

## LOOK HUGHES HEAD GREENKEEPER AT WHICKHAM



Brian Hughes has been promoted to Head Greenkeeper at Whickham Golf Club in County Durham – and he's made a real impact recently by using compost teas.

Brian has been at the parkland course for over 25 years, and has witnessed difficult times, particularly over the last few years.

However he now enjoys the full backing of the club and is proud that their greens are continuing to improve thanks to his use of compost teas.

Brian said: "Just like many other clubs we had a hard time of it recently and unfortunately the club had to make difficult financial decisions which involved some redundancies. But we've come through the other side and we're a stronger unit now.

"I started using compost teas two years ago and it's been brilliant, the greens are in great condition. They just feel healthier – we've got away from the sterile soils of the past. It's great to feel that you're doing something right from a greenkeeping point of view, we don't use any chemical fungicides at all on our greens now. It's saved us lots of money on fungicides.

"I feel the club is ahead of the game compared to some. We haven't turned the corner totally but we're looking at a really positive future."



## FLYING HIGH AT EAST BERKSHIRE

In GI June we featured a project at St Annes Old Links who used a drone to take stunning aerial photos of the course. Matt Nutter, BB&O Secretary and Course Manager at East Berkshire GC, also wanted to investigate how seeing the course from the air using an accurate, up to date aerial picture could help him assist and manage the estate.

After researching companies who provide imagery Matthew employed the services of PinPoint Golf, a company who specialise in golf course mapping and surveys to carry out the drone flight.

The drone flight produced a fully geo referenced ortho image, in basic terms a full GPS map of the golf course and estate.

"The first thing that impresses you is the clarity of what you are dealing with" said Matthew. "Most of us have used existing online maps when we've had to but we know that when you scroll in close you lose any detail".

The main key benefits that Matthew was looking to glean from the exercise was to review cutting lines and shapes from the air and to be able to measure areas that had been raising questions from the membership: areas of long fescue rough, distances of carries from tee to fairway, heather plantations and areas earmarked for further heather establishment. The software allows accurate measurements around the tees fairways, greens and bunkers and then creates a spreadsheet of the surface areas of all of the key features of the course. This will offer savings by being able to accurately measure to order the correct amount of sand, fertiliser and dressing.

Matthew and the team at

East Berkshire had finished a successful course renovation programme when the aerial was taken but any proposed course changes can be helped as the image gives the best possible view of how the hole looks now and the impact of any proposed changes.

The process really helps you understand what space you have and how best to utilise it from boundary issues to land purchase. An accurate record of your course from the sky is invaluable. This has been particularly useful when making presentations to committees and Board members with regard to proposed projects. As Matthew commented "it's hard to argue with a detailed image showing the exact areas concerned and proposed changes". The software package allows future updated work i.e. drainage, irrigation changes and general ground works to be added to the mapping. This allows a consistent and accurate record of the course and completes the final part of a meaningful Course Policy Document.

Matthew concluded: "We finally have a tool that I can put to a practical use. If it was just a pretty picture it would be little use but thanks to the accuracy of the image combined with the ease of use of the software I'm using it all the time. And the more I use it the more useful it becomes for others as a living breathing record of my golf course".

When drones with cameras were invented it wasn't to benefit the management of golfing estates and to beautify golf courses but for those that have used it in that way and have seen the benefits it certainly has created an incredibly useful by-product.



# Membership News

The latest news from BIGGA

**Following the Greenkeeper International survey, we've revamped the Membership pages – and we want you to get involved.**

As before, this section will highlight the many benefits BIGGA membership gives you, but will feature you, the members.

We want to hear your stories and experiences – so whether you've

found a new job through BIGGA, got help through our Legal Helpline or Lifestyle Counselling, worked at a high-profile tournament or even won a golf competition we want to hear from you!



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You can follow BIGGA on Twitter @BIGGALtd



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### OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

(Full Members only)

**Personal Accident Helpline**  
0207 2048952

**Greenkeepers Legal Assistance**  
0800 177 7891

**Lifestyle Counselling Helpline**  
0844 770 1036  
www.arcllegal.co.uk/carefirst

## CONFERENCE PRESENTERS UNVEILED

Once again we've attracted some of the industry's top names to our Regional Conferences which take place in November. Remember that one hour of education equals one CPD Credit – so there's a potential total of 6 CPD Credits on offer at each Conference.

