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A top 12 entry in the BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition 2013: Grange-over-Sands Golf Club by Robert Sandilands

Flexibility key for golf clubs

As 2013 draws to a close and we look forward to a bumper BTME next month there seem to be some genuine signs for optimism in the industry. After a couple of terrible years of weather 2013 was much more like it, courses have been in great condition and remain so going into winter and this has led to a substantial increase in rounds played.

The more switched on golf clubs have converted those extra rounds into increased revenue which has to be good news for all of us. There are still some serious challenges out there though with golf club memberships appearing to still be in decline.

Golf clubs are being forced to adapt and as with anything in life those that adapt the quickest are finding themselves ahead of the curve. It is in some ways extraordinary that in an innovative sport like golf the core business model of the member golf club has remained seemingly untouched for generations. Our members have been adapting to changes in technology, climate and the economy continually since the sport was born and I genuinely believe that the golf club business can learn from that flexibility.

Over the last few weeks I have been fortunate to attend four of BIGGA's Regional Conferences and am struck time after time with the level of adaptability that greenkeepers show. David MacIndoe's experience growing in Belarus's first golf course and Steve Chappell's preparations for next year's Ryder Cup at Gleneagles were just two of the many examples.

I would like to thank all the presenters who gave their time to take part in the conferences, the learning and networking opportunity they provide is priceless.

I am delighted that Jacobsen have committed to continuing with their excellent Future

Turf Managers Initiative. Having attended the inaugural event this year, I would urge any of you who have ambition to be a course manager to take part. On your behalf I would like to thank Jacobsen for their continued commitment to supporting the Association and its members.

During BTME next month I am looking forward to catching up with the FTMI Class of 2012 and I know I will hear many examples of how the Initiative has made a difference already to the delegates' careers.

There are just a few short weeks to go until thousands of greenkeepers descend on Harrogate for BTME. Bookings for the Continue to Learn programme are substantially up at the time of writing so I say unapologetically "book now to avoid disappointment!" I look forward to seeing you there.

Our cover story for this month is the remarkable tale of the twin brothers who have lovingly cared for the historic links at Harlech, Royal St Davids, for over 30 years. Theirs has been a labour of love that, to continue this column's theme of adaptability, has seen them embrace change in a bid to provide a consistent enjoyable experience on a world class course.

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

DECEMBER 2013

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Go West

West Sussex Golf Club's Joe Dormer triumphed in our Photo Competition with this frosty April shot

The winner of the BIGGA Golf Photographic Competition 2013 is Joe Dormer, Assistant Greenkeeper at West Sussex Golf Club, with this fantastic picture looking over a pond at the club's 14th hole.

Joe has always been keen on photography and borrowed a friend's camera to take the winning shot on his day off, early on a frosty morning in April.

Joe said: "I'm not chuffed to win the annual competition, I really am over the moon. I used a Lumix G2 DMR which I borrowed from friend and Sheriffing Adam Harby. I noticed the potential for a great early morning shot previously, that corner of the course is in a beautiful area, abundant in wildlife in a natural heathland setting. Usually when I'm mowing greens this area is the best place you get to sit around 9.30-10am so I dragged myself out of bed on my day off to get this picture at 7am. West Sussex is such a picturesque course and it was a

ged in a way by Camera magazine has Streeter that compliments as beauty."

Runner-up was Gareth Roberts, Course Manager at Handley Common, with his colourful shot of the 11th tee at his club. Greg Fitzmaurice, Head Greenkeeper at Handley Hall Golf Club, was third with a striking off-road image taken on his course.

Thanks to all BIGGA members who entered the competition – the best new entries are included in your calendar in this month's magazine. The top 12 were chosen by professional photographers Eric Hopworth and Alan Birch plus a judging panel at BIGGA House.

Joe wins a framed print of his shot, and a framed print from Eric's wide range of golf course photography which you can see for yourself at <http://www.bephotography.com>. Gareth and Greg win a print from Eric's collection.

BIGGA 2nd Place **BIGGA 3rd Place**

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



Chairman's Word

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

Looking forward to 2014

I feel that November seems to be one of the busiest months for BIGGA members on and off the course and it's certainly been a fast and frenetic month for me.

The highlight for me was the Regional Conferences and I'd firstly like to thank our four Regional Administrators for their tireless work in attracting superb line-ups of speakers and for publicising all four of the events so well.

I'd also like to extend my thanks to the sponsors who supported each Conference, your backing is more crucial than ever.

I was delighted to see so many members in attendance and I'm sure you all gained plenty of knowledge and insight to take with you – I know I did.

It was the perfect opportunity for me to chat with members and discover what makes them tick, and hear news, problems and solutions from greenkeepers from the length and breadth of the UK.

The passion and enthusiasm you have for your jobs is superb and a credit to the industry.

I don't think it's unfair to say that this time last year, things in this industry were a little depressed, the weather and the economy had got everyone down a bit, but I really feel this has lifted and we can look forward with optimism.

