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Turf Managers Conference 2012

## BTME brings New Year Cheer

**A Happy New Year to all, let's hope it brings better weather and economic conditions than the last and that the amazing year of sport we've witnessed leads to an upturn in participation meaning more golfers and more golf.**

Certainly the heroics of the European Ryder Cup team and Rory McIlroy's ascent to being the sport's number one superstar should provide inspiration and I know our industry is desperate to provide the excellent playing surfaces that make the game so enjoyable.

January is BTME month, the exhibition looks buoyant with many of our exhibitors debuting new products and services that will make turf maintenance more efficient or effective. The Continue to Learn education programme is filling up nicely with the Turf Managers Conference on Monday 21st going particularly well. The balance of technical turf matters with management topics is a great reflection of the role of the Course or Facility Manager and I know that all those who attend will leave having gained knowledge and skills that will benefit their surfaces and by extension their customers.

Visitor numbers look very healthy with pre-registrations up on this time last year, I would urge all of you who are intending to come to go through the pre-registration process on [btme.org.uk](http://btme.org.uk) to avoid the queues on arrival. All in all the signs are all pointing to another superb festival of turf management with the suppliers and manufacturers providing the platform for a few days of fantastic networking, I look forward to seeing you in Harrogate.

On a less positive note we have started to hear rumours of non-exhibiting companies who are planning to come to Harrogate and attempt to do business with visitors inside or outside of the Exhibition Halls. The Americans call this practice 'Suitcasing' but I have a stronger term for it – Hijacking. BTME is a brilliant vehicle for getting thousands of greenkeeping and groundsman professionals together and driving standards up. The hundreds of exhibitors who take space in the

Halls provide this platform and any company who seeks to take advantage of this 'Hijacking' is doing the entire industry damage. I would strongly urge any of you who are or have been approached by a non-exhibiting company not just to deny them your time but to make it clear to them that their actions are unacceptable. We understand that BTME is not a viable option for a number of companies but they should have the good grace to respect those who are contributing to the event.

During BTME I am very much looking forward to meeting up with the ten successful BIGGA members (see page 26) who will make up the Bernhards Delegation to the Golf Industry Show in San Diego next month. This initiative is now into its 11th year and I know a high proportion of previous delegates believe that the experience of taking part has had a significant positive impact on their careers. Our thanks again to Stephen Bernhard for his long term support of this fantastic member benefit.

My New Year's Resolution (or at least one of them!) is to stop moaning about the weather but I fear I'm in the wrong industry for this. A look back over the last twelve months of magazines shows that water – either the lack of it or far too much of it – has dominated conversation. In this edition we look at the way one club, Woburn, has chosen to address their particular needs (page 28) and hope to focus in future editions on the many innovative solutions that our members have found.

Enjoy the read.



**Jim Croxton**  
Chief Executive



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BTME SPECIAL

BTME

Here's just a small selection of some of the new products, competitions and other surprises you can enjoy at BTME 2013...



### GRASS SUBBUTERO

British Seed Houses is looking to put its own mark on the BTME 2013 by showcasing a grass subbuter competition on the BTME stand. The machine is designed to be used on a variety of grasses and is expected to be a popular choice for the BTME 2013.



**New Syngenta Turf XC nozzle launch for BTME**  
Syngenta is launching its new Turf XC range of turf repair products at BTME. Designed to improve the accuracy and results from every application, the Turf XC nozzle range overcomes the key issues facing turf repair operators to achieve better application accuracy. The new nozzle range includes a range of nozzle designs with a wide spray range, to produce an improved deposit distribution, capable of delivering 90% turf coverage at low nozzle heights. This makes the Turf XC nozzle range a significant improvement on current nozzle technology.



