

THE GOLF BUSINESS

Issue 24 • March 2019

GOLF BUSINESS
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FEATURING

Adam Walsh

general manager of
Farleigh Golf Club

NEW MEMBERS

JUNIORS

Ways to attract them to your club

COURSE DESIGN

18 HOLES

Why two loops of nine is popular

DUAL ROLES

MANAGERS

Greenkeepers who run their clubs



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ere's three major issues I discovered in the last month that are all covered in the following pages:

Ignore irresponsible dog owners at your peril

At least a couple of golf clubs have been so bothered by reckless behaviour that they've decided to broadcast their concerns to their local community. Both clubs have reported fouling on their courses, and at one the situation has become so bad that trespassers have put themselves at risk of being hit by balls, fencing has been vandalised, dog owners have been aggressive towards golfers and club staff, and even a deer had to be put down after it was attacked by two dogs. How widespread a problem is irresponsible dog owners?

The industry is standing up to those who mock it

The media likes to mock golf and, for example, has derided golf course management diplomas for years without the industry doing much to defend them, but maybe that is changing.

Various publications ridiculed Derby council in February for spending £2,400 on a golf strategy for its municipal courses. John Ashworth, chairman of Golf Business International, however, defended the council, saying it 'should be praised for engaging

outside expertise in order to provide the best possible return for both its taxpayers and golfers'.

Not only was it a welcome voice to add to the story but the Local Government Association joined in – echoing Ashworth's comments.

Free beer can save golf

Is there anything free beer can't improve?

If slow play is a reason why some golfers don't offer more of their custom then this could be the solution.

A Portuguese golf resort offered free beer to golfers for up to one hour and 45 minutes after they teed off in a recent nine-hole competition.

It proved to be a total success – the winning team finished their round in a staggering 45 minutes.



Alistair Dunsmuir, Editor

To let us know what you think of this month's *The Golf Business*, or to comment on specific issues or advise us of your clubhouse / course renovation plans, please email golf@unionpress.co.uk

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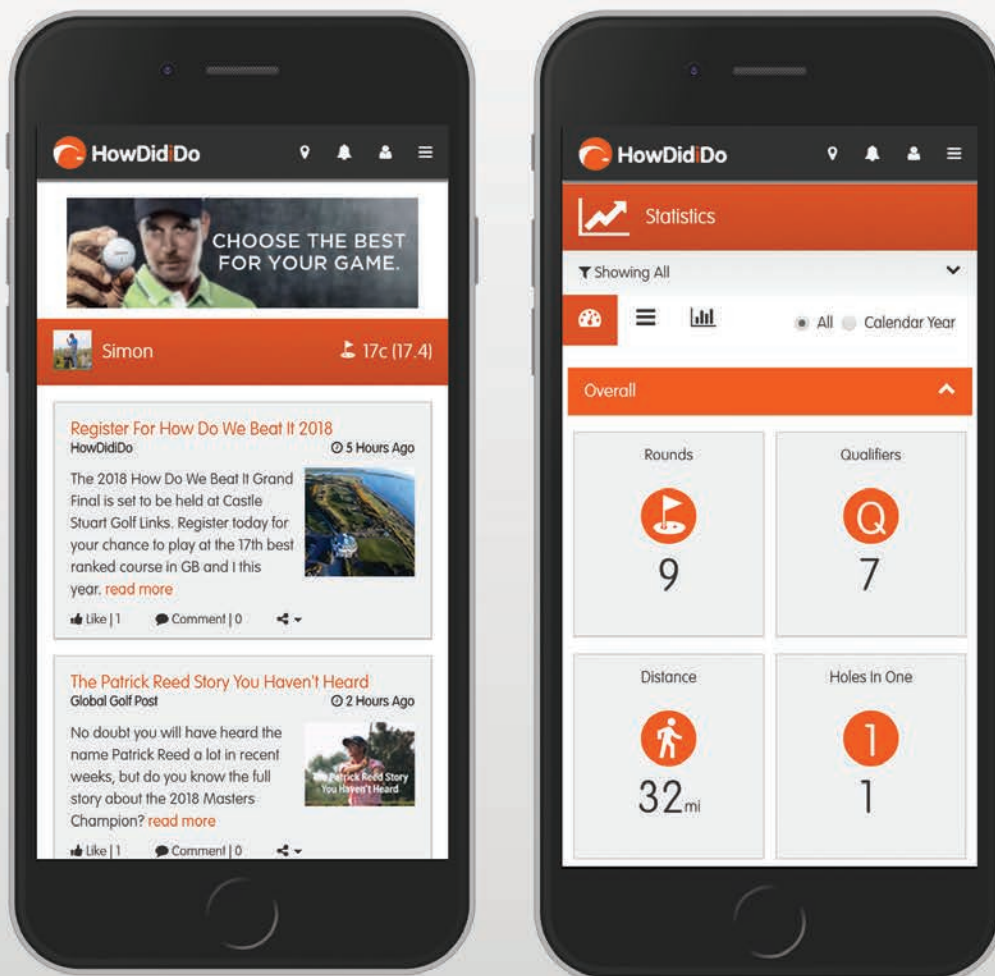
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Club hopes to build homes to survive

A **Northumberland** golf club that has financially struggled in recent years has applied to have nearly 100 new homes built on part of its course to prevent it from closing down.

Blyth Golf Club's proposals include new homes being built on the 10th and 11th holes, while the clubhouse would be renovated, new outbuildings would be put up, including a halfway house, and there would be alterations to the course.

According to *ChronicleLive*, the plans are for 24 two-bedroom homes, 41 three-bedroom houses and 27 four-bedroom properties, of which eight would be for social rent and six for sale at discount market value.

The planning statement concludes: 'The golf club is in a poor financial position and without any measures to

address this, it is likely that the club would be forced to close in 2019 given the current overdraft position with the bank who are providing crucial financial support.

'The proposed development would provide the funds required to improve the golf course and the clubhouse, thereby securing the future of the club.'

It claims that the scheme is in line with up-to-date planning policies, adding: 'The fundamental purpose of the proposed development is to safeguard the viability of the golf club, and the continuation of the important role it provides in offering benefits to the local community and as a tourist attraction'.

The club has struggled over the last seven years due to rising costs and, in particular, a reduction in income. This has led to it making staff redundant, which means it now finds it difficult to maintain the course adequately.

The statement adds that 'financial support from the bank has only been extended on the provision that the proposed sale of the land goes through and the timing of this application is now critical'.

Closed-down golf course set to reopen

A **Cheshire** golf course that closed down when Mack Golf ceased trading last year will reopen this month.

Ellesmere Port Golf Course (also known as Hooton Golf Club) was one of eight UK Mack Golf clubs that closed down in October. It is the fifth to reopen and only one of the eight will definitely remain closed.

Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) has said it has found a new operator for the venue.

Since October, the council has been carrying out a regular maintenance programme on the golf course to ensure the fairways, tees, semi rough and greens are kept to a high standard.

Councillor Louise Gittins said: "We have been working to find a solution to the problem in order to have the golf club reopened in time for the spring and summer so that golfers in Ellesmere Port will be able to return to the course.

"We have assessed the available options and are now

pleased to say that a preferred operator has been found for the club.

"We are now putting arrangements in place with the operator and we will be able to announce more details as we get nearer to our anticipated late March opening. We appreciate the patience of the community who have been without a golf course during the time it has taken to find a solution.

"We intend to contact all former golf club customers who have contacted us to give them more details in the coming weeks."

When Mack Golf ceased trading, the council terminated the lease and other agreements in order to take back control of the site and secure its future.

Meanwhile, the future of Knights Grange Golf Club, another former Mack Golf club, remains uncertain.

Gittins added: "We have been able to find a commercial operator for Hooton Golf Club but sadly we have been unable to identify a viable commercial proposal for Knights Grange Golf Club at this stage. The council will continue to explore all options to secure the future of sports provision on Knights Grange. We have engaged with former customers of the golf club to keep them informed of the progress we are making and to discuss the interim situation. Other leisure activities at the site are continuing as normal."

Wheelchair golfer is first ever club captain

A Derbyshire golf club has become the first in England and probably the world to appoint a wheelchair golfer as its club captain.

Terry Kirby, 63, has taken office at Tapton Park Golf Club, Chesterfield, almost exactly 25 years after a tumour in his spinal cord cost him the use of his legs.

"There are other wheelchair sports," says Terry, who has a handicap of 26. "But golf is a sport for life, once you are into it, that's it. Golf has really kept me going. It's been the mainstay of my life."



Terry Kirby. He is also the chair of the Handigolf Foundation, a charity for wheelchair golfers that organises competitions and hires buggies to wheelchair users who want to play the game

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This man hit two holes-in-one by hole seven

An amateur golfer has defied odds of 67 million to one to hit two holes-in-one in the same round.

Most people go through life without ever hitting a hole-in-one but grandfather John Rourke had achieved the feat twice by the seventh hole of his round at Haydock Park Golf Club in Merseyside, where he is a member.

The 68-year-old, who plays off an 18 handicap, said he

will be keeping the ball and scorecard for the round in a 'special place'.

He said: "I don't normally do the lottery, but I did after that. Sadly, I must have used up all my luck as I didn't win that!"



Manager finds ball thief is a crow

The manager of a golf club in Dorset who carried out a personal investigation into why balls on the course kept disappearing has found the culprit is a crow.

Parley Golf Centre's Daryl Dampney went out with his binoculars and spotted a murder of crows – one in particular, a carrion crow, was spotted swiping the balls and flying off with them, presumably mistaking them for eggs.

Recently the course was expanded near to a wooded area, which is where it is thought the pilferer lives.

Tony Whitehead, a spokesman for the RSPB, said: "This does happen occasionally. It is likely that a single bird is responsible and is mistaking the balls for eggs that it wants to eat. Crows will fly off with food and store it in a larder for later. It is most likely a carrion crow and the way to stop it happening is to use fluorescent balls for a time."



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Four clubs to close in late March / April

At least four golf clubs have said they will close down at the end of March or in early April.

Perhaps the biggest is Redhill and Reigate Golf Club in Surrey, which was established in the 1880s and was the second oldest golf club in the county.

According to *SurreyLive*, the venue 'battled to stay afloat for almost two decades'.

Club chairman Tony Hallett said: "Sadly, the club is no longer financially viable and the time has come to accept our combined efforts have been in vain and the club must close. I'd like to express my thanks to staff and members of the club for their support and understanding."

The club once had 660 members but that had plummeted below 300 by 2013, the year it stopped being a members' owned facility.

Marland Golf Course in Rochdale has also said it will close – in April, after its operator echoed Hallett's words by saying the running of the course is "no longer viable".

Andy King, CEO of Link4Life, said: "Whilst the course itself is of a good quality, we recognised that significant capital investment would be required to improve the physical assets at the site. For example, the building infrastructure, and this, alongside a national trend of decreasing membership numbers in golf, has resulted in a gradual decline in Marland Golf Course members, poor financial performance and a reduction in long-term sustainability for a number of years.

"As a result, the golf course will close with the management being subsequently handed back to Rochdale Borough Council. We understand that this is disappointing news, especially for customers using the golf course, but without an alternative option being available, it is not viable for Link4Life to continue with the management of the golf course long term."

Last year *The Golf Business* reported on North Luffenham GC in the East Midlands and Maywood GC in Derbyshire, which both are due to close at the end of this month. The owner of Maywood said the problems included younger people no longer buying memberships, people having less time, clubs putting on 'crazy deals' to attract golfers, a VAT disparity between proprietary and private members' clubs and the game being male dominated.

Golf consultant mockery slammed

The mainstream media has come under fire from a golf industry group after it mocked a council for employing consultants with golf expertise.

Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran was quoted as saying it was “absolutely shocking ... that struggling local councils across the country are wasting so much money” with Derby council’s decision to spend £2,400 on a golf strategy highlighted.

However, the chairman of an association of consultants working within the golf industry has said the council should be praised for trying ‘to provide the best possible return for both its taxpayers and golfers’.

