

THE GOLF BUSINESS

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FEATURING

Julie Wannop

managing director of Eden Golf Club

COURSE REDESIGN

HS2

The golf club most impacted

REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE

ONLINE ATTACK

Surviving a Twitter storm

ACADEMIES

TOMMY FLEETWOOD

The next generation of stars

Marqués de Cáceres

Unforgettable moments and flavours



HI

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

Wilma Erskine deserves an amazing retirement

The secretary-manager of Royal Portrush, who will retire this autumn, played a major role in the club delivering an Open Championship that has been widely praised as being good for the game and Northern Ireland in general, but it's been the club's turnaround that she played a central role in achieving that is perhaps the most remarkable.

A year after she began the job, in 1985, the club took £36,000 in green fees and foreign golfing groups were so rare that they would ask what day can play.

Last year the club brought in £2.2 million in green fees and the venue is now so desirable that those same groups ask: 'Which year can we play?'

Golf club managers are still getting younger

We've reported on three appointments in the last month, including at the prestigious Sunningdale, and the oldest of the three is just 34-years-old.

Factor in other stories such as West Essex Golf Club appointing 23-year-old James Levick as its new manager last year, and it's clear

that the average golf club manager's age profile is significantly lower than it was a generation ago.

Your driving range could be your key to significant growth

There are three Topgolf centres in the UK, featuring food, beverage, music, large screens broadcasting sport and driving range bays linked to technology that offer golf lessons and fun games including via corporate and social events. They're packed most nights and the company behind them wants to build as many as another 15 in the UK.

And now they have a rival – BigShots Golf, which was launched in the USA just two years ago and is hoping to come to Wallsend Golf Club in Northumberland, which is set to embark on a £12.5 million project where, at its heart, a driving range will be constructed that provides state-of-the-art virtual reality digital technology.

For some golf clubs, this could be their future.



Alistair Dunsmuir, Editor

THE GOLF BUSINESS

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inappropriately.

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Course
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April 2015)

LOWER Information

Course Opens at: 8am
18 Hole
Course
Back Nine

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Game

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Keep your golfers up to date with the latest course information

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England Golf is insuring club members

Every member of a golf club affiliated to England Golf is now covered by a major new personal liability insurance policy.

The organisation is providing £10m personal liability insurance, which came into effect on July 1, 2019, for all its affiliated club members.

The announcement comes after a number of high profile incidents, including at last year's Ryder Cup when a



spectator was hit in the eye by a ball, and after a famous case that started in 2007 when a golfer at Niddry Castle Golf Club lost an eye also after being struck by a ball.

England Golf's chief executive, Nick Pink – who has been named as the new CEO of England Hockey – said: "The safety of our sport is a concern at every level of the game and this is a very exciting step forward which will provide peace of mind to all our clubs that their members are covered."

All clubs have to do is to retain a list of their members which matches their affiliation fee return. This may be required when insurers are assessing claims and need to check that an individual golfer has a right to the cover.

Nick Pink discusses this development in an exclusive column for The Golf Business on page 11. Clubs can also find out more about this policy at www.englandgolf.org/my-account, where they can activate the cover. To find out about Nick Pink's new role at England Hockey, visit bit.ly/hockeynickpink

Royal Portrush's manager to retire

The secretary-manager of Royal Portrush, host of the 2019 Open Championship, will retire this autumn after managing the club for an incredible 35 years.

Speaking to *The Telegraph*, Wilma Erskine talked about the club and how her role has changed since 1984.

Explaining why Darren Clarke refers to her as 'The Boss', Erskine said: "It's because tradesmen have come to the club, seen the 'secretary' bit in the title, not understood what that role means in golf, thought of secretaries as female and innocently said, 'Can I see the boss, please?' So my stock reply has become, 'Hey, you're looking at her – I am the boss.' "

She added: "I was looking at the diary in 1985 and there was one American three-ball who played here in the whole year. We were so excited, we put a big circle around their names and marked it 'USA'. We took about £36,000 in green fees that year; last year we took £2.2 million,

with a £5 million turnover. Now when Americans call for tee-times, they don't ask which day they can play, but which year."

When she was told that George O'Grady, the former European Tour chief executive, said that the club would not be hosting the Open if it wasn't for her, she said: "Let's just say that when I get hold of something I don't like to let it go. We'd had the Amateur Championship in 1993, for the first time in 33 years, and then a few Senior Opens, so the course was being seen on TVs around the world. George gave us the 2012 Irish Open and we showed we could stage a big event.

"It's what it means after the Open – to the members, the club, the town and the country. And to have played my wee part has been a privilege."



Award for club turnaround

PGA professional Fame Tate has won the 'Outstanding Achievement' Award at The English Women's Awards – North for bringing a golf club back from the edge of closure.

Fame rescued Stanedge Golf Club earlier this year when she acquired it. She transformed it from a run-down clubhouse and golf course to a thriving facility which now sees over 50 players of all ages coming to the club on Wednesday nights for the club's '6@6 golf league'.

"The resurrection of Stanedge

Golf Club has not been easy, it really has been a monumental effort by many people who put many unsociable hours into making the club a place people now want to visit and enjoy being at the club," she said.

"Since we acquired the club in February we have attracted over 80 new members and many visitors in response to our various offers, with different groups getting involved in our coaching and learn to play offers."

Fame started playing golf at the age of 10 at Tapton Park GC and then joined Chesterfield Golf Club. She was playing off scratch at the age of 14. Fame went on to represent England for nine years and Great Britain and Ireland for five years. She played in The Curtis Cup twice and in The Vagliano Trophy also twice.



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£200m golf resort loses funding

A project to build one of the world's greatest golf resorts in Merseyside has been hit by the news that Wirral Council has pulled its funding for the scheme.

Key members of the council have said they will no longer be looking to borrow £26m to support the development of a £200m resort at Hoylake, which was due to be given the same 'Celtic Manor Resort' branding as the Wales venue which hosted the 2010 Ryder Cup.

The council had previously agreed to support the scheme and had already put together a £600,000 funding package for geotechnical surveys, reports *Wirral Globe*.

However, Pat Hackett, Wirral Council leader, said: "It is a massive investment for the council. We are a new leadership, with new priorities and, after much deliberation, we've decided the money we would borrow to invest in this scheme would be better spent on securing affordable and social housing."

Women welcomed to 275-year-old club

The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, which has its home at Muirfield, 16-time host of the Open, has invited women to become club members for the first time in its history.

The 275-year old golf club is one of the oldest and most prestigious golfing venues in the world. In 2017 its members voted to change the club's rules to allow women to join – and 12 women have been invited to take up membership.

Alistair Campbell, captain, said: "This marks a milestone in the club's illustrious history. This year marks the 275th anniversary of the club's first



recorded golf competition. We are proud of our club's rich history but equally excited for its future and the part all of our new members will play in the club's cherished traditions."

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Housing pressures impacting on Brighton clubs

Hassocks Golf Club

HASSOCKS GOLF CLUB



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Two golf courses in Sussex have an uncertain future following a proposed review of how a council uses its land. This comes just a few weeks after one local golf club

closed down to make way for housing, while another is in talks to go down the same route and one political party is proposing building housing on one of the golf courses.

Brighton & Hove City Council has revealed that memberships at its two golf courses, Waterhall and Hollingbury, which have both been leased since 2010 on a ten-year contract by social enterprise Mytime Active, have halved in the last nine years.

A report about the venues states: "The future of the courses needs serious consideration due to the challenging financial position experienced by the operator during the current contract."

The report adds that the preferred option is to market both sites offering 25-year leases.

One or both would kept as a golf course with the potential for other uses such as outdoor activity and education centres, camping, glamping, a country visitors centre, or an events venue.

Nearby Hassocks Golf Club closed down in March of this year to make way for a housing development and during the recent city council elections the Liberal Democrats had a policy of building 1,500 houses on Hollingbury Park as part of its manifesto, but the party won no seats on the council.

£15k award for female inclusion



The governing body for amateur golf in Scotland has received £15,360 from the Scottish government to invest in women's and girls' golf.

Scottish Golf has said it will use the funding to deliver four new hubs across the country, aimed at introducing over 400 women and girls to the game.

The money comes from the government's new £300,000 Women and Girls Fund, and the organisation is one of 15 to benefit.

Aimed at getting more women and girls in Scotland taking part in sport, the fund will target women and girls who have previously had little or no access to physical activity for a wide variety of reasons.

Scottish Golf has said it will use the money to set up new Women and Girls Golf Hubs to complement the national governing body's existing Get into Golf offering, with four regional hubs offering entry level coaching in a fun and inclusive environment across the country.

Carol Harvey, women and young people development manager at Scottish Golf, welcomed the announcement, saying: "This will allow us to deliver four new Women and Girls' Golf Hubs across the country, aimed at introducing over 400 new women and girls into the game.

"The hubs will run for 39 weeks during term-time with PGA professionals delivering entry-level coaching in a friendly environment for beginners."

Northumberland club planning rebrand

Wallsend Golf Club in Northumberland is hoping to embark on a major £12.5m project that will see its driving range transformed into a centre aimed at attracting new people to golf.

The club is poised to become the UK's first 'BigShots Golf' centre, combining traditional golf play with digital technology and has applied for planning permission to reconfigure the existing golf course and include the development of a driving range that will be the first of its kind in the UK.

The BigShots Golf concept, launched in Texas in 2017, 'is designed to deliver golf to a younger and more diverse market by combining the outdoor facilities of a traditional driving range with state-of-the-art virtual reality digital technology', said a spokesman. Last year, ClubCorp, the world leader in private golf clubs, purchased a controlling interest in the company, which has been compared to Topgolf, which has three successful facilities in the UK.

The £12.5 million project, which could be completed as

soon as autumn 2020, will see the construction of a two-storey building, with golf bays fronting the driving range at ground and first floor levels and additional facilities including a new bar and restaurant, shop, changing facilities, golf academy, kitchen, function and meeting rooms and offices.

The western end of the building would contain new Wallsend Golf Club locker rooms and the application also includes parking facilities, plus a new maintenance building for greenkeeping equipment.

PGA professional Phil Harrison said: "It's a fantastic concept that is proving incredibly popular in the USA as it's attractive to not only experienced golfers who can use it as a traditional driving range to practice, a coaching aid or just the fun of playing different courses in a virtual reality mode, but also to complete novices who can learn to play golf here whilst still having fun playing different games.

"Whilst there will be disruption to the course over the first year of construction, the end result will be a professionally designed 18-hole course with a truly superb facility in the BigShots driving range."

Chris Sanderson, who will manage the facility, added: "Wallsend Golf Club will be radically reconfigured and improved to provide a first class golf facility that will rival any course in the region, with a superb clubhouse."

Adam Walsh is new manager of Sunningdale GC



The 32-year-old general manager of Farleigh Golf Club has been named as the new general manager of Sunningdale Golf club – one of the most prestigious job roles in golf club management.

Adam Walsh, who was featured on the cover of *The Golf Business* in March 2019, will move to the Surrey golf club in September, after four years at Farleigh.

Walsh was promoted to general manager from his previous role of golf sales manager in January 2017 and has overseen the completion of a major investment programme at Farleigh.

He became the youngest 'Certified Club Manager' with the Club Managers' Association of Europe (CMAE) when he qualified last November.

Commenting on his new role, Adam said: "I am absolutely thrilled that I will be joining the team at Sunningdale, one of the world's finest clubs.

"I have worked very hard on myself from a professional standpoint for a number of years now."

Tristan Hall, the current secretary of Sunningdale Golf Club, added: "I know that Adam will do an amazing job in running the daily operations and facilities of Sunningdale Golf Club."



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Shahin Bani-Sadr takes over at Rowlands Castle

Rowlands Castle Golf Club in Hampshire has appointed Shahin Bani-Sadr as its new general manager.

Incredibly, Shahin, who comes from Crown Golf, has, at the age of 28 and now one of the youngest golf club managers in the UK, lived for just two years more than the time the outgoing secretary was running the private members' golf club for.

That man is Keith Fisher, who is retiring from his role as secretary at Rowlands Castle, which was founded in 1902 and shares its heritage with courses such as Sunningdale and Wentworth, which were all designed by Harry Colt.

Shahin Bani-Sadr said: "I am excited to get started and push the golf club forward. I am looking forward to working with a

committee who is as passionate as I am at creating the best possible environment for its members."

This will be Shahin's first role in the private sector.

"It's great to see Rowlands become the latest club to take a chance on a younger manager. Golf is currently in a fragile state and I feel it is our duty to drive the sport forward. Seeing the likes of an old colleague getting the Sunningdale role at the age of 32 is inspirational to me and must be huge inspiration for other young managers," he added.

