



The Kerrys are certain of a busy retirement – mostly involving singing and rugby. They even recently recorded a CD – a rousing mixture of English and Welsh choral classics such as ‘Galway Bay’ and ‘Ol’ Man River’. My personal favourite is a stirring cover of ‘Anthem’ from the musical ‘Chess’ which made for the perfect soundtrack as I travelled home. They also perform for residents of nursing homes, and are looking forward to watching more Harlech Rugby Club matches for whom Llion is one of the key players.

the same reason we’ve also moved some of the tees back.”

The Kerrys – and the whole team – are proud to say the greens are now predominantly bent with (roughly) 35% fescue and 5% meadowgrass. Their aeration programme varies – they used to do once a year but aerated three times last year along-side 8mm solid tining, with slitting in October. They oversee around three times a year with two types of fescue.

Roger said: “I feel we’ve taken it to a good level, and after working with Rhys for a few weeks I think he can take it on to another level.”

They’re going to miss it, aren’t they?

They both smiled before John replied: “We are but it’s time to go. The club told us we could carry on if we wanted but it’s decided. After we got them on board with what we were trying to achieve they’ve been very supportive through the years, and that will continue to be the case with Rhys.”

It’s pleasing to note the Kerry name is not disappearing – John’s son Llion is First Assistant Greenkeeper, ensuring a nice historical continuation. He confirmed that the Kerrys have had a harmonious partnership, with any disagreements confined to sarcastic sibling bickering! Also, Assistant Greenkeeper Emyr Price has been at the club even longer than John and Roger as he’s now entering his fortieth year at Harlech.

Ymddeoliad hapus Roger a John.



## A ROYAL APPOINTMENT

The man entrusted with filling the Kerrys’ shoes is Rhys Butler. As well as completing his NVQ Level 2 and Level 3 at Northop College, he gained an HNC in Golf Course Management at Elmwood.

This was an online distance learning course which he described as “fantastic - it covered everything I needed to know”. He is on BIGGA’s North Wales Committee (of which Roger Kerry was a founding member) and was awarded an R&A Scholarship during his studies at Elmwood. Aberdovey also twice won an STRI Golf Environment Award under his stewardship.

Rhys joined the team around two months before the Kerrys retired to familiarise himself with the links, and is already beginning to implement his ideas while remaining true to some of their long-term practices. So, why Harlech?

“Agronomically, to inherit a place like this which the Kerrys have put so much work into is probably every greenkeeper’s dream. Considering the hardships they’ve gone through over the years the course is phenomenal. I can’t think of many courses that have managed to change from meadowgrass to the finer grass they have now.

“I played in a Junior Open here when I was about 13 and played in many national championships over the years, so I’ve been aware of this special links for a long time. They hold plenty of tournaments here, and

having worked on BIGGA’s Open Support Team a couple of times I’ve realised that’s what I enjoy the most – preparing the course for a championship and seeing what the elite golfers make of it. The feedback from the golfers is so valuable – and this shapes your thinking ahead of the next tournament.

“It’s now up to me to keep to the same sort of tried and tested methods John and Roger have developed while taking it up a little notch again. It’s not about starting from scratch, it’s building gradually from the excellent work Roger and his team have undertaken. You never stop learning in greenkeeping and that will be true here for me. It really has been a great honour to work alongside two real gentlemen of the greenkeeping industry.”

His first idea was to construct a walkway from the second green to the third tee. It was previously very narrow so it’s been improved – something that’s gone down well with the members.

He added that Castle Stuart is his vision of the ideal modern links – something which is backed by Roger and John. He intends to tweak the bunkers so they have a very rugged, natural appearance – and a big project looming is to remove trees from the sand dunes to reinforce an open, ‘linksy’ feel.

*For more, visit the new greenkeeping blog set up by Rhys <http://royalstdavidsgolfinksteam.blogspot.co.uk>*



# We need you

Join the BIGGA Open Support Team at The Open 2014, at Royal Liverpool

**Applications are now open for a place on BIGGA's Open Support Team for the 143rd Open Championship at Royal Liverpool Golf Club next July.**

We require full BIGGA members to join our team behind the scenes. They will be supporting the home greenkeeping team at Hoylake by raking bunkers alongside the players during the four rounds.

You may also be required to complete early morning preparation work and evening divot repairing.

It's a real development opportu-

nity from both a professional and personal point of view. You will gain an understanding of the technical preparations from the home greenkeeping team and sample the atmosphere of one of the world's greatest golf tournaments.

You will also spend several days with greenkeepers from across the UK and the world with many remaining firm friends for years to come.

You will receive accommodation, a food allowance, daily transport to and from the course, a waterproof

suit and polo shirts – all you have to do is make your way to Liverpool. The 2014 tournament proper begins on Thursday 17 July with the winner crowned on Sunday 20 July.

