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Industry future in safe hands

The title of Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year is hard won and rightly so, its presence on a CV carries significant weight if the successful careers of many of the former winners is anything to go by. Luke Turner's achievement in earning this year's award ahead of a very impressive line up of fellow finalists is therefore not to be underestimated. Congratulations to him and all the eight finalists; as one of the judging panel said to me afterwards 'the future of our industry is in safe hands'. Luke has taken a slightly unusual route to finding his career of choice but having done so he has quickly grasped that education is the absolute key to future success. We wish him well on his extremely intensive trip to the University of Massachusetts Turf School in the new year courtesy of Toro.

The runners up, Sam Evans and Scott Roberts, will hopefully now be perusing the enclosed 2014 Continue to Learn at BTME brochure to plan their own prize – an all expenses trip to Harrogate in January. I hope that many of you will take advantage of the superb learning and development opportunities that are taking place at BTME. The programme has been carefully put together following extensive feedback from the membership and genuinely offers something for greenkeepers at all stages of their career. The huge success of the Continue to Learn programme has meant that we are starting to outgrow the facilities at the Harrogate International Centre and are expanding in to the Crown Hotel which is just a short walk away. The centrepiece of the programme will take place at the Crown on Monday 20 January 2014 – The 4th Annual Turf Managers' Conference. An excellent array of speakers including the very popular Professor Karl Danneberger from Ohio State University have been confirmed for what will be an informative, not to be missed event for all turf managers. Don't delay in reserving your place on the

conference, workshops and/or seminars as with all stand space in the exhibition sold out we confidently expect this year's BTME to be a great success.

Last month we were saddened to hear of the untimely passing of an industry stalwart in Keith Kensett who was a great supporter of greenkeepers and the greenkeeping and groundsmanship industries in general. Never short of a strong opinion and generous with both his time and sage advice he will be sadly missed and our sympathies at this time are extended to his wife Jane and two boys Richard and Joe.

October is traditionally the time for BIGGA to crown its National Golf Champion and I am very much looking forward to seeing who comes out on top of the pile at the excellent Frilford Heath Golf Club. I know that Sid Arrowsmith MG and his team have prepared the course beautifully and that a very warm welcome awaits all competitors. May I wish all those looking to take Oly Browning's crown the very best of luck and hope that the generally clement weather that 2013 has enjoyed lasts into October.

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton
Chief Executive, BIGGA

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Aussie rules

What's it like to be in charge of the golf course on the Marquess of Landsdowne'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: skydiving, fishing
Favourite Sports Team: The Wallabies

ROWWOOD

Arriving at the Rowwood Estate, which lies a few miles west of Chippenham in Wiltshire, felt like accidentally stumbling across the set of 'Bourne Abbey' - and I half expected to be welcomed for afternoon tea by the Marquess.

The spectacular 6000 hectare site boasts a famous Rhododendron Walk, a secret garden and an 18th century House. The property is Charles Mason's 17th Century 'Favourite', the 9th Marquess of Landsdowne - Rowwood has been the family's home for nearly 200 years. But my visit concentrated on the serious work that's been taking place on the superb golf course.

Byshire-born Jaey Goodchild is Head Greenkeeper at Rowwood Golf and Country Club which covers around 200 acres of the huge site. It's 18 holes of glorious parkland and a former Challenge Tour venue which measures an intimidating 7,300 yards from the blue tees and 6,675 from the white.

Jaey said: "It's a pleasure to work here - just what you would expect one of Capability Brown's works to be. But it's very much a working Estate - there's a greenkeeper and a seasonal site supervisor. In fact the wooden posts for our year-long signs have been secured from seasoned oak felled on site."

Jaey came to Rowwood in 2011, and his immediate aim was to improve the 18th green which at that time had a high thatch content and high incidence of disease. Where the issue used to be, the greens suffered major put-ups due to the lack of surface mobility. The weed was weak with minimal rooting and they would spend hours repairing the greens after aeration.

"My first big challenge was convincing the proprietor, committee and members of the importance of aeration and finding a way to fit it in to the schedule. This was difficult in the first year because I started in March when the end of the year's business had already been booked. So you are had to be a real 'babe' and offer a approach to keep things ticking over with plenty of aeration and light topdressing."