Mark Willcox, 2019 captain, added: "Although it is with sadness that Keith is retiring after such a long and distinguished service, the committee and I are eagerly



awaiting Shah's arrival. We look forward to working with him and continuing to move the club forward in these challenging times."

Alex Davies is Belton Woods' new director of golf

Advanced PGA professional Alex Davies, 34, has joined Belton Woods in Lincolnshire as its new director of golf.

Davies has previously worked at four-time Ryder Cup venue The Belfry, 2010 Ryder Cup host Celtic Manor Resort, and Bocket Hall, in Hertfordshire. His is a CV which demonstrates broad experience of top-quality golf resort management and a wide-ranging understanding of golf operations, membership, club-fitting and customer service.

He has gained experience in the running of a number of high-profile events in previous positions, including the British Masters, Wales Open, Wales Senior Open, the Celebrity Cup and the 2014 NATO Summit.



Davies explained: "The resort has an excellent reputation and I will be looking to build upon that, working in tandem with the local community and the other departments within the resort.

"This was an opportunity I was keen to pursue and am delighted to have secured the position. I'm already engaging positively with the members and have been quick to realise the potential of the golf club as well as that of a stay-and-play venue."

The resort's general manager, Ian Peck, added: "It takes just a few minutes in Alex's presence to realise how passionate he is about golf and in making golf enjoyable for his members and visitors. He also brings invaluable experience in a wide range of processes and skills which will enhance our overall golf operation."

in their own words

Nick Pink

chief executive of England Golf



B

ig news to discuss in this month's column! Here at England Golf we've just launched a ground breaking initiative which adds tremendous value to affiliated membership and also addresses concerns about safety in the sport.

As you've probably seen from recent news coverage, we began providing every one of our affiliated golf club members with £10m personal liability insurance at the beginning of July.

This is a hugely important benefit and one which makes affiliation to England Golf even more relevant to club golfers. I believe it will also give great peace of mind to both members and clubs to know that this cover is in place.

We can all remember highly publicised incidents of injury on the golf course, such as the one at the last Ryder Cup. But did you know, it's estimated that each year in the UK about 12,000 people need some sort of treatment after being injured on the golf course? At the same time, we also know that around two-thirds of golf club members don't have the protection of personal liability insurance.

That's a serious concern and one we are delighted to address by working with

**As you've probably
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personal liability insurance
at the beginning of July**

specialist insurance broker Bluefin Sport. As a result we are providing personal liability insurance for golf club members – underwritten by Allianz – in the event that they are held liable for injuring someone or causing serious property damage at a golf facility.

The cover is provided for members playing at any club in the UK. There is no excess in respect of personal injury claims, and just a £500 excess in respect of damage to third party property.

We're working very closely with clubs to help them spread this exciting news to their members and encourage them to visit www.Englandgolf.org/my-account to activate their cover.

This will also give them access to a new microsite which offers full information about the cover, including details of how to report an incident and make a claim. It has a section on 'Frequently Asked Questions', together with background on Bluefin Sport and how to contact its team for further information.

As part of our extensive promotional campaign we've also arranged for golf clubs to receive posters and social media assets to help them inform their members about the insurance.

As far as golf clubs are concerned, this initiative brings the reassurance that their members are covered in this situation. All golf clubs have to do,

to ensure their members benefit from the cover, is to retain a list of their members which matches their affiliation fee return. This may be required when insurers are assessing claims and need to check that an individual golfer has a right to the cover. TGB

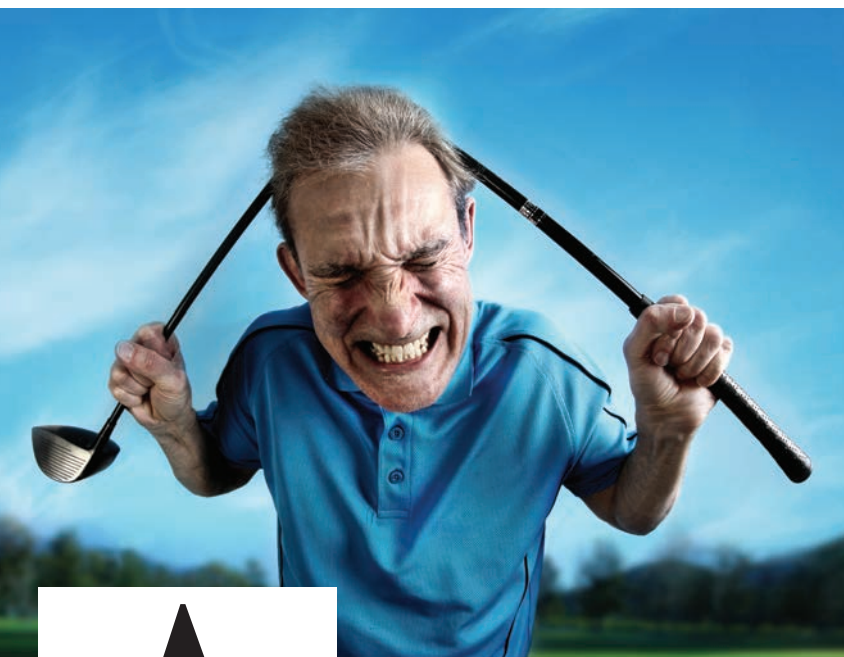
For more information, visit www.Englandgolf.org



the secret secretary

‘One recent Saturday was the last straw’

Every golf club has at least one regular golfer who will not address the fact that their slow play causes distress for others. Here, an anonymous proprietor of a UK golf club details what he did when he decided he had to take action – after this had been going on for 20 years



who plays every Saturday and Sunday morning and is always slow – unless he has forceful playing partners he refuses to call through. This has gone on for 20 years and I, alone, have wasted days of my life sorting out this slow play and the aggravation this causes to our busiest times.

But one recent Saturday was the last straw.

Tempers frayed and three county matches were held up. Green fee payers walked off the course and I drove past four empty holes to reach the culprit who was in blissful denial about the problems he was causing, as he always is. After requesting his four to call through they still didn't comply and action had to be taken.

I engaged in dialogue.

As usual I was met with total denial from him and a supportive

partner. They said those

behind them never asked to go through and that they never had the opportunity to call them through. The other two members of their fourball were too in awe of the politician to say anything.

He also denied that this had been an ongoing situation ever since he joined and feigned astonishment that everyone, when asked, said he was a slow player and they avoided him if they wanted to play a quick round.

This is in spite of the fact that I, and my staff, have had this conversation with him many times in the past.

I played with him last autumn and, at my insistence, we called five games through and we took four hours to complete the round. I discussed this with

**Green fee payers
walked off the course
and I drove past four empty
holes to reach
the culprit who was in
blissful denial
about the problems
he was causing**

At our club we pride ourselves on being a speedy course – three hours and 20 minutes is the norm but many are upset if their round takes longer than three hours. Our course is 5,500 yards in length and the green to tee walks are very short. We have 10-minute start times and only one start point to avoid hold ups.

If anyone is held up and cannot get through they phone the clubhouse and someone drives out to enforce a play-through and apologises to those held up. This makes us a happy, speedy golf course. It works.

We have had one member – a distinguished politician –

him afterwards and he thanked me for pointing out how he could speed up.

I suggested heavily that, unless he changed, his membership would not be renewed. He countered by sending a block email asking for support from all those who had played with him over the years.

'The manager says I'm slow. I'd be grateful if you could give me your opinion of my pace of play,' it stated.

I think that gives an impression of the sort of member pretty much every club encounters and struggles to manage gently.

I warned him that we could no longer continue his membership unless he noticeably speeds up or moves his start time to a quieter slot in the afternoon, for example. I also spoke to two vice presidents and they were delighted to 'take him under our wings'. Both had been affected by his slow play in the past.

The vice presidents had no trouble making him an offer he couldn't refuse. "You've been warned many times: move to the afternoon or your renewal won't be accepted," they said.

Although he hasn't officially replied, we have reallocated all his early morning start times (he had, of course, booked several weeks ahead) and I wrote him a congratulatory letter saying: 'Well done at moving your tee times. I'm sure you will have a far more enjoyable round at that time.'

Since then, many staff and members have come to me with horror stories of the times they have had to deal with him, but now feel they can speak out. The staff also now have the lever to discuss with two other slow, but less cantankerous golfers, who have been moved to quieter start times.

Everyone has breathed a sigh of relief.

I'm sure many private members' clubs will say: 'It's all right for you as a proprietor, you can do that sort of thing.' I would remind those feeling thus restricted that with all likelihood your club holds an alcohol license and one of the duties of the licensee is to refuse access to anyone whose behaviour, in their opinion, is likely to cause a disturbance to the smooth running of the establishment.

Nothing upsets the calm of a golf course more than slow play.

Several weeks on and he now plays regularly at his new, less busy, time and we have not had one report of hold-ups. Usually in that time we would have had several. TGB

The opinions expressed on this page are those of the authors, not The Golf Business. The authors change from article to article, but so far have only been golf club managers or golf club owners.

If you're interested in contributing a 'secret secretary' article for The Golf Business, email golf@unionpress.co.uk

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HS2



Back on track

Whittington Heath GC is undergoing a huge redevelopment including the building of new holes and the reworking of existing ones, as the HS2 rail line is due to pass through it. Detailing what's happened so far this year is course construction specialist John Greasley Ltd

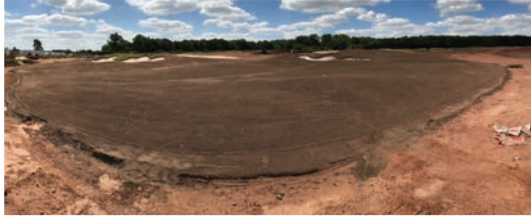


It's been a busy and productive first half of 2019 for John Greasley Ltd, starting the new year on a very interesting heathland re-development project at Whittington Heath GC in the West Midlands with golf course designer Jonathan Gaunt.

Phase one commenced in early January with the reconfiguration of existing holes involving tee, fairway and green alterations along with the complete reconstruction of all bunkering on the 13 holes that are to remain after the HS2 line is constructed. We managed to bring forward works programmed for this autumn and complete more than anticipated before April, helped by the dry winter. Feedback has been fantastic and both the project team and members were pleased to have all the reconstructed bunkers returned back to play at the start of June. A new and updated irrigation system also formed part of our contract during the same period, designed by Irritech and

Above: The reconstructed 11th green at Whittington Heath Golf Club and, inset, the 4th green.
Here, the reconstructed 15th green.
Above, right: New holes being constructed





installed by Irrigation Control.

As well as installing part of the system to the new features to enable an efficient and successful establishment, they were tasked with a complete new ring main, new green and tee irrigation, most of which was seamlessly installed between January and the end of March.

From mid-March works have concentrated on the construction of five new holes being created within 70 acres of adjacent arable land. One of the key parts of the project is the formation of substantial swathes of new heathland which are being predominantly formed out of the sandy subsoil areas of excavation. Earthworks are nearing completion with the holes at their final stages of preparation for seeding.

As is now quite typical, but nevertheless enthralling, we utilised Jonathan Gaunt's three-dimensional CAD designs in conjunction with GPS surveying and machine control systems during all aspects of the topsoil strip, earthworks and shaping. To have the ability to install the latest 3D model onto suitably equipped dozers and scraper boxes was paramount to the effective implementation of Jonathan's design, without the need for a team of full time surveyors, assistants, hundreds of pegs, boning rods, tapes, ranging rods and head scratching! We decided to use a number of GPS-controlled, low ground pressure tractors and scraper boxes to excavate, haul and spread material to the design levels. Each machine is able to cut, load and haul significant distances and discharge fill material in layers as the design model intends. With the right operatives and methodical planning, it has been a deceptively efficient and accurate way to carry out the bulk earthworks, whilst being sympathetic to the ground.

John Greasley has also harvested and spread 'grass cores' over the new USGA-style constructed greens instead of the more conventional seeding or turfing of putting surfaces. This has involved hollow coring all 18 existing greens every six weeks to provide sufficient cores to cover two new greens which are then topdressed and oversown with pure bent.

This relatively new and pioneering technique was specified and orchestrated by the club's agronomist, Bruce Jamieson, who's also overseeing the agronomic aspects of the project. The new landscape created by Jonathan's vision and guidance is formidable. TGB

For more information, visit www.johngreasleyltd.co.uk

Jonathan Gaunt on the Whittington Heath project

In 2010, Whittington Heath Golf Club was informed by HS2 that the High Speed 2 railway line would be routed through the centre of the golf course, car park and clubhouse. The future looked decidedly bleak.

