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Sami Collins
sami@bigga.co.uk

Contact Us
BIGGA House, Aldwark, Alne, York,
YO61 1UF
info@bigga.co.uk
www.bigga.org.uk
Tel – 01347 833800 | Fax – 01347 833801

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Production
Design & Brand
Executive
Tom Campbell

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 513
tom@bigga.co.uk



Editorial
Communications
Executive
Steve Castle

Tel – 01347 833800
ext 510
steve.castle
@bigga.co.uk

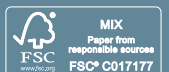


Advertising
Business
Development
Executive
Jill Rodham

Tel – 01347 833800
Fax – 01347 833802
jill@bigga.co.uk
ext 519

Printing
Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor
Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
Tel – 01778 391000 | Fax – 01778 394269

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Muirfield Clubhouse courtesy of Alastair Brown

Great Scott triggers Open countdown

Browsing social media on the Monday after Adam Scott's magnificent Masters win it was clear that a lot of Greenkeeper International readers had been glued to the TV coverage and were going to be a bit bleary eyed as they prepared their courses that morning.

For as long as I can remember I have considered it compulsory to watch the year's first major unfold on television and whilst the early hours conclusion does not combine well with greenkeeper hours it is clear I'm not alone in this industry with that view. Once again the Augusta National golf course provided a fantastic examination for the best players on the planet and whilst it was unfortunate that a couple of rules incidents threatened to overshadow the play, the thrilling finish giving Scott his first major was a great advert for the sport. The immaculate conditioning once again showcased course management to a worldwide audience - whether it creates unrealistic expectations amongst our own golfers or not it is clearly a great shop window for the profession.

Augusta weekend marks the traditional start to the golfing season and, with due deference to the intervening US Open, also whets the appetite for the upcoming Open Championship which this year is to be held at the wonderful Muirfield. I vividly remember the last time the tournament was held there when strong winds on the Saturday blew some of the world's finest off course with Tiger Woods registering the worst round of his career. The current champion Ernie Els then came through a four man playoff to claim his first Claret Jug. Els is in the unusual position of being both the defending champion and the last man to win at this year's venue. In this month's magazine (page 20) we take a look at the preparation work that the Course Manager Colin Irvine has put in as he builds up to what is in my view the world's greatest golf tournament.

The BIGGA Open Support Team are also gearing up to the event and I am looking

forward to getting to know this year's successful group as they play their part in ensuring the success of the Championship.

Last month I was privileged to attend the inaugural Future Turf Managers Initiative made possible by Jacobsen.

Held at Ransomes Jacobsen's impressive Ipswich headquarters the Initiative offered an intense management training and mentoring experience for the twenty BIGGA members who had been selected to attend. The event was both inspiring and informative and it was fantastic to see the young, aspirant Future Turf Managers interact with each other and their mentors who had given up their time to participate. In depth sessions on communication skills, budgeting, organisational politics and managing different personalities were all hugely relevant to the skills needed by the modern course manager, or any manager for that matter. I would like to publicly take this opportunity to thank Jacobsen for their superb support of the Initiative and the five mentors for their generous commitment to the event itself and to their role as group mentors.

These pages contain a review of the event and also the first part of an excellent two-part article by Kevin Munt who explores the '18 holes' to a successful career as a course manager. The front nine commences on page 30 with the homeward stretch to follow in June.



Enjoy the read
Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

MAY 2013

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Dan McGrath MG recently won Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year, a coveted STRI Environment Award. BIGGA are part of this and Greenkeeper International is a media partner, so Dan agreed to tell us about his prize – a trip to Portugal to explore how they're dealing with environmental challenges on the Iberian Peninsula