John Ashworth (right), chairman of Golf Business International, in which the members are all consultants to the golf sector, said: “While none of our members were involved in this particular consultation, I would imagine the information would have been crucial to Derby

council’s future provision of golf courses.

“Golf courses are not cheap to maintain and municipal courses have traditionally served the needs of a particular segment of the golfing market. Where supply outstrips demand in that segment, a responsible council has a duty to review and, if necessary, to rationalise its level of provision. Understanding the balance of supply and demand for golf is a specialist skill which councils are right to buy in from outside.

“Rather than criticise the council, I think it should be praised for engaging outside expertise in order to provide the best possible return for both its taxpayers and golfers in the region.”

The Local Government Association appeared to agree with Ashworth by saying that outgoings on consultants were a small part of councils’ spend, and that it would be a waste of taxpayers’ money to employ staff where occasional help was needed in a specialist area.



‘Dog owners should be more responsible’

At least two golf clubs have asked dog owners to be more responsible when it comes to walking their dogs – as they’ve experienced problems such as fouling, trespassing and even wildlife being attacked.

The director of Clandon Golf Club in Surrey has said the venue has been vandalised and dog walkers have trespassed on the fairways – putting themselves at risk of being hit by balls.

Geoff Legouix told *SurreyLive* that fencing at the edge of the course has been “repeatedly” vandalised and some of the owners have become aggressive when confronted.

When challenged by club staff, he said most dog walkers “resort to abusive and aggressive behaviour and carry on regardless” and only a few apologise and leave.

According to Legouix, someone has repeatedly cut fencing by the second and third fairways with a stout pair

of wire clippers. “This allows the dog walkers to trespass on the course to exercise their canine companions – without picking up after them – even when there are golfers on the course about to tee off,” he said, expressing concern that some people may end up being hit by golf balls and injured.

“It seems it’s an acceptable form of vandalism in the middle-class enclave that is Mewsey,” he added.

Last year a young deer had to be put down after it was attacked by two dogs at the golf course, which Legouix claimed had been let off their leads by a dog walker who did “nothing” to stop the incident.

Meanwhile, a Scottish golf club has asked for dog walkers to keep their pets on a lead when walking on the course.

A statement from the club read: “Millport Golf Club would like to make a polite request to any dog walkers frequenting the course.

“Please may we ask you to keep dogs on leads at all times, to keep dogs away from the bunkers and greens and clear up any dog fouling – thank you very much.”

Free beer works in war v slow play



A golf resort in Portugal has discovered that offering free beer to golfers is an effective way to get them to complete

their rounds more quickly.

Palmares Beach & Golf Resort launched the 'Eradicate Slow Play' tournament recently and now hopes to make it a regular event.

'The philosophy behind the event was embraced by the participants – spurred on by some radical local rules to act as an extra temptation to complete the nine holes of Texas Scramble as quickly as possible,' stated a spokesman for the club.

One incentive in particular – the prospect of free beer in the clubhouse up until one and hour and 45 minutes after the shotgun start – certainly did the trick

for the winning team from the UK as they toasted their success.

It meant Brad Walker, Steve Smith and Derek Sanders – with an average age of 62 – enjoyed an hour of quenching their collective thirst with complimentary hospitality after tearing around nine holes in just 45 minutes.

Aside from other incentives of replacing all lost balls with a brand new sleeve, the threat of punishment also served its purpose with one-shot penalties handed out for searching for lost balls, practice swings, hitting provisional balls or reading greens from both sides.

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Paul Vaughan is 'partner of the year'



Ardglass GC PGA pro Paul Vaughan (left) receives his Partner of the Year award from last year's winner, Oliver Hunt

The director of golf at Ardglass Golf Club in Northern Ireland, Paul Vaughan, has been named as 'Partner of the Year' at the

annual TGI Golf Awards.

The PGA professional took the top honour at the Trump Turnberry Resort at a glamorous gala dinner to honour the top partners and suppliers from golf's leading retail services group.

Vaughan, who became the first Irishman to win the Partner of the Year award, saw off competition from fellow nominees Gordon Cattrell (Middlesbrough GC), Stuart Callan (Bathgate) and Jon Earl (Ilfeld).

He said: "It's an amazing feeling to have won this award just three years after becoming a partner. How have I done it? I just keep my head down, work hard and keep evolving, introducing new things to

the business and being open to change, you have to be willing to change to become the best you can be.

"The team I have at Ardglass have played a huge part in me winning this award, I would be lost without them. It's key as PGA professionals that we give our assistants an element of ownership of the business, if you have faith and trust in them to do what they want then they will help you take your business forward.

"At Ardglass we place a big emphasis on talking to the customer, not just in store but through email marketing and social media too, they have both been huge for us. We believe that if you're not talking to your customers then someone else is."

Former Lydd manager Brian Evans passes away

The former secretary / manager of Lydd Golf Club in Kent, Brian Evans, has passed away aged 84.

Among many other achievements in golf, Evans had also been secretary of the Kent Golf Union and designed and built the Warren course at Littlestone Golf Club also in Kent.

"Prior to founding the UK Senior Golf Association in 1999, Brian had an eventful golfing career: he played with Gary Player many times during his African period, retained a scratch handicap for over 25 years and represented Wales," said his friend Mike Couzens, national secretary of the United Kingdom Senior Golf Association.



"He also served on the national committee overseeing the 1981 handicap system changes.

"One of Brian's favourite tales relates to his management of one of the most successful Kent Colts teams, featuring two of his charges: one Bruce 'helicopter' Hilsdon – a prodigious club thrower – the other, a somewhat debonair young player by the name of Nigel Farage who, as Brian often admitted, had real golfing talent.

"But for most of us at the association, however, Brian will be remembered for his sheer knowledge of the game, the golf courses at home and around the world and the people involved in the game. A progressive thinker, always trying to keep the association moving forward, Brian was the player's ultimate 'go to' coach and would grace the practice ranges at all European senior golf championships, helping our teams to hone their game.

"We will all sorely miss him, especially 'on the tee' where his pithy wit helped many a player to focus on their upcoming round!"

in their own words

Robert Maxfield

chief executive of The Professional Golfers' Association



One of the most interesting things to come out of those meetings was that education remains one of our core functions.

We face a changing – indeed, changed world – so we must ensure all PGA professionals, both new and long-serving, are supported in their efforts to keep pace with the demands this industry is facing.

The key role of our founder members was golf coaching and that role remains fundamental to the world of golf today. We work closely with PGAs around the world, The R&A and the International Golf Federation to promote the importance of excellent golf coaching in countries where golf is thriving, or just starting out.

We are proud to be one of the leading providers of training and education and we are committed to building on this reputation in countries where golf is still in its infancy. Closer to home, we have reached out to our fellow PGA associations in more than 45 European

countries and working alongside them, we remain committed to developing the game on the continent.

These may be uncertain times on the European political agenda, but one thing is for certain, PGA professionals are undertaking a variety of integral roles at golf clubs around the world. We will continue to make sure they are equipped with the skills and expertise to operate in all areas of golf. TGB

To find out more about The PGA and how our thousands of PGA members across the UK, Ireland and overseas can benefit your golf club, visit www.pga.info

Amy Yeates, director of golf, Moor Park Golf Club. Amy is a PGA professional – but one whose job roles go beyond those of a traditional pro



As we prepare for another busy summer, The PGA is now looking at the changing nature of the role of a PGA professional with more of our members following different career pathways in the golf industry.

I am increasingly reminded that the traditional role of the PGA professional has changed. A growing number of our

members occupy jobs outside the 'traditional' role of club professional.

To find a PGA professional in the director of golf chair is common, with members now responsible for running flagship facilities the world over. CEOs of some of the country's top golf clubs started as PGA professionals and today remain proud members.

It is important that we begin to recognise these changing roles and that someone following a career in the game can take many paths. We have challenged ourselves on whether the association is supporting these members and those of the future, and it is a debate which will no doubt continue as 2019 unfolds.

We are starting to work closely with owners and developers to promote the value and importance of PGA professionals within a facility's management team, whether in the office, or delivering front-line services to customers.

Last month I met with hundreds of PGA members at regional meetings across the UK and Ireland where I was able to present my vision of the association.

A growing number of our members occupy jobs outside the 'traditional' role of club professional

New kids on the block

Case study 1: The National StreetGolf Final at The 3 Hammers Golf Complex

StreetGolf is junior golf charity Golf Foundation's entry level golf format for children aged 11 upwards. This growing school and community activity involves a 'National StreetGolf Championship' and last summer the final was held at The 3 Hammers Golf Complex.

Some 40 per cent of the finalists were girls, who like



Golf development professional Luke Walker at Sunbury GC.
Image by Duncan Soar

A number of golfing organisations and clubs are working together to introduce golf to more children. Here, Tania Longmire looks at three initiatives that have all been working

the boys, had only recently experienced golf on an actual golf course for the first time after their first golf coaching in the spring.

The junior-friendly Wolverhampton venue was the perfect par-three facility for young players brand new to the sport.

From 10 regions of England, and Wales, 44 youngsters in 11 teams qualified through school events and regional finals, with around 70 selected school golf satellite clubs teeing up this golfing journey at the start of 2018 (18 clubs had a specific girls' golf focus, while all encouraged girls to take part). These school golf clubs (supported by Sport England funding) are all linked to Golf Foundation HSBC Golf Roots Centres which welcome young people into the game at club level.

Golf Foundation regional development officer Stacey Mitchell said: "One of the girls told me 'this is the happiest I've ever been playing sport'. She's only been playing golf a few weeks and she was awesome! I also spoke with the teacher from Baysgarth School in Lincolnshire and learned that while sports such as football and cricket weren't for his team of boys, they had 'found their sport' in golf and had been busy practising at the club ready for the final. Their teacher said they absolutely loved their day at 3 Hammers."

Case study 2: The Sharpshooter Junior Golf Academy at Golf World Stansted, Essex

PGA Advanced Professional Paul Ring took up the position of head professional at Golf World Stansted (formerly Elsenham Golf & Leisure) in 2014. Having been a junior golfer himself, Paul arrived with a vision to not only engage in adult coaching – he wanted to raise the bar with junior golf and create an all-inclusive junior academy.

Using a programme he originally conceived at his previous club, Paul, along with Katie Herlock (junior organiser and business partner) relaunched SharpShooters Junior Golf Academy. Upon delivering free golf taster

One of the girls told me 'this is the happiest I've ever been playing sport'

classes to approximately 3,000 school children across the area as well as engaging with local community groups, SharpShooters Academy has successfully grown from 30 children to 300 children in weekly lessons over the course of three years. SharpShooters Golf World Stansted is now delivering 30 classes a week at the club as well as at various local primary schools on a weekly basis.

SharpShooters success is not based solely on delivering golf lessons, but also offers a wide range of golfing activities for juniors of all ages and abilities. In the search for competitions which are suitable for a wide range of juniors, the academy is heavily involved in GolfSixes, Girls Golf Rocks and, off the back of its success, the European Tour Foundation. The academy's 300 juniors are also invited to play on various junior golf weekends away which adds another revenue stream to the business.

SharpShooters' success has been acknowledged by a recent four-page article in *Golf Monthly*, highlighting not only Paul's passion for the game and a reliable revenue stream for the club and himself, but how this also provides a great networking opportunity for local business sponsors. The reliable revenue stream provided by SharpShooters is because over 600 people come through the doors every week – spending money and their social time at the club. This



Last year's National StreetGolf Final.
Image: Leaderboard Photography



The SharpShooters Academy has grown from 30 to 300 children in just three years. SharpShooters Golf World Stansted is now delivering 30 classes a week at the club as well as at various local primary schools on a weekly basis



new engagement provides a steady stream of returning and new golfers for the club and coaches. This has been shown in an increase in membership, lessons, use of the club facilities and events.