However, the club took on the challenge with determination – members and club officials worked together and, through careful negotiation and forward-thinking commitment, found a solution to the problem. This exciting solution will enable Whittington Heath, established in 1886, to continue to operate successfully as a golf club (post railway line construction) for, hopefully, another 130 years.

In 2012, Gaunt Golf Design was appointed as golf course architect and, after numerous masterplan iterations, the final designs were granted planning permission by Lichfield Council in September 2016. Construction work finally started two and a half years later, in January 2019 – beginning with significant modifications to the existing holes. Since starting, John Greasley has barely stopped for breath, and this is partly due to the free-draining nature of the site, but more to do with the excellent working relationship and understanding we've established.

Key to the success of the project is the development of five new holes and practice facilities on 25 hectares of undulating farmland adjacent to its existing site, to the north-east. This land is essentially denatured lowland heath, with a sandy subsoil beneath so, perfect for re-creating a heathland golf course in the style of the original Harry Shapland Colt design.

Ecology has been an important element in this project, and specialist consultant, Johns Associates, has worked alongside us every step of the process. While the new golf holes will be constructed to reflect the traditional heathland environment, there is also 10 hectares of heather and acid grassland, four eco-ponds, additional hedgerow and native woodland to establish. The status of the ecological (mitigation) land is preserved by a binding agreement and the golf club is responsible for maintaining it as such on behalf of HS2.

Construction of the new holes will continue through to spring 2020 with a tentative opening date being expected in spring / summer 2021. HS2 railway line construction is anticipated to begin in 2022/2023.

online reputation

Spring to defence

Just as the 2019 golfing season was clicking into gear, two golf clubs in south west England found themselves at the centre of abuse campaigns in which they had to defend themselves against incorrect accusations. This is what they did, writes Tania Longmire

Launceston Golf Club (in Cornwall)





One Saturday morning this May, Alan Creber, club secretary at Launceston Golf Club in Cornwall, woke up to find his club was under attack.

Unlike Royal North Devon Golf Club, which had been vandalised just days earlier, this attack wasn't physical. However, it could have had even greater repercussions than the dug up clumps of earth on a green or defaced course signage that Royal North Devon suffered.

And, incredibly, both clubs had been targeted by animal rights activists who had incorrectly assumed they had been cruel to animals due to an online misunderstanding.

Launceston received a barrage of online abuse following a news story about a golf club that was set to carry out a cull of several animals that had defecated on its course.

What many of the social media activists didn't realise was that the story, covered by *ABC News* in Australia, was about Launceston Golf Club in Tasmania, which has been granted a permit to cull species that have been

'causing damage to the golf course', including ducks, possums, native hens and wallabies.

The two golf clubs have nothing in common bar the same name – but the English club has a much bigger online presence, which is probably why it was wrongly targeted.

"I woke on Saturday morning to be inundated with a storm of messages on Facebook and Twitter accusing us in Cornwall of being murderers and wanting to kill for our elitist sport," explained Alan Creber, club secretary at Launceston Golf Club in the UK.

"To be honest these were the polite comments! One person went back through every post we had made on Facebook over the last few months and posted hateful comments."

In response to the abuse the club posted this statement on Saturday morning: 'There have been some very harmful comments posted this morning about our club. But actually the issue that they refer to is at Launceston Golf Club in Tasmania. We have an extremely positive attitude towards the environment and would like to ask those people who have posted both here and on other social media sites to check before posting that they have got the right country let alone the right club. Thank you. Removal of these comments would be appreciated.'

Creber said that while that update did result in several of the abusive posts being removed, including with

online reputation



Launceston Golf Club in Cornwall and, right, how the online story developed



"We also have a very positive attitude towards managing our course, having worked to virtually eliminate the use of chemicals and recently embarked on our own compost manufacture; we have in the past won awards from England Golf for our policies," added Creber.

"We have a very rich animal population on and around our course and we do everything we can to look after them and the environment we care for.

"One of the posts said the actions proposed by Launceston in Tasmania was typical of the arrogant management of golf clubs in not looking after the countryside. I responded saying they were welcome to come and look at what we do and that they should not tar all golf clubs with the same brush.

"This negative side of social media is a concern but we will continue to use it for the benefits we can see. I would advise club officials and managers who use social media as a tool to keep a very tight check on what is being said about them; the three days were bad enough constantly fire fighting posts but could have been even worse had I not been awake early on Saturday!"

TGB



Alan Creber

apologies, it didn't stop the messages outright and he spent the whole of the weekend and the following Bank Holiday Monday dealing with more harmful messages.

He even received an apology from ABC News, although the article was not updated to advise readers to check which club they were contacting.

As Royal North Devon discovered, online outrage can spill over into the physical realm.

I would advise club officials and managers who use social media as a tool to keep a very tight check on what is being said about them

There, a Facebook user posted images of what looked like dumped piles of rubble on top of badger setts at the club, to block them in – a crime in the UK since 1992. It led to activists visiting the club where they dug up a green and

spray-painted the word 'killers' on signage.

The rubble was actually deposited during recent works on the course, and no badger setts were damaged.

"We work closely with the Badger Conservation Society and take our responsibility for local wildlife seriously. Our club would be happy to invite in any local groups to discuss how we operate a golf course whilst also being sensitive to the natural ecosystem," said a spokesman.

"It is a shame that in this instance there were acts of unnecessary vandalism on our premises before any conversation with the concerned group could take place."

in their own words

Craig Tracey MP

co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Golf Group



In 2016, the All-Party Parliamentary Golf Group (APPG) hosted the launch of The R&A's report into the economic impact of the sport to the UK economy. Such is the scale of financial benefit to the UK through golf that Members of Parliament held a debate in the House of Commons' chamber a few weeks later.

With employment levels quoted of nearly 75,000 and £4.3 billion spent by golfers, UK golf delivered £990 million in tax to the exchequer. With these sorts of numbers it is clear that golf is not just a sport, it is a substantial industry.

However, golf suffers from a level of fragmentation that many industries of a similar size simply do not. This is in part due to the long history of the game, pre-dating sporting structures and regulation that we see today, often resulting in a single or small number of stakeholders who act as custodians of their part of their game. In golf, we see different elements being represented by different organisations and speaking with different, albeit often aligned, voices.

For those responsible for public funding of sport this is a challenge. Why should some funding be provided to a project or programme that looks very similar to others and if one project is supported, does that mean all others with the same objectives must receive similar support?

Whilst these are not directly decisions for backbench Members of Parliament, through the APPG we can make a powerful case for golf more broadly and, to do that best, steps have been taken since I last wrote for *The Golf Business*.

The most fundamental and important step for the group was the decision to restructure. Non-parliamentary membership of the group has closed, with membership ceasing in summer 2020. We will continue to hold open meetings at different points of the year to hear from golfers.

In the meantime, we will seek to work with stakeholders to a greater, more strategic and overarching level with the intention to use the group's unique position to bring disparate voices to the table at a senior level and encourage consensus that can then be articulated to government.

To begin that process, I invited several major stakeholders in the game to parliament to discuss how that might be implemented from their perspective, and where they feel we in parliament can add the most value to the game. That was as frank a conversation as it was positive.

It was clear from all that issues can be seen and that positive steps are being taken to address them. The best example of this is female participation. Everyone understands the issue at the highest level, their part in how it manifests, and the benefit of more people playing. Most importantly, each organisation or body represented in the room was doing something to address it and there are some outstanding projects, programmes, competitions and formats in place.

However, most fundamentally, so many are operating in silos and with so many schemes in place, one only has to look at the social media hashtags to see how easy it is for any single message to be lost.

I took two things from that meeting. The first is that the group should be operating like others in parliament that represent industries, and that the decision to work more closely with fewer organisations was the correct course to take. Secondly, that everyone wants the same results and there is a recognition that working

together will mean the sport gets there more quickly.

It is now down to the group to play a role to encourage all those involved in leading golf to do that by working together more closely on certain areas. It is my hope that when The R&A commission a second report on the economic benefit of golf to the UK, we will see a substantial upturn across the board. TGB

For more information, visit www.parliamentary.golf

**Non-parliamentary
membership of the
group has closed,
with membership
ceasing in
summer 2020**

Greenfee365

www.greenfee365.com

Greenfee365, the Swedish and Spain-based marketing hub where golf clubs can sell their tee times directly to golfers all around the world, which has been huge in Europe, especially Spain, Portugal, Italy and France, is launching in the UK.

The company, which allows golf clubs to have full control over their offering, already has its first UK customer – Old Thorns Golf Club in Hampshire – and has said it will focus on big, medium and smaller golf clubs that are interested in making their product accessible for the modern and on-demand golfer who wants to consume golf in the same way as they consume bookings in other sectors.

"We saw a lot of potential in making our tee times live and accessible on Greenfee365.com with the objective to try a new and fresh way of marketing Old Thorns as well as reaching European golfers," said Henry Alliss, business manager at Old Thorns. "The performance-driven business model along with the whole philosophy around Greenfee365.com feels very solid."

"For all the years while I have been working in this industry, I saw many flaws and challenges.

One of them was the lack of means to control the product and prices out on the secondary market," said Marcus Ekeberg, CEO and co-founder, **Greenfee365**. "Another challenge was the need for effective



marketing and tools to build the online sales but without sacrificing margins. Finally, we saw that golf clubs really wanted to get to know their customers but there was a big gap in data from third parties, tour operators and local agencies."

"Through joining **Greenfee365** you will gain complete control over your product, prices and availability. The player is a customer to the golf club, not to us," added Alex McIver (pictured left with Henry Alliss), **Greenfee365**'s head of business development.

For more information, email alex.mciver@greenfee365.com.

ARRANGE A ROUND

www.arrangearound.com

The ARRANGE A ROUND app is tailor made for your golf club and consists of a fully interactive online calendar your members can post a game on, with details of their name, gender, handicap and the decade that they were born.

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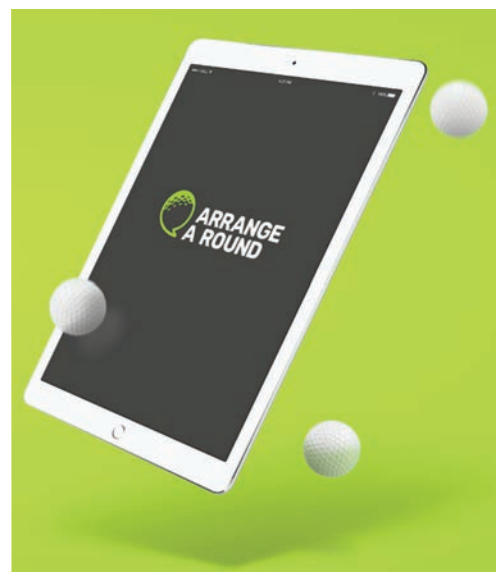
like to join in the round.

Research has shown that nine per cent of golfers stop playing when their friends or relatives no longer play, and 39 per cent would join if they had someone they knew to play against.

With this software, more golfers will play more rounds with more people, which will go on to promote golf, retain members, increase turnover and further improve the support that you offer your members, while at the same time encourage new golfers.

To help you understand this exciting concept, please visit www.arrangearound.com where all will be explained in more detail, with benefits for the golfer and the great benefits for your club. A instructional 'how to use' video can also be clicked on from the top of the web page.

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Julie Wannop

is the co-founder and managing director of Eden Golf Club – Cumbria's only 27-hole venue. She talks to *The Golf Business* about the advantages of offering nine as well as 18-hole golf, how Eden became a host venue for Girls Golf Rocks, the industry's changing attitudes towards women and what the club has been doing to attract non-golfers to use its facilities



Julie Wannop

Can you tell us a bit about Eden Golf Club, including its history and your connection to that, plus what the course is like today?

My husband and I started Eden Golf Club in 1992. We were looking for opportunities to develop our business and golf came along at the right time. Since then we have added the restaurant and events business, an additional nine hole course and a driving range.

Today, Eden is highly praised by visitors and members alike for its immaculate condition, beautiful environment and above all its ability to test golfers without being unfair. We have hosted the English Seniors Championship and is Cumbria's only 27-hole course.

The fairways wind their way through the 50 acres of woodland around which the course is designed – although tremendous views of the Pennine and Lakeland fells are still afforded on various parts of the course.

Wildlife is numerous on the courses with families of swans nesting on the lakes as well as mallards, moorhens, hares, otters, the occasional roe deer family and our residential red squirrels.

Our nine-hole Hadrian's course is where steep gullies and undulations await with rewarding views of the River Eden and surrounding fells and countryside. Whether played on its own or as part of a 27-hole day, this 3,262 yard par 36 course greatly adds to the appeal of a day out at Eden.

The courses hold several county and inter county events each year.

How do you think your role as the manager of a UK golf club has changed during your time with Eden?