2012 Golf Environment Awards, supported by BIGGA

STRI

Following my appointment as Course Manager at North Foreland Golf Club on the Kent coastline seven years ago, many challenges confronted me. A truly spectacular chalkland cliff top course built on the shores of traditional golf needed tweaking in several work programmes – one being the ecology and environmental work. First there was to draw up an environmental policy and plan, which then there is no device. This was completed and the whole written into and into in motion. I was introduced to the Kent Wildlife Trust by a professional employee as the next logical step was to make North Foreland a corporate member. Having the expertise and local knowledge of such an organisation is invaluable and one I would recommend to anyone wishing to pursue any environmental project. The main concentration of the first phase of the work was the Chalkland Regeneration Programme. Large areas had previously been unmanaged and seen as one of the most beautiful green spaces in the south of England. My job was to restore the grassland and also to bring ground to be populated by the sea. A programme of education on a national level commenced and by all carried out in the club. The results have been immense. Nothing has been overestimated, on this have appeared with members growing every year, the rough is thin and happy giving fantastic dedication and improve

Conservation goes European



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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

A glimpse of the future

The only place to start this month's column is Ipswich – or more precisely the HQ of Ransomes Jacobsen which proved to be a marvellous venue for the first ever Future Turf Managers' Initiative.

It turned out to be a wonderful couple of days that I can honestly say surpassed all my expectations.

I'm 64 now but still came away having learnt all manner of new things. All the presentations were superb, but if I had to pick a highlight it would be Lorna Sheldon's seminars on interview techniques, writing CVs and effective communication strategies.

I enjoyed Lorna's seminar at the Turf Managers' Conference this year and was delighted to see her return and pass on her years of expertise.

You can have all the greenkeeping knowledge in the world, but without a well-written, professional CV you won't get past first base for the next position you're aiming for.

Once you've got to interview stage, you really need to stand out and Lorna showed everyone how. In today's highly competitive job market these are critical skills being passed on.

Well done to all the candidates, who without exception were engaging, enthusiastic and eager, and I've a feeling we will be hearing much more about them and their career successes in the future.

Also, my heartfelt thanks to the presenters, and the BIGGA mentors, who gave up their valuable time to assist the next generation.

Finally, congratulations to everyone at Jacobsen who were so helpful and welcoming.

When I started in greenkeeping all those years ago there was little to no formal training available and it was a frustrating time to be an ambitious young (or relatively young!) greenkeeper. I fondly remember the first ever supervisory management course organised by BIGGA which took place at Aldwark Manor in the early nineties.

The seminars, presentations and mentors we had gave us so much to work on and many of us went on to become Course Managers at all manner of courses.



I'm 64 now but still came away having learnt all manner of new things

It was also a great chance to meet other greenkeepers from across the country, tap into their knowledge and get to know them personally.

It was a novelty at that time to take part in formal training, now there are so many opportunities for all members and you must take these opportunities.

As I mentioned at the start of this column, it doesn't matter if you're a little older and nearing the end of your career, you will definitely learn something.

I don't want to jinx it, but it seems the weather has turned and spring has finally arrived after one of the longest and coldest spells I can remember.

March was particularly cold which I'm sure may have thrown a spanner in the works for your plans ahead of the start of the season. I enjoyed watching a superb Masters tournament on TV, but as we all know, Augusta is a long way from the day

to day reality of life preparing a golf course in the UK.

In fact, I'm sure many of you had a wry smile on your faces as you watched the final holes take place in torrential rain and gloom looking more like a drab day on Teesside – they've now had a taste of what we had to put up with for most of last year!

With the Masters out of the way it really feels like summer is approaching, let's hope it's a good one. I've got a busy few months coming up, as I'm sure you all have, and I hope to visit as many Sections and Regions as possible.

As always I'd be happy to discuss anything with BIGGA members, my contact details are below.

Contact details

Tony Smith / 07988 838956 / tony.smith48@ntlworld.com

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SHINING BEACON BILL RETIRES

A BIGGA stalwart, and great friend to many in the industry, Bill Paterson has retired after 50 years in greenkeeping. Bill has spent 28 years at Beaconsfield Golf Club in Buckinghamshire. Here Billy McMillan pays tribute to his friend...

