

GreenKeeping

Keeping the industry on course

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BRUSHING THE HEATH

The chairman of greens at Tadmarton Heath Golf Club, **John Stubbs**, and course manager, **Jim McMurdo**, detail the long-term heather regeneration project the club is carrying out

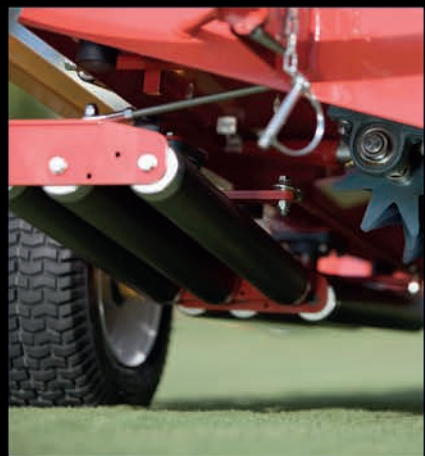
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Average US course manager's salary is £72k

The average annual salary of a US golf course superintendent, equivalent to a golf course manager in the UK, is now more than \$93,000 (about £72,000) according to a new survey by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

The 2019 report shows that the \$93,176 average salary was an increase of 4.5 per cent over the last time a survey of this nature was carried out, in 2017, continuing the trend of increases in every two-year period since GCSAA began tracking the data in 1993. Superintendents' salaries have more than doubled in the last quarter century since that first report, when the average salary was \$44,500 (about £34,000).

Certified golf course



superintendents, those who have achieved the highest level of recognition through education, experience and service, saw an increase of more than one per cent over 2017. Their average salary rose to \$111,250 (about

£85,000), an increase of \$1,630 over 2017.

Assistant superintendents and golf course equipment managers also saw increases in their incomes. Assistant salaries rose 7.3 per cent, and equipment

managers saw a seven per cent increase from the average salary two years ago.

"It is heartening to see golf course owners continue to invest in golf course superintendents and their staffs," said Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO. "They know the value of these highly educated professionals who oversee the golf facility's top asset."

The *Compensation and Benefits Report* also gives a good picture of the profile of GCSAA superintendents and their operations. The average age of a superintendent is 46.5 years, and they have spent 16.4 years in the profession. The average number of years superintendents have spent in their current position stayed steady at 10.5 years.

New Eco Village comes to SALTEX 2019

SALTEX visitors can expect to experience the latest green technology in groundscape in a new area on the show floor for 2019 – which is purely dedicated to environmentally-friendly products.



The trend towards sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices in groundscape is gathering pace. Today, an increased number of grounds personnel, greenkeepers, landscapers and contractors are looking for products that can deliver quality results but also reduce carbon footprints to the environment.

Although more than 80 per cent of SALTEX 2018 visitors rated their overall show experience as being excellent, the post-show survey also revealed that visitors thought the exhibition could benefit even further from a wider choice of eco-friendly products and services.

The all new Eco Village at SALTEX will feature a programme of daily demonstrations of cutting-edge sustainable technology – offering visitors an opportunity of seeing a number of products in action.

Furthermore, industry experts, within this village, will offer advice on green technology

and how it could benefit current working practices.

Commenting on the Eco Village, SALTEX event director Matthew Knight, said: "Each year we listen to every single piece of feedback and implement tangible changes that will make the SALTEX experience even better.

"It is great to see groundscape manufacturers committed to reducing the environmental footprints and with the increasing demand for battery-powered products it makes sense to launch a new area at SALTEX, which solely focuses on these technologies.

"There has been a huge amount of interest from companies that are looking to participate and we are expecting to stage a fascinating and varied demonstration programme." SALTEX 2019 takes place at the NEC, Birmingham on October 30 and 31. For more information visit www.iogsaltex.com.





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Gleneagles celebrates courses centenary



Gleneagles in Scotland has celebrated the 100th birthday of its iconic King's and Queen's Courses, with a little help from local John Deere dealer Sandy Armit of Double A.

Designed by James Braid and created using nothing more than manual labour and horse and cart, both courses were officially opened in May 1919 and have an illustrious history.

The King's Course hosted a famous match

between the 'Big Three' of Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player in 1966, as well as the popular Bell's Scottish Open on the European Tour from 1987 to 1994, the largest spectator event after the Open at the time. The Queen's Course has also hosted great names from entertainment and sport, including Sean Connery and Alan Shepard, the only man to hit a golf shot on the moon!

In more recent times both courses have benefited from extensive renovation projects. These have seen them realigned to Braid's original design vision with wider fairways, bringing strategically placed bunkers back in play, and the reintroduction of Scottish heather in key areas.

As part of the special centenary celebrations, Gleneagles staff recreated several historic archive photographs from the 1920s, including an image of a tractor pulling a set of gang mowers on a fairway. This was replicated with a 1941 John Deere Model B tractor, equipped with a set of trailed cylinder gang mowers. The tractor is owned by Sandy Armit and is usually on display at the dealership's headquarters in Cupar, Fife.

Gleneagles signed an exclusive contract with John Deere in 2017 for the supply of golf course maintenance equipment and related technology to the three championship golf courses at the award winning hotel and golf resort.

Parley GC invests in native flowers

Native flowers will soon be adding beauty around the course at Parley Golf Centre as seeds have been planted to encourage more wildlife.

The course was extended in 2017 and now it has bedded in, staff are adding some finishing touches.

One of these is the scattering of Beebombs – pellets packed with wild flowers – that are created by hand on the Parley Court Estate where the centre is based.

The bombs contain 18 species of native wild flowers and require no gardening skills whatsoever to plant.

The Royal Horticultural Society has described the flowers chosen in the mix as ‘perfect pollinators’ and they will encourage bees.

Already a haven for wildlife, the centre, opposite Bournemouth Airport, is a specialist practice destination.

The £250,000 redevelopment saw the extension of the nine-hole

course, creation of a short game practice area with a huge green and even two academy holes.

The driving range has been upgraded and more innovations are coming.

Manager Daryl Dampney said: “Beebombs are based here and have been going for around 18 months.

“It made perfect sense to use their seeds to encourage the growth of native wild flowers that will encourage bees and other wildlife.

“We have a huge variety of wild and farm animals on the estate and believe we have a responsibility to encourage diversity.

“It will also please golfers who do appreciate the beauty of the surroundings when they have a round.

“The new course has settled down extremely well, is playing superbly and we are looking forward to a busy summer.”

Beebombs can even be bought from the golf club for people to use in their gardens.



Daryl Dampney, manager of Parley Golf Centre, and Laura Wilkes of Beebombs

Elsham GC greenkeeper follows Ryder Cup work with Solheim opportunity

Solheim Cup captain Catriona Matthew with Scottish Golf CEO Andrew McKinlay and the trophy



Elsham Golf Club in Lincolnshire’s head greenkeeper, Colin Hopper, is looking forward to getting up close to his second Europe versus USA clash later this year.

According to the *Market Rasen Mail*, Colin has been invited to join the greens team working at the Solheim Cup in September which takes place at Gleneagles in Scotland. Last year Colin was on the team which helped stage the Ryder Cup in France, as well as at the French Open.

Colin sees it all as another great opportunity to learn more about tournament golf set-up, other greenkeeping skills and bring some ideas back to Elsham where former Open winner and Ryder Cup captain Tony Jacklin was a member in his halcyon days of the 1970s.

Zane Paxman, also on the greenkeeping staff at Elsham, is to take Colin’s place on the French Open support team at Le Golf National in October.

The Solheim Cup is the pinnacle of women’s golf, with the best golfers from Europe and the United States going head-to-head, watched by millions around the world.

Colin said: “It will be another great experience; it will be such a major event.

“Here at Elsham we don’t have all the resources that they have at Gleneagles, but obviously we hope that from being there we can bring at least a little bit of what they do as we seek to reach their standards back here, and so everyone benefits including the club.

“I am really looking forward to it.”



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The club reserves the right to deny access to anyone dressed inappropriately.

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► course consistency

Consistent craving

Achieving consistency in your putting surfaces is one of the most important roles a greenkeeper has, yet it's also one of the most difficult. Age of the greens, irrigation changes and the weather are just three factors that can cause inconsistency. Here, **Noel Mackenzie** explores how these issues can be overcome

Inconsistent putting surfaces look terrible and play even worse!

The total golfer experience is not something we often stand back to take in properly as we tend to get focused on particular issues and problem solving approaches. However, it pays to step back once in a while and ask what is it we are providing and what is it that is expected of us in this demanding sphere of turf management and facility provision. It was bought home to me in a discussion with a ex-head greenkeeper (now sales technical representative) as we looked out of a clubhouse window at a seminar; he said to me: "What is wrong with this picture"? I confessed I was looking at a very weak area of fairway on the right with probably 30 per cent ground cover – he, on the other hand, was looking at the mowing pattern and the lack of care in its direction toward the green on what looked to be a nice hole otherwise! Which of us was right? In reality it was both of us, but the key thing is we saw different things in that split second. It got me thinking about greenkeepers and how we weave our magic!

The most critical area for consistency is the greens, their putting surface performance and their visual qualities. There is a whole range of ways of measuring and assessing the surfaces and to some extent all greenkeeping teams should run an assessment of the putting surface(s) on a daily basis if at all possible. This provides valuable data for the supporting consultant and also an answer for those players that seem to delight in finding surfaces under performance a reason to gossip and spread trouble for greenkeepers and their clubs. Data aids greenkeeper experience and job satisfaction plus it prevents from over preparation as much as under preparation. Data also gives the greenkeeper the perfect tool to show in an impartial and dignified way that the performance is at a certain level.

