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Overcoming the wet at Wentworth

The 2014 European Tour season finally reached these shores last month when the BMW PGA Championship took place at Wentworth. Rory McIlroy claimed a notable victory, amazingly his first professional win on European soil, coming out on top of a stellar leaderboard on a fascinating final day. The event was plagued with heavy rain and storms, leading to suspensions of play and delayed starts.

The greenkeeping team led by Kenny Mackay and Graham Matheson worked wonders and were ably supported by the BIGGA Support Team who, for the first time, match raked on all four days as well as assisting the on site crew in preparing the course and dealing with the inclement weather. I heard many tales of 15 hour days but tellingly they were told with pride and good humour.

We are grateful to all the volunteer greenkeepers who gave up their time to support the tournament, it is a credit to this industry to see so many qualified and experienced greenkeepers willingly volunteering their services in this way. It was a great team effort all round and played a huge part in ensuring that the paying and watching public were able to witness such an enthralling tournament.

On the subject of teamwork I am delighted that Evertis have committed to sponsor the BIGGA Golf Management Trophy in 2014, details of which are on page 8.

This event provides a fantastic opportunity for Course Managers or Head Greenkeepers to spend time with senior decision makers from their club as a team in a competitive environment. Five qualifying events lead to a final at the excellent Frilford Heath Golf Club and I look forward to seeing which club will be crowned the 2014 Golf Management Trophy winners.

Whilst it would be far too glib to state that simply taking part in a golf tournament leads to a perfect team ethos within a club, it is clear that golf clubs that do have a team approach to management are better equipped to make effective decisions and produce a consistent, excellent product for their customers.

In an ideal world all golfers would be a part of the extended course management team, caring for the course, replacing divots and repairing all their pitchmarks.

Sadly this isn't always the case and pitchmarks in particular cause a major issue for greenkeepers and golfers alike. We at BIGGA will be getting behind the second National Repair Your Pitchmark Day in August of this year, which began as a Twitter campaign in 2013 and gathered surprisingly strong momentum.

Enclosed within this edition is a poster for club noticeboards demonstrating the correct pitchmark repair method that we hope will bring further attention to this campaign and encourage golfers to do their bit for the course.

As always this magazine also contains numerous articles about BIGGA members, by BIGGA members and for BIGGA members.

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton, Chief Executive

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British and International
Golf Greenkeepers Association



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Chris Sealey, gives his thoughts for the month

A momentous May

May was a momentous month for me and everybody at Chippenham – the culmination of seven years of blood, sweat and tears as our course redevelopment was completed.

As I've mentioned in previous columns, we've built four brand new holes and modified another three to improve the course layout and extend it by 600 yards. The initial plans were drawn up in 2007 and I feel like the project has taken up several years of my life!

In these situations, you find out how good your team really are. The expectations both from myself and of course the members were extremely high. It's a huge responsibility and the key was to ensure that these new holes were up to the same high standard as the rest of the course when they opened.

Achieving this took a great deal of forward planning, a lot of communication with our committee, strong and effective team management and a coordinated and professional team effort. I'm delighted to say that it all came together perfectly and the team were up to the task.

On the weekend of 17/18 May we held a Members' event with 200 members playing the new course layout on Saturday, and even more members and guests playing on the Sunday.

The feedback on the new holes was fantastic, everyone I spoke to was very positive.

The fabulous weather was a real bonus. It was perfect for the whole weekend, really bright sunshine with a cooling breeze.

It's no exaggeration to say if we had held it the weekend before it would have been a disaster as that weekend was incredibly windy with heavy showers resulting in branches, twigs and blossom everywhere. It was a huge relief that conditions played their part in such a successful weekend.

I'm very proud to see everybody's hard work come to fruition. We worked several 12 hour days and I did 14 on the Friday.

On Saturday, after a 5am start, I played in the competition with the members. I know that many of you have been just as busy at this extremely busy time for turf managers.



