

# BTME 2014 A BIG HIT FOR HIGHSPEED GROUP

BTME 2014 was a successful show for Highspeed Group, particularly for their class leading ClearWater washpad water recycling system.

Director David Mears said: "This was an important show for us and we were determined to make BTME 2014 our best yet. We were not disappointed as the footfall, orders and enquiries exceeded anything seen in the last four years! Confidence is certainly returning."

Worthy of particular mention was the first ClearWater sale confirmed at the show from a German Golf Club. Chris Knowles, course manager of Golf Club Hanau-Wilhelmsbad near Frankfurt, placed an order with Highspeed Group Ltd on their stand. He'd met David Mears at BTME in 2012 and, having checked out a number of washpad solutions, believed the ClearWater recycling system to be the ideal solution to meet the demands of anti-pollution legislation and be future-proof.

Chris said: "The system



we had was inadequate and I wanted to challenge the negative environmental press golf clubs can get in Germany anyway, by showing that we can prevent pollution.

"I was attracted to the ClearWater system as soon as

I saw it because, being below ground, it is enclosed and easy on the eye."

Chris needed to be sure that the system was compliant with EU and German legislation. The UK manufactured system has undergone exhaustive

testing and meets the necessary requirements of EN858 (equivalent to DIN 1999-100 in Germany). Highspeed passed official certification to Chris by way of proof and Chris consequently signed the deal.



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## GOLF INDUSTRY FIRST AT BTME

Visitors to BTME were the first in the UK to see Toro's all-new Sand Pro 2040Z zero-turn bunker rake.

With the SP2040Z, Toro brings zero-turn technology to bunker maintenance for the first time. The result is a mechanical groomer delivering unmatched maneuverability and productivity – and, as a result, one of the most laborious jobs on the golf course just got a whole lot easier.

The machine boasts a brand new 'flex' raking system with a patent-pending 'lift in turn' feature that enables operators to make the tightest of turns in bunkers without leaving unraked 'teardrops' or tyre marks, to produce picture-perfect surfaces even in small, tight bunkers and those with sloped walls. Toro also says it won't tear bunker liners or turf on bunker edges.

Lely also chose BTME to showcase its latest Toro PREMA machine – a Reelmaster 5410.

This showed the thousands of visitors the quality of machines available for clubs wanting to buy quality, pre-owned Toro turf machinery that's technically as good as new, at affordable prices, under its new PREMA scheme.



## WORLD FIRST FOR TRIMAX AT BTME

Trimax Mowing Systems' brand new golf and turf mower 'snake' was unveiled for the first time anywhere in the world at BTME 2014.

Snake has been meticulously designed from the ground up, drawing on 30 years of innovation, refined engineering practice and customer insight.

The 3.2m wide trailed rotary mower has been specifically designed for sports turf applications where a high standard of presentation, safety, durability and low downtime are essential. Like its namesake, when it's on the move, it is surprisingly quiet, allowing mowing to take place around sensitive areas without causing disturbance.

Snake looks like a smaller version of the popular

Pegasus mower, and has several innovative features integrated into its design. The clever 'kerb jump' feature allows the decks to be lifted with the blades still engaged to go over kerbs, paths and other obstacles without stopping the PTO. This prevents wear and ensures smoother operation whilst mowing. It is also useful for turning at the end of a mowing run.

Snake has been designed to require little maintenance. Sealed spindles mean there are fewer points to grease. All grease points are easily accessible to ensure any maintenance time is kept to a minimum.

It is equipped with a new sealed PTO system which seals the moving parts from dust and other debris. This allows for

up to 50 hour greasing intervals, dependent on the environment it operates in.

To complete the package, Snake comes with a market-leading three year warranty. This true and trusted warranty, which is also offered on many other Trimax models, demonstrates the company's total confidence in its build quality and engineering.

Trimax Customer Relationship Manager Michael Quinn said: "The Trimax team continues to prioritise the customer. Because our mowers contribute to their livelihoods, we understand that when a mower is not in operation, our first priority to get them running again. Trimax operators are part of the family and with family, you support each other."



## RT LAUNCH NEW RANGE

The biggest, brightest and most informative brochure Rigby Taylor has ever produced was showcased for the first time at BTME 2014.

This 136 page brochure has been specially designed to incorporate user friendly features that allows the reader to easily and quickly navigate through the product sections. Each section is preceded by a double page spread range-selector, which shows 'at-a-glance' the products features.

Also included for the first time are attractive and highly visual icons that depict each product's key characteristics.