### GRASS GROUP LAUNCH VACUUM SWEEPER AT BTME

The Grass Group will be exhibiting the Tolo 31 vacuum sweeper for the first time at BTME. Purpose developed for use behind compact tractors delivering 20hp plus at the PTO, the 1.5m machine with Tolo 31 has a large, high-capacity container. Suitable for the collection of grass clippings, leaves and litter, the 4.5 Baling load limit sweeper will gather material that is vacuumed into the container to lower a clean finish. A key design feature is the user's low ground loading pressure. This enables it to be used on fine turf with minimal soil disturbance and allows operation in conditions where heavier designs may be compromised.



### TRACKING SUCCESS WITH COURSETRACKER

CourseTracker, the new digital business management tool for golf courses, is being launched on the BTME stand. CourseTracker (CT) is a software developed by The RMA specifically to help your club members and staff to track the growing season and revenue. CourseTracker gives you the power to track seed masses, course-related revenue streams and course-related expenses and, in addition, help with benchmarking and accountability plans for the future. For a more in-depth look at the tool, visit the CourseTracker stand at BTME. The stand will help you to identify your decisions and measure your progress for the future. CourseTracker will highlight your financial and operational data. CourseTracker is completely free and all entered data is stored securely and privately. It is an ideal tool for the club who makes decisions on every aspect of the business. It will help you to have a good understanding of how you are performing compared to the performance of other clubs. CourseTracker is completely free and all entered data is stored securely and privately. It is an ideal tool for the club who makes decisions on every aspect of the business. It will help you to have a good understanding of how you are performing compared to the performance of other clubs.

### DLF TRIFOLIUM OFFER PRIZES

Following on from the successful launch of their new Trifolium turf culture, Armonia, within the DLF stand at BTME 2013 will have a chance to win a bag of Armonia turf. The prize is a bag of high performing turf. In fact every day will see winners walking away with a bag of Armonia turf. The prize is a bag of high performing turf. In fact every day will see winners walking away with a bag of Armonia turf. The prize is a bag of high performing turf. In fact every day will see winners walking away with a bag of Armonia turf.



## Destination San Diego

These are the ten BIRGA members who will be heading to San Diego for the Golf Industry Show next month courtesy of Bernhard - what's sure to be a once in a lifetime experience.

- BRUCE HICKS - Head Greenkeeper, Boston Golf Club**  
Bruce has spent his whole 22 year greenkeeping career at Boston and Hills City & Clubs 2 and 3 BIRGA qualifications. He is also Secretary and Treasurer for BIRGA East of England Section, something he has got 'retirement satisfaction' from. He was chosen as a delegate for his 'very busy' role. He has many hobbies including swimming and golf. He has a wife and 'three' children.
- RICHARD JENNISON - Deputy Course Manager, O West**  
Richard has been in O West for 13 years at the O West Golf Club. He has completed his BSC in Golf Course Management at Brunel College. After completing his BSC he joined the team at O West and has worked on all aspects of the club's construction. He has many hobbies including swimming and golf. He has a wife and 'three' children.
- THE JOHNSON - Assistant Greenkeeper, The Winklow Golf Club**  
The Johnsons have been working how greenkeeping practices in a long time. The Johnsons are a sustainable golf course that works on 100% self-sufficiency. The Johnsons have worked on all aspects of the club's construction. He has many hobbies including swimming and golf. He has a wife and 'three' children.
- DEBBIE JOHNSON - Deputy Head Greenkeeper, The Winklow Golf Club**  
Debbie has been working how greenkeeping practices in a long time. The Johnsons are a sustainable golf course that works on 100% self-sufficiency. The Johnsons have worked on all aspects of the club's construction. He has many hobbies including swimming and golf. He has a wife and 'three' children.

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**FEATURED INSIDE**

The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition returns to Harrogate

**ALSO INSIDE...**

BIGGA DELEGATION ANNOUNCED WINTER COURSE MANAGEMENT Q&A



**John Clarke of Woburn Golf Club**



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





## JERSEY BLOG

We've had a good response to last month's blogging article – and one of the most progressive greenkeeper blogs has emerged on the island of Jersey.