“We all know it's a tough job, but I'm sure you get the same feeling of satisfaction in a good job well done”

We all know it's a tough job, but I'm sure you get the same feeling of satisfaction in a good job well done. When you see hundreds of golfers walking round the course in bright sunshine, having a laugh and enjoying the course, playing the holes you've spent years putting together and seeing the green stripes your team have mowed on the fairways looking lush, it truly does make it all worthwhile.

Away from Chippenham I headed over to Bowood for the Everris Turf Reward event. This is a great initiative for greenkeepers, groundsmen and their employers and I would like to thank Everris for their support.

I'm pleased to see the events touring a wide range of clubs across Great Britain and Ireland from Dublin to Wentworth to Loch Lomond.

This month I also presented a 'So You Want To Be Promoted' seminar at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club with John Keenaghan, which was a great success, and as this goes to press I will have visited the aforementioned Wentworth for the BMW PGA Championship.

As I'm sure you all know we have a larger BIGGA Support Team than usual offering a wider range of assistance to Kenny Mackay and all his team, and I'm very much looking forward to meeting them.

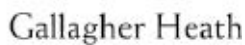
I know they will gain so much from the experience.

Contact details

Email Chris at coursemanager.chippenhamgolf@btconnect.com or contact him direct on 07817 294632

Funding your future

The funding and assistance provided by BIGGA Partners and BIGGA Education Supporters underpins the Association's considerable investment in Continuing Professional Development and all our educational activity. They are investing in the future of BIGGA members, we are hugely grateful and urge you to show them your support



Individual Contributors: Steven Tierney MG, Chris Lomas MG, Andrew Campbell MG CGCS, W J Rogers, Sam Langrick, Espen Bergmann, Nick Gray, Steve Dixon, Richard McGlynn, Douglas Duguid, Jaey Goodchild, Michael Beaton, David Barker

BIGGA GOLF MANAGEMENT TROPHY LAUNCHED



Now's your chance to enter the inaugural BIGGA Golf Management Trophy, sponsored by Everris, which features matches across the Regions and Sections in England this summer.

This is the perfect opportunity for the management team of any golf club to spend time as group and network with similar management teams from across BIGGA's Regions.

There will be five Regional qualifiers played at prestigious courses with the Final taking place at Frilford Heath Golf Club in October.

There must be a BIGGA greenkeeper member either playing in the event or attending the meal afterwards to validate each team.

Entries are on a first come, first served basis with the cost £99 per team. This includes coffee and a bacon roll on arrival, then a two course meal afterwards. The format is Stableford. Dates:

9 July – Northern Region
-Workshop GC
23 July – South Wales
Section – Cardiff GC
29 July – Midland Region –
Buckinghamshire GC
20 August – South West
Section – Chipping Sodbury GC
11 September – South Coast
Section – Parkstone GC

For more details please contact Regional Administrators Sandra Raper on 07866 366966 (Sandra@bigga.co.uk), or Tracey Harvey on 07841 948110 (tracey.harvey@bigga.co.uk).



BERNHARD AND BIGGA TEAM UP

Bernhard's team of trainers have visited Scotland as part of a series of workshops in conjunction with BIGGA. The workshops presented to greenkeepers, club managers and mechanics are designed to inform and advise – and offered the opportunity for delegates to pick up CPD Credits.

The workshops, held at Royal Aberdeen, Turnhouse and Dundonald Golf Courses and Elmwood College covered a range of subjects including the setting of cutting units, reel maintenance, grinding and the benefits of correctly setting cutting units.

Willie Nisbet, himself a former greenkeeper at St Andrews Links and now Bernhard's man in Scotland, said: "We have been very pleased with the feedback that we've had from these seminars. It is vitally important for busy greenkeeping staff to be able to set units quickly and efficiently. There is always

something new to learn and judging by the comments we received afterwards, even the oldest dog can learn new tricks!

"Good players notice the quality of the surface not just in terms of how it plays, but how the place looks. An exceptional shine on the course shows up the definition in the greens. As there's no dead tissue, the green retains its colour and plays faster and more evenly."