Starting at Old Ranfurly golf club in the early sixties as an apprentice Billy was soon hooked on greenkeeping. He was number 27 on the register of young greenkeepers taking up a formal education in Scotland at that time. Once qualified he soon took on the role of Deputy at Old Ranfurly then Paisley.

In the early seventies he became Head Greenkeeper at the Randpark Golf Club in South Africa - not only was this a big move for him personally but also a massive learning curve in the management of warm season grasses.

Creeping bent grass was on his agenda, and with great initiative he managed to get his hands on some seed, introducing it into his greens during dormant conditions to give his membership quality surfaces year round.

This was not a simple thing to achieve with sanctions going on at that time. He actually managed to have this grass seed smuggled in on the back of his then club captain's business of importing American cars with a trunk full of bent grass seed stashed away for a timely door to door delivery.

In the mid to late seventies home beckoned - maybe he missed the charm of wet feet and a cold wind - and after a short spell as Head Greenkeeper at the Vale of Leven Golf Club he was off to the acclaimed Royal Dornoch Golf Club. During his time there he enjoyed presenting the course for many fine



Bill has been succeeded by Stuart Langhorn who spent eight years as Course Manager at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club.

Stuart commented: "I've been seeking a new challenge and this is a great opportunity at a stunning golf course - their ambitions match mine. I've spent six weeks working alongside Bob. When you join somewhere new you always wonder whether it's going to be a little awkward working with the person you're replacing, but it couldn't be further from that here. Bill is a top bloke.

"His job here has been his life. He's been much more than a greenkeeper. He's arranged Christmas parties, he puts the Christmas trees up, he's done so much work with the Artisan section... you name it, he's been involved in it.

"I intend to continue the terrific work Bill has done here. I'll be continuing the woodland management project he started and also the layout of the new paths. Then it's likely to be working on the greens, bringing up the putting speed, and reviewing and investing in our machinery fleet."



amateur tournaments such as the Scottish Ladies, Home Internationals and the British Amateur.

In 1985 he decided to see what England had to offer and took up his role as Head Greenkeeper at Beaconsfield.

An avid reader, Billy boasts at home a collection of books that would be the envy of many, with publications from Kipling, Dickens, and Robert Service as well as greenkeeping to choose from.

He not only has a marvellous ability to recall information but can recite it in such a way you are hooked and entertained, ensuring it will be an experience to remember for anyone that has had the pleasure to be in his company.

I remember lying in bed at many a BTME with the silence being broken with a rendition of some Scottish ballad drifting through the night as Billy returned to his room.

Now you may think a greenkeeping career was all that he aspired to - but you would be way off the mark. He has lived a well-rounded life and for many years has taken part in local church events and runs a youth club for all the local children in his village.

Serving time on greenkeeping committees he has been hugely instrumental in the establishment and development of the BB&O Section in recent years. With a spell as chairman of this section he has always been quietly working away to better the role of the modern day greenkeeper in the area.

A wonderful career is at an end, so from all your greenkeeping friends we wish you Billy, your wife Eileen, your children Fiona and Billy and all your grandchildren a happy retirement filled with many adventures yet to come.

GOVERNMENT ARRANGES ASH GRANTS (BUT NOT FOR GOLF COURSES)

The recent Chalara Management Plan released by DEFRA lacks any uniform and equitable assistance for landowners and organisations affected by the disease.

Grants will be given for removal, destruction and disposal of recently planted common ash and replanting with alternative tree species, but this only applies to a selective swathe of counties (Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire and up through the Midlands). The aim is to slow down east to west disease spread and help create a 'chalara free' zone in westernmost England. The Royal Forestry Society describes the plan as a 'postcode lottery' but worse still it excludes the amenity and landscape sector and therefore golf courses.

Simon Ellis, marketing director at Crowders Nurseries in Horncastle Lincolnshire, which currently holds 250,000 healthy ash trees, told Greenkeeper International:

"We are about to destroy the entire stock. They are unsalable and difficult to manage. Many are

up to ten years old which means a decade of investment down the drain with no compensation from government.

