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Memories are made of this

As my body and voice recover from a truly hectic BTME 2014 I believe we can look back with considerable satisfaction on a job well done.

Many exhibitors are calling BTME 2014 the 'best ever' but just as importantly feedback from attendees is hugely positive. Record pre-registration numbers, nearly 9,000 total attendees and a record number of delegates at the Continue to Learn programme show that the Exhibition is still a vital part of the turf industry calendar.

The memories are many but our inaugural BIGGA Welcome Celebration held in the historic Royal Hall is uppermost among them, and I hope this is something we can repeat in future years. The evening began with a bang when Alan Prickett of Ransomes Jacobsen donated a very generous £2,500 to the BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund. It concluded with the legendary Peter Alliss regaling the several hundred attendees with his 'special connection' with greenkeeping during his epic career. The launch of the Benevolent Fund fulfilled a long held ambition for the Association and I am thrilled that we are now in a position to support those members that fall upon hard times.

It was also great to launch our new online member benefit offering – BIGGA Xtra Benefits – which aims to give our members even further value for money from their membership.

The Celebration event was the ideal occasion to pay tribute to the tireless work Tony Smith undertook in his 18 months as Chairman, it has been a privilege to witness his passion for greenkeeping and the Association.

Whilst I know he intends to remain active on the Board I am still delighted to be able to wish him well in his 'retirement'.

I am thoroughly looking forward to working with the new Chairman Chris Sealey through 2014 as the Association continues in its

ambitions to raise the profile and appreciation of greenkeeping.

Sadly the roaring success of BTME did come at a price. A number of companies attempted to hijack the event and profit from the gathering of turf industry professionals without formally exhibiting. I am pleased to say that increasingly the visitor is recognising that this behaviour undermines the event and all it stands for.

My thanks go to the 123 exhibiting companies who committed to be a part of BTME in 2014. Thanks are also due to all those who delivered education during the Continue to Learn programme, including many BIGGA members. Watch this space for details of how you can have your say in determining next year's content.

I make no apologies for dedicating so much of this issue (pages 17-45) to BTME coverage - there is much to report.

Away from BTME, 2014 has begun with monsoon conditions affecting large parts of the country.

Strong and innovative forward planning has never been more vital, on pages 56-60 read how Philip Taylor at Alwoodley has combined two detailed five year plans to ensure this gem of a course remains one of England's finest inland courses.

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton, Chief Executive

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Lone working controlling the risk

Recent events have highlighted the dangers of lone working in greenkeeping – and the turf management industry as a whole. What lessons can we learn? What can be done to reduce lone working risks? What does the law require and what simple, practical controls can be introduced? Tom Searle from Britrisk Safety shared his views with GI

Firstly let's be clear about a few key facts - lone workers are those who work alone without close or direct supervision, even though others may be present in the area.

There can be little doubt that whatever risks are present by virtue of the actual task being undertaken, they automatically become far more acute due to the simple fact that the person concerned is alone or isolated in this or that an issue that should be seen as a high priority area.

What if it is not illegal to work alone, the law does require employers to carry out a risk assessment and take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. The assessment must include instruction, training and supervision. There is also a requirement to consult workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them.

The assessment may include:

- An assessment that special tasks may be too hazardous to be carried out by an inexperienced worker and that as a consequence at least two people must be present at all times.
- If this is not practicable, that task is deferred until more staff are present or when on weekend duty, avoiding using machinery for potentially dangerous complex tasks (such as snowing steep banks).
- How the task and lone worker will be supervised.
- The means by which assistance and support is delivered should the need arise.
- The arrangements for emergency response and how this will be delivered.
- Whether the worker concerned has any personal health risk factors, such as a latent condition or status that may adversely raise their personal risk level.
- Whether there are any reasons to think that there may be a need for risk of attack or assault – such as cash carrying, or being called out at night to investigate a premises.
- Reference to monitoring arrangements as applied below.
- Monitoring arrangements are a critical aspect of supervision. This may include:
 - Supervisors periodically visiting and observing the place of work
- The use of a manually operated Personal Alarm Button (PAB) that transmits an immediate automatic warning if activated by the lone worker.
- Devices are available that automatically trigger a 999 alarm if someone indicates that they are in trouble suddenly immediately.
- The implementation of a robust system that ensure the person concerned has remained home or to have by a certain time.
- A procedure is required to ensure clarity of vision and full understanding by all concerned of what needs to be done. The 3 Ws apply: WHO WHAT WHY? WHO? WHO? WHO? WHY? WHO? WHO? WHY? WHY?
- The main vehicle for this is the risk and process specific arrangements that must accompany the Health & Safety Policy.
- It is important that procedures are kept short and simple. Lengthy, wadded procedures are not easy to read, if they are not read, they are not applied and procedures that are

not applied result in accidents.

