

August 2021 | £5.50

# Greenkeeper

International

## RETURN OF THE OPEN

From the mechanics to  
the agronomists,  
we meet the  
team behind The  
149th Open at  
Royal St George's

### Festival of Turf

The turf industry reunited  
after 18 months at BIGGA's  
summer festival

### Dumbarnie Links

The new premium links  
course is to host the  
Women's Scottish Open

### Nairn Dunbar

A visit to 2021's  
Environmental Golf  
Club of the Year



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# Welcome



It's been absolutely wonderful  
to spend time over the last  
few weeks at two key events,  
The Open and our very own  
Festival of Turf, interacting  
face-to-face with colleagues,  
BIGGA members, clients,  
industry partners and friends.

While definitely not yet  
normal — daily lateral flow  
tests, social distancing and  
small 'bubbles' saw to that —  
it was as close as I've come to  
normal in nearly 18 months  
and I loved it.

After the usual  
pleasantries, nearly every  
conversation turned to what  
we will all do differently after  
the pandemic subsides; this  
was true of personal and  
corporate conversations.

What has become very  
clear is that the pandemic has  
provided everyone with an  
opportunity to self-reflect and  
set new goals and priorities.  
Huge numbers of people  
across every industry have  
considered their work-life  
balance and very many are  
looking to make permanent  
changes to their working  
situation to achieve a more  
acceptable balance. Examples  
range from simple things like  
more working from home and  
less unnecessary travel to



Chief Executive Jim Croxton

major life and career changes.

The hospitality industry  
looks like it will be hugely  
impacted as fewer workers  
from overseas combined with  
a heightened emphasis on  
lifestyle means that bars,  
restaurants and hotels are  
struggling to find staff for what  
are considered unsociable  
shifts. I have read a number of  
articles and blogs that posit a  
need for businesses to change  
their mindset on staff welfare,  
remuneration and flexibility if  
they wish to continue  
providing 'business as usual'.  
Will this extend to the golf  
industry, I wonder? My  
personal view is that yes, it  
will. The additional focus on  
the golf course and  
greenkeeping provided by the  
recent surge in playing  
numbers has seen a number

of golf clubs recognise the  
importance of their  
greenkeeping team and look  
to improve resources and  
conditions accordingly. Of  
course, our industry can be  
notoriously slow to respond to  
economic and social change  
so I don't expect a seismic  
change overnight but I am  
heartened by the number of  
conversations my colleagues  
and I have had with facilities  
that recognise the need to  
improve pay, conditions and  
work-life balance if they wish  
to retain a team that keeps  
their course in the desired  
condition.

This is a drum we at BIGGA  
have been banging for years,  
and it has perhaps taken an  
unprecedented global  
pandemic to amplify the  
sound but I genuinely believe  
the work we have done across  
the industry with governing  
bodies, members associations  
and with golfers in general is  
finally starting to pay  
dividends. Make no mistake,  
there are still a number of  
facilities who are blind to this  
and our team continues to  
offer support to members in  
difficulty. Likewise, we will  
continue to advocate strongly  
on your behalf.

# WHAT'S INSIDE...

## Editor's Notes

Greenkeeper International editor, Karl Hansell



There was a really interesting moment in my conversation with Grahame Taylor at Dumbarnie Links when I asked him why the developers of the multi-million pound premium golf venue selected him to lead the team.

They were placing a spectacular amount of faith in his abilities and I wanted to know what set him apart from the rest. Grahame has a massive amount of experience, not least his time spent at St Andrews Links, but it was interesting that his reply was "planning and organisation". Ahead of agronomic knowledge and greenkeeping ability, it was the ability to effectively plan and organise that set him apart. Grahame even highlighted that a neat and tidy office can go a long way to changing mindsets and I wonder how many of us can say that our working environment is in the best condition it could be?

After the activities of the past year I know that I, for one, have let my organisation slip somewhat, something to which anyone who has emailed me and waited patiently for a response in the last few months can attest! It constantly feels like I'm running just to keep up and I know many of you feel the same. So, as summer gives way to autumn and the pace of life slows, can we all agree to give ourselves a moment to breathe?

As usual, this magazine has plenty of things to divert your attention during a coffee break or two. I'm really proud of the work we did to bring a behind-the-scenes look at The Open. I learnt a huge amount and perhaps you'll do the same when reading our feature. There's also tons of other interesting articles, which I hope you've come to expect from your monthly magazine. As always, we'd love to hear from you, so please get in touch and share your views – like James Bledge, you could even win a spectacular prize (see page 56)!

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BIGGA Photographic Calendar 2021: August's image is of hand watering at dawn on the 7th green at Hankley Common by Jake Austin

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### BIGGA National returns!

This year the BIGGA National Championship is taking place at the fantastic Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club and entries are now open for our biggest golf event of the year. To book your spot in our national championship and start your road to glory, sign up using the QR code:



## With thanks to our contributors

Each month Greenkeeper International is put together with the help of our industry contributors. This month we have features from:



**Ken Siems MG**  
Ken was one of the most influential course managers of recent years, with stints at Loch Lomond and across the globe.



**Sally Duffin**  
Seasonal allergies such as hayfever are unpleasant, but did you know what you eat can impact how much you are affected?



**Grahame Taylor**  
Dumbarnie Links is Scotland's newest links venue and Grahame talked us through the build and grow-in journey.



**Paul Larsen**  
Paul and his team were incredibly welcoming when we joined them and they gave us a rarely-seen view of The Open.

**DON'T FORGET:** You can claim CPD credits for reading this edition of Greenkeeper International. Head to the CPD section of the BIGGA website to log your credits.

# SMART PURCHASING



Why you should take the time in order to save money

Ken Siems MG CGCS



“Can the grass really determine the difference between the two products?”

**Today, more than ever, golf courses are under financial pressure to stay in business, to stay ahead of competition and to survive.**

Smart purchasing is one of the many key factors to ensure your company's short and long-term financial sustainability.

Through my career, I have utilised smart purchasing, both at work and during my everyday home life. Take, for example, when you select your home gas and electricity energy supplier. If, like me, you regularly switch providers in order to secure the best deal to suit your needs, you use comparison websites. The same comparison sites can also be used for mobile phone contracts and internet providers, all in the hope of saving a few pounds here and there. However, amazing as it is, many of us still do not take this philosophy to work when we purchase.

I'm amazed to see the tremendous cost variance between the fertiliser products within the golf industry. At the end of the day, does the grass really know the difference in the fertiliser you use? The answer is probably not.

Most nutrients enter the grass plant in an inorganic form. Therefore, all fertilisers must be converted into a form the grass plant can use.

Most commercial fertilisers are a blend of quick-release, intermediate release and slower-release plant foods, primarily nitrogen. Nitrogen remains the most important of all fertiliser ingredients as it promotes plant growth, supported by other nutrients.

But is there a difference between the various fertilisers? Let's do a quick comparison:

## Fertiliser A:

Straight urea 46-0-0.  
Cost: £15 for 25kg. 1kgN cost: £1.30

## Fertiliser B:

Prominent turfgrass industry brand liquid 23-0-0  
23% total nitrogen, 3.5% nitric nitrogen, 3.5% ammoniacal nitrogen, 16% ureic nitrogen, 0.03% molybdenum (Fancy terminology, packaged beautifully).

Cost: £47/10l (weighs 12kg). 1kgN cost: £17

Can the grass really determine the difference between the two products? Does Fertiliser B really provide 13 times (that's the price difference) better result than using Fertiliser A?

The same comparison can be made »

Figure 1: Cost analysis for having pipe joints welded

June 18 2008			Fusion cost analysis					
Pipe size	Estimated welds/day	Total welds	Company A Cost/weld	Company A Total cost	Company B Cost/weld	Company B Total cost	Company C Cost/weld	Company C Total cost
800mm	4	75	2,000	150,000	382	28,650	500	37,500
560mm	4	31	800	24,800	256	7,936	325	10,075
500mm	4	160	700	112,000	256	40,960	325	52,000
450mm	6	80	600	48,000	175	14,000	217	17,360
315mm	7	80	500	40,000	135	10,800	130	10,400
225mm	8	42	300	12,600	120	5,040	115	4,830
				387,400		107,386		132,165

“Obtaining three quotes for like-for-like specifications is smart business practice and should be a standard operating procedure.

for all nutrients and it is amazing the cost variances you will find. The key is to ensure comparisons are made on a like-for-like nutrient cost.

Unit price comparison is a fundamental process to determine value for money spent and should be used for all purchasing. When buying machinery, we must and should evaluate and compare energy consumption, servicing and replacement parts cost, productivity, build quality and, of course, whether it can achieve the desired result.

Above (Figure 1) is a cost analysis for having pipe joints welded for a large irrigation project that I was involved in during my time in the Middle East. As you

can see, Company A is charging more than double that of both B and C.

Obtaining three quotes for like-for-like specifications is smart business practice and should be a standard operating procedure. Why pay more if you can get the exact same product or service for a much cheaper cost?

The logic of applying smart purchasing into all areas at work does take time and effort, but it can save your company a lot of money, which in turn can be put to best use elsewhere.

I haven't quite cracked smart purchasing in all areas at home and my wife can't always see my logic! Any advice is much appreciated.



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# THE NATIONAL RETURNS

Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club  
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# ACROSS THE BOARD

Colin Webber | Portmore Golf Park | BIGGA President

## At last, a month filled with presidential duties!

So this is what they warned me about when inviting me to become BIGGA President for 2020, extended to 2021 given the events of the past year.

It was absolutely fantastic to finally get out there and meet other BIGGA members in person and actually shake some hands!

That isn't to say the National Board hasn't been busy the past year, we really have and I never thought my business acumen would be leaned upon quite so extensively during my time as president, but needs must.

It is always risky to tempt fate, but with things finally getting back to normal, I know it did me the world of good (given I've had both my doses of the COVID vaccine) to get out into the world again and meet so many people at first The Open and then the Festival of Turf.

Firstly I'd like to congratulate my Region's membership services manager, Tracey Walker, who did such an incredible job of organising everything for the Volunteer Support Team during the week. It was her first time in charge of ensuring everything went to plan and she, supported by the rest of the BIGGA team, did an incredible job, so well done Tracey.

The Open was an awesome experience and it was nice to be out, without everyone being terrified. The course



Ilan Kinley of Royal Porthcawl joined the support team at Royal St George's

was special in terms of its design, the layout and the fantastic way it was presented. For most amateur golfers it would be too tough to play, when you stand on the tee and think 'where do I go?' but those guys are so good and hit it so far.

I can't replicate that experience at my club, nor would I want to as we're trying to get people into golf. But this really was the pinnacle of what you can achieve.

I spoke to the course manager, Paul Larsen, twice to ask him if there was anything our volunteers could do to help. Raking the bunkers may be the most obvious thing we do, but I hope it is reassuring for the home team and The R&A to know that if things do go very wrong (a COVID outbreak among the greenkeepers, being an obvious example), then our

team is on hand and ready to lend their expertise.

It was also great to see the volunteers who were integrated into Paul's team, such as Richard Whyman from Burnham & Berrow and Ian Kinley from Royal Porthcawl. I have known them for many years and it was nice to see them in person once again. I know Ian was raking bunkers each morning and although that may seem like a menial task, it's not when you have to do it well. You've got the best cameras in the world that can zoom in on a grain of sand, so it needs to be absolutely perfect. What does it show about what a great guy Ian is, that he's willing to give up his spare time to do such a task and support the home greenkeepers?

Likewise, there were around 30 new faces on the volunteer support team, from

a total of 53. It was special when Gordon Moir, who has been top of the tree at St Andrews, was the first volunteer to jump into a bunker and show us how to do it. With the first push of his rake he showed everybody so much. Instead of pulling, his first move was to push. He levelled things out instantly and then the job was easy.

It was only the second Open I've ever been to, after Royal Portrush, but what I found really special was the evenings. As always, when greenkeepers get together, there is a sharing of knowledge and forming of friendships. What was so special at The Open was that even though we had to be in our pods, all the teams stayed together and had a really good laugh. Within two days they formed friendships that will last a long time and that's what I love about this industry. The camaraderie and support is so important and if that has been damaged in any way by the pandemic, we all need to work hard to rebuild it. I know that was what the BIGGA team hoped to achieve with the Festival of Turf and I know there will be other opportunities coming up in the near future, so if you get the chance to join a BIGGA event near you, make sure you do so. It will change your career and you'll build friendships that will mean so much to you as we overcome the challenges that lie ahead in the coming years.

# HELPING US TO HELP YOU



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Partner

BIGGA's Partner Programme aims to provide an array of career enhancing and defining opportunities for our members. Through their relationship with BIGGA, the leading companies in the industry are able to support our members through education, initiatives and awareness.



The support we receive from our Partners is critical in providing the significant series of benefits open to our members. Head to [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) to find out more and to get involved.

# Would you like to take better photos of your golf course?

BIGGA Photo Competition judge Mike Hyde gives advice on how to take the best photographs of your course

Mike Hyde, Carefree Golf Photography

## Taking a great golf course photograph is sometimes pretty easy.

Golf courses are among the most scenic and beautiful landscapes to be found anywhere and we've all found ourselves stood out on the course looking at a spectacular view that reminds us why we are in this profession.

Sometimes you need to do a more professional job, however. Whether it's taking images for your golf club's website, for social media marketing purposes or — say — to enter BIGGA's annual photo competition, there are a few simple things you can do to make your images really pop.

Carefree Golf Photography's Mike Hyde gave us his top tips for good golf course photography. »

This image conveys the immense scale of Slieve Donard behind Royal County Down

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## Right gear

I use a Canon 6D, with a 24–105mm lens. It's not top-of-the-range gear and I sometimes hire in specialist kit when I need something extra, but it's sufficient for my requirements, although it still wasn't cheap!

If you're looking to take your photography to the next level, there are plenty of entry level options that will help you take professional looking shots, like the Canon 4000D.

Alternatively, eBay is always a great place to grab used kit as people look to upgrade their gear.

It's a photography cliché that lenses trump camera bodies, but it's a cliché for a reason. If you have to choose, invest in your lenses ahead of your body, and you'll see the difference in image quality.

It's also worth experimenting with different types of lenses. A 15mm wide angle lens will give you a vastly different image style to

a 200mm zoom, and will make you think about where you are positioning yourself on the course to get the best photograph.

## What about my phone?

Smartphones absolutely have a place in photography and perform strongly in well-lit situations or when you can get close to your subject, but that means they are not always the best option at sunrise or sunset.



They are also designed to take pictures that look great on your phone, which is perfect for social media use, but that doesn't always scale up to a bigger screen or if you ever want a decent print.

While a big attraction to phone photography is the ease of use, there are still some helpful customisable settings that can help you capture a strong image, so it's worth taking some time to learn how to use your phone camera properly.

## Composition

There are some fundamental rules, like the 'rule of thirds' and the 'golden ratio' that are always worth bearing in mind.

On the golf course, always try and think about what the main focus of your image is. Occasionally you'll just be trying to document a huge scene, but usually you'll be capturing something in particular. In that case, try and guide the viewer's eye towards the subject.

That might mean shooting from the side of a fairway towards a green, with a path in the foreground winding towards the flag. Or from behind a green, with the pin in focus at the front of the image and the hole disappearing away in the background.

Water hazards are great for providing interesting foregrounds, especially if it's a still day and you can capture a reflection.

## Time of day

Greenkeepers have a distinct advantage over everyone else, by typically being on the course during the best light of the day. Golf courses look completely different in 'golden hour' light — around 1 hour after sunrise or before sunset — and shooting at this time will really elevate your shots.

It's also amazing how quickly the light changes at that time of the day, and it can sometimes be worth staying in one spot for a little while. When you're waiting for a pin to be bathed in sunshine or for the sun to just dip behind some trees, a couple of minutes' patience can be the difference between an

average picture and a great one.

## Interesting angles

When I'm visiting a new club for a shoot, I'll always seek out the advice of the course manager and their team on interesting places to shoot. I usually get a shot that I wouldn't have done otherwise, so make the most of your local knowledge.

One tactic that seems to catch out people who think they know courses inside out, and which makes your imagery stand out, is to photograph one hole from a position on a different hole.

It sounds obvious, but a lot of 'amateur' photography is taken from the middle of the »

“ That might mean shooting from the side of a fairway towards a green, with a path in the foreground winding towards the flag.



Enter the BIGGA Photographic Competition 2021

Hurry as entries close on 31 August!





Off the beaten track at Malden – a rare shot without a flag, but still obviously a golf course as the path leads your eye towards the sunrise



Getting down low at Trump Turnberry to showcase the gorgeous bridge, with the contrasting flag against the stormy sky, makes things work even without bright sunshine

fairway, which often isn't a particularly interesting angle. It also feels instantly familiar to anyone who has played the course.

Shoot from an adjacent fairway, the next tee, from one green to another, and you'll find yourself creating images that feel unique, and have people taking a moment to get their bearings.

#### Post-processing

While I do my best to capture the scene as accurately as possible 'in-camera', I never submit images to a club that I haven't edited in some way in post-processing software.

I use Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. The former allows me to play with brightness, contrast and colours, so that the image reflects what my eyes were seeing on the ground. I then use Photoshop

to edit out any major blemishes or unsightly objects (signage, bins and suchlike that would detract from a landscape image).

Mobile users have options too. If you are shooting on your phone and posting to Instagram, that doesn't mean cranking up all the sliders to 11 and pressing publish. People can spot an over-processed image a mile off. Both Adobe applications are available for mobile, and while it adds to

your workflow, it stands you apart.