The challenges are numerous and critical

when different constructions are present on a course, for example where additional greens have been added or the course extended or holes rebuilt. All such situations tend to create differences in the soil hydraulic behaviour (water behaviour) and this impacts significantly on playing performance. Surfaces that are wetter might also attract more of certain diseases, moss, certain weed and grass types and, of course, if wetter, more organic matter accumulation and thatch development. Whichever the case, it may be that the consistency of the playing surface is compromised.

Age of greens and their management impacts on grass species composition and at this time of year growth rate differences between species is a particular problem for early season course consistency with putting surface smoothness causing difficulty with pace and ball deviation. Even the slightest nuances in the surface and slight changes in irrigation coverage have impacts on species distribution in the surface.

The springtime growth differentiation issue is not long-lived, usually lasting around four to six weeks and generally is over by around late May / early June once growth has stabilised among all species. The main tools to tackle this are

1. Ensuring optimised growth through correct nutrition – this is crucially important when considering nutrient sources and which products to use.
2. Sensible cutting heights to control early shooting growth species (colonial bents, *Agrostis capillaris*, ryegrass, fescues and bring them in line with the less enthusiastic species, usually *Poa annua*, creeping bent and so on)) – it all depends on what you have growing and its condition.
3. Topdressing aids smoothing the spring surfaces and must be light and dusted in to avoid smothering the grass. This is

particularly difficult because grass may have surges or bursts of growth and then be suppressed by prolonged periods of cold weather lasting as much as month – proceed with caution!

4. Verticutting can proceed even if growth is limited because recovery is assured in the not-too-distant future even if not right away and unless taken to unnecessary levels of extreme, is hard to overdo. Establishing vertical leaf growth and cover is important for ball roll and also to prevent organic matter accumulation on the surface.

5. Rolling can be a useful tool for settling the surface that has become uneven following frosts or maintenance operations such as spring hollow tining or vertidrainage. Using vibrating rollers can help to work in topdressing nicely too so long as it is dry enough to be worked in.

6. Mowing – sometimes it is only cutting a bit tight that gets the uniformity back – this is especially true of mixed swards where the *Poa annua* refuses to grow but the bent or ryegrass is pushing on relentlessly.

Greens and approaches need harmonising as much as possible and in reality, no two putting surfaces will be identical even if constructed from the same materials, turf and so on – microclimate impacts see to that. But for the golfer the behaviour of the ball being somewhat consistent is important.

Tees also need to be consistent and are perhaps both the easiest surfaces to make uniform and possibly the least often found to be consistent. The first tee is generally the first encounter of the golfer with the course and is the biggest first impression.

Teeing ground lack of consistency is generally due to a combination of different constructions applied on many courses over the years and because the wear damage

► course consistency



varies considerably between long holes and the par threes which take such a lot of abuse. What can we do to address this? In the short term, maintenance is what it really boils down to and good general maintenance making life easier for both the plant and the greenkeeper should be the goal. Sensible mowing heights, provision or irrigation, if possible, use of wetting agents with longevity and good fertiliser practice are all important elements. To this should be added elements of aeration and regular renovation and divot mix provision, especially on busy courses and



Uniform putting surfaces, even winter surfaces like this one, can look and perform well

certainly par three tees. In the longer term, working toward consistency in construction on tees would help many courses considerably, therefore, if looking at a programme of tee resurfacing and builds, make the most of the opportunity to invest in these much-overlooked surfaces.

Fairway condition should be uniform around the course but the reality is that a course may cross one or more boundaries of different soil types and aspect and altitude may impact on sward type and even weed species presence.

Striping up and creating visual definition is a key part of the perception of uniformity even if it is the case that the sward type shifts from fescue to rye grass dominance around the course – the golfer does not know much what he plays on, only that he has something that looks the part!

Fairways suffer around landing zones and this can disrupt the presentation and uniformity of the surface. The solution to this is proper repairing of damage and keeping the fairway soil and organic matter management sound in the first place, that way recovery is

much more likely to be successful. Excessive organic matter presence really hampers recovery of fairways.

Bunkers are the bane of achieving any consistency on a course. For a start the construction of every bunker is unique and that creates challenges which impacts on whether they drain or not, how fast the sand dries in them and whether they are prone to sand loss in wind or wash out in the rain. Life would certainly be improved if there were no bunkers and they might well be up the list of many a greenkeeper's Room 101 wish list!



Nasty pathways are as bad as inconsistent ones

As with teeing grounds and greens, construction plays a huge part in bunker consistency. Bunkers have certainly improved on some courses since I started consulting over 25 years ago, but there are still far too many with poor finishes, collapsing faces, stone ingress and that most jarring visual impact – different sand types and colours. Nothing stands out more strongly than different sand colour in the bunkers and this will almost certainly draw swift criticism from players in no time. Unfortunately, the financial situation of golf in a competitive market doesn't help because if local courses are in a price war it means there is no money to invest in the course and make it nice by off-setting the years of abuse and damage sustained from play. Overall my impression is that while bunkers have improved generally on many courses there are others where the damage is not being addressed. I went to one course at Christmas time last year and again this year and the damage and loss of condition was exactly as it was 20 years ago – really it was a facepalm moment.

Pathways are a non-playing surface that

golfers experience directly and over the years many clubs have used many different materials. In all instances the crucial thing is try to use just one type of material for pathways, moving from tarmac to shale to woodchip to tree roots is not going to win prizes for consistent player experience.

Presenting consistency on a golf course is all about presenting quality throughout to give the impression that the club pays attention to detail in a way that separates it from the also-rans. The player likes to feel special and that he is at the best venue he can be or that his



Fairway damage in drought or by bird damage reduces consistency

membership or green fees are being used properly. Whether the consistency is paths, greens' performance, tee markers freshly painted, bins emptied, fairways with full grass cover and so on, that impression of the detailed quality is so important.

As a greenkeeper it is as well to bear in mind that perception of quality is at least as important as the actual quality itself. Football groundsmen have long known that a few stripes on a pitch will generate compliments like 'oh it's like Wembley', despite the fact that the average player struggled to run 100 yards in the warm up – perception is a powerful thing. Therefore, while data and stimp / green speeds and hardness readings and the like are all fascinating and valuable on a performance surface, never underestimate the power of a hand-cut green compared to a triple cut one ... just make sure they are all cut the same!

Noel Mackenzie is a member of GreenKeeping's editorial advisory panel and is the principal consultant at Sports Turf Consulting. Tel: 07739 505862 or email info@sportsturfconsulting.co.uk

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► seeds, turf and fertilisers buyer's guide

Rigby Taylor

Phil Baldock has joined Rigby Taylor's northern team of area technical managers.

He brings a wealth of practical experience to this role having worked in greenkeeping for a number of high-profile clubs including Foxhills Country Club, Hankley Common, Royal Portrush and Ganton.



Phil has won the Shell 'Best of Better Britain' Conservation Award for his sand dune conservation and has staged Curtis Cup, Walker Cup and Brabazon Trophy events.

As a keen supporter of BIGGA, he was secretary and chairman of the Surrey section and founder member of BIGGA Northern Ireland section and its first chairman.

Meanwhile, the extraordinary levels of savings in time, resources and therefore money forecast by the investment in Rigby Taylor's robotic TinyLineMarker (TLM) line marking machine will not only see Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's Street Scene team achieve a return on investment measured in months, but the new-found efficiencies will also enable the operation to offer ultra-competitive line marking to sports facilities currently outside of the council's remit.

With the maintenance of 92 pitches under their care, the Street Scene team – led by Operations Manager Darren Bisby – was formerly taking four man-hours (two men) to initial line mark each pitch (predominantly football) each week with the conventional 3/4/5 trian-

gle method and string, using a total of eight men in four vehicles.

Now, with TLM, one man is able to deliver the borough-wide service for line marking, taking just 20 minutes to mark a pitch – and Darren even suggests that a standard pitch can now be mowed and marked in less than an hour.

So, with 2,392 scheduled overmarkings across the pitches, 797 man-hours will effectively be put back into the Street Scene operation. With teammates released to perform other income-generating duties, the TLM operator can also now get on with other tasks during his visit – such as litter picking, goal-post strimming and divotting – while the robot is in action.

In addition, one vehicle has been removed from the fleet – saving several thousands of pounds on lease costs and around £900 on annual fuel plus any maintenance and repair costs.

Lightweight and easy to transport, TLM utilises the latest GPS technology with RTK receiver and antenna that connects with global satellites and mobile network connections. It takes the input of pitch line dimensions and multiple pitches via an App and re-positions them to best fit the site using Google Maps. Once stored, the lines are never lost, even if they disappear if a pitch is not used for any length of time.

Web: www.rigbytaylor.com

Bayer

Bayer has brought a new residual pre-emergence herbicide to the UK market, adding another product to the amenity contractor's armoury.

Lewis Blois, Bayer national account manager, says Valdor® Flex (MAPP:19033) contains a unique new formulation. "The pre-emergence herbicide contains two active ingredients, that prevent the emergence of a broad spectrum of weeds for up to four months, reducing the frequency of traditional herbicide applications.

"The product provides excellent residual control for even the hardest to manage weeds on a wide range of surfaces, including open soil, gravel and industrial areas."



Lewis explains that because of the combination of active ingredients, Valdor® Flex acts as a valuable tool for resistance management within the weed control sector.

"The herbicide provides good control of numerous weeds, while the two active ingredients, diflufenican and iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium, help to minimise the risk of resistance with two different modes of action.

