

PITCHCARE

The turfcare magazine from pitchcare.com

June/July 2022

Issue 103 | £5.95

DON'T MISS

Good turf management at **Goodwood**. Andy Boxall discusses one of the most varied and challenging sites in the country

MANAGING IN HIS OWN WAY

During its 120-year life, Stowmarket Golf Club has been developing in one way or another. Originally a nine-hole parkland course when it opened in 1902, it now sits at 6,108 yds, having undergone redevelopment in the sixties with designer Charles Grayston. Blair Ferguson met with Head Greenkeeper of thirty-three years, **Matthew Gill**

Marching on together

David Mears visited Leeds United Training Ground recently to meet Head Groundsman, Stefan Jones and learn more about the facilities and new developments; in particular the construction of the new first team pitch 7



SERVING GREENKEEPERS & GROUNDSMEN

 pitchcare.com

H2Pro[®] TriSmart

The
power
of

3

Penetrates

Spreads

Retains



A high quality wetting and water conservation agent

H2Pro TriSmart is a high quality wetting and water conservation agent. Formulated with three water management surfactant technologies, TriSmart provides great water penetration, even water spread through the rootzone and improves the water holding capacity of rootzones.



www.icl-sf.com



Researched, formulated and produced in house by ICL

WELCOME TO

PITCHCARE

Goodbye to our friend

This magazine is dedicated in its entirety to our friend and colleague Peter Britton, who sadly passed away on Friday 10th June, following a very short battle with prostate cancer.

Needless to say we are all devastated, and Peter leaves a massive hole in our hearts, both personally and as part of the Pitchcare family.

Back in 2005, Peter was instrumental in launching the magazine, in order to offer a platform for groundsmen and greenkeepers to share knowledge, expertise and open debate through features. Peter was a strong campaigner along the way for topics such as rubber crumb infill and many conservation issues.

When I first got into the industry (some twenty years ago), Peter was the smiley fellow who welcomed me into the press room at exhibitions and made me feel like I fit in on press trips etc ... his smile was infectious. Fast forward and Peter recommended me to the Pitchcare team to form part of a succession plan ... he always joked he wasn't getting any younger, but was still very much a dedicated full-time team member when he passed at the age of 70!

When you work closely with someone for nine years, you get to know everything about their personality, hobbies, family life, and even what they're watching on tv at any given time. Peter was devoted to his two grandchildren; Lissie and Max and loved nothing more than holidaying with them in Greece.

Peter's other passions were all things sport, particularly cricket and

Spurs and I know he shared in many conversations/banter with many of you. Myself, I would always wait for a phone call the morning after Wolves lost for him to rub it in a little.

This year has been really tough as a team of two and Peter was nothing short of amazing when I needed his support and the necessary time to beat breast cancer ... I couldn't have done it without him ... and there certainly wouldn't have been a magazine to read without interruption.

Peter was a hard-working, highly skilled and dedicated man and we will all miss his knowledge and expertise.

There has been an outpouring of messages and well wishes and each and every one means so much to us (read more tributes on page 105). Thank you to everyone for their support and understanding during this period, whilst we adapt.

I'll take it from here - rest in peace my lovely friend!
Kerry



TRIBUTES ...



"Such sad sad news. I never met Peter, but corresponded regularly on the forum both publicly and privately. He was fast as lightning to react whenever I had a problem and had a lovely gentle sense of humour. I will miss him."

Peter Craig, Forum contributor

"If it had not been for Peter and all his invaluable advice, it would have been impossible to launch our magazine here in Spain. What a lovely soul he was. RIP my friend."

John Imrie Stewart, Groundsman Sport

"Such a sad loss and will certainly be missed. I'll miss our Friday afternoon chats on cricket and the banter we had about how Spurs were going to rule again. RIP Peter."

Christopher Bassett, Fusion Media

Peter was a fantastic, kind and well respected friend in the industry who was always keen to help lift others up. He'll be hugely missed.

Andy Mackay, ECB Pitch Advisor

"You've been the media dream team for sure! I'll miss his voice on the phone and hearing all about his holidays"

Ellie Parry, MCIPR, Forte Marketing

The Pitchcare team



KERRY HAYWOOD

Editor

t: 07973 394 037
e: kerry@pitchcare.com

Our contributors



JOHN RICHARDS
Freelance
sub-editor



PHIL HELMN MG
Freelance Technical
Journalist



JANE CARLEY



BLAIR FERGUSON



NEVILLE JOHNSON



GREG RHODES



CHRIS McCULLOUGH



DAVE MEARS

No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher. Editorial contributions are published entirely at the editor's discretion and may be shortened if space is limited. Pitchcare make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the contents but accepts no liability for its consequences. Images are presumed copyright of the author or Pitchcare unless otherwise stated.

Pitchcare Magazine is printed by the Gemini Press, Dolphin Way, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex BN43 6NZ

Pitchcare.com Allscott Park, Allscott, Telford Shropshire TF6 5DY

Tel: 01952 898 516

Email: kerry@pitchcare.com

www.pitchcare.com



Issue 103 - June/July 2022

Matthew Gill, Stowmarket Golf Club

COVER STORY: Managing in his own way

During its 120-year life, Stowmarket Golf Club has been developing in one way or another. Originally a nine-hole parkland course when it opened in 1902, it now sits at 6,108 yds, having undergone redevelopment in the sixties with designer Charles Grayston. Blair Ferguson met with Head Greenkeeper of thirty-three years, Matthew Gill. **P12**

GOLF

Monumental renovations

Laid out in a beautiful piece of heathland on the northern boundary of Southampton, Stoneham Golf Club has always presented a good challenge to all standards of golfers. Phil Helmn met with Course Manager Matt Pledst to find out about the extensive renovation programme which has earned them finalists' positions for Golf Environmental Awards in 2017 and Project of the year in 2022. **P22**

Oh lucky man

David Byron comes as close as it gets to being born and bred at Thorndon Park Golf Club, and gives the course as much attention as if he had been, Greg Rhodes discovers. **P30**

WINTER SPORTS

Marching on together

Leeds United's Training Ground is located on the outskirts of the village of Thorp Arch, near Wetherby and just thirty minutes' drive from the club's Elland Road Stadium. David Mears visited recently to meet Head Groundsman, Stefan Jones and learn more about the facilities and new developments; in particular the construction of the new first team pitch 7. **P42**



Contents

SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Sparkling sports provision

It's all fun and games, plus plenty of hard graft, for the grounds team tending one of the country's elite sporting schools. Greg Rhodes arrived at the entrance of Epsom College to interview head groundsman Jason O'Keefe, and was ill-prepared for the sheer scale and splendour of the place. **P52**



PUBLIC PLACES

Good turf management

Goodwood is a beautiful estate in the heart of West Sussex covering 4,900 hectares (12,000 acres) in the village of Westhampnett, Chichester, West Sussex and is the seat of the Duke of Richmond. Phil Helms met with Head Groundsman, Andy Boxall, to discuss one of the most varied and challenging sites in the country. **P66**

CONSERVATION & ECOLOGY

We are the champions

Do you have a prize tree in your midst? If so, celebrate your good fortune, lavish the attention on it that a champion deserves while putting in place a legacy plan, reports Greg Rhodes. **P74**



Thorndon Park Golf Club

TECHNICAL

Nitrogen efficiency

It is hard to escape from the fact that the cost of nitrogen fertilisers has increased significantly due to a range of factors placing strain on both supply and demand globally. With this in mind, it is useful to reconsider why we use nitrogen and how to use nitrogen efficiently to reduce costs and environmental harm and improve plant growth.

Agrovista UK Technical Manager Dr. Abigail Graceson discusses nitrogen efficiency and why it's important for plant growth. **P86**

Healthy water this summer

There are scientific reasons why we're drawn to water, it's calming, peaceful and inspiring, adding beauty to any landscape. Our love for it is pervasive and why most of our holidays are situated as near to the shoreline as possible. So, to say an attractive waterscape will bring benefit to your venue is quite an obvious statement. **P92**



Matt Plested



Andy Boxall

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Delegation can supercharge your career

Trainer and Conference Speaker Frank Newberry believes that you can supercharge your own career and the careers of others with delegation. If you personally want to avoid your career being 'plateaued' - then delegation can really help. Frank defines his terms, identifies the key players in your personal delegation equation and suggests a starting point - if you do not already have one. **P96**



Leonardslee head tree surgeon Adam Butler



Nitrogen efficiency

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Foreword	1
Peter Britton Tributes	1 & 105
News	5
Classifieds	98
Offside	104

The TGA summer show is back

The Turfgrass Growers Association are pleased to announce that the Turfgrass Summer Show is back. The show is being hosted by Turffit Ltd, Levenmouth Steadings, Kinross, Scotland on Thursday 28th July 2022 11am-5pm. Tickets are on sale now!

The last TGA summer show was held in 2018 and, after four years, the event is a welcome return. This year's event will provide an opportunity where machinery, seed and crop protection companies can find a platform upon which to showcase and promote their latest technologies.

The TGA are also pleased to announce that, in partnership with Trimax, they will be hosting a celebratory meal to close the 2022 show at the prestigious Cannonball Restaurant, Edinburgh. The historic setting in the heart of the Old Town, and with fabulous views of Edinburgh Castle, will be an ideal place to celebrate the Turfgrass event with the growers and affiliated industries from across the UK and the wider world.

For more information on registering tickets to the event or for information about exhibition possibilities please visit the website: turfgrass.co.uk/tga-summer-show-2022/



FTMI 2022: Are you ready to lead?

Applications have opened for the Future Turf Managers Initiative, sponsored by Jacobsen.



The Future Turf Managers' Initiative has returned in 2022, with a new hybrid education programme that combines both in-person and online learning opportunities.

Twenty BIGGA members will be selected for the FTMI Class of 2022, with applications open between Wednesday 1 to Thursday 30 June 2022.

FTMI was established in 2013 by BIGGA and Jacobsen, a BIGGA Partner.