#### Where is the light?

Shooting into the sun rarely works out — although sometimes you can get lucky. It usually helps to be shooting with the sun coming across you, to highlight shadows and the contours of your course.

Taking pictures with the light directly behind you presents another challenge,

especially at dawn or dusk, as you'll find your shadow starring in all your pictures! Sometimes it can be edited out but it's not always that simple.

#### Rise above it

As well as interesting angles, it serves to get a bit of height into your photography. I always have a buggy for getting around the course and find that climbing atop that gives me enough height to make a difference, although I'm 6'2", which also helps.

It's often easy to find higher ground on the 18th at most courses, as you can usually find a spot in the clubhouse that gives you a cool perspective.

But around the course you have to get creative. Sometimes that means just finding a hump or bump on the course. Fairway bunkers often

have elevated lips that get you a couple of feet higher.

Kevin Murray — a golf photographer whose work I really admire and who has kindly let me pick his brains in the past — posted recently about all the different ways he's got elevated shots. From hiring industrial cherry pickers to sitting in the bucket of a digger, he found some novel ways to get the shots he needed!

Conversely, sometimes it pays to get as low as you can and shoot up. This works really well if you've got big trees in the background for a sense of scale or if you want to highlight the quality of the turf.

#### Set yourself challenges

Last year I found myself postponing photoshoots until the weather was absolutely perfect, which is a

challenging business model when you live in the UK.

I knew I had to improve my photography in 'sub-optimal' conditions, so that if I found myself on the ground and the weather turned, I could still deliver something to the client.

I purposefully learned some techniques for shooting in overcast conditions and tasked myself with taking recreational photos in those conditions.

Even if you're just shooting

for fun, it's a good idea to set yourself little challenges to keep your creative juices flowing.

Try taking photos:  
/ That don't have a pin in them — the hole is the focal point of golf, so finding something else to photograph can be harder than you think

/ In black and white — golf looks a lot different when you don't have colours to sing for you

/ In portrait orientation — courses lend themselves to wide vistas, so finding angles that work top to bottom is great fun

/ At a fixed focal length — say 50mm, so you have to move yourself to find the right composition and not just zoom in or out.

#### Continue the conversation

Head to [carefreegolfphotography.co.uk](https://carefreegolfphotography.co.uk) or contact Mike on Twitter using @MikeHyde or Instagram using @mikehydegolf and @carefreegolfphotography

The BIGGA photographic competition closes on Tuesday 31 August 2021. Enter on the BIGGA website



Taken from a couple of fairways away at Royal County Down to get the angle right

# AROUND THE GREEN

## Revealing this year's Toro Student finalists

National



After a year's hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards are returning for 2021, with the search on to find the country's best up-and-coming greenkeepers.

Each year the awards enable BIGGA to work alongside turf maintenance equipment manufacturer Toro and distributor Reesink UK to celebrate the next generation of talented and dedicated greenkeepers.

A record 49 nominees from

across the United Kingdom participated in regional interviews. These candidates were nominated by their employers or colleague tutors and from those candidates a final 12 have been chosen to contest the grand finals this September.

Sami Strutt, head of learning & development at BIGGA, said: "I was delighted to learn that a record number of student greenkeepers had been nominated for this year's award, especially after the challenges of the past year.

"For so many employers and tutors to recognise the commitment of the students, despite the difficulties we have all faced, is testament to what a wonderful industry we are working in. There can be no better introduction to the greenkeeping community than a nomination for these awards and, these 12 finalists should be incredibly proud of everything they have achieved thus far."

For the first time, the finals of the awards will take place at Celtic Manor Resort,

providing an incredible backdrop to the event and giving the opportunity for the finalists to learn more and be inspired by the maintenance of the championship venue.

September's event will be the 32nd staging of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards and just the fifth time the Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award, open to greenkeepers aged 21 or under, will take place.

To be eligible to take part, candidates must be registered on a qualifying greenkeeping qualification and must be nominated by their course manager or college tutor.

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year winner will receive an eight-week all expenses-paid scholarship to America when restrictions allow, including a six-week residential turf management study course at the University of Massachusetts, a trip to the Golf Industry Show in San Diego, California, and a visit to Toro manufacturing facilities.

The Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year winner will receive a work experience placement at the exclusive Vidauban Golf Club in southern France. They will also receive a trip to Continue to Learn at BTME and enjoy a five-night package that includes hotel, four days of education, travel and £125 expenses, plus a Toro training voucher.

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists are:



Leon Brant, assistant greenkeeper at Wexham Park



John Le Cappelain, apprentice greenkeeper at Royal Jersey



Daryn Curtis, greenkeeper at Royal Mid-Surrey



Matthew McCreadie, greenkeeper at Daventry & District



Matthew Milligan, first assistant at Rudding Park



Michael Russell, greenkeeper and ecology manager at Preston

The Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists are:



Rhian Barton, apprentice greenkeeper at The Wisley Park



Greg Manson, apprentice greenkeeper at Mortonhall



Callum Marjoribanks, apprentice greenkeeper at Mortonhall



Ross McKie, apprentice greenkeeper at St Andrews Links



Will Pallister, apprentice greenkeeper at Cleckheaton & District



Cameron Shanks, apprentice greenkeeper at Bothwell Castle

## Beedles Lake event

Central England - East Midlands



The East Midlands Section is once again hosting its popular par-3 event at Beedles Lake near Leicester.

The competition takes place this year on Wednesday 18 August and is always well-supported and that continues this year, with thanks going to event sponsors Banks Amenity.

You can register for the event by heading to the What's On section of the BIGGA website and filling out an entry form.

## South East update

South East

In last month's magazine we revealed that Simon Pyett would be joining the BIGGA team as membership services manager for the South East.

However, Simon has now chosen to pursue other career options and so has stepped down from the post. We wish Simon well in his future endeavours. A successor will be announced in due course.

## Thorndon

South East - Essex

Essex Section members are reminded that the highly-anticipated Thorndon Park Golf Day is taking place on 14 September.

You can book your place by contacting Andy Harding on 07884 433 327.

Your Local Membership Services Team

Scotland & Northern Ireland



Chairperson Gordon McKie



John Young 07776 242 120 johnyoung@bigga.co.uk

Northern



Chairperson Jack Hetherington



Sandra Raper 07866 366 966 sandra@bigga.co.uk

Central England



Chairperson Andrew Smith



Roger Butler 07525 593 359 roger@bigga.co.uk

South West & South Wales



Chairperson Lucy Sellick



Tracey Walker 07841 948 110 tracey.walker@bigga.co.uk

South East



Chairperson Sam Bethell

Ecology & Sustainability



James Hutchinson 07767 242863 james.hutchinson@bigga.co.uk

Welcome new members

Scotland & Northern Ireland

Ross Dingwall, Moray, AGK; Scott Forrester, Sandyhills, DHGK; William Hutton, Pitlochry, A

Northern

James DeRosier, Kirkby Lonsdale, AGK; Peter Dooley Sherdley Park Municipal, DHGK; Marcus Orrell, Ilkley, AGK; Mark Porter, Sherwood Forest, AGK; Craig Ramplin, Ilkley, AGK; Benjamin Richards, Aberdovey, GK; Jake Thompson, Moortown, APP; Derek Vaughan, Leigh, A; Andrew Wilson, Grange Park, AGK; Ellis Wilson, Bondhay, HGK

Central England

James Hook, Stoke Rochford, APP; Dominic Howell, Hunstanton, GK; Craig Judson, Sherwood Forest, AGK; Dominic Numphud, Goring & Streatley, GK; Callum Reeves, Kedleston Park, AGK; Harry Sands, Hunstanton, AGK; Jonathan Smith, Ansty, A; Duncan Smith, Ashridge, GK; Paul Ward, Whitehill Golf Centre, DCM; Wayne Wasylczyn, Whitehill Golf Centre, GK; Michael Woods, Hadden Hill, CM; Michael D Woods, Hadden Hill, DHGK

South East

Kai Appleby, Royal Cinque Ports, APP; Joseph Balmer, Royal Mid-Surrey, AGK; Simon Bankes, Abridge Golf & Country Club GK; Matthew Clark, Benton Hall, APP; Sam Cooke, Romford, GK; Michael Dodd, Plumpton College, ATP; Harley Dunne, Felixstowe Ferry, APP; Stephen Eaton, Chelmsford, GK; Alex Ermini, Ashridge, GK; Liam Fenwick, Royal Eastbourne, AGK; Harvey Finch, West Essex, APP; Nir Halfon, Plumpton College, ATP; Jamie Hayes, Hilden Park Golf & Leisure, GK; Paul Jelley, Royal Mid-Surrey, AGK; Adrian Loveday, Romford, AGK; Benjamin Lovett, Ashridge, CM; Billy Nuttall, Royal Mid-Surrey, AGK; George Power, Royal Eastbourne, AGK; George Watkins, Barnham Broom Hotel, APP; Adam Wilson, Barnham Broom Hotel, APP

South West & South Wales

Andrew Burgess, Tenby, GK; Matthew Arnold, Hamptworth Golf & Country Club, AGK; Storm Ashby, Ferndown, AGK; Anthony, Garner, Royal Jersey, GK; Max Gibbons, Royal Winchester, G; Andrew Green, Ross-on-Wye, GK; Rhys Hanscombe, Waterlooville, APP; Martin Jennings, Paultons Golf Centre, AGK; Tom Martin, Ferndown, APP; Kevin Mingo, Thurlestone, AGK; Atley Stacey Day, Farrington Park, AGK; Samuel Trott, Weymouth, AGK; Drew Van Der Niet, Royal Jersey, GK; Donna Weeks, St Mellion Hotel G&CC, APP; Kieron Witchard, Farrington Park, AGK

International

Steve Austin, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; JJ Bennett, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Danny Carter, Links Leuk Golf Resort, I; Che Flaherty, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Alan Kinsella, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Cathal Lee, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Alexander Lehane, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Alistair MacFadyen, The Bluffs Grand Ho Tram Strip, I; Mark McCarthy, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Alan O'Dwyer, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Eoin O'Brien, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Adam O'Dwyer, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Barry Quinlan, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Sergei Quinn, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Martin Rafferty, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Jack Reidy, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Cian Ryan, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S; Cormac Walsh, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, S

Meet the Robinsons...

Northern Ireland



The best wishes of everyone at the association go to Peter and Jayne Robinson who were married at Lusty Beg Island on 2 July 2021.

Peter is course manager at PGA National Ireland Slieve Russell in County Cavan, while Jayne is a primary school teacher.

...and the Rileys

Northern - North West



Congratulations go to Andy and Deb Riley, who married at Windermere's Cragwood Country House on 29 June after a lifetime of knowing each other.

Andy is deputy course manager at Warrington and everyone at the association wishes them all the happiness in the world.



Apologies

Northern - North Wales

Greenkeeper International would like to apologise to Tony Mash from Vale of Llangollen after misspelling his name in July's magazine.

Tony shot a hole-in-one during the first North Wales Section golf day following lockdown at Holyhead GC.

South West job moves

SW&SW

There has been plenty of movement in the SW&SW section with members taking on new challenges.

Seb Cavilla has moved from Chippenham after eight and a half years to become deputy at Lansdown.

Adam Baldwin has moved from Lilley Brook after six years to become course manager at Painswick.

John Stewart has moved from Cotswold Hills after 17 years to become deputy courses manager at Minchinhampton.

Best of luck to everyone who has changed course.

DOGS ON COURSE



Name: Angus

Breed: Jack Russell cross

Owner: Phil Wentworth

Course: Army GC

Favourite treat: Mini scotch eggs from staff

Favourite spot on the course: Anywhere in the sun on a seat

My dog is happiest when... Loves trying to attack running sprinkler heads and any hoses out watering

If you'd like your course mascot to be featured in GI, email Lorna Taylor on lorna@bigga.co.uk

THE SAVINGS SOON ADD UP

Warmer weather has arrived (hopefully)... and it's time to get grilling. BIGGA members can take advantage of these offers that can you save you money on your barbecue.



Make great savings on Charles Tyrwhitt\*

Looking to update your wardrobe for your next BBQ? Discover Charles Tyrwhitt's Summer range and get exclusive discounts. This offer is available online and in-store.



Save on BBQ essentials with TOTUM PRO

The TOTUM PRO discount card and app offers you access to discounts and offers from 350 UK retailers available in-store, online and via the TOTUM app\*. Here are some highlights on offers to help you make the most of your BBQ.



Get 25% off with The Cookaway\*

BIGGA members can cook up a storm, learn new flavours and travel the world through their cooking. Why not create a Spanish fiesta or explore our new BBQ box?

Choose one of their exciting global menus and they'll send you all the quality ingredients including the easy to follow instructions from their expert chefs. There's no subscriptions and free national delivery.



Home movie streaming for less with chili.com

Entertain your friends and family with the latest releases (plus 10,000 of your favourite movies) with Chili.com. As a BIGGA member, you can receive 17.5% off plus £10 gift voucher code for £8.25.



To take advantage of these fantastic deals visit the BIGGA Xtra Benefits Special Offers page!

\*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice and correct at time of print. Beer52 - Full terms at www.beer52.com/terms. BIGGA Xtra Benefits is managed and run on behalf of BIGGA by Parliament Hill Ltd.

MEMBER BENEFIT



THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION

Each month we meet a BIGGA member who works outside the United Kingdom to find out more about working practices in other countries. This month is the turn of:

Paul Fitzgerald | Castle GC | Ireland



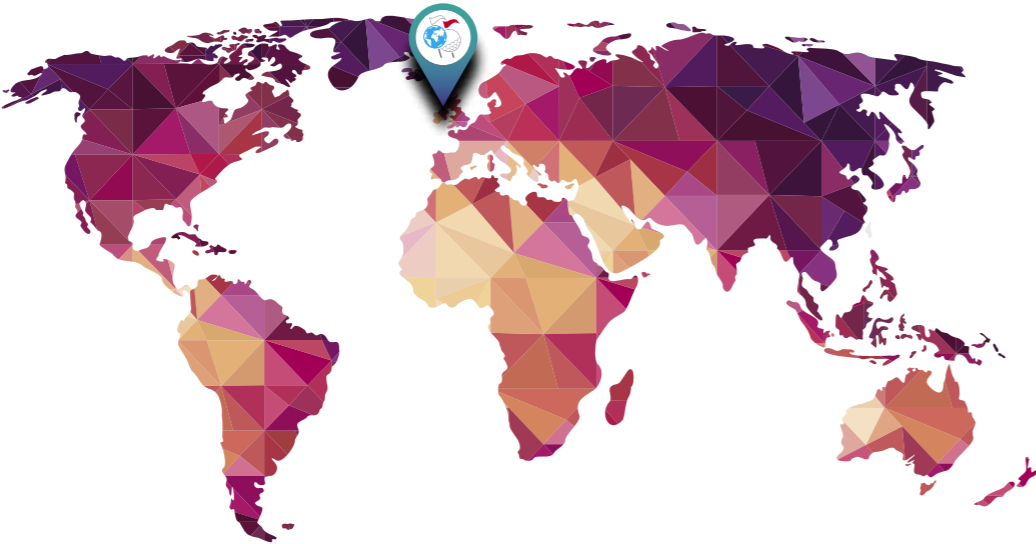
From left to right: Niall, James, Aiden, Thomas, Ross, David, Val and Paul

What makes you proud to be a greenkeeper?

Job satisfaction is huge when you get to see the fruits of your hard work. The team's work practices and projects change with the seasons so

our job never gets boring. Greenkeeping gives me an opportunity to work with flora and fauna and research good agronomic practices while playing some part in working with and protecting the environment.

Location: Ireland



How would you describe the style of the course you work at and what is its claim to fame?

Castle Golf Club is a private members' club just outside Dublin. Established in 1913, it is an 18-hole Harry Colt-designed parkland course with heavy bunkering and tree-lined fairways.

It is a par 70 measuring 6,221 yards. Castle has recently been rated #64 in the top 100 courses in Ireland.

We also have a short game area "Valley Course" developed in 2008 with six holes.

Castle has held the Irish PGA championships on a number of occasions and many amateur events including the Irish Boys and Irish Girls championships.

In 2012 the club won the All Ireland Senior Cup, considered to be the most prestigious mens' interclub competition in Ireland.

What wildlife do you see on your course?

As a city club surrounded by residential properties you may be surprised to learn that on course wildlife include foxes, badgers, buzzards, sparrowhawks, egrets, herons



1st fairway



8th greens complex

and ducks, among all other standard wildlife of course.

What turfgrass species do you grow on your course and how are they impacted by your climate?

Here at Castle our greens are annual meadowgrass/ Colonial browntop bent (80%/20%). We are trying to encourage more bentgrasses into our greens.

Our tees are ryegrass/ fescue and on our fairways we are working on an annual overseeding programme to introduce rye and fescue.

How closely do you and your team work and interact with your members?

It's extremely important that the course staff have good relations with the members and are always sure to inform them of any course activity they might ask about. The members at Castle are always friendly to the staff and make it clear how appreciative they are of our hard work.

I would always encourage my staff to be courteous to our members. I make it my business to be around the clubhouse at least once a day

to greet and chat to our members and answer any questions they might have on course activity.

The course staff also submit photos of course activity for the club's weekly newsletter to our members.

I have recently done a presentation to the members on "greens only maintenance" across Zoom, when I believe over 200 members logged on.

What have you learnt through being a member of BIGGA?