The reliable income provided by SharpShooters has been recognised by other clubs which are now using the programme. SharpShooters provides the juniors with structured learning from weekly golf lessons and a 'SharpShooters Skills' book and parent-friendly online booking for events. For the professionals, it creates consistent earnings throughout the year due to the

monthly payment system and increased footfall for the club.

To summarise, SharpShooters Golf World Stansted is believed to be the fastest growing junior golf academy in the UK – and this is solely down to Paul and Katie's drive and ambition to grow the game.

For more information, call 07731980272 or email info@sharpshootersgolf.co.uk.

Case study 3: Crown Golf

Last August the three-man junior teams sent by St Mellion International Resort and Sunbury Golf, both Crown Golf clubs, finished joint second at the 2018 England Golf Champion Club finals at Frilford Heath, losing out only to the winning team from Horsehay Village GC.

Both teams are the product of junior golf programmes at Crown Golf's 21 venues, which between them have over 1,000 junior members. The head of the company's group-wide 'Golf Development Professional [GDP]' initiative, Rob Spurrier, points to three key factors in their success.

"You need a structured plan, skilled coaches, and the right facilities," he said. "At Crown Golf we have created a new role – GDP – to act not only as the chief introducer to the sport, but also to act as the social glue at the golf club, getting young people as involved as possible. Our GDPs always ask themselves: are we working closely enough with the local community, and the schools in the area? We work with the Golf Foundation and the Junior Golf Passport scheme, and across the group we have implemented the Crown Golf junior golf structure, with the core objective of maximising enjoyment of the game.

"This is further supported by our commitment to family golf, providing complimentary junior memberships with every adult membership, ensuring families can create great golfing memories together in friendly and welcoming golf clubs." TGB

Toro fleet marks 25 years at the Celtic Manor Resort

Web: reesinkturfcare.co.uk

The latest Toro fleet, which includes greens, tees, fairways and rough mowers as well as utility vehicles, for Celtic Manor marks a relationship spanning a quarter of a century.

And the reason why is because Toro is “head and shoulders above the competition”, says director of golf courses and estates management, Jim McKenzie MBE.

“We originally chose Toro in 1993 because it was the only machinery manufacturer that could deliver us a full fleet of machines, or the closest to it anyway. That sums Toro up, it has always led the way and been market innovators, and that’s why the relationship has lasted.”

Machinery was replaced as and when, but in the main every three years from 1993 to 2008 when Jim decided it was time to agree to a five-year partnership agreement: “Toro and Lely, as Reesink was then, were our preferred suppliers for many years. And the timing was right to formalise the deal in 2008 with us hosting the Ryder Cup in 2010, to have the back up and support that being in such an agreement brings as we took on one of the world’s biggest sporting events.

“Our Toro fleet is as complete as it’s possible to be. We have literally hundreds of bits of kit. And the reason for that is because Toro holds its value and ages well. Toro is part of our image. They look good for many years, and as a result we tend not to sell on the older machines as we replace them. They continue working on estate developments and with the gardening team.”

With so many machines at his disposal and his experience of using them over the years, is it possible to pick a favourite? Jim says yes. Step forward the ProCore 648 aerator. Favoured by Jim for its versatility across the three world-class championship courses, the golf academy and the nine-hole municipal course Caerleon Golf Club: “The ProCore is excellent for all fine turf aeration applications. The club is built on old farmland and is well drained, and hollow coring with the ProCore helps ensure the ultimate condition of the turf.”



Larger hole competition to take place on April 20

www.1puttgolf.co.uk

A company that aims to boost participation in golf by modernising the game via the introduction of a format involving larger holes, has announced a permanent residency at Thames Ditton & Esher Golf Course in Surrey, along with the launch of a new tournament.

Founded by two brothers with years of family experience in the golf business, Harry and Ross McNley launched the first 1PUTT event in 2016, as a way to modernise the game. Since then, they have organised packed events in Sunningdale Heath, Strawberry Hill, Redlibbets, Dukes Meadows and Banstead Downs, along

with a large-scale event for Durham University. The event has even been backed by England cricket batsman, Jason Roy.

Ross McNley said: “The traditional golf hole was inspired by a drainpipe at St Andrews and hasn’t changed for 500 years. In order to combat dwindling numbers, 1PUTT’s design bridges the gap between those who have never played and those teeing off weekly to offer a fun and competitive golfing experience. Faster, more aggressive play with team scramble formats means all abilities can join in. With no dress codes and team kits encouraged, the atmosphere suits the on-course DJs and bars for the perfect golf set-up. Caddy spots are available for those who want to come along for the fun and an après style party awaits those making their way back to the clubhouse.

“1PUTT is the perfect platform for people to approach golf with a new mindset, encouraging participation for everyone and offering more than the traditional format. We’ve deliberately challenged the status quo to remove barriers and stereotypes associated with the game.”

Tickets for the event can be purchased at 1putt.ticketco.events



On cloud nine

Two Scottish clubs have modified their golf courses from 18-hole venues to ones that offer two loops of nine. While this has only required minor design amendments, the marketing and financial benefits should be much bigger, writes Tania Longmire

Following a successful trial, a Scottish golf club's members have voted overwhelmingly to change the course from an 18-hole venue to two distinct loops of nine holes.

Haddington Golf Club, a long established parkland course in East Lothian, is, according to a spokesman, "adapting to the changing face of golf".

Nearly 80 per cent of the club's members voted to change to the new layout.

As a result, the club has introduced the changes and has made the necessary minor amendments so that the club is ready for the new season.

At the end of last year, as part of a four-week trial, Haddington changed the route of the golf course to feature two distinct loops of nine holes. This gave the club the option to sell nine-hole tickets, run nine-hole competitions and generally host shorter forms of the game.

Scott Thomson, the club's professional and general manager, commented, "We feel it's vitally important to explore new ways of attracting more people to the game. We must adapt to show that people can still enjoy golf despite having less free time than ever before. There is a very positive feeling about Haddington

Golf Club right now and we want as many as possible to get involved.

"The management team and I are delighted to have the support of the membership with this proposed change. We look forward to an exciting season ahead which will include some events based around the new layout. I encourage all golfers, especially those new to the sport to come and try it out and I look forward to meeting them."

Recently, Ashludie Golf Club, also in Scotland, announced that it is also being reconfigured into two nine-hole courses, although it will still be possible to play an 18-hole format.

"A number of golfing organisations, including The R&A and Scottish Golf, are encouraging golf clubs to promote nine-hole golf as an alternative to the full 18 holes," said a spokesman.

"Under new rules, competitions can be run and handicaps can be adjusted on a nine-hole course.

"The organisations promoting this have done so because of falling golf membership nationally, and the need to attract new people into golf. It is stated that a nine-hole option might be more appropriate for older golfers, physically less able golfers, juniors learning the game, golfers with less time available to them and golfers who prefer to play nine holes only." TGB

This gives the club the option to sell nine-hole tickets, run nine-hole competitions and generally host shorter forms of the game



Haddington Golf Club

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Have you considered the power of your brand?

Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club is one of the finest courses in Kent and indeed England having hosted The Brabazon Trophy final qualifier, the Kent Amateur Championship and regional qualifying for The Open Championship. When the decision was taken to look at the branding of the Club and how this could enhance the overall customer journey, the Club selected Eagle.

What followed was a structured, professional and methodical approach to understanding first of all, what the Club needed and then in turn how best to achieve it, represent it and position it. Eagle believe that the power of the branding can propel a Club to greater heights and have been helping a large number of Clubs throughout the UK achieve a variety of goals such as:

- Improve their position on National and International course rankings
- Increase and retaining membership numbers
- Increase green fee revenue
- Drive the overall revenue performance of the business.

The question that needs to be asked is have you considered the power of your brand?





Eagle modernised the logo and branding for Rochester and Cobham Park and projected it through a customer journey signage project to help the club move up the Golf Course rankings.

The Challenge

Rochester and Cobham Park came to EAGLE for a new large entrance sign. It was at that point, when reviewing the logo to be used, that not only did it fall short visually of how Rochester and Cobham Park wished to be perceived as a Club, but also that there was no relationship between the icon and the title meaning that the logo was not versatile across a number of different formats and layouts. It was, therefore, decided that they required a re-brand and identity upgrade before investing in a signage and print collateral project in order to move forward and maintain their status. Starting from square one, a full audit took place at the Club as the management plotted their route to prosperity. At the time, the Club did not own a high-resolution logo, have a colour palette to work with and the website was not mobile-optimised. Of course, with a limited budget, there is a tendency to be lured into schemes that promise to cut corners and provide short term investment, but the experienced team saw past this, realising that the first step was to implement solid and authentic foundations before any progress could be made.

The Process

Rochester and Cobham Park briefed Eagle that their new look must be something that was fresh, appealing and recognisable. Eagle leveraged the already recognisable essence of their old logo and modernised it for the 21st Century. Eagle's signage team conducted an audit of the premises deciding that a full course signage upgrade as well as a customer journey signage project was required to enhance the experience when playing at the course.

EAGLE created key collateral items include scorecards, course guides, diary, bag tags, and green fee tickets, to produce effective marketing material.

Other common items include pin sheets, green books, membership swipe cards, and brochures. All of them ensured the brand is featured prominently.

The Outcome

There is now a tangible sense of positivity at the Club. With a new responsive website and consistent identity, they now have all the foundations in place to market themselves effectively. Rochester and Cobham Park are planning an intensive marketing campaign that includes strategic partnerships with local clubs and communities, digital marketing and social media campaigns. John Aughterlony, Club Manager of Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club commented: "When we took the decision to enhance the quality and consistency of our signage, we chose Eagle as we wanted to ensure that the Rochester & Cobham brand and visual identity would be first class. We wanted to define our customer journey for both our members and visitors and in working with the design team at Eagle, we were able to deliver this. The feedback we have received has been tremendous and I would recommend Eagle to any Club, that are looking to enhance their appearance or re-position their branding"



ROCHESTER
 AND
COBHAM PARK
 GOLF CLUB

Haydock Park Golf Club

The former manager of Oxford Golf Club, Stephen Nicholson, has been named as the new business manager of Haydock Park Golf Club in Merseyside.

Nicholson, who has two degrees in golf management and a national diploma in golf studies, and has been the group golf marketing manager for QHotels, among several other roles in the golf industry, also has a semi-regular column on marketing in *The Golf Business* and was featured on the cover in the November 2017 issue.

At Oxford Golf Club, Nicholson oversaw a significant increase in membership and revenue via the creation and implementation of a development strategy that improved the course and attracted a new generation of golfers to the club.

He said: "I was attracted to the challenge of taking the club to the next level and the board's vision to make sure the club is fit-for-purpose for many years to come. I am looking forward to getting to know the course and the members and working with the team to ensure we provide an exceptional experience for everyone and continue to improve the club. I am looking forward to creating the right strategies to develop the club, while fully respecting its history and values."

Cliff Anderson, chairman of Haydock Park, added: "With his excellent knowledge of golf management, experience of operations, marketing and customer service I believe Stephen is the right man to ensure we continue to provide a great service for our members."



The Buckinghamshire

The former assistant general manager at Queenwood Golf Club in Surrey, Ben Ludwell, has been named as the new general manager of The Buckinghamshire Golf Club.

The appointment has been unveiled by Arora Hotels, which acquired the club in November 2018.

A spokesman said it was part of the hotel group's drive to provide an enhanced member experience at the club.

Ben was based at Queenwood for over seven years.

After graduating from Bournemouth University with a degree in golf business management, Ben has held roles as assistant golf operations manager at The Breakers Ocean Golf Course in Florida, and golf and leisure resort manager at the Cape Cornwall Golf Leisure Resort.

Sanjay Arora, director at the Arora Group, commented: "I am delighted to announce Ben's appointment as general manager."

"With his extensive knowledge and experience of golf management, as well as his service-driven approach, Ben is well-placed to lead the team in providing a great club and course experience for all our members."