"Valdor® Flex can be used as a stand-alone application on bare ground before weed emergence. But if weeds are present it can be mixed with glyphosate, which provides the initial knockdown, while Valdor® Flex will provide residual control preventing subsequent weeds emerging for up to four months."

Lewis says the correct amount of product should be mixed to cover the given spray area for that day. However, he explains Valdor® Flex is stable in water for at least 24 hours, so if for some reason there is any spray solution left in the tank it can be used the following day.

"It's easy to mix in a knapsack or tractor mounted sprayer with very little dust given off, providing improved operator safety," he says.

"Valdor® Flex is also available in a range of pack sizes. The 10g sachets are the ideal dose to be mixed in a knapsack sprayer with 10 litres of water. However, for contractors requiring larger quantities, the 500g bottle may be more cost effective to use in a tractor mounted sprayer.

"We're always working hard to bring new innovative formulations and sustainable solutions to the amenity sector, and the launch of this product will help contractors continue to manage weeds at a time when many products are being lost from the market," concludes Lewis.

Web: www.bayer.co.uk



Headland Amenity

The significant improvement in the condition of the multi-sport facilities at Dorset's Hamworthy Sports Club has largely been put down to a nutritional regime suggested by Headland Amenity. Such is the progression in uniformity and quality achieved across the football, cricket and golf surfaces that head groundsman Gavin Fisher has been awarded Dorset FA Groundsman of the Year and Dorset Cricket Groundsman of the Year – for the second season in a row!

Gavin has been at the club for six and a half years and is solely in charge of the turf maintenance – a busy site that's home to Hamworthy Cricket Club and Hamworthy Recreation FC. "When I joined the club, the feeding programme I inherited clearly wasn't working," he explains. "The golf greens in particular were suffering from disease, patchy coverage and just a general lack of growth. While I had no previous experience of Headland or their products, their sportsturf specialist Alex Hawkes stopped by and we got on straight away. He took some soil samples and spent time going through the product range to formulate a programme that would be effective site-wide."

For Gavin, one of the biggest challenges has been to create a programme to improve surfaces, while sticking to a very tight budget. "Alex fully understood that we needed versatil-



ity from the products, that could perform not only on different playing surfaces, but adapt to weather conditions and other environmental pressures." Key to the programme has been Headland's '20/20/30' Enhanced Plant Health strategy.

"We apply this tank-mix across both the golf and cricket surfaces every month. It is used in conjunction with various analysis' of Xtend® slow-release fertiliser which we can tweak as the seasons change and TriCure AD™ Granular on our golf greens, to deliver more uniform water distribution, which has helped us cope without an automatic irrigation system."

"We also use Xtend® on the football pitch, together with Multigreen® temperature-controlled release fertiliser, which we apply once early in the season and then again in the autumn. The beauty with the programme we have is, though it has largely remained the same in the last few years, we have the flexibility with Alex's knowledge to make adjustments here or there if we think we can achieve even better results. We are now reaping the rewards of our investment, having made real strides with the health, appearance and playability of our sports surfaces."

Web: www.headlandamenity.com

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Web: www.eagle.uk.com



STRI Group

STRI Group is delighted to announce the appointment of Gary Smith as an agronomic consultant, based in its Scotland office.

Smith has worked in the turf industry for over 25 years, mainly in a professional technical support role, including various new product launches in the chemical, nutrition and biotech industries.

Until recently he was employed by Symbio UK and previously at Agrovista UK and Scott's UK (now ICL) for 14 years.

Paul Woodham, STRI's general manager of agronomy, said: "It's an exciting time to welcome Gary who comes with a wealth of technical knowledge and industry experience. Gary will be a great addition supporting our operations across the business."

Smith is one of several new faces to join STRI Group as the business continues to grow across its global territories.

Consultant Samantha Maxwell joined STRI's Melbourne-based business SportsTurf Consultants; Kate Breare and Oliver Thornton are the new trials officers at STRI's UK research team.

STRI Group's recent expansion has also seen new roles created, for a Planning & EIA consultant, as well as a CAD technician, in its new Consultancy division. Full details can be found on the jobs section of the STRI website.

Lee Penrose, STRI Group director, said: "STRI is always searching for ambitious and talented individuals to continue our growth as the leading provider of turnkey plan, design, build and operate services into sports developments. Engaging with industry leaders such as Gary ensures our work exceeds the expectations of our clients."

► seeds, turf and fertilisers buyer's guide

Charterhouse Turf Machinery



Charterhouse Turf Machinery

With changes in pesticide legislation having an ever-deepening effect on sportsturf quality, the drive for turf managers to shift their nutritional and mechanical maintenance to a proactive approach has never been more important. Graham Wallace, golf course manager at the Bank House Hotel's Bransford Golf Club, is doing just that and has recently invested in a Graden CSI from Charterhouse Turf Machinery to help them produce strong greens.

"The course has sand-based greens but, due to the poor quality of sand used during construction, are unfortunately susceptible to holding water" explains Graham, who is supported by a greenkeeping team of five. "With the upcoming changes in fungicide regulations it is becoming essential to keep the surfaces dry, and the plant healthy, as much as possible to prevent disease from taking hold." To help improve drainage, Graham has conducted in-house drill 'n' fill across the 18 greens for many years, followed by passes with the Graden CSI to keep channels open.

"We were lucky enough to borrow a CSI from another course, but last year this was not possible, and we noticed a real difference on how wet the greens were compared to previous years." Graham put a case to the owner and was successful in purchasing his own

unit, from dealer Tallis Amos in February 2019. "Now we have our own machine, we can look to get out with the machine more frequently and can trial various depths and settings to achieve maximum impact with minimal surface disruption."

Web: www.charterhouse-tm.co.uk

GreenMech

The ARB Show provided the launch platform for GreenMech to introduce its much-anticipated revolutionary new woodchipper series, the EVO 165. Capitalising on GreenMech's engineering prowess, this new range has been designed in direct response to industry demands to deliver more aggressive torque, more powerful bite and more throughput.

The EVO 165 combines a wealth of new features, together with some of GreenMech's proven innovations which have seen their chippers become the preferred choice with many industry professionals. Its wide infeed chute, together with twin horizontal rollers and GreenMech's 'No-Stress' control system mean the Evo 165 efficiently grips timber and brash and controls its lateral movement to provide maximum bite and unparalleled processing power via its new, heavy-duty flywheel and re-flowed exit chute.

Optimised outputs from a diesel or petrol engine option provide usable power that matches budget with operational needs, alongside maximum fuel efficiency and compliance with Stage V Emission requirements. The EVO is the quietest machine GreenMech have produced to date, beneficial for both operators and neighbours alike.

Together with improved performance, the aspects of safety, durability and ease of maintenance have also come under the spotlight. GreenMech have fitted the Evo with a new safety bar system to minimise nuisance tripping while offering a better inflow of material. The Evo's durability has been increased with the adoption of a one-piece fabricated chassis that provides greater strength in even the most demanding of operational conditions. Meanwhile, GreenMech's patented Disc Blade system continues to provide in excess of 900 chipping hours before replacement.

When maintenance is required, the vertical and horizontal shear bars have been re-engi-



neered to be more accessible and a centralised greasing point has been introduced to make regular servicing easier to carry out.

Web: www.greenmech.co.uk

Otterbine

Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club has invested in two Otterbine High Volume aerators to improve the water quality of its reservoir and help prevent stagnant smelling water and weed build up.

The club in Deal, Kent has a 13,000m³ reservoir, the water from which is used to irrigate the 18-hole championship links course, but with no aeration to keep the water clean and clear James Bledge, course manager, was noticing a significant deterioration in water quality.

"The water was starting to turn stagnant and was giving off a strong smell, and there was a considerable amount of weed and algae forming on the bottom of the reservoir," he explains.

To solve the worrying problems the club opted to have two Otterbine aerators installed at the same time as a new Toro irrigation system and a renewal of its Toro fleet, all delivered by distributor Reesink Turfcare.

The club is a Toro Total Solutions club meaning it has a 100 percent Toro fleet as well as a Toro irrigation system, but that didn't mean an automatic order for Otterbine, which is also distributed by Reesink Turfcare.

In fact, the Otterbine aerators were suggested by Robin Hume Associates when designing the new irrigation system. With success at similar clubs in the same application, the irrigation design consultancy was confident Otterbine would help to solve the issues at Royal Cinque Ports, and it seems that judgement was right.

"We're seeing a substantial difference since the installation of the new Otterbine aer-



ators," says James. "The water doesn't smell anymore and we're already seeing an improvement in the water quality."

The Otterbine High Volume aerator adds an impressive 3.3lbs or 1.5kg of oxygen per horse power, every hour and is constructed from marine-grade, 316 stainless steel, thermoplastics and a rugged, energy efficient, low speed motor to withstand even the toughest of aquatic environments.

But it's not just that which has impressed James, the ease of use of the control system has too: "It's been set on a timer, so that way it doesn't disturb any nearby residents and helps us to save on energy."

The importance the club places on its water quality, sustainability and the technology that it manages, is evident in James' decision to assign greenkeeper Nick Machin the role of supervising all the irrigation and aeration technology. Coincidentally, Nick happens to be the 2017 winner of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award and James feels confident the day-to-day management of the new additions will be in safe hands.

"With the technology we now have at our fingertips and the supervision from Nick, I am confident about the improvements we'll see in the long term. It will be interesting to see, for example, how the turf benefits from the better-quality water irrigating it."