To apply, just fill in the application form on the opposite page and return by post to Rachael Duffy at BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF by Friday 31 January 2014. We'll announce the team in February and the successful applicants will then be allocated various roles within the team. Good luck!

Name .....

Golf Club .....

Position .....

BIGGA Membership Number .....

Home address .....

.....

.....

Email Address .....

Mobile Number .....

Passport photo attached?.....

Waterproof measurements; waist.....leg length.....

Polo shirt measurement; chest.....

Are you available for the Early Morning Prep team from Monday 14th July? .....

Sunday final night (20th July) accommodation required? ..

Any specific dietary needs?.....

If so please state .....

I have applied for/appeared on the team at:

Applied Successful

Muirfield, 2013..... ..........

Royal Lytham & St Annes, 2012..... ..........

Royal St George's, 2011..... ..........

St Andrews, 2010..... ..........

Turnberry, 2009..... ..........

Yes No

I have been a BIGGA member for more than three years.... .....

I serve, or have served in the last three years, on a Section/Region Committee..... .....

I am an active member of the BIGGA CPD Scheme..... .....

I have attended three of the last five BTMEs..... .....

I am/have been a member of the PGA Championship Support Team..... .....

I am willing to be a mini bus driver (You must have held a full driving license for three years and be over 25 years of age.)..... .....

I am an overseas Member..... .....

IMPORTANT INFO

Note: A place on the team is open to all full BIGGA members but priority will be given to the more active members. Subject to the availability of sufficient numbers of experienced team members no regular team member will be selected for more than three teams in succession. A limited number of places will be made available to younger members and overseas members.

**Please ensure that you have spoken to your golf club or Course Manager prior to applying and have arranged the time off.**

To apply please fill in the application form and enclose a passport photograph and send to Rachael Duffy, BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF. **Closing date is 31st January 2014.** You will be notified in February if you have been successful.







# Go West

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



**BIGGA**  
**2nd**  
Photo Comp

**BIGGA**  
**3rd**  
Photo Comp



**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 so chuffed to win the overall competition, I really am

over the moon. I used a Lumix G2 DSLR which I borrowed from friend and Sheriff rep Adam Hartley.

"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 last place you get to at 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 is man-

aged in a way by Course Manager Ian Streeter that compliments its beauty."

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

Thanks to all BIGGA members who entered the competition – the next best nine entries are included in your calendar in this month's magazine. The top 12 were chosen by professional photographers Eric Hepworth 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 [www.hepworthgolfphotography.com](http://www.hepworthgolfphotography.com). Gareth and Greg win a print from Eric's collection.





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# ... PLEASE RAISE YOUR ARM

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Nothing is more powerful than the all-new seven-gang AR722T™ contour rotary mower from Jacobsen. With a massive 48.6 kW (65.2 horsepower) Kubota® turbo-charged diesel engine, the AR722T powers its ultra-productive 3.15 metre (124-inch) width-of-cut without slowing down.

The AR722T glides over ground contours and climbs hills with ease – thanks to the exclusive SureTrac™ four-wheel drive traction and weight transfer control. See for yourself why the powerful and productive Jacobsen AR722T contour mower is at the head of its class – call your local Jacobsen dealer today.

**JACOBSEN**®



# Master Greenkeeper unmasked

## MASTER GREENKEEPER CERTIFICATE

What is the BIGGA Master Greenkeeper Award, how do you achieve it and why should I apply for it? All these questions and more answered

**The Master Greenkeeper process was started by BIGGA in 1990, and a total of 63 greenkeepers have been successful so far. It's rightly considered to be one of the highest accolades in the history.**

Master Greenkeeper is achieved via a three stage process - education, training and experience, assessment of golf course operation and a case study and technical examination.

The certificate is open to all full BIGGA members, regardless of age and whether working at a large club or a smaller club.

But don't just take our word for it. We asked some of BIGGA's Master Greenkeepers to give you more of an insight into what the process involves, how it can reward you personally and professionally, and explode some of the myths surrounding it.

### CASE STUDY ONE

**Alan Pierce MG (main photo)  
Course Manager, Ham Manor  
Golf Club**

Alan began studying for his Master Greenkeeper certificate in 2010 to push himself and benefit his club and their members. It took him just a year to complete the process.

He said: "During the process, the greenkeepers who were already MGs were extremely helpful and supportive. The main challenges for me were finding out what the course inspection required and also fully understanding the exam questions.

"I had enough CPD credits to

progress to the course inspection stage relatively quickly. My team and I put a great deal of preparation into ensuring that our normal high standards were not just met but exceeded throughout. I studied hard for the exams and was fortunate to pass the inspection and exams on my first attempt.