Ben Taylor, Bernhard Training Manager, began the seminars. He commented: "I introduced the delegates to the company and product, including the technicalities of angles, attitudes and details of cutting units. After a short presentation we went into the workshop where we ran through all features and benefits and demonstrated exactly what makes this machinery unique across the world. We then demonstrated how to sharpen quickly and efficiently."

David Grey, First Assistant at Ladybank Golf Club, and former Bernhard Delegate, said "This was a fantastic in-depth presentation which detailed the importance of maintaining sound sharp units and the many consequences of failing to regularly do so.

"It was very interesting learning the various angles and how vital these are to achieve the perfect finish."

Stuart Green, BIGGA's Learning & Development Executive – Technical, added: "CPD is a vital tool in a turf professional's career toolkit.

"It's essential that greenkeepers update their skills, keep abreast of changes in legislation and maintain an awareness of current industry trends to benefit themselves and their employers.

"BIGGA offers its members the opportunity to record their CPD through an online system and reward them for their efforts."

AERIAL BLITZ AGAINST OPM RETURNS

Aerial application of insecticide over West Berkshire in May 2013 against oak processionary moth (OPM), and reported first by Greenkeeper International in April 2013, will be repeated in May 2014 said the Forestry Commission (FC) in a surprise announcement.

Given the furore created by last year's aerial spraying of the biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki* over Herridge's copse and Broom's copse near Pangbourne, this year's blitz on nearby Sulham Woods, also a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), appears strange to say the least, and especially since no OPM nests were found in Berkshire in 2013. The action is apparently based on the capture of five male adult moths in late summer 2013 during a routine pest monitoring exercise using pheromone traps.

FC says this does not necessarily mean a viable breeding population of OPM is still present in the Pangbourne area but that their aim remains eradication of the pest. This begs the question as to why another round of aerial spraying, when last year's operation clearly failed to 'do the trick'. In 2013 FC admitted they were unsure as to whether there were actually any pest insects in the treated woodlands and 'Butterfly Conservation' branded the operation a 'sledgehammer to crack a nut'.

And what about the even stranger decision taken this year to spray just very small part of a single wood called

Sulham Woods, in the same general area as last year (to the south of Pangbourne) but this time nearer to Tilehurst on the western outskirts of Reading. Male oak processionary moths are strong fliers with flight distance capabilities of up to 25 km, which means they could have exited nests and mated with females over a potentially extensive area.

It is now over one year since the May 2013 aerial application 'trial' took place with no sign of the results being made public by FC. In January 2014 I asked someone who was operationally involved in the 'trial' if he was privy to how it went. He had asked to see the results but was told he would have to go through the 'Freedom of Information Act' to retrieve them.

I thought he was joking until I discovered that a Pangbourne resident had already used the Freedom of Information Act to find out why Natural England had sanctioned aerial spraying of an SSSI oak woodland in the first place, and especially since most conservation organisations thought the environmental and ecological risks were a 'no brainer'.

According to BBC Berkshire, the Freedom of Information request revealed how Natural England had sanctioned aerial application of insecticide despite believing that it would not eradicate the insect pest, and also believing it would have "a very significant impact" on other species of moths and butterflies in the area.

Natural England was right to think a single pair of BTK



sprays will not have eradicated OPM in 2013, even if present in the treated woodland, but for entirely the wrong reasons.

Spraying BTK as a stand-alone measure is essentially a pest management tool rather than a pest control tool and requires repeat applications over a number of years to achieve pest eradication if at all. If the capture of five male adult moths in 2014 shows one thing it is that aerial spraying with BTK in 2013 failed to eradicate OPM, so why should the same treatment prove any different this year. And especially since there is no hard evidence of pest presence in the woodland earmarked for spraying this year.

BTK is a biological insecticide lacking the potency and

persistence generally required to achieve eradication with a single application, but which is possible using more powerful chemical insecticides like diflubenzuron (an insect growth regulator) and deltamethrin (a pyrethroid insecticide acting through contact and ingestion). These insecticides are used in ground based spraying against OPM but are not licensed for aerial application.