As well as various seminars we also have a range of workshops during the day.

We kick things off with the Midland Regional Conference at Forest Hill Golf Club on Wednesday 6 November. This includes seminars from Lee Strutt MG, Course Manager at G West International Resort, on how to build a budget, and a presentation from Henry Bechelet, Technical Sales Manager for Everris, on soil moisture management. The day

costs £15 for BIGGA members and £25 for non-members.

Hot on the heels of the Midland Conference is the Northern Conference on Thursday 7 November at The Phoenix Sports and Social Club. Among the highlights is Ian MacPherson, Renewable Energy Product Manager for Rain Bird UK looking at renewable energy, and Stuart Yarwood MG and Paul Lowe's seminar on soil biology with practical greenkeeping. The cost is just £10 for members and £20 for non-members.

The South East Regional Conference is on Tuesday 19 November at Hadlow College. Speakers include David (inset above left) and Alec Macindoe on past and present greenkeeping strategies and techniques, and

John Ross MG from Compliant Grounds on accident causation.

The South West and South Wales Regional Conference takes place on Thursday 21 November at The Oaktree Arena in Highbridge.

Highlights include Steve Chappell's seminar on preparations for the 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, Jason Brooks (above) volunteering at The Phoenix Open (as featured in GI March) and a presentation from Dougie Robertson, Head Groundsman at West Ham Utd FC. The cost is £26 for members and £34 for non-members. For more details please contact BIGGA's South West & Wales Regional Administrator Tracey Harvey on 07841 948110 or tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk



# L&D News

The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

**BTME**  
**CONTINUE TO LEARN**  
 EDUCATION PROGRAMME  
 Sunday 19 to Wednesday 22 January 2014  
 at the Harrogate International Centre, N. Yorks  
 Continue to learn at **BTME 2014**

This month's Greenkeeper International features a booklet giving you all the details of the Continue to Learn education programme at BTME 2014.

Our two day workshops will take place on Sunday 19 January and Monday 20 January. We've got Golf Course Architect Howard Swan talking about renovating your golf course, Frank Newberry's advice on moving into management and Dr Paul Miller on turfgrasses, soils and fertilisers.

## CONTINUE TO LEARN AT BTME 2014

We've also signed up some new experts for 2014. Shona Garner – Director of Shona Garner Coaching Services – will be presenting 'How to Be an Outstanding Manager Part Five'. Two Master Greenkeepers – Les Howkins from The Richmond and Lee Strutt from Ochil Developments, g West, will be looking at 'Mathematics for Modern Greenkeeping'.

Other highlights include Michael Alstrop, Principal at Coach the Mind, showing you how to prepare and write effective reports, and a presentation on enhancing personal effectiveness from Wendy Shortman – Wellness Consultant at Life Matters.

The Turf Managers' Conference will again be a cornerstone of the

entire week with a superb list of experts from across the world delivering fascinating, educational presentations. We've attracted the likes of Dr Karl Danneberger, Professor of Turfgrass Science at Ohio State University, Karl Morris – Managing Director of the Mind Factor – and Mark Hunt, Technical Director at Headland Amenity.

And of course there are our Focus On Sessions ranging from Grass Identification to Dealing with Conflict, and Seminars on Soil Life, Plant Pigments and Wildflower Mixtures for the Golf Course.

A range of CPD points, BASIS and NRoSO points are available for attendance – please refer to your booklet for more details.



**Gold Key Individual Members:**  
 Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS, Ian MacMillan MG, Ian Morrison, Andrew Turnbull, W J Rogers, Sam Langrick, Espen Bergmann, Nick Gray

**Silver Key Individual Members:**  
 Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn, Douglas Duguid, Jaey Goodchild, Graham Wiley, Michael Beaton, Paul Jenkins, David Barker



Robbie, with Jason and David shown inset

## TRIO AWARDED RANSOMES JACOBSEN SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to three BIGGA members based in the UK and America who have been awarded BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships supported by Ransomes Jacobsen worth £1000. Jason O'Keefe, who works

at Gatton Manor Hotel Golf & Country Club, will attend Merrist Wood College to study NVQ Level 7 in Sportsturf.

David Thompson, First Assistant Greenkeeper at Hexham Golf Club, will go to Myerscough College to

study a Foundation Degree in FDSportsturf.

The final award goes to Robbie Bond, currently a greenkeeper at Augusta National Golf Club.

