lothian Turnberry 70
David Nelson Trade 72
Derek Wilson Irvine Bogside 73
TOTAL 281

QUAICH – TRADE PRIZE

David Nelson Nelson Vecchio 77 5 72

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIERS

Scratch: Gordon Sangster, Cathkin Braes Golf Club
Net: Iain McDonald, Largs Golf Club

INNOVATION CORNER!

We're still hunting for the unusual innovations greenkeepers have on their courses – and Stuart Yarwood, Course Manager at Lymm Golf Club, has several!

He said: "When out deep slitting weekly during the winter we found the slitter removes the dew off the green but left a little strip one inch wide in between the rear rollers. One of our lads, Robert Cooper, fitted a scrap piece of astro turf to cover the gap, and brush the little strip of dew off as he went along, leaving the surface right for our visitors and members."

"The next is our drainage trench gravel filling machine, or 'Nellie' as we call her, (after the elephant).

"It's a piece of plywood attached to traffic cone with a length of hose bolted on. We can drop the tail board on the workman and fit this in seconds. Then when we have excavated our drainage trenches, and installed the pipe, we can back fill the trench, by straddling the trench with the workman, with large or small gravel in a fraction of the time by hand and without spilling a drop. Saves on shovels and backs.

"Thirdly, we found that some drains were capping over with grass clippings, wear and tear over time, and we needed to uncap these. We tried with half moons and by hand but it was very slow. We needed to uncap down to 6" till we hit the clean gravel then we could replace with clean sand and restore the effectiveness of the drain.

"So we purchased an old Sisis turf cutter (18" wide turfs) and chopped and rewelded the cutting blade so that it can cut 5" wide. We now mark the drain line by finding the gravel line in the ground with a probe, and mark the centre. We mark the centre of the tractor bonnet, we drop the implement into the ground and it shaves out the waste material on top of the drain live to a depth of 6" to clean gravel.

"This is simply forked off onto a waiting cart and away to our compost heap. Really saves a monumental amount of time in a soul destroying task. I feel it's hugely important to find an efficient way of doing tasks both from an operations and moral point of view."



JIMMY LEAVES NORTH EAST SECTION

Jimmy Richardson has left the North East section after many years of service.

He said: "Having served as Section Secretary/ dogsbody I have decided to retire from all section duties and would like to thank past Committee members for their support over the years.

"Special mention to my other two helpers Steve Pope and Russ Black. Steve has also decided to retire but Russ is staying on as Section Chairman.

"Now we have a young energetic Committee taking over headed by Simon Olver of Percy Wood GC I would ask all members to give him a lot of support as he's working very hard on pushing the Section forward. Other members are Glen Baxter, Michael Gunn, David Wilkinson and James Parker.

"New competitions are being arranged as well as lectures and seminars for the Autumn and Winter so please support the North East Section as much as you can."