Golf has been a very male-dominated sport and place to work, with a terrible reputation for being a snooty game.



Sometimes when visiting other clubs or attending meetings and seminars I was made to feel very uncomfortable and at one event unable to cross the line defining 'the men only side of the clubhouse' (not that an out of bounds line would stop me) and yet it is one of the few sports men and women can play and compete side-by-side. Added to that you can play from and to any age – in which other sport can a grandparent and parent compete with or against their grandchild or child?

Golf is fantastic fun and a social game with incredible health aspects to it as well. Thank goodness this is now being recognised and moving on from its stuffy reputation. My role as a manager and a proprietor has always been to move on, look for new and fresh ideas and make the game and club more accessible and inclusive. That is still true today.

What would you say are your biggest challenges at Eden Golf Club today?

Finding good staff and new ideas has always been a challenge. But, I am very

proud of our team at Eden. From the greenkeepers to the restaurant team, the admin and events team – they are a great team to work with. We quite often gather together for a meeting and they always come up with fresh ideas that I'd never thought of. It really is wonderful to work with such a brilliant team.

At one golf managers' event I was unable to cross the line defining 'the men-only side of the clubhouse'

How do you market the golf club to potential new members and visitors? Your website has an outstanding aerial video, how did that come about?

Good marketing is so important – bad marketing is a waste of money and that's why new ideas and pushing

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the boundaries as to what we can provide is key to recruiting new members and visitors.

I'll have to agree with you there – the aerial video is great! People want to see what they have signed up to so photography and that aerial video are perfect for showing that.

We were lucky to host a very large lavish birthday party for a client in our marquee. The evening was filmed from all sorts of angles and heights and the guys doing the filming very kindly came back to do the course the next day and what a great result we got!

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

Very much so. It is such a good sport to get into, especially for all those who are not interested in mainstream sport or who want to have a hobby that involves their husband, partner or the whole family.

“Golf is fantastic fun and a social game with incredible health aspects to it as well. Thank goodness this is now being recognised and moving on from its stuffy reputation”

Our ladies' section is growing rapidly and we are hoping to field a full girls' team in our junior section, which is pretty much unheard of.

All his helps with the general ethos of the club, whilst still respecting and supporting our gents section and scratch teams. Last May, our juniors won comfortably the county junior team event, with a team of two girls and two boys. Proud would be an understatement!

The club offers free taster sessions to some beginners. How do these work and how successful are they? Similarly, this year you were one of just four venues in Cumbria to host the national Girls Golf Rocks programme. How did that come about, what did it entail and what benefits did you see this year from being involved?

The taster sessions have been organised by our new coaching professional. He has organised several different coaching sessions to





get people started and offers a free taster session to start and then follows it up with a structured course of lessons. This has proved to be very popular thus far and the hope is that the participants will want to become members of the club.

The Girls Golf Rocks programme is such a brilliant concept. It came about through our golf secretary, Erica Wellings. She put forward Eden as venue to host the Girls Golf Rock and our application was successful! Our practice facilities at Eden are very extensive, including a driving range, putting greens and a designated chipping and bunker area and so we were able to offer a very good structure of lessons for the girls. The benefits have been great for both us and the girls – there has been lots of interest and lots of girls wanting to join in which is brilliant! With having a great junior girls cohort anyway, a lot of them have volunteered to help with the coaching sessions, which has helped younger girls to see golf can be an accessible sport for all ages and genders.

You offer nine-hole memberships. How popular are these and do you see alternatives to 18-hole golf as a growing trend for golf clubs in the future?

I have always felt that the biggest difficulty for recruitment into the sport was the length of time it took to play a round of golf. It's great for those that have retired, but for anyone with a young family or in full-time work, four hours is a big commitment.

We started introducing nine-hole competitions about 10 years ago and then latterly with the luxury of having the additional nine-hole course felt it would be a good idea to include a nine-hole membership aimed at those who perhaps felt they were no longer fit enough to justify a full

We felt it would be a good idea to include a nine-hole membership aimed at those who perhaps felt they were no longer fit enough to justify a full membership or those who didn't have the time to play 18 holes. This has proved to be very popular indeed

membership or those who didn't have the time to play 18 holes. This has proved to be very popular indeed.

Have you considered offering other golfing alternatives such as footgolf, adventure golf and speedgolf?

We have looked into it and I think for some clubs it's a great idea and works really well. At the moment we are focussing on Get into Golf and the Girls Golf Rocks schemes but never say never!

What is the club doing to enhance profitability of its food and beverage operation? The 1Up restaurant at the club is branded separately – why?

The food and beverage side is very important to all golf clubs and so is the customer service. We rebranded a few years ago to 'Eden'. This was to highlight that whilst the main emphasis is on golf at Eden you can dine in the 1UP restaurant, or even use the 'Garden at Eden' facilities to get married, host a private party, a conference or a corporate event. This is through our on-site marquee which is set in the private water garden overlooking the Hadrian's course. Our clubhouse is not a traditional interior. It has a very modern look and feel and we are delighted with our new image.

We are just as keen to attract non-golfers into the clubhouse as we are golfers so giving the restaurant its own identity was seen as a step in that direction.

We can dine up to 50 in our restaurant and 500 in the marquee.

profile



Eden Golf Club

The flexibility of our dining facilities is unique for a golf club and that enables us to hold large and lavish events. We have had the privilege of hosting bands such as JLS, Little Mix and this year the British Philharmonic Concert Orchestra and Sarah Fox for the St James's Place Charitable Foundation. Catering on this scale is like a military operation and you are only as good as your last event, so service and quality is absolute key.

You won the award for 'Large Hotels, Leisure & Tourism' at the 2019 Cumbria Family Business Awards. Congratulations! What did you do to win this?

We were delighted and honoured to receive this award – it was totally out of the blue.

We were nominated by a company that we have worked with and

We are just as keen to attract non-golfers into the clubhouse as we are golfers so giving the restaurant its own identity was seen as a step in that direction

it was a great thrill to be put forward. We were very flattered that they thought us worthy of a nomination. We are very much a family business and proud of that fact.

My husband Alistair's late father was very involved in the setting up of the course and his

mum still takes a keen interest.

Both our children worked during school and university holidays either as part of the greens' staff or on the catering team.

This June we were named runners-up for the Large Hotels, Leisure & Tourism national round of The Family Business Awards.

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profile

“Our course manager has his own organic potions he uses instead of pesticides and fertilisers and is hoping in the not too distant future that we will be a totally chemical-free course”





The environment has been a big issue lately, what does Eden do to protect its local habitat?

The wildlife at Eden is incredible and plays a big part in what we do here. Our course manager, Malcom Lathan, is very conscious of the environment and prefers to follow the biological route instead of chemical route for course management. He has his own organic potions he uses instead of pesticides and fertilisers and is hoping in the not too distant future that we will be a totally chemical-free course.

The layout and make-up of the course create the perfect environment for wildlife with woodland and small lakes as well as some long grass areas creating a great mix of habitat. We put great efforts into encouraging our red squirrel population (which are generally on the decrease) and it's great to see them do well. Likewise our hares on the course are another species finding it hard at the moment, but they are also thriving!

A few years ago we covered a story about a cow being found on your course after it had been swept along by flooded water for 18 miles. What actually happened?

Both the course and clubhouse were hit by Storm Desmond in 2015 – it almost completely wiped us out which was both heartbreaking and scary.

After the water disappeared Alistair was doing a course walk to assess the work we needed to do and he came across some fresh hoof marks along the fairway. He followed them until they led him into some woodland on the course and there was a young heifer sitting under the trees clearly traumatised. When she saw Alistair she stood up and followed him off the course to a nearby field until he could trace the farm from where she had come.

She had come approximately 18 miles down the river and was also in calf. Happily, she was safely transported home and calved down safely some months later. A happy ending for all involved! TGB

Employment Tribunal claims



With the number of Employment Tribunal claims on the rise, it is important for golf clubs to handle matters correctly with their employees in

order to avoid or reduce their exposure in potential claims.

With that in mind, this article explores what might happen if things go wrong and a club receives a claim from an employee, explaining the outline procedure and the potential compensation that might be awarded.

In the Employment Tribunal, the person bringing the claim is known as the 'Claimant' and the person defending the claim is known as the 'Respondent'.

Starting the claim

In order to start a claim, the claimant must present the claim on an ET1 form, which can be submitted online, by post or hand delivered to certain Employment Tribunal offices. Claims must be lodged within the relevant time limit, for example an unfair dismissal claim must be brought within three months of the termination date and most discrimination claims must be presented within three months of the date of the discriminatory act.

In most cases, an Employment Tribunal claim will only be accepted if the claimant has firstly followed the ACAS early conciliation procedure, which lasts for up to one

month. The purpose of it is for ACAS to conciliate and to reach a settlement between the parties, so as to avoid the case proceeding to a full Employment Tribunal hearing. Any cases settled would normally end there. In circumstances where no settlement is reached, a certificate is issued by ACAS to say conciliation was unsuccessful, which the claimant must present to the Employment Tribunal, along with their ET1 form. In practical terms, therefore, the first indication that respondents will have about a potential claim will be that contact from ACAS.

Provided that the Employment Tribunal accepts the claim, it will send a copy of that claim to the respondent, together with a blank ET3 form for completion and return. The respondent should set out their defence to the claim on the ET3 form and must submit it within 28 days of the date on which the tribunal sent out the ET1 form.

Preparing for the case

Assuming that the case proceeds, an employment judge will review the case to set out certain matters for case management. This will normally take the form of a timetable for the disclosure of documents, any requests for further information, preparation of the 'Schedule of Loss' by the claimant, the production and exchange of witness statements and

a date for the agreed bundle of documents to which the parties will refer as evidence in the main hearing. This underlines the importance of contemporaneous record keeping and a paper trail when dealing with employees, since it could form part of the club's evidence at a tribunal to help defend a claim.

There is no requirement for either party to be legally represented during a tribunal case, so the preparation for, and conduct of, the hearing could be conducted by the club itself. Whilst the Employment Tribunal system was originally designed for the parties to represent themselves in a less formal environment, the law is increasingly more complex and so it may be sensible to engage representation. Some clubs will have insurance against claims, who may appoint legal representatives for the club. It is sensible to contact insurers as soon as a claim is intimated, but some insurers will require a club to have consulted with them about the handling of the dismissal procedure much earlier, so it is likely that insurers may well be on board in advance of receipt of a claim.

The hearing

At the hearing itself, the case can be heard by an employment judge sitting alone or by a panel of three people, made up an employment judge and two wing members (one drawn from an employee background,



such as trade unions, and the other from an employer background, such as the CBI).

Witness evidence is heard and each party argues their own case. Witnesses are normally required to give evidence on oath and the representatives for the parties will have an opportunity to ask questions of those witnesses. The Employment Tribunal may have its own questions as well, and at the end of the hearing each party makes its closing submissions to summarise their case with reference to the legal principles and the evidence.

When the Employment Tribunal reaches a decision it can be given immediately or it can be reserved, which means that it is issued in writing to the parties at a later date.

If the claim is successful, the Employment Tribunal will go on to consider what compensation (if any) they should award. This may be done the same day or the parties may have to return at a later date for a remedies hearing.

Remedies

The compensation in unfair dismissal claim consists of two aspects. The first is the basic award and the second is the compensatory award.

The basic award is up to a maximum of £15,750 (in the financial year of April 6, 2019 to April 5, 2020) and is calculated in the same way as a statutory redundancy payment, based upon an employee's age and length of service with one week's pay capped at £525 until April 5, 2020. Sometimes the basic award can be

reduced where the employee's conduct before the dismissal justifies it or where the employee has already received a redundancy payment from the employer.

The compensatory award is what the Employment Tribunal considers just and equitable in all of the circumstances. It can include immediate loss of earnings, future loss of earnings, loss of pension and benefits and expenses incurred. In most cases the compensatory award is subject to a maximum of the lower of 52 weeks of gross pay at the time of dismissal or £86,444 (for the year April 6, 2019 to April 5, 2020). Compensation can be reduced in circumstances where there was an error in the dismissal procedure but the claimant would have been dismissed in any event, where the claimant's conduct contributed to the dismissal or where the claimant has not taken reasonable steps to find alternative employment.

If an Employment Tribunal upholds a complaint of unfair dismissal, it can make an order for reinstatement or re-engagement. They cannot, however, order reinstatement or re-engagement and also make a compensatory award. In practice, though, orders for reinstatement or re-engagement are extremely rare.