Web: reesinkturfcare.co.uk

SISIS

Compaction related problems are common place on golf courses. Dry patch, black layer and excessive thatch all lead to an inconsistent course surface. Compaction reduces the air spaces between the soil particles; restricting the passage of air, water and nutrients through the rootzone. The patented SISIS Javelin Aer-Aid 1500 machine greatly increases the speed of the aeration process by



directly injection air into the rootzone at a fast working rate, creating thousands of fissures.

The cam trigger mechanism ensures that the air is always expelled at the bottom of the tine penetration. The overall result is reduced compaction and a healthier root growth. The 10mm diameter 'tipped' tines are spaced at 75mm (three inches) with depth of penetration infinitely variable to a maximum of 127mm (five inches). The air injection tines are designed to use the maximum air available from the compressor and produce clean, fresh air. Surface disturbance is also kept to a minimum.

The Javelin Aer-Aid 1500 has a working width of 1.5 meters and is extremely quiet in operation. It can be powered by a compact tractor as little as 30hp which also keeps weight on the surface to a minimum. Used at the correct speed and depth, it can aerate an average green in under 20 minutes, whilst leaving an even finish that can be played on immediately afterwards.

Changing tines is simple with very little maintenance needed on the machine. Alternative tines for other operations, such as hollow coring before top dressing, are available to make this SISIS a truly versatile aerator.

Web: www.sisis.com

Toro

Bridgnorth Golf Club in Shropshire has signed its fourth renewal agreement with Toro despite competitive offers from other brands because "nothing matched up," says head greenkeeper, Martin Jones.

When it came to the end of the club's third renewal agreement with Toro, Martin chose to consider all the options to find the best possible machinery for the parkland course.

"One company even brought a whole fleet for us to trial," says Martin. "But at the end of the day, myself and the whole team agreed



that nothing matched up to Toro.

"Since our first agreement, we've been impressed with the quality of machines, service and the improvement to the course, and it's continued to get better through the tenure of two more agreements. In fact, in the last five years, I can count on one hand the number of issues we've had! That's an incredible track record that's hard to beat."

Martin also credits the service from local dealer Oakley's Groundcare and Reesink Turfcare, an official Toro UK distributor, as largely influencing the decision to renew for a fourth time.

"We've got a great relationship with Oakley's. On the rare occasion we have a problem, I know I can pick up the phone and they'll get a mechanic out to us in an hour and a replacement machine within a day. Similarly, Reesink's area manager John Pike has been really helpful, from general advice to the training; it's all been great."

Having been at the club for 42 years and head greenkeeper for over 20, Martin knows quality when he sees it.

"The quality of Toro machines is second to none and every single machine does exactly what it says on the tin. That's why we've renewed like for like as well as purchasing a couple machines from our previous fleet."

The new fleet consists of a Greensmaster TriFlex 3400, Groundsmaster 5610, GM4000-D, GM3500-D and Reelmaster 3100-D alongside a purchased Workman HDX-D and GR3250-D. "The quick release unit of the Greensmaster TriFlex 3400 in particular is fantastic," says Martin. "It's a real time saver and the standard of cut is outstanding."

"With every new renewal the course has improved, particularly the fairways and the tees," Martin concludes. "With Toro things just keep getting better!"

Web: reesinkturfcare.co.uk



Brushing the heath

Tadmarton Heath is one of the most attractive golf courses in Oxfordshire. *GreenKeeping* speaks to its course manager Jim McMurdo, and its golf operations manager / chairman of greens, John Stubbs, about their five-year programme to restore heather to the course – and how they deal with issues surrounding extreme weather and chemical legislation

Tadmarton Heath Golf Club in Oxfordshire's course is a classic heathland layout with no shortage of gorse and broom. The free-draining sandy soil ensures it is playable throughout the year and the small, testing greens have always been highly regarded. In the summer the premium is on accuracy and, when the fairways firm up, the 'inland links' character offers a unique challenge. Situated on a hill, the wind is always a factor at Tadmarton, notably in the winter when the long par fours are a stiff test for even the longest hitters.

GreenKeeping caught up with the club's course manager, Jim McMurdo, and its golf operations manager, John Stubbs, to find out about them and the work that goes into

maintaining this popular and well-respected venue.

GreenKeeping: What was your path to greenkeeping, where did you study and how long have you now been at Tadmarton Heath Golf Club?

Jim McMurdo: I started at Prestwick Golf Club in Ayrshire on the youth training scheme in 1985. I left after one year, then an apprentice job became available in March 1988 and I stayed there until November 2017, working my way to deputy head greenkeeper.

I started greenkeeping as I loved playing golf at a early age, and thought it would be good to work on a golf course as I could play

golf all day (how wrong I was with that!)

I studied at Elmwood College for my first year as an apprentice then moved to Woodburn House in Rutherglen, Scotland for my final two years to complete levels 1 and 2, I did my level 3 through South Ayrshire College with Gordon McGinn – most of Ayrshire's greenkeepers were taught by Gordon, who had fantastic enthusiasm for the job.

I completed my HNC through Elmwood college online.

I started as course manager at Tadmarton Heath on December 1, 2017.

GreenKeeping: What's the size of your team?

Jim McMurdo: We have six staff, including

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*Use as part of a preventative strategy of
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myself: deputy course manager Neil Markham, assistants Peter Hawkes and Jake Southam, and apprentices Jonnie Jeffcock and William Wilson. We try and make sure every member of staff does all aspects of the job from the top to the bottom.

GreenKeeping: What would you say are the biggest challenges you currently face and how does this impact on the daily maintenance?

Jim McMurdo: The biggest challenge we are facing is trying to repair the damage from last year's summer drought. We lost a lot of grass on the weaker fairways. We have a lot of thatch build up on these fairways and reducing this is a major problem that we have just started through the autumn and winter of last year.

The club has invested in the Terra Rake and Vredo seeder to help. This will be ongoing next autumn and winter, with scarifying, aeration and wetting agent programmes continuing, and further overseeding will be required.

One of the biggest challenges since I started has been the weather. From last winter's snow, the 'beast from the east' and so on straight into 30 degrees-plus temperatures for months during the summer.

In 2018 we had 93 days when it rained and already this year we are 45mm down on last year's rainfall. With no irrigation on fairways, we're all praying history doesn't repeat itself. The club has invested in upgrading our irrigation pumps over the winter, which will help us.

GreenKeeping: The removal of chemical constituents from products used to treat the course and the move toward a preventative rather than curative approach are bringing more challenges to greenkeepers and maintenance programmes. What are you doing to overcome this?

Jim McMurdo: I feel this is going to be a massive change in greenkeeping practices over the coming years. All course managers will have to decide if we continue relying on chemicals or not. I have chosen not to wait until it's too late and I am working very close with Symbio to create a healthy soil and make active soil biology the key for healthy turf.

I have tried preventative chemicals over the months at the end of last year and to be



honest, on my course, it didn't work, I had the biggest outbreak of fusarium less than 10 days after spraying on two separate occasions and that's when I made the decision to try a different route. I quickly started using a fulvic acid over the winter months and found this cleaned up all the soil profile tremendously. I haven't sprayed any fungicide since November and by using the Symbio programme over the winter and spring to reduce thatch levels and improve the soil I have been disease free, so I'm excited about the future to see the benefits improved soil health will bring. I know it won't be a quick fix but everything starts with small steps. Thankfully my committee and board members have fully backed me in this decision.

GreenKeeping: What aeration and topdressing programmes are you running

across the course and why, and how often are you undertaking these processes?

Jim McMurdo: Over the past year aeration has been the buzzword at Tadmarton. When I arrived the greens were very soft and retained far too much water after small rain showers with flooding particularly bad; on a sand-based heathland course that is not a good sign.

The thatch levels had to be addressed. Also when taking soil samples I found black layer six inches below the surface. My main concern was to break this up. We deep tined to 10 inches twice my first winter and again another twice over the past winter, using a Wiedenmann Terra Spike.

We introduced a pencil tine at a four inch depth throughout the summer every four to six weeks using a Toro ProCore and every two weeks we ran a Sarel roller over the surface to keep them open.

The intention is to run a deep tine over the fairways this coming autumn at a depth of 10 inches.

We started using sand-only topdressing on the greens, changing from fendress that had been used for many years; we are applying 80 tonnes a year on the greens.

GreenKeeping: Part of the renovation project is tree and gorse removal and management. What were the problems identified and what remedial action has been taken?

Jim McMurdo: A decision on heathland regeneration was decided by the members before I started. We are removing unwanted sycamore trees around the course and we planted 30 new pines last winter. The gorse has been left to become very leggy over the past number of years and with last year's snow, many gorse bushes collapsed, making it

► Greenkeeper profile



very untidy. We are removing or stolling 50 per cent of the gorse over the next five years and trying to manage it better in clumps of gorse rather than almost hedges of gorse that we currently have. We want to encourage natural tall fescues into the roughs and surrounding areas.

GreenKeeping: What height of cut do you use across the course?

Jim McMurdo: We are cutting greens seven days a week at 3.5mm from June through to September. Tees are cut at 7.5mm twice a week, approaches also 7.5mm three times a week, fairways, twice a week at 13mm with two mowers and the semi rough at 1.75 inches once a week.

GreenKeeping: The pressures on the course manager to deliver a better product are growing year on year and the level of professionalism is rising with this. What do you think are the qualities now needed to meet the requirements and demands of golfers by someone in your position and how does this help contribute to the business of golf?

Jim McMurdo: Education is vital, greenkeeping is a fast moving industry and it's vital to stay informed with changes and new procedures available. This for me is reading greenkeeping magazines and following social media, where sometimes you may just pick up an idea that may work on your course.