John Critchley, greenkeeper at Les Mielles Golf & Country Club, maintains an impressive blog with frequent updates and images of the team at work on the Championship course which is in a picturesque conservation area of the island.

Read it for yourself at [www.lesmiellesgroundscrow.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.lesmiellesgroundscrow.blogspot.co.uk). It's also pleasing to note that it's given a very prominent spot on the club's website – clearly visible at the top of the text on the homepage.

John says: "I started the blog in October last year to make the members aware of what we're doing and educate them on why we follow certain practices. For example, when hollow coring greens you always tend to hear the same things from unhappy golfers. However when they are informed in advance via the blog, and we explain the benefits, they are more understanding. We also have a busy schedule ahead of us, including rebuilding and adding

a few bunkers, tee renovations, and drainage works, so it's a good portfolio for our greenkeeping team. It has certainly created a good communication link between the members and our team, I believe it's shown them we are dedicated and take pride in what we do.

"The feedback from the Club has been positive. Members who you never thought would come to us say they have been following the blog which is great. I feel the majority of golfers don't understand what our job entails. When the weather's bad some believe we either go home or sit in the break room drinking coffee. Actually we're servicing the machines, setting up mowers, cleaning and organizing store sheds, doing paint work and all manner of other tasks. It's important to make the members aware we are always doing valuable work.

"The members know they have the option to contact me for more information, I am easily approachable. It's benefited the membership, the management and it's created a kind of buzz within our team."





## GCMA APPOINTS NEW CEO

The Golf Club Managers Association is delighted to announce the appointment of a new Chief Executive, Bob Williams.

Bob is well known to many within the Association already, having been in golf club management for 20 years, previously Manager at Long Ashton GC and latterly at Chipping Sodbury GC.

He is also an active member in the South West Region, notably spearheading their educational activities in recent years. Bob also played an active part in the Association's planning group for the 2011 National Conference. He is also currently working with the Association's Gill Bridle and Bucks New University to help develop the education programme there, including preparation of the course content.

He was already scheduled to help with a presentation at the BTME Show at Harrogate in January, and will be attending the Regional Secretaries Conference at Weston-super-Mare at the end of January also.

Bob will formally commence work at Weston-super-Mare on the 1st February 2013, initially working closely with current CEO Keith Lloyd for a month's handover period before Keith departs at the end of February.



## GEORGE PITTS BECOMES LATEST MG

George Pitts - Course Manager at Yelverton Golf Club - has been announced as BIGGA's latest Master Greenkeeper.

George, who is also Secretary for the Devon & Cornwall Section, lives in Okehampton and described how pleased he was to have been awarded the accolade, while highlighting how important education is.

He said: "Achieving the Master Greenkeeper certificate has been my career objective since completing my HND in 2000. It's a great process, ensuring you meet the highest industry standards and promote professionalism to the wider golfing community.

"Education and training is key to improving the integrity of the profession and the Association. Thank you to Yelverton Golf Club for their support during the process and to various peers in the industry for their help and guidance."

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BIGGA volunteers are once again required to help Kenny MacKay and his team at The Wentworth Club for the BMW PGA Championship between May 23-26 2013. Assistance will be required for any period of time during the tournament - from all four days to just one day.

The last two days will feature bunker raking. It's a great chance to see at first hand the preparation for this European Tour flagship event, which will be held on the West Course. All assistance will be greatly appreciated.

For more information please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator at [cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk) or call Clive on 07841 948410 or 01737 819343.



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## GET ACTIVE UNDER THE SNOW BLANKET

Recent snowfall across England and Scotland, combined with the sudden plunge in temperatures from icy northerly winds, has highlighted the risk of damaging Microdochium (Fusarium) Patch attack, warns Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson.

He pointed out that while last December last year was memorable for the incessant rainfall and unseasonably mild temperatures, prolonged periods of snow cover have been more common in recent seasons - resulting in extensive damage to unprotected turf beneath the snow blanket.