Ben commented: "I am excited to be joining the team at The Buckinghamshire Golf Club and am looking forward to getting to know the course and its members. I am keen to start working with the team to ensure that we provide an exceptional experience for all our members whilst continuing to improve all areas of the club. This is certain to be an exciting and rewarding journey for all involved."

Situated about 18 miles from the centre of London, The Buckinghamshire Golf Club comprises an 18-hole championship golf course, Grade II listed clubhouse and mansion house (the Denham Court Mansion). Renowned course designer and former Ryder Cup captain, John Jacobs OBE, who turned the estate's rolling parkland into a mature and challenging golf course, designed the course.

profile

the manager profile

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Adam Walsh

The general manager of Farleigh Golf Club in Surrey talks to *The Golf Business* about running a venue with a reputation for good customer service, the growth of nine-hole golf and how he has become the youngest of just 51 golf club managers in Europe to achieve 'Certified Club Manager' status



Adam Walsh

Farleigh GC has a reputation for excellent customer service. What does the club do to achieve this and how much of your role is devoted to customer service?

Customer service is all about getting your recruitment process and training on point. I feel that employing people, particularly customer-facing staff, can only be done well if you recruit on personality and that is exactly what we do every time.

What do you think are your biggest challenges at Farleigh?

We are in an immensely competitive golf market and without question one of the busiest golfing areas in the UK. This does create a requirement to differentiate not only with the quality of your playing surfaces but with the

environment that you create inside the club. We always ask: 'What makes us different so that we don't have to compete on price?'

We always ask: 'What makes us different so that we don't have to compete on price?'

Farleigh is part of The Foxhills Collection. What are the pros and cons of this compared with a standalone private members' golf club?

Being associated with Foxhills has a raft of benefits. We have the benefit of a well-established club and well-regarded business to learn from, not to mention the fact that our members receive some valuable treats when they



renew their membership with some access to golf there.

We are a very different course stylistically so I suppose the only difficulty may be if a golfer, due to our links with Foxhills, would expect a parkland golf course and a hotel at Farleigh.

Farleigh has 27 holes of golf. Are you seeing a growth of interest in the nine-hole version of the game and how do you tap into that demand for quicker versions of golf, if you're experiencing them?

We do have a demand for nine-hole golf, particularly on the weekend mornings. We fully support fitting in as much golf as possible and with time pressures in this day and age, nine



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We do everything we can to create an atmosphere where all golfers feel welcome. We provide junior golf coaching in the community and offer taster sessions for prospective lady golfers

holes can be a real pleasure. At Farleigh we make that easy with our three nine-hole loops. We like to think of Farleigh as somewhere that fits in with your life.

Farleigh also markets itself as a food and beverage destination. What is the club doing to enhance profitability of this operation?

Our profitability comes from being dynamic. Many people cut costs to enhance profit but this is a short-term

solution and will not last the test of time.

We are very flexible with our staffing levels which enables us to increase payroll when we are busy and decrease when we are quiet.

We always use quality ingredients but work strictly to cost of sale percentages, which strikes the

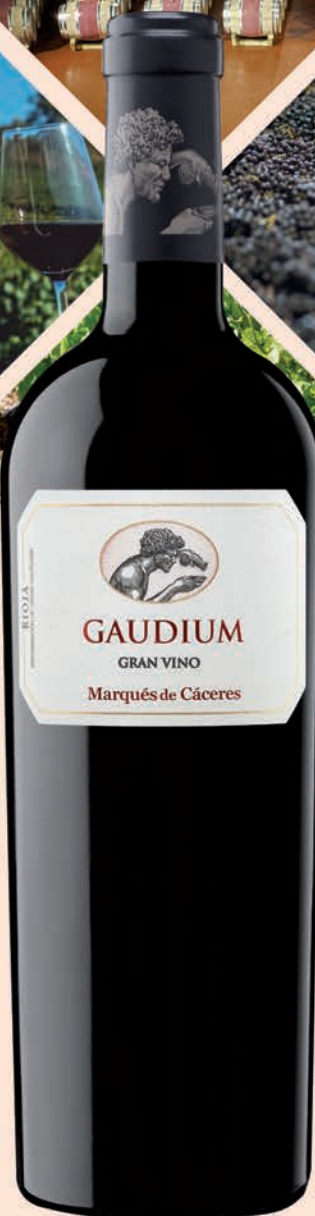
correct balance of value and commerciality.

With regards to marketing, what does the club do to attract potential new members and visitors, and retain existing ones?

We are moving away from transactional marketing and like our



VINTAGE
2014
93
POINTS



VINTAGE
2014
95
POINTS



VINTAGE
2011
93
POINTS

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style to be more that of 'telling a story'. Regular engagement and social media that is visually impactful works a treat. Try to keep it fun and don't do what everyone else does as this becomes invisible in a crowded marketplace.

Farleigh is a popular wedding destination. What challenges does this pose for you as its manager and do you have any advice for other golf clubs thinking of venturing into this area of business?

The key consideration is firstly how it impacts on your membership. We are fortunate enough to be able to segregate our wedding guests reasonably well from the members and their guests. Items such as a mobile bar can definitely be a worthwhile investment to allow you

to create space between different parties.

I would also highly recommend if you wish to tap into this market that you hire a dedicated events sales person as their knowledge of ever-changing wedding trends will be crucial.

It's essential to keep up to date with the latest style or popular theme.

Is Farleigh trying to attract more women and juniors to the facility?

Our facility is extremely modern and family friendly. We do everything we can to create an atmosphere where all golfers feel welcome and actively promote both areas, whether it is providing junior golf coaching in the community or offering taster sessions for prospective lady golfers.

Adam Walsh becomes latest CCM

Adam Walsh has become one of six managers to achieve the globally recognised Certified Club Manager (CCM), following five years of study and an exhausting eight hour exam.

He joins Alessandro Napoli and Cristian Fiora from Italy, Russell Stebbings from England, Andrea Faldella from Dubai and Carlos Linares from Spain, which means the number of CCMs in Europe is now 51.

Walsh said: "I am absolutely delighted to have achieved the CCM qualification through the CMAE. The Management Development Programme [MDP] has been extremely powerful for me, helping my day to day quality of work immensely through outstanding education whilst at the same time allowing me to build up a truly fantastic network of

industry colleagues. I look forward to the future as my growth as a manager continues."

Stebbings, general manager of Frilford Heath Golf Club, added: "I have developed some great relationships and support networks during the CCM process but most importantly it has improved me as a manager, a person and helped me improve the clubs I've worked in.

"I feel very privileged to be one of the first 50 certified club managers in Europe."

Linares, general manager at La Romana Golf Club, said: "To become part of this growing family it is a dream come true as a result of many years of hard work.

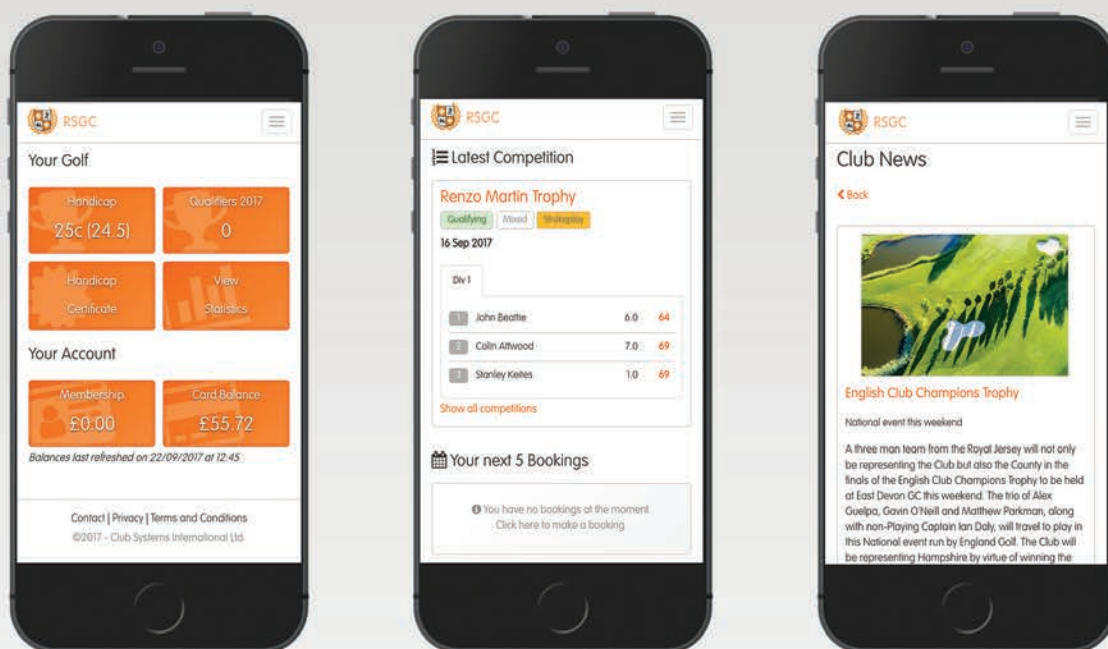
"Being a CCM is not the end of the path but the start of a new journey!"

The CMAE is absolutely invaluable in my role, as I can take the best of club education and mix it with a fine network





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profile

Does the club have investment plans for the future?

The owner is always open minded to an investment opportunity as has been shown since he made the purchase of Farleigh with millions spent on upgrading every aspect of the club.

Every year there has been investment in the business, whether it be on-course or inside the clubhouse, and this will continue I am sure.

Has your PGA training helped you in your managerial career?

One hundred per cent. My inside knowledge of what members and guests truly want from their club and golf course shapes every decision that I make on a daily basis.

I would say not only does it educate my decisions but it also gives me credibility when I spend time with them. Golfers like to talk to golfers and in that sense my relationships become easier to build.

**I would say not only
does having PGA
training educate my
decisions but it also
gives me credibility when
I spend time with golfers**



How involved with the Club Managers' Association of Europe (CMAE) are you and what have you learnt via their educational offerings?

I recently passed their CCM qualification and believe that I am the youngest of only 51 in Europe to have this distinction so it is a real highlight of my educational career to date. The CMAE is absolutely invaluable in my role, as I can take the best of club education and mix it with a fine network.

I recently became the inaugural chairman of their 'Young Managers' Group' and this has proved successful with just under 100 delegates attending in three sessions so it has been a great year.

If you are considering education for our industry, I really can't recommend it enough.

Prior to being named general manager of Farleigh, you were the

club's golf sales manager, which involved attracting corporate income. What did you do to achieve this?

Generally speaking corporate income is the result of networking and a quality product.

We have lots of repeat customers from the corporate sector and I think that we offer such a great range of services for all their needs.

You have a fun and relaxed clubhouse with all required business facilities, a great selection of wines to relax on before or after a meeting and good food.

The key is getting this message across and building relationships with the local community.

Get the name out there, deliver on quality and you have a recipe for success. Don't underestimate the businesses that your members are involved with either. They are pre-qualified corporate prospects. TGB



Late payment of subs

The NGCAA details what a golf club can do about the late payment of membership fees



M

embership fees are a vital source of cash flow for all golf clubs. It should provide the ability to monitor and forecast the amount of funds which will be paid on a monthly or yearly

basis, but when membership fees are paid late or not at all, this considerably restricts a club's ability to meet overheads and other obligations. So what can be done?

There are several indicators that should set alarm bells ringing. These include:

- i. They are difficult to contact; your letters, emails and phone calls go unanswered;
- ii. They are reluctant to negotiate payment schedules;
- iii. They break their promises to make payments;
- iv. They start to get excuses in early, for example by complaining about services or standards.

By identifying potential problem members early, you will save time and money spent chasing further down the line. You should have an internal process which deals with late payments as soon as they arise. When you find it's too

late and bad debts are starting to escalate and causing huge inconvenience, it might be time to call in the services of a solicitor.