Playing golf for me is vital. To try and understand what a golfer expects helps tremendously and gives a good understanding of the game. When I started out I remember

being asked by my head greenkeeper how would you like your golf ball to land in an area that wasn't properly prepared and that has stuck with me.

Trying not to take comments too seriously, it is very frustrating when you're working so hard on the course to provide a quality product, then to receive a negative comment from golfers can be very frustrating. As we all know most golf clubs have 400 greenkeepers in the membership!

Having a good team under you, most clubs run with low staff so having a good happy team goes a long way to success.

Being a meteorologist we all spend all day with about five different weather apps hoping one will tell you what you want – usually rain.

Communication is vital – it could be Facebook or Twitter or course reports, but let the members know what's happening.

GreenKeeping: What currently gives you the

greatest satisfaction from your job?

Jim McMurdo: The biggest satisfaction for me is seeing the transformation in the course from a Monday morning to a Friday afternoon, leaving on a Friday when the course has been set up for the weekend knowing the team have done their best and the course is looking good.

I enjoy doing winter projects, this was my first full winter programme. The plan was to rebuild and extend three tees and create a completely new championship tee, I was delighted with the results.

Tadmorton is a heathland course and for many years it has been set up as a parkland course. I have been set the target to get the course back to playing like a heathland; we set about opening up bunker run-ins, creating run-offs around the greens and have fast running fairways. These areas and results had lots of positive comments last year.

GreenKeeping: With your many years experience, what advice would you give to youngsters starting out and wanting to pursue a career in the profession?

Jim McMurdo: Walk before you run, take your time and listen to the experienced members of the team. This is a job that brings a lot of happy days but can also give plenty of days when you want to give it all up. But if you're passionate about your job and love being outdoors doing what you love, it can be very rewarding. Educate yourself, always be prepared to learn and never rest on your laurels.



GreenKeeping: Hello John, what's your career path to becoming golf operations manager at Tadmarton Heath?

John Stubbs: I grew up playing at Hawarden Golf Club and Padeswood and Buckley Golf Club. At 22 I was offered my first head professional's role at Rhyl Golf Club in North Wales, having previously been the assistant to David Llwellyn at Northop Country Park where I was the first year to take the PGA's new diploma programme.

In March 2008 I was offered the head professional role at Tadmarton. I was asked to join several committees in 2011, including greens – I was asked to become golf operations manager in 2017 and also chairman of greens that year.

GreenKeeping: What does your current role entail and what is the size of your team?

John Stubbs: My current role sees me still as head professional: here I have a team of three.



As chairman of greens my work involves running all the budgets for the greens, plus myself and Jim have daily and weekly briefings to fine-tune the course in conjunction with the

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overall plan. We work closely with our general manager, Matt Draper, to drive the business forward while making sure the daily operation is smooth.

GreenKeeping: The course has undergone a five-year regeneration project as part of the club's vision to put the traditional heath back into Tadmarton. What exactly were the plans for the course, who did the club work with and how was the work undertaken?

John Stubbs: Ken Moodie designed the new bunkers and also some course layout changes which have taken place over the last few years; he also helped with our plan for our heath re-generation project, which is our plan for next five to 10 years.

The focus is now on heathland, the gorse stooling and removal programme and tree management, including removal of all self-seeding trees. Tree planting includes introducing 30 Scots pines every year for five

years, plus rough management.

This will reduce the fertility in the ground, meaning the finer grasses will flourish.

We are one of the last true heathland areas in Oxfordshire. It's not just about bringing the course back to its roots from land management either; we wanted to go that extra step and start to care for the course in a

more natural and environmentally friendly way. We have teamed up with Symbio who have worked closely with us to develop a specific plan to improve the soil condition, using natural biology. With more and more of the harmful chemicals getting removed every year from the market we feel in two to three years time we will be ahead of the game when it comes to disease outbreaks.

GreenKeeping: Which areas of the course were specifically addressed and why, what work has been undertaken to date and what positive result has this delivered for the course, members and visitors?

John Stubbs: The whole course has been reviewed: bunker programme, gorse removal / stooling, clearing out, tree planting, some tree felling, new tees, larger tees and a new pumping station.

Certainly clearing out a lot of poor trees and undergrowth has allowed the more natural flowers to flourish; the bluebells this year were the best ever, the natural heathers on the course have started to come back, which our members and visitors love to see, and with the gorse stooling / removing programme, the members can find their balls now, until it grows back!

GreenKeeping: How has the team managed to achieve the delicate balance of retaining the special character of Tadmarton Heath, yet return the course to a heathland character and improve playability?

John Stubbs: I think it is all in the planning and the guidelines we have set ourselves,



instead of removing large swales of gorse we remove smaller sections each year to make sure the whole shape and character of the course isn't altered too much. This is of course a slower process but we have been here nearly 100 years already so there is no point rushing now.

With any change to an old classic golf course the balance of improving it can be tricky. We have an understanding membership who we communicate to on a regular basis.

GreenKeeping: The club has recently bought a new fleet of machines using a lease deal. What was the reason for this?

John Stubbs: Our old Toro deal was coming to an end and we wanted a total overhaul of our fleet. Not only to give our staff everything they need, but also to be more efficient as a business. Farols (and John Deere) really understood our idea and came back with a really exciting proposal.

GreenKeeping: As part of the tender process, what was the club specifically looking for?

John Stubbs: Good service, face-to-face contact and high quality and reliable machines.

GreenKeeping: Which brand did you select and how would you describe the experience of working with the supplier?

John Stubbs: We chose Farols who supplied John Deere. They have been true to their word and offered great after-sales and customer service. It is important that a trust is developed between both parties when there is a large investment being spent.

From a purely business point of view I cannot fault them and I know Jim feels the same way with regard to the quality of the machines they have supplied.

GreenKeeping: Are you happy with the results of the regeneration project to date and what is the general feedback from members and visitors?

John Stubbs: It's early stages but so far we couldn't be happier, we are already seeing the finer grasses coming back in places, the clearing out and the small amount of felling that has taken place so far has really helped the course to breathe. Our members have been great and are really supportive of the work being carried out. We are always aware that the project needs to be sympathetic to our membership, but so far we feel we have that balance just right.

GreenKeeping: Looking forward, what further plans are there for the course in the coming years?

John Stubbs: Like the Forth Road Bridge, it will never be finished, we have a solid five-year plan we are currently working towards but that gets added to each year. Projects that will also take place are new enlarged tees, an improved practice area, more irrigation on high wear areas which were highlighted after last year's weather and a reduction in chemical use. The layout of the course is great but subtle tweaks over the coming years will only highlight the little gem we think we have.



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Dream machines

The greenkeeper's job is never done. Andy Waple reviews some of the latest developments in fairway mowers and tractors which help make life a little easier

Featuring the same advanced technology as **John Deere's** award-winning A Model family of fairway, rough and trim and surrounds mowers, the new 6000A Series PrecisionCut fairway machines were launched at BTME 2019 in Harrogate in January and are now available from UK and Irish dealers.

Based on a three-wheel drive, smooth tyre configuration, the 6080A, 6500A and 6700A five-gang cylinder models have been introduced to meet a specific customer need for improved budget control, while still delivering a mower designed for the rigours of fairway applications.

"With tight operating budgets and increasing labour costs, many customers need a more cost effective solution to get the job done," says John Deere's European turf sales and marketing manager Carlos Aragones.

"With this in mind, we challenged ourselves to design a machine that can still boost productivity and maintain quality of cut while keeping costs down, and we've done that with these new 6000A Series mowers."

All three models use a powerful 24.7hp (18.4kW) diesel engine, and boast several other premium performance and comfort features. Just like the existing John Deere A Model range, these latest mowers offer exceptional cut quality, even on slopes, thanks to the standard LoadMatch system, while the innovative eHydro transmission eliminates linkages between the foot pedals and the hydrostatic pump.



Cutting widths are 2.03m (80in) on the 6080A and 2.54m (100in) on the 6500A and 6700A, with a choice of 46 or 56cm (18 or 22in) QA5 5in or QA7 7in diameter cutting units depending on the model. In addition, the 8mph (12.9kph) mowing speed allows operators to cut larger areas in less time.

As with all A Model machines, the new fairway mowers feature the innovative TechControl display with password-protected controls. TechControl allows course managers or technicians to enter a range of commands, including mowing, turning and transport speeds as well as service intervals, while also providing on-board service diagnostics, to give complete and consistent control over cutting performance and quality.

The established frame design provides strength and durability, and a high quality cut is maintained in undulating terrain thanks to a rear-attaching yoke on the cutting units.

Combined with the standard GRIP all-wheel drive traction system, these features allow the mowers to climb hills more easily without slipping.

The new John Deere 6000A Series PrecisionCut fairway mowers also provide several features designed to increase machine and operator uptime. These include internal hydraulic wet disc brakes that eliminate the need for linkage adjustments and grease points in the braking system, along with the traction drive system that needs only one fluid type for regular maintenance. In addition, the comfortable operator station includes CommandArm mounted controls that move with the seat.

Toro

Toro's Reelmaster 3555-D and 3575-D are lightweight mowers that pack a punch, the fairway featherweights, which make a big impression without leaving one.

Joining the Reelmaster 3550-D, which weighs in at just 900kg, in Toro's Reelmaster range, the RM3555-D and 3575-D fairway mowers don't let the side down with their lightweight credentials. Weighing around



Toro's Reelmaster 3555-D and inset. Above: The 6500A PrecisionCut fairway mower from John Deere



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► mowers and tractors

500lbs less than comparable four-wheel Toro mowers they provide more choice in the fairway mower arena.