The intention was to educate up-and-coming greenkeepers to help them on their journey to becoming course managers. Since its inception, nine cohorts have progressed through the initiative, with over 180 BIGGA members counting themselves as FTMI graduates.

FTMI is sponsored by Jacobsen, which celebrated its centenary in 2021. This coincided with the challenges of COVID-19 but, keen to host this valuable opportunity for BIGGA members, the programme transitioned into a series of online events.

Utilising video calling software, the education content during 2021 actually doubled, giving the FTMI Class of 2021 over forty hours of classes, mentor sessions and peer-to-peer engagement. With a desire to bring the class together, an in-person event was hosted at Jacobsen's Ipswich headquarters in October, when restrictions allowed. The team building day was led by FTMI mentor Craig Haldane, who returns to the role in 2022 and was a great success.

What does this year's programme look like?

September 2022: Welcome event with a factory tour and education, taking place at Ransomes Jacobsen in Ipswich.

October to December 2022: Online classes and mentor sessions.

January 2023: Two-day management class and graduation during BIGGA Welcome Celebration, taking place at BTME in Harrogate.

To complete the Future Turf Managers Initiative 2022 Application visit: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/K32STJX

Government responds to GMA on Red Diesel

HM Treasury has responded to the Grounds Management Association's recent letter calling for a change to the guidance on rebated fuels entitlement.

Within two weeks of receiving the GMA's letter, HMRC updated its guidance on Using rebated fuels in vehicles and machines, to add 'land maintained by a community amateur sports' to the list of those able to use red diesel following the regulatory change on 1 April 2022.

The GMA welcomes this clarification but has concerns that although this is good news for Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) registered with HMRC, it falls far short of benefitting the wider sporting community.

GMA CEO, Geoff Webb says: "The HMRC's policy reform paper made clear in its impact statement that

there would not be a withdrawal of an entitlement to use red diesel in areas such as sports, yet the guidance does not reflect that commitment."

"We are delighted that the HMRC has updated its guidance to make clear that amateur sports clubs can continue to benefit from the fuel rebate. This will benefit over 7,300 clubs."

"But it doesn't go far enough as education establishments, professional sports clubs, and the many contractors who maintain sports and leisure grounds across different settings will be hit hard in

the pocket at a time when they are facing significant cost increases."

"We will continue to engage with policymakers to seek an exemption for all sports and not just the few. These businesses need sufficient lead time to phase out equipment that uses red diesel to power specialist vehicles and machinery, and we will continue to push the case across all sports at all levels for a reinstatement of the entitlement."

To view the policy form visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reform-of-red-diesel-entitlements/reform-of-red-diesel-and-other-rebated-fuels-entitlement>



E-SERIES by DENNIS

Battery-powered E-Series range **without compromise.**
 Built for professionals to meet your carbon neutral goals.



ES-860
Cassette

ES-34R
Rotary

ES-36
Dedicated

ES-510
Cassette

For more information or a no obligation demonstration call **01332 824777** or visit www.dennisuk.com

DENNIS



GMA announces judges for 2022 Industry Awards

The Grounds Management Association (GMA) is delighted to announce the names of this year's panel of judges who will be recognising talent from across the grounds care industry by selecting the winners of the 2022 GMA Industry Awards.



The twelve judges represent a variety of sectors operating in the grounds care industry, and will collectively select a winner for each of the nineteen award categories.

Grounds Management Association CEO, Geoff Webb says: "The GMA Industry Awards dinner has always recognised all parts of our varied sector by celebrating those who work hard to keep green spaces accessible and make sport possible."

"We are grateful to all of our judges for giving their time to help us recognise the achievements

of individuals and teams who are making a real difference in communities, clubs and educational settings across the regions. The GMA Awards are uniquely determined by fellow grounds staff and people who have wide and diverse experience, making the GMA Industry Awards a truly authentic and peer-to-peer-led event."

"I would also like to thank our sponsors, Origin Amenity Solutions, Kubota UK, Redexim, Infinicut, AMS Robotics and SGL, whose support is what makes events like this possible."

Listed alphabetically, the judging panel includes:

1. Adrian Kay, Head Groundsman at York Racecourse
2. Anthony Facey, Area Sales Manager at Tuckwell Group
3. Cheryl Hill, Groundswoman at Leicester Tigers Rugby Club
4. David Roberts, Director at Training Unlimited
5. Derek Walder, Operations Manager at Saltex
6. Jackie Evans, Head of Grounds at Wellington College
7. John Wright, Head of Grounds at Southampton Football Club
8. Lee Marshall, Grounds Manager at Eton College
9. Lee Metcalfe, Senior Grounds Manager at Manchester City Football Club
10. Nasa Hussain, Head Groundsman and Facilities Manager at Bradford Park Avenue
11. Neil Stubble, Head of Courts and Horticulture at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club
12. Stuart Kerrison, Head Groundsman at Essex County Cricket Club

Full details of the award categories and how to nominate is listed on the GMA website. Nominations must be submitted before 17.00 on Friday 29 July 2022.org.uk.

New sustainable project at Brøndby IF

Brøndby IF's stadium is the first in the world with a 100% sustainable and economical solution in the form of 100 m² sun mirrors that add the missing sunlight to the grass.

Brøndby IF and Second Sun have, in recent years, collaborated to establish this solution, and now several clubs in Denmark, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom and Australia are also joining the fray to become part of this green future.

Chris Hague, head groundsman at Brøndby IF: "There are parts of the southern half of the course that need more light than the natural daylight it receives today. Nothing is better for growing grass than sunlight. Second Sun contributes sunlight to the half of the field that is missing, and is part of

the solution that solves the problem. Innovation and new technology are part of Brøndby IF both on and off the field."

Second Sun is an entrepreneurial company in Copenhagen with CEO Nicolai Moustgaard at the helm.

Racecourse Association publishes Annual Report

The Racecourse Association's (RCA) 2022 Annual Report has today been published with the theme of encouraging new racegoers and participants to the sport to the fore.

The 2022 Annual Report includes keynote addresses from Chair Wilf Walsh and Chief Executive David Armstrong in addition to financial summaries, departmental updates and a long-read on the RCA's equality, diversity and inclusion work.

In his first Annual Report as Chair, Wilf Walsh has called on the sport to collaborate in its quest to attract new racegoers, using only 'fact-based, comprehensive market research and data' to do so. Collaboration is also a critical part of the proposed industry restructure, with Wilf commenting on the necessity to 'safeguarding both our short and long-term future as a modern, thriving and inclusive sport.'

David Armstrong uses his address to pay tribute to the RCA team and racecourses across Britain

in supporting each other through perhaps the most difficult period of trading in memory. Looking ahead to future challenges, David highlights the forthcoming Gambling Act Review and the sport's response to date as an example of utilising a collective resource to strong effect. David also introduces a series of workstreams the RCA has developed with the view to welcoming additional racegoers, including representation on the Horse Welfare Board and a new racegoer app.



As one of the founding signatories to the sport's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, the RCA has included a long-read report on the association's work in the past 12 months to address this responsibility. New projects, including Autism in Racing and pan-racecourse accessibility audits, are included as well as a look at the long-term future of this vital workstream.

Unrivalled Cut and Collect in any weather.

2 Year Commercial Warranty as standard

The best cut and collect ride-on mowers on the market.

The Etesia range of ride-on rotary mowers sets the industry standard.

Full product details at www.etesia.co.uk
Contact us to arrange a free onsite demonstration on 01295 680 120 or sales@etesia.co.uk

[f](#) Etesia UK [@EtesiaUK](#) [EtesiaUK](#) [@EtesiaUK](#)



Hydro 124
124cm cutting width
Electric or hydraulic lift options
2WD or 4WD models



Buffalo 124
Briggs & Stratton 23hp
124cm cutting width
2WD or 4WD models



Buffalo 100
Briggs & Stratton petrol or Perkins diesel
100cm cutting width
2WD or 4WD models



Hydro 100 III
Kawasaki - Twin Cylinder
100cm cutting width



Hydro 80
Kawasaki 16hp
80cm cutting width
Optional differential lock



Bahia
Kawasaki, Honda or Briggs & Stratton
80cm cutting width
Electric version also available

ETESIA

THE ETESIA RANGE OF RIDE-ON MOWERS

RAU students help rare butterfly to flourish

A joint project between the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) and Cirencester Golf Club has won a prestigious conservation award.

Students from the RAU's British Wildlife Conservation course have been working to improve an area of grassland at the Club which is a habitat for caterpillars of the nationally rare Duke of Burgundy fritillary butterfly, and the project was recently named as Outstanding Environmental Project 2022 at this year's Golf Environment Awards.

RAU course leader Dr Ian Grange said: "The Duke of Burgundy butterfly requires limestone grassland which is now quite a scarce habitat. As well as the scarcity, the remaining habitat also needs to be in just the right condition with a balance of grassland, scrub, and a supply of cowslip, the butterfly's primary food plant."

"Alongside the intensively managed greens at the Golf Club, there are also areas of preserved unimproved rough grassland which have the potential to provide just the right conditions for these butterflies to thrive."

"Given the importance of cowslip as the main food plant for the Duke of Burgundy caterpillar, our students have been working hard planting cowslips in this area as well as testing different methods of grassland and scrub management. This builds into their learning experience and is often done in

conjunction with other conservation organisations such as the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens."

The RAU students have been using the exposed north facing grassland slopes at the Club to conduct a series of experiments, plug planting cowslips, and monitoring whether the planted cowslips are used for egg laying and larval feeding.

From these experimental plots, which are regularly monitored, the students also hope to be able to discover the ideal grassland condition and scrub percentage cover for the butterfly species. The results of their research will be used to direct future management of the land at the Golf Club.

Matt Worster, Assistant Head Greenkeeper at the Golf Club, said: "This award recognises the significant ecological resource that we have here at the Club which, with the help of the research conducted by the RAU and its students, is now being appropriately managed

to benefit the Duke of Burgundy population."

"It is a joy to work on, and be a custodian of, a site as ecologically special as Cirencester Golf Club. The research carried out by Ian and the students will help us to continue to do all we can to tailor our management of these areas to help these butterflies to flourish."