I have been an international member of BIGGA for over 20 years. I get so much from the monthly magazine because it relates directly to my work as course superintendent.

I have been a regular attendee of Continue to Learn in Harrogate in recent years and

I must say that I found the 2020 show extremely enjoyable. I brought my deputy superintendent and first assistant along and it gave them a positive insight into the direction that the greenkeeping industry is heading.

What one tip would you give British greenkeepers that you have learnt in your country?

Sharing information and communicating with your members is paramount so strive to find the balance between good agronomy practices and good customer satisfaction. Put yourself out there, embrace situations, be more proactive towards course projects and maintenance criteria.



7th greens complex

## Apprentice Corner

Brought to you by the Greenkeepers Training Committee

# Switching or brushing

The switching or brushing of playing surfaces is a regular task carried out by greenkeepers and is likely to be the first task carried out in the working day.

There are many reasons for this work, but the most important are:

- / The removal of early morning dew helps prevent disease. Fungal diseases such as Fusarium spread quickly on wet leaf surfaces
- / To improve the playing surface. A dew-covered turf will slow down the roll of the ball and may be slippery for players
- / Brushing also helps to lift up the grass before mowing, therefore giving a better quality of cut
- / During the spring and autumn months when earthworms are most active, switching or brushing will remove the casts prior to mowing or play
- / Switching or brushing allows the greenkeeper to inspect

the turf surface before mowing. Items such as metal studs and stones can be spotted and removed, reducing mower damage

- / Brushing is often carried out after topdressing or fertiliser applications to help work

the material into the grass surface

- / On golf green surfaces it is important to pay careful attention to switching or brushing areas of the green near bunkers, as players can splash sand and small stones



- out of the bunker and on to the green surface. These materials could badly damage mower cutting units.
- / Should trees surround the sports surface, then leaf removal may be another important brushing task in autumn.

## Timing of operation

Switching or brushing should be carried out as early in the morning as possible to ensure that the surface is in a suitable condition for the players.

## Some types of equipment used for switching and brushing:

- / Switch with fibreglass rod
- / Dew brush
  - / A dew brush is supplied in two halves which fit together to form a 3m brush
- / GreensGroomer brush
  - / A GreensGroomer brush is designed to quickly work topdressings into grass and synthetic surfaces

## Bonus points: Are golfers allowed to remove dew?

Generally, golfers are not allowed to remove dew from the putting surface prior to taking their shot. Removing dew, frost or water is seen as improving the lie and isn't allowed. Nor is dew considered temporary water and so no relief is allowed. The exception is on the tee, when dew can be removed to improve the lie. In all other areas, it's your fault for teeing off before the greenkeepers have been able to clear the greens of dew!

This information is taken from the GTC's Learning Materials, available to purchase on the GTC website. The GTC produces Learning Materials to support apprentices with the knowledge required to achieve their qualifications. These materials are not exclusive to apprentices and are available to all to help with best practice. Head to [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk) for more information.



## Meet your Learning and Development Team



**Sami Strutt**  
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**Fiona Lyttle**  
L&D Executive (GTC)  
[fiona@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:fiona@the-gtc.co.uk)

Congratulations to the following BIGGA members who have achieved their Level 2 Certificate in Golf Greenkeeping

Keane Barson, Styrrup Hall; Matthew Bowers, Glen Gorse; Jack Coombes, West Herts; Joshua Cramp, Garon Park; Richard Cutts, Dale Hill Hotel and Golf Club; Callan Gent, Dale Hill Hotel and Golf Club; Edward George, Queenwood; Ben Hammond, Woburn; Drew Hodsdon, Hythe; Matthew Hunt, Porters Park; Viktor Ivanov, The Wisley; Brittany Lennon, Beauport Golf and Country Club; Daniel Mackenzie, Canons Brook; Chris Manley, Mid Kent; Logan Pymm, Sheerness; Rob Sewell, East Brighton; Chris Shepherd, The Richmond; Adam Wate, Howley Hall Golf Course; Connor Winter, Orpington Golf Centre

[www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)

/greenkeepers trainingcommittee

@TheOfficialGTC

# ICL CONTINUE TO LEARN SCHOLARSHIP

## 2022

**As we plan to return to Harrogate in January, we're pleased to announce that applications for the ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship 2022 are now open.**

Now in its sixth year, ICL and BIGGA are seeking five BIGGA members to take up the 2022 scholarship.

The scholarship comprises a comprehensive Continue to Learn education package, three nights'

accommodation, visits to the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition (BTME) and networking opportunities with fellow greenkeepers and the sponsor.

"For BIGGA members serious about their education and progressing in their career, this scholarship provides a fantastic opportunity to develop both personal and professional skills" said Sami Strutt, BIGGA's head of learning and

development. "To date, ICL has supported 25 BIGGA members through this scholarship and we are immensely grateful for their continued support and investment in the greenkeeping industry"

The 2021 scholars had a very different Continue to Learn experience to normal as the education programme moved online. Instead of making the trip to Harrogate, the first coronavirus lockdown meant they experienced the education from their own homes or workplaces, having received a package that included both the virtual conference and a series of online Continue to Learn classes.

The scholars definitely endorse the experience and, thanks to ICL, they will get to meet each other in person as they have also been invited to make the trip to Harrogate to attend Continue to Learn at BTME 2022.

Ed Carter, UK sales and development manager at ICL said: "We are delighted to be sponsoring the scholarship scheme again in 2022, which will be the sixth year we've been involved. Taking a step »

“When I received the email saying I was one of five selected for the scholarship I was completely stunned. I think I read the email five times just to make sure it was actually true. I cannot begin to thank ICL and BIGGA enough for the opportunity, I will honestly never forget it.

James Matthewman, deputy head greenkeeper, Maesteg Golf Club

“I think it's important at the early stages of your career to attend as many educational events as possible so as to build knowledge quickly and have this tie in with the practical work you're doing on course. I'd highly recommend applying to anyone who is wanting to develop their greenkeeping career.”

Laura Sayer-Hall, Greenkeeper, Ardfin Golf Club



ICL Scholars of 2020 at BTME



# APPLY TODAY

back, that means 25 greenkeepers have experienced a total of 375 hours of education and 75 nights' accommodation at BTME, which is amazing. As always, it's brilliant to be able to support a scheme that allows greenkeepers to have the Harrogate experience, who otherwise may not have been able to make it."

## What you need to do now

The application process invites applicants to consider why BTME and Continue to Learn are important to the industry and how it will help you achieve your career aspirations. You are also asked to explain why you should be awarded the scholarship.

Applicants should be full greenkeeper members of BIGGA and be CPD active.

Continue to Learn at BTME 2022 takes place from Sunday 23 to Wednesday 26 January at Harrogate Convention Centre.

## How to Apply

To apply, simply scan the QR Code or visit [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ICLC2L2022](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ICLC2L2022)



Applications close at 5pm on Tuesday 31 August 2021. The selected scholars will be announced in Greenkeeper International.

It should be noted that the scholars will be expected to meet the costs of their travel, meals and other personal expenses during the experience.

For further information about becoming CPD active, visit [www.bigga.org.uk/education/continuing-professional-development.html](http://www.bigga.org.uk/education/continuing-professional-development.html)



## Congratulations to the following members who achieved CPD Approved status this month:

- / Craig MacEachen, Murcar Links
- / Yannick Webber, Golf Club Schonenberg
- / Matthew Clarke, Surbiton
- / Gregg Hood, St Andrews Links
- / Richard Johnstone, Nairn Dunbar
- / Matt Kitson, Royal Mid-Surrey
- / Roy Eaton, Dulwich & Sydenham
- / John Kemp, GEO Foundation
- / Nick Staff, Aldeburgh
- / Grant Moran, Mortonhall
- / Nicholas Roberts, Hampstead
- / Allan Black, Royal Jersey

## Congratulations to the following members who achieved their CPD Milestone this month:

- / Scott McTaggart, Sandyhills
- / Simon Connah, St Andrews Links
- / Matthew Clarke, Surbiton
- / Gregg Hood, St Andrews Links
- / Matt Kitson, Royal Mid-Surrey

## Keep your CPD record up to date:

[www.bigga.org.uk/member-homepage/continuing-professional-development](http://www.bigga.org.uk/member-homepage/continuing-professional-development)



The ICL Scholars of 2019 at BTME alongside Ed Carter

# FUNDING YOUR FUTURE

BIGGA's Learning & Development Fund supports a vast array of educational opportunities for BIGGA members. From subsidies, scholarships and refunds of fees to seminars, workshops and conferences, the funds generated by BIGGA Education Supporters improve education in the greenkeeping industry every single day. We ask BIGGA members to continue to support those companies that are committed to supporting you on your career journey.



Individual Contributors: Steven Tierney MG | Andrew Campbell MG CGCS | Richard McGlynn | Jaey Goodchild  
Frank Newberry | Greg Evans MG | Jon Kiger



# ECOLOGY ROUNDUP

James Hutchinson | Membership Services Manager (Ecology & Sustainability)

I would like to introduce you to three organisms that can help you with the holistic thinning of your roughs, while adding a dash of colour to an otherwise green landscape.

While your cut, collect and scarify programme will work a treat on problem roughs, there are some little extras that can take it to the next level with minimal time and effort — these are semi-parasitic wildflowers.

It's probably best to mention how they work at this point. Parasitic flowers take food from our over-eating friends, the fleshy grasses such as Yorkshire fog and meadow vars, to the point where these types just don't grow any more. The best part is, they tend to avoid fescues and bents as they have fewer nutrients in them.

First on the list of beneficial species is a personal favourite, the yellow rattle — so called because it's yellow and it rattles. Biologists often name nature in that way and other examples are red underwing moth and whitethroat bird, which are self-explanatory!

Yellow rattle is an easy-on-the-eye wildflower that can be found in grasslands that are a little rank and full of fat-leaved grasses. It can be sown into problem areas where rough

management is being carried out. But a word of warning: although they can make a foothold within a few seasons, it may take a few more for fine grasses to come through.

Red bartsia is another beauty. With its crimson and burgundy tinges, look out for this one on links courses where nutrient content is low. Similar to the rattle, this chap taps into the roots of nearby grasses and takes their nutrients, thus thinning out a grassland.

Eyebright is another belter and one I see on the majority of courses I visit (over 400 now), but it is barely noticeable given its miniscule size. There are about 20 different kinds and another 60 different hybrids, which are all difficult to tell apart. Knowing that, I'd just admire this tiny but formidable beauty if you



have it. Unfortunately I don't have a photo as my camera won't focus on such a small flower!

Be aware that nature is in no rush. If you decide to use these wildflowers on your golf course then it will take time, but you'll get there eventually.

I always suggest trialling a few areas to see what works best for you and your site.

As always, keep me informed and let me know if I can help further.



Ecology Roundup is kindly sponsored by



**Don't forget** You can read more from James on the BIGGA website. Visit [www.bigga.org.uk/about/green/ecology-bulletin.html](http://www.bigga.org.uk/about/green/ecology-bulletin.html) or scan the QR code



AR530

## ALL TERRAIN. ALL YOU NEED.

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Designed with TRUEDECK™ heavy-duty contouring decks, with best in class clippings distribution and superior after-cut quality, it climbs hills and contours smoothly, eliminating the risk of scalping.

The AR530 offers quick and easy deck adjustments and a trustworthy Kubota® engine you can rely on.

For information and support:  
[www.jacobsen.com](http://www.jacobsen.com)



CUT WIDTH <b>90"</b> (2.3M)	CUT HEIGHT <b>0.75" - 4.5"</b> (19MM - 114MM) 0.25" (6MM) INCREMENTS	CUTTING CAPACITY <b>UP TO 5.66 AC</b> (2.29HA) / HR AT 7MPH (11.26KPH)
FUEL CAPACITY <b>17 GAL</b> (64.2L)	MOWER ENGINE <b>KUBOTA® 50.2HP</b> (37.4KW) DIESEL	TRANSPORT SPEED <b>12 MPH</b> (19.3KPH)



Image courtesy of Ash Youd Photography

# Working in the sun

How working outdoors can impact your health more than you may realise

Jesper Dahl, British Chiropractic Association

There’s much to enjoy about greenkeeping, such as working outdoors and getting a daily dose of fresh air.

However, even the fittest of workers can feel the impact of the heat on their bodies if they don’t take the necessary steps to look after themselves.

Jesper Dahl, chiropractor in Kent and member of the British Chiropractic Association, has shared his top tips to prevent the effects of working in the sun from getting between you and achieving your goals.

## 1. Shield from the sun

While you may not feel any pain in your muscles throughout the day, heat cramps can arise quickly due to your body’s low salt levels. It’s important to be mindful of the time you spend in the sun to help reduce the likelihood of heat cramps happening.

When the sun is especially

punishing, keep yourself protected from its rays by wearing cool, loose-fitting clothing in light-coloured fabrics. These breathable fabrics will help your body maintain a healthy temperature. It is also a good idea to take regular breaks throughout your day and, if possible, move some of your tasks into shaded areas to reduce the amount of time that you spend in the sun.

“While you may not feel any pain in your muscles throughout the day, heat cramps can arise quickly due to your body’s low salt levels.

## 2. Drink up!

Hydrate, hydrate and hydrate some more! It is not a well-known fact, but dehydration can cause a decrease in your work performance due to muscle fatigue brought on by fluid loss. Greenkeepers often spend most of their time in the summer months working and walking in the sun, so a good tip is to always keep a bottle of water with you and aim to drink every 15 to 20 minutes.

## 3. Eat right

If you are working in the heat, avoid a heavy lunch, especially protein-rich meats. You are better off with smaller snacks and light meals throughout the day as your body creates more metabolic

heat if it is breaking down heavy foods.

Try and include plenty of leafy green vegetables or fresh fruit and nuts in your lunches too, to help replenish your electrolytes and salts, which are lost through physical work.

And, while it may seem counter-intuitive, spicy food can also cool you down, as it stimulates heat receptors in your mouth, enhancing



Gary Tonge rakes a bunker on 18 after shots by Justin Thomas and Adam Scott at The Open held at Royal St George's

circulation and causing you to sweat, which is your body’s natural way of cooling.

## 4. Let your body acclimatise

It’s perfectly normal for your body to need time to adjust to changes in temperature. When you notice a temperature rise, listen to your body and moderate your tasks so you’re working at a pace that suits you.

## 5. Mix up your schedule

If you can start your day a bit earlier and get the most

physically demanding parts of the job out of the way before the midday sun ramps up, your body will be much happier in the late afternoon. An earlier start means you will have to endure less heat, but you can also consider a schedule that puts part of your day into the cooler part of the evening.

## Continue the conversation

To contact the British Chiropractic Association on Twitter, use @ChiropracticUK

**Read this for:**

- / Personal health
- / Allergies
- / Skin safety

Sally Duffin, registered nutritionist

Stress is a big disruptor of histamine »



# SUMMER HEALTH RECIPES

### Watermelon smoothie:

Add 2-3 cups of watermelon chunks to a blender with 300ml coconut water and blend until smooth.

### Avocado and chocolate mousse:

Blend together 1-2 avocados, 50g raw cacao powder and a generous drizzle of honey. Place the mixture in small dishes, chill for at least an hour, then top with pomegranate seeds before serving.

### Summer salad:

Combine lightly steamed broccoli florets with grated carrot and pomegranate seeds. Dress with lemon juice, olive oil and black pepper. Serve with chicken, fish, hard boiled eggs or houmous.

**Fruit salad:**

Combine freshly chopped raspberries, strawberries and red grapes. Top with grated dark chocolate and a drizzle of fresh cream (dairy or non-dairy).

“ Certain foods naturally contain a lot of histamine and reducing or avoiding these foods can be helpful as it reduces the histamine load in the body.

balance as it interferes with histamine levels and the rate at which it can be detoxified. Hormonal changes are another factor and some women find hayfever symptoms to be worse around the time of their periods or during menopause.

Certain foods naturally contain a lot of histamine and reducing or avoiding these foods can be helpful as it reduces the histamine load in the body.

There are still plenty of foods that can be eaten when dealing with high histamine. Fresh meat and fish, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, pulses, and most wholegrains are all absolutely fine.

Foods naturally rich in vitamin C can help process histamine: opt for watercress, broccoli, citrus fruits, blueberries, parsley, and peppers. Other key nutrients for histamine detoxification include magnesium (found in almonds, buckwheat and dark green vegetables) and vitamin B6 – fresh poultry, fresh fish, sunflower seeds, and hazelnuts are all good sources.

Apples, onions, and cherries are rich sources of an antioxidant nutrient called

quercetin. This works alongside vitamin C offering antihistamine protection, and you may even find it included in some vitamin C supplements.

General immune support is also useful for managing seasonal allergies. The immune response is modulated by the beneficial bacteria living in the digestive system, known as the gut microbiota. These microbes work alongside vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin, to influence and regulate the immune system. The gut bugs love fibre-rich foods like oats, apples, bananas, root vegetables, onions, garlic and asparagus. Including plenty of these foods each day ensures the microbes have regular sources of fibre to feed upon.

Vitamin D levels are commonly low in the UK due to our erratic weather. And when we do get sunny summer days, we smother ourselves in sunblock that prevents the manufacture of vitamin D in our skin. Food sources include oily fish, eggs, butter, and mushrooms (particularly sun-dried mushrooms) but it isn't possible to correct a deficiency through foods alone and many people require a supplement even during summer.