The new brochure includes the company's extensive 'R' range of grass seed; including cultivars exclusive to Rigby Taylor and extended wild flower mixtures.

In addition the new wetting agent Propel-R, polymer coated fertilizers PolyPro and ConVert and, the latest addition to the Microlite range, TE-Bag.



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# HARD ROAD TO HARROGATE



**One of the undoubted highlights of BTME was the arrival of the ‘Mad Mower Men’ completing their amazing 200-mile trek from Ransomes Jacobsen’s Ipswich HQ to Harrogate pushing Ransomes hand mowers.**

Their incredibly tough week-long charity challenge – all in aid of Scotty’s Little Soldiers – came to an end on the Tuesday of BTME as they triumphantly walked through the entrance at the Harrogate International Centre.

They were then welcomed with applause and party poppers into Hall M with their trusty mowers which they had pushed across several counties in heavy rain, hail and freezing fog.

The fearless foursome were Mark Hillaby, Head Greenkeeper at Macclesfield Golf Club, Tim Johnson, Senior Greenkeeper at Wilmslow Golf Club, Gordon Irvine MG Golf Course Consultant and David Steventon, a former greenkeeper who is now director of Prestige Garden Services. David’s wife Amy and Tim’s dad Stuart also formed part of the support crew.

David said: “I went into it with no training whatsoever, and after the very first day my feet were in bits so I switched to some proper running trainers. They helped but my feet were still held together with blister plasters. It was agony at times but

you just get your head down, take some painkillers and get on with it.

“Walking along we had a lot of cars and lorries beeping their horns encouraging us. Now and again we’d be walking through the middle of nowhere and a car would slow down behind us and stick a tenner at us, that sort of thing really kept us going.

“The first few days were very rural and quiet, it was quite eerie at times pushing this mower along in the middle of nowhere, so it was good to get to busier towns and cities towards the end.

Tim said: “The penultimate day was the worst. The entire route had been pretty flat until we hit this hill near Leeds Golf Club. I could feel my heels and my shins going. We had the odd puncture but other than that it went well – we learnt a lot from our mistakes on last year’s walk. The team spirit was fantastic.”

Gordon added: “My biggest concern was the safety side of it, you’re walking along the road itself at times but we made sure we were very visible. Also the weather was a constant worry – I did last year’s walk in the summer and obviously it was harder this time round. We had some hail and heavy rain plus freezing fog but you get through it.

“We all knew each other at the start but you end up being very close friends at the end, that’s what makes it so special. We talked

greenkeeping as well as lots of other subjects for many hours! I spent a lot of time talking to Tim, he's been involved with lots of the education BIGGA have organised, and it was great for me to hear a young guy's perspective on the industry as we walked round."

Peter Driver, PR and Media Communications Manager at Ransomes Jacobsen commented: "The team were so keen to start the walk that they left our head office at around 4pm on the Tuesday evening, a week ahead of the show. On route they were interviewed by BBC Radio Suffolk on three occasions and also by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and BBC Radio Lincolnshire. On my way up to Harrogate, on the Saturday prior to the show, I even managed to find them on a B-road somewhere north of Sleaford in the wilds of Lincolnshire to offer encouragement and take a few photos.

"What is really amazing is just how robust the Super Certes mowers proved to be. Tim's mower was the same one used for last year's walk from Liverpool to Hull, so it's now done over 400 road miles without any mechanical modifications whatsoever.

"The team has done a tremendous job, all in aid of a very worthy cause and everyone at Ransomes Jacobsen congratulates them on their achievement. Well done Tim, Mark, Gordon and David and to your support team, who were vital to the success of the walk."

Thanks to everyone who has donated money so far and all the sponsors: Ransomes Jacobsen, Campey Turf Care Systems, Bernhard & Co, Symbio, Cheshire Turf Machinery, Rigby Taylor, Sports Metals, Rushserve, Banner Building & Plumbing Service, Prestige Garden Services, Wilmslow Golf Club and Gordon Irvine MG Greenkeeping Consultancy.

Scotty's Little Soldiers is dedicated to supporting the children of men and women killed in action while serving with the British Armed Forces. You can still donate at [www.bmycharity.com/HardRoadToHarrogate](http://www.bmycharity.com/HardRoadToHarrogate) and watch this space for the lads' next challenge, which Tim's dad Stuart says will be the biggest yet!