Contract

You can negotiate or set out your own terms to ensure there is a substantial remedy to the club where members pay late. There are certain provisions you should consider incorporating into your constitution or membership agreement

regarding late or non-payment. These should include:

- i. How many days after a payment falling due will it be considered a 'late payment'?
- ii. Will there be a fixed admin or late payment fee?
- iii. Will this be charged once or monthly?
- iv. Will this increase after the debt has remained unpaid for a certain period (six months / a year)?
- v. Will you charge interest on the late payment?
- vi. What rate of interest will you charge?
- vii. Do you reserve the right to recover your legal costs where legal action is taken to recover the monies owed?

Where the terms above are written

into the constitution or membership agreement, sometimes signed by the member and payments fall due, you are afforded the right to add costs / interest / late payment fees to the amount claimed, thus covering most if not all of the expense you incur during recovery.

In the absence of any specific payments terms, statutory rights apply.

Payments will usually be considered late 30 days after becoming due.

Interest

As a 'member' is to be classed as a 'consumer', you must specify in the constitution or agreement if you intend on charging interest for late payments.

You will be able to charge interest from the date the payment becomes a 'late payment'. You can set the rate of interest as high or as low as you choose however, a court is unlikely to enforce an unreasonably high interest rate.

The original debt owed may not be a considerable amount however, the right to charge interest, admin fees and recover your legal costs could see the amount recovered significantly increase.

Members are likely to be deterred from making late payments where they are made aware of the penalty



cost implications of doing so. Without the contractual provisions, it is easy to see how you could spend more money than the debt is worth in trying to recover it.

Process

A membership fee is chargeable by virtue of the agreement entered into. Breach of that agreement will give rise to a legal right to enforce the terms of that agreement and recover the amount owed. Where the debt is below £10,000, a 'small claims' action can be brought.

If a small claims application is to be made, there are steps which must be taken to ensure that the process is not misused.

1. A 'letter before action' (LBA) must be sent to the late paying member, giving not less than 14 days to pay the amount owed. Usually the threat of court proceedings is enough to encourage payment. Where the LBA goes unanswered or where the debtor is being difficult, you may have no other option than to proceed to issue court proceedings. The following should first be considered:
 - i. You should ensure that all disputes have been narrowed before going to court.
 - ii. You also need to be sufficiently certain that the member has the means to pay the debt.
2. A claim form is submitted to the County Court Money Claims Centre. The court will serve the debtor with this claim form and give them a date to respond. They are

given the opportunity to accept or defend the claim.

- i. If accepted, they can pay you immediately, bringing the court proceedings to an end. They may need time to pay, in which case, payment proposals may become necessary.
- ii. If defended in whole or in part, they will have 14 days to provide a defence to the court.
3. The court will issue directions after both you and the debtor member have completed a 'directions questionnaire'. The questionnaire asks about the following issues:
 - i. Whether the parties want the court proceedings to be suspended at all to see if a settlement can be reached.
 - ii. Which court you want the case to be heard at and why.
 - iii. A clear indication of the amount in dispute.
 - iv. Any witnesses that each party might be relying on.
 - v. Confirmation as to whether expert evidence and expert reports will be needed.
 - vi. Which track the solicitor believes is most appropriate for the case.
 - vii. How long the parties think they will need for the final trial and if there are any dates they already know need to be avoided.
 - viii. The timetable and actions that the solicitors believe will need to be dealt with before the case is ready for final trial.
 - ix. Some idea as to the legal costs already incurred.

x. Any other information which will be of use to the court.

4. Both parties will be given a final hearing date. The court will decide what the debtor owes and make an order for the payment on the date of the final hearing.

Considerations

As you can see, court proceedings are a structured and formal procedure. Issuing proceedings does not prevent the debtor member making payment before going to court, in fact the court actively encourage parties to try and negotiate settlement before a final hearing.

It is important to consider your members before taking action. In taking a firm stance, you will be setting a precedent that late payment cannot be tolerated. However, you should seek to maintain a healthy ongoing relationship with those reliable members who continuously make payment and help your club grow.

Cost

It is important to consider whether the cost of pursuing the debt outweighs the amount owed. In certain circumstances, it may be cheaper for you to write off the debt.

The NGCAA can discuss the likely costs that a solicitor would charge and help you weigh up whether it is worth pursuing the debt. For further advice, please contact Alistair Smith, CEO of the NGCAA on alistair@ngcaa.co.uk or 01886 812 943



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club profile

Coxmoor Golf Club

The Nottinghamshire venue opened a spectacular new clubhouse on New Year's Eve, featuring a large balcony overlooking a picturesque golf course, as Andy Waple details

The new clubhouse at Coxmoor Golf Club



The 120 club secretaries of the GCMA attending this year's AGM on April 15 will be among the first visitors to experience the new clubhouse at Coxmoor Golf Club in Nottinghamshire.

Opened in January after years of planning, the building is certain to attract envious glances from many of the delegates who could only dream of working in such a spectacular environment.

The new build replaces the former timber-framed clubhouse constructed in 1961 which was deemed to be of insufficient quality to complement the club's very fine golf course and was no longer fit for purpose.

Suggestions for refurbishment were rejected and a small committee was formed to oversee its replacement.

Members were consulted and kept informed of progress throughout the process, and the striking new clubhouse was unveiled on New Year's Eve to wide acclaim.

It had taken 10 months to complete and despite obvious disruption, all agree it was well worth the wait.

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The contemporary design features two storeys with a large balcony offering splendid views of the heathland course, particularly over the first and 18th holes.

All golf related aspects including changing rooms, pro shop, club offices and a spike bar are located at ground level. Upstairs are the large dining room / lounge with panoramic views, a meetings/function room, bar, kitchen and toilets.

Club managing secretary Colin Bee said: "The 1960s clubhouse was very functional with poor aesthetics and reminiscent of an old school room. A number of additions had been made over the years bringing associated maintenance issues.

"The club recognised the old clubhouse no longer fitted the needs of the membership and visiting golfers and had become an ever-increasing cost to maintain year on year.

"We looked at refurbishment but that was rejected by the members so the time had come to consider replacing it.

"The club is fortunate to have a full membership with a waiting list and we can command a joining fee. In addition we are a busy club that hosts big events so we are in a healthy financial position, so the new build could be financed from club funds and a bank loan.

"The new clubhouse is a bold and striking design; it is certainly state-of-the-art and futuristic.

"It really set us apart, is a great focal point and the final piece in the jigsaw to go with the ever-developing golf course."

Coxmoor selected industry leader Ridgeway Furniture to carry out the fit out of the new locker rooms. A total of 75 cart-bag sized lockers and a number of smaller compartment lockers and benches were installed in the men's and ladies' changing rooms. The club selected a light oak finish to complement the overall theme of the new surroundings.

Colin said: "Ridgeway were very professional throughout the entire process and there have been no issues. We are very satisfied with the work they carried out for us and I can recommend them to any club considering a refit or upgrade."

Since its inception Ridgeway has manufactured tens of thousands of lockers that have been installed in some of the most prestigious golf clubs in the world.

The company has seen turnover increase by more than 100 per cent over the past six years and has invested more than £500,000 in a new factory increasing its capacity by over 50 per cent. The facility, at more than 18,000 square feet, means the company is now the UK's largest dedicated manufacturer of wooden lockers.

Coxmoor, which opened in 1913, has one of the finest courses in the country and has hosted numerous high profile events such as the English Senior Men's Open Amateur Championship.

The club continuously seeks to improve its standing however, and it recently embarked on a 10-year improvement plan under the direction of Creative Golf Design, which has recommended works to tees, bunkers and some additional drainage. Coxmoor is also working with the Sherwood Forest Trust to protect the natural environment and is undergoing an extensive heathland renovation project. TGB



Royal Norwich set to complete relocation

How Toro machinery is ensuring the club's two new courses will thrive

Royal Norwich's relocation is nearly complete. The new 18-hole and six-hole courses are due to open later this year



Things have moved on considerably since we last visited Royal Norwich, all 24 holes have been handed over to director and estates manager Peter Todd and the greenkeeping facilities and workshop are complete, meaning Toro now has a home at the new site to work and live.

The major benefit of designing a golf course from scratch is that it brings with it the chance to be specific to the needs and wants of your membership. In the case of Royal Norwich that means a progressive board of directors, each one bringing with them a wealth of expertise in their specific sector, with one mission in mind: to create a sustainable business which understands how the game of golf is changing.

Receiving as much attention as the 18-hole golf course is the six-hole course. Being built to the same exacting standards to bring an identical quality of golf to players with less time, the six-hole course represents the way Royal Norwich is creating a venue that has thought of everything, says Peter.

"The focus at Royal Norwich is to make the game of golf easy and accessible to all. If you don't have as much time, the six-hole par three and par four

course provides a challenging and exciting, but much quicker, game. It has two different teeing positions to enable players to do two rounds from each tee, and we hope will be appealing to juniors and our older members, too."

There's a distinctly all-inclusive feel developing at Royal Norwich, this is a place where families and groups of friends will be welcome. With 300 acres of mature and established woodland and beautiful rolling countryside, the venue is ideal for plans for cycle tracks and walking trails. "It's just a more modern way of thinking, which corresponds to the change in culture that has traditionally surrounded golf," says Peter. "People want to spend time together and we're making this venue an appealing place to do that."

Another way Royal Norwich has thought of everything is

Peter Todd, director and estates manager at Royal Norwich, right, and Reesink's Julian Copping with Toro in the club's state-of-the-art greenkeeping facilities





It's clear to see then, why a loan fleet of used equipment makes economic sense!

Plus, as Peter concludes, this is a partnership for the long-term: "With things on a new course moving so fast and so many different requirements at each stage, I knew I needed a machinery partner that would be flexible and accommodating. I respect the Toro brand and have enjoyed working with Trevor for all these years, but I needed to know I had flexible and immediate support, Reesink's East Anglia service division gave me that."

Now joining that loan fleet which has worked so hard in the early stages are the beginnings of Peter's Toro fleet. Four Flex 2120 pedestrian mowers have arrived for hand cutting the greens, the Greensmaster 1600 is Peter's top choice for the tees and the Groundsmaster 4500-D and

in its design of the greenkeeping facilities and workshop. The building was reclaimed from an old refrigeration warehouse, now it's the second all air-conditioned facility in the country. A team room with pool table, stylish meeting rooms for business meetings, state-of-the-art workshop and parts storage, a 'boot room' with washing machine and dehumidifier, showers, every convenience has been thought of, confirms Peter, including its green credentials:

"It's completely insulated, so will be highly efficient. One hundred percent of its daytime power is generated from the solar panels on the roof as well as supplying 40 percent of the clubhouse electricity needs."

The facility has been home to a loan

fleet of used Toro equipment, compiled to accommodate the growing-in phase of the courses. Reesink Turfcare's Trevor Chard has worked with Peter for more than 18 years, first at The London Club where they introduced of a new Toro fleet of machinery.

Trevor says: "There are so many different requirements when tending new and growing-in turf. For example, it's pedestrian mowing to start with to prevent bruising the grass, it's only once the grass is more established that ride-ons will be required. And it's tough, unforgiving work for the fleet, there's a lot of dust and stones to contend with as the earth moves and settles into its new formation."

Here, Peter takes over again: "If my time in construction at Gleneagles taught me anything, it's that you can never predict what a new course will throw at you. One thing I didn't envisage was using rotary mowers on the tees for example! But we had dwarf perennial rye grass in a blend when fescue took hold and grew so quickly in those early days; we needed to get on top of it fast and only a rotary would do."

"I knew I needed a machinery partner that would be flexible and accommodating and I respect the Toro brand"
Peter Todd



Groundsmaster 3500-D are taking on the initial mowing of the fairways and semi-roughs.