"The award has many benefits. My employer is very happy with what I've achieved and it has encouraged me by pushing me to maintain the high standards expected of a Master Greenkeeper on a daily basis. It shows real commitment to your profession.

"I know there are rumours the MGs are a bit of an elite club but nothing could be further from the truth. Every single MG I've met has been very friendly and approachable. They're all from different backgrounds and different clubs - some have very limited budgets and resources while others have excellent budgets and resources. Some have three members in their team and some 30 - but all share the determination to achieve."

### CASE STUDY TWO

**Colin Parish MG (shown inset)  
Course Manager, Morecambe  
Golf Club**

Colin passed his Stage One and Stage Two in Master Greenkeeping while at Ulverston Golf Club in 1999, then moved to Morecambe Golf Club where he passed his final exams in 2005.

He commented: "I wanted to be able to manage at a high standard and have an understanding of what's needed in every aspect of greenkeeping. I had a HND and lots

of experience which helped me pass Stage One. I then gained a few years' experience as a manager before taking Stage Two. I did not pass the exams at my first attempt so left it a year before having another go. The exams were a real challenge and in the end it took me several attempts to pass them.

"Achieving MG has improved my confidence and self-esteem at work and in my personal life. I've earned real respect from my employer and they benefit from having a golf course that operates at a consistent standard at all times even when operating to certain budgets. I meet so many greenkeepers who are incredibly passionate about their job and undertaking your MG goes in tandem with this.

"My advice to anyone considering going for Master Greenkeeper would be to go for it and don't give up. Don't fear failure. It took me five years to complete it. There's supposedly a stigma around MG status but it's not like that, all the MGs I met are all down to earth and hard working. I don't manage a high end course, it's a normal members club, you can achieve it."





**CASE STUDY THREE**  
**Les Howkins MG (inset)**  
**Course Manager, The Richmond Golf Club**

Les Howkins completed his MG in 2004 while at Cleethorpes Golf Club. He is now Course Manager at The Richmond Golf Club.

He said: "I got fed up with people moaning about the MGs and how it was only in place for greenkeepers at big clubs, so I decided to give it a go and if they were right, at least I would have the evidence to prove it.

"My team and I worked incredibly hard to pass the course inspection and that was with a team of four and an annual budget of around £25,000.

"The process pushed my standards up and will continue to do so. It strengthens best practice and sets a benchmark for what can be achieved.

"It opens doors to other jobs as it

really stands out on a CV. I would like to see it as the norm and the goal of every greenkeeper moving up the ladder. It's not for the elite or the privileged few – it should be for the masses. Greenkeeper education has improved in so many areas and there is no reason more can't make the grade – if I can do it anyone can."

For even more on Master Greenkeeper, visit the Education section of the BIGGA website and click on the 'Master Greenkeeper' tab. If you're a member you can download the Golf Course Inspection form and past examination papers from the MG Section in the members' area. You can also contact the BIGGA L&D team at BIGGA House for more info.



# Bringing back the bees



Dr Terry Mabbett looks at how Operation Pollinator is making an impact at golf clubs nationwide and asks, what's really in it for the greenkeeper?

**Operation Pollinator sounds like a mission and in many respects that's just what it is. Its underlying aim is to wage war on the disappearance of bees from the landscape and offer them the best possible incentives to return.**

This is being achieved by sowing the broadest range of pollen and nectar rich flowers to suit the tastes of the widest spectrum of these Hymenopterous (bees and wasps) insects. The essential difference is that instead of concentrating on traditional targets like meadows, natural downland and grass verges, Operation Pollinator focuses on golf courses by seeding out of play areas with a rich mix of annual and perennial flowering plants.

Operation Pollinator is the brainchild of Syngenta but has become a golf industry initiative in implementation. "It is a valuable opportunity for the golf industry to play a pivotal role in saving the bee population," said Caroline Carroll, Marketing Communications Manager at Syngenta.

"Golf courses can be real oasis for wildlife. Most have land resources and skilled managers that can create the habitat to encourage populations of bees and pollinating insects, without impinging on their members' play."

Golf courses are perhaps a better resource than other more traditional wild flower sites like grass verges. Indeed a recent report by the charity Plantlife drew attention to the ongoing deterioration of grass verges as habitats for wild flowers and pollinating insects caused by councils cutting too frequently.

The Operation Pollinator concept has its roots in a much earlier agricultural initiative, to establish wildflower and pollinating insect sanctuaries in field margins. The programme itself is based on knowledge and experience gained from the scientifically acclaimed 'Buzz Project', with over four years of field trials conducted by independent researchers.

So what are its objectives? Caroline explained: "The aim of Operation Pollinator is to establish