He will now undertake an Associates Degree at Penn State.

The funding provided by Gold and Silver Key Sponsors is used to produce training and career aids, DVDs, CD Roms, field guides and provide refunds for training fees and subsidised learning and development courses. The funding also helps support seminars, workshops, courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

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## COUNTRYWIDE T&A TEAM INVESTS IN EXPERIENCE

Countrywide is delighted to announce the addition of Roger Clark to its Turf & Amenity team.

Roger will be supporting customers throughout Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

"Roger has held key roles at some of the UK's top golf clubs and brings a tremendous breadth of industry experience," says Sam Honeyborne, Turf & Amenity Manager for Countrywide.

"His knowledge over 21 years, spans the entire turf and amenity sector, combining both technical sales and practical knowledge and skills. I have no doubt that he will become a key member of our growing team of dedicated turf professionals and will be valued by customers and colleagues alike."

BASIS and FACTS qualified, Roger can advise on the use of pesticides and fertilisers and is keen to put his in-depth experience to the use of Countrywide customers – course managers, greenkeepers and groundstaff whose problems and pressures he fully appreciates.

"The demands today are tremendous," says Roger. "Golf courses, football grounds, sports stadia now operate 365 days a year so the challenge is to create healthy turf that lasts all year round. My advantage is that I understand customers' needs and enjoy working closely with them - and within any constraints they have - to advise on the best products to improve and maintain their surfaces."

"Whether it's grass seed, top dressings, fertilisers, or our substantial portfolio of pesticides and herbicides, it

is much easier to recommend certain products when you have likely used them yourself!"

Joining Countrywide seemed like a natural career progression for Roger: "I kept coming up against Countrywide as a competitor so, in the end, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em! Another big advantage for me was my experience of using Sustane, the organic, slow release fertilisers of which Countrywide has now been appointed sole European distributors."

"This new role will give me the opportunity to use all the knowledge and experience I have gained over my 21 years in the industry to deliver first class results for greenkeepers, course managers and groundstaff as part of the very vibrant, proactive Countrywide team."

## GROWING PLACES

Following a challenging trading year for the amenity market in general, industry leader Rigby Taylor is delighted to announce a sales growth of almost 6% for the year ending July 2013.

A number of company initiatives were at the heart of this growth including a record supply arrangement of total herbicides to Network Rail, new product developments including the Microlite micro granular fertilizer range and a dynamic, company rebranding programme.

Planning for the future with great optimism, a strategy has been implemented in preparation for planned additional growth this year and beyond with a move to larger warehousing premises in Stallingborough, North Lincolnshire. This move, at a stroke, provides increased capacity of some 15% over the existing site at Horwich and, offers the flexibility for further expansion.

The new warehouse facility will be up and running from the end of October 2013 and the current sales support operation for the north of England will relocate to a new sales office within Horwich.

As regards the company's other regional warehousing and office facilities, the Newbridge branch near Edinburgh has recently entered into a joint venture with Scotbark to provide a trade counter in Glasgow serving the west of Scotland and the Camberley branch in Surrey provides excellent stocking and supply arrangements throughout southern England and south Wales.

Only recently Rigby Taylor returned to SALTEX after a five year absence to launch a number of new products and marketing initiatives and will be attending BTME 2014.

# GI NEW PRODUCTS

The latest products on the market reviewed

## DOWN THE MIDDLE WITH KUBOTA'S F3680 AND 100-INCH MOWER DECK



**FRESH  
FROM  
ETESIA**

Following the success of the launch of Kubota's F3680, the tractor and groundcare specialist has introduced a Lastec 100-inch flex mower deck for use with the unit, to provide superior groundcare performance.

The 100-inch mower deck, called the 100 EFK, is exclusively available on Kubota's F3680 as this model has the ideal horsepower requirements for a 100-inch cut width.

The solution has been designed so all the deck pans articulate independently 15 degrees up and down to follow the ground contour with walk-mower precision, which reduces the possibilities of scalping.

Other features include hydraulic operated fold up outer pans to minimise width for transport and an adjustable deck height ranging from 1-inch to 4 ¾ inches with ¼ inch increments with no tooling requirement.

Adjustable internal baffling also allows for standard rear discharge or mulch to optimise

performance in a variety of positions.

Adrian Langmead, Business Development Manager at Kubota, commented: "The introduction of the mower deck is part of Kubota's ongoing commitment to add value to every product along with the service we provide our customers to ensure they can complete their work efficiently and effectively.