## Sun exposure

We are all familiar with the pain and irritation of sunburn, but did you know that sunburn can cause alterations to the DNA in skin cells, which can be the start of skin cancer? Sun damage also breaks down collagen in the skin. Collagen keeps skin plump and smooth, which is why sun damage accelerates the appearance of wrinkles and sagging skin. Using sun cream is important for external protection and there are nutrients that can act as internal sunscreen too. These nutrients don't directly protect against sunburn but do help skin cope with the



## HISTAMINE FOODS

- / Fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir.
- / Alcohol: Red wine is highest in histamine, followed by white wine, cider and beer. Spirits are lower but do still contain histamine.
- / Vinegars and pickles.
- / Preserved meats such as salami and pepperoni.
- / Tinned fish.
- / Smoked or aged meat, fish and cheese.
- / Tea (black and green) can interfere with histamine processing



damage and inflammation wrought by sun exposure.

Several research studies focus on the benefits of carotenoids found in red, orange, yellow and green fruits and vegetables. Tomatoes, for example, are packed with lycopene, a powerful antioxidant which is even easier to absorb when the tomatoes are cooked and processed in some way such as in tomato soup, sauce, or roasted tomatoes.

Spinach, broccoli, edible marigold flowers, yellow peppers, parsley, and peas provide lutein, an antioxidant that

“Coconut water is a natural source of electrolytes and tastes great on its own or blended with fresh fruit.”

protects both skin and eyes from UV light damage. Other skin protective foods include pomegranate, watermelon, avocado, green tea, red grapes, kale and cocoa.

If you're working hard in the heat and sweating a lot, it's important to stay hydrated with plenty of water and remember to replenish electrolyte minerals like magnesium and potassium. Coconut water is a natural source of electrolytes and tastes great on its own or blended with fresh fruit.

**Continue the conversation:**

Sally Duffin is on Twitter at @nutritioninyork

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**PROUDLY BRITISH**



Grahame Taylor and Era van Zyl

# PRODUCING DUMBARNIE LINKS

Meet the team behind Fife's latest masterpiece

Karl Hansell, BIGGA

## Location: Fife



**Much has been written about Dumbarnie Links since its opening in May 2020.**

The golfing press gets incredibly excited when a new course opens, especially when it's a premium links layout in Fife. This month Dumbarnie will host the Women's Scottish Open, marking the culmination of an incredible journey for Course Manager Grahame Taylor, Deputy Era van Zyl and the agronomy team.

We wanted to find out the story behind the headlines, so we spoke to Grahame and Era about what it took to get the course into the incredible condition it is in today.

### Read this for:

- / Course construction
- / Links
- / Personal presentation

Grahame, 43, was the first cog in the Dumbarnie team and joined from St Andrews Links, where he had been supervisor on the Old Course, in June 2018. He brought with him Era van Zyl, formerly of the Castle Course in St Andrews, marking a clear statement of intent from the course developers.

Dumbarnie Links was designed by former Ryder Cup player, Clive Clark and project managed by Paul Kimber. The club is managed by O.B. Sports Golf Management of Scottsdale, Arizona. The 345-acre site is maintained by 19 greenkeepers and lies within the 5,000-acre Balcarres Estate, with over a mile and a half of sea frontage brushing the links up against the Firth of Forth. It is situated between the links at Lundin and the Golf House Club at Elie and

like Kingsbarns, the landscape is entirely sculpted by man, including the creation of 600 dunes. In 12 weeks, the construction team shifted a total of 600,000 cubic metres of soil.

Fife residents can play for £98 and Scottish residents for £125, but with peak green fees sitting at £258, it meant all those good reviews soon after the course opened were pivotal to the marketing strategy of the venue.

The publicity was a resounding success and between its opening in May 2020 and December that year the club hosted in excess of 15,000 rounds. That has continued and in the first six months of this year 10,000 rounds were played, despite restrictions on travel limiting the number of overseas tourists able to visit.

As a multimillion-pound »

## IN THE SHED

## The Team

- / Grahame Taylor, course manager
- / Era van Zyl, deputy course manager
- / Jamie Christie, mechanic
- / Chris Gilchrist, greenkeeper
- / Dean Cormack, greenkeeper
- / Graeme Davidson, supervisor
- / John Bowers, greenkeeper
- / Michael Hughes, greenkeeper
- / Michael Walker, greenkeeper
- / Robert Richards, greenkeeper
- / Lee Snaddon, greenkeeper
- / Jeff Palmer, greenkeeper
- / Neil Latto, greenkeeper
- / Steven Melville, greenkeeper
- / Kenny Reid, Seasonal greenkeeper
- / Dave Hutcheson, greenkeeper
- / Keiron Wilson, seasonal greenkeeper
- / Connor Anderson, seasonal greenkeeper
- / Hugh Greenhill, seasonal greenkeeper

## Major Equipment

- / John Deere fleet
- / 220s
- / 2750s
- / 7500s
- / 7400
- / 9009




project, ambitions for Dumbarnie had always been towards the upper tier of venues, with the aim of hosting a televised event within five years of opening. To be awarded a tournament within the first year was in part testament to the incredible work of the agronomy team.

Having worked at many top venues, Grahame Taylor was not fazed by the challenge. He described the career journey that brought him to the Dumbarnie project.

"I always wanted to work on the Old Course," said Grahame. "I started at Leven Links and it was always an ambition of mine to work on the Old Course for an Open. I was on the Castle, the New and the Jubilee, but I loved everything about the Old Course."

Grahame has also gained experience on different grass species, at Gleneagles working towards the 2014 Ryder Cup and on warm season grasses in Southern Spain.

"My motivation comes from producing the highest standards possible after working on some great high-end courses and working at the biggest tournaments," he said. "And my ambition is to produce one of the best out there . There's obviously a limit to what you can do with routine maintenance on

 You have to control the controllables

established courses. You have to maintain it, and do that daily to a high standard, which is also very motivating itself, but the opportunity to come and grow-in Dumbarnie was something off the scale."

Grahame was appointed to the Dumbarnie Links role following a successful interview with O.B. Sports Senior Vice President Luke Beardmore, which included a tour of the Old Course and Dumbarnie just as construction was getting started.

"My interview went very well with Luke. I think good

preparation is sound advice if you're going to make a good impression," said Grahame. "We have a great working relationship, I'd say the main part of this job is being a good leader, along with planning and organisational skills. If you're good at planning and you're organised, you're on the right road."

One of the first steps in the journey was the opportunity to select a team from scratch. Grahame explained the hiring process and what he looks for in a candidate. He said: "If you were to tell any course manager that they could hand pick every member of their team, they'd jump at the chance. We advertised and picked the right candidates and fair play to the team



Hole 3 is a risk and reward hole, which is a major part of the Dumbarnie philosophy

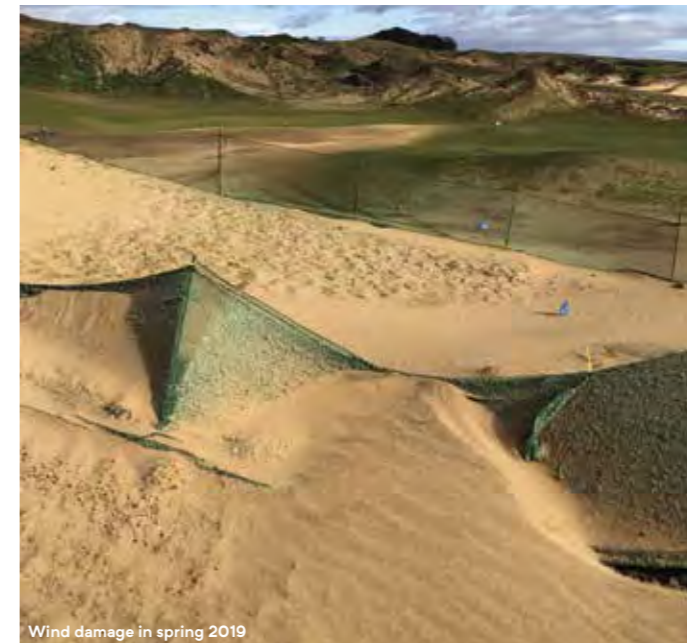
because they took a risk coming out of secure jobs to a new development, but they had the vision to see that this could be something exciting.”

Era added: "Every single one of them is so passionate about the place because they built it."

Era, 42, embodies that spirit. A South African who moved to Scotland in 1998, he began his career in golf as a caddie at St Andrews, then Kingsbarns, before becoming a greenkeeper on the Castle Course. He was one of Grahame's first recruits at Dumbarnie Links.

"All I'm looking for is a good positive attitude, a hard worker," said Grahame. "You can teach all of the rest. It doesn't matter about the skillset or what they need to be taught, if they've got a good attitude and they want to work, we'll give them a chance here at Dumbarnie."

Dumbarnie Links is  
constructed on indigenous



### Wind damage in spring 2019

sand, including the greens where the developers resisted the temptation to install USGA-standard greens in favour of a more traditional construction. The grass sward is primarily fescue, although Grahame insisted on the use of some bentgrass on the greens and surrounds. This

gives a good blend to the sward, while also ensuring the greens don't become too lean.

The Toro irrigation system covers 20 hectares of playing surfaces and grass walkways, and ensures 100% grass coverage of the site.

"The walkways are pure ryegrass, so they have to be

managed differently to our fescue surfaces,” said Era. “They’re one of the biggest challenges actually, because they’re very narrow and built on indigenous sand, but they look great and everybody loves narrow grass walkways that feed through the dunes.”

Establishing turf on the site has proved to be the most difficult challenge, particularly as the freshly-sculpted sand dunes had a habit of shifting in high winds.

"The one thing that always springs to my mind during the grow-in was the spring of 2019," explained Grahame. "We were at the stage of the grow-in where the playing surfaces were grassed, although still very young. The sand dunes were constructed of fine sands but we always get a windy, dry spell in spring and so when that came in 2019, the sand blew off the dunes. It completely buried the second fairway, we lost three greens and we had to »

+  

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reseed them.”

“It was not a fun experience at all,” added Era.

“Kudos to the team,” continued Grahame. “They had to work very hard in what felt like a warzone out there.

“There were fences and netting everywhere to try and act like a windbreak. It was almost like we had to start working backwards by getting grass on the sand dunes first.

“We had static sprinklers and hoses running, just to try and get grass coverage on them, which we managed .

“A grow-in is not for the faint-hearted. You have to control the controllables and take charge of the whole situation. Playing surfaces with irrigation are within our control, but the dunes were more of a challenge.”

Era interjected: “To make progress every day you cannot wait on perfect conditions.”

Grahame continued: “You must have a ‘just get it done’ attitude or you’ll still be waiting months later. It’s about taking control and being aggressive with a grow-in.”

The design has been praised for offering a strong element of fun, with a classic risk and reward layout and raised tees with holes that open out in front of you. Fourteen holes offering views of the Firth of Forth also make for a spectacular setting.

“Where I would have an input was purely giving advice from a maintenance point of view on things such as surface contours,” said Grahame. “So, we did get input into the shape of the golf course, just from a maintenance perspective.”

The ability to have high level discussions with multiple different sub-contractors is key to a successful grow-in, presenting yourself in a way those people can relate to and respect.

“I really enjoy going into high level meetings,” said Grahame, “I saw it as my role to represent the business in any meetings that took place.



Dumbarrie Links' 16th green

“A huge part of the role is being tenacious and I say that to my guys. And from the minute you drive in that front gate, it’s about being respectful and behaving, dressing and acting the right way. You’ve got to promote a professional image as you’re representing our industry. The customers and the wider world are going to see our team, so we’re quite big on that.”

With the course open and receiving spectacular reviews, the greenkeeping team could sit back and revel in their success. It will come as no surprise though to hear that isn’t the case.

“We’re never done,” said Grahame. “We’re getting great reviews and that is fantastic, but we want to keep progressing. Era and I are made up differently but we complement each other very well as a management team.

“We’re both the same in that we’ve got a sharp eye and we can see what needs to be done to improve the course.

“And there’s so much more that we want to do to keep making it better. In our terminology, we are looking to get as close to perfection as we can.”

“But even if we reach perfection today, tomorrow it’s not perfect any more,” said Era. “You can’t keep it there, it’s impossible because golf courses are living things that constantly change. That’s why you can never take your eye off the ball because the grass doesn’t stop growing.”

All that hard work and dedication paid off when the club was awarded the Trust Golf Women’s Scottish Open, taking place this month.

“I took it as a compliment of how well the team has done,” said Grahame. “It makes me feel proud of what we’ve achieved.”

“There’s not many people that can say they’ve done that, basically,” said Era.

Grahame added: “Honestly, the tournament could be hosted out there today. The

course is maintained to a high standard, so all you’re doing is increasing the frequency of cuts for the tournament. I like to maintain the course to a high standard from day-to-day for our customers so there’s not really much to change.

“We’ll have to be a little cautious prepping the course for the tournament and yeah we’ll cut and roll every day, most likely. But the week before, there needs to be some common sense to make sure we don’t overstep the mark or there’ll be too much stress on the surfaces. It’s all about finding the right balance. It’s still very young out there, and it has to be treated tenderly.”

And then what is the plan for after the event?

“We continue to work hard and keep getting better,” said Grahame.

**Continue the conversation:**

Grahame and Era are on Twitter at @GT511 and @erajvz

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# BEHIND THE SCENES

The unseen story of the 149th Open at Royal St George's  
Karl Hansell, BIGGA

**The Open is intended to be the ultimate challenge for golfers on this side of the Atlantic. Up against the world's leading players on some of the toughest links venues anywhere, in all conditions, only the absolute best earn the title of Champion Golfer of the Year on the Sunday evening.**

The same could be said from an agronomic perspective, with the very highest of standards expected for the championship and The R&A expecting only the best from its host venues.

It's for this reason that eight fully trained greenkeepers — including course managers at some of the country's top venues — took three hours each morning to prepare the bunkers for play. It's why the rough was left to grow for two years prior to the championship, with the outspoken Bryson DeChambeau calling it "diabolical" but a good test for the entire field. Or why the greenkeepers literally torched the faces of revetted bunkers to ensure there were no weeds growing outwards.

Over the following pages we've tried to bring you a view behind the scenes of the activities of the greenkeepers, mechanics and agronomists who worked together to help deliver The Open.

### Morning set up

Each morning the greens were hand

mown by 14 greenkeepers working in teams of two. They'd double cut the greens and then each, along with the practice area, were measured by The R&A's team of agronomists. The measurements they recorded show the incredible standards the greenkeepers achieved for tournament week.

We caught up with R&A agronomist Richard Windows on the 9th green ahead of Friday's play and he told us how The R&A stimp greens, with some tips you could implement at your course.

Each day the agronomists stimped the greens on exactly the same spot, using a little black dot that went unnoticed the rest of the day by anyone else. They placed a plastic gardening tunnel in a line towards a set point — on the 9th this was a TV tower.

"That means any variability is because of changes in the turf or implemented greenkeeping actions, as opposed to the different directions," explained Richard. "We use the wind tunnel to ensure the effect of the wind is eliminated from the stimpmeter reading because even with a slight breeze, it could affect the stimpmeter by three to four inches. As the wind gets up the effect on the stimpmeter is higher, so we developed this simple garden tunnel system that, while cumbersome, works a treat."

Greenspeeds were measured in both

directions to gain an average for each putting surface. If the target speeds are not hit, the agronomists would ask the greenkeepers — who were stood waiting close by — to undertake another cut.

Richard said: "There's very little grass in the boxes, but each mowing operation provides a further polish to the greens and around 3 to 4 inches of green speed."

Here's an incredible fact: the agronomists were looking to record a variation of 6 inches or less across every putting surface on the course.