UK plant health authorities are apparently keeping the results (if any) from these 'trials' very 'close to the chest'. It will probably take another 'brave soul' to make a Freedom of Information request to secure the findings for general viewing and scrutiny - any volunteers?

Dr Terry Mabbett

40 YEARS FOR DAVE AT CHILDWALL

BIGGA member Dave Macavoy has celebrated a 40-year stint as Head Greenkeeper at Childwall Golf Club.

Dave began his greenkeeping career at 15, and spent eight years at Royal Birkdale before joining Childwall - a

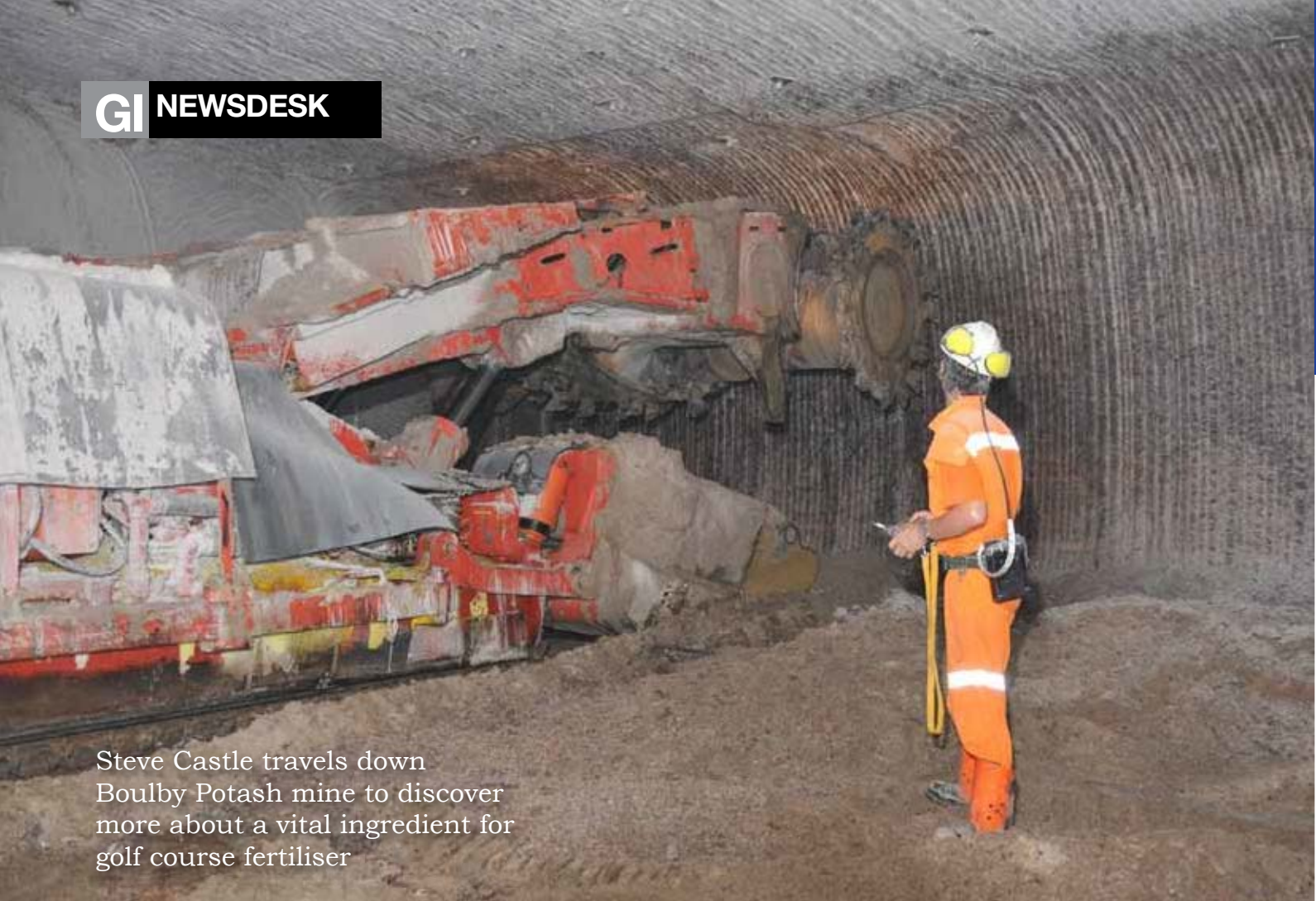
parkland course close in the Huyton area of Liverpool - which was established in 1912.