"The patented Lastec design integrates five 21-inch mower pans, uniquely pinned together and belt driven, giving a 100-inch wide cut with the precision of a 21-inch walk-behind mower. For turf professionals, this means a larger area can be cut in a shorter space of time, saving users valuable time and money."

The most powerful out front mower in the Kubota range, the F3680 features an efficient 36hp engine diesel engine and Auto-Assist 4WD as standard. It has been designed to offer maximum manoeuvrability and versatility over undulating surfaces, whilst being able to

tackle the most demanding operations on the golf course.

The unit also feature Kubota's unique deck suspension and weight transfer system ensuring the mower blades are kept in perfect alignment with the ground at all times, resulting in an even cut no matter what the surface.

For busy golf courses, Kubota understand it's imperative that maintenance can be conducted on site with ease to ensure greenkeeping teams can run smoothly. That's why the F3680 has been designed with a tilt up hood, easy to clean integrated radiator screen and dual element air filter meaning maintenance couldn't be simpler.

The F3680 also includes a host of features to increase operator comfort and reduce fatigue, such as hydrostatic power steering, deluxe adjustable seat, conveniently positioned operator levers and a single HST pedal resulting in longer, more productive periods of operation.

Among a range of new product launches from Etesia this autumn are two high quality professional rotary mowers, two domestic pedestrian lawn mowers and a new revolutionary electric wheel barrow.

The PKCTM 46cm and LKCGM 53cm models join the Duocut range. Both machines are available with mulching inserts ensuring that users can use one machine for a multitude of different tasks – cut and collect, cut and drop or mulch.

The PKCTM model is a single speed machine equipped with a 6HP Kawasaki KAI-FS181 engine and comes complete with a long range fuel tank making it ideal for mobile grass cutting teams who require a machine to last all day without re-fuelling, whilst the LKCGM model is equipped with a 6HP Kawasaki KAI-FS180 engine and has three speeds – 2.7, 3.5 and 4.5km/h.

Completing the new product launches is the new revolutionary 100% electric wheel barrow which is available with a range of attachments that can tackle a wide variety of jobs.



# The Turner prize

Just three years ago Luke Turner was all set for a career as a policeman – now he's **Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2013**. Steve Castle investigates the fascinating tale of this year's winner

main photography by Jonathan Pow  
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TORO®



**In 2009 Luke Turner joined the Metropolitan Police force's training scheme, and the only time he'd been on a golf course was to walk his dog. Something told me he would have an interesting tale to tell when we sat down to chat the morning after he became the 25th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year – and he didn't disappoint.**

After completing his A Levels he studied Politics at University, and after moving down to Eastbourne he applied to and was accepted by the Met. However, just a month into his training Luke and the other students were told the money to run their apprenticeships had run out.

Luke recalled: "They got rid of every single one of us. It was a real shock, I had my career plan mapped out for some time, then it was suddenly taken away from me. I had to start all over again.

"In a way it was quite exciting, but I just wasn't sure which direction my career was heading which was unsettling. I knew a couple of guys who worked for the local council, and they told me they needed some seasonal workers at Devonshire Park Lawn Tennis Club. I play tennis as well as several other sports so I thought, why not?"

"I ended up spending a couple of enjoyable and interesting years there, then I heard there was a greenkeeper's job going at a local golf club – Willingdon.

"I applied and had an interview with the club's Course Manager Peter Negus. I was honest and admitted greenkeeping hadn't been my original career choice, but I was very keen to learn. He replied that if I put the hours in he would help as much as he could and he's been true to his word – he's been an inspiration.

"In fact, I think he liked that I had a clean slate. He immediately enrolled me on a Level Two at Plumpton College, and I'm now starting the second year of my Level Three Diploma in Golf Course Supervision and Sports Turf Management."

So, as a newcomer to greenkeeping what struck him immediately?

"My first impression was the importance of time management. Devonshire Park is a closed venue for most of the year, so you cut the courts at roughly the pace you want. But at the golf club you start cutting at 6.30am and people are teeing off at 7.30am – the pace of work to keep ahead of golfers was a shock to the system. It was also difficult at first to keep up with the other greenkeepers' speed of work until you get the hang of it a few months in."