Powered by a 24.8hp (18.5kW) Kubota diesel engine, these two machines, which are distributed in the UK by Reesink Turfcare, provide plenty of power to climb hills, even while running groomers and rear roller brushes, yet they use less fuel per acre than traditional fairway mowers.

A 100 inch width of cut and Toro's renowned Dual Precision Adjustment (DPA) cutting units featuring Toro's all new Edge Series cylinders provide a consistent, long-lasting, crisp, clean cut whether opting for five inch cutting units on the RM3555-D or seven on the RM3575-D.

With the weight balanced from side-to-side, a low centre of gravity is created and when coupled with smooth turf-friendly tyres and a highly manoeuvrable three-wheel-drive system which allows tight turns to be made with ease, reduces turnaround time and significantly decreases the potential for turf tear, the result is a reduction in turf compaction and damage.

As well as being among the lightest on the market, both machines are also among the quietest in their class. Registering at just 84dB(A) for the operator and at 73dB(A) 25-foot away, which is the same as a motorbike, making them ideal for courses in residential areas.

Cleveland Alliances (formerly Cleveland Crop Sprayers)

Founded by Patrick Dixon in 1991 as Cleveland Crop Sprayers, the firm concentrated on agricultural machines and was the Gambetti agricultural importer for the UK. The company grew rapidly and in 1998 Gambetti Amenity sprayers started pouring into the UK, imported by Cleveland. Since then, Cleveland has expanded and led the UK golf market with Gambetti Sprayers.

Patrick's son, James, started with the company in 1994 as a junior engineer. He left the company in 2000 to join the armed forces, returning to the family business in 2004 to join the sales department. James led the agricultural sales from 2008 and in 2013 became sales director.



Technology in agriculture was growing at a very fast rate. In 2013 Cleveland started introducing that technology into the golf and amenity sprayer sector, achieving the distinction of becoming the first to roll out sprayers with GPS technology into the UK golf market.

Since then both Cleveland and Gambetti have refined their products and now have state-of-the-art GPS technology operating across the UK golf market.

In 2017 James became managing director as Patrick was preparing for retirement. James has taken on the role and is steering the company to new directions. In 2018 Cleveland sold the agricultural side of the crop sprayer business, concentrating on machines for the golf and amenity sector, and on Greensiron and Rotomec Mowers, which it also distributes.

The largest growth area for the company is its sprayer parts sector. Cleveland is now a sprayer parts wholesaler, providing parts to sprayer dealers and specialists across the world.

In 2019, the decision was made to change the name of the company to Cleveland Alliances, as it was considered that 'crop sprayers' no longer told the company's entire story. Looking to the future, the company has invested heavily in its websites and is growing its online presence week by week.

Demonstrating Cleveland's grasp of technological innovations, James said: "Our company does not simply buy and sell sprayers. We buy components, booms and computers, tailoring sprayers specifically for the UK amenity and golf course market. 'Designed in the UK, put together in the UK, for the UK,' is our mantra.

"We have a large dealer network and supply well-known dealers throughout the UK.

We know our products inside out and base our business on our knowledge and experience, and our dealers rely heavily on this support."

John Deere

John Deere's new 3038E compact tractor is an economical and versatile machine suitable for a wide variety of customers, including greenkeepers, groundsmen, landscape contractors, groundscape maintenance service providers, rural property owners and equestrian operations.

The 3038E is equipped with a powerful, emissions-compliant Stage IV diesel engine developing 37.3hp. A hydrostatic transmission with Twin Touch foot pedals provides the operator with simple, comfortable controls to select exactly the right speed for the job at hand.

Combined with power assisted steering, the Twin Touch pedals are intuitive and easy to use and enable the operator to maximise productivity. The tractor's independent PTO can be engaged on the go, eliminating the need to stop and use the clutch. The 3038E also features an easy-lift bonnet that provides wide-open access to the engine bay for maintenance.

A new 300E front loader has been designed to complement the 3038E and features a curved boom and durable components. Together with the tractor's tight turning circle, this offers a highly manoeuvrable combination for materials' handling, whether working indoors or outdoors. Four-wheel drive is available as standard for more demanding applications and difficult ground conditions.

Left: John Deere's 3038E compact tractor.

Right: Nicknamed a 'multi-tasking marvel', TYM's T393 makes light work of the hard work

The 3038E compact tractor also offers telescoping draft links as a factory or field installed option. This makes attaching and removing rear implements very easy and increases overall performance in the field. This option is compatible with a wide range of implements, including mowers, rear blades and post hole diggers.

"This new tractor is easy to operate, easy to maintain, easy to own and easy to buy," says Carlos Aragones, John Deere's European turf segment manager. "No matter what the task, the 3038E compact tractor delivers John Deere quality and reliability at a budget-friendly price."

TYM

It's with good reason that TYM Tractor's T393 is nicknamed a 'multi-tasking marvel' and that's thanks to its ability to switch from one task to another, which is a vital consideration for greenkeeping teams.

Bridging the gap from the compact utility range into the mid-duty range, the T393 is a good choice on a golf course providing enough

power to handle a vast array of tasks, but lightweight enough to not be detrimental to turf.

It has one of the highest lift capabilities in its class with a lift capacity of 1,200kg and one of the highest hydraulic flow rates with a maximum output of 42 litres per minute.

It has a robust 38hp three-cylinder liquid-cooled Yanmar engine, dual element air cleaner and independent rear and mid PTO selection. The tractor can also be specified with various implements including front loader and a range of rear mounted attachments including, but not limited to, finishing mowers and rotary tillers. And if that wasn't enough, the T393 is also easy to use with an excellent turning radius and maximum traction.

Packed with innovative and user-friendly features such as auto PTO, hydrostatic power-steering and factory fitted cab with both heat and air conditioning, it's a tractor based on comfort as much as purpose. The T393 can be



equipped with

either a 12x12 manual gearbox or a three-range hydrostatic transmission with auto throttle response.

Transportation, ground preparation, seeding and mowing, it's a workhorse that makes light work of the hard work.

For advice on your grounds maintenance needs or to arrange a demonstration please contact Reesink Turfcare on 01480 226800. Or you can find more information by visiting www.reesinkturfcare.co.uk.

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Dennis and SISIS

The head groundsman for De Montfort University at Beaumont Park in Leicester believes that most of his maintenance programme can be achieved by using just two key SISIS machines – the Multitiner and the Quadraplay.

Head groundsman Cameron Flitten has a number of strings to his bow when it comes to sports turf maintenance. After starting in the industry with an apprenticeship at a golf course, he went on to specialise in the maintenance of cricket squares, football pitches and rugby pitches in his previous position at Loughborough University.

Cameron has now been in his current employment with De Montfort University for three years but revealed that it was in his former position where he first became acquainted with SISIS machinery.

"I used SISIS machinery at Loughborough so I already knew that they were brilliant pieces of kit. We never used to have any problems with the equipment; they were reliable, simple to use and did an excellent job every time. I tend to always go with what I know works so I was keen to get some SISIS equipment in here."

In particular, Cameron uses the SISIS Multitiner 1.8m and the SISIS Quadraplay 1.8m at the impressive Beaumont Park which plays host to the university's men's and women's football teams. The facilities are also used by the local community and with a high amount of recorded usage, regular pitch maintenance is essential.

One of today's most useful pieces of kit in any groundsman's armoury, the SISIS Quadraplay significantly speeds up maintenance tasks by carrying out more than one operation simultaneously – making it ideal for groundsman like Cameron who have several sports pitches to maintain.

This single-pass maintenance system in-

corporates a mounted frame for up to four implements such as grooming rakes, slitters, rollers and brushes. The implements can be fitted to the mainframe in any order and can be independently adjusted to achieve the desired effect.

"Quite simply, the Quadraplay is essential for us. We've got the slitter, the rake wires, the brush and a roller for it and we tend to use it regularly throughout the year. I like the fact that you can carry out a number of tasks in just one sweep which saves so much time. It provides the pitch with aeration, removes organic matter, gives the surface a good clean and then leaves an excellent finish," Cameron explains.

The SISIS Multitiner is a tractor mounted drum-type aerator which is ideally suited to a range of applications from sports field maintenance, lawns and amenities. It has three drums with independent rotation and its interchangeable tines with a maximum depth of 100mm ensure excellent turf care when the time comes to aerate.

"At this time of year, we tend to use the chisel tines on the Multitiner because it 'cracks' the soil incredibly well and we find that it gives us a bit more depth. It's great to be able to open the surface up especially when it is cold and wet.

"We rely on the Multitiner for drainage and aeration – to ensure that air gets into the surface and to keep the pitches draining freely. I would say that we try and use the Multitiner every couple of weeks and when the weather gets warmer, we switch to the solid tines. It only takes an hour to go over the whole pitch, so it's incredibly quick compared to other machines on the market."

"For me, these two machines help me carry out a huge part of our maintenance programme and we use them in tandem. They are well built, reliable and are key pieces of turf maintenance machinery for us here."

Web: www.sisis.com

GreenMech

A fleet of GreenMech woodchippers have been fundamental in the successful delivery of large-scale utility arb contracts for South Wales Arborists (SWA). Running both tracked

and road tow models, director Stuart Michael and his arb teams are well-equipped to deal with all tree, shrub and woodland projects which ensure the safe management of the power networks.