"The schedule now allows using operations per year plus multiple aeration sub-operations during the year. Last year we aered the greens 15 times and almost follow up with a light topdress, balancing and rolling to get the surface back on track. "We're giving the roots the opportunity to develop, bind the soil together and strengthen it. Now we're every confidence we'll have very put-up when we aerate."

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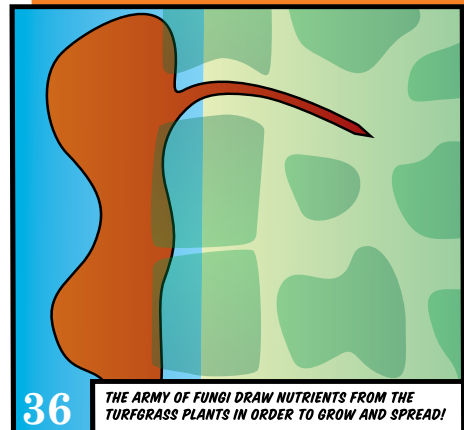


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THE ARMY OF FUNGI DRAW NUTRIENTS FROM THE TURFGRASS PLANTS IN ORDER TO GROW AND SPREAD!



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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

Students shine in Toro final

Warmest congratulations to Luke Turner on winning the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2013.

I'm fortunate enough to have been Chairman during two of these competitions, and I can't stress enough my pride in seeing enthusiastic, knowledgeable and personable young greenkeepers making their way in the industry.

I'd also like to extend my congratulations to all of the eight finalists.

Just reaching the last stage is a superb achievement which will really stand out on their CVs and set them up perfectly for success in the future.

Also, I know from speaking to them that they relished the opportunity not only to network and exchange greenkeeping advice and opinions with the other finalists, who work at a range of a courses the length and breadth of the UK, but also to visit BIGGA House.

For most of them it was their first visit and I'm delighted to say I heard several comments mentioning how welcoming our staff were and the generally positive atmosphere, which contributed to everyone socialising together in the evening.

This sort of camaraderie, shared knowledge and genuine friendship is unheard of in some industries and we should count ourselves lucky to be involved in it.

I would like to publicly thank Toro for their superb continued support of the competition, and also Sami, Rachael and Stuart from HQ who have put so much time and effort into the successful organisation of it.

I'm now hugely looking forward to the BIGGA National Tournament at Frilford Heath Golf Club.

We've increased the publicity around this event, dropped the entry price and increased the prize fund thanks to the generous sponsorship from Charterhouse and Kubota and I'm pleased to say this has led to a rise in the number of entrants.

I look forward to meeting Sid Arrowsmith MG, his team and all of the members who are looking forward to pitting their wits against this fine course.

Hopefully I will avoid becoming marooned in any bunkers as I did during



"This camaraderie, shared knowledge and genuine friendship is unheard of in some industries"

last year's event at Irvine Bogside!

That couple of days during last year's National Championship in Scotland stood out for me last year and one major reason was the weather.

It felt as if summer finally arrived for a couple of days in Ayrshire in October.

Thankfully, this year we've had something approaching a good, dry summer.

Last year featured a depressing number of cancellations of golf days and other events organised by BIGGA members.

I know many of you go well out of your way to arrange these events, and I'm delighted to hear that this summer so many of them have been great successes played in glorious weather.

Please support these events if you

possibly can – keep an eye on the new-look Around the Green plus Section Facebook pages etc for details.

My focus hasn't changed during my tenure as Chairman – keep moving BIGGA towards becoming a must-join Association.

I've mentioned the benefits of joining so many times during my tenure as Chairman I must be starting to sound like a broken record but I make no apology for that – this was our focus when I took over and it remains our focus now.

Tony

Contact details

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



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CHRIS IS NEW HEAD AT PRESTWICH

Chris Harding is the new Head Greenkeeper at Prestwich Golf Club in Greater Manchester.

Previously a Deputy at Dunham Forest Golf & Country Club in nearby Eccles, Chris has joined the 18-hole parkland course with the intention of making his mark in his first Head Greenkeeper role.

He said: "It's a challenge and it's one I'm

really looking forward to. My first focus is to improve the greens because they have suffered with thatch here.

"It's a very pretty course, we've recently had a few new members join too so I want to help reach its full potential."