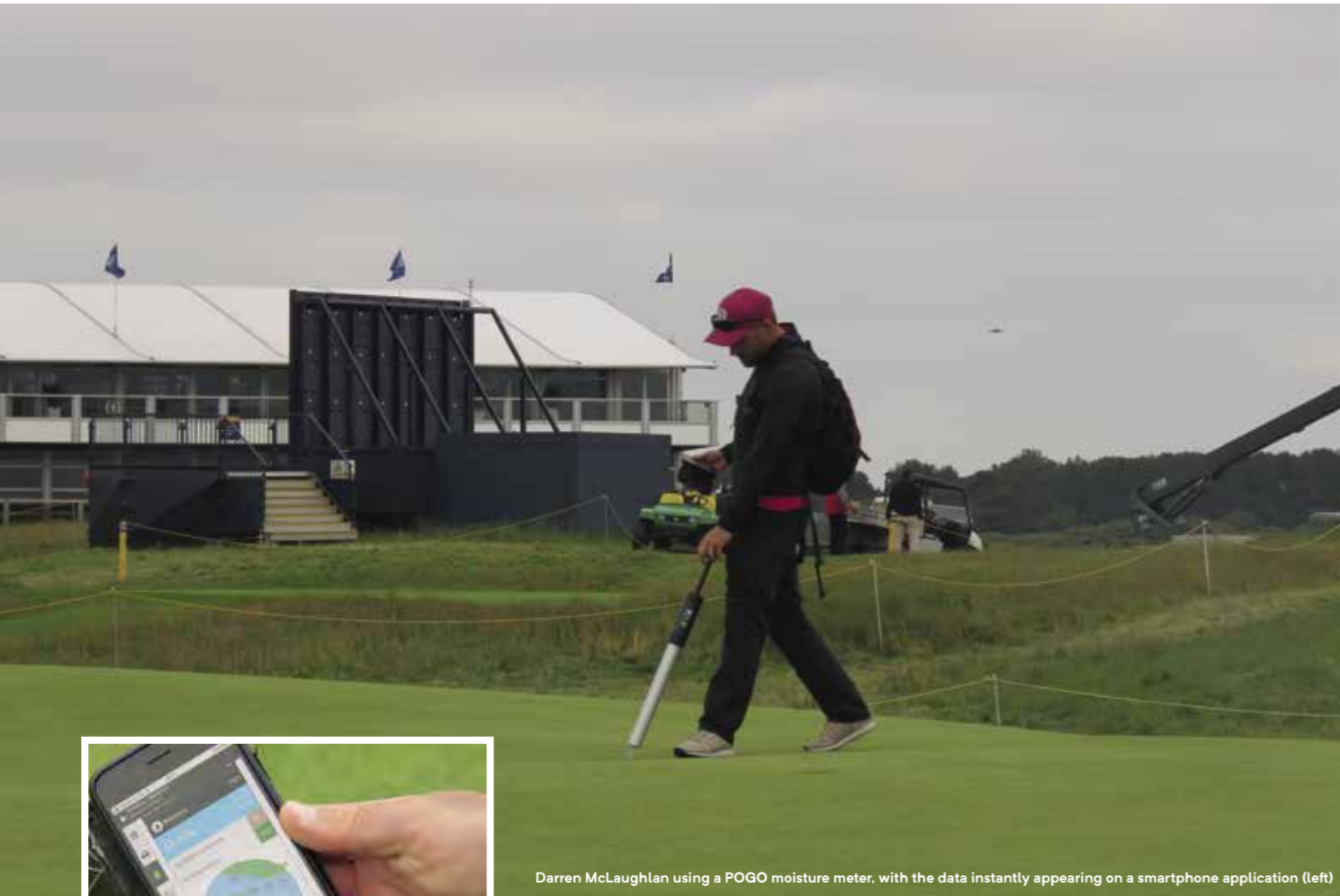
"There may be some greens, the 10th for instance, that we might leave a little slower because it's a little more exposed, but generally we're looking at between 0 and 6 inches," said Richard.

Each morning that information was distributed to the media and the players at 6am and we've repeated it in this feature. Firmness values were also released to give an indication of how receptive the greens will be. These are the intricate details that define a modern Open.

Richard added: "This is absolutely superb and there's nothing better than working at The Open. It's very much the pinnacle of the industry and working with the greenstaff at our venues is absolutely superb. It's an absolute privilege and just great fun." »



Golf, grandstands and greenkeepers at the 149th Open



Darren McLaughlan using a POGO moisture meter, with the data instantly appearing on a smartphone application (left)

There's a video of Richard measuring greenspeeds at The Open on BIGGA's Instagram page; scan the QR code to see this and other images.



Following behind Richard were Sam Sweetzer, deputy course manager at The Buckinghamshire, and Darren McLaughlan, course manager at North Berwick. Both are R&A Scholars and were tasked with recording firmness and moisture content on the greens. The Clegg Hammer and POGO moisture meter readings were loaded into an online database that gave the entire agronomy team an insight into exactly what was happening beneath the surface.

"You want it a little bit firmer for the bump and run style of golf, rather than the target golf you see on a parkland course," said Sam. "Figures we're looking for are in the region of 120 to 130 gravities and we're seeing really good consistency."

Also walking the entire course each morning was Alistair Beggs, head of agronomy at The R&A, and Royal St George's head greenkeeper Paul Larsen.

"We're walking the golf course hole by hole, quality checking the work that's been done ahead of us and making sure the morning prep is to the standard that we want for The Open," said Alistair. "The

greenkeepers are doing really well. The Open is a fantastic championship, the greatest major in the world, but we could not put it on without the greenkeepers and the dedication and expertise they show us, so we're very grateful for everything they do."

With the hole prepared to a satisfactory standard, the hole could be moved for that day's play. Placement was decided in advance by The R&A — not the home greenkeeping team — and the location was measured out by Grant Moir, Director – Rules, and Conor Finlay, Rules Manager. A mark on the turf was made to represent the centre of the hole and Dan Martin, greenkeeper at Royal St George's, stepped up.

He began by using a BMS holecutter



Dan Martin was responsible for changing the holes



Lee Westwood (centre) thanked the greenkeepers for their efforts via BIGGA's social media

to cut down to the correct height and then a full 30 degree twist ensured the core was free from the rest of the soil. Out came the holecutter and the core was used to repair yesterday's pin placement. Then Dan lightly brushed the turf with his finger in towards the hole and used curved gardening shears to trim the edge and ensure a neat cut. When high definition cameras and an audience of millions are soon watching, with players who can make worldwide headlines if they criticise your work, it's worth taking the time to ensure this is done well. A plain white plastic cup was then pressed into the hole, tapped to the correct depth using the flag. Another trim around the edge tidied up any dislodged leaves of grass and, satisfied that it was neat, Dan delicately laid a BMS hole painting stencil onto the hole. He then sprayed three coats of white paint, letting it dry between each application to prevent it from dripping. One final trim to ensure smooth edges around the rim and the flag is placed in the hole, which is finally ready for championship play.

You can watch a video of Royal St George's Dan Martin changing a hole on BIGGA's Instagram. Scan the QR code to find out more.



The mechanics

There was a team that started even earlier than the greenkeepers, so much so that they slept on camp beds in the greenkeeping facility for the duration of the event.

Adam White and his uncle, Gary

Sidders, are the resident mechanics at Royal St George's. They worked alongside Prince's mechanic Jon Bartlett, who was volunteering for the week, to ensure the machines were ready and waiting for the greenkeeping team ahead of each day's course set up.

"I've been sleeping in the facility on a fold out bed," said Adam, 34. "I wanted to be on site just in case something happened."

Adam was up at 3.30am to open the sheds and make sure the machines were ready. The greenkeepers would then arrive at 4am and head out on the »



Royal St George's mechanics Adam White and Gary Sidders alongside John Bartlett (left) who volunteered for the duration of The Open

Hi this is Lee Westwood and I just wanted to say a special thank you to all the greenkeepers out there, especially those who are helping us this week at The Open, raking bunkers. My wife is especially thankful to the gentleman [Jason Connaughton] who came with us in the first round. I gave him a lot of work, so thank you very much and keep up the good work!

Lee Westwood



course in the dark. With time tight, they prepared the 18th, 17th, 1st, 2nd and 3rd holes in that order, to ensure the greenkeepers were far enough away from the television cameras by the time the first golfers teed off.

Preparatory work from a machinery perspective had been taking place months in advance of the championship.

"Over winter we had everything in and ground everything, knowing we'd grind everything again just before the event,"

said Adam. "The last servicing we did was three weeks to a month beforehand because no matter how much you clean them around the grease point and the seal, when you start to run them you can get a little grease oozing out and the last thing you want is a grease mark on the green. So, we did the servicing early, gave them a check over — wheels off, units off, check everything through, make sure everything's done. You can never stop everything from breaking down, but you

“Thanks to all the greenkeepers out there and particularly those who have helped prepare Royal St George's for The Open.”

Alistair Beggs, Head of Agronomy at The R&A



can do your best."

To ensure COVID compliance, but also to keep an eye on who is doing what, each machine was assigned to a single greenkeeper. When their work was completed each morning, the mechanics again sprang into action to ensure each piece of kit was ready for the next shift.

"We have a group who go out to the practice range and cut the target greens out there," said Adam. "They're normally the first back in and as soon as they start coming back in, we will knock their machines off."

When mowers return in the morning they were checked for quality and height of cut using a digital gauge that can measure to 0.01mm. The machines were given a visual inspection, with the engines and belts double checked on the hand mowers.

"We're trying to get everything as spot on as we can," said Adam. "When we bench set the heights, the aim is to get them to exactly what they should be. People give a 0.05mm variant either way, but every time they come in we'll try and get them spot on. The trouble is, the tracks are so bumpy here that when the hand mowers are moved around on trailers, sometimes the blades have moved, but it's very minimal and we check them over."

Another issue that can emerge relates to the fact the mowers are taking off so little grass when they're being used.

"If you set your units too tight it can cause the cylinder and bedknife to get too hot where there's no contact with the grass," explained Adam. "We set them with very minimal contact on the Toro mowers and when they come back in there's very

little adjustment needed. The only issue is when they ping a stone or anything."

If that happens it can cause an imperfection in the knife, meaning the blade must be ground again. This was made easier due to the loan of two Bernhard demo grinders, while the team was also supported by other machinery manufacturers including four fairway mowers and seven Toro Flex 2120 walk behinds, bringing a total of 14 for use on the greens.

Other equipment used throughout the event included two Triflex mowers for the aprons, six pedestrian mowers for the target greens — including two loaned by John Deere — utility vehicles and three Baroness hand mowers loaned for the teeing areas. »



“Hey it's Pops here. I just want to say thank you to all the greenkeepers for your effort this week; the course is awesome. Starting at 4 and finishing at 10 like you do, those are some shifts fellas so thanks for everything you do to keep everything ship-shape.”

Nick Poppleton



Main image: Carlos Ortiz hits out of a bunker on the 11th hole  
Inset: Up to 30,000 spectators were on site each day

To signal that a machine was readied for use, lanyards were hung from the roll frame of ride on mowers using a magnet. If there was no lanyard, then the mower could not be used and the operator must find the mechanics for more information. Likewise, green pegs were clipped to the handles of hand mowers to show they were ready to go out. If there was a red peg, the machine wasn't prepared and shouldn't be used.

COVID also had an impact on the team, with mandatory tests every 48 hours and the mechanics eating

separately from the rest of the team. Leading up to the event the greenkeepers were working split shifts and those riding utility vehicles had to wear facemasks. Once a greenkeeper finished with their mower they sanitised the steering wheel and other contact points.

But on the whole, things were surprisingly normal and the mechanics could enjoy their experience, having a good laugh at Jon when he fell off his bike on the way back to Prince's to complete his duties there or having a quick chat with the players as they



The Royal St George's team

“I just want to say thanks to the greenstaff for all the work you’ve done this week. All the players are delighted with the conditions and obviously getting in at 3.30 in the morning pays its dividends so good luck and all the best.

Pete Cowen, renowned golf coach



A wind tunnel is used when stimping for a more accurate reading

passed by the end of the building on their way to the first tee.

“It's gone as smoothly as it could have,” said Adam. “Coming into it prepared and with a system in place has helped that. When you've so many machines, if you don't have a system of checking things over, you will struggle.

“The support staff have also been absolutely brilliant. We've got course managers from some other big clubs and they're getting stuck in. They are a real good mix of people, everyone has got on and done what's asked of them with late finishes and early starts and they're just happy to be here.”

There's a video of Gary Sidders checking the height of cut of a machine at The Open on BIGGA's Instagram.



exciting and scary. It's weird coming somewhere like this where there's golfers everywhere, because we only have two or four golfers each day and we just keep out of their way. So the etiquette of working with golfers is something I'm just learning.

“The week has been immense. I knew it was going to be good, but it has ticked every box. Once the anxiety of stepping on to the first tee went, it was fantastic. Walking down the 18th, it was epic when the grandstand was empty, so walking down when it was full was just amazing.” »

**Support Team stories**

Laura Sayer-Hall, greenkeeper, Ardfin Golf Club

For Laura Sayer-Hall, The Open was epic before she even arrived at Royal St George's.

It took two ferry journeys and a 10.5 hour drive to get from her home on the Scottish island of Jura to Kent.

She was rewarded with the penultimate match of the championship and she watched on as Jordan Spieth attempted to chase down Collin Morikawa.

“I'd never even been to a golf tournament before today. On the first evening, walking down the fairway, seeing the grandstand on 18 is immense, quite

**Greens information**

All greens were double cut at 3.25mm each morning. As the ground dried up in the incredibly dry and hot weather firmness increased, although the team was able to maintain consistent greenspeeds.

**Round One (Thursday)**

The green speed was 10 feet compared to 9.9 the day before. The green firmness was 108 gravities.

**Round Two (Friday)**

The average speed was 10.2 feet and firmness was 112 gravities.

**Round Three (Saturday)**

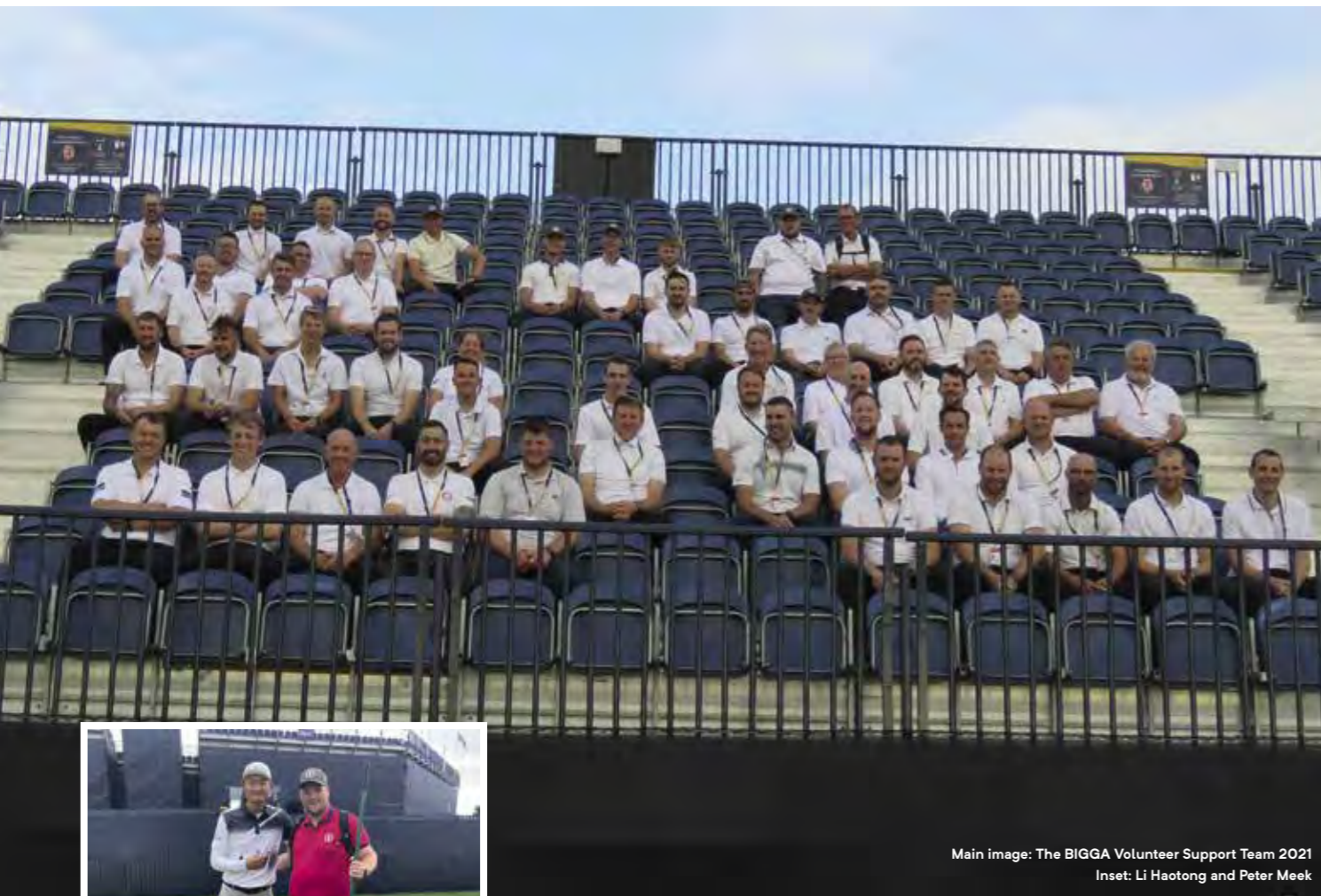
Average speed was 10.2 feet and firmness was 117 gravities.

**Round Four (Sunday)**

The average speed was again 10.2 feet with a firmness of 123 gravities.



Gary Tonge waits while Justin Thomas plays from a tough bunker lie on 18



Main image: The BIGGA Volunteer Support Team 2021  
Inset: Li Haotong and Peter Meek

**Daryn Curtis, greenkeeper, Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club**

"This was my first real major sporting event ever and it was great. Actually going out and being inside the ropes, following them around, watching them play and seeing the quality of golf that's out there, getting to experience that first hand is unreal. I think it's a great opportunity for everyone to do."

**Jez Ward, greenkeeper, Rotherham Golf Club,**

Jez Ward, greenkeeper at Rotherham Golf Club, joined a familiar face as he match raked for Rotherham's Nick Poppleton.

"Unfortunately for his sister, on the day she became a qualified teacher he qualified for The Open, so she was a little overshadowed! I talked to him all the way around and when we walked off the first tee he said 'we've come a long way from you telling me off for playing off the wrong tees!'

"When I was thinking about the draw, obviously you want to get a good game, but I said to the lads and my gaffer that it would be good to get one of our lads, and I got Nick. The day after was different

gravy though as I got Spieth, DeChambeau and Grace."

**Ken Ward, head greenkeeper, Harrogate Golf Club**

Ken Ward, head greenkeeper at Harrogate Golf Club, witnessed Jonathan "Jigger" Thomson's hole in one up close as he was on duty for that match.

"It was awesome. I was stood next to his coach, Nick Huby, and Jigger's partner. It just went absolutely nuts, it was amazing. You feel a part of it and we were celebrating almost as much as the caddie was, it was amazing."

