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Rose blooms as The Open looms

Justin Rose’s serene march to the US Open title was a fabulous story on so many levels; the fulfilling of precocious teenage promise, redemption following the traumatic 21 missed cuts that blighted the start of his professional career, overcoming the huge crowd favourite and the imperious Hogan-esque ball striking down the stretch.

For the Merion Golf Club Superintendent it was also a career defining triumph. The weather did its worst, which seems to be the case so often these days – particularly in the days leading up to the start of the tournament. But Matt Shaffer and his team presented their classic golf course beautifully and it tested the world’s best players to the absolute limit. When the rains came down various commentators opined that the course would be defenceless and that the winning score would be double digits below par, in the end though the sub 7,000 yard challenge defeated all comers. Watching Rose strategically plot his way round to become the first English winner for 43 years and make it the third British triumph in four years was a huge thrill.

The golfing circus now moves on to Muirfield where Course Manager Colin Irvine and his regular and volunteer teams will prepare another world-class layout, the best in many people’s eyes, for a superb field of players. I hope the weather is substantially kinder for Colin but that we do get a good coastal breeze to make it a true Open test.

Either way the BIGGA Open Support Team are ready to play their part in the ongoing success of The Open Championship. I look forward to seeing many of you at Muirfield during the week.

As I write this column the interview stage for the fiercely contested 2013 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year has begun.

We look forward to welcoming the successful finalists to BIGGA House in September when one will be crowned the 25th recipient of the title. Our thanks go to Toro for their superb and loyal support of this key aspirational opportunity for BIGGA members. A quick glance at the Roll of Honour for the last 24 years shows what a fantastic career boost the Award and the associated educational opportunities that the winner receives can be. May I wish all the candidates luck in the process.

In this month’s edition we take a look at Frilford Heath Golf Club, venue for the 2013 BIGGA National Championship. The Red Course will play host to European Tour



Justin Rose (Getty Images)

qualifying a week prior to our event and it will be fascinating to see how greenkeeping’s finest compare. There are many excellent players in our ranks and I’m really keen that our National Championship becomes a ‘must play’ event to all those low handicappers in the membership. To that end we have reduced the entry fee this year and substantially increased the prizes on offer for the leading players. I know that Sid Arrowsmith MG is very much looking forward to welcoming all competitors to Frilford Heath in October so I hope you are able to take up the opportunity.

Elsewhere in these pages we unveil a new look to Around the Green which I hope meets with your approval, our reader survey highlighted the importance of this ‘grassroots’ element to our magazine but also raised a number of valid points in terms of style and presentation. As we strive to make this publication the most relevant and informative of the bewildering array of titles that serve our industry it is clear that we must listen to your views. Please feel free to feedback to us any comments you may have on the recent changes or any other area.



Enjoy the read.

Jim Croxton,
BIGGA CEO

JULY 2013

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



Chairman's Word

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

All roads lead to Muirfield

I was glued to the coverage of the US Open this month and was naturally delighted to see a British player claim the crown.

The moment I saw Justin Rose deservedly lifting the trophy, I realised that all eyes now turn to Muirfield for the next major and started to get excited about The Open.

Other than BTME, I feel The Open really is the year's highlight for us and our best chance to showcase the Association as yet again dozens of our members from across the UK and the world have the unique opportunity to work on the Support Team.

I know from experience how valuable the Team's work is and I'm sure that once again they will provide hugely professional, committed support for the venue's existing greenkeeping team.

It's an extremely intense week, with some incredibly tired members around by the Sunday night, but it's so rewarding on both a personal and professional basis. It's these sort of opportunities that I've repeatedly mentioned as one of the huge benefits of BIGGA membership.

From my point of view, as well as getting involved with the Support Team, it's my chance to meet countless other industry bodies, turf professionals and all manner of old friends and new faces who will be attending – I can't wait.

It will also be a proud week for me as it marks a year in my post as Chairman – which has flown by – and that neatly brings me on to some news regarding the board. Regrettably, Gary Cunningham has resigned from his position as Board Member for the Midlands Region due to his current employment status.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank Gary for his terrific commitment, energy and enthusiasm whilst on the Board and wish him all the very best for the future.