Compensation for discrimination is based on the loss suffered by the claimant. Importantly, there is no upper limit on compensation and the aim of it is to award a sum of money that will put a claimant in a position that they would have been in had the wrong not taken place. The compensation can cover financial loss (as above in unfair dismissal cases such as loss of earnings) and non-financial losses, which in most cases will include an injury to feelings award which can range, at present, from £900 to £44,000 (or potentially beyond in exceptional circumstances) depending on the severity of the discrimination. In some cases it can also include an award for personal injury, aggravated damages and exemplary damages.

Finally, where a discrimination claim is successful, an Employment Tribunal may make recommendations and declarations such as recommending that within a certain period of time, the employer should take specified steps to reduce the adverse effect upon the complainant.

Appeals

Either party can appeal an Employment Tribunal decision to the Employment Appeal Tribunal on a point of law. They cannot, however, appeal simply on the ground that they are unhappy with the outcome. The notice of appeal must be lodged within 42 days of the date of the decision of the Employment Tribunal or if it is a judgement, within 42 days of the date on which the written judgement was sent to the parties.

Employment tribunal proceedings can be complex matters and it is important for clubs to understand the consequences of failing to deal with their employees properly and in a legally correct manner. For advice in relation to employment law matters, please contact Alistair Smith at the NGCAA on alistair@ngcaa.co.uk or 01886 812943



The National Golf Clubs' Advisory Association

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Quality control

Increased demand in Scotland for cloud-based software systems has seen the company behind the ClubV1 system invest in additional client support north of the border. Tania Longmire reports



Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh

The world's oldest golf club, Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh, has moved from another supplier to ClubV1, proving that even an organisation with nearly 300 years of history behind it can make an effortless leap to the forefront of technology with the right support

Investment is key to business success and the addition of Craig Galloway to the Club Systems International (CSI) team, as a second account manager in Scotland, has seen an increase in customer support capabilities and, as a consequence, growth in the company's customer base north of the border.

As Europe's leading golf club IT specialist, CSI has always placed an emphasis on client engagement and support. The addition of Galloway, who is based just outside of Edinburgh, has enabled the company to ensure

customers are utilising fully the CSI products and services available to them as he visits every club in Scotland during the summer months.

CSI has, consequently, secured a number of new clients north of the border as an initial reluctance to engage with a cloud-based system gradually became something of a stampede, once club officials saw for themselves how simple and effective the product was.

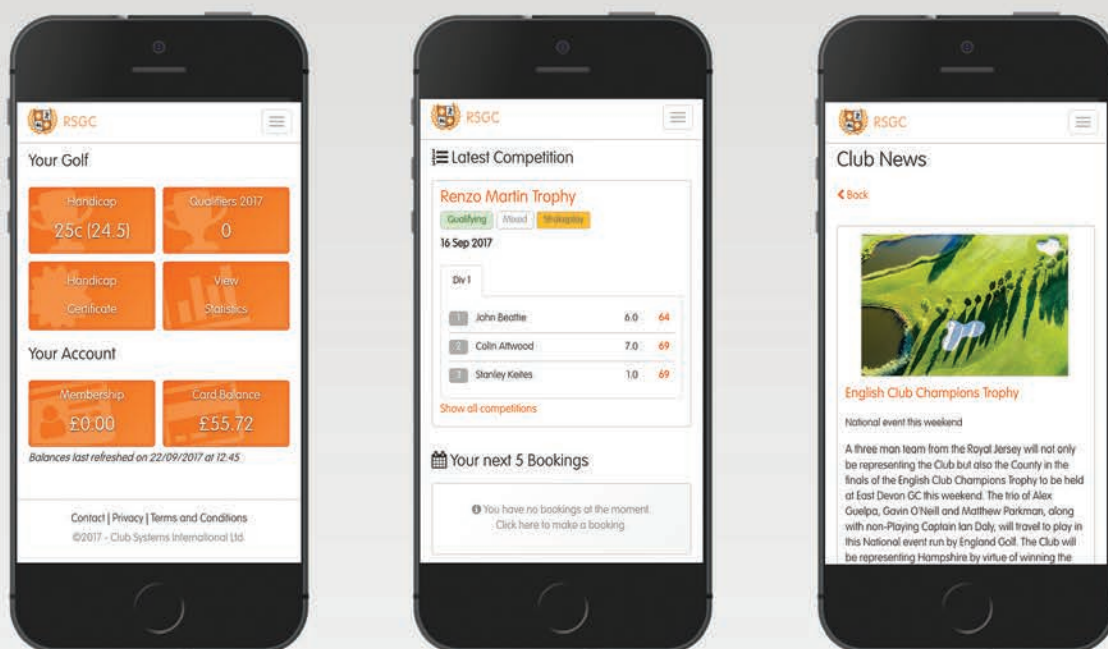
The prestigious **Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh** – widely recognised as the oldest golf club in the world – has recently

moved from another software supplier to embrace ClubV1, proving that even an organisation with nearly 300 years of history behind it can make an effortless leap to the forefront of technology with the right support.

It was swiftly in use to administer club competitions and handicap adjustments, while members have benefited immediately from the improved communication via the members' app and hub, while the



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clubhouse technology



even if I cannot be in the clubhouse at the time. The team were excellent in setting us up and the online chat helpline is useful for any queries as we develop our experience.”

Just down the road from the Duke’s is the **New Golf Club at St Andrews** – it’s all relative, this one dates from 1902 – CSI installed not only ClubV1 but also integrated widescreen tills with customer-facing displays, which have been very warmly received.

Secretary / manager Mark Richardson said: “The New Golf Club is continually looking to improve the service we offer members. Our investment in new technology allows us to strike the balance between members having greater integration and improvements in efficiency for our staff team members. The recent investment with CSI to upgrade our tills

system also integrates seamlessly with three new tills.

The Duke’s St Andrews became the 1,500th ClubV1 customer, having moved to CSI from another software provider, with the fully hosted management system providing market-leading tools for club officials, while members gain all the benefits and added extras of membership to HowDidiDo, Europe’s largest online golfing community.

Secretary Lee Dickson said: “The greatest impact ClubV1 has had for the club is the interaction for members. They enjoy the ability to enter competitions from the comfort of home and receiving results as soon as they are posted.

“The graphics and display are appealing when following the leaderboard, whether it is a member competition or an open tournament.

With the system being cloud-based it

and golf competition software is already reaping the rewards for all.”

Having used other systems previously, **Moffat Golf Club**, in Dumfriesshire, was initially reticent to consider

“The greatest impact ClubV1 has had for the club is the interaction for members.”

Lee Dickson, secretary of The Duke’s St Andrews, which has become the 1,500th ClubV1 customer



From left to right:
John Cardno, Club System International’s senior Scottish account manager;
Lee Dickson, secretary, **The Duke’s**;
and **Tom Ogilvie**, assistant professional at **The Duke’s**



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clubhouse technology

changing, but officials were quick to see the benefits of ClubV1 following a demonstration and have not regretted the decision to switch across to the market leader.

The UK and Ireland's most successful cloud-based product, ClubV1, is not the only CSI product which is being utilised in the Home of Golf. When the Georgian neoclassical Killermont clubhouse at **Glasgow Golf Club** was devastated by fire last year, general manager Chris Spencer vowed to restore it to its previous glory.

And, as part of that restoration, he decided to ensure the administration and 'member experience' technology was the best it could be and researched the market substantially. He settled upon CSI, which, in addition to ClubV1 Premium, has installed Merlin Touch and the hand-held Merlin Mobile, PSiTouch and the free members' apps.

Since its launch in 2005, the MerlinTouch loyalty card system has become the most successful EPoS loyalty card system in UK and Irish sporting and membership clubs. Designed and developed in-house by the CSI team, it is fully compatible with the ClubV1 suite of products and allows Glasgow GC to integrate flawlessly with its sister venue, Glasgow Gailes, 35 miles away.

Across on the west coast of Scotland, Open Championship venue Royal Troon, which benefited from CSI's additional till support during the successful staging of the championship in 2016, has now upgraded all its tills to the new widescreen version with customer display, as well as adding two hand-held Merlin Touch EPoS units to enhance the customer experience.

CSI's managing director, Richard Peabody, said: "Scotland has historically proven to be one of the most successful areas of the UK for CSI and, despite some initial uncertainty about cloud-based systems, in recent years we have been extremely happy to welcome several new customers who have chosen our market-leading solutions to drive their business forward.

"We are privileged, now, to be working with the Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh, Glasgow Golf Club,



A customer-facing till from Club Systems International

"The recent investment with CSI to upgrade our tills and competition software is already reaping the rewards for all."
Mark Richardson,
secretary / manager of
New Golf Club at St Andrews, which has installed both ClubV1 and integrated widescreen tills with customer-facing displays

the Duke's Course St Andrews and Moffat Golf Club, to name just a few. With several others looking to make the switch later in the year, we have reconfirmed our commitment to providing the highest levels of service with the appointment of a second account manager in Scotland."

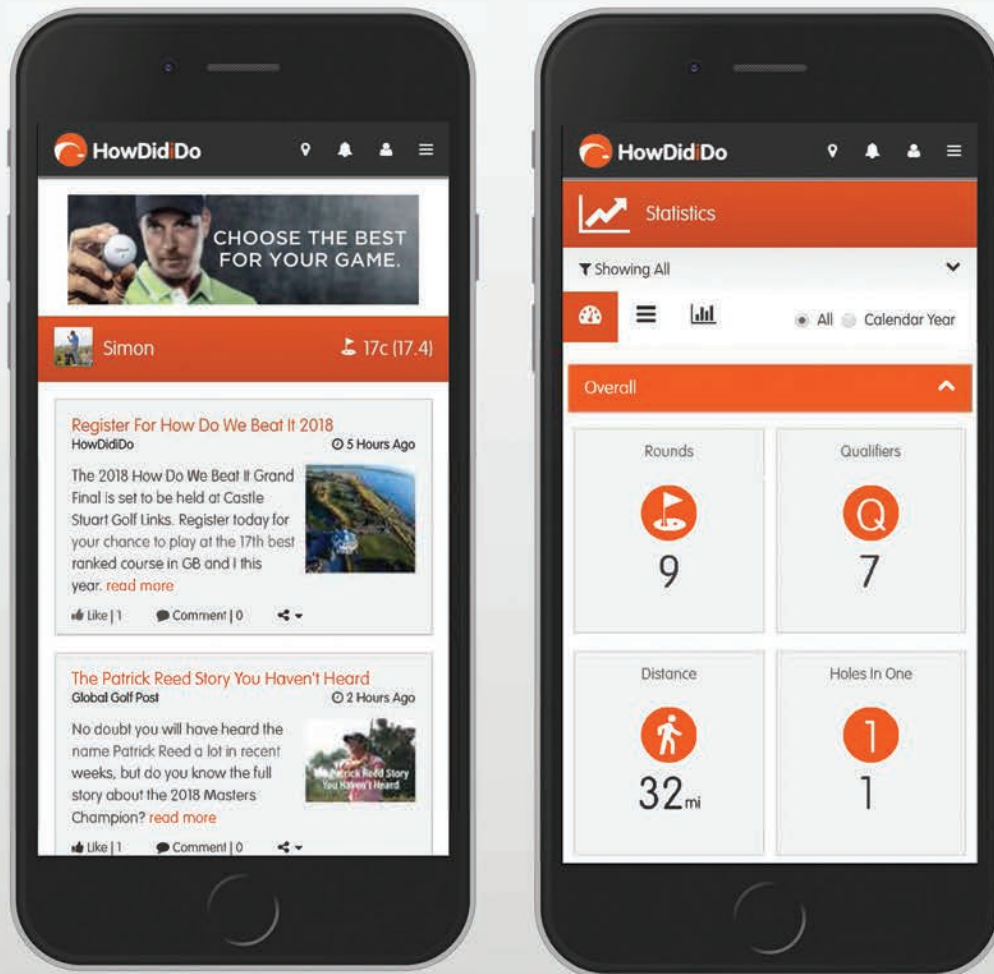
While golf clubs continue to turn to CSI, their members are increasingly downloading apps driven by the management suite: the free-to-download ClubV1 members' app and HowDidiDo app. They have been downloaded 91,000 and 227,000 times respectively, and are the subject of constant further R&D at CSI headquarters in Manchester.

CSI is continuing to reinforce its strong, long-standing relationships in Scotland and elsewhere, with new customers, more staff, industry-leading products and unparalleled customer service. It remains the market leader in Europe and, with continued investment in staff and innovation, it is determined to remain there. TGB

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club profile

Grim's Dyke Golf Club

The 110-year-old London golf club is famous for its welcoming atmosphere – and to maintain this, the club has invested in its clubhouse, as Andy Waple details



G

rim's Dyke Golf Club, named after Anglo Saxon earthworks that weave through the course, was formed in 1909 with an original nine-hole layout on gently rolling land.