"I am very proud that this work has been recognised with this award and I look forward to developing the partnership with the RAU further in the future, for the benefit of our local environment."

The Club has commissioned an ecology report and, alongside its butterfly work, has placed many bird boxes and bug hotels around the course, as well as bee hives from which the club produces honey which is sold in the Club bar. There are also areas of calcareous long grasses to encourage insect and bird life, and wild deer also often visit parts of the course.



BASIS Points for magazine subscribers

BASIS awards two CPD points for 'paid-for' subscribers to the hard copy version of *Pesticide* magazine, due to the "diverse range of content that relates to the control, management and use of pesticides".

Subscribers can now obtain a further two valuable CPD points for their Professional

register, simply by paying for a subscription to the 'hard copy' version of the *Pesticide* magazine.

Anyone wishing to claim their points should email their full name, BASIS membership number, date of birth and postcode to editor@pesticide.com.

BASIS

Setting Professional Standards

"BASIS is an independent standards setting and auditing organisation for the pest control, fertilizer and allied industries."



Franklin Electric

PUMP PERFECTION

Now stocking Franklin Electric
clean water pumps



THE QUICK, EASY AND ECONOMICAL OPTION

Introducing the ES, VS and EV series pumps from Franklin, made for pumping clean water through irrigation systems at golf clubs and sports grounds. Plus the EGT and EGF series, for dirty water extraction from reservoirs, streams, lakes and pits. Simple and effective, you get instant improvements to energy efficiencies, variable speed solutions and a boost to your water pressure. Easily the best choice for pump replacements.

reesinkturfcare.co.uk

Get **MORE** from your turfcare partner this year:

More products . More advice . More training . More finance



Reesink UK LTD is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Images shown for illustration only.



Golf Under Threat?

The race for green space is on, and golf courses must demonstrate their environmental value to survive.

Golf courses in urban areas are under increased pressure to demonstrate their environmental and community value.

With the planet's urban population set to double to 8.5 billion by 2050, demand for land is on the rise, with golf courses already in the crosshairs of some lawmakers.

Golf Under Threat, a new multimedia editorial feature from Syngenta Golf, explores the conflicting demands for more housing and green spaces, and highlights how golf businesses have an opportunity to play a leading role in sustainability for people and the planet.

In the feature, Bethpage State Park Director of Agronomy Andrew Wilson, whose world-famous Bethpage Black Course is set to host the 2024 Ryder Cup, explains how the park has become a haven for wildlife over the past two decades.



John Ashworth, who helped save Californian community facility Goat Hill Park from development having already seen his boyhood golf course "ploughed under", outlines why he opposes a new bill which threatens the future of municipal courses across California.

Mark Birchmore, Syngenta Global Head of Marketing, Turf and Landscape, who commissioned the feature, said: "Golf courses are often an easy target, but in reality they play a critical role in providing a green space for golfers and non-golfers,

preserving wildlife habitats, and they are already implementing sustainable best practice."

"As the debate around urban land use intensifies, golf businesses should take the opportunity to communicate their contribution to society and their long-term environmental value."

To read the full article and watch the interviews, visit: www.growinggolf.shorthandstories.com/golf-under-threat/

The Amenity Forum working in collaboration with DEFRA

The Amenity Forum already offers a series of guidance notes and video material on integrated approaches to weed, pest and disease management and, in 2020, published an extensive document on the subject in relation to weed control, along with a template to help amenity organisations produce integrated plans.

Integrated approaches are long established in the sector but it is clear that, with the great emphasis being placed by government on this topic, it would be beneficial to further improve both access to, and content of, guidance to all operating in amenity and sports surface management. As such, the Forum

is in positive and collaborative dialogue with Defra as to how this can be achieved.

Defra published its Pollinator Action Plan recently and in it was the following reference to part of this work.

Work with stakeholders, including local authorities, to:

- support the development of guidance on the use of pesticides by amenity managers, including IPM and sustainable approaches for weed control which consider pollinators
- explore ways to maximise uptake of IPM by amenity users

John Moverley, Independent

Chairman of the Amenity Forum, said: "We have been in dialogue for some time with the Defra team about creating better access to guidance on integrated management. Whilst the publication of the much anticipated UK National Action Plan has been delayed, it is clear that the production of Integrated Plans will feature strongly."

"As such, we welcome direct input into helping improve guidance. Integrated approaches involve creating plans for management, making use of all tools available including pesticides to provide the required outcome in a way which protects the environment and minimises carbon emissions."

PERFORMS BEYOND OTHER BATTERIES.

The intelligent power of EGO's 56V ARC Lithium™ battery controls and monitors each battery cell to deliver maximum power and performance, while its unique Arc shape and Keep Cool™ technology helps to optimise temperature for longer run times.

It is battery performance that goes beyond.



ZERO
EMISSION

To find out more visit egopowerplus.co.uk

EGO
POWER BEYOND BELIEF™



Stowmarket Golf Club

Managing in his own way



2nd hole looking across 1st green

During its 120-year life, Stowmarket Golf Club has been developing in one way or another. Originally a nine-hole parkland course when it opened in 1902, it now sits at 6,108 yds, having undergone redevelopment in the sixties with designer Charles Grayston, followed by the design of six new greens in 1968 by Hawtree. Blair Ferguson met with Head Greenkeeper of thirty-three years, **Matthew Gill**

The topography of the land is not what you might expect from Suffolk. Steep inclines split the holes at Finborough Park and work to create a challenging round with beautiful scenery.

These above ground challenges and excellent course quality attract golfers, but below the surface, Suffolk clay, an ageing glued irrigation system and changing times have provided a constant and welcome test for Head Greenkeeper of thirty-three years, Matthew Gill.

Over two visits - one for the interview and another for pictures - the course showed both of its sides. On a wet March day following high winds, the first, the course was closed, but on the second two weeks later and bathed in sunshine, the appeal of Stowmarket Golf Club could not be more obvious.

These two contrasting positions Matthew is working to change, with 5mm of rain often the difference between open and closed, and progress is being made. Arguably, no one knows the course better than him. He first joined Stowmarket on work experience in 1987 and two years later was the first apprentice taken on using the then new YTS scheme.

His path to the top job was steady and considered, but his transition from one of the lads to management was quick and wasn't without learning opportunities.

"I think I got the right position at the

right time. The secretary who promoted me was an ex-headteacher at Oakwood School in Stowmarket, and he was very good. He could see that I could do the job but also that I needed to go on management courses."

"I was appointed following an internal restructure in August 2003. The man who was the head greenkeeper when I was a YTS lad was still in the team, and it wasn't an easy transition in that sense. It was tough for a few years because of that dynamic change, but it was all part of it."

"I felt I had to distance myself from being one of the lads, and that is the hardest bit. There are six of us here, and I am the boss, and it doesn't matter what you say, I'm always going to be the person that appraises them every year. So, not being in that circle of having a laugh and joke is difficult sometimes, but you quickly learn that separating yourself is more important than being popular."

"It was gradual for me. I had a long honeymoon period, and for six months to a year, we were doing things differently. I took a very different approach by using new techniques and different working hours. Sometimes the old ways are good, but there is a better and quicker way to do it a lot of the time."

"I've always wanted to see staff progress and ultimately move on to new roles. I wanted to give people responsibility and help them grow as greenkeepers, and there



Ill-informed members were saying we don't want to spend that money on an irrigation system, but what is the other option? This has to happen



have been several cases of that happening.”

“I did two management courses quite quickly after I took over. BIGGA do courses through Frank Newberry, and I learned a lot. I suppose the key is to make sure you manage how you think you would like to be managed rather than trying to replicate someone you've seen in the past.”

“Maybe pick some bits out, but ultimately your personality will come through. You can't really say this is how he has done, and this is how I'm going to do it because it's too difficult then because you're trying to reinvent yourself.”

Developing a management style has been one thing, but finding the staff to manage has been another in more recent times.

This topic often comes up in interviews and is an industry-wide issue. Matthew, like many others, points to wages as the main culprit for the decline, but a general lack of awareness for the profession among younger people is also a big problem.

Matthew explains: “I think staffing is going to be a big issue as we advance. We had a lad here two weeks ago, and he is a golfer, and he was keen on wanting to be a

greenkeeper. I could see myself in him, and I thought he could do well here.”

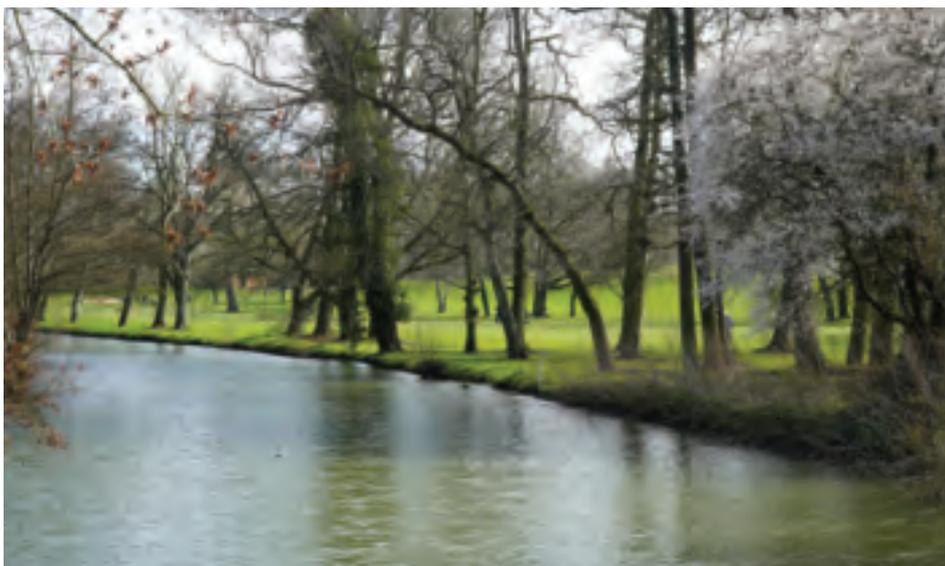
“He was here for the first four days and then got an offer from his old employer and went for it, even though it wasn't a job that excited him.”