I'm sure he will continue to be a prominent and well-respected figure in the industry. Steve Mason, Course Manager at Stocks Golf Club in Hertfordshire, has taken his place on the Board and I know Steve will be able to bring similar enthusiasm and vigour to the role. I look forward to working with him.



BTME aside, I feel The Open really is the year's highlight for us, and our best chance to showcase the Association

After 12 months in the role as Chairman I feel it's the perfect time for me to reflect. It has been a busy time including the conclusion of a difficult restructure at HQ and the implementation of our Business Plan.

With the right team at BIGGA House now in place and our business affairs in a more robust state the Board has the opportunity to focus more on the long-term future of the Association, delivering better benefits to membership and really making the industry stronger for the next generation of greenkeepers.

The last few years have been a big challenge for the Association and whilst there are still some major issues for individual members, some of which are worsened by the volatility of both our climate and economy, we have laid the foundations for a more successful future and feel that we are on track towards our ultimate aim of becoming a must-join Association.

I know this is not the case for the whole of the UK, but generally I sense the weather is behaving itself with not only dry spells but also some of the sunshine that was so sadly lacking last year.

The courses that I've seen recently seem to finally be growing and flourishing and we can only hope this signals the arrival of a proper summer.

You could argue it's been six or seven years since the last summer worthy of the name.

Next month I hope to be reflecting on another super Open as the sun sets on the stunning links at Muirfield, although I remember wet and blustery conditions the last time we were there in 2002 so I'm not counting my chickens just yet!

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BIGGA SEMINARS AT SALTEX

BIGGA are staging a whole day of free education presentations at this year's SALTEX (Sports Amenity & Landscape Trade Exhibition) at Windsor Racecourse – with CPD credits available for those attending.

The BIGGA Golf Education Day on Wednesday September 4 will appeal to greenkeepers at courses of every size and type and will focus on drainage, bunkers, composts and disease management.

The day will start with 'Greens Drainage - Mission Possible' presented by Andy Wood, Course Manager of Robin Hood Golf Club. He will outline a workable solution for transforming soil-based greens with deep thatch and black layer, highlighting the methods used to solve drainage problems on troublesome greens.

Stuart Yarwood MG, Course Manager of Lymm Golf Club, will then discuss 'Sand Traps and Money Pits'. He will look at managing and constructing golf course bunkers on limited budgets, while revisiting the

past to shape our future. Stuart's presentation will also include the art of compost creation and its role in greenkeeping.

The schedule is completed by the joint Evertis/Syngenta presentation 'Go In Green... Come Out Clean' as Dr Simon Watson, Syngenta Turf and Landscape Technical Manager, points out how winter disease on golf greens is particularly problematic since there is little turf growth to allow recovery and for scars to heal.

This, he says, can impact the playability of greens right through to the spring period leading to dissatisfied golfers.

Simon will highlight how an integrated approach to disease management can reduce the disease pressure, improve turf health and enhance the performance of fungicide applications.

New findings on disease management will also be presented along with practical advice on how to deliver smooth, disease-free greens

right through the high risk autumn and winter periods.

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton, said: "BIGGA is delighted to once again have the opportunity to work with our friends the IOG and bring top-class greenkeeper education to the SALTEX experience. I hope many of our members take the opportunity to attend the seminar programme.

"BIGGA's revamped CPD programme launches on July 1 so it is great that SALTEX provides the chance for our members to improve both their knowledge and their CPD profile. I hope many also take the chance to view the exhibition; the turf industry is a constant provider of innovation, and opportunities like SALTEX where new products and services can be seen at first hand are always a benefit."

One BIGGA CPD credit is available for each seminar and a CPD register will be available at the end of each seminar. Visit www.iogsaltex.com for full details.



CHRIS ROARS OFF INTO RETIREMENT

Keen motorcyclist Chris Mitchell has retired after working at Maidenhead Golf Club in Berkshire for 45 years.

Chris – currently a 13 handicapper – joined the club in 1968 as an apprentice greenkeeper, then moved on to assistant and first assistant before taking the Course Manager position ten years ago.