With the Regional Conferences over, the focus more than ever switches to BTME 2014.

With a sold-out exhibition and bookings pouring in for our Continue to Learn education programme, the excitement is building – not just within our Association but also the industry as a whole.

Everyone looks forward to Harrogate to kickstart their year.

I'd like to highlight the Turf Managers' Conference in my column this month.

This really is an unrivalled educational, networking and development opportunity.

I was there last year and got so much from the combination of cutting edge turf management information, updates and management coaching.

I urge you to visit the BIGGA website or the dedicated BTME website to reserve your spot as soon as possible.



“The Turf Managers' Conference really is an unrivalled educational, networking and development opportunity”

There's also our first Welcome Celebration to look forward to straight after the exhibition on the Tuesday, featuring what's sure to be a superb speech from Peter Alliss – and it's free to all BIGGA members and BTME visitors.

I could go on for pages and pages about why you should attend BTME – if you haven't done so already, start making your travel and accommodation plans for Harrogate now.

I don't mind admitting BTME is likely to be a little emotional for me as I hand over the chairmanship to our current Vice-Chairman Chris Sealey.

However, I've been fortunate enough to be Chairman for 18 months and I intend to put all my energy into the remaining couple of months of my tenure.

I'd like to wish all members and everyone in the wider turf industry a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I hope you're all surviving the onset of winter, and that the weather isn't too bleak during the next few months.

Tony

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BIGGA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 22 January 2014, 5.15 pm
Queen's Suite, Harrogate International Centre

The BIGGA AGM is open to all Members of BIGGA, however only Full Members are entitled to vote. A current membership card **MUST** be produced to gain entry.

Access to the Queen's Suite for the AGM is from either the escalator link between Halls B & C or from the escalator link in HIC Entrance 3 (Springfield House). Follow signs for the Queen's Suite.



REGIONAL CONFERENCES HIT THE ROAD



BIGGA members from across the country came together for four Regional Conferences in November which kicked off the countdown proper to BTME with some superb seminars and presentations.

Thanks to everyone who presented, members who attended and also the sponsors.

The four Conferences again reinforced BIGGA's commitment to greenkeeper education with a huge range of presenters.

The likes of Henry Bechelet, Lee Strutt MG, Jason Brooks, Paul Lowe, Steve Chappell and Dougie Robertson presented to hundreds of delegates the length and breadth of the country.

There were also a series of breakout sessions, and Stuart Green showcased the new CPD software which has gone down so well so far – and of course, CPD credits are available if you attended the conferences.

Don't forget the Scottish Regional Conference is on March 4 – for further details please contact Scotland Regional Administrator John Young on 07776 242120 or johnyoung@bigga.co.uk



JIMMY HAYES

Everyone at BIGGA was saddened to hear of the death of Jimmy Hayes, former greenkeeper at several clubs in the North East and BIGGA member for many years.

He was Head Greenkeeper at Gosforth Golf Club having also worked at The Northumberland Golf Club, Parklands Golf Club and Wallsend.

He was an extremely talented amateur golfer and was club champion at Gosforth an amazing 19 times.

BIGGA's former North East Section Secretary Jimmy Richardson paid a warm tribute to Jimmy. He said: "He was the people's champion in golf and was generally recognised as one of the best players never to be capped by England. He very rarely played in national tournaments as he was a man of modest means but he was a star among stars. He represented Northumberland at county level winning around 200 caps during the 30 years he played county golf."

He also won a notable national amateur tournament of his era, The Golf Illustrated Gold Vase, and the Scottish Seniors Amateur Open in 1988.

He lived in Seaton Burn for most of his life. He leaves a widow, Janet, a daughter Sandra, a grand-daughter and a great grandson.

BIGGA MEMBER LAUNCHES TURF CADDY APP



A new App has been developed that could revolutionise the chemical spraying of agricultural and leisure land. Turf Caddy, devised by Ben Blampied-Smyth, Course Manager at Royal Jersey Golf Club, will help users meet legal obligations whilst also helping to alleviate environmental concerns.

Turf Caddy is designed to allow quick and easy calibration of Fungicides, Pesticides, Herbicides and Liquid Fertilisers used in all areas of Turf Management whether on Golf Courses, Sports Grounds or Land Management.

It calibrates the amount of chemical required for various types of spraying equipment over a given area as well as plotting the areas sprayed via GPS and allowing a spraying record to be created for reference.

Turf Caddy allows users to electronically track their spraying

as they work; it also helps to extend the shelf life of expensive product and allow for better budgeting.

Ben qualified with a Turf Science and Golf Course Management degree in 2009 and became Head Greenkeeper at the Royal Jersey Golf Course in 2011.

The birth of this app and also of his blog, which has now had over 17,000 viewings and a large following online, are both tools Ben is using to help streamline his role to be more efficient, compliant and informative.