“I think this industry is going to struggle in the future because at the lower level, and even in the middle level, unless you've got a position and you do five, six, seven or ten years worth of training and education in your industry, most people can't afford to move. Now, they can go and do anything. They can work at Tesco and get paid the same. I know that's not what everybody wants to do but, relatively speaking, you can walk into a job and get paid more, and the lovely idea of that's a nice job is there for a lot of people, but it doesn't pay the bills. And that's when people leave, and I think there is a glut of people around 30 years old that if they don't get looked after, they'll be gone, and we'll never get them back.”

“Being a Head Greenkeeper is a bit like being a football manager. There are lots of people who think they know the best team to pick, but the final decisions come down



This is an old course compared to somewhere like Royal Norwich, where their rootzone is everything they want all the way across, but we don't have that here. You can find all sorts





I wanted to give people responsibility and help them grow as greenkeepers, and there have been several cases of that happening

to one person. That person is the only one who sees everything rather than just what is important to them, and usually the opinions you get are based on that.”

“I’m quite happy to be straight-talking with people, but I also know that there is only a certain amount you can do. At committee meetings, I can explain my decisions and listen to them and see it from their perspective. And sometimes, whether or however the club wants to go, you say this is

as good as we can get and that is it.”

“Over the years, the club has steadily invested in machinery and infrastructure. This has improved the course, which brings with it greater expectations from the membership, who often judge us against clubs close to us. We are between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, who have very good courses, additional 9-hole pay and play courses, and a stronger membership base because of their location, so we are always

aiming to match that”

Despite the developing issues of staffing and the familiar pressures of the job, now is an exciting time to be part of the Stowmarket project. The club is approaching one of its most significant investments, in recent times, with a new irrigation system that will allow them to take full advantage of its just over nine thousand cubic metres reservoir into the advanced planning stages.

With wetter winters and drier summers,



ONE TOOL DOES MORE

The AERA-Vator. Tackle more with your tractor.

This versatile and cost-effective UA60, a tractor-mounted aerator, delivers healthy turf all-year-round. With its unique universal frame system, shafts can be added to get more done, including a Multi-Tine, Multi-Slicer, Multi-Spike and a non-PTO Coring shaft. Simply add more and do more.

reesinkturfcare.co.uk





Reesink UK LTD is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Images shown for illustration only.





There are six of us here, and I am the boss, and it doesn't matter what you say, I'm always going to be the person that appraises them every year

the changing climate has contributed to this change. But, the positive environmental factors of single head control and course benefits will see Matthew able to deliver the consistency he wants.

"It will be more efficient with water. We've bought a moisture probe for the greens, so we know where each one is at in terms of percentage levels, and I can adjust as needed."

"With the current system, you have a left-hand side of the green and a right. Sometimes the greens, like the two tier one near the school, the top level is dry, and the bottom is wet, but the sprinklers come on left and right. That's no good because someone has to hand water, or the

bottom gets overwatered, and the top gets under-watered. With the new system of everything being valve in head, we will eliminate that problem."

"An irrigation consultant will oversee the specification and tender process. I have spoken with other head greenkeepers and got their opinions based on projects they have recently completed."

"We are on a significant slope in places considering how flat we are generally. There is some unusual topography, and there are parts of greens that are shaded and other parts that are exposed. So, we need to have a bit more control, and we don't have that. Even going forward, we need more consistency. One of the things we've





The course has significant slopes



The club has steadily invested in machinery and infrastructure. This has improved the course, which brings with it greater expectations from the membership

had for years here is people saying the bunkers aren't consistent, and the reason they aren't is that they are not watered. It sounds daft, but watered sand is more consistent than dry."

"There are many things to consider with this design, like how much water we have to start with, what people want and what we can actually afford. Also, do we future proof it to have complete fairway irrigation, because I think that could

happen in the future?"

"That may not happen in the next three years; that may be something we add. At the moment, we have built two new tees this year and installed all of the irrigation in-house because most of the team are very capable of working on those projects. That saves you a lot of money, and you know when something goes wrong how to fix it and are more confident in using it."

"I think more golf clubs are going that

way. You do need to do your own projects like that. Gone are the days when you just phoned up and said can you help me do this. But, because the system that we have is glued; everything has to be shut down, and everything has to be drained, then you have to glue, then let it set, power the system up and put the water in again."

"In the new system, leaks will be isolated and fixed with the system still operational, and we won't have to shut the whole

WHEELS.co.uk
THE ONLINE STORE FOR ALL YOUR SPECIALITY TYRE AND WHEEL REQUIREMENTS

SCAN ME **10% OFF ONLINE ORDERS WITH CODE - PITCH22**

Huge Range Of Speciality Tyres For
Grounds care, ATV / UTV & SaS
Horticultural & Agricultural Machinery

Tyre & Wheel Assemblies For
High Speed Trailers
ATV Trailers

WHEELS.co.uk **sales@WHEELS.co.uk**

Trencher Hire UK

Specialists in the hire of pedestrian trenching machines for laying water pipe, drainage pipe or electrical cable

- Established and reputable company
- Range of trenchers available – Toro & Vermeer
- First class service from knowledgeable staff
- Well-maintained machines
- Simple to operate
- Trenching depths from 150mm to 900mm

To find out more call **01939 211 900**
or email **team@trencherhire.com**

www.trencherhire.com



One of the things we've had for years here is people saying the bunkers aren't consistent, and the reason they aren't is that they are not watered. It sounds daft, but watered sand is more consistent than dry

system just to do one section. Again, thirty years of progress."

"When it comes to the technicalities of that irrigation system, there will be so many things where we will be in a far better position. I'm positive members will see a big difference."

"I think our current one is fine, it hasn't been horrendous, but it is at the end of its life. My take would be we got lucky this year and got a couple of breaks when we had unsettled weather, and we didn't need it. If we had a break, a day before the club championship, when you're trying to keep them quick and the greens are on the edge of being firm to hard, then very quickly you'll get situations (like they have had at the US Open), when the greens become burnt and impossible to play on. And that is when



people realise you're on a knife-edge."

"The greens are cut at 4mm, so it doesn't take a lot for them to turn in a few hours with some heat on them."

"A part of patching it up is you're not doing other things that you want to be doing, and that time adds up eventually. I said to the greens committee chairman that ill-informed members were saying we don't want to spend that money on an irrigation system, but what is the other option? This has to happen."

"The biggest issue I've got is it can't deliver as much water as I want quickly enough. I have to start the programme at 9pm, and people are still playing golf, and it's still going at 6am. We come in at 6am, but after covid people are teeing off at 5am, so they are going to get wet. If I shorten it,

then greens staff will have to hand water; that will all get sorted by having a bigger mains to get round and pop up more heads."

"It's like someone saying here's a car that is thirty years old; what could you do with a brand new one now? A lot."

Irrigation is only one half of the puzzle, with the other being drainage. This project started six years ago, with rope drainage being installed on the weakest greens first.

So far, six have been done with four more of what Matthew considers the worst left to go. This work, along with irrigation, is exceptionally important to Stowmarket because it is a club where the course drives the profit. It sits outside of the main town, isolated from any houses, so the clubhouse's main source of foot traffic comes from golfers.





Oak tree



I think this industry is going to struggle in the future. People can work at Tesco and get paid the same. I know that's not what everybody wants to do but, relatively speaking, you can walk into a job and get paid more

The key thing to remember is Stowmarket was built to be a summer course.

Transitioning it to take winter golf confidently is what Matthew is trying to do, and rope drainage is playing a major part.

"It's about consistency across all of the greens, and they are all completely different. We see that through stimpmeter readings, those at the top end of the course are always quicker because they will be more exposed. Because of that, you get better

finer grasses, which means the ones at the bottom are a bit slower, but not enough for people to say there is much difference. So, hopefully, if we can drain them a bit better, that consistency will be there."

"But, I think that is what people forget. This is an old course compared to somewhere like Royal Norwich, where their rootzone is everything they want all the way across, but we don't have that here. You can find all sorts."

"During one of them, there were three different types of clay - grey, blue, and god knows what, and you think how on earth? The trouble is that the course was built to have summer play, and now they are built for all year round and, of course, people expect to play all year round."

"We've been lucky this year because we haven't had much rain, but we're now catching it. We had three days where we've gone from closed to having trolley bans,

ClearWater
Water Recycling Systems

A division of Acumen Waste Services

Two years In House Interest Free Credit now available

Making compliance that much easier

ClearWaters Unique Advantages

- **A genuine biological water recycling system**
Not all wastewater solutions recycle
- **Installed safely below ground**
Away from vandals and it looks good
- **Low operating temperature**
Well below 20°C and stops fears of Legionella developing
- **Large 5000 litre water capacity**
More than most offer and allows time for full treatment
- **Annual Investment Allowance (AIA) Available**
Means great tax advantages available for more savings
- **Only two moving parts**
Less to go wrong and minimal maintenance
- **Self-install option**
The only bio-system offering this means huge savings
- **Available Across Europe and other Countries**
Get in touch for Distributor details

Call now 01977 529580
clearwater@acumenwaste.co.uk



1st green



The biggest issue I've got is it can't deliver as much water as I want quickly enough. It's like someone saying here's a car that is thirty years old; what could you do with a brand new one?

buggy bans and open and then 5mm last night, and we're back to being closed again."

"As part of addressing this, we have had D Juke install rope drainage. We are pulling in rope using a mole plough at 300mm deep and one metre apart. There is an outlet that comes down to about a 600mm main drain. It acts like a wick, and it actually draws it out. The hard bit is getting the water from the top surface to the rope. When you have clay, you have to make sure that you tine it and use different techniques."

"So, it is only as good as what soil you have on there. Of course, you are putting it in because the soil isn't great in the first place, so it is sort of chicken and egg. It is a good system, but we have got a high content of clay greens, and today eight of them are flooded. They will be great and playable tomorrow, but compared to modern sports pitches, they will never take as much rainfall because we will always have a high percentage of clay in the profile."