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# Extreme winters at Losby Golf Club



**Agronomist Charles Henderson has worked on Losby Golf Club's course advisory board since 2011 along with Agnar Kvalbein from the Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environmental Research Foundation (STERF). Charles explains how BIGGA member Alex Cawley tackles extreme winters in Oslo**







**Losby Golf Club is one of Oslo's top courses, having hosted many professional events. Designed by the Swedish architect Petter Nordwall the complex consists of an 18 hole championship course and a nine hole course set within a National Park.**

Course Manager Alex Cawley has managed the facility since March 2011. During this period Alex has faced many challenges posed by the Nordic climate. As Agnar Kvalbein from the Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environmental Research Foundation (STERF) said: "The Oslo area represents an extremely difficult and unpredictable winter climate. Alternating snowfall and rain, frost and mild days often creates ice on the greens. Around 70% of courses in the region face remedial works on greens in spring as a result of winter kill."

Losby is set within a low lying valley and is famous for 1.8ha of greens on its championship course. These characteristics amplify extreme winter challenges faced by the team each year.

### Oslo Climate And Growth Potential

Norway represents one of the shortest growing seasons in Europe. Potential for turf growth and development is short with the golfing season mostly lasting from mid May/June to mid October/November. Temperatures are comparatively low and present difficult winter management and complex spring recovery issues.

### Understanding Winter Kill

Winter kill is a generic term used within the industry and covers various forms of turf kill.

**Low temperature kill** – The result of rapid drops in temperature down to 0°C (32F) and colder resulting in ice crystal formation.

**Desiccation** – The dying of leaves and plants through drying whilst in a dormant state. This is most commonly experienced on open and exposed sites and usually affects certain greens more than others depending on where they are situated.

**Crown hydration** – Caused by daily swings in temperatures. Snow melt causes the accumulation of water in low lying areas of greens, which in turn refreezes during low night temperatures.

In this process plants uptake water into the crown and upon freezing the water turns to ice, expands and ruptures plant cells resulting in serious injury or death.

This can occur in very sporadic patterns.

**Snow mold disease** – Both Pink and Grey snow molds are relevant to winters in Norway. Pink snow mold (fusarium patch) is a condition experienced through most of northern Europe. Of equal concern is the development of Grey snow mold. Grey snow mold requires more specific temperature requirements of between 0-2.2°C (32-36F) to develop and prolonged snow cover experienced in Oslo can provide this.

**Ice encasement** – Agnar explained: "The most lethal winter stress in Oslo is ice encasement that causes suffocation. Lack of oxygen forces the grass cells and the soil microbes to change from normal cell respiration to fermentation of sugar reserves. This is a very inefficient metabolic process, and the plant may run out of energy, but more often the grass is killed by the high concentration of toxic metabolites (several organic acids and hydrogen sulfide) that is trapped under the ice. These chemicals may also inhibit germination of grass seed. Re-establishing partly dead greens can therefore be very challenging. When to break the ice on greens is one of the most difficult decisions Norwegian greenkeepers make."

### Preparing For Winter

As with most clubs throughout northern Europe, Losby's winter preparation starts with the prevention of fusarium patch. Disease occurrence early in the autumn/winter leaves limited chance to recover from disease. Already infected patches act as continuous hosts to recurring fusarium infections under snow with the right conditions.

Losby has retained high levels of Creeping Bentgrass varieties within greens. Poa annua is present but at very low levels. With decreasing fungicide availability, keeping poa annua alive into and through winter is becoming increasingly difficult.

At Losby, continual levels of growth are sustained for as long as feasible through September and early October. Both nitrogen deficiencies and excesses are avoided, light applications of 3-5 N units/ha applied as required. Ammonium Sulphate based fertiliser is used at this point in the year. Frequent use of Iron sources is sustained and potassium is at a 2:1 ratio with nitrogen although this necessity is under review.

Meltwater, crown hydration and ice encasement is the biggest and

### about the author



Charles Henderson is Agronomy Director for Sports Agronomy Services (SAS) and provides independent fact based advice to golf clubs throughout the UK and Europe. Charles has over ten years' advisory experience covering Australasia, Europe and Asia working with leading authorities and clubs.

most obvious cause of winter kill in greens. To understand the challenges faced by Losby, soil profiles freeze down to a depth of 500mm to 2000mm depending on temperatures.

Cutting off meltwater at source is the first stage of preparations. Small fences are erected in known problem areas to divert meltwater away from greens. Channels 40mm wide and 70mm deep are cut around immediate green perimeters where water moves onto greens. These channels are directed to non-playing areas.

Solid tining or hollow tining prior to winter is a technique used by some courses in the region. The opening of the immediate surface can provide channels through which meltwater can drain vertically down the greens profile.

In this sense such work is advantageous. But, such work can also cause complications with heaving of the soil profile and excessive surface softening during spring.