The opening ceremony the following year was performed by Sir William Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan fame, who became the club's first president.

In 1921, plans were drawn up for extending the course to 18 holes, designed by James Braid, one of the era's greatest and most prolific designers.

Today the club prides itself on being one of the friendliest in the Middlesex and the north London area.

"Everybody gets a game at Grim's Dyke Golf Club!" is the motto and its reputation, enhanced by its policy of maintaining a no formal tee-booking system, nor cliques or privileged groups.

The relaxed atmosphere creates a convivial and sociable club environment and there is a warm welcome to new members, guests, visitors and societies.

There is also a strong '19th hole' tradition so the atmosphere in the clubhouse is second to none.

The present clubhouse was built in 1936, and opened by the Marchioness of Carisbrooke. It retains the attractive

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Ridgeway were the obvious choice to put in the lockers. I can definitely recommend them to any club looking to upgrade their changing rooms

features of its era although extensions and renovations in 2012 and 2014 have enhanced and improved the interior.

The bar area is attractively set out and is a hub of activity, especially at weekends. The lounge

/ dining room, featuring magnificent views over the course and the practice green, also has a bar area and relaxing seating. The dining room, which is large enough to accommodate 100 people, is available for hire and is ideal for large events such as weddings and other celebrations.

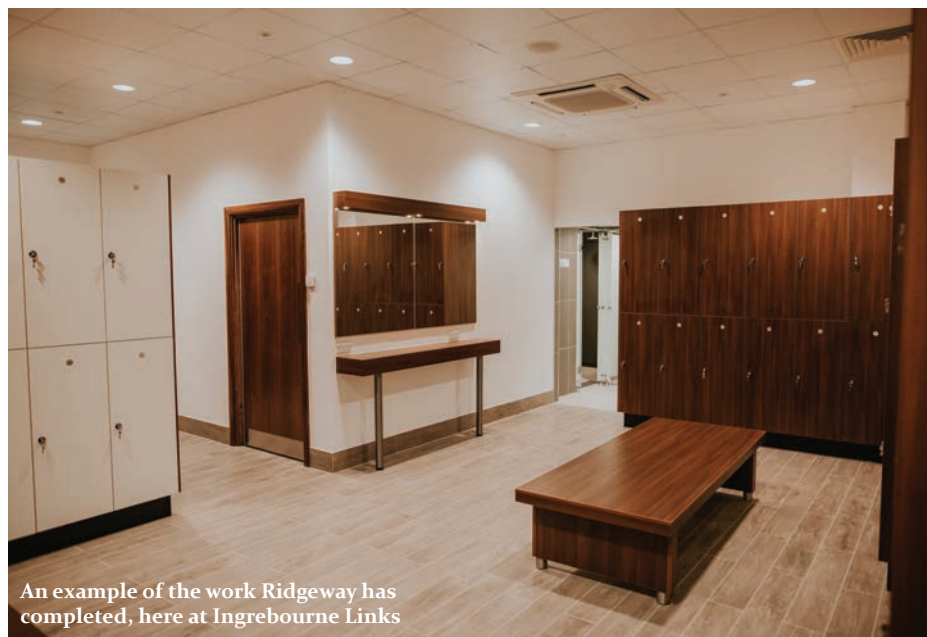
A smaller space, The Gilbert Room, is used for meetings, and lunch or dinner events.

The clubhouse also features some fine club memorabilia. In 1958, two former captains, Dr Mungo Park and his brother, Dr Jack Park, presented clubs used by their grandfather, Willie Park, four times Open Champion between 1860 and 1875.

Today replicas of these clubs are displayed in the entrance hall of the clubhouse, alongside the medal won by Willie's brother, Mungo Park, winner of the Open Championship in 1874.

In 2012, the men's changing rooms were rebuilt, giving the club one of the most modern facilities of its type in the area. Furnished with wooden lockers,

installed by Ridgeway Furniture, they are complemented by a spacious, well-equipped shower room complete with modern fittings. The



An example of the work Ridgeway has completed, here at Ingrebourne Links

superb facilities were opened by the Mayor of Harrow.

The ladies' changing rooms are also attractive and comfortable, with excellent facilities.

Recently, Ridgeway Furniture were re-engaged to add an additional 20 lockers.

Grim's Dyke's director of golf, Lee Curling, said the decision to reappoint Ridgeway was due to the quality and service provided for the original work.

Lee said: "Ridgeway are a very good company to work with. They were the obvious choice for us to select them to return to put in the additional lockers. I can definitely recommend them to any club looking to upgrade their changing rooms."

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.

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Tommy's steel

The man who came second at last month's Open Championship, Tommy Fleetwood, has launched his inaugural golf academy at Formby Hall Golf Resort & Spa in Liverpool, where the head pro is Tommy's first coach. Tania Longmire reports

‘PGA pro Norman Marshall introduced eight-year-old Tommy Fleetwood to a game of hitting a target from a distance of 75 metres. At that time the record, held by Norman, was 16 out of 25. On his first try, Tommy hit 21 out of 25.’



Tommy Fleetwood has launched his first golf academy at Formby Hall Golf Resort & Spa in Liverpool.

Through a fun and accessible training programme, Fleetwood aims to introduce young golfers to a whole range of techniques as well as teaching them the discipline of successful golf.

The resort is where the 28-year-old learnt to play golf from the age of six – and the head pro is none other than Tommy’s first coach, Norman Marshall.

General manager Andrew Pyle says: “The academy will give boys and girls across our region access to some of the best in golf tuition and facilities at every level.” TGB

'I'm so lucky to work in this industry'

Gordon Stewart is the head PGA professional at Cawder GC in Glasgow. He talks about how the club converts beginners into members and the technology he utilises



W

hat daily challenges do you face in running a pro shop and teaching?

Being based at a busy 36-hole private members' club is a challenge in itself. Overseeing tee reservations for both members and visitors, officiating competitions, controlling stock both in and out, merchandising displays and managing staff to make sure we meet and exceed the expectations of all our customers, while also finding the time to update social media channels and e-newsletter campaigns, is at times very time consuming.

To that end I have always tried to take full control of my teaching diary. This is open for four slots in both the morning and afternoon of Tuesdays and Thursdays and also for four slots on a Sunday morning. This allows me to control appointments and also fulfil all my other club commitments.

How do you manage your day?

I employ two full time PGA professionals (one qualified and one trainee) who work shift systems to cover all shop opening hours.

At the end of each day I always sit down and write the task list for the following day. This 10 minutes is extremely valuable to maintain efficiency and pass on or delegate tasks to the staff at the start of the following day.

As a small team we need to work closely together, also communicating through WhatsApp when outside of shop hours. I also attend a weekly management meeting with our general manager, head greenkeeper and our clubhouse catering team to make sure all departments are up to speed with all the arrangements and events going on at the club.

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

Yes we do. We have just introduced a 'Pathway into Golf' with various categories of memberships. As an 'Introduction to Golf' we offer four informal fun group lessons, providing clubs, if necessary, to beginners.

We then offer another four sessions as part of our 'Get into Golf' category that allows you to take your skills onto our six-hole academy course and also benefit from 10 rounds on our flat and more forgiving Keir Course.



A popular option nowadays, we also have a 'Flexible Membership' that allows access to both courses – our Keir Course and the Championship Course – with a nominal fee paid each time you play. This category still enjoys the full benefits of being a member of a golf club, full social access, members' guest rates, reciprocal golf and so on, though playing restrictions do apply for Saturday medal competitions. It is hoped through any of these categories that we eventually do see transfers into the full membership category.

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

At Cawder we are very proud to support our junior section and we have tried to keep membership prices as low as possible to encourage junior membership. Any under 12 who has a relative who is a full member is welcome to play at Cawder for free and as a spur to increase membership we have just released an initiative where any junior joining us will receive their first year's subscription free of charge.

We also schedule both Easter and summer coaching camps and in between offer 'Friday Fun Night' sessions that have all proven to be very popular. Our 'Little Big Shots' coaching programmes have nearly 50 interested pupils that enjoy learning in a fun and friendly environment. 'Bring a Friend' and 'Bring an Adult' have also added a bit of interest. In addition we also have a couple of development squads as we look to steadily improve the ability of all our age groups.

Are you trying to attract more women to golf?

We have a large and very healthy ladies' section which definitely helps. We have however completed a structured marketing campaign around the time of The Masters that has left us slightly disappointed by the interest from both ladies and beginners. We are now looking at our next step as we have seen some really successful initiatives that have elsewhere proven really popular.

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

Our Crossover EPoS system is a must in being able to control our stock and through specific reports, identify areas of opportunity as well as warn of potential dangers that could influence future investment or overstocking situations.

With hardware brands now accepting the high percentage of custom fit orders, equipment pre-books have become less cash onerous and the residual discontinuing product has become much less, allowing us to be ready to reinvest into the current product.

We tend to split apparel drops into pre-ordered merchandising collections that allows us to create impacting displays when it first arrives and then allows us to freshen up with different colour drops over the next six to eight weeks. This helps customers to see something different from week to week and also allows us to improve cash flow over the second and third drops.

To help engage with our customer base, we conduct an annual survey focusing on preferred brands, products, price points and so on. This has proven popular and has at times thrown up some surprising results with all the returned information, compiled and honestly fed back to our customers.

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?

Although not everyone will have a swing studio, nowadays every PGA pro should have some form of launch monitor capability. This has undoubtedly helped us retain customers by displaying our product knowledge and expertise to fit customers into the best and most suitable product for their game. To allow customers to afford their investments we have also just recently added a zero per cent finance initiative through TGI Golf Finance that will help spread payments over the course of the season.

We will always look to improve, although for the moment we feel our facility is suitably equipped, so for us



we now try to add value through tapping into the TGI Golf Partnership and our relationships with key suppliers to allow us to offer promotional events such as the Srixon Amateur Championship, Medal Competition incentives from Adidas, FootJoy and Titleist and so on as well as offering VIP 'Experience Days' to allow me to take customers to play a major venue while being personally fitted for new equipment.

We have also introduced a season long 'Order of Merit' competition marketed as 'The Race to Turnberry' where three members will win their way through to play with me in the final over the Ailsa Championship course at Trump Turnberry. Last season this created a real buzz, helped increase medal participation and produced an exciting finish to the season.

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

I joined the TGI Partnership when it merged with

Golf Ecosse in January 2001. Then the opportunity to grow in numbers was beneficial in increasing our buying power to secure best trading terms. This was exciting for us all and allowed us to challenge our suppliers to provide us with opportunities to challenge the

bigger retailers. The TGI Golf Partnership from then has grown from strength to strength and is now so much more than just a buying group.

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

Undoubtedly, and as the partnership has broadened its services, even more so.

Individually, the assistance we get from our own retail consultant, the provision of in store digital marketing, the e-news programme and the new zero per cent finance initiative allows me to confidently



run an efficient and professional business. Collectively though we also enjoy the Team Challenge in Turkey, along with other playing opportunities through the Partnership Trophy, Srixon Amateur Championship and the regional golf days, but probably the best event of all is the annual business conference where we have been treated to keynote speakers such as Ryder Cup captain Thomas Bjorn and respected coaches in Denis Pugh and Roger Cleveland.

The camaraderie and togetherness shown at all of these events doesn't just show the benefits but also the size and professionalism of the partnership and the pride that everyone takes in being part of such a respected organisation.

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

I qualified as a PGA professional in 1992 where in the early years like most of us, I concentrated on playing and teaching the game. Subsequently as I moved through my career and became a club professional, the last 23 years have focused mainly on improving my business and developing my role within both clubs I have been fortunate to be employed by.

During this time I have also been proud and fortunate to have employed some real quality professional staff. Many of

whom have moved onto their own professional positions, or are employed as fitting technicians or sales representatives with key brands or have taken up various other positions within the golf industry.

Other highlights have been being TGI chairman, a PGA regional committee member and a brand ambassador for TaylorMade Golf, which have provided so many fun and exciting opportunities, to which I constantly remind myself of how lucky I am to work in such a wonderful and rewarding industry.

TGB

We have introduced a season long 'Order of Merit' competition marketed as 'The Race to Turnberry' where three members will win their way through to play with me in the final over the Ailsa Championship course at Trump Turnberry



bar and restaurant

Get into The Grove

Hertfordshire's The Grove golf resort has revamped its bar, which now utilises the flora and fauna found at the venue for its cocktails, and its restaurant, which provides vegan offerings near live cooking stations. Tania Longmire reports



contemporary restaurant.

Having lived in Asia for several years, leading some of the best restaurants including Six Senses Laamu, Constance Moofushi and The Sun Siyam Iruvushi, Wheeler has drawn upon his experience from the region's focus on fresh, seasonal produce to introduce a range of new dishes and cooking techniques to provide diners at The Glasshouse with a huge range of options.