"We install rope drainage twice per visit, and we've now done six in total. We

concentrated on the wettest greens because some of them were starting to go yellow this time of year."

"We've got about four more of our worst ones to do, but I don't know if the club wants to do all of them. They are all clay push up, so there is no formal drainage in them at all."

"But, along with that, over the last twenty years (even after investing in a Toro topdresser) we try to put on between eighty and one hundred tonnes a year. They are quite small greens, so I know for a lot of people one hundred tonnes seems to be the figure that they go to, but for us, eight to one hundred is a good amount. So, we're building away from the clay."

"We have seen an improvement with the rope drainage, but it is ultimately how quickly it goes from the top to the bottom of that capillary action."

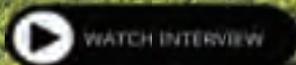
Matthew has seen and continues to be part of significant changes at Stowmarket. In his own words, "what started as an old gents club is now geared up to be a business", and a massive part of that can be seen in the course investment.

Other challenges, such as a now resolved issue with leatherjackets, will likely surface as time goes on. But, with Matthew at the helm, Stowmarket Golf Club and the future greenkeepers he mentors are in good hands.



**STOWMARKET
GOLF CLUB**
AT
FRESHWATER PARK

DEMAND QUALITY, WHY COMPROMISE?



"With our larger aerators and implements requiring high lift capacity of 1,580kg, powerful 49hp engine, tight turning circles and low weight to avoid turf damage, the compact and powerful TG6507 IQ is perfect. It makes aerating effortless with the headland management system that can be set to automatically disengage the PTO on lifting and re-engage when lowering, turning at the end of runs is so simple. The high specification air-con cab is just the ultimate in comfort. We wouldn't hesitate to recommend this top quality well-built, sturdy and reliable tractor."

Max Sandford, Head Groundsman, Exeter Rugby Club

Contact your local dealer to book a demo on your pitch today!



www.iseki.co.uk

Stoneham Golf Club

Monumental renovations

Laid out in a beautiful piece of heathland on the northern boundary of Southampton, Stoneham Golf Club has always presented a good challenge to all standards of golfers. Phil Helms met with Course Manager **Matt Plested** to find out about the extensive renovation programme which has earned them finalists' positions for Golf Environmental Awards in 2017 and Project of the year in 2022

The undulations on the course mean that players rarely get a flat lie, and small (perfectly manicured) greens mean that their short game will get a good test if their approach shots are a little wayward.

The Club was established back in 1908 in an old deer park and Willie Park Junior, designer of Sunningdale Old Course, created a wonderful course in the undulating heath and parkland. Although it is short by today's championship standards at 6400 yards, it is not a course that will be over-powered and brain rewards golfers more than brawn. The rises and falls of the land are so beautifully dramatic with several blind or semi-blind drives, but they only add to

the enjoyment, as is so often the case on well-designed courses. As I walked the course with Matt, I couldn't help commenting that in much the same way when you visit a top-notch restaurant and order a succulent steak with all the trimmings, the visual impact as the plate is placed in front of you makes your taste buds begin watering, every hole at Stoneham has the same effect! I just wanted to pick up a set of clubs and tee off! No surprise then, when I tell you, that in the last seven years Stoneham Golf Club has risen thirty-four places in the Top 100 golf course rankings!

Matt is rightly proud of his personal achievements which include tournament support at Walton Heath G.C. (U.S. Open

qualifier 2006-13), Old Ford Manor G.C. (The Open qualifiers 2006-10), Kingsbarns G.C. (Dunhill Cup 2002 and 2003) and finally Wentworth G.C. (Volvo/BMW Masters 2002 and 2014). Matt was also selected to join the Bernhards/BIGGA delegation in 2006 which took him to Atlanta U.S.A. In the past, Matt has been heavily involved in supporting our association and has had roles as regional chairperson (London section), board member (Southeast section) and has been involved in the assistant greenkeeper training programme as well as contributing as a mentor on The Future Turf Managers Initiative programme.

Matt's journey on his way to Stoneham began back in 1996 as an assistant

greenkeeper at Lee on Solent G.C. until he moved in 2000 to Hendon Golf Club to take up the position of first assistant for five years, before moving to Old Ford Manor Golf Club as deputy for a short term. In 2007, the call came to move to Muswell Hill Golf Club as their course manager before the lure of Stoneham in 2015. Of course, during his strong career path, Matt gained his level one, two and three National Vocational Awards as well as being invited to become a regional judge on The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year competition. He has been particularly proud that two of his young team members made the final of the same competition in 2018.

Before visiting Matt for our interview,

we had met a year ago whilst attending a BIGGA regional conference where we were both to speak on our respective subjects, and had previously bumped into him at other educational events. So, I already knew he was a particularly driven and well-versed golf course manager with a leadership style and emphasis on 'getting the job done.' However, I felt compelled that I had to find out for myself (and report to you all) exactly how driven he and his team were. So here we go.... Since joining Stoneham G.C. Matt and his team have embarked on what I can only described as a monumental renovation programme, which has earned them finalists' positions for Golf Environmental Awards in 2017 and Project of the year in 2022.



We used many of the old course photos from the club's original handbook which highlighted a mix of heather clad and grass edged bunkers which brought the 'feel' of the course back to life



Rope drainage



These projects would make the head spin of many a greenkeeper (certainly mine) and as I catalogue their achievements, I'm sure you will agree that their workload is impressive and their new, revised course ranking is justifiable.

1. Greenkeepers Welfare facility

Conversion of an old material storage building which was previously used as a set of topdressing bays. The conversion gave the staff much needed operational facilities. The area now consists of an office for Matt and his deputy, a substantial (and very well equipped) dining area and kitchen. Adjacent to the entrance there are toilets, showers, locker facility and a drying room.

2. New machinery

The machinery fleet is impressive. Stoneham embarked on a rolling five-year Toro deal which sees the replacement of all cutting

equipment. Matt explained that large investments by the club, year on year, will help to enhance the fleet for years to come.

3. Woodland management

A major woodland management project was undertaken at the beginning of Matt's tenure at the club. Tree removal is always slightly controversial, but when left unmanaged, trees can cause problems with light and air movement. Matt explained that without the tree management plan in place the rest of the golf course would have suffered. Of course, one of the fundamental issues with extensive tree cover, apart from creating poor turf health, is that more trees equate to more leaf fall which makes it almost impossible to sustain good heather growth.

4. Heather regeneration

Matt and his team have embarked on an



Making sure we had enough water was obviously important, so we installed a six hundred and sixty cubic metre tank, latest pump sets and a brand-new pump house to cope with demand



4th bunker



Heather regeneration

extensive heather regeneration programme at Stoneham. Large 'swathes' of heather have been re-introduced to carries, bunker faces and woodland edges, so much so that the course is almost unrecognisable from that of seven years ago. Indeed, as previously mentioned, this extensive work earned the team the recognition of a place in the final of the 'Outstanding Environmental project of the year award' in 2017.

5. Full 18-hole bunker renovation programme

Rebuilding fifty-nine bunkers on the golf course was a particular project Matt enjoyed. "Working with Ken Moodie's Master plan with the help of Murray Long at my side was exciting," described Matt. "We used many of the old course photos from the club's original handbook which highlighted a mix of heather clad and grass edged bunkers in a typical Willie Park Jnr design,

//

Rope drainage is amazing" explained Matt. "It's quick to install and extremely quick to establish. Minimum disruption with maximum effect!

which brought the 'feel' of the course back to life," explained Matt. All bunkers were constructed using 'Bunker Blinder' to help with the previous poor drainage issues. "All the bunkers are now fully drained and don't give us any real problems," said Matt.

6. Greens drainage

One green is traditionally perforated piped drained and there are a further fifteen greens roped drained with the

+




TEMPEST™ BLADES CUT OUT FOR MORE

Work better, harder and longer with Tempest blades from Toro. Perfect for heavy-duty and fine-cut flail mowing, when a great cut and after cut matters.

reesinkturfcare.co.uk

Get MORE from your turfcare partner this year:
More products . More advice . More training . More finance



**24hr
delivery***



*We operate on a 24 hour basis where possible. Reesink UK LTD is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Images shown for illustration only.



Getting Personal

Matt Plested, taking the opportunity to use our industry to see the world.

Who are you? Matt Plested. Course Manager at Stoneham Golf Club.

Family status. Married with three beautiful children; Oliver, Ivy and Flora.

Who's your hero and why? I don't really have heroes! I greatly admire doctors/neurologists who specialise in conductive education.

What's been the highlight of your career so far? I have three! Completing the driving range project here at Stoneham GC, improving our golf course ranking by 34+ and my staff going on to becoming head greenkeepers in their own right.

If your younger self saw you now, what would he think? You need to chill out more (and lose some weight)!

Which famous people wind you up? Most politicians, but Boris at the moment.

What job would you love, other than your own? I'd love to be an educational speaker/trainer.

What was the most embarrassing moment in your life? Anything involving wetsuits!

What is your favourite film? The Karate Kid.

What scares you? Decisions being made by uninformed committee members.

What would your autobiography be called...and who would play you in the film? One big project - Jack Black.

What is your favourite sport? Football/golf/rugby, but football slightly wins. I'm a big Portsmouth fan!

What would you cast into room 101? Nuclear weapons.

Which historical time and place would you most like to visit? The UK in the swinging sixties. What great music!

Do you have a lifetime ambition? I've accomplished most things in



my career but, personally, to be a good parent.

What's your favourite smell? A BBQ.

Which three people, living or dead, would you invite to a dinner party? John Lennon, Tiger Woods and Liam Gallagher.

What's the best advice you have ever been given? We didn't come this far, just to get this far!

What's your favourite piece of trivia? Christmas Day (Jesus's birthday) was once celebrated in January!

What's your favourite piece of kit? Toro ProCore.

Which three albums would you take to a desert island? The Verve - Urban Hymns, Oasis - Definitely Maybe and The Stone Roses - The Complete Stone Roses.