He heads a five-strong greenkeeping team with a seasonal member joining in the summer.

He said: "We don't have major events

here but we've held many county matches down the years and we're proud of our work here.

"We've reconstructed 16 of the 18 greens with work on the remaining two coming up, and all the work is always done in house."



Steve Castle travels down Boulby Potash mine to discover more about a vital ingredient for golf course fertiliser

GOING UNDERGROUND

I'm three quarters of a mile beneath the ground, six miles out under the North Sea, and a burly miner, visible only because of dim torchlight and his orange uniform, is tucking into a lunch of Dairy Lea Dunkers. Just another average Tuesday afternoon for the intrepid turf journalist.

The location is the east coast of Yorkshire and I'm watching on as workers at Boulby Potash mine operate a huge machine which is prising potash ore from the earth. The mine is run by Cleveland Potash Ltd - a wholly owned subsidiary of Israel Chemicals Ltd - and I'm on site to discover more about the beginning of the fertiliser production process.

Potash is the common name for potassium chloride, and Boulby Mine produces over half of the UK's annual supply - from a staggering 2.4 million tonnes of potash ore a year.

This dark, warm and dusty atmosphere thus eventually leads to the production area of polyhalite, a different seam, some 140m beneath the potash - which contains potassium sulphate, calcium sulphate and magnesium sulphate. This polyhalite, a unique, organic mineral, is the key ingredient of Everris's ProTurf fertiliser - which we would learn more of later.

After an informative briefing from our guide Neil Rowley, we don the all-orange outfit worn by the workers.

This features an oxygen self-rescuer (which converts CO to CO₂ if smoke inhalation occurs) clinging to the belts we wear in case of fire.

We file into a small, dark lift which then plunges at surprising speed beneath the earth. We then walk through piles of silvery dust before we reach a Ford Transit which will shuttle us 45 minutes to the face where the mining is taking place.

The vehicle trundles through the darkness. One of my colleagues compares the landscape to a Terminator film. It does almost seem post-apocalyptic. The roof is low and it's stuffy and warm - around 32C - as the Transit rattles along a path of compacted dust in the gloom.

I'm astonished at how far we have to travel. There seem to be no obvious points of reference, with only the odd safety refuge point and mechanical station to be seen. It's hard to imagine that this is someone's daily commute.

At the face we meet several miners, who are happy to chat about their work. Some of the workforce began as coal miners before joining Boulby, and all have several years of experience as a necessity to allow them to work at the face and operate the huge, complex and potentially highly dangerous machinery.

As well as potash, Boulby produces between 0.5 - 0.8 million tonnes of rock salt



annually, which is the crucial substance which de-ices UK roads.

The end result of all this labour and expense goes into ProTurf - a high impact fertiliser with a combination of controlled release and conventional release of nitrogen designed for use on all outfield turf areas.

The polyhalite ensures all macro nutrients are delivered in one application, and rates are flexible due to the small granule size.

It's been a fascinating experience as I'd never before considered the sheer scale of the technical and human operation required to produce this substance which then goes into fertiliser.

From this weird, arid environment comes the building blocks for the fine turf we see on fairways, tees, surrounds, approaches and lawns.

All things considered though I'm happier to view the North Yorkshire coastline from a more traditional vantage point above ground.