And the progress so far has had the royal approval as representatives from 25 Royal clubs from around the world flocked to Royal Norwich to celebrate the club's recent 125th anniversary and see and hear how the club is shaping up to be a progressive, pioneering and prestigious addition on the world golf stage. TGB

Reesink Turfcare is the exclusive distributor in the UK and Ireland for Toro professional turfcare machinery and irrigation products for the golf, sport and amenity sectors. Tel: 01480 226800, email info@reesinkturfcare.co.uk or visit reesinkturfcare.co.uk



Talking shop

The business of the head PGA professional at Howley Hall GC in Yorkshire, Ryan Rastall, has won the coveted 'Pro Shop of the Year' category at the recent TGI Golf Awards, staged at Trump Turnberry. Here, Ryan explains why his shop has been such a success

What daily challenges do you face in running a pro shop and teaching? I think just having enough time to fit everything in! I absolutely love my job and as I continue to grow the tuition and custom fit side of the business, I find it increasingly difficult to spend quality time with the members. I make sure I am in the shop on our competition days in order to speak to as many customers as possible, but it can be difficult at times.

Fortunately, I have a really good team around me to ensure my time is used effectively.

There is a constant flow of new golf products – how do you manage your stock to serve the needs of your members and visitors?

Utilising my Crossover XPOS system effectively is imperative to controlling the stock well. The

The use of flash sales rather than prolonged sale periods gives a quick injection of cash to invest in new stock

reports you can produce are brilliant and really highlight areas where stock is not turning over.

It is difficult to fill the shop with new products if old stock is still in store, so the use of flash sales rather than prolonged sale periods gives a quick injection of cash to invest in new stock. This really helps to keep

customers looking at new items and keeps the shop looking fresh.

Having the ability to say no to suppliers constantly trying to push product in to store is also a skill I

have acquired over the years. You can't stock everything but the temptation to try and keep every customer happy can be tough.

How do you manage your day?

I pretty much live my life by the online BRS booking diary we have. Every lesson, fitting, meeting and shift in the shop is inputted so I am always organised. Without it I would be lost.

What are you doing to support junior golf and introduce kids to the sport?

I work very closely with local school games' organisers, the Golf Foundation, England Golf and, of course, the golf club to ensure we offer pathways for kids to get into



Ryan Rastall delivering his speech at Trump Turnberry after winning the award, next to Eddie Reid, managing director of TGI Golf

the game as well as develop their interest in our junior academy sessions.

Our junior section was non-existent when I arrived and we now have over 40 junior members and have won back-to-back junior league titles, which is something I am extremely proud of.

Are you trying to attract more women to golf?

We have just revamped our ladies' 'Get into Golf' offering at the club and have really tried to involve the current ladies' section as well as gents to encourage family members and friends to start the game.

The trial memberships we have introduced have also allowed prospective new members to experience the 'feel' of a golf membership before committing to the expense of full membership.

This is all in conjunction with regular group coaching sessions.

Do you have any programmes in place such as academy membership to make it easier to introduce beginners to the game?

The taster memberships we offer starting at £99 offer prospective members to have a taste of what the club can offer. We also offer separate memberships of the practice area to encourage players to work on their game at their own pace.

A lot of PGA pros are having to be a step ahead of their competitors in their offerings and technology – what additional added value services do you provide?

All of the staff are trained on all of the latest products and



Ryan Rastall (left) with the PGA professional team at Howley Hall Golf Club

the PGA professional

technologies. We use TrackMan 4 in all of our lessons and fittings as well as giving a Ryan Rastall Golf gift box to all new lesson clients which includes a towel, pitch mark repairer and ball marker – these little extra details not only look great but make customers feel valued.

I stand by the service we provide and every business in this industry trades on reputation so it is imperative to keep customers happy.

When did you join the TGI Golf Partnership and what was it about it that attracted you?

I joined in 2016 as soon as I took over at Howley Hall GC. My employer was a TGI partner when I did my PGA training and I saw first-hand the level of service provided so when I got the job as head professional it was an easy choice.

Has TGI Golf been of benefit to you as a PGA professional?

Undoubtedly! The events, forums, resources and retail consultant not to mention the amazing 'Business Conference' have allowed me to meet other TGI partners, share ideas and learn from some of the best in the industry about how to run a successful and sustainable business. I am looking forward to my first team challenge in Turkey shortly to play some golf in the sunshine and also meet up with all the TGI team again.

What year did you turn professional and what have been your career highlights, both playing and employment?

I turned professional in 2012 following my dad and brother



To win TGI Golf's Pro Shop of the Year award, recognising the hard work we have put in over the past three years, has been the icing on the cake

into the PGA and have had some great experiences on and off the course in that time.

Qualifying to play in the Titleist and FootJoy PGA Championship in 2016 at The Oxfordshire was a great experience.

Playing three times on the EuroPro Tour was fun, but winning the Nike Golf International event in Dubai in 2015 was amazing, we got to watch the final day of the Race to Dubai and see Rory claim the trophy followed by two competitive rounds, which I managed to win by one shot.

Off the course, I visited the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando in January and, as a lifelong golf geek, it was unbelievable.

The sheer size of the event took my breath away.

Setting up my own business has always been a dream of mine and to win TGI Golf's Pro Shop of the Year award, recognising the hard work we have put in over the past three years, has been the icing on the cake.

TGB



Ryan receiving the award
from Peter Smyth, TGI Golf
Retail Consultant for Ireland



Industry innovations

This year's PGA Merchandise Show in Florida saw thousands of golf industry professionals gather to discover the latest trends in golf equipment and technology. Attending again on behalf of *The Golf Business* was Sarah Forrest – and here's her pick of what she saw



The new ShakeDry jacket from Galvin Green will be available in the UK soon – water beads drip off without compromising on warmth

A

s always it is a pleasure to attend the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, and this year was especially exciting with the offerings on the table from established suppliers and also the new innovative products.



Salted smart shoes

There are so many training aids on the market, but this one struck me as particularly useful, why? Because it's the shoes you wear. Golf shoes are a fundamental part of the game but have you ever considered wearing a shoe that gives you stats back to an app on your phone? With

sensors embedded into the soles to track feet pressure and distribution of your weight transfer and balance, there is no getting away from the stats which are fed back to an app!

Instructions provided to analyse the stats (which are visual) to determine not only your weight balance and transfer but also left to right and front to back balance readings are given too.

Galvin Green

A name respected as an innovative and stylish design to be worn for golfers and more has come up with the next best thing for the golf industry. Galvin Green, already known for waterproof golf wear, taped seams, stretch and comfort not to mention its other clothing ranges in which design has not been

compromised, has now come up with ShakeDry, which pretty much is what it says. An incredibly lightweight (174 grammes) jacket to hit our stores in April with a very limited availability of lime green zip, with the grey range more available in July of this year. Featuring the already sought after Gortex®, the new ShakeDry flips everything

around with the Gortex® being the outside membrane with no outer covering, this superlite garment will retail the same as the PacLite range prices and is sure to be a

Have you ever considered wearing a shoe that gives you stats back to an app on your phone?

massive hit as the beads of water simply drip off yet warmth is retained. A great addition to any golfer's wardrobe; for those that carry their golf clubs, for those that travel for their golf but really for any golfer who needs a decent jacket that simply does it all.

Golf snacks

A bacon sandwich is often a golf club staple before playing golf, followed by a quick pop into the pro shop for some chocolate part way round, or if you're feeling super righteous then maybe a cereal bar which may or may not contain the same amount of

calories but I have been enlightened to another snack which I would carry without hesitation – jerky.

Hand crafted Chef's Cuts real jerky is as tasty as any of the above, packed in a sealed bag to keep it fresh. This treat is enough to keep you going through 18 holes and beyond. There are many flavours but the ones I tried are the original and teriyaki beef, but there's also smoked chicken breast, buffalo style, which



is making my mouth water as I type!

Dried meat isn't a new thing, it has been done for years as a way to preserve meat, in South Africa it is biltong, in the US it is jerky, two different processes, two tasty snacks for the fairways.

If you can get your hands on the Chef's Cut range, I'm sure you won't be disappointed and that you'll have a great round too!



Pitchforks

How many styles, designs, colours, different materials have you seen of the humble pitchfork? And why was my eye drawn to the Pitchfix range? It is true there are a myriad of pitchforks out on the market at the moment, but the clean simple lines of the gift tins available from Pitchfix got my attention. Completely customisable items sold as individuals or in presentation boxes for that truly unique gift include an easy to use trident or two pronged pitchfork with magnetic ball marker and an integrated pencil sharpener set in an ergonomic rubber 'casing' and a further two ball markers in one tin; together with the tin lid being branded for more effect and positive marketing make that gift extra special.

Pitchforks flip out and pack away to save any injury as you bend down to retrieve your ball from the hole! Other presentation tin options are available, or can be purchased individually. Products available include pitchforks, ball markers and hat clips. TGB

Sarah reviewed the above products at the PGA Merchandise show in Orlando, January 2019. Her opinions are her own and represent an analysis of her findings without bias or payment.

Email Sarah via sarah@golfgurugroup.com.

View her Instagram account at [sarah.forrest360golf](https://www.instagram.com/sarah.forrest360golf)

the manager's office

Alan Oliver

The secretary at Silloth on Solway GC in Cumbria says clubs will be better suited to recruiting new customers if they market their unique selling points instead of trying to attract all golfers



If your course is short do you need to call it a 'championship course'? Highlight the fact it is better suited to new golfers or you can get round it quickly – this will attract the right customers



If I was to ask you what is the best film of all time I'm guessing there would be many different answers. If I asked what is the best car, book or golf course, again there would be a number of answers. But why would there be so many different answers?

From a marketing perspective it is vital to understand why there are different answers to these questions, why isn't there a single best film, car, book or golf course?

There are over seven billion people on earth all who have different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles – how could there possibly be one single best product or service that would fit all of these people.

Every company has to ascertain who their core audience is and who their products or services fit best.

There are millions of people around the world who buy cars but car companies don't just target car buyers when they are trying to sell their latest model. They know what type of person is likely to buy their cars and they target smaller more specific groups of car buyers who they believe their product is best for.

Golf clubs need to adopt the same strategy in order to attract more customers to their clubs. Identify what kind of golfers will find their golf clubs the best fit for them as at the moment too many golf clubs are just targeting golfers as a whole rather than specific types of golfers.

Golf clubs need to be brave in identifying what type of club they are, only then can they highlight and find who their target customers are and how to attract them.

If the golf course is a difficult 7,000 yard course with severe rough then trying to attract beginner golfers will be a waste of time; aim this at serious golfers who will relish the challenge the course presents. Once you are brave enough to do this it will mean you can tailor your marketing message towards telling people what your golf club is and this will help to attract the right customers. Tell them the course is tough, tell them it is a challenge if this is what your course is – you can't be everything to everyone.

If your course is 5,500 yards long with very little rough do you need to call it a 'championship course'? Highlight the fact it is better suited to new golfers or you can get round in under four hours – this will attract the right customers.

Every golf club will have customers now that are their ideal customers, so who are they? How old are they?

Where do they live? What standard are they? Golf clubs

can use this to build profiles of their ideal customers and then look at how they can find more customers with similar profiles.

Once you are clear with your identity, clear with who

your ideal customers are, it makes the tasks of marketing your company and attracting more customers a bit easier by targeting smaller, more specific groups of customers.

TGB

Silloth on Solway Golf Club is rated by Golf World as the 22nd best golf course in England. For more information, visit www.sillothgolfclub.co.uk

Too many golf clubs are just targeting golfers as a whole rather than specific types of golfers

in their own words

Jim Croxton



Chief Executive of the British and International Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA)



Jim Croxton

As I consider what I would like to say in this column for *The Golf Business*, it springs to mind that there would be no 'business' at any golf club without its course.

If a golf business is to thrive, it can generally only do so if the golf course is thriving. The entire structure of a golf club relies upon a well-maintained course that is enjoyable and attractive to play.

It brings to mind the words of one golf course owner I spoke to, who hadn't tarmacked his car park or invested thousands into the locker rooms. "What do I want to do that for?" he told me. "It's out there on the course that people spend four hours of their day and it's the course that keeps them coming back."

And if the course is central to the golf club business, then it stands to reason that the greenkeeping team are similarly important.