Emergency procedures are critical if an accident has occurred. The recipient of the distress call needs to know clear essential facts. The person placing the call not only needs to be aware of the relevant exact location of the accident. By virtue of the lone working scenario, this may not always be immediately obvious and critical line can be lost if the emergency services are not directed specifically to the scene via the most efficient and accessible route.

A method statement may be appropriate – a short document accompanying the risk assessment that describes the main aspects of the task and the sequence of operations, including how the process of supervision will work.

So having identified the main elements of risk control, how can we pull together the risk communication process and ensure that everyone involved in the task is clear on their role in identifying risk, assessing it and the means for its primary or 'red-line' elimination? It operates at the level of the construction industry.

Put the kettle on, pull up a few chairs around the table and let's talk through the main risks and controls. The older, more experienced hands should be initiating discussion and reporting the young guns, particularly against the workers and other youngsters with less experience than what's written on the subject, don't forget about the main risks and controls surrounding Young Person's One again this should not be negligible as you should be considering on the many occasions that taking one topic per week and spending 15 minutes on it throughout a three-week period is a great investment in everyone's safety and well-being.

Our Frank 'Gully' Wins, use of the Dynamic Risk Assessment process that is a great complement to existing risk assessment and allows the employer to own legal duties to the care of themselves and others.

Dynamic risk assessment may be defined as a continuous process of identifying risk, assessing it and eliminating such risk. It operates at the level of the construction industry.

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What does my training and experience say about this job? Is this task too heavy? I don't see to be able? How could I ensure myself being able? Finally, for further help on Lone Working take advantage of the best source of free health and safety guidance and support in the world. The HSE website contains a wealth of daily illustrated information, and it's free! Here is the link: www.hse.gov.uk/pubs/psl/psl07.pdf



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British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association



New BIGGA Chairman

Chris Sealey became the new Association Chairman at BTME 2014. Steve Castle met Chris to find out about his greenkeeping philosophy, the major construction project he's overseen at Chippenham Golf Club and his love of Bristol Rovers FC

BIGGA's new Chairman was typically candid when I asked him if, as a teenage apprentice greenkeeper at a parkland course near Bath in the seventies, he ever envisaged becoming an Association Chairman.

"I never dreamt I would. I was on the South West Section committee, then a vacancy came up on the Regional Board, then I was asked to be Regional Chairman, then a vacancy came up on the National Board when Jeff Mills left as South West & South Wales representative.

"I always thought that would be as far as I would go, just getting on to the National Board and representing the Region was a great honour, and I was happy to be involved with decision making and the future of the Association.

"Then Tony asked me to be Chairman. I don't like the word gobsmacked, but I can't think of any other way to put it, and I was also really touched to be asked.

"I never set out with the goal of being Chairman."

He officially took the reins during BIGGA's AGM at BTME.

He said: "Undoubtedly the highlight of my career is being asked to be chairman.

"It's a fabulous honour and I look forward to representing the Association with distinction."

Chris has already been heavily involved in various events as a National Board of Management member including interviewing Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year candidates and attending numerous events.

But what else stands out during his many years of involvement with the Association?

"BIGGA has given me so many chances to develop myself profes-

sionally and personally.

"I wouldn't otherwise have had these opportunities and I think that's a very important message for anyone thinking of joining the Association, or any members who have not yet made the most of their membership.

"I've volunteered at the 2007 US Open at Oakmont Country Club, the 2008 Ryder Cup at Valhalla, the 2010 Ryder Cup at Celtic Manor and five Open Championships.

"The main thing I'm looking forward to during my time as Chairman is simple – meeting people.

"All the other things you get to do are lovely, but the people are the biggest strength of the Association.