What's the daftest work-related question you have ever been asked? Why are you putting out so much bird seed on the tees? (It was fertiliser)!

What three words best describes yourself? Passionate, caring and reliable.

What is the single most useful thing you could tell a 16-year-old greenkeeper? Take the opportunity to use our great turf industry to see the world.

What talent would you like to have? To be able to predict the weather!

What law/legislation would you like to see introduced? Better welfare/rights for vulnerable children.



The Club was established in an old deer park

help of DJuke contractors completing the work for the team. "Rope drainage is amazing," explained Matt. "It's quick to install and extremely quick to establish. Minimum disruption with maximum effect! Our last two greens should be completed in October later this year," added Matt.

7. Wetland area

New wetland area created on the 18th hole to add an area of ecology to the course. This also acts as a holding pond for the drainage off the new academy area.

8. Pathways

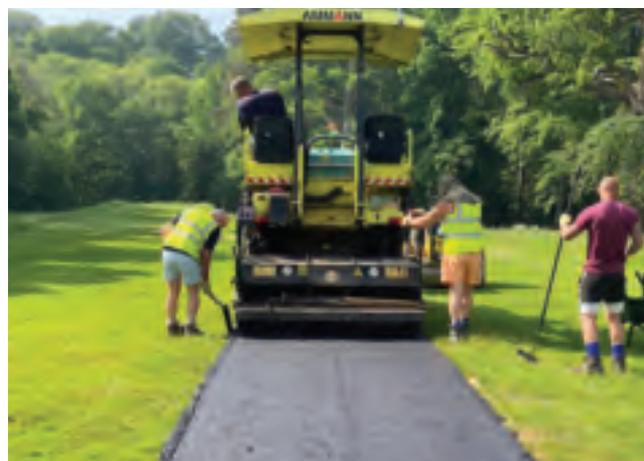
Two hundred thousand pounds invested in member pathways, using either tarmac or rubber crumb installed by Profusion to increase member satisfaction, improve visual effect and reduce maintenance costs.

9. Halfway house (comfort station)

A new prefabricated halfway house and resin coated outside patio seating area constructed behind the 10th green complete with diner, toilets and kitchen area. Matt explained, "This meant getting power and water from the clubhouse five hundred metres through the golf course, which wasn't easy." Matt went on, "The existing pathways had to be rebuilt afterwards and trees on the 1.1km route had to be lifted to 14ft."

10. New Irrigation system

Brand new Toro Lynx irrigation system is due to be completed by end of March 2022. It includes eight hundred heads servicing greens, tees, fairways and back to back heads on the aprons, bunkers, turf nurse and all





8th hole



We spent over one hundred thousand pounds on tree planting around the new site including twelve-metre-high pines being brought in for instant impact

walkways. A mix of Infinity 55's, 35's, T7's and T5's heads have been used all told. Matt explained, "Making sure we had enough water was obviously important, so we installed a six hundred and sixty cubic metre tank, latest pump sets and a brand-new pump house to cope with demand." Matt went on, "M.J.Abbotts have conducted the installation and I have to say what a fantastic job they have done. First

class as usual!"

11. Bespoke in-house signage

Course signage has been transformed using old, recycled wood made from trees felled on site.

12. New tees

New tees have been constructed on holes eighteen and four to date as part of the

range project. I was informed that more are on the way!

13. Fairway drainage

Two holes drained at 5m centres to improve the playability during wet winter months.

14. New Short game area and Academy

25,000 lorries of infill material to build a state of art academy facility which includes a



Another best seller from MM

Get a **HEADSTART®** with the UK's leading amenity brand for faster germination and seed establishment.

Contact us for a copy of our latest brochure.



Follow us: [@MM_Seed](https://twitter.com/MM_Seed)
Visit: www.mm-seeds.co.uk

Call: 01384 179 755
Email: mmdesigner@df.co.uk

If you want to produce premium sports turf, it has to start with MM Seed.

What's in the shed

Toro greensmaster 3420 triflex x 3
 Toro reelmaster 5610 x 2
 Toro greensmaster 1026 x 3
 Toro groundsmaster 3100
 sidewinder x 2
 Toro groundsmaster 4000D
 Toro greenspro 1260 x 2
 Toro procore 648
 Toro 5800
 Toro greensmaster 3250
 Toro greensmaster 1000 hand
 mower x 4
 Toro proforce leaf blower
 Terraspik GXi8
 Greentek aero quick slitter
 Sweep and fill brush attachment
 Toro workman HDX/Toro 200
 Kawasaki mule utility vehicle
 John Deere gator x 4
 Trilo SG400
 Grillo FD450
 Iseki TG6490 x 2
 John Deere 4520



All bunkers were reconstructed to help with the previous poor drainage issues and they are now fully drained and don't give us any real problems



split, two-tier fairway for fade and draw shot, three grass greens, five synthetic Southwest greens, five Southwest synthetic bunkers and collars. The outfield was built with seven thousand tonnes of rootzone, drainage at five metre spacings and fully irrigated with Toro Infinity 55 heads.

The short game area has a blinder bunker, the design concept to recreate every shot which you may need to master when out on the golf course. There are indoor and outdoor bays, two grass tees, Trackman technology and state of the art indoor golf, including the best digital golf courses from around the world including Stoneham G.C. on the system, so the members can play their own course if they wish. The teaching studio is both indoor and outdoor and has all the latest technology for club fitting and swing management plus a putting studio. "We spent over one hundred thousand pounds on tree planting around the new site including twelve-metre-high pines being brought in for instant impact," said Matt. "Heather has been lifted from the site along with heather purchased via Tillers to add to the banks of the range to add age. England Golf, Hampshire golf are now using the facility to train their teams," Matt explained proudly.

So, as they say, "that's it folks," or is it? Well, no not really! Matt and the club have even more ambitious plans for the future. Among some of the planned projects are creating a thirty-two thousand cubic metre reservoir, extending the greenkeepers maintenance facility to hold more equipment, extensive drainage to the wetter parts of the course and creating new gender-neutral teeing areas.

I did say, at the beginning of this article that you'd be impressed. Well, I certainly was, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Matt and his team for their hospitality, congratulate them on all their achievements to date and wish them all the luck and success in their future projects. Well done guys - top work!



Start of the bunker project



INVISIBLE IN-FIELD IRRIGATION

The new in-field sports sprinkler with natural turf cup.
For a seamless 'Man of the Match' performance and easy access.

The new Toro B Series Turf Cup sprinkler from Reesink offers an invisible solution for irrigating your pitches. By enabling natural turf to grow above the sprinkler head, it creates a seamless and continuous area of turf, eliminating any need to dig up your pristine pitch during maintenance.

reesinkturfcare.co.uk



**Minimises
sprinkler
interference
on the pitch**

Get **MORE** from your turfcare partner this year:
More products . More advice . More training . More finance



Reesink UK LTD is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Images shown for illustration only.



Thorndon Park Golf Club

Oh lucky man

David Byron comes as close as it gets to being born and bred at Thorndon Park Golf Club, and gives the course as much attention as if he had been, Greg Rhodes discovers



//

The industry's in trouble. Youngsters are not coming through - plenty of jobs out there but salaries don't reflect skill levels. It's also about passion for the job. We're proud of what we do and achieve - it means a lot: a badge of honour

Thorndon Park Golf Club rests within a 240-acre woodland conservation site, partly landscaped by Capability Brown and lying just ten minutes' drive from the M25.

The only Essex entry in England's Top 100 league, the 18-hole parkland course is crowned by the magnificent Palladian Thorndon Hall - the former clubhouse before its replacement opened in the 1970s, after the mansion was redeveloped as private apartments.

Head greenkeeper David Byron and his nine-strong team have to pit their wits against heavy London clay soil. Their league ranking bears testimony to their success in overcoming such an adversary.

David's worked his way up Thorndon

Park's career ladder since landing fourteen years ago. "Between jobs, I used to run a pub in Rayleigh but tired of that and fancied a change," he explains.

A pub landlord has to juggle plenty of managerial balls to run the hostelry effectively - skills no doubt David has applied here.

Certainly his attention to detail and reliance on science and data to shape his turfcare choices ring out loud and clear.

"I've always loved the outdoors (so much so that I once lived in a tent in a field amid the splendour of rural Wales) and enjoy caving, sailing and canoeing so keep myself active."

"Mum lived on site here with the club steward and one summer the greenkeeping team needed a course casual for six

months." He jumped at the chance and temporary work became permanent as Thorndon Park saw his potential.

After four years as deputy, David was ready for the step up to head greenkeeper, coming into post in March 2021.

He's eminently hands on, and you'll likely as not find him tinkering in the shed, grinding and sharpening turf machinery. "I'm mechanically minded and like looking after classic cars but I've acquired a good knowledge of mower cutting units and have developed welding skills too."

This kind of know-how clubs across the country are crying out for to reduce outsourcing fleet upkeep costs. He's saving money in other ways too, being ticketed to drive tractors and operate excavators.

And there's more. "When we upgraded





The team sits down every morning to discuss the workplan for the day and what we want to achieve - our in-depth monthly meet-up also taking in weekly goals

our irrigation system, I was able to do the plumbing and setting up the sprinklers,” he reveals. “The Toro Lynx system was installed in 2007, just before I started, and was upgraded with new software in 2014 to enable us to micro manage the holes a bit differently.”

Weed management is all handled in house too for what is a year-round operation to keep unwanted growth under control, he explains. All that is except meetings periodically with an STRI consultant agronomist.

“We spray everything, from bracken, bramble and understorey scrub to path,

drives and the clubhouse patio.”

Knapsacks come in for some heavy work rotas, with the team totalling three to four weeks cumulatively on the various spraying tasks vital for premier presentation and playability. “Pathways and the main drive alone can take a week to treat,” David reports.

Weed treatment is a key element of the spraying programme, helping the team rid the 74 bunkers of moss build-up and Poa growth,” he explains, adding: “We’ve future-proofed our greenside bunkers with rubber crumb Profusion Environmental and Blinder Bunker Liners to prevent flood washouts. Fairway bunkers are our next job.”