Chris currently has just one colleague on the greenkeeping staff although they are currently interviewing for a third member of staff.

KEITH KENSETT

Everyone at BIGGA was shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Keith Kensett of R&K Kensett in September.

One of his many good friends in the industry is Peter Bradburn, an expert in the start up of golf course businesses in the UK and Mediterranean for the past 20 years.

He said: "It is unavoidable that in a small industry such as the turf and golf sector we are all going to lose acquaintances and colleagues over the passing of the years. But the unexpected news about Keith will create a void in many people's lives.

"I was first introduced to Keith over 15 years ago, in another country on another grow-in but I was struck by his dedication and tenacity in getting the message across, his way was the right way of doing renovation maintenance and that was that!

"In the intervening years, I have listened to, discussed with and learnt from him on a whole range of subjects to do with growing good grass. It was not unusual to receive a call from him late in the evening as he returned from a job and would want to bounce an idea off you. That was the kind of guy he was and you just loved him for it: inquisitorial, inventive and resourceful.

"Knowing Keith, you inevitably got to know the his family and the extended clan that is R&K Kensett.

"My heartfelt sympathies and condolences go out to Jane and the boys during this time and the team at the family business.

"It is an overused epithet at a time like this but he shall be sadly missed in the industry; rest in peace old fella."



SWEET CHESTNUT BLIGHT UNCENSORED

Most people are now aware of the story so far surrounding the first UK finding of *Cryphonectria parasitica* (blight) in November 2011 at a farm in Warwickshire on sweet chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*) planted in 2007 and sourced from a nursery in France.

However, tucked away in one of the mammoth reports regularly produced by the UK plant health authorities (this one by Food and Environment Research Agency [FERA]*) is an account which reveals a considerably more complex and higher risk situation.

First infected trees in the UK were indeed found in November 2011 at the unnamed Warwickshire farm, but on trees planted in different time frames and on different sites, having arrived at the farm along different distribution chains.

Eighty of the infected trees were planted in 2007, having been sourced from the French nursery, but an additional ten infected trees on a different site were planted later. These were purchased from a nursery in Devon which had sourced its stock from the same French nursery.

By the time the UK plant health authorities started to investigate, the nursery in Devon had sold all of its sweet chestnut stock. A Forestry Commission (FC) map reproduced in the FERA report shows how some 90 consignments of potentially infected trees were dispatched to sites across the UK.

The report says subsequent trace back through the records of both the French nursery and the UK supplier, by the Plant Health and Seed Inspectorate (PHSI) and the FC, led to the identification (as of April 2013) of nine further UK sites with infected trees.

FC focused on distribution of consignments of more than 10 trees leading to 30+ infected trees being found on an East Sussex farm and two infected trees at a private residence in Herefordshire. By May 2013 PHSI had additionally traced infected trees to seven private residences and one additional nursery mostly in southwest England.

The risk of sweet chestnut blight establishing in the UK does not end there. FERA says the vast majority of trees supplied by the French nursery into the UK were sold mail order by several different distributors, and that customer lists for deliveries made prior to 2011 are difficult to obtain.

No wonder the government has rushed to ban imports of sweet chestnut from known blight infected areas in Europe. If it all goes pear shaped then the government will no doubt claim it took appropriate and timely action. However, with potentially infected trees at apparently still unknown locations in the UK it could already be too late.

*FERA (2013) Rapid pest risk analysis for *Cryphonectria parasitica*. 23 pages. 20 May 2013.

Dr Terry Mabbett



BIGGA SEMINARS A HIT AT SUNNY SALTEX

It was standing room only during our education programme at this year's SALTEX.

We ran a whole day of free education presentations during the Wednesday of the show at a sweltering Windsor Racecourse – with CPD credits available for those attending.

Again we attracted experts from across the industry. Andy Wood, Course Manager at Robin Hood Golf Club, presented on greens drainage and was followed by Stuart Yarwood's seminar on managing and constructing bunkers on limited budgets. Stuart is Course Manager at Lymm Golf Club.

The day's final seminar was from Dr Simon Watson – Syngenta Turf and Landscape Technical Manager – on winter disease on golf greens. Dr Watson is pictured above.