"This plan is selective, divisive, inequitable and unfair. Grant aid will only be available to forestry sector landowners with planted ash sites funded under the Rural Development Programme for England. It excludes the amenity and landscape sectors but it is they who buy our larger trees. I don't see why grants should only be given to the 'landed gentry' and withheld from entrepreneurs building and maintaining leisure complexes, golf courses and other sporting facilities."

Small trees planted by big forestry landowners are typically purchased at around 20 pence 'a throw'.

Simon and others in the nursery trade met with Defra and put forward specific plans to assist the amenity and landscape sectors, including golf courses, but this has clearly been ignored.

Dr Terry Mabbett



Grant aid for recently planted ash sites in high priority areas but none at all for golf courses. Courtesy of the Forestry Commission



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BRAVE ASA'S MARATHON MISHAP

Unlucky Asa English endured a torrid time at the recent Brighton Marathon after suffering an injury halfway through – but still managed to finish after limping 12 miles to the finishing line with a torn thigh muscle.

Asa and pal Greg Skinner ran the Brighton Marathon for charity last month, the fourth time Asa – Greenkeeper at Rothley Park Golf Club – has run the 26-mile course.

But disaster struck after 14 miles when he suddenly felt a searing pain in his left leg. However, determined not to let his chosen charity down, he insisted on finishing, and managed to drag himself across the finishing line in 3 hours 52 minutes. A scan later revealed a Grade Two muscle tear with doctors amazed he had managed to complete the course.

He said: "It was all going well and I thought I was on track to beat my personal best of 3 hours 23 minutes when I felt this really sharp pain out of nowhere. I've never suffered any injuries before so I thought I could just keep going.

"But it did become very hard work. I think the spectators must have thought I was suffering from Tourette's because I was swearing constantly due to the pain!"

Asa had been training for months up to the big day, which was watched by crowds of up to 150,000 people on the South Coast. He will now be restricted to certain less intensive tasks at his club until the injury heals.

He added: "It's frustrating, but these things happen. I won't be able to exercise for a month but I'll be back. There's life in the old dog yet!"

Asa was running for 'Miracles To Believe In' – a charity for autistic children. To donate to this worthwhile cause please visit www.miraclestobelievein.moonfruit.com or contact Asa on 07790 574075.

We're always on the lookout for stories involving BIGGA members. So if you've won a sporting trophy, achieved a qualification or have a humorous story to tell contact Steve Castle at BIGGA HQ on steve.castle@bigga.co.uk and you may be featured in GI!

JANE JONES TO DEPART BIGGA

Sadly we are announcing the resignation of Jane Jones from her post as Regional Administrator for the South West/South Wales Region.

Jane has worked dedicatedly for BIGGA for eight and a half years, joining us in November 2004. She has been a hugely valuable employee and we are sad to lose her.

Jane still intends to work within the golf industry on a more local level. Jane's last day will be 31 May 2013 and we would like to wish her all the best in her new ventures.



GI SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who completed our recent Greenkeeper International survey – we had a fantastic response with over 200 members letting us know what they would like to see in the mag. You will notice changes to the magazine as a result from this edition onwards, hopefully reflecting some of the feedback we have had. If you have any further comments or suggestions on anything regarding GI, please contact steve.castle@bigga.co.uk

The most widely read sections of the magazine proved to be technical greenkeeping articles, recruitment and course features/case studies. Some of the least popular sections included the Learning & Development and Membership pages which have led us to revamp these areas with further changes coming in future months. Again, technical detail was the greatest attraction when deciding whether to read an article, followed by human interest, and location in the magazine.

We received a wide range of feedback and suggestions to some of the other questions on how to improve aspects of the magazine – and you will start to see these reflected in Greenkeeper International over the coming months. As always, the magazine is for members – so if you have any suggestions, comments or constructive (!) criticisms contact Steve Castle at BIGGA HQ.