**Scott Thomson, deputy course manager**

Scott Thomson, deputy course manager, Wetherby Golf Club, received a signed flag from Tommy Fleetwood, which was dedicated to all the team at Wetherby.

"It's been an amazing experience really, a million miles away from Wetherby Golf Club, which is a parkland course. I've enjoyed the massive contouring around the greens and the cavernous bunkers and the way the balls seem to disappear from the fairways into gaping crevasses of bunkers. We don't



Sam Wood had responsibility for raking the final match of the championship

have anything like that near us.

"I'd love to do it again, but I'll go back to Wetherby and encourage all the other boys to apply next year.

"Tommy had a putt for a birdie on the 18th and holed it. There was massive support for him all the way around. It makes the hair stand up on the back of your neck and really makes you appreciate the magnitude of what you're a part of."

**David Byron, head greenkeeper, Thorndon Park Golf Club**

David Byron, head greenkeeper at Thorndon Park Golf Club, was pinged for track and trace during the welcome meeting, meaning he had to immediately leave the team and his Open experience behind. Fortunately, things weren't quite what they seemed.

"My heart sank. I'd been so careful the past couple of weeks, avoiding the football, going out, going nowhere because I knew I was coming here and didn't want to spoil it. My heart fell through the floor. Then I was worried about how it would affect everyone around me if I was positive and whether I had ruined it for everyone. I went back to my room and put my head in my hands, but luckily my wife works for the NHS so when I phoned her she said check the code and follow the procedure and it'll tell you when to stop and start isolating. It said I could finish isolating on 12 July, so it was an old message. My spirits lifted and I did three tests to make sure and they all came back negative!

"I don't think COVID has affected the tournament too much. It's not a hassle to go through the procedures and you know you're doing it for a good reason. When you see all the people and all the crowds and you know they're being checked at

the gate, it makes you feel much better.

It's the first time in 18 months when I've looked about and genuinely felt I was happy and doing something I loved, surrounded by other people who were happy and doing something they loved, watching golf, out in the sunshine. It's the first time I've felt normal in 18 months. Life's back and it's good."

**Amy Thomas, greenkeeper, Barton On Sea Golf Club**

"It's been brilliant and the bubbles have been great, we've really bonded. It's been really good, very different to the Women's Open I worked at Woburn. It's great to just walk up the holes with the golfers and you feel a real part of the event. The guys have been great and inclusive and I'd love to do it again."

**Stephen Mapes, greenkeeper, Coventry Golf Club**

Stephen Mapes, greenkeeper at Coventry Golf Club, got an extra special souvenir from the event as Sam Burns gave him his tour bag.

"I was bunker raking for Sam Burns and Rickie Fowler and Sam Burns' coach was walking with us. He said, 'hey man, when we're finished, we're in Prince's Lodge, if you come up to there you can have Sam Burns' bag'. I said 'really?' I went back a few holes later and asked how to get up there because I can't take the shuttle they use. He said 'OK Steve, I'll make sure it's there for you' and gave me a fist bump. He was talkative all the way round, it was just a fantastic experience."

There's a photo album on the BIGGA Facebook page (@golfgreenkeepers) where you can see images of the BIGGA Volunteer Support Team from throughout the week.



## The head greenkeeper's closing thoughts

With the last match out on the course on Sunday afternoon, we caught up with Paul Larsen to learn how he felt the week had gone.

**What's been the most difficult part of your week?**

**Paul Larsen:** "The morning start is quite difficult and quite demanding because The R&A's standards are very high, like our own, so nothing has been left untoward and we've tried to hit perfection. We've hit the levels we wanted and the team has surpassed any expectations I had, they've been brilliant. That includes the support team."

**What is next on your agenda?**

**PL:** That's the end of one chapter and this is now the start of a new chapter in my book. We shall see where we go.

**Any final words?**

**PL:** Always fight for your right for perfection.

**Continue the conversation:**

If you have any questions about the setup of the course for The Open, you can contact Paul on Twitter at @PaulLarsenRSG

“Hi I’m Haotong, thanks to all the greenkeepers for everything you guys do. Cheers!

Haotong Li



The turfcare industry reunited for the first time in over 18 months at the Warwickshire Event Centre as the inaugural Festival of Turf took place beneath clear blue skies.

With live music playing on a grand stage and ample opportunities for networking, the celebratory feel was aided by clear sunshine and warm weather.

COVID protocols helped ensure the health and safety of those in attendance and the festival provided a platform for more than 40 exhibitors from across the turfcare industry to

showcase their latest innovations and products.

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton said: "We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all the exhibitors who signed up to support BIGGA and its members at what we hope is the beginning of a strong new chapter for the golf and wider sports turf industry."

"There was a fantastic atmosphere as visitors and suppliers came face-to-face for the first time in 18 months and the overriding feeling »





“There was a fantastic atmosphere as visitors and suppliers came face-to-face for the first time in 18 months and the overriding feeling was one of optimism.”

was one of optimism. Those who attended engaged meaningfully with the exhibitors and reconnected with friends and peers. It was scorching hot, but the combination of exhibition, live music, refreshments and fantastic weather brought a brilliant sense of occasion to the event. Our thanks go to everyone who came along

and rekindled old friendships, struck new deals and enjoyed being together after so long apart.” Across the two-day event, delegates from various sports and amenity disciplines came through the doors of the Warwickshire Event Centre, bringing a buzz and energy



back to the industry that had sadly been missing due to the coronavirus pandemic. One of the highlights of the event was John Ledwidge, head of sports turf and

grounds at Leicester City FC, who took to the grand stage for a Q&A session hosted by Martin Smart of Turf Business, the official media partners for the event. »

## JAMES BLEDGE WINS BIGGA EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

Royal Cinque Ports course manager James Bledge was celebrating at Festival of Turf after being awarded top prize in the BIGGA Excellence in Communications Award sponsored by Campey Turf Care Systems.

James was presented with a £750 cash prize and an all-expenses paid trip to Florida, when restrictions allow.

James said: “I was really shocked because I’ve never won anything like this before. I read every new entry that comes in, but I never thought my article was in the same calibre as those.

“How the article came about was I had a Sunday off. I got up and had a coffee and had a feeling that I wanted to write something. I turned the laptop on and wrote a few words and before I knew it I had enough words to submit for the magazine. It was never my intention to enter a competition, it was just something I wanted to get off my mind. There are other guys and girls out there who have a lot to say and I would really encourage them to give it a shot.

“The prize is pretty exceptional and so my thanks go to Campey Turf Care Systems. We’re lucky in our industry that there are so many manufacturers and sponsors who put a lot of money into things like this. It’s phenomenal that we have all this support and we couldn’t do it without them.”

James won the award after producing a feature that was selected for inclusion in the October 2020 edition of Greenkeeper International. The article touched upon the daily maintenance of the golf course and whether asking golfers to contribute to a course’s upkeep detracts from the activities of the greenkeeping team.

The Excellence in Communications Awards encourage BIGGA members to submit articles for inclusion in Greenkeeper International, with a monthly prize of a £100 Continue to Learn education voucher for Continue to Learn up for grabs. James’ piece, entitled “The Sands of Time: Should we dump the bunker rakes for

good?” was selected from the 12 features included in the magazine throughout 2020. It attracted praise from the competition judges for raising a discussion point that stands in contrast to traditional thinking and sparked debate among readers. The feature is available to read on the BIGGA website.

The BIGGA Excellence in Communications Awards continue throughout 2021, with BIGGA members encouraged to submit articles for inclusion in upcoming editions of Greenkeeper International. Head to the BIGGA website for more information.



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**“** I've had two fantastic days being your host at Festival of Turf. Can I give special thanks to BIGGA for being a wonderful company to work with – you guys are amazing, top notch. Thank you to Farol for kitting me out with clothes and thank you to my ever-supporting bosses Angus, Wadey and Duncan for allowing me to do this and pushing me to grow. I've had super fun and I'll see you all in Harrogate!

Anna Nielsson, irrigation technician at The Belfry and social media ambassador for Festival of Turf

Jim added: "Our attention now turns to BTME, taking place this coming January, when the exhibition will return to the Harrogate Convention Centre for the first time since 2020. We have a massive education programme planned and we are incredibly excited about the return of our flagship event. We hope to see you all there!"

BTME will take place at the Harrogate Convention Centre on Tuesday 25 to Thursday 27 January 2022. Visitor registration is due to open this autumn. There will also be the return of in-person learning as BIGGA's world leading Continue to Learn education offering returns to the venue on Sunday 23 to Wednesday 26 January 2022.



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## GREENTEK

## DYNA-SEEDERS PUT LIFE BACK INTO VANDALIZED GREENS

Fresh growth springing up at Linlithgow



“Overseeding gives you more direct control over the species in your greens than any other practice

When vandals sprayed thirteen of Linlithgow Golf Club's greens with weedkiller, Course Manager Phil Montgomery had to take drastic remedial action. In what was clearly a carefully planned attack, the quad bike sprayer left a devastating trail of destruction.

However, thanks to the determination the Phil and his team, and regular use of their new Dyna-Seeder units, the greens are coming back.

“They are amazing, working a treat” says Phil. “We are trying to pump as much seed as possible into the greens. We use them every two weeks. They are a brilliant bit of kit – so easy to use.”

Thankfully, vandal remediation is not the usual reason that so many courses are now Dyna-Seeding their greens. For most courses, their objective is to create improved putting surfaces with an ideal sward composition.

Overseeding give you more direct control over the species in your greens than any other practice

Whilst careful management of height of cut, watering, nutrition, and limiting disturbance, all play their part in providing conditions that favour your desired species; nothing gives you such a direct route to your ideal sward composition as sowing the seed of your choice.



The damage done by vandals at Linlithgow



Dyna-seeders being used for greens renovation

“We’ve had Dyna-Seeders for years, and I can’t speak highly enough of them

Literally, you grow what you sow! David Thompson, Course Manager at Hexham Golf Club says “We’ve had Dyna-Seeders for years, and I can’t speak highly enough of them.”

“We are a parkland course with bent/Poa greens. You will never get rid of Poa, but if you keep filling up with bent it can

colonize and out-compete the Poa with the right management. Not feed and water it too much. But if you’ve not got the right grasses in, you use more chemical, feed and water.”

A key benefit of the Dyna-Seeders is their ability to obtain maximum germination from seeding rates as low as 5g/sqm.

“Bent is quite expensive. We use three bags, 60kg for 19 greens, at £440 a bag. That does every part of the greens and the perimeters as well.”

“The Dyna-Seeders are absolutely fantastic for getting maximum germination. We get a very good strike. After 12 to 14 days, it is popping up. They are such a good tool to use, I’ve not got a negative thing to say about them – they get 10 out of 10 from me!”

Article brought to you by

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# TIMING TO REFINE LEATHERJACKET ACTIONS

New Syngenta research could change the approach and timing of actions to target leatherjackets.

Glenn Kirby, Syngenta UK Technical Manager



**New Syngenta research has identified a series of techniques and refinement of practices that could further enhance control of leatherjackets and help to mitigate the damage they cause on greens.**

Trials undertaken with greenkeepers and clubs in some of the most challenging situations have revealed some important pointers for a better understanding of the target pest, along with tailoring future site specific advice.

The work has involved nine courses with recognised leatherjacket issues, studying work on over 100 greens.

On greens, any damage can be far more apparent, compared to fairways, and, for many, there is little tolerance to the effects on playing surface quality and turf health.

It's clear that achieving desired levels of control on greens is likely to involve a

range of cultural, biological and chemical controls. In all instances that revolves around a better knowledge of where and, particularly, when the larvae are active.

### Research study

From the research studying levels of turf damage on UK golf courses, it was shown that, in the 2020/21 season, turf damage was typically seen after 350 Growing Degree Days (GDD) (base temp 6°C) from the point of peak adult crane fly activity.

Armed with that knowledge, it is possible to roll back and start preparations in advance of the point of damage. It also opens a range

of proactive options that could help to prepare turf health to counter the pest's impacts and minimise potential damage — including nutrition, height of cut, improving rooting, moisture management and biostimulants.

One of the important aspects of GDD is that it enables a far closer temperature correlation for soil pest activity across the country and seasonal differences. Pest Tracker reports of adult crane fly have revealed there is relatively little variability in the timing

of their peak flight, however there are significant differences between the observation of leatherjacket activity and damage caused, which the GDD reflects.

### Feeding activity

Knowing the feeding activity of leatherjackets could also help better timing of control applications. Pest Tracker reports indicate peak adult crane fly emergence is occurring towards the end of September — significantly later than previously thought.

Detailed analysis of larvae activity and surface quality damage now suggests that when applying specifically to greens in these problem situations, the optimum timing for Acelepryn occurred a month after peak flight timing. That resulted in consistently significant reductions in the average level of damage and brought control down to acceptable levels.

Assessment of 108 golf course greens showed that those treated with Acelepryn to coincide with peak adult crane fly activity scored an average damage level of 29.3 points per m<sup>2</sup> (ranging from 0 to 190). Those treated a month after peak flight, however, recorded an average damage of 5.7 points per m<sup>2</sup> (range 0 to 22) — see Fig 1. An affected area of 10 points per m<sup>2</sup> would be deemed manageable.

The later application timing on greens is believed to have given time for crane fly eggs to hatch and for larvae to start feeding at sufficient levels to ingest the

**Fig 1: Research indicates Acelepryn application a month after peak crane fly activity could help reduce damage on greens**



required dose of Acelepryn. It differs from the current advice for fairway applications, which is to treat at peak flight of crane flies.

The research also involved detailed studies of where Acelepryn was remaining in the soil profile and at what concentration. The results confirmed initial recommendations that the product remained predominantly in the top 4cm

of the soil profile for a period of successive months. Soil dissipation analysis showed, for example, that four months after application on a sand construction green, 60% of the original active remained in the soil profile, with 90% of that in the top 4cm.

### Larvae movement

The work indicated that when larvae move up through the soil profile and feed on organic matter, they would ingest the active ingredient. That suggests the importance of understanding the nature

of leatherjacket activity in the soil and the impact of soil moisture and temperature on their movement.

Again, reference to the GDD activity trigger may give a better indication of aeration timing, or possibly aeration technique, that might involve different equipment or depth to ensure larvae remain active in the target zone.

The research showing stability in the soil has also highlighted the importance of application technique, to move the product where it is required from the outset.

The ongoing research is a major advance in helping to refine and tailor recommendations for specific courses across the UK.

### Continue the conversation:

@syngentaturfUK



# GETTING IN A SCRAPE

Digging deeper into habitat creation at Nairn Dunbar

James Hutchinson, BIGGA

In the third of this four-part series on the Golf Environment Awards, we take a look at one of Scotland's most proactive and forward-thinking courses.

**Scotland is our port of call this month, as we visit a place where a great deal of effort and liaison with the outside community has taken place: Nairn Dunbar.**

Richard Johnstone is the course manager and after visiting the site in 2019, I had a great deal of admiration for him, the team of greenkeepers and the way the course is presented. Last December the club won Environmental Golf Course of the Year and so I thought it was important to revisit the club and ask Richard a few questions about the environmental activities of the greenkeepers.

**James Hutchinson: Can you tell me a little about yourself and your team?**

My name is Richard Johnstone and I am the course manager at Nairn Dunbar, located in the Scottish Highlands. We have six full time staff consisting of myself, Deputy Course Manager Craig Mackay, assistant greenkeepers Graeme Robbins, Michael McInnes and apprentice greenkeepers Nathan Grant and Ryan Knox. I am blessed to have a vast range of experience within the team,

along with some enthusiastic guys who are new to the group. In 2016, when I was

appointed course manager, I was the youngest member of the team, which had an average age of 47. In just five years I am now fourth oldest, with an average age of 37!

**JH: What type of course is Nairn Dunbar?**

Nairn Dunbar is a championship links situated behind the rugged sand dunes of Nairn's East Beach. The course has a total area of



The greenkeeping team at Nairn Dunbar

Read this for:  
/ Ecology  
/ Links  
/ Landscaping



A course walk a few weeks after creation of the sand habitat (picture of James Hutchinson with Steph Elliot and Isobel Morgan from RSPB)

135 acres and has hosted many prestigious events in its 122-year history, regularly featuring in the top 100 golf courses in Scotland.

**JH: Which award did you win?**

Nairn Dunbar won the 2021 Environmental Golf Course of the Year accolade at the Golf Environment Awards last December after beating off the challenge of three other finalists — The Springs GC in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire County GC and the Hong Kong GC.

We were selected as finalists on only our second year of entering and I believe that was because we took all the information and advice given through previous visits

from both STRI ecologist Rowan Rumball and yourself James, to take what we were doing to the next level.

Our aim is to establish Nairn Dunbar as an environmental leader within

the golf industry and we are communicating how our well-managed club is providing many environmental benefits. Our club is also an integral part of the local community and it

gives us the opportunity to lead by example and raise sustainability awareness.

**JH: Can you talk us through the projects you've been working on at the club?**

Our main focus was aimed at re-establishing the fine textured turf that once dominated this links before excessive fertiliser and irrigation applications caused an unfortunate botanical change. The restoration project that we introduced in 2016 has been extremely successful and we have received some fantastic recognition from members and guests for the work carried out. Rough, gorse and tree management plans »



The finished product a sand habitat and view towards 11th green.tif

**Location: Nairn**





Nairn Dunbar is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including red squirrels



A goldfinch having its biometrics taken



Top: Nairn Dunbar 10th hole pre-restoration work  
Bottom: Nairn Dunbar 10th hole after the creation of open sand habitat



were put in place to help us reveal the natural topography, which had been completely lost to invasive species. In some places our 122-year-old links site had almost become parkland, but with the backing of our management and members we set about completely transforming the look of the course, providing members and guests with a true links test.