Willingdon is an Alister Mackenzie designed downland course, stretching over 110 acres and built on a natural bowl two miles from the coast. It has a chalk base ensuring excellent drainage. The area also boasts the title of the sunniest

place on the mainland UK – so how has Luke made his mark?

"I'm aware of being respectful of the traditions of the industry, but equally I'm happy to question a lot of things. If someone says "it's always been done this way" I may question it and reply "wouldn't this way be better?"

One of Luke's successful initiatives is introducing a club Twitter feed - @willingdongolf.

"The greens chairman wanted a Facebook page but I argued that was the wrong medium – I wanted something immediate and easy to use, and I used a couple of Twitter feeds from prestigious clubs to support my argument. During the winter months I can simply type – "loads of rain overnight but we're open, grab your waterproofs and come for a round of golf." So if other courses in the area are closed and golfers are looking for somewhere to play, they look at our website and see we're open from our Twitter feed – they don't even need to call us. It's great for educating the members and communicating with them too.

"I'm in the perfect team to help me further my career. I'm trying to absorb knowledge from Peter when it comes to downland course management as he's been at Willingdon for a number of years. He's very hands-on; he has to be because there are only four of us. Matt Webb worked for MJ Abbott doing golf course construction and also went through the Ohio State programme,

## PROFILE

**Name:** Luke Turner  
**Born:** Leamington Spa, 4 January 1985  
**Role:** Greenkeeper  
**Handicap:** 28  
**Hobbies:** Surfing, rugby, cycling  
**Favourite Sports Team:** Northampton Saints

ABOVE RIGHT: The finalists analysing the 18th tee at Aldwark Manor



and Tim Collier has lots of experience working at courses across the South East. They all have their own ideas, I listen and learn and chip in when required."

Back to the final. As well as an in depth interview the candidates were asked to report on the compaction and thatch layer on three specific teeing grounds. They also had to come up with a programme of work required to improve them. So how had he emerged as the winner from some genuinely tough competition?

"I rated several aspects of the condition of the tees on a scale of 1 to 5 on colour, vigour, root growth, moisture, damage and so on. But I also looked at other aesthetic touches. I suggested adding a raised sleeper flower bed or some decorative bark or gravel – it doesn't cost much but it makes a big difference on the impression golfers get as they walk to the tee. Simple measures achievable within realistic budgets, and similar to work we did on our course last winter. We aim for uniformity – set a good standard on the first tee and carry that on for 18 holes."

He admits he was ecstatic but

also shocked to have won, and had one immediate concern.

"The logistics started going through my head – was my boss being honest when he said he wouldn't mind me having two months off to go to America?!"

"I can't wait to go, I've never been to the States. The education programme is bound to massively shape my career and I can bring so much knowledge back. Even if some of it doesn't necessarily apply to our little downland course, I'm sure I'll be able to use the knowledge gained to my advantage for the rest of my career. Maybe I'll also be able to play a game of American Football, I play rugby and I think it would be fun to see how much damage I could cause with the helmet and all the padding!"

He's clearly a busy man with work, cycling, surfing, rugby and the gym leaving little spare time, although he's determined to improve his 28 handicap after recently taking up the game. He admits he currently merely tries to thrash the ball as far as he can, leading to a string of lost balls on the club's tough 6th hole. But what's his career ambition?

"I want to be a Course Manager.

I'd love to work on a links course because I more or less grew up on a beach – I love surfing – so maybe a course in Devon or Cornwall. But in the next few years I'd love to work abroad, learn another language and immerse myself in a different culture."

The Met's loss is clearly green-keeping's gain.

ABOVE: The finalists; James Wilkinson, Joshua Thorley, Paul Walsh, Ben Waters, Daniel Hardy. Seated are Sam Evans, Luke Turner and Scott Roberts

BOTTOM RIGHT: The interview panel Sami Strutt, Chris Sealey, Trevor Chard and Bruce Jamieson

BELOW: The finalists and judges relaxed with an evening of bowling after the winner was announced

**"I've never been to the States. The education programme is bound to massively shape my career and I can bring so much knowledge back."**







# Aussie rules

What's it like to be in charge of the golf course on the Marquess of Lansdowne's Estate on Grade One Listed parkland designed by Capability Brown? It's all in a day's work for Jaey Goodchild as Steve Castle discovered

## PROFILE

**Name:** Jaey Goodchild  
**Born:** Brisbane, 5 December 1976  
**Hobbies:** Kayaking, running  
**Favourite Sports Team:** The Wallabys