However, a couple of years ago our friends at England Golf ran a project across three counties, whereby they offered free, high-quality business advice to golf clubs. Those clubs that took up the opportunity were asked to get their senior management teams to meet the advisor. How many of those clubs included their head greenkeeper or course manager, would you imagine?

Well, despite their being responsible for the successful operation of the club's most valuable and expensive-to-maintain asset, more than 80 per cent of the clubs who took part didn't include their course manager in the senior team.

I find this extremely worrying. But having worked with many golf clubs that do involve the greenkeeping team in the overall business, I know that a solution is possible, and a club will thrive if it does engage in this way.

Of course there are two sides to this and I accept that our members must play their part to ensure they are perceived as being at a management level. They have to involve themselves in business matters at the club and be prepared to get out of their comfort zone. This means building relationships with other heads of department and members or customers and recognising that they are part of a broad leisure experience.

BIGGA as an association is doing its part to provide its members with the ability to rise to this challenge. Our annual exhibition and conference is all about providing greenkeepers with the tools they need to do their job

**The entire structure
of a golf club relies
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effectively. That can be the latest machinery and equipment, or it can be the skills and knowledge that enable them to earn the respect of members at their club.

At BTME in 2019 the Continue to Learn education programme provided more than 6,000 hours of education on subjects as varied as communications, finance, public speaking and purchasing, as well as agronomy and ecology. There aren't many professions that have access to such a varied and engaging programme and I believe

many would be surprised to discover the level of education available to their greenkeepers.

Greenkeepers are highly trained professionals and it's now up to golf clubs to live up to their side of the bargain. If they want have the best course and attract the best talent, golf clubs will have to demonstrate they have a coherent business structure in place that ensures accountability for all and the backing and support to allow

their staff to thrive.

I can't finish without a brief mention of a topical greenkeeping challenge; the effects of last year's summer. If your club lost grass cover due to the extreme heat and drought I hope that remedial measures were permitted and resourced in the autumn to begin recovery. If not then unfortunately the bare earth will turn to patches of mud following the first heavy downpour – much to the disappointment of the greenkeepers! TGB

For more information, visit www.bigga.org.uk

'I'm both the golf club's manager and greenkeeper'

Mat Edwards is both the managing director / general manager of the Harry Vardon-designed Looe Golf Club in Cornwall and the club's head greenkeeper. Here, he details what an average day at the club for him is like

W

hat time do you arrive at the club?

Our working hours change throughout the year dependent on daylight hours. In the summer I get in between 6:00 and 6:15am, but if there are competitions on at the weekend, we will sometimes start any time

after 5:00am to cut ahead of the first group of golfers. In the winter, when days are at their shortest, we start at 7:30am.

Can you describe your morning routine?

We will open up all of the sheds, have a quick cup of coffee and arrange the jobs for the day, depending on the tee time book and the weather for the day ahead.

How many people are there in your greenkeeping team and is it a fair number for your collective workload?

The most we have at one time is four, although more often than not it is two or three as the club job-shares, meaning that occasionally we have to cover shifts in the clubhouse. When everyone is fit it works out, however if someone phones in sick or they are on holiday then it becomes very stretched. I think every club would always wish for extra green staff as there are always jobs to do.

Do you share tasks?

With such a small workforce, it's impossible not to share tasks. Everyone knows how to do every task, except for spraying, which is only done by myself. Also, due to a staffing reshuffle, I have now been made managing director of Looe Golf Club, so my workload has now increased significantly.

How do you motivate your colleagues?

We have all known each other for a relatively long time thanks to being members at Looe Golf Club since junior level, so we get on very well, which



creates a good working atmosphere. We are always 'winding each other up'!

We all play golf as well, both socially and for the club (with one lad playing for Cornwall), which also helps when setting up the course.

What aspects / functions of your job gives you the greatest satisfaction?

Getting the course completely cut and prepared by Friday, ready for the usually-busy weekend of play is very satisfying. All of our members really appreciate the work we have put in over the last few years to greatly improve

Manager / greenkeeper Stuart Imeson wins award

The general manager – and head greenkeeper – at Dunstanburgh Castle in Northumbria, Stuart Imeson, 28, has won an industry award.

He won BIGGA's 'Greenkeeping Project of the Year' sponsored by Baroness.

In addition to embracing his new managerial role at the golf club in the last year, Stuart has continued to provide excellent educational opportunities for greenkeepers through his 'Bunker Camps', which were a sell-out in 2018 as greenkeepers from across Europe came together to take part.

The camps see volunteers head to

Stuart (left) with Adam Butler of Baroness



Dunstanburgh Castle to participate in the construction of revetted bunkers over a two-week period, with educational seminars and workshops taking place

alongside the practical greenkeeping. More than 250 people have now been involved since the start of the bunker camp and education days.

the playability and appearance of all areas of the course. For least: Seeing unrepaired pitch marks, divots and unraked bunkers after a shot has been played is highly frustrating, when they know how much work we put into achieving the standard players now expect. Also, constantly clearing leaves and pine needles in the autumn is very time consuming.

Have you attended any courses recently?

I am relatively new to the industry having only started at Looe Golf Club in 2014. Personally, I haven't attended any courses since acquiring my spraying licence in 2016, although I do attend the occasional seminar. Over the last two years we have sent a couple of our staff on chainsaw courses which has worked very well, as we have lots of trees around the course. Being built on one of the highest points in Cornwall, we are very exposed to the elements so we often have damage to attend to.

Do you have a feeding programme for your fairways?

Our budget doesn't allow for fairway feeding, only greens, tees and approaches at the moment. With many products being taken off the market due to new legislation, a lot of courses now prefer the use of natural products like seaweed and other bio-stimulants to maintain a healthy sward. Keeping an eye on nutritional inputs is very important as over-encouraging growth can lead to disease, while managing the height of cut around times of high turf stress is also beneficial. We have a very good relationship with Headland Amenity and our local rep, Richard Shapland, lives only 20 minutes away. He is always on hand and willing to give us any advice or information on products and

procedures. Headland's C-Complex fertilisers are, in my opinion, the best on the market for use around greens' renovation time.

How would you improve the greenkeeping industry?

In my opinion, investing in training is key for any new individuals looking to start a career in the industry. Gaining as much knowledge as possible is a must, especially as legislations change and new rules are introduced by The R&A.

What advice would you give to a young greenkeeper starting out today?

Get as much training as possible and pay attention to those you work with, whilst listening to all instructions. Getting something wrong on the course could be disastrous to the surface and if it's working with large machinery, could be potentially dangerous.

How do you spend your leisure time?

In the last year myself and my better half have purchased our first house, so all of our spare time is spent working on that. Given the chance (and time) I might pop out for nine holes!

TGB

Brought to light

Light plays an essential part in grass health. Supplementary to triggering photosynthesis, the energy carried by light is also used as a defence

mechanism, warming up the soil during cold weather and drying the plant surface from morning dew or rain, considerably reducing the risk of disease infection and algae proliferation.

Knowing this, it is easy to deduce that shade can be an enemy to your turf, even worse on greens, as the short mowing height reduces the leaf blade surface, consequently reducing the caption of light for photosynthesis. During winter the problem is aggravated through reduced sunlight hours, longer shadows and the cold.

If you notice that a certain area of your course has very thin and weak turf or is lacking coverage, and if the environment is surrounded by trees, fences or other obstacles that may be filtering or impeding the grass to receive full sunlight, then high chances are that you are facing a shade problem. As we know, with regulations on golf courses, it is hard to remove such obstacles. Providing the

plant the required energy for its full growth through a lighting rig would be your best bet.

What is a lighting rig?

A lighting rig is an equipment developed to provide PAR (photosynthetically active radiation) light to grow plants. It refers to all the wavelengths of light between 400nm (violet, blue) and 700nm (deep red), which is exactly the kind of light / energy the grass needs.

In general, lighting rigs are metal structures holding smart lamps that vary in wattage according to the need of the treated area. Greenhouses and stadiums have been taking advantage of this technology for years, and now, after a good amount of research and decades of experience, Bernhard and

Company's partner, MLR, has created a lighting rig specific for golf courses.

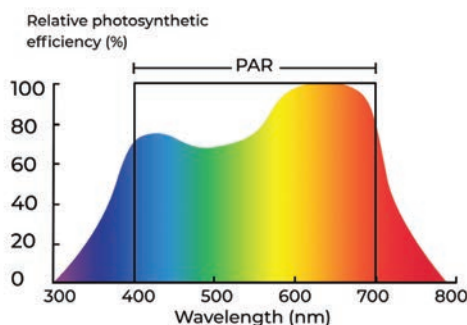
Easy to use and to move, lighting rigs for the turf market can help promote grass growth, recover wear areas and improve the quality of grass by solving shade problems.


What is it used for?

It is used to treat turf areas that are suffering the effects of lack of light.

When grass does not receive enough energy for photosynthesis, it will present thinner leaves, elongation of the blade, depletion of carbohydrate reserves and even the roots will be affected through depth reduction. Consequently, you will see an overall unhealth and unappealing grass that suffers more from damage from wear and is more susceptible to diseases.

A lighting rig works as a substitute of natural light, providing to the plant enough energy for its own maintenance.





Shade results in weak turf but for many golf courses the option of removing the trees causing it is not viable. Fortunately, as Tania Longmire reports, there is a solution

The case of Highgate Golf Club

Highgate Golf Club is the closest 18-hole course to central London. Working with course manager, Derek Mason, Bernhard and Company proceeded with a trial with a light rig last year.

The first green was remodeled in 2010, it was laid with a bent-fescue mix and since the beginning the grass did not establish well in some areas, becoming weak and poor in coverage. It was also possible to see algae formation. After analysing the causes through collection of soil nutrition information and nematodes population activity, it was found that the biggest problem on the green was the shade created by both the fence and trees located right behind it.

To reduce the effect of shade on the first green at Highgate GC and facing the need for an immediate remedy, and a dedicated golf rig not being available then, Bernhard and Company placed its smallest rig at the time (Loki) at the end of February 2018. The trial was set to last a month. During the trial, the weather conditions worsened with the arrival of an unusual cold front that brought to Great Britain temperatures below zero and snow. The lighting rig was kept on even during the snowing days.

Data was collected every two days during a period of 31 days. Root growth was measured on a weekly basis.

By the end of the trial, it was possible to see an overall improvement of the

green, even under difficult climate conditions. Colour appeared brighter. New shootings were emerging in the area that before had no turf and the crowns looked strong and healthy. Advancement in root growth was also verified through root measurement.

How to use a lighting rig

If your team has decided that it is time to solve the shading problems on your golf course to keep the grass to its healthiest, but you are still unsure on how to use a

lighting rig, one of Bernhard and Company's agronomists will assess the shade issue and help your team create the best movement regime for that specific need. TGB Tania was speaking to Renata Mundim, an agronomist with Bernhard and Company. For more information on



Bernhard's golf rig specifically designed for golf courses or a demonstration, contact Bernhard and Company on 01788 811600. For details about the Highgate Golf Course case study, visit: www.bernhard.co.uk/knowledge/blog

Gleneagles has – until now – treated its three famous golf courses as separate entities with each having their own greenkeeping team. This has now changed. The club's Craig Haldane talk about 'One Team' and Craig's new role as golf courses manager

Craig Haldane

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ast year Gleneagles appointed Craig Haldane as its new golf courses manager. South African Craig, a well-known figure in the global golf industry, joined the venue from Emirates Golf Club, Dubai, where he held the position of director – golf course maintenance, and had led golf course operations at the iconic Middle East venue for the past 11 years.

He'd also held senior roles at Nad Al Sheba Golf Club, Dubai, Riffa Golf Club, Bahrain, Ria Bintan Golf Club, Indonesia and Fancourt Hotel, South Africa.

Gary Silcock, director of golf at Gleneagles, said: "Bringing together Craig's experience with Scott Fenwick, our director of agronomy and estates, who has 38 years of tournament expertise here at Gleneagles, is helping us create one of the strongest tournament teams in golf."