Prior to 1980 young trees and gorse would have naturally been removed through disturbance created from deer or sheep, so we introduced management programmes in 2016 to simply mimic this process. It was evident that areas of dense woodland were causing a lack of sunlight and air movement to our surfaces, creating a perfect environment for non-native grasses and disease outbreaks, such as fusarium. Tree roots were also creating a risk of damage to mower blades, blocking drainage pipes and robbing

the turf of vital nutrients.

We had also become aware that some of the dune systems on site had become overgrown with vegetation, meaning many of the native grasses and wildflowers species had been lost. With all the extra plant growth the sand had also become enriched with nutrients, encouraging non-native plant growth and stabilisation. With sand dunes now one of the most at-risk habitats in Europe it was essential we introduced the steps necessary in order to prevent a total loss of biodiversity at Nairn Dunbar.



Creating sand habitat using an excavator

To create healthier and more ecologically beneficial strands of gorse, coppicing was used and where it had become leggy and degenerate, we chose to completely remove the bushes, creating bare sand habitats, especially in areas where it was negatively impacting on play.

The results and feedback that we have received regarding the work have been fantastic and with much of the dune habitat now restored, it is providing a true test of links golf. We are now left with some long, open and wispy

rough, which in turn gives the course some definition and allows golfers to find their balls, helping speed up play.

**JH: Can you tell us more about the sand scrapes you built?**

Before we started, I did extensive research to provide the contractor with an idea of what we were trying to achieve. We used pictures of other courses who had already completed similar work and aerial images of dune systems and bare sand from across the UK. A local contractor with a 360-degree excavator was used to firstly help us remove any tree stumps and any weedy invasive species and to place any of the natural grass turf to the side. We then dug down into our sandy profile, removing as much as necessary to cover the area and provide a hole for the roots and weedy grasses to be buried. After burying these materials, we shaped the area

with various humps and hollows with the aim of making it look as natural as possible before placing some of the clumps of native turf and grasses on the high points

**JH: How has wildlife reacted to your ecological work?**

At Nairn Dunbar we do our best to provide optimum playing conditions, while working in harmony with the conservation of our natural environment using economically sound and socially responsible management, which in turn provides a wide variety of different habitats for wildlife. Most notably our roughs are home to a rich diversity of plants and animals. We have around 15 roe deer roaming freely around our site and frequently see squirrels, pine marten, hares, and hedgehogs. The native grasses and wildflowers are home to many different species of mammals, bees,

butterflies and moths, with the dune slacks, wetlands and watercourses providing a habitat for amphibians, birds, fish, reptiles, mammals and rare plants.

We border a SSSI site and have been working hard to build extremely close relationships with STRI, R&A, BIGGA, Scottish National Heritage, Forestry and Land Scotland and the RSPB, who have offered advice and guidance to help us manage the many different habitats within our 135-acre site. We carry out a migratory bird study every year and by monitoring them it is possible to detect changes in the environment. It has also allowed us to learn more about the many different bird species at Nairn Dunbar, such as bird lifespan and chick survival rates.

**JH: I often wonder who will be the first to win environmental course of the year on back-to-back occasions... We'll watch this space!**

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# UP AND RUNNING

## Microdochium patch disease in August

By Henry Bechelet, Technical Manager ICL

### Microdochium patch disease will no doubt be on all our minds for the rest of the year.

It is an extremely damaging disease that could strike at any time.

If we want to get through the autumn and winter in good shape then we will need to employ every method available to us to slow down its development or achieve control. An integrated approach to Microdochium patch is essential and it all starts in August.

Microdochium patch disease is caused by the fungal pathogen *Microdochium nivale* and it is constantly lying in wait to develop at any time, given adequate moisture and cool temperatures. If conditions are suitable then it can develop very quickly (initially unseen) and potentially spiral out of control to cause widespread damage, especially to golf greens. The damage commonly occurs in the autumn and winter, when recovery growth might be months away. That's why Microdochium patch disease prevention and control is one of our top agronomic priorities for the year.

We know from experience that we can manage this disease to limit the level of damage, but to achieve this we need to be fully on our game. First of all we need to "be alive" to those climatic factors that favour the development of the disease. Cool and wet conditions are the key drivers and this is where a resource such as

Greencast.co.uk can bring us some real value because it factors our local climatic conditions into disease prediction models that then calculate the level of risk of an outbreak developing. You will also need to factor in your own site considerations (such as level of shade, topdressing, intensity of maintenance) to get a truer reflection of the risk, but this is something we have always done.

Alongside forecasting resources, we will need to keep a close eye on the situation. Careful monitoring and feedback from all the greenkeeping team is essential. We should always be looking for the early signs of discolouration, which can be a sign of infection, with a focus on those indicator greens that tend to show infection a little sooner.

Obviously, we don't want to be seeing any disease activity and so we put together a plan of action that aims to prevent it. We start by considering those factors that favour the development of the disease and then manage them in such a way to reduce their influence.

The biggest influencing factor in the development of Microdochium patch is leaf wetness and so we need to find ways of reducing this. Turf

soil surfactants should still be deployed to reduce irrigation requirements. We do have good dew dispersant technologies but they don't tend to be deployed when active growth is occurring because they can quickly be mown off. Instead, at this time we will need to employ switching, brushing or turf ironing as required to remove dew and reduce that period of leaf wetness.

Turf health is also hugely important in terms of creating a less conducive environment for the development of Microdochium patch disease. In terms of nutrition, we are just trying to set the right balance of the amount of Nitrogen in the soil. The actual levels of nutrition that you will need will be influenced by a large number of factors (including intensity of maintenance, rootzone type and general environmental conditions) but I would say that as a general guide I would be looking to supply in the region of 2-3kg of N/week in August, but this might actually be more or less depending on the situation.

An important consideration at this time would be the source of Nitrogen and generally we would advocate using slow release granular fertilisers

(in our case using formulations containing Methylene urea). The Sierraform GT K-STEP 6-O-27 +TE always does a great job in its own right at this time and it can be applied at low rates (20 g/m<sup>2</sup>) without any speckling. The Greenmaster Pro-Lite "Autumn Mg" 6-5-11 +3MgO has a similar release pattern and would also be a common recommendation at this time if P and K are needed to support an overseeding programme.

Greens renovations are commonly scheduled for August to take advantage of the good levels of growth at this time. If an intensive programme is taking place and a high level of topdressing is being applied then the risk of Microdochium patch disease would rise, especially if conditions turn cool and damp. This would greatly increase the risk of attack and a preventative fungicide might be needed.

This brings us to the use of fungicides, which are a central part of any autumn ITM plan. The need for a fungicide treatment will depend on the level of risk and disease activity, but if a heavy renovation programme is scheduled then a preventative application might be wise. In terms of what to use, "FR321" is a one box solution from Syngenta containing both Heritage and Medallion TL (along with Ryder) so it is a really strong broad-spectrum tank-mix. Generally, however, if we have everything in place and the climatic

conditions are not so conducive to attack then a preventative application may not be needed until September.

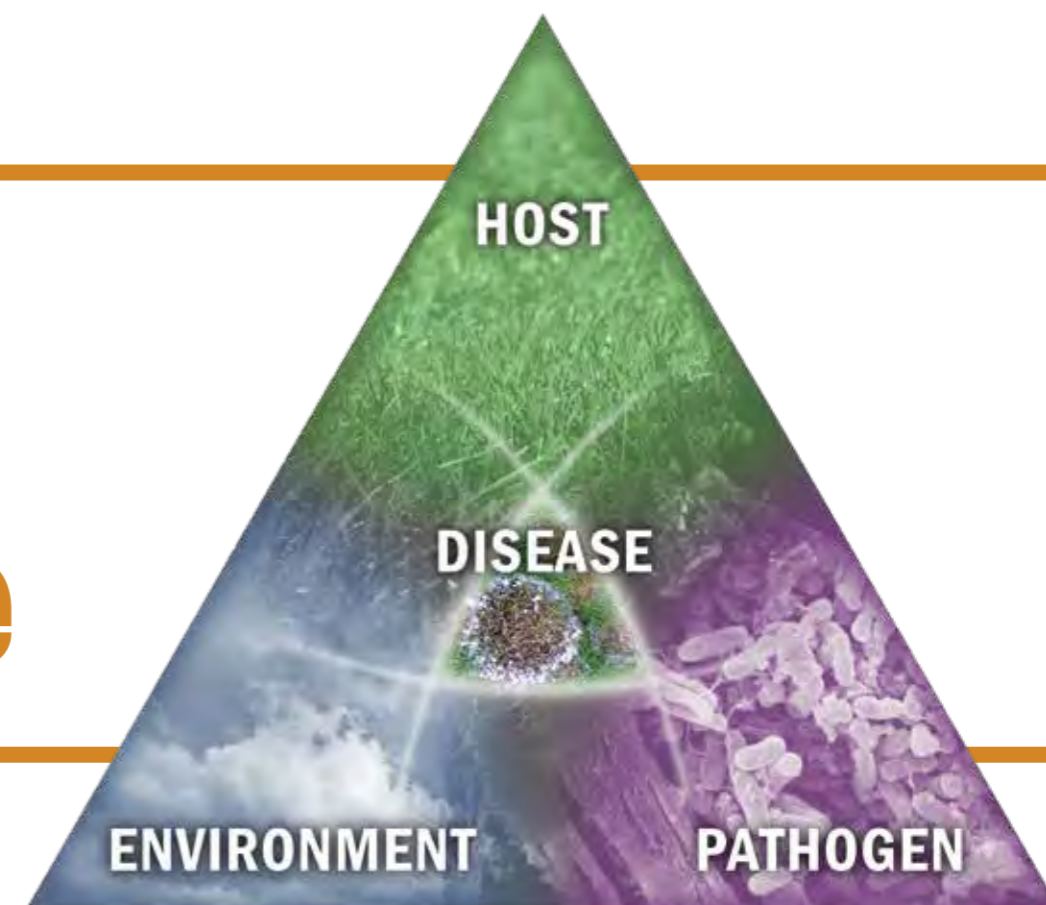
So, August is the start of our Microdochium patch disease control strategy that we will be running through autumn and winter. This is a crucial programme of work if we are to maintain smooth and true putting surfaces for play. We will need to keep a close eye on those climatic factors and our focus should be on reducing leaf wetness, maintaining turf health and thinking about the intensity of surface preparations. If renovations are scheduled and conditions are favourable for the disease then we might need to factor in a preventative fungicide application. There is always plenty to think about but it's important that we go into autumn with our ITM plans already fully up and running.

“The biggest influencing factor for the development of Microdochium patch is leaf wetness

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# Brushing to break the disease triangle



**We're all familiar with the disease triangle, whereby the plant acquires disease due to three interactive components - the host plant, the environment and a pathogen.**

Disease susceptibility can be reduced by breaking this triangle, for example, by altering the immediate environment surrounding the plant to make it less favourable for the pathogen to prosper. Utilising simple mechanical techniques can reduce pathogen entry points, maintain plant vigour and improve the surrounding environment — as simple even as just regular brushing.

Like a lot of things in the world of greenkeeping, balancing the requests and expectations of the golfers for lush surfaces, mown low for pace and consistency often comes at the agronomic expense of overall plant health. The desire for low heights of cut can contribute to conditions that are conducive for disease. One of

the most common affecting fine turf is fusarium patch. Caused by the pathogen *Microdochium nivale*, a number of common grass species in the UK — especially annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*), which continues to make up a large proportion of golf greens and fairways — are particularly vulnerable to a fusarium attack.

The *Microdochium nivale* pathogen is naturally present within the soil profile and can

survive within thatch layers. This is part of the reason why cultural practices such as aeration and scarification, which reduce thatch levels and increase airflow within the sward and profile, are two of the basic methods in the fight in preventing disease from occurring. While the spores and fungal mycelia are ever-present, they are most active in cool (sub 20°C) and damp conditions, such as those traditionally

experienced in the spring and autumn months, leading to these being peak disease pressure periods.

Along with poor air movement and the correct climatic conditions, one of the key factors in the spread of *Microdochium nivale* is surface moisture. Moisture, particularly in the form of dew or guttation, can be easily transported via machinery and foot traffic, providing an ideal medium for fungal spread. This is why something as simple as brushing can be so critical in reducing plant susceptibility to attack.

Removing surface moisture and standing the plant upright not only contributes to improved airflow and a less optimum environment for disease to move and thrive, but it can also help to improve the cleanliness of cut, reducing the pathogen entry points on the plant itself.

At Windlesham Golf Club in Surrey, brushing has become a regular, year-round

task following the purchase of a Redexim Top-Brush in December 2020.

"Because of the heavy soil profile of the course, and the ongoing reduction in chemicals, we were looking for a solution to the issues we experience over the autumn and winter months with worm casts" explained Assistant Course Manager Graeme Roberts. "We were really impressed with how clean the Top-Brush left the fairways and, being 6m wide, how quickly we could cover the course, delivering a high-quality finish while staying ahead of the golf.

"Now that worm cast season has died down, the Top-Brush is now going out ahead of the mowers at least twice a week to remove morning dew — drying the plant out ahead of mowing to improve the quality of cut, remove moisture and reduce the clumping of clippings.

"The fact that the brushes can change rotation direction

is really handy. We tend to run them in the opposite direction of travel to stand the plant up more effectively, but if we're working in smaller areas, we can simply change the brush direction as we move backwards and forwards."

As well as changing brush direction, working depth can also be adjusted, making the Top-Brush a versatile tool for a light surface brush — suitable for clearing dew, incorporating topdressing material or

removing clippings – or a deeper, more aggressive surface agitation to effectively rid large areas of organic matter.

Graeme added: "We've been really pleased with how it has been removing dead material and debris from the sward, thereby helping to improve the plant's growing environment without having to use more invasive and time-consuming techniques."

Considering once again

the three points on the disease triangle — plant, environment and pathogen — brushing is one of a handful of cultural practices that can make a valuable contribution to breaking the chain, particularly in making the plant environment less favourable for disease to thrive. The impact that removing surface moisture has on suppression of outbreaks should not be underestimated, and in conjunction with other mechanical operations and careful nutritional management can significantly lessen one of the major pressures faced by today's greenkeeper.



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# Reducing seasonal stress

**Trials conducted by the STRI have shown that without summer stress, autumn disease incidences can be reduced by 17%, which highlights the importance of careful management to avoid disease later in the season.**

Dr Colin Mumford, Bayer technical support manager, says managing turf stress will be extremely important this year as golfer traffic has drastically increased, with The R&A reporting that golf participation increased by 40% from 2019 to 2020.

“There’s no doubt that courses are going to be under increased pressure from wear and tear alone this year, without the seasonal challenges that could be thrown at them,” said Colin.

“Another concern is the fact that greenkeepers are extremely busy and their time out on the course is limited.”

In this feature Colin gives his advice on how to manage turf stress this summer to help reduce disease later in the year.

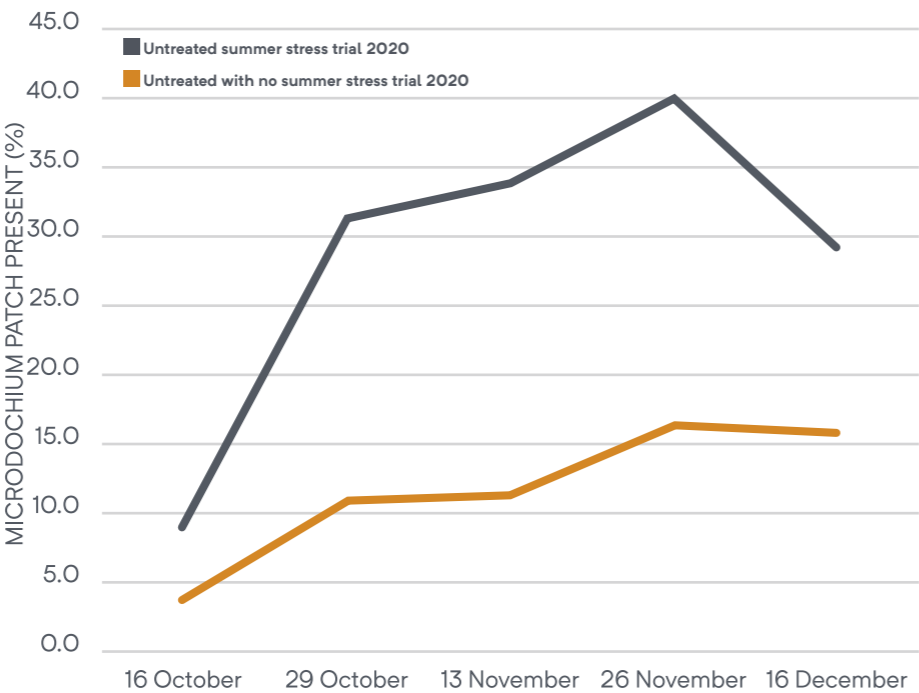
## Managing turf stress and disease

Colin explained that in order to maintain healthy courses and prevent

autumn diseases it is important that greenkeepers prioritise preventative treatments alongside practical measures this August.

Figure 1: Presence of Microdochium Patch

Over the 8-week trial period, on average 17% less disease was seen on the unstressed plots



He said: “The use of preventative treatments, such as Exteris Stressgard, can help keep turf healthy and disease free by enhancing turf protection. It has also been proven that Stressgard formulated products provide relief from the pressures of turf stress, but most importantly they help to reduce disease long term.”