Live cooking stations invite guests to watch the chefs in

action as they prepare food to order. "The Glasshouse caters to all palates and preferences, with fantastic freshness and quality. There is an extensive range of meat and fish options, whilst vegetarian and vegan guests are very well catered for, too, as well as plenty of options for children," added the spokesman.

Wheeler commented: "It brings me great pleasure to oversee the

The Grove, the five-star hotel and golf experience in Hertfordshire, has officially re-opened its doors of the newly refurbished, The

Glasshouse, following significant investment to dramatically update the space.

The restaurant has received an exhaustive renovation. Strikingly redesigned, it sits at the heart of The Grove, and offers an "outstanding, luxurious yet fun experience, inspired by food-

hall style dining," said a spokesman. For a set price, diners are invited to sample a variety of dishes celebrating international flavours, fresh produce and the talents of a team of specialist chefs.

Executive head chef, Stephen Wheeler, launched The Glasshouse when the hotel opened just over 15 years ago. Now, having spent many years overseas gaining widespread international experience, he has returned to the helm of The Glasshouse to re-open an elevated,

We've introduced so many new cooking stations and methods, as it was crucial to us that we provide a range of options at a superior quality. It's an interactive and fun way of eating



relaunch of The Glasshouse, and we couldn't be more excited to showcase this new, innovative dining experience to guests. We've introduced so many new cooking stations and methods, as it was crucial to us that we provide guests with a fantastic range of options at a superior quality. It's an interactive and fun way of eating."

Within The Glasshouse there is also the new The Glasshouse Bar, which sits in its original location, but with a new addition of a glass extension connecting it to the terraces and garden. Guests are invited to relax in the bar area ahead of dining in the restaurant or to simply

enjoy drinks overlooking the garden terrace and admiring the uniquely designed interiors.

With an overarching 'garden to glass' concept for the cocktails, The Glasshouse Bar also offers a wide choice of carefully sourced spirits, beers and wines, with the intention of operating a zero-waste policy wherever possible. The drinks menu features a diverse range of cocktails using locally sourced ingredients, utilising the rich flora and fauna found in The Grove's Walled Garden.

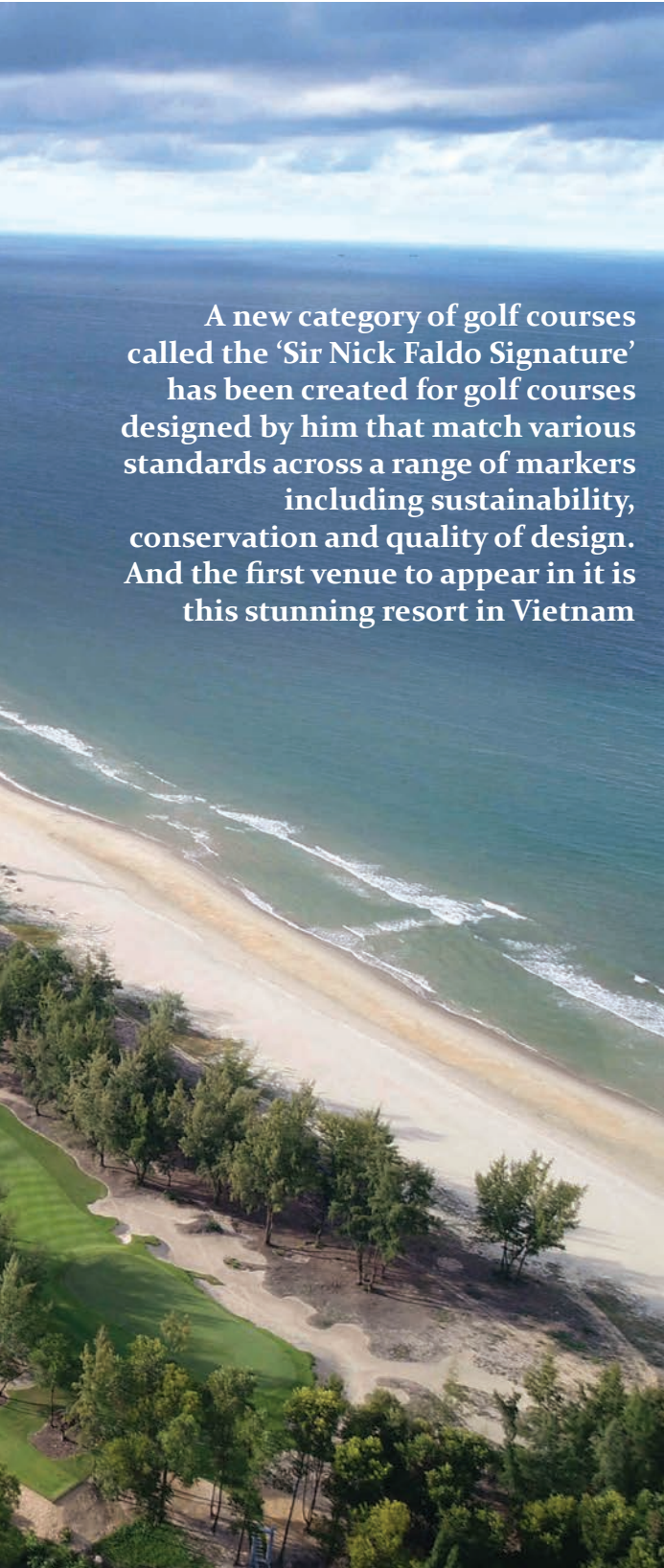
TGB



golf in Asia

Vietnamese pearl

Laguna Golf Lăng Cô in Vietnam



A new category of golf courses called the 'Sir Nick Faldo Signature' has been created for golf courses designed by him that match various standards across a range of markers including sustainability, conservation and quality of design. And the first venue to appear in it is this stunning resort in Vietnam

L

aguna Golf Lăng Cô in Vietnam has become the first fully operational course in the world to become a 'Sir Nick Faldo Signature'.

The six-time major winner, and now golf course architect, sees Laguna Golf Lăng Cô as his flagship layout in Asia. Opened in 2013, the course makes full use of the property's amazing location sandwiched between the ocean and the mountains, with play incorporating rice paddies,

jungle and coastal holes.

The new Sir Nick Faldo Signature category will only be applied to Faldo courses – both existing and forthcoming – that match and then maintain their designer's exacting standards across a range of markers including sustainability, conservation and quality of design.

The track has earned acclaim over the years, cementing itself as home of the annual Faldo Series Asia Grand Final – one of the world's most respected showcases for young players.

"Being elevated in status like this really speaks volumes of our ongoing commitment to realising Sir Nick's vision," said Adam Calver, director of golf at Laguna Golf Lăng Cô.

A mantra of continual improvement has been ingrained at Laguna Golf Lăng Cô under the stewardship of Calver. And it is this philosophy that has helped it secure its position as one of Faldo's most lauded masterpieces.

Calver and his team have made several improvements to the layout in recent times. New tees have been added, providing alternative challenges for golfers. Trees have been cleared on the coastal holes, opening up views of the beach and the East Sea. Also eye-catching has been the introduction and reintroduction of rice paddies on the course, with four hectares of rice fields right in the middle of the course tended to by a family of water buffalo who act as 'bio mowers'.

"From the first time I came here when it was still jungle almost 10 years ago, I've always considered it a unique place," said Faldo. "We knew the course was going to be different and special because you play through different environments. You go through the rice fields to the jungle. Then we've got beach and river and rocks. It really is a special course, with a memorability factor that is sure to keep golfers interested."

TGB



The course manager of Calcot Park Golf Club in Berkshire, Tom Jennings, talks about adapting to an unpredictable climate, the work the club put in to ensure the course bounced back following the 2018 drought, educating members about the products he uses and the plans his team has for a new irrigation system



Tom Jennings

Calling Calcot

Situated on the Berkshire / Hampshire border, Calcot Park GC sits within an exclusive private estate. Its parkland setting enhances the ambience of the course and there is an abundance of wildlife including badgers, foxes and deer. The changing seasons are complemented by the colours of the mature trees and shrubs which abound on the course.

Designed by Harry Colt, 89-year-old Calcot Park is an 18-hole course where the seventh, the signature hole, is played across a lake to an elevated green.

We speak to course manager, Tom Jennings, about his work and to find out more about this delightful golf course.

"I started my greenkeeping at Swinley Forest Golf Club after successful work experience placements," he said. "I worked at Swinley Forest for eight years under Lawson Bingham and John Band. I then took the job as first assistant at Sonning Golf Club and was promoted to deputy course manager within a year. After seven

years at Sonning I then took the position at Calcot Park as course manager. All of my training for my NVQs, for example chain sawing and spraying, were done at Swinley Forest. I started work at Calcot in October 2018."

Attention to detail is the most important part of keeping the course tidy and ensuring that we always go the extra mile

At Calcot Park, Tom has a deputy course manager, Kirk Hall, a workshop manager, Andy Winchcombe, a first assistant, Bridget Brady, and other greenkeepers: Gary Boulton, Simon Mallock, Paul Knight and Bradley Tuckett. But what are the biggest challenges they face?

"Environmental challenges are my biggest challenges; trying to manage when aeration and top-dressing needs to be done to ensure the course stays consistent," he said. "Trying to work to the

weather pattern which can affect my spray timings – and often sprays may be a last-minute decision due to the change in weather. I am very lucky that I have a flexible team and if we need to stay on to get work done they will keep working to ensure the job at hand is done.

"I work extremely hard and have a fantastic work ethic that has been installed into me by my parents.

"My desire and aim is to make Calcot Park one of the best clubs around and I will drive my team and myself to achieve this.

"I have worked at a top 100 course and I know what it takes and the different skills you need to have to achieve this.

"Training my team in this philosophy will make Calcot Park Golf Club one of the best around.

"Since joining Calcot Park Golf Club I have upped our aeration programme and we use all different practices to achieve these surfaces. We Air2 G2, pencil tine, Soli tine, Dyno core, scarify, Verti cut and Sarrell roll. We use our Greentech units weekly and other forms of aeration monthly depending on our work load and weather conditions.

"The aeration programme in place is extremely aggressive, allowing us to hit different levels in the soil profile and reduce thatch. Increasing top-dressing levels and using a penetrate programme (Penetrate R) we are allowing moisture to move through the profile. Using good cultural practices and using the correct products, we are achieving this.

"Since joining in October I have put together a programme for the staff. Section work where two members of staff work on six holes



Above, the 15th fairway in October 2018, before it was treated with overseeding, aeration, wetting agents, feeding and sharp mowers. Below: The same fairway in June 2019

the golf course

each; this provides healthy competition and attention to detail. I am a firm believer that the overall product of the golf course should be first class. Green speeds and firmness are important but so is having manicured bunkers, edged pathways and clean course furniture. For me, attention to detail is the most important part of keeping the course tidy and ensuring that we always go the extra mile.”

Tom is also a big fan of social media.

“Since October I have set up an Instagram account called Calcot Park Greenkeepers,” he explained.

“I use Instagram because I want the members and other Instagram users to see what we do, how we do it and the benefits and results for them. Before and after photos and videos are great to look back on and show the users what practices we do and how often we do them. I have had fantastic feedback from my own membership, other golfers and other greenkeepers in the industry. I post daily so the page is consistent and gives people an insight into the work we have done for particular tournaments.”

Tom takes us through some of the products he uses.

“Most of the products I use are Rigby Taylor; I have a fantastic



Before and after images of recent overseeding works on the first fairway – which were shared on Instagram

relationship with Gareth Acteson who I have known for over 10 years. Gareth’s knowledge and advice is second to none. The after care and back up support that I get from Gareth gives me support in what I do and ensures all the products are used to their full potential which in turn boosts the course. The products speak for themselves and I have nothing but positive feedback from my directors and members at Calcot Park,” he said.

“I have a programme set in place for each area of the course from greens to tees to fairways. When I joined in October 2018 after the summer drought I decided it was a must that we overseed our fairways. Working with Gareth, we used a Rigby Taylor R6CRT seed sown at 20 grams per square metre. As well as aerating fairways, scarifying fairways, using liquid feeds and applying a wetting agent programme, the fairways have come back.

“The club recently purchased the POGO moisture meter; it is a water management tool that has enabled me to get the best out of my current water system. Using the POGO has allowed me to change the irrigation programme so I get better results and, more importantly, improve consistency throughout the course.

“The current irrigation system we have is coming to the end of its life; being able to use the POGO gives me data and results on how the system is performing daily.

“We are currently using a Rainbird system and are looking to potentially invest in a new system.

“Calcot Park is a members’ club and I feel it is important to show the members what their money is being spent on.