“When snowfall threatens, greenkeepers and turf managers must be ready to make a Medallion TL application and get protection in place early,” he advised. “Treatment now means they can relax over the Christmas period, with the assurance their turf is protected.”

Dr Watson reported that in 2010 the temperatures quickly plummeted, with many areas under significant snow cover by early December. Although temperatures eased in the second week with a welcome thaw, mid-month saw a return to icy conditions and a further 10 to 14 days snow cover for many areas.

“Experiences in 2010 highlighted that when the snow thawed, turf without fungicide protection had been seriously hit. However, turf managers who had applied Medallion TL ahead of forecast snow cover and predicted high disease risk conditions, reported very good results with turf remaining disease free.”

In 2010, Hanbury Manor Golf Club Golf and Estate Manager, Stan Power, applied Medallion TL just prior to 10 days of snow cover. When the snow receded, visual results on the treated greens were very good and disease free, whilst Fusarium infection had started to occur on untreated surrounds.

Further heavy snowfall through December prevented further treatment, yet when the snow melted the trial greens still showed no signs of disease. On final inspection - six weeks after application - Stan reported all the greens treated with Medallion TL had come through the harsh winter period with no signs of disease. The untreated green, however, had seen a substantial amount of disease on the main playing surface and collars.

“We have been very happy with the results at Hanbury Manor, and would not hesitate to recommend Medallion TL to other courses as a contact fungicide,” he added.

## SOUTH EAST GOLF & DINNER

Walton Heath Golf Club hosts one of greenkeeping's longest running events on Friday 8th March 2013. Please come along and support this hugely popular day.

For more details please contact Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator at [cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk) or call 01737 819343 or 07841 948410

## WHAT IS PHOSPHITE AND WHAT CAN IT DO FOR TURFGRASSES?

Phosphorous is a major plant nutrient, in plants taken up and used in the form of phosphate (PO<sub>4</sub>). Phosphite (PO<sub>3</sub>) is very similar to phosphate, only one molecule of oxygen in the difference. However, where phosphate is vital for plant growth, phosphite cannot be utilised by plants as a source of P nutrition and importantly should not be applied to P deficient plants.

Phosphite, derived from phosphorous acid is phototoxic and has to be modified prior to use with a neutralising substance - most commonly potassium hydroxide, producing potassium phosphite - currently marketed as a biostimulant and promoted as a means to reduce Microdochium nivale.

We have two questions to answer; Does phosphite suppress Microdochium nivale in turfgrasses? And by what means does this occur?

To date field trials and laboratory procedures have produced interesting results. Trial plots composed of three turfgrass species were established in 2010, to which treatments were applied and the effect on disease incidence and turfgrass quality assessed.

Plots are assessed monthly for disease occurrence and turf quality. Results have shown applications of potassium phosphite reduces disease by 50%, compared to untreated controls. Combinations of Chipco Green and PK Plus fully inhibited disease, indicating differing

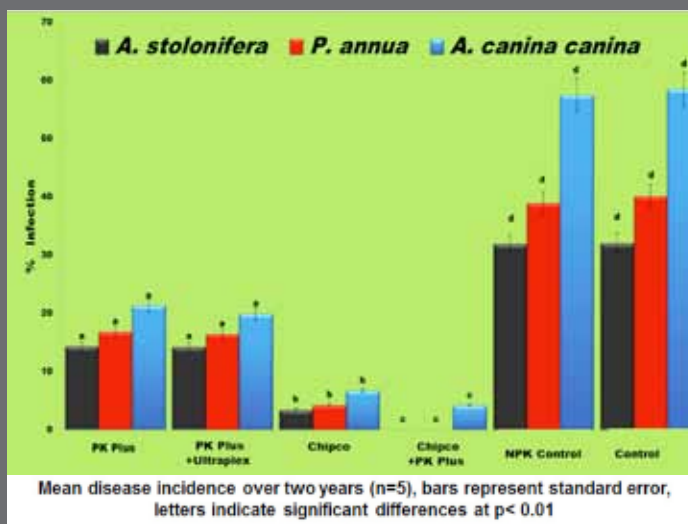
modes of suppression or possible synergistic effect. A significant improvement in turf quality in all phosphite treated plots was also determined. How does this occur? There are two possible methods:

Direct - Phosphite acts as a fungicide - and indirect - Phosphite stimulates the plants natural defences.