In one way, the team is just scratching the surface with its turfcare, literally using a cutlery fork to tease out moss on greens, then topdress and seed.

The 15l and 20l Cooper Pegler knapsacks have been a constant at Thorndon Park for at least 15 years and have rarely needed replacing, thanks to David’s insistence on pre- and post-season maintenance checks and regular upkeep to replace parts. Our CP 1l hand sprayers have been here even



The club pays salaries commensurate with skills but, as far as I can see, so few follow the BIGGA salary structure and pay does not reflect the demands and qualifications of greenkeepers



Head Greenkeeper, David Byron



Paperwork can take over if you let it so I need office days to control that, and these change with the seasons. Winter sees me out on course mornings, returning indoors in the afternoons, with the reverse of that in summer

longer than I can remember," he reveals.

"The late-February maintenance doesn't usually need much. We apply silicon grease to lubricate parts and replace seals and O-rings if they have perished or dried out. I know the aftersales care and dealer support are good, so we can always get hold of replacement parts and accessories."

Most of the team are PA1/PA6 certified - including David, who also has his PA2 and PA4 - so spray duties can be shared out.

The man-made three-acre lake and two ponds - fed from the ditch system lining the course - are kept free of unwanted aquatic growth. Aerators keep the water healthily oxygenated, encouraging an array of wildlife in and around the features, including newts, lizards, slow worms and adders. A local man scuba dives to dredge the lake of reeds and to keep banks free.

"We wait until high summer when the ditches dry out before applying Roundup

along the bases to remove tree growth," David says.

Ecology and environment are high priorities. "We don't spray many chemicals - mainly organic-based feeds and wetting agents and some selective herbicide in the long rough."

"Boom spraying comes into play for the larger stretches of the course - we apply natural fungi and microbes on to the soil, using our Toro 5800."



It's what's underneath that counts.



Mansfield Sand has pioneered the development and production of high quality sand-based products for over 170 years.

We provide a wide range of innovative products for sports, landscaping and equestrian uses.

These include stadium and training ground facilities, championship golf and world class show jumping arenas.

Our core products include Fibresand Equestrian, Fibrelastic, Fibre Reinforced Rootzones, Top Dressings, Silica Sands, dried and moist, Industrial, Pavior and Foundry Sands, Asphalt Sand, Gravels, and Concrete Brick products.



The Mansfield Sand Company Ltd.
Sandhurst Avenue, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 4BE - Tel: +44 (0)1623 622441 - email: info@mansfield-sand.co.uk
www.mansfield-sand.co.uk





A double verti-cut of all greens recently

Knapsacks come into their own again for spot spraying weedkiller such as Depitox and HolsterXL on tees, tee banks, and in the rough “to encourage the grasses to flourish, rather than weeds, and to control ragwort.”

“August is the perfect time to spray the bracken, just as stalks start to bend and droop. It takes us a couple of weeks to complete, ideally when we’ve had fine, dry weather beforehand.”

Newly acquired Berthoud Vermorel Pro

Comfort knapsacks, with telescopic lances, will prove “a gamechanger”, allowing the team to penetrate deeper into the undergrowth, David adds.

Leatherjackets have proved troublesome. “Two years ago, we lost all our fairways but managed to gain emergency clearance to apply Acelepryn. You only have a narrow window to buy and apply it, and sales are strictly recorded and controlled.”

Fungicide is applied sparingly and David

prefers preventive organic options such as Chitosan spray to resist disease, pest damage and drought. “It’s a probiotic for greens,” he smiles, “helping seed germination and toughening up the plant.”

Much of the estate is left wild to foster butterflies, insects and birds - “Three pairs of buzzards nest nearby,” David notes with pride.

He believes that with sprayers, as with most other things, you get what you pay





We spray everything, from bracken, bramble and understorey scrub to path, drives and the clubhouse patio

for. “You can buy cheaper ones of course, but then you’ll discover there are no replacement parts, so you have to bin the sprayer and buy another one.”

Team play

Managerially, David captains a tightly streamlined ship. “The team sits down every morning to discuss the workplan for the day and what we want to achieve - our in-depth monthly meet-up also taking in weekly

goals,” he explains.

Unlike most of us, David can be in two places at once, thanks to communication planning. “The team links up throughout the day from various parts of the course,” he says, “using our WhatsApp group to send me videos of what they are doing, which really cuts down on walking to them in person.”

“Yesterday, for example, I was Vertidrainning the fairways [one inch

diameter tines, going down 13 inches “with a bit of heave on it to let the turf breathe”] while viewing team activity on my mobile while in the tractor cab.”

David is particularly proud of his team’s commitment to take up opportunities to further strengthen their greenkeeping prowess, and talks encouragingly about a few of them before outlining individual skills.

“I must mention their eagerness to volunteer at tournaments,” he says. “Jake

SEE YOU AT SAGE
6-7 JULY

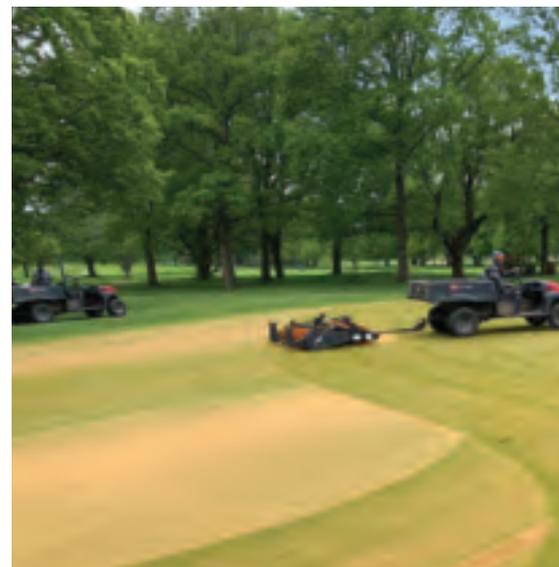
Machinery That’s Helping Turf Care Professionals Achieve Perfection

Campey supply market leading, innovative turf care machinery worldwide, we’re continually researching new techniques and refining existing practices.



Call +44 (0)1260 224568 visit www.campeyturfcare.com





and Aaron recently worked at the Farm Foods Open at Forest of Arden. Aaron also returned to work at the Valero Texas Open, held in San Antonio at the end of March.

“Tony has helped out at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth, Joseph at various European tour events,” and not forgetting himself, David adds: “I have volunteered at the Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass, Florida and two Open Championships at Port Rush and Royal St George’s.”

So who’s who at Thorndon Park?

Deputy Tony Dineen, 30, arrived four years ago from Tottenham Hotspur’s training ground. “He’d been in golf originally, as assistant professional at local site Top Meadow Pay & Play,” says David.

“He wanted to give football a go to add variety to his career experience, then decided to return to golf, as first assistant here.”

Echoing the trend among UK greens teams, Tony and his colleagues increasingly

handle a range of duties. “Everybody multitasks here,” confirms David, “but Tony’s key task is arranging and handing out the day to day jobs. In peak summer months, he’ll be fairway spraying and mowing as well.”

While his deputy divvys out on-course work, David is heavy on the admin. “Paperwork can take over if you let it, so I need office days to control that, and these change with the seasons. Winter sees me out on course mornings, returning indoors in the afternoons, with the reverse of that in summer as warmer weather and longer days gives us all the chance to push forward outdoors in the afternoons and evenings.”

And while mentioning warmer periods, David is quick to stress that all protective measures are put in place, with factor 50 sunscreen, hats and sunglasses provided, plus flasks of water to keep the team hydrated.

Golf’s also in the blood of first assistant Sam Barker, 27, who came to the club six years ago from North Wield Golf Club

near Harlow.

“He qualified under his dad, who was head greenkeeper there. Then the club closed, giving Sam the chance to move here, rising to his present position when Tony was promoted to deputy.”

Career progression is a key driver in David’s roadmap. “You want to grow and train them up as far as they can, and that may mean they leave you. Jake Messenger came to us from Spurs training ground and stayed a year.”

“Jake’s move from groundsmanship into greenkeeping allowed him to see what he really wanted to be - a head groundsman. He moved to Tottenham Stadium at the end of February to help him achieve his goal. I didn’t want to hold him back - I know that Jake’ll get where he wants to be.”

His departure left a gap though, that David was seeking to fill when we spoke by advertising the position through BIGGA - he’s a member of local branch - the Indeed website and social media channels. “We’ve interviewed only men so far,” he states a



Two years ago, we lost all our fairways but managed to gain emergency clearance to apply Acelepryn. You only have a narrow window to buy and apply it and sales are strictly recorded and controlled



Using our WhatsApp group to send videos of what they are doing, really cuts down on walking to them in person

little disconsolately.

Meanwhile, former lift and escalator technician Matt Dunn, 52, has carved a niche for himself in the four years since he joined the team. "He worked at a golf club nearby before coming here," notes David, "and given Matt's earlier background, he's our mechanical greenkeeper."

Driving his point home, David adds: "You are tied down more and more because of the diagnostics on modern turf machinery, forcing you to send it back to the dealers for

replacement parts, rather than being able to buy your own components elsewhere far cheaper. Golf clubs really pay the price - it's so frustrating."

David usually acquires his, largely Toro, machinery on hire purchase, which gives them a high residual value when selling on. "The dealer gets first refusal on buyback mostly." Toro supplies service kits for the service life of the lease and extended warranties are available.

"Generally, there's no real problem with machinery and parts supply, although we're still waiting for replacement bits for backpack blowers after two broke in December. Stihl have a shortage of replacement parts apparently.

"Matt's the one servicing machinery and sourcing parts and he's always looking for a good deal, while forward planning to help avoid sudden problems."

"We have 200l of 5w 30 mower oil sitting on the shelf ready for use, as well as a stock

of bottom blades. The larger the order, the more discount you're given. Seed has been pre-ordered for purchase later this year. The supplier honours the price, even if it rises. Then it's just a question of making sure you have the room to store it and keep it dry."