“Giving them an insight into the practices and products we use helps educate our membership. Communication is extremely important to me in keeping the club’s members informed that we are

Toro

01480 226800

After the successful installation of Highwoods Golf Club's irrigation system with a Toro Lynx central control system and sprinklers, the Sussex club now has the Toro 'Total Solution'.

In 2014, Highwoods Golf Club took its first step to take the course to the next level by investing in Toro in what was called at the time "a major investment to improve the course". Since then, the course has flourished, so when the time came in 2018 for a new irrigation system, there was really only one choice in the mind for the club – that of Toro and Reesink Turfcare.

Deputy course manager Jamie Melham says: "Toro had already proved the quality of its products and services to Highwoods, having been the brand of choice for the club's fleet for six years. However, as was the case before, we took advice from other clubs, specialists and of course the greenkeeping team."

And after looking at other brands to see what was available, Toro triumphed on value for money says Jamie: "Nothing offered



the same value for money as the Toro Lynx control system and sprinklers. Plus, Lynx was easy to use and has extra features that gave it a real edge over competing brands.

"I was really impressed by the sprinklers, too. We selected Toro Infinity series for greens and approaches, T5/T7 series sprinklers installed on tees. The rain curtain is really impressive and delivers accurate coverage. The T5 series sprinklers in particular have a low throw which means they aren't as affected by wind which is really useful, and the Infinity series sprinklers have Smart Access, so we can carry out maintenance if required in the future, without having to dig or turn off the water."

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the golf course

using the best products for their golf club.”

What other insights does Tom have on the industry?

“Going through the Instagram page and looking back at jobs via before and after photos gives me great satisfaction to see how far we have come in such a short amount of time,” he said.

“The pathway constructions, overseeding fairways, aeration programme and the greens’ consistency is great to look back on.

“One of my biggest achievements so far is looking how far as a team we have come with adding new staff to the existing team and how well we have jelled together. The team has been transformed and we now work together and this is showing in our work ethic and course presentation.

“Attention to detail and surface consistency has been a huge factor in what we are achieving. It is also nice for us as a team to receive verbal feedback from members saying



The greenkeeping team at Calcot Park Golf Club



Gareth Acteson from Rigby Taylor and Tom taking moisture meter readings with the POGO moisture meter

how much they are enjoying the changes to the course and how much it has improved.

“I think that education programmes are very important and the industry needs to ensure that they keep bringing out new courses in ways to test the green staff.

“Courses also need to be made more affordable so more people can access them. I also think the golf clubs need to improve their relations with the green staff and should allow them to compete and be a part of their club. The club should do this so the staff are able to experience what they create to a higher standard.

“Education and keeping my team fully trained is extremely important to me. I was given a chance at Swinley Forest by Lawson Bingham and John Band to go on as many courses and gain as much experience as I could. I will be forever grateful to them both. I am using their practices on my own team, putting my staff through college, chainsaw qualifications and spraying qualifications. I would like to keep learning myself and I am looking at doing my level 5. I think no matter what position in a greenkeeping team you are, you should always strive to be the best and keep learning every single day.” TGB

Reesink Turfcare

reesinkturfcare.co.uk

Rochelle Bedford has been appointed the new marketing manager for Reesink Turfcare.

Overseeing marketing activity for all the turfcare machinery and equipment brands in the Reesink portfolio, Rochelle says it was Reesink's established reputation, values, great work ethic and ideas sharing culture that appealed to her most about the role, as well as working in a new industry.

"Reesink Turfcare is a well-established company and its reputation preceded it," she says. "With a great work ethic, the values of the company and the way staff are encouraged to share their ideas to come up with new solutions for ongoing projects was an exciting aspect of taking on the role. Plus, my marketing experience with commercial vehicles and dealer network support lends itself well with this new and interesting industry.

"With the marketing machine fully up and running, I was

excited to get stuck straight in to see how it all worked. Over the past couple of months, I have seen great potential for how the

marketing department can be developed, in supporting the business as a whole and taking it to that next level."

Rochelle has already recruited another member to the team and Nichola Spinks joins the company as marketing assistant.

Reesink's marketing department is a vital part of the business, as well as coordinating all of Reesink's turf marketing programmes in the UK, it also organises all the shows and events the company attends throughout the year too.

Rochelle concludes by saying: "There's no question there's definite potential for future growth for the team!"



TYM Tractors

01480 226800

Reesink Turfcare is taking flexible finance to a new level for TYM Tractors offering not one, but two options to help customers get the tractor they need.

Steven Haynes, TYM sales manager for TYM at Reesink, says: "Reesink's motto is to offer customers more, and as such we've worked hard to bring to market two very competitive finance options on TYM's sub, mid-duty and heavy-duty compact tractor ranges. Zero percent finance is available on up to an incredible 75

percent of the retail value of the tractor, whichever option you choose."

With two options available depending on whether you'd rather buy now and pay later, or spread the cost over

three years, Steven says: "These finance options are designed to help customers buy the tractors they need without compromising cash flow."

For those who opt for option one, there's nothing to pay until May 2020, while the second option spreads the cost over three years with three months payment upfront then 33 equal monthly payments thereafter.

Thanks to the TYM's innovative features such as easy-to-read LED displays, hydrostatic power-steering and optional weather cab, it's easy to see why TYM is fast becoming the first choice for greenkeepers and groundsmen. And Reesink is gearing up for the brand's increasing popularity by bringing more choice to customers and more product launches, attachments and finance options.

Steven concludes: "When it comes to finance there's not a one-size fits all solution and that's why we have come up with two flexible options. Whichever tractor is required we have a package we think will suit most discerning greenkeepers."

Both options are available until 29 November 2019 and are available on all tractors in the TYM range except the T194 and TS25 models. Finance is subject to acceptance and only available in the UK.



Breath of fresh Ayr

One of Scotland's finest championship links courses has undergone a new look to help boost playability. Tania Longmire reports on Kilmarnock (Barassie) Golf Club, a former Open final qualifying venue, which now boasts an impressive new short 12th hole and other subtle course changes that have helped increase membership at the west coast layout



The new 12th green

In the early 2000s, Kilmarnock (Barassie), a prestigious Ayrshire club on the outskirts of Troon, completed a project to add an additional nine holes to the existing 18-hole course, primarily to offer members more challenge and variety.

However, two parts of the site required having to walk over 400 yards between holes and Barassie, wanting to speed up the sport, has now created an exciting new par three hole that removes the walks. After gorse was taken away and sand imported from other parts of the site, the new 12th, 'Hillhouse,' replaces the former sixth hole.

To create a better link between the fifth green and the former seventh fairway, the club has also built new teeing grounds near the fifth green to enable play towards the new sixth fairway from a completely different angle and achieve a right-to-left dogleg hugging the nearby railway line.

The new 12th – which at 145 yards features an undulating green, pot bunkers around the green and a view to Arran looking

back down the hole – has already proved popular with members and visitors.

The total yardage for the par 72 course has reduced by just eight yards while the standard scratch for all levels remains the same.

Coupled with other initiatives such as rough reduction, the course changes have also helped Barassie to grow membership in these challenging times.

The club, which was founded in 1887 and the course finally laid as 18 holes in 1937, now has a total membership of over 1,100.

Claire Middleton, general manager, said: "We are thrilled with the new 12th hole."

Barassie, which also boasts a nine-hole layout, counts former amateur champion Gordon Sherry and fellow ex-Walker Cup winning players Jim Milligan and Jack McDonald among its current members.

The club also offers improved facilities in the clubhouse and professional's shop, run by Gregor Howie. TGB



the golf course

Toro

reesinkturfcare.co.uk

Last month the Open made its historic return to Northern Ireland for the first time in 68 years and, as Royal Portrush prepared to host the 148th event, Toro was honoured to play a role in helping prepare the course.

As expected, preparations for the Open were years in the making and Toro was not only there every step of the way since the news broke in 2015 that Royal Portrush would be the 2019 host, but for the last 25 years.

Course manager, Graeme Beatt, who joined the club in 2014, comments: "The relationship between Royal Portrush and Toro is a quarter of century old and for us there is no better machinery partner to ensure the optimum conditions for the players as well as the eyes of the sporting world."

Preparing the all-important course, crews used Toro's Flex 2120 pedestrian mowers for the greens, Reelmaster 3550-D and 3555-D mowers on the fairways, approaches and surrounds, Greensmaster 1000

and TriFlex 3400 on the tees, Reelmaster 3100-D with the Sidewinder system on semi-roughs and Groundsmaster 4500-D on the roughs. In addition, the team used the Greensmaster 3250-D and GR1000 on the practice area and the ProCore 648 for aerating the

courses. Twenty-five additional Toro machines from Reesink Turfcare, the sole Toro distributor in the UK for golf and sports fields equipment and irrigation products, joined the 50-strong Toro fleet already at the club in the run-up to and during the championship.

But it's not just a successful partnership with Toro machinery, Reesink and Lairds Grass Machinery that ensures the course was tournament ready, but Toro irrigation too. In 2017, the irrigation system was upgraded to a Lynx central control system and Toro Infinity, Flex and B-Series sprinklers irrigate the rugged links course situated on the Atlantic coast.

Of course, it's not just an irrigation system that's new for The Open. The world-famous Dunluce course has been extended from 6,867 yards to just over 7,300 yards and every hole has had some work in varying degrees, none so much as the 17th and 18th holes which became the tented village areas and two new holes created at seventh and eighth.



SALTEX

iogsaltex.com/

innovation-of-the-year-award

Entries to the SALTEX 2019 Innovation Award are now open for all SALTEX exhibitors to take part – allowing show visitors the chance to witness a stellar line-up of brand new products and services that are pushing the boundaries in groundscape innovation at the NEC, Birmingham on October 30 and 31.

Since its launch at SALTEX 2017, the Innovation Award has helped to highlight some of the most ground-breaking, innovative products and services within the groundscape industry.

All of the submitted entries are evaluated by an independent panel of judges before a final shortlist is devised. The finalists are then given an opportunity to impress judges and visitors in a seminar theatre on the first day of SALTEX as representatives from each company take to the stage to deliver product presentations.

Entering the award is an unmissable opportunity for exhibitors as every innovation will be featured on the SALTEX website and in the official show guide. Being shortlisted as a finalist offers even more exposure as they will be given dedicated time to showcase their product or service in front of industry giants, judges and influencers and can draw even more of a crowd to their stand.

The worthy winner will be presented with the coveted award at the exhibition and will receive a dedicated news article in post-show reports.

The winner of the SALTEX 2019 Innovation Award will join previous winners: Rigby Taylor's Intelligent One autonomous robotic line marker and Fleet Line Markers' MAQA line marking machine were joint winners of the first ever SALTEX Innovation Award and in 2018 Sherriff Amenity's app, PrecisionPro, picked up the top prize.

John Deere

www.deere.co.uk

The recently formed Club Managers Association of Europe – Middle East & North Africa Region (CMAE MENA) has held its first club education seminars under the title 'Building confidence in communication', to train golf course and other managers for new challenges. John Deere supported this initiative by bringing in communication expert Bill McFarlan to deliver several seminars earlier this year.

As clubs are becoming bigger, more diverse and more demanding, communication skills are more than ever a key requirement for managers at all levels. Workshops were held at Education City Golf Club in Qatar, Al Mouj Golf Club in Oman and Dubai Creek & Yacht Club.

Michael Braidwood, general manager at Education City Golf Club in Qatar and former CMAE Director of Education, said: "CMAE MENA was delighted with the support John Deere



offered us to be able to have our first educational seminars in the region. Without this support, the events would have not been possible. Over 60 club industry professionals benefited from Bill McFarlan's expertise. It is great to partner with an organisation like John Deere, who have similar values to our own, and we look forward to working with them to deliver more first-class club executive education in the future."

BIGGA

bigga.org.uk

The director of golf and greenkeeping at Wentworth Club has spoken about his pride at the return of a greenkeeper support team to assist with course maintenance during the BMW PGA Championship this September.



Members of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) will head to Wentworth for the European Tour's flagship event, which for the 2019 season has shifted from its traditional May hosting to September.

Wentworth's Kenny Mackay is eager for the volunteers to get the most out of their time as part of the team and so the group is divided between those who will undertake bunker raking duties and those who will play an active role in the preparation and maintenance of the West Course for the duration of the event.

Kenny said: "With the change in the schedule, the hosting of the BMW PGA Championship is going to be a completely new experience for the Wentworth team. The preparation of the course each morning is going to be very tight if we're to stay ahead of the golf and so the volunteers will prove vital as we work to achieve our aims of preparing a course fit for the European Tour's flagship event.

"We want to ensure the volunteers learn many things that they can then take back to their own club."

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