The club have promoted two of Chris's former colleagues with Barry Gardner assuming the mantle of Course Manager and Mark Sweeney the new Deputy.

Chris said: "I've really appreciated the support of the club, the members and management in providing the resources to do the job to the best of my ability."

He added that one of the highlights of his time at Maidenhead was when the members clubbed together to pay for a much-needed full fairway irrigation system several years ago. Chris intends to lower his handicap in retirement as well as indulging his passion of motorcycling, and travelling with his wife Jane.

TORO MOWER AT THE HART OF WEDDING

A greenkeeper at Newcastle-under-Lyme Golf Club is so attached to his Toro mower – he took it to his wedding.

Darren Hart tied the knot with sweetheart Stephanie on a glorious June day.

He took the opportunity to be pictured with his Toro Greensmaster 3250, which was specially transported to the nearby wedding venue.

Ian Beech, Head Greenkeeper at the Club, attended the nuptials and confirmed a good time was had by all!



GREENKEEPERS VICTORIOUS

Ashley Wood Golf Club played host recently to the 17th Annual Course Care Cup, this year with the secretaries keen for a win!

Good weather and a fine course ensured good golf with the day thoroughly enjoyed by all. Despite huge efforts the Secretaries could not prevail and the Greenkeepers took the trophy again winning three matches to two. Thanks from all were extended to Highspeed Group Ltd for sponsoring the event.

Highspeed Group's Area Manager Paul Dyter presented the trophy to Tony Gadd, Chairman of BIGGA South Coast Section.



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AN ISLAND BLOG

The latest impressive blog set up by a BIGGA member is from the Head Greenkeeper at Royal Jersey Golf Club - Ben Blampied-Smyth. Ben has used some spectacular photography of the links course in tandem with pages of in-depth greenkeeping information, all set out in a clear and attractive format.

Ben said: "As a fairly new Head Greenkeeper it's allowed the members to get to know me professionally. It's also been extremely helpful when I've changed maintenance practices to inform the members why I'm changing things and the benefits of these changes.

"For the greenkeeping team as a whole it has hopefully allowed the members to get to know the team better. It's massively improved communication to the members in terms of why certain procedures are necessary, what is involved in carrying out the procedure, timescales and potential inconvenience.

"In my first year we had TPL Thomson Perrett & Lobb golf course architects do an audit of the course. My first winter program involved implementing some of these changes to the course which were fairly major. The blog became very important to a lot of members to keep them up to date with these changes and how they would improve the course long term.

"This winter we also carried out changes to three holes from the TPL proposal and started upgrading our irrigation system which is a massive investment for the club. Again we were able to inform and educate the members on this work via the blog."

See for yourself at <http://royaljersey.getrefined.com>



JIMMY READ RETIRES

Jimmy Read (above left) has retired from his position of Head Greenkeeper at Hunstanton Golf Club. Jimmy spent 37 successful years at the Championship links, 34 of which were as Head Greenkeeper. Jimmy's son Peter is currently Acting Head Greenkeeper.

Club Secretary Bob Carrick said: "He has overseen many amateur competitions over the years and is

proud to leave the course in superb condition.

He has seen great changes in the course as part of the recent development work masterminded by Martin Hawtree and Gordon Irvine. All members and staff wish Jimmy all the best for his retirement and we would like to thank him for his tireless work over the years."



BY GEORGE! BIGGA LIFE MEMBER'S DOUBLE ACE

Former BIGGA Chairman George Brown recorded two holes-in-one in the space of ten days - and was rewarded with two exclusive Hugo Boss watches!

Seven handicapper George, 74, began his winning streak by hitting a four-iron into the cup on the 160 yard 6th at Turnberry's Kintyre course during a seniors competition.

He followed this up with an ace in a medal competition on the 175 yard 11th at the Ailsa course - and he is now the

proud owner of two Hugo Boss Watches because the luxury brand is rewarding club golfers with a special timepiece for every hole-in-one recorded during official competitions.

All official competitions are recorded on the HowDidiDo system, so anyone hitting a hole-in-one between April 15 and October 31 can claim a watch.

George, former Course Manager at Turnberry, has now taken his career total of aces to nine.