"The support network amongst greenkeepers is superb and there can't be many industries where relationships are so strong and enduring."

Chris's greenkeeping career began purely by chance in 1970.

He said: "I started off caddying for my dad's friend at a nearby club and he told me they were looking for an apprentice.

"I thought it seemed a good way of earning a living."

So the enthusiastic, sports-mad youngster was offered a three-year apprenticeship at Lansdown Golf Club, a parkland course and private members' club on the outskirts of Bath.

He ended up staying there for 12 years, steadily rising through the ranks to Deputy, before moving to Salford Golf Club in Bristol, a similar parkland venue.

He enjoyed eight years at Salford before clinching his first Course Manager's position at Chippenham in 1990, and much to his amazement "they've somehow put up with me for nearly a quarter of a century!"

The Bristolian's first involvement



PROFILE

Name: Chris Sealey
Born: Bristol, 24 April 1955
Role: Course Manager
Handicap: 18
Favourite Sports Team: Bristol Rovers
Hobbies: Playing golf, watching sport mainly football, golf and cricket



in the Association was playing in golf days organised by BIGGA in the eighties.

But he then recognised the need to increase his range of skills so he enrolled on the first Management courses which BIGGA ran at Aldwark Manor adjacent to what is now BIGGA House – just as his predecessor Tony Smith did.

He said: “When I became a Course Manager I knew I needed some extra skills in addition to those I’d already gained as a Deputy so I completed four or five of the week-long management courses and that was very useful for me.

“It was the first real formal education on offer to greenkeepers and I knew I had to take advantage of it.”

He then joined the South West committee around 1995 before becoming Section Chairman.

I travelled south to see for myself the work that Chris and his team have put in at Chippenham – a Wiltshire town which lies between Swindon and Bristol – and discovered a frenzy of activity probably unparalleled in the club’s history.

Firstly, a new clubhouse with much improved facilities and extended offices opened in December 2012.

Next, it was decided that time had caught up with the course. Although various modifications and improvements had been made to the course over the years, it was now too short for the modern day game. It is currently 5,720 yards off the white tees, and after the alterations it will be close to 6,300 off the whites.

Chris explained: “We did a deal with a local farmer to rent land at the back of the course which will house four new holes, and we’re combining four of the existing holes to make two long par fives.

“It’s the first time I’ve been involved in such a major project. When I was at Saltford we built individual greens and renovated tees but it’s the first time I’ve been part of the build and grow-in processes on this scale, so it’s been a real learning curve for me.

“It was meant to be a 12 or 14 week project, so we pencilled it in for when the weather should have been at its best by starting in April 2012.

“It was a nice idea in principle! Of course, as soon as we started, in common with most of the UK it didn’t stop raining all summer so that meant a few delays.

“But I learnt that you have to be flexible.

“Obviously I know the weather always has a huge effect on golf

courses, but this is particularly true when you’re working on a major construction project.

“Also, so many unforeseen things can throw a spanner in the works.

“For example, on a Bank Holiday Monday we hit an old water pipe potentially wiping out the water supply to several nearby villages.

“I’ve been lucky enough to be involved at Chippenham at probably the most exciting time in its history, and this last couple of years has been the highlight of my professional career.

“The whole team, which currently numbers four after the recent departure of Kyle Knight to Bowood to further his career, have worked incredibly hard, ably assisted by the expertise of Mike Smith from 1st Golf and golf course architect Matt Maryon.”

The weather is still posing problems – Chippenham had 70mm of rainfall in the first nine days of 2014 – but Chris is convinced they are on track for the new holes to be in play in early summer.

So what’s his agronomic philosophy?

“Conservative, lean and mean”, he replied. “I don’t overwater or overfeed.

“I do as much aeration and topdressing as I possibly can, but I don’t take it to the degree of starving the greens and trying to get fescue.

“We’re on a clay site, the greens will always have poa in them so I manage them as poa greens; they are a poa/bent mix.

“The new greens have still got a lot of fescue in them at the moment.

“So the biggest challenge now is to get the clay push up greens and the new sand greens to perform as close to each other as we possibly can.”

It was clear from the banter in the car park I saw at Chippenham that Chris enjoys excellent rapport with members, and one of his initiatives was the Greenkeeper’s Revenge charity day.