Gleneagles is a blend of natural beauty and golfing adventure, its three championship courses were inspired by two of the biggest names in the game, five times Open winner James Braid and the 'Golden Bear', Jack Nicklaus. It was him who created the PGA Centenary Course, the venue for the 2014 Ryder Cup. The facility also comprises the Braid-designed King's Course, opened in 1919, and has been described as a masterpiece of golf course design. There is also the shorter Queen's Course, which has seen the likes of Seve Ballesteros, Tom Watson and Lee Trevino play on it, as well as an academy course and a PGA academy.

Here, Craig talks about how the appointment has been working out.

Can you explain what 'One Team' is?

The four core values within our organisation are 'Warm and Thoughtful', 'Pride', 'Sense of Adventure' and 'One Team'. For us in the golf course maintenance department we use these values as the foundation blocks in all that we do.

We have centralised our maintenance facility and now operate our full fleet of equipment and our entire team from the central compound. It is well positioned within the 850-acre estate and allows us easy access to all three courses. This allows us to maintain all 63 holes and the practice facilities as a single unit which provides our colleagues with the opportunity to gain experience throughout the entire operation and not just on one particular golf course. In the past we were operating our courses as individual properties and one of them from a separate compound and as a dedicated greenkeeping team.



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By centralising ourselves we have truly embraced the One Team value and it has made a massive difference already. We no longer have the 'us' and 'them' scenario within a single department. Whilst healthy competition and banter is a great thing and is something that has not been lost, we felt we had a better opportunity at building a unified team that were working towards a common goal by creating the right environment for all to succeed and grow. Having a clear vision of where it is we want to go as a department and communicating this to the team has been a key element to the success of the structure and whilst the transition has had its ups and downs, I am truly excited to see the positive change in individual attitudes, their willingness to learn and how eager they are to progress themselves over the years ahead.

What were your first thoughts when you arrived at Gleneagles and how did you go about building your action plan?

I was excited, very excited. Being at Gleneagles and being tasked with building this team at what can only be described as one of the most beautiful properties I have had the privilege of working on, was a 'pinch yourself' moment.

The action plan was simple. Get to know the property and business quickly. Show the team how much value they bring. Earn their trust and respect and give them my personal time. Provide a clear vision for the department and communicate this to them. We then needed to restructure the department and provide opportunities for growth and development.

This all needed to be done while running an existing operation, hosting three key events through a very dry summer and relocating a family to a new country. Fun! Change is constant and your work is never done. We are on a pathway now and it will continue to evolve as we develop and grow as a team.

You said the business of golf course management has changed. In what way exactly?

If we don't show the golf business that we are



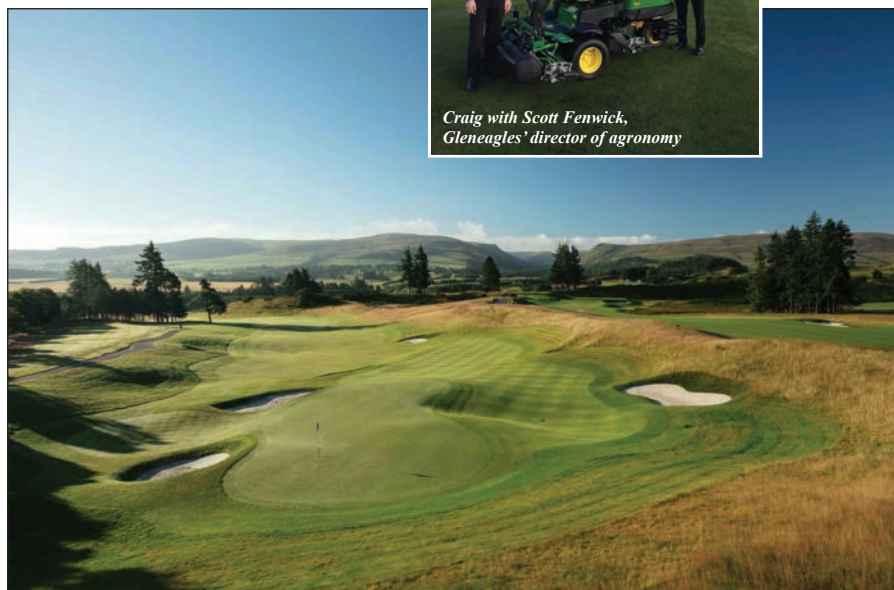
professionals at the top of our game who are passionate in delivering excellence each and every day, we will forever be seen as just 'greenkeepers' – the guys and girls who mow grass, water it and rake bunkers.

We form part of the business of the golf club to a greater level than ever before. Managing the finance of our business directly impacts the bottom line for the golf club and

communication is now without question one of the key skill-sets required. Having the ability to not only set realistic budgets but to communicate and deliver your annual



Craig with Scott Fenwick, Gleneagles' director of agronomy



business plan to the powers that be will directly impact the year you are going to have as a business, from both a profitability point of view and quality of product standpoint.

Your membership is your key client. Imagine never delivering after-sales service to a client in any other business? Our members deserve and expect this today. You have to be comfortable talking to your clients at all levels. If it's a quick chat out on the course or delivering a two-hour presentation in a board room, it is equally important. An informed member and colleague is a happy one.



Internal communication is vital. You have to know how to educate not only your team, but the golf pros, shop assistants, food and beverage colleagues and everyone who may interact with your client.

If the guy in the locker room has the ability to engage with a guest and give them just a small piece of information regarding the golf course they are about to play, this is powerful stuff.

We are a customer-facing department. A customer spends six hours at a golf club and has many touch points throughout his journey. From the minute he makes a call to enquire about a booking, his or her journey has begun. Our teams are tasked with creating a journey for our membership and guests that is consistent from the practice range to the 18th green. This is an opportunity! Don't let it slip you by.

If you want to be seen as a professional you need to behave and act like one every day. Attended a seminar and sit in the back corner with your rags on looking down and never asking questions? Been out on course and shied away from a member who greets you and perhaps grunt a faint hello? We can't afford to be this way. Stand tall, be confident and show your knowledge and experience when it matters most. Act like a professional and you will be treated like one.

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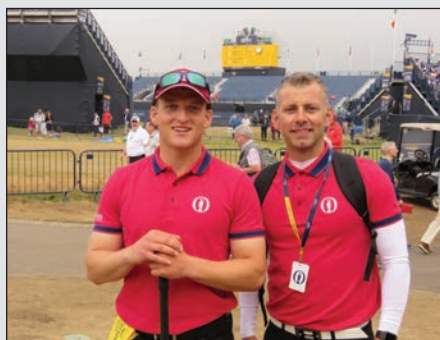
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Meet the Open's greenkeeping volunteers

The line-up for the volunteer support team that will be heading to Northern Ireland for the first time ever as the Open Championship takes place at Royal Portrush Golf Club has been unveiled.

The British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) members who have gained a place on the team are given unprecedented access to golf's greatest championship and they will assist with maintaining bunker presentation throughout the duration of the tournament.

Each year The R&A requests BIGGA's assistance with the championship, meaning BIGGA members have been on hand to witness some of the greatest moments in



the history of the game, including Francesco Molinari's incredible bogey-free final round in difficult circumstances that brought Italy its first major championship in 2018.

The 62 bunkers that will be in play is the lowest total of any current Open venue, but the team members will hope players stay out of Royal Portrush's famous Big Nellie bunker, measuring a massive 25-feet high, which has been recreated on the 7th hole.

Every full BIGGA greenkeeper member is eligible to apply for a place on the team,

but with The Open being hosted on Irish shores for the first time since 1951, there is a large contingent of Irish and Northern Irish members who have joined the team.

This is the list: Adam Baldwin, Lilley Brook; Craig Berry, St Andrews Links Trust; Sam Bethell, Chipstead; Alex Brougham, Trentham Park; Sophie Bulpitt, The Berkshire; David Byron, Thorndon Park; Gary Corlett, Mount Murray; Joe Curtis, Gloucester; James Dawson, Oulton Hall; James Devoy, Donaghadee; Allan Donlevy, Abbeydale; Anthony Duffield, Ham Manor; Josh Dunn, Bramcote Waters; Nicholas Edwards, Remedy Oak; David Feeney, Prestwick; David Fellows, Cocks Moors Woods; David Forbes, Faughan Valley; Phil Hellier, Axe Cliff; Graham Ives, Louth; Richard Jenkinson, Golf House Clb (Elie); Rodney McKay, Galgorm Castle; Ronan McKeown, Golf Club Montgomerie Links; Scott McTaggart, Ralston; Glen Mlotek, Shiskine; Ryan Neale, Bromsgrove; Ian Nichols, Orsett; Daniel Patten, The Mere; Oliver Pennington, Les Ormes; Richard Ponsford, Clevedon; Chris Powell, St Clements; Leigh Powell, Windlesham; Kevin Ravier, Golf de Lavaux; Peter Roberts, Belvoir Park; Graeme Roberts, Swinley Forest; Peter Robinson, Slieve Russell; Andrew Ross, Maxstoke Park; Aaron Small, Belvoir Park; Phillip Snellin, Donaghadee; Ollie Tanton, Royal North Devon; Mark Thompson, Galgorm Castle; Sean Tully, Meadow Club; Daniel Tyrrell, Gathurst; Andy Unwin, Birley Wood; Darryl Walker, Portstewart; Paul Walton, Hexham; Richard Whyman, Burnham & Berrow; Adam Young, The Players Club.



Craig Boath is Carnoustie's new links superintendent

Carnoustie Golf Links has appointed Craig Boath as the new links superintendent at the venue of last year's Open Championship.

A well-known and experienced individual within the greenkeeping industry, Craig is moving from his role as head greenkeeper of the Championship Course.

Craig began working at Carnoustie in 1996 as an apprentice greenkeeper on the Championship Course, followed by spells on the Buddon Links Course and Burnside Course. In January 2007, ahead of the 136th Open, Craig became deputy head greenkeeper of the Championship Course before being promoted to head greenkeeper in 2012.

Craig said: "It's an honour to be asked to follow in the footsteps of John Philp and Sandy Reid. I am looking forward to leading the fantastic greenkeeping team we have here at Carnoustie Golf Links.

"I will do my best to play my part in maintaining the high standards that have already been set and ensure that we continue to be a world-leading golf venue and home to 'Golf's Greatest Test'."

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With one of the hottest summers on record last year, Ashridge Golf Club in Hertfordshire has reaped the benefits of a new Toro irrigation system, installed in the nick of time.

Consisting of a Toro Lynx control system and a combination of Toro FLEX 34, 35 and T5 RapidSet series sprinklers, the dry summer was no match for Toro's top of the line technology.

Course manager, James Camfield, explains: "The system was installed in the winter of 2017 and in 2018 we had an incredibly dry summer. It was a real test considering we were still getting used to the system, but the training provided by Toro was excellent, so we got through it with relative ease. We're really fortunate we had the installation when we did, without it, I'm sure the course would have really suffered."

With the new irrigation system having done wonders on the greens, tees, surrounds and approaches despite the extreme

weather, James and the team have been

blown away by the results.

"It's been transformational," he says. "We're applying water consistently and uniformly to the greens and irrigating the surrounds automatically for the first time ever. Members and visitors have all seen the difference and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

"We're looking to invest more in Toro machinery over the next few years. The club is considering a second phase of the irrigation project. Twelve of the fairways weren't covered by the first phase and you can tell that they've really suffered compared to the rest of the course. Updating the fairways, starting in the worst affected areas, will help protect more of the course in the future."



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Rule
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Rule
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Eagle will provide a service to help regarding your Local Rules

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The service that Eagle will provide here is to help the Club where possible with regards to the Local Rules. However, it is the responsibility of the Club to define accurately and appropriately the Local Rules for the golf course, as only a Club has the detailed understanding and intimate knowledge relating to each individual hole and the situations and circumstances where specific Local Rules will be required and applied. For any further information relating to The Official Rules of Golf please refer to : <https://www.randa.org/en/rog/2019/pages/the-rules-of-golf>