In recent trials carried out by the STRI, which looked at an array of treatments during the summer stress period, it was found that applying a preventative treatment sooner rather than later, meant the turf was less susceptible to stress and therefore disease during the autumn.

“With treatments being applied at 28-day intervals between June and August, they wouldn’t be expected to offer preventative effects after mid-October, but they lasted through to the end of November,” explained Colin.

“The Exteris Stressgard plots continued to perform well and had the lowest levels of infection rates, with 5.2% disease in late October rising to 14% in November. The corresponding untreated plots ranged from 31.2% in October, peaking to 40% in late November.

“Ordinarily fungicide treatments would be applied early autumn, but none were applied during the trial as we wanted to see if there were any residual

effects from the summer applications, which clearly there were. Additional fungicide applications during this period would obviously yield even better results.

“Stressgard formulated products provided a residual effect on turf health and disease control, even after the effects of the products are supposed to have expired.

“What’s more, the results for turf colour and quality mirror the findings for disease control as the Stressgard formulated plots achieved higher than average results well into the autumn.

“This backs up the theory that by supporting plant health with effective methods, greenkeepers can give turf a better chance of fighting disease long-term.”

However, Colin explained that this should be backed up by good management practices: “I’d advise that greenkeepers regularly move the pin position on the green to help avoid high levels of wear and tear in one area of the putting green. In addition, heavy topdressing and scarifying, which can damage leaf tissue and increase pressure on the turf, should be avoided or reduced during high stress periods in the summer.

“For example, sand dressings are akin to

grinding paste on the leaf tissue, and during high stress periods can potentially cause more harm than good.

“Attention should also be paid to turf nutrition and irrigation to maintain a healthy plant.”

Colin also advised the avoiding of direct traffic around wet or damaged areas by fencing these areas off, to prevent additional damage to the course.

He concluded: “Maintaining healthy turf throughout the year can really help keep disease under wraps during the autumn months. Therefore, it’s important that greenkeepers continue to take a proactive approach even when courses are busy, to minimise turf stress and keep courses looking as healthy as possible.”

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# Under pressure

An overseeding strategy offers big advantages at the Home of Golf

Image courtesy of St Andrews Links

**Whatever perfection is, and if it can ever be achieved in greenkeeping, is a matter of opinion and the subject of ongoing debate.**

What is certain is that in any process, optimal results are achieved when components complement each other and work in harmony at just the right time. Unpredictable Mother Nature plays a significant role in course conditions, but new technologies and innovations help greenkeeping teams refine processes to enable small but important steps to be taken in the quest for high quality, year-round playing surfaces.

On the Old Course at St Andrews, overseeding greens is an especially challenging task. With 50,000 rounds each year, it is in constant use by golfers, caddies and streams of tourists who make the pilgrimage to walk the iconic course when it's closed to play on Sundays. There's a vast area to cover, some 30,000m<sup>2</sup>, and windows of opportunity are short. The venue's autumn calendar includes back-to-back R&A fixtures in September followed by the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship, which runs into early October. These prevent Course Manager Gordon McKie and his team from carrying out maintenance when weather conditions are ideal.

Gordon said: "On our double greens, there are inevitable variances in the playing surface, so we're aiming to improve consistency as golfers move across the area. To achieve this, and to ensure the surfaces remain in excellent condition all year round, we're improving our species composition to increase our levels of fescue, while also introducing bentgrasses where Poa annua is

dominant. With continual footfall, overseeding is an essential restorative and regenerative task, but more so here than at possibly any other golf venue, we need it to be frequent, swift and effective, with minimal disruption. There are two key factors that we have found make a significant difference — the performance of the seed we use and the effectiveness of our seeding operations."



Image credit Simon Connah.

Dr David Greenshields at Barenbrug UK has worked closely with Gordon and Director of Greenkeeping Sandy Reid for a number of years.

David explained how their seed strategy is benefitting the Old Course greens: "They are being overseeded with fescue and our All Bent blend. Bentgrass tends to outperform fescue coming out of winter into spring. It continues to grow a little in colder conditions and generally delivers better year-round surfaces.

"Cultivars Charles and BarKing complement each other. Charles is relatively new and has excellent shoot density and a very fine leaf. It establishes really well under rigorous maintenance regimes where seedlings are under significant pressure. BarKing has excellent winter performance and disease tolerance. We provide superb-quality seed bred to perform under the toughest conditions. Getting bentgrass to germinate is easy enough, but these seedlings are under serious pressure from day one and it's vital they are given the best opportunity to establish and build resilience."

The other major contributing factor to recent overseeding success has been the addition of a Wiedenmann Terra Float Air to the St Andrews fleet, which has

“The playing experience at the Old Course has to be second to none. Whether you're an Open Champion, an R&A member, a yearly ticket holder, or one of our many domestic or overseas visitors, it should be the experience of a lifetime

allowed them to increase the number of times they overseed without disrupting the surfaces.

"The pneumatic air seeder gives us a really good seed bed," Gordon explained. "It has very fine rollers and calibration is extremely accurate. It aerates or loosens the ground with a rotary spiker, then the air flow and deflector system meters seed uniformly and accurately into the holes.

"The brush and roller combination incorporates the topdressing and it leaves

a very clean surface.

"This approach and the continual advice and support we receive from the experts at Barenbrug and Wiedenmann give us confidence that the full value of every bag of seed is realised. The playing experience at the Old Course has to be second to none. Whether you're an Open champion, an R&A member, a yearly ticket holder or one of our many domestic or overseas visitors, it should be the experience of a lifetime so we cannot, and will not, compromise on quality. This process delivers both short and long-term benefits. Our teams have observed excellent results on other courses. We've only been seeding this way on the Old Course since June, but early indications are that it could be a game-changer, enabling us to optimise conditions and revenue in the years to come."

**Continue the conversation:**

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# INDUSTRY NEWS

## Higgs secures Europe-wide sales role

**Former Windlesham course manager Alastair Higgs has been promoted to the role of Europe Service Manager at Rain Bird.**

In his new position, working from Rain Bird Europe's offices in France, Alastair will be responsible for developing service activities for the company across Europe.

Alastair said: "My new role widens my remit significantly and covers the full spectrum of Rain Bird products over a much larger geographical territory. Having been involved with golf throughout my career, it's a welcome change to be dealing with a range of new sectors, from agricultural to residential."

Beginning his career as a

greenkeeper at Calcot Park in 2000, Alastair joined American Golf UK in 2004 before becoming head greenkeeper at Donnington Valley and then course manager at Windlesham.

Joining Rain Bird in 2016 as a golf sales specialist, he became golf district manager for the UK, Ireland and Iceland in 2018, managing and promoting the distribution of Rain Bird Golf products and services through trusted partners, providing support and guidance about best practice to end users.

"I am delighted to announce Alastair's promotion," said Richard Nelson, global sales and service manager. "Alastair has



Alastair Higgs

in-depth knowledge of our irrigation technologies and with his vision and drive, will take us forward in this exciting new period for the Rain Bird European service team."

Alastair added: "The new

role also allows me to manage and guide our team of talented service engineers and support the network of approved service providers to deliver after sales Global Service Plans."

## Battery-power for Dennis

**Dennis & SISIS have launched a range of 'environmentally-friendly' mowers.**

Dennis Mowers have spent more than three years working with carefully-selected partners to develop the E-Series range of battery-powered equipment.

Managing Director Ian Howard said: "Reliable and long-lasting solutions are a must-have for our customers and in this rapidly developing technology field we have chosen our partners very carefully. For us it was important to create no compromise alternatives to our petrol mowers, which would not need constantly recharging or swapping batteries – it was imperative that they last the distance. "The hard work has paid off and now we can unveil our



Members of the turf media attend the launch of the E-Series

first equipment benefitting of the Dennis badge."

The Dennis E-Series range consists of three products, the ES-860 cylinder mower, the ES34R rotary mower and the ES-36 machine.

The machines feature a LCD keypad screen that provides the operator with information such as speed, clip rate, service checks, lifetime running reports and

battery information. The E-Series take just 2 hours for an ultra-fast full battery recharge utilising a British 110A battery and the ultra-low HAV and noise allows operators to use the machines for a full day in any environment. Furthermore, Ian revealed that by the end of October every existing Dennis product will have a battery-powered alternative.

## Pesticide store qualification

**Independent standards setting organisation BASIS has launched a training course and accredited qualification specifically developed for professionals who are responsible for the storage of pesticides within the amenity sector.**

The NSK Amenity course will provide focussed training that meets the specific requirements for professional storekeepers working within amenity.

The qualification has been accredited by Harper Adams University and is fully-recognised by the Chemical Regulation Division.

The first training courses for the NSK Amenity qualification will be delivered online from August 2021, with more details available on the BASIS website.

## Baroness to import AgriMetal



Baroness has teamed up with AgriMetal

**Baroness has become the sole importer and distributor for AgriMetal rollers for the United Kingdom.**

The available range will consist of the GR-400 and GR-660 models, with the latter providing a 66-inch wide roll.

Adam Butler, sales director for Baroness UK, said: "We are extremely pleased and excited to be working with such a well-made and respected brand. We already produce

market-leading cutting technology for a wide range of mowing equipment, but now we have added to our portfolio one of the most affordable and well-made rollers on the market. To add the icing on the cake, they will be rolling off the production line sprayed in the fantastic Baroness red."

To book a demonstration, contact a Baroness dealer via [www.baronessuk.com/find-a-dealer](http://www.baronessuk.com/find-a-dealer)

## Charterhouse change name

**Charterhouse Turf Machinery has rebranded to become Redexim.**

While the product portfolio, premises and personnel are unaffected, the change of name brings the UK into line with the Redexim corporate strategy adopted throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

Redexim chief operating officer Harman de Bree said: "The team at Charterhouse has done a fantastic job over the years at cementing the place of the Redexim natural and artificial ranges with leading turf managers throughout the UK. The time is now right to unify the approach with that adopted throughout the world by delivering sales, service and support under the Redexim banner. This will help to strengthen our brand awareness and global corporate identity and



Redexim Verti-Drain

streamline our communication with customers around the world."

The relationship between Charterhouse and Redexim has been ongoing for more than 35 years, when Charterhouse was appointed to distribute the Redexim Verti-Drain. Charterhouse became a wholly owned subsidiary of Redexim in 1997.

The portfolio now includes tools for maintaining natural and artificial playing surfaces.

## Turfcare bolsters south west area Emergency leatherjacket summit

**Former groundsman Andy Matthews has joined TurfCare as technical sales support.**

Andy has spent 40 years in the industry, mostly within the independent schools sector.

"We are incredibly pleased that Andy is joining the TurfCare team," said UK sales manager Daniel Jones. "His background and experience will allow our entire team to further grow and support our customers in the south west."

Andy started at Bradfield College in 1981 as an apprentice while studying at Berkshire College of Agriculture.

He left Bradfield as deputy head groundsman in 1993 to take up a position as head groundsman at Birkbeck College in Greenford.

Then in 1997 Andy moved to Taunton School, before joining Harrow School in 2001. While at Harrow he oversaw a £5million upgrade



Andy Matthews

of the sporting facilities.

In 2011 he moved to Clifton College in Bristol, where he oversaw international football, a Rugby World Cup training camp and county cricket.

"I am excited to join the TurfCare team and support our customers in the southwest region, helping managers select the correct products to match their agronomic needs," said Andy.

For more information visit [www.turfcare.eu](http://www.turfcare.eu)

**An 'emergency summit' for the control of leatherjackets took place via a virtual platform on Wednesday 14 July, with more than 100 people linking up to view live throughout the 4-hour event.**

The extensive damage caused by leatherjacket larvae to turf has been well-documented with seemingly record-high population levels. To help the industry deal with the problem, the World Bioprotection Forum organised an emergency summit, which focussed on the use of cultural, physical and mechanical techniques, bioprotectants (formerly known as biopesticides) and chemicals to manage leatherjacket infestations in the sports turf and amenity sector.

"Leatherjackets have caused such terrible problems this year that many greenkeepers are in despair,

said Dr Minshad Ansari, chairman of the WBF. "I hope this emergency summit has shown them that it is possible to manage these pests and to reverse the damage they have done to turf across the UK."

Among the speakers were Dr Colin Mumford of Bayer Crop Science, who explained cultural, physical and mechanical management, Glenn Kirby of Syngenta, who spoke on current chemistries and recommendations for their emergency use and Dr Ansari, who explained how and when to apply beneficial nematodes for leatherjacket control. Peter Corbett of Rigby Taylor explained how the key to success is using an integrated approach combining a number of various approaches, while Mark Tucker, head greenkeeper at Neath, discussed his successful usage of nematodes.

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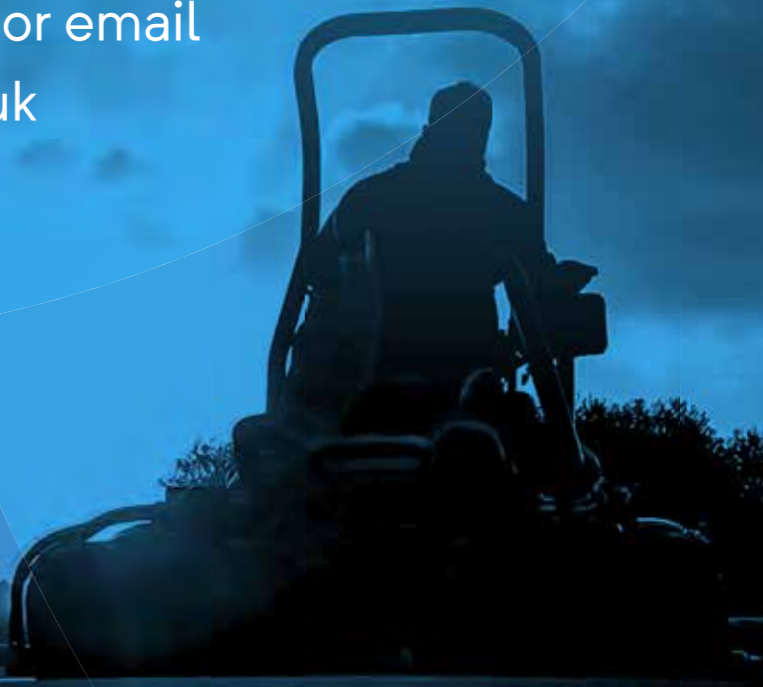


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## Greenkeepers (Full-Time and Seasonal) - Golf-und Country Club Seddiner See

## Deputy Course Manager Ingrebourne Links Golf Club



INGREBOURNE LINKS  
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## Assistant Greenkeeper Castletown Golf Links



## Head Greenkeeper Marple Golf Course



## Assistant Greenkeeper Heaton Moor Golf Club

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## Head Greenkeeper Holme Hall Golf Club



# Recruitment



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## BIGGA TURF MANAGEMENT EXHIBITION



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1958

# HISTORY OF GREENKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONS

1958

In January the Scottish Golf Greenkeepers Association (SGGA) tried a different tack at a meeting with the Association of Golf Club Secretaries (AGCS) to discuss wages, conditions, apprenticeship schemes and superannuation.

Mr Dakers of the AGCS said he thought the superannuation idea would be possible if the large firms in the golf trade donated £4-5,000 to start off the fund, as they had done for the Professional Golfers' Association. Even though these companies, golf unions and secretaries' associations made their living off the hard work done by greenkeepers, none of them were prepared to help.

The secretaries replied at the meeting that the only thing they agreed with was the apprenticeship scheme, but they would come back later to discuss. Months later it was noted that there had been no word for them and they were clearly evading the issue.

In the British Golf Greenkeepers Association (BGGA) magazine of February, the average wage carried in adverts for head greenkeepers was £9 plus accommodation.

The main topic of discussion in most committee meetings was the concern in the industry regarding the lack of people coming into the trade and the loss of many youngsters to other jobs. The reason was always poor wages and working conditions. During this period and into the 1960s,

Extracts from the BGGA Magazine from May 1957



both BGGA and SGGA were constantly trying to get golf unions and secretaries' associations to advance the case for better wages and conditions at clubs, but were constantly rebuffed.

Strangely enough, the most support for the greenkeepers' associations came from the press, both in England and Scotland. Golf writers who attended tournaments could see what was happening and articles, such as one written in the Nottingham Evening News by Bill Withers under the title 'Unsung Heroes' warned golf's powers that be that unless they got their act together and treated greenkeepers as tradesmen of the highest quality, there was going to be an even more serious shortage

of greenkeepers.

Many head greenkeepers were reaching retirement and although they had been loyal and faithful servants to clubs, many for 40 or 50 years, the younger generation was not prepared to suffer the same conditions and poor wages.

In July the announcement was made of the death of Mr G A Philpot, the editor and publisher of the first BGGA magazine in 1936 and who had continued to be so until shortly before his death. A new editor was appointed but his tenure was short and F W Hawtree came to the rescue, taking over the reins as editor.

The death of Norman Hackett was also intimated this year. Hackett will be remembered for his interest in agronomy, especially regarding golf courses. In 1927 he had asked the help in setting up an advisory body, which was turned down and he went his own way. In 1929 he became the first secretary of the Board of Golf Research (BOGR), the predecessor to the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI).

The draw for the national tournament showed that a three-ball starting at 9am was due on the tee for its second round at 1pm. Eighteen holes and lunch within four hours — that's how the game should be played!

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