As an approved contractor for Western Power Distribution (WPD), SWA has over 10 years of experience in managing trees in close proximity to overhead lines, both low and high voltage. "Our chippers are the key tools in helping us to deliver the contracts, and the vast array of sites we attend mean we're often working on a variety of different terrains" ex-



plains Stuart. "We've used a few different makes of woodchipper over the years but have had various reliability issues and found parts to be expensive so when we made the decision to look around, I got in touch with Julian Cullis of GreenMech.

"We were immediately impressed with what the GreenMech machines offered and bought our first tracked machine from them roughly eight years ago."

SWA now has a nine inch ChipMaster 220 TMP for large, high-volume projects, two Arborist 150 road-tow machines used predominantly on low-voltage street works and, the most recent additions to their fleet, two Arb-Trak 150s for off-road projects and those on challenging ground conditions. Stuart also specified his machines in red livery, the company's corporate colours.

"These chippers have been brilliant, they're efficient and chip a range of materials thoroughly and accurately. Though 99 per cent of our workload is utility arb, we have the range of machines now to easily reach a variety of locations and handle material no matter the size."

Stuart is hoping to have fully converted his fleet over to GreenMech machines by the end



of this year. "Since the introduction of the first GreenMech chipper all those years ago we've never really looked back. We get fantastic support from Julian and look forward to continuing to deliver our contracts, with the help of GreenMech, for many years to come," he said.
Web: www.greenmech.co.uk

Toro

A £1.2m investment in the 18-hole course at one of the world's oldest golf clubs, Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society in Edinburgh, has concluded with the arrival of a brand new Toro fleet of machinery to safeguard the investment.

As course manager Neil Hogg says, you don't create something of this quality if you don't have the machinery to keep it at its best: "This is our first package deal and the timing coincides with the conclusion of the extensive revamp of the course by golf course architects Mackenzie and Ebert. The course has been designed around a very modern spec and reflects the way golf is played in the 21st Century. We knew we needed a package deal to take care of the course and deliver the results it deserves."

The main objective of the redesign was to keep the original Dr Mackenzie shapes and feel but bring it up-to-date. Mackenzie and Ebert follow in the footprints of past course work completed by Willie Park Jnr, Dr Alister Mackenzie, James Braid and Fred Hawtree.

"Despite being an Open qualifying venue since 2011, there hadn't been any changes to the course since the early 1970s," Neil says.

There are now eight new holes and more than 80 bunkers which have been redesigned and repositioned to reflect the distances club golfers are now striking the ball, plus the course has been restored to a par 71 to create longer play.

The 12th and 13th holes were combined to create a challenging dog leg par five into a prevailing wind and a new signature par three

hole at the 16th over a pond has been introduced.

And already Neil notes the improvements are making a big difference: "The course improvements were designed to elevate Bruntsfield to be one of the top parkland courses in Scotland. The works have only recently finished, but have made such a difference and been so well received, we've surged up the Top 100 Golf Courses list by 69 places. Plus, we've seen an increase in membership too and now have an extensive waiting list in place."

However, the equipment in the shed wasn't quite so shiny and new, as Neil explains: "The shed was previously a mixed bag of machines. Some were getting on for 30 years old and the machinery that made up the fleet as a whole hadn't really been considered. With Dougie, our CEO's guidance, plus that of Reesink's Stuart Tait and David Raitt, we looked at how we could streamline things and ensure the best for the future of the course."

Dougie Cleeton enjoyed a successful tenure as managing secretary of Blairgowrie Golf Club before joining Bruntsfield and bringing with him sound knowledge of what to expect with the redesign of a course, says Neil: "We were lucky to get Dougie, he'd been involved in similar projects before and brought with him a wealth of experience. Together we went through the machines in the shed and planned the new fleet."

Included in the deal are two Reelmaster 3575-D fairway mowers, two Reelmaster 3100-D mowers with Sidewinders, five Greensmaster 1000 pedestrian mowers, two Greensmaster 3250-D ride-on greens mowers, a Workman MDX utility vehicle and a TYM 503 heavy-duty tractor.

"The new fleet is delivering on our expectations. All the staff love using the machines, the fairway mowers are so nimble and light, and the pedestrian mowers in particular are a big hit. Plus, maintenance and servicing are a lot easier.

"It's the perfect end to a successful project. We started out with quality and longevity in mind and we conclude with it too. The machines will respect the course and bring out its best for years to come."

Web: reesinkturfcare.co.uk



Ventrac

Trevose Golf & Country Club, situated five miles west of Padstow in Cornwall, is the latest business to appreciate the benefits of owning a Ventrac 4500 compact tractor and attachments. Delivered by local dealer Devon Garden Machinery, the package included the Ventrac 4500 compact tractor, a Contour mowing deck and Power Rake.

Owned by the Gammon family, Trevose is one of Cornwall's premier golf destinations with 36 holes of golf including the 18-hole Championship course, the nine-hole Headland course and a nine-hole short course. The Championship course was designed by Harry Colt in 1925 and has recently undergone extensive renovations. In recent years it has hosted The Brabazon Trophy (2008), The McGregor Trophy (2012) and the English Men's County Finals (2017). In June this year it is the venue of a Staysure Tour event – the Farm Foods European Legends Links Championship.

Neil Ivamy is the course manager and heads a team of 13 greenkeepers. Explaining the decision for the addition to his fleet he said: "We were in the market for a semi-rough mower and Vic Robinson, the area manager for Devon Garden Machinery suggested that we look at the Ventrac. I had my doubts initially as I was worried that the width of cut was slightly less than our existing pod mower, which would put significant time on the mowing operations across the three courses. However, the manoeuvrability of the machine was fantastic, reducing turning times and cutting areas we would normally have to strim, leading to improved overall productivity. We had two demonstrations and when these were concluded, I realised that my doubts were unfounded; the finish was excellent. The Ventrac is very versatile; it's not just a mower. We purchased the Power Rake attachment in the package and that's how I justified it to man-

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agement; we can use it to enhance the appearance of the entire property, not just the golf courses.

"The Power Rake is a great attachment and can reinstate pathways very easily and without the need to import new material to fill potholes. We have numerous paths around the property and it certainly reduces the maintenance hours. We also use the it when reinstating our turf nursery to rotovate the soil before reseeding. Although we didn't purchase the Tough Cut deck or the Power Broom, they both performed superbly on demonstration and I will certainly be looking at them in the future.

"The machine performs brilliantly on slopes; it can work safely up to 30 degrees, and we are now maintaining banked areas more frequently, including some that would only be strimmed twice a year. We can attach our Wiedenmann TerraRake to the rear three-point linkage and rake the clippings to the bottom of the slopes for easier collection. Without doubt, this is a very versatile machine."

Neil began his career at the age of 14 while still at school, working weekends in the Pro-Shop and with the greenkeeping team at nearby Merlin Golf Club, before joining on a permanent basis when he left full-time education. In the winters of 2003 and 2007 he played club cricket in Perth, western Australia and on his return spent two years in the landscaping industry. He joined Trevoise as an assistant greenkeeper in 2009, was promoted to deputy course manager in 2012 and course manager in 2015.

Web: priceturfcare.com

INFINICUT

As part of an ongoing investment programme, Warwick Independent Schools Foundation has purchased two Cub Cadet INFINICUT® mowers, as well as a selection of TMSYSTEM™ cassettes. In a very short time grounds manager Duncan Toon says the vast improvement in the condition of the natural grass surfaces is down to these newest additions to his machinery fleet.

Four schools occupy the eight hectare site of natural turf and sports facilities – Warwick



School, Warwick Junior School, King's High School and Warwick Preparatory School. Duncan and his grounds team of six are required to deliver top-quality surfaces for all. "I joined the school in June 2018 whilst it was in the midst of a significant investment programme and started sourcing machinery to help improve the quality of the grounds. I'd had a demonstration of the INFINI's in my previous role at Birmingham FC and they'd been on my wish-list ever since. I knew these would be key to achieving the quality we were striving for."

Duncan took delivery of an INFINICUT® 34" Fixed Head and an INFINICUT® 26" Floating Head mower, in quick succession. "Alongside the superior quality of cut, and striping ability, another big selling point for us working in a school environment is health and safety. With the INFINI's being battery powered, we no longer have to spend time and money sourcing and safely storing fuel - and the noise emitted is all but eliminated meaning we can mow anytime including through the exam season. They're also incredibly comfortable to operate, which is much more enjoyable for my guys while mowing large areas such as rugby pitches. In fact, they're fighting to use them!"

The 34" unit, equipped with a 7 blade SmartCut reel, is predominately for use on the rugby pitch and cricket square, while the 26" floating head model will become their wicket mower. Duncan is also impressed with the cassettes from the TMSYSTEM™ range that came with the machines - the PowerBrush™ and UltraGroomer™. "We've put the UltraGroomer™ across our cricket surface to thin out the sward and remove any unwanted Poa



ingress and lateral growth. Compared to other verti-cutters, this cassette is head and shoulders above anything I've ever used. When you think you've taken everything out, you go over again and it's amazing how much more you get."

"These machines have already made a noticeable difference to the health, presentation and quality of the swards" explains a delighted Duncan, who is looking forward to adding further units to his fleet in the not-too-distant future.

Web: www.cubcadetturf.com

Kubota

Kubota is establishing 'Innovation Centres' in Japan and Europe as organs for the creation of new business ventures, products and services. Working together with external partners, the centres will advance open innovation for proactive engagement with ICT, AI and other advanced technologies, and accelerate the creation of new business, products, and services.

To date, Kubota has pursued the development of products responsive to the needs of customers mainly through specialised development departments for each of its product lines, such as agricultural machinery and construction machinery, working in partnership with an in-house research and development department in charge of advanced technologies and component technologies. At present Kubota is developing and strengthening its research and development bases both within Japan and internationally to respond to business globalisation and product line expansion.