### Once Under Snow

Snow is allowed to accumulate on the greens surfaces - common practice in most of Norway. Ideally the surface will be frozen before the snow falls, this reduces the potential for disease occurrence.

This doesn't always occur, in which case gradual freezing through light snow covering is the next best scenario. With a good covering (30cm or more) the turf surface is insulated from extremely cold temperatures normally around -1°C to -4°C.

Alex said: "Removal of snow over the immediate green surrounds is carried out through winter. This provides low lying ground onto which snow can be removed from greens and surrounds in spring."

"This is limited to a couple of applications to avoid compaction of snow and increased ice encasement."

### Spring Snow And Ice Clearing

Spring is an intense period for all courses in Norway. Determining the exact condition in which the greens will come out of winter is heavily affected by decisions made in spring.

Timing of snow clearing is a very difficult decision. Avoiding excess snow cover over 120 days is desirable to avoid favourable anoxic soil conditions meaning there is pressure to remove early. In contrast, removing during high day-night temperature swings (varying from +5 to -15°C) creates risks of crown hydration. Once snow removal



ABOVE: Course Manager, Alex Cawley

commences the speed at which the operation is completed is critical.

Alex commented: "Snow clearing is carried out with initial use of a snow plough and 70hp tractor complete with spiked tires and snow chains. This is then followed by a snow blower driven by a 50hp tractor."

Once temperatures rise above freezing in spring snow starts to melt. Commonly, meltwater seeps through snow cover forming additional ice layers over the turf surface. This creates additional work to remove it with the potential for 10cm thick ice layers and further increased risks of crown hydration.

He added: "Ice clearing is achieved through application of black sand, charcoal prills and/or organic fertilisers, this speeds up the melting of the upper ice profile. Mechanical removal is only implemented as required."

### Determining The Spring Recovery Programme

The exact condition of greens is unknown for sometime during spring. Determining the exact extent to which grass will recover takes time. Plants suffering crown hydration in spring will not always show obvious symptoms and they can appear as if recovery will take place.

### 2013 Spring Recovery Programme

Last year Losby hosted the Norwegian National Junior Championships in July and a Challenge Tour event in August, presenting the club with additional pressure to deliver first-class greens surfaces. 2013 presented moderate levels of winter kill and poorer than usual spring germination and recovery of existing plants.

Once it was apparent some areas of greens turf were not going to recover, overseeding becomes an essential first stage of recovery. Deciding when to overseed is challenging. Too early and temperatures will not support germination resulting in seed rot and low germination rates.

Losby use a verti-cutting and drop seeding programme in spring to achieve a uniform spread of new creeping bentgrass plants within sward. Use of germination sheets is essential at this point for both new seed and recovery of existing plants.

### Recovery of existing plants

Growth potential remains very low normally until June. However growth can be forced through late

April and May. As important as the establishment of new plants is the recovery of existing plants within the green.

Textbook feeding programs in these circumstances are of little regard. Promotion of growth is a priority to regain density. Between 100-150 units of actual N/ha is applied between the months of March and June, some 50-75 % of the annual nitrogen budget.

### Contingency Turfing

Each year Losby makes contingency orders for turf imported from Sweden and/or Austria. In 2013, 3500m<sup>2</sup> of turf was laid on the worst affected greens. Turfing of greens in Norway is less than ideal but commercial pressures dictate its necessity in some circumstances. From laying to play Losby has achieved suitably smooth surfaces in both 2012 and 2013 in around five to six weeks.

Sports Agronomy Services (SAS) and Agnar Kvalbein of Bioforsk worked closely with Losby through early 2013 along with support from the European Tour. They implemented a combination of seeding, turfing works, plugging, protective mowing heights and early season feeding programmes.

Through these patient regimes, which were fully supported by the club, Losby enjoyed positive recovery for the season and the crucial Challenge Tour event.

Following the event The European Tour commented: "Alex and his greenkeeping staff put in a monumental effort. They presented a championship course in a condition which drew huge praise from the players and the tournament staff, including the Challenge Tour's Tournament Director Kevin Feeney."

### In Summary

Losby (and Oslo in general) presents extreme winter conditions every year. The prediction of recovery and predicting the success of spring seeding is extremely difficult. In contrast, the demand to produce playing surfaces of quality regardless of weather remains constant – something the vast majority of greenkeepers will be able to identify with!

There is still much to learn about winter kill and STERF continue to invest in this. Effective spring recovery strategies are continually under review in the region. SAS continue to work with Losby on this and other agronomic matters, which it feels many clubs in Europe can gain value from.