GREAT AYTON WINS MCMILLAN TROPHY

Congratulations to Craig Ayton, greenkeeper at Foxhills Club & Resort, who won the Surrey Section McMillan Trophy held at Sunningdale.

Craig scored 40 points to win the competition, which was held on the New Course. Here he is being presented with the Trophy by Jack and Rita McMillan.



MORE BUZZ OVER OPERATION POLLINATOR

Golf courses provide an essential haven for some of the UK's most endangered insect species, and potentially hold the key to restoring populations of essential pollinating insects.

A new study, to provide a scientific approach to pollinator conservation efforts on golf courses, has revealed some fascinating finds - including the extremely rare bumblebee, *Bombus ruderalis*, on Operation Pollinator habitat at Rutland County Golf Club in Leicestershire.

The extensive study, by leading independent entomologist and ecologist, Mike Edwards, on some of the golf courses involved in the Syngenta Operation Pollinator initiative across the UK, has catalogued the diversity of insect species present, and the habitat potential to increase both the numbers and range of insect species.

Commenting on the study's results, Mr Edwards highlighted that whilst some individual golf clubs already have areas of outstanding interest for wildlife, there remains a large number where the potential to make a real contribution had yet to be realised.

"Many of the older clubs have areas that reflect the sort of countryside that was present before modern agricultural production became established.

All too often, however, these areas have sadly been un-managed and of limited ecological value," he said. "Providing expertise and support in restoring such flower-rich grasslands with the Syngenta Operation Pollinator initiative can make a major contribution to the conservation of our flora and fauna."

The discovery of *Bombus ruderalis* on Rutland County Golf Club was an especially exciting discovery, since the species was considered on the verge of extinction just a few years ago - with no records of the bumblebee in the area since 1994. However, Mr Edwards recalled that, when Operation Pollinator habitat had been created on farmland over the past decade, *B. ruderalis* was again rediscovered from the point of extinction, and is successfully on the way back to recovering its former distribution.

Rutland County Golf Club Head Greenkeeper Jamie Goddard believes the colour and wildlife in the club's new Operation Pollinator wildflower areas will enhance the whole experience of playing the course for golfers, as well as providing a valuable habitat for essential pollinating insects.

"The fact that we already have the incredible find of the rare *Bombus ruderalis* on the course highlights the ecological value of golf courses. Now we can actively

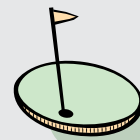
manage areas to make them even more attractive for bumblebees and other pollinators, alongside a great course for players, makes it even more exciting."

One of the key aspects of successfully restoring or establishing wildflowers in areas of golf course rough is the removal of competitive coarse grasses that dominate thick, dense rough, according to Syngenta Technical Manager, Dr Simon Watson. Autumn applications of the selective herbicide, Rescue, offer an ideal opportunity to clean up and thin out invasive grass species such as ryegrass.

Rescue should be applied whilst the coarse grasses are actively growing, to aid uptake of the systemic herbicide. Dr Watson added: "Extensive research and user trials have shown high levels of kill can be achieved with well-timed autumn applications."

"The added advantage of autumn application is that the plants are naturally senescing, which limits the visual impact of treatments."

Rescue is approved for use at the rate of 1.0 l/ha in the autumn, with optimum results achieved using the Syngenta XC Foliar Nozzle to minimise the effect of undulations or variable vegetation height and to achieve all round coverage of the leaf; applying in a water volume of 250-300 l/ha.



CGCS SALARY INCREASE

Based on the Annual RPI figure for August 2013 the Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) have recommended an increase of 2.6% in the level of recommended Salary Scale for Greenkeepers. The Committee are fully aware that 2013 has been another difficult year for club finances, but believe it is essential to at least maintain parity with the Government RPI figure in order to retain current staff and attract new recruits.

The CGCS recommended rates of pay package are guidelines only and the Committee is aware that they are for negotiation only and that some staff will earn substantially more, while others will earn less, depending on the golf club.

The CGCS wants to emphasise that these scales are for 'packages' and should be treated as such, whilst taking into account individual and team performance and any increase in responsibility and/or qualification.

The CGCS, once again, wishes to remind clubs that they must be aware of any changes to pension or employment legislation.

Regional variations will be published and downloadable in PDF format from the BIGGA and GCMA websites from late October onwards.