At the same time, in order to respond to changing customer needs such as the rising awareness of food safety, environmental conservation and other aspects of social sustainability, the company needs to deliver new forms of value such as 'system solutions' utilising ICT, AI and other advanced technologies,

beyond the existing product lines. These technologies are evolving at an increasingly rapid pace, and in order to engage with them in a timely manner it is essential to pursue partnerships (open innovation) with venture businesses, companies in other industries, universities, research institutes and other external partners.

It is for this purpose that Kubota is establishing its new Innovation Centres, which will take the lead in planning and proposing new business activities, products and services that transcend existing boundaries between different product lines, promote open innovation through investment in and joint research with external partners, and seek to create new forms of value that surpass customers' expectations.

In order to respond attentively to regional needs, Innovation Centres will be established in both Japan and Europe. The company will also consider establishing centres in other regions in the future.

Web: www.kubota-eu.com

BLEC

Three years on since the announcement was made that BLEC was to become a division of the Redexim Group, the press was recently invited to an update event at BLEC dealer Acorn Tractors in Derby. Hosted by division manager Curtis Allen, members of the press, including



GreenKeeping's Steve Eaves, heard in more detail how the new and enhanced range of specialist landscaping and turfcare equipment is creating quite a stir.

A busy few years under the guidance of the Redexim Group has seen the streamlining of product ranges and manufacture, along with the appointment of a network of dedicated dealers nationwide. Amongst the machines shown on the day were the Blecavator, Laser Grader and Multi-Seeder where key developments were

discussed. Of particular note was the number of mechanical adjustments made to the renowned Laser Grader range including new twin Danfoss proportional valves and heavy-duty finger tines, that both now come as standard. The all-new Power Box Rake 1800 was another highlight as the first Redexim designed and engineered addition to the BLEC offering. Whilst following the ethics of the previous versions of the PBR, this machine has been built from scratch to be the perfect tool for cultivating, earth-moving, grading and raking.

During the presentation and subsequent working demonstrations, it was evident how machines from across the BLEC range can be used in conjunction with one another, in the process of converting bare earth into a surface ready for seeding. With a comprehensive selection of pedestrian and tractor-mounted units, each available in a variety of working widths, they're suited to applications from landscape gardeners, golf course construction, sports pitch preparations to large-scale groundworks.

The press were also treated to a talk from Sean Goodwin, Director of Talbot Farm Landscapes and Talbot Sports Turf, and long-standing user of BLEC machinery. Sean has a vast selection of BLEC units on his machinery fleet. He adds, "The BLEC range demonstrates an understanding of what we, the commercial landscaper/sports turf contractor, really need. The build quality is one thing that has always impressed me but the new Multi-Seeder I have purchased through Redexim is even better – well engineered and attention paid to every detail. With the resources available to Redexim, the manufacturing prowess and the ability to stock a wider range of parts through their dealer network, they have the potential to take BLEC to the next level."

Curtis summarised, "Despite its best efforts, the rain didn't dampen spirits on what was a fantastic opportunity to update the media on all of the improvements we have worked hard to deliver across the portfolio. We have come a long way with the range already and with further innovations in the pipeline we're entering a very exciting period in the BLEC story. A big thank you must also go to Julian Simpson at Acorn Tractors for providing the host venue and



coordinating such a positive day."

Web: www.blecmachinery.com

EcoBunker

Working on a course for a Ryder Cup is a great achievement for any golf construction professional. To work on two in the space of a week, though, is pretty remarkable. But that's what EcoBunker site manager Louis Palser did last month.

Louis spent two days at Le Golf National in Paris, supervising EcoBunker's part of the construction of the 2018 Ryder Cup venue's new state-of-the-art practice facility, which is being managed by golf consultant Alejandro Reyes (the former superintendent of Le Golf National). Flying directly from Paris to Rome, Louis moved on to the Marco Simone club, currently under reconstruction at the hands of European Golf Design architect Dave Sampson, in advance of its starring role in the 2022 Ryder Cup. There, for ten days, he worked alongside EcoBunker's top construction specialist Llewellyn Matthews installing EcoBunker's AquaEdge lake edging product on the 16th and 18th holes.

Quite some going for a young man who is new to the golf business. Louis joined EcoBunker last year after studying civil engineering at Salford University, because 'he wanted to use his construction knowledge, work outdoors and gain plenty of travel opportunities', and spent 18 weeks last year on the company's job at the new Dumbarnie Links in Fife, where he rose to be deputy site manager under Llewellyn Matthews. Now, he's comfortable leading jobs, and has worked on EcoBunker projects in the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and France.

EcoBunker CEO Richard Allen says: "With our contracting business growing rapidly we've had to invest in new construction management talent, and Louis has rapidly become an important part of our growth."

Web: ecobunker.co.uk

► A day in the life

Lee Strutt

is the golf course manager at the **Royal Automobile Club** in Surrey. The private club features a vast array of sporting facilities



• **What time do you arrive at the club?**

I normally arrive around 4.30 to 4.45am.

• **Can you describe your morning routine?**

This can vary greatly as no two days are ever the same. I normally like to have seen the weather forecast before leaving for work and then on arrival at the club, get a confirmation from our weather station. I have a quick chat with my two deputies and head mechanic to discuss the last 24 hours plus the plan for the day ahead. Once they're scheduling the day's tasks, I normally catch up on emails from the previous evening. Then it's either looking around the courses and estate and / or starting on information updates, reports or finance.

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

I have 21 during the winter and 27 during the summer. It never seems to be enough people, as there is always a list of priority tasks to be completed.

• **Do you share tasks?**

I try to delegate as much as I can – it is always important to have as many staff who are able to undertake your tasks as possible.

• **How do you motivate your colleagues?**

Motivating my team is very diverse, every team member needs something a little different to help them engage with their work. I try to listen, clarify and help them with their tasks and duties. I try to set a good example (and I'm certainly not perfect!) so that we try to help each other as much as possible.

• **What's your favourite season of the year and why?**

It has to be late spring – the smell of freshly mown grass, the course shrugs off its winter coat and starts taking up definition.

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

I get great satisfaction from seeing my staff learn, develop and produce great work.

• **And what part of it gives you the least satisfaction?**

Idiotic complaints by people who have little, or no, common sense!

• **Have you attended any courses recently?**

We had an internal course on performance management which aimed to help managers identify staffing issues and learn how we can help team members perform better. The course gave us clear tools to use,

**“LIKE FARMERS,
GREENKEEPERS ARE
CUSTODIANS OF THE
LAND AND SO SHOULD
ALWAYS MAKE SURE
THAT WE RESPECT IT,
LOOK AFTER IT AND
MAKE UP SHORTFALLS
WHERE POSSIBLE”**

to reduce friction between staff and managers and helped us to identify areas where the business can assist its team members.

• **What piece of equipment would you say is the most popular and frequently used by you and your team?**

Our Charterhouse Rink 3800 topdresser has had a huge impact on our operations. This machine helps move topdressing sand onto the course which we then dispense into smaller topdressers, saving us valuable time for topdressing as well as reducing wear.

• **How would you improve the greenkeeping industry?**

More respect and understanding on what we do; too many people think of simple solutions without taking into considerations the many complexities of the job.

• **Has a golfer ever deliberately directed a ball at you?**

Fortunately, no.

• **What is your favourite machine and why?**

As old as it is, it would still have to be our Verti-Drain. An icon in our industry and one that revolutionised the activity of aeration.

• **Have you ever had any mishaps with lakes on the course or had to undertake a rescue of a daft golfer?**

I've lost count of the times electric trolleys have ended up in streams and lakes and have had to be rescued, but the look on the golfers' faces is normally priceless.

• **What is the most interesting animal you have seen on your course and how do you do support wildlife?**

When I was based in Scotland, we would often have red kites flying around. Amazing, beautiful birds and great to see their numbers on the increase.

As for supporting wildlife, I believe it comes naturally to greenkeepers to create natural habitats for a wide spectrum of wildlife, from insects to mammals. Like farmers, we are custodians of the land and so should always make sure that we respect it, look after it and make up shortfalls where possible.

• **Are you seeing any evidence of climate change?**

Well there is no doubt there is a shift in the seasons; April is a real struggle for growth and consistency, but October, typically, is becoming a great autumn month. Regardless of the date in the diary, we are constantly looking at the weather forecast, what is happening and reacting on a daily and weekly basis. No two days are ever the same.

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

Firstly, be patient. If you love the industry, your turn will come to use different equipment, to undertake different tasks and opportunities will arise for you to travel. If it is truly what you want to do, you'll have a career filled with many experiences and a lot of friends.

• **How do you spend your leisure time?**

Any spare time I get, I love to travel, be it by plane, train or automobile. I love the excitement of going to places or countries I've never been to before. Mostly its connected in some way to the golf industry – you are never far from someone you know or someone you have heard of. If I'm not getting away, I enjoy cooking. There's nothing like creating a special meal for friends and family.

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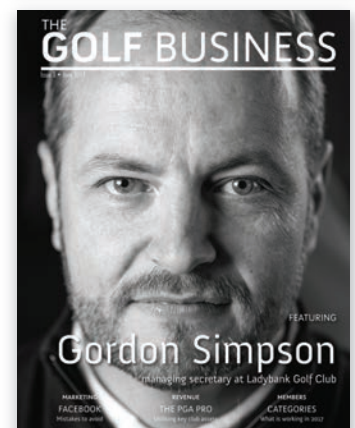
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