In a format which will be recognised by mischievous greenkeepers across the land, the team deliberately used a range of tricks to make the course devilishly difficult.

They rolled some of the greens ten times achieving up to 19 on the stimpmeter, cut holes on collars so members had to putt off the green and placed tee markers behind trees amongst other fiendish ploys.

It was all in aid of Help for Heroes and £1,000 was raised, as Chris said “there were some interesting scores!”

The new section of the course under construction last summer



He lives with Pat, his partner of some 20 years.

In his spare time he follows the usually grim fortunes of Bristol Rovers FC (which he described as his “main handicap”) and he’s also very keen on playing and watching golf.

Another of his passions is cricket, and he’s recently been trying (and failing to) dodge abuse over England’s dismal Ashes showing.

He laughed: “I’m surrounded by Aussies.

“Jaey Goodchild at Bowood just sat there grinning through the last Section meeting, and our General Manager at Chippenham Leighton Walker has been giving me plenty of stick too.”

A hugely successful BTME 2014 has certainly got Chris’s period as Association Chairman off to a flying start. He concluded:

“BIGGA is going from strength to strength and this was evident at BTME. I am greatly looking forward to the next 12 months.”

Contact Chris

Chris is keen to hear from members on any subject. You can email him at coursemanager@chippenhamgolf@btconnect.com or call him on 07817 294632.



Leighton Walker, General Manager at Chippenham, had this to say following Chris's appointment: "Chippenham Golf Club and its members are extremely proud that Chris Sealey will be Chairman of BIGGA in 2014. It's a great honour for Chris and I know the members at Chippenham join me in congratulating him. It's fair reward for the hard work and commitment that Chris has shown to both the Club and the industry as a whole and we're sure he will make a success of his time in office."

TEAM PHOTO (LEFT TO RIGHT): Kyle Knight, Seb Cavilla, Chris Sealey, Chris Bell, Steve Randall

GI NEWSDESK

The latest news from around the globe



VOLUNTEER AT THE BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BIGGA is again offering a superb opportunity to increase your experience by volunteering at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth in May, assisting Kenny Mackay and the home greenkeeping team between May 20-25.

You can volunteer for one day or for the full period. The schedule will involve bunker raking duties on the last two days, possibly all four days, and early morning duties on the official Practice and Pro-Am Days on May 20 and May 21.

This is a great chance to see at

close hand the preparation for the European Tour flagship event on the West Course at Wentworth.

For more information please contact, Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk, also on 07841 948410 or 01737 819343.



SOUTH EAST GOLF DAY

The South East Region's Annual Golf and Dinner Day will be held on Friday 7 March at Walton Heath Golf Club on the Old Course. This is one of the industry's longest running events and is always well supported.

For more details please contact Clive Osgood, all details for Clive can be found in the BMW PGA story on this page.

MAC ON THE MOVE



David MacIndoe, who featured in GI last September working as a grow-in consultant on Belarus's first ever golf course, has made a move to warmer climes in Portugal.

David, left, a former Course Manager who is now a Lawn & Sportsground Consultant, has been appointed Grow-in Manager on the new David McLay Kidd course at Comporto Dunes near Lisbon. He starts imminently on an eight-month contract.

SCOTTISH CONFERENCE

The Scottish Conference will be held on 4 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

Gordon Moir and Paul Miller will be providing a talk on the "Story of Kingarrock", a course in Fife.

Alistair Eccles will then pose a question for delegates to ponder "to oversee or not to oversee".

We are delighted that Cameron McMillan will be coming up for the day to dispel the mystique surrounding Queenwood Golf Club in Surrey.

During lunch, Stuart Green from BIGGA's L&D Team will be available to discuss CPD and to provide a presentation to members extolling the virtue of full participation in the scheme.

After lunch our chairman Andy

O'Hara will provide his address that this year will include Chris Sealey, National Chairman, providing his thoughts.

Mark Hunt will then take us through a number of factors that are affecting course maintenance with a distinctive look at changes to our climate, something that may affect your course!

Finally, we have Steve Chappell from Gleneagles providing us with a background on the preparation of The Ryder Cup 2014.

Six CPD credits are available to anyone attending the conference - further details are available from the BIGGA website, including the booking form.

Alternatively email John Young: johnyoung@bigga.co.uk