Ben said: There has always been a lot of misuse of Pesticides, Herbicides and Fungicides. The main issue is measurement with them being put down either too weak or too strong. Apart from the performance and environmental considerations, the products are also very expensive so it's

vital for users to find a way to monitor and use them effectively. Originally I just designed Turf Caddy for Greenkeepers but it soon became apparent that it was also applicable to managers of agricultural land and sports fields and also owners of large gardens. The interest in the App has been quite phenomenal.

"With Turf Caddy it feels like we're moving the industry into a new era."

Requirements: Compatible with iPhone, iPod touch and iPad. Requires iOS 4.0 or later. Cost: £4.99 Android version. Available from Amazon Android and iTunes. Compatible with Android 2.2 and above. Requires GPS.

The App is also calibrated for the US market.

For more information please visit: turfaddy.co.uk. Ben's Blog: royaljersey.getrefined.com



STEWART CLAYTON

Last month saw the passing of Stewart Clayton, MD of Greensman and well-known face in the greenkeeping industry. Alan White, who owns Greensman, paid this tribute.

"Stewart passed away in the company of his devoted younger sister, Linda, after battling a brain tumour for a year. He was an accomplished sportsman who became involved with hockey, representing England.

"Golf then became Stewart's greatest passion, he was the driving force behind The Bramham Lions Golf Society for almost thirty years and was a member of Scarcroft GC for almost as long.

"Joining Greensman in 2002 Stewart quickly developed his East Anglian territory and was offered a Directorship. Representing Greensman and Scotlube, he was happiest when playing in regional golf days. Stewart played off twelve and could remember every stroke he had ever dropped. He never forgot to help his fellow man, to be supportive, warm and genuine, and always be there when you needed him. He will be sadly missed.

"All good things come to an end - apart from memories."

HEAD GREENKEEPER JON RAISES THE BARR

Congratulations to Jon Barr, Head Greenkeeper at Lutterworth Golf Club, who has become our latest Master Greenkeeper.

Jon began his studies for the certificate seven years ago and passed the exams earlier this year, becoming the 63rd BIGGA

member to achieve Master Greenkeeper status.

He said: "I'm really pleased. I'm most pleased that I won't have to sit the exams again! They were the first exams I've sat in about 20 years so it was daunting, but I put a lot of work in.

"I did it for my own career and development.

"Having the Master Greenkeeper certificate puts you in a great position if you want to further your career."

Turn to page 38 for much more on Master Greenkeeper.



Steve (centre) with Karen Proctor, Ransomes Jacobsen Key Accounts Manager, and Neil Back

SLALEY HALL'S STEVE CRAM WINS AWARD

Congratulations to BIGGA Member Steve Cram, Golf Course & Estate Manager at De Vere Slaley Hall, who was awarded 'Greenkeeper of the Year' at the annual Pro Shop Europe Awards. Steve has received a wealth of praise throughout the year for his sterling work in preparing the Hunting course at De Vere Slaley Hall to such a fantastic standard for the 40th anniversary of the PGA Cup.

Steve has been a long-standing member of the team at De Vere Slaley Hall and has been integral in developing the North East resort's reputation as one of the UK's premier golfing destinations and tournament venues.

As well as maintaining a championship standard of golf course through challenging weather conditions all year round, he's overseen six

European Tour and 13 European Senior Tour events at the Northumberland resort. The team implemented a strenuous programme of course and drainage improvements over the winter months, and this paid dividend throughout the peak season, culminating in the 26th hosting of PGA Cup matches.

Steve said: "I was really pleased and humbled to win – to be honest I was surprised to even be nominated. The award is more for all the team here who have worked so hard over the last few years.

"I feel the greenkeeping team is now a tighter ship and more efficient than it's ever been, and the whole golf operation here deserves credit.

"We came into March and April this year facing a real challenge – we had snow on

the ground for two weeks in April. But since then we've flown – it was a great summer. We did have two or three spells of really heavy rain, but we'd done lots of work on our drainage in preparation for those conditions. So, the next day we would be fully open with no compromise for our members and visitors."

Keith Pickard, Regional Golf Director at De Vere, said: "Steve is a credit to his profession, a true leader who loves his trade and has a fantastic ability to galvanise and motivate his team of green staff. His passion and pride inspires his team to put in the extra hours to ensure everything is perfectly prepared, and he stands as a role model for heads of departments across the whole De Vere Group. The award is richly deserved."



A KNIGHT'S TALE

Hydroturf International welcomes Gareth Knight as their newest addition to the Dubai Head Office – a familiar face to many at BIGGA. Gareth's new role of Commercial Sales Manager sees him managing the UAE, Oman & Bahrain for products such as Toro, TruTurf, Bernhards, and others.

Gareth previously worked as Estates Manager at Trefloyne G.C. He was also Section Secretary of BIGGA South Wales and BIGGA Regional Vice Chairman.