To test whether phosphite acts as a fungicide we carried out a range of in vitro studies. Microdochium was grown on petri dishes, amended with concentrations of phosphite and phosphate, the growth then compared to unamended controls. Results showed concentrations of 100µg/ml of phosphite fully inhibited mycelial growth and at lower concentrations caused disruption of hyphal morphology. Phosphate amended samples caused no effect.

Using a range of laboratory procedures we determined that following foliar applications there was rapid assimilation and accumulations in turfgrass leaves, full systemic mobility and no conversion in the plant to phosphate.

In summary, what can be concluded from the results of this research to date is that routine and sequential applications of phosphite, as part of an integrated disease management program, will significantly reduce the incidence and severity of the disease and also gives rise to significantly improved turfgrass quality than untreated controls.





## HOLLAND IN AUSTRALIA

Abbie Holland, a greenkeeper from West Sussex Golf Club, tells GI about an incredible few months working at Lake Karrinyup Country Club in Australia

I applied for a working holiday visa to Australia and emailed every course I could find with my CV. Lake Karrinyup replied offering me an eight-week contract over the Perth International tournament being held in October 2012.

I packed my backpack, said goodbye to my friends and family and travelled to Australia. I started my adventure by diving the great barrier reef, swimming in the rainforest, whale watching, feeding dolphins and camping with dingos – incredible.

When I walked up to the immaculately presented gardens and lush turf of Lake Karrinyup Country Club I couldn't believe my eyes. On my first day I met the 18-strong team and was handed a uniform, safety equipment and immediately offered places to stay and any help I could possibly need. I had landed on my feet for sure!

I was soon asked to hand mow for the first time because I'm used to ride on mowers. I struggled for a bit but the supervisors all showed me different techniques and set me

loose on the practice areas! After a week I was cutting greens.

In the build-up to the big tournament I learnt how to maintain and hand mow bent collars, present bunkers by brooming the face and raking the middle and about the properties of bent, cooch and kygoogie grass. We renovated the bunkers in no time, with one person edging, two flymoing high cut and low cut, one strimming, two using back pack blowers, three raking up, and two brooming the faces, followed by a bunker rake. Before this it was beyond me how bunkers could be done so quickly and efficiently.

We scarified and top dressed the greens and cut out new aprons with triple x mowers - and I had to stop to move the long neck turtle in my way. I also helped out with mulching, weeding, tidying up the rough areas, patching the fairways and general day to day maintenance. Gradually tv crews and scaffolding went up, the course was looking superb and I felt so proud to be part of it.

We were all designated

jobs for the tournament and mine was striping the tees. The third in charge put dots on all the tees at the front and the back so I could line my reel up with them and begin burning in straight lines down the fairway. The same was done for fairways and the greens were being double cut. A few times we had to be up before the sun, but to keep my lines straight I was given a light to stick at the end of the tee. It was a bit surreal at times, especially when I'd be mowing next to a kangaroo. Due to it being so well organised we were all relaxed and had a great laugh. My plans now is stay in Perth because I really have become settled here and enjoy the climate. Pushing up bunkers, cutting holes in the frost and digging through mud is almost a thing of the past due to the sandy soils and hardly ever rains.

I would advise anyone thinking about travelling to do so. Personally, I've had such a positive and happy experience due to the people and their attitude and I hope to take my knowledge with me to my next course.

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