Although wanting to be a keen adopter of battery-powered kit, David has had his ups and downs with the technology. "We tried an electric buggy but found the battery needed replacing early on. The diesel equivalent was far cheaper to run."

The hybrid mower, diesel fuelled with electric reels, he trialled had issues too. "If we went out to cut, halfway round, the reels would stop as there wouldn't be enough volage to run them."

"The new Toro mowers can cut fifty greens on a full charge but I don't know what this is in terms of area - one or two hectares maybe. A like for like comparison is the only way to really size up which is more cost effective to run."

ALLETT
CYLINDER MOWERS SINCE 1965
Uplift86 Evolution
Battery Powered Twin-Bladed Rotary Mower

Debris Collection
For Pitch Perfection

- Zero emissions
- Low noise levels
- Low hand arm vibrations
- Clean up quicker and more efficiently than ever before

Follow us on

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT MORE
sales@allett.co.uk
www.allett.co.uk
01889 271503



I've always loved the outdoors (so much so that I once lived in a tent in a field amid the splendour of rural Wales) and enjoy caving, sailing and canoeing so keep myself active



You are tied down more and more because of the diagnostics on modern turf machinery, forcing you to send it back to the dealers for replacement parts



In a personal capacity, David has already gone electric. "We bought our pod point charger for £200 by accessing a 75% EV grant, ready for when electric is embedded in our thinking."

Back to the human dimension and speaking of BIGGA, David has some thoughts on greenkeeper pay. "The club pays salaries commensurate with skills but, as far as I can see, so few follow the BIGGA salary structure and pay does not reflect the demands and qualifications of greenkeepers."

"The industry's in trouble. Youngsters are not coming through - plenty of jobs out there but salaries don't reflect skill levels. It's also about passion for the job. We're proud of what we do and achieve - it means a lot: a badge of honour."

Arriving as assistant greenkeeper four years ago from The London Club, keen golfer Jo Horlock, 35, had also worked on a driving range at O2 Arena. "He's a real 'steady Eddy' with excellent attention to detail," - so will chime with

David's philosophy.

Eighteen months into his assistant's post, Aaron Cross, 30, recently gained his Level 2 greenkeeping NVQ and has already started his 14-month Level 3 correspondence course at BCA College, Berkshire.

As David noted earlier, the team is keen to volunteer for sports events at different venues - Aaron likes matchdays at the London Stadium among others David listed earlier.

"I encourage volunteering as a way to broaden skills. Aaron is ambitious and wants to progress his career quickly."

Just completing his Level 2 greenkeeping is Alec Wilcox, 23. Like David, Alec began life at Thorndon Park as a summer casual before moving into a full-time role three years ago. "As someone who enjoys working outside, Alec thrives in the busy summer months and likes driving the machinery."

"Although more autonomous spraying and mowing kit is coming along, we'll still need the skills to assess what work they



Aaron Cross receiving his Level 2 certificate



I'm mechanically minded and like looking after classic cars but I've acquired a good knowledge of mower cutting units and have developed welding skills too

should be put to."

It should come as no surprise that David takes on apprentices whenever he can. Currently, 19-year-old Ben Murchie is filling that role. On site for about nine months and taking his Level 2 in greenkeeping, he can thank his mum for working at Thorndon Park.

"She came to us to ask us to take Ben on as she was worried about him and wanted him to learn a trade. He's a very able lad,

who is flying through his college course and has taken to the job like a duck to water - already out on the big bits of machinery and attachments."

The club's `been here forever` person is gardener Ivor Kettle. "At 78 years young, he has been involved with Thorndon Park since he was a boy. A general handyman, Ivor tends the car park and the area outside our pro shop, as well as the smaller lawn in the mansion grounds."

He manages the member volunteer divoting parties too, showing them how to look after the tees and rake the bunkers.

"During lockdown members were allowed to meet in small work bubbles - ditch clearing and the like. That was brilliant as it kept them involved."

Seeing the wood for the trees

Lancelot `Capability` Brown's landscaping has left a lasting arboreal legacy at the Park,

sisis

Expert Surfaces

Surfaces maintained with expertise and passion



Pedestrian Scarifiers



Tractor-mounted Scarifiers



Tractor-mounted Aerators



Tractor-mounted Brushes

*For more information or a no obligation demonstration call **01332 824777** or visit www.sisis.com*

BUILT WITH 90 YEARS EXPERIENCE

What's in the shed

- New Holland T4 front loader tractor
- John Deere 4066R tractor
- John Deere 4575 tractor
- John Deere 1570 out front flail mower
- Toro 5800 sprayer
- Toro 4700D rough mower
- Toro 3100D semi rough mower
- Toro 3575 fairway mowers x 3
- Toro 3400 Triplex mowers x 4
- Toro Greens master 1000 x 7
- Toro ProCore 648
- Toro Hydroject
- Toro Pro Pass Top dresser
- Tru Turf Roller
- Verti-Drain
- John Deere Aercore
- Bernard 5000 express dual spin grinder
- Bernhard 4000 DXI bed knife grinder
- Various tractor attachments, brushes and trailers.



on top of the extensive woodland acreage the club owns.

The team deploys a drone to help it see the wood for the trees - aiding David with drought management and spotting disease. "During dry spells, we can see, then map, the drain lines across the course - useful for when we need maintenance work doing."

A woodland consultant advises David on day to day management of the estate's varied and ancient stock. "The three members of the team certified for chainsaw operation handle the reachable work," he says. Among all the oaks, pollarded horse chestnuts and beeches lining the course and beyond, many with Tree Preservation Orders on them, lies a true gem, arguably unique to Thorndon Park.

"Look to the right from the first green and you'll spot our horseshoe oak. One

of the oldest trees on any course in Europe, it's estimated to be 1,000 years old," David enthuses.

"Buried deep among other trees, the oak was choked with brambles. We must preserve veteran trees so priority work was to clear that away and allow it to breathe in its own space."

Invasive species such as the Turkey oak have to be controlled, as has the long rough, for one very good reason, David states. "In most years, oaks produce thousands of acorns - 2020 was one in question. We have to cut and collect rough to prevent saplings springing up."

Whatever the eventual lifespan of Thorndon Park's horseshoe oak may prove to be, if you believe in luck, this magnificent specimen has bestowed a millennium's worth to all those who live and work nearby - David and his team included.





agrovista
amenity

growing
through
innovation



Kick[®] Fairway **liquid wetting agent** **for hydrophobic soils**

- Highly cost effective, highly concentrated with low application rates
- Improves penetration and infiltration of water on natural soil and constructed fairways
- Anti-dew treatment
- Specifically designed for outfields and fairways

For more information
Speak to your local
amenity specialist



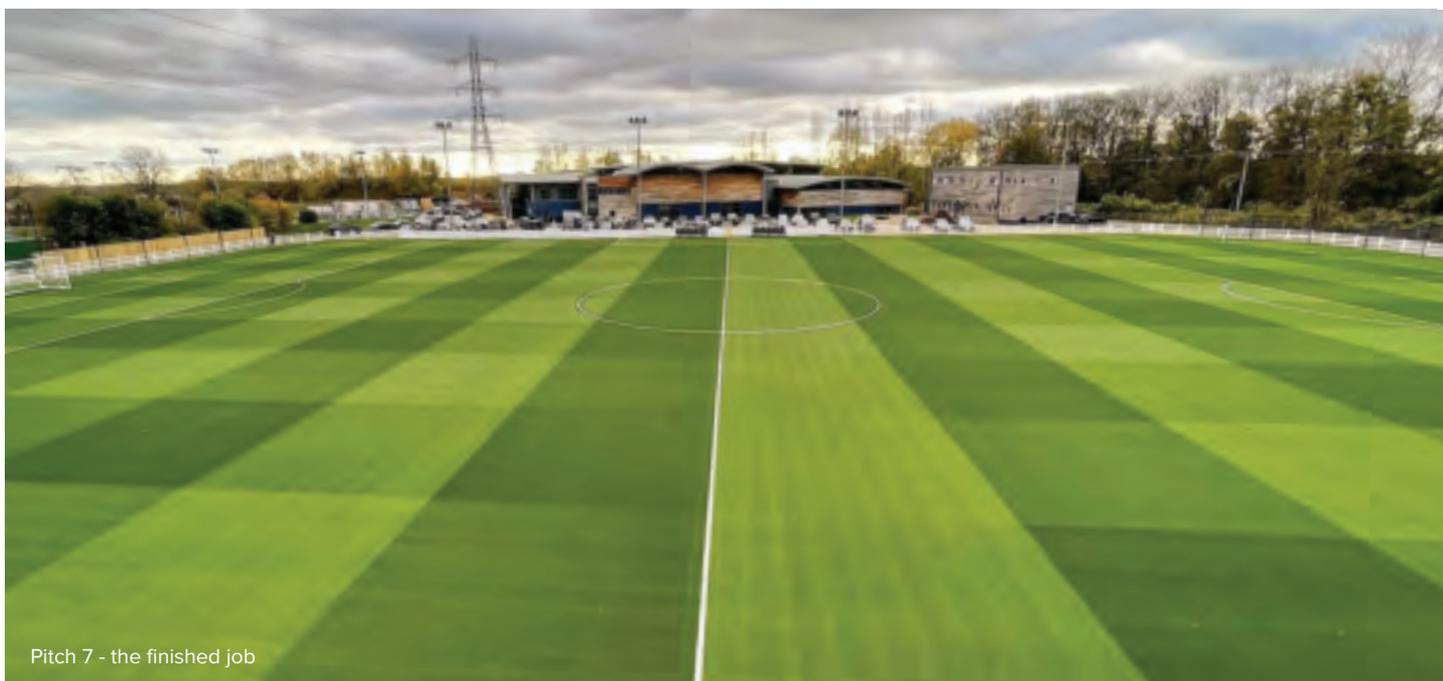
@AgrovistaAMNTY 

@AgrovistaUK   

www.agrovista.co.uk/amenity


COMPO
EXPERT[®]





Pitch 7 - the finished job

Leeds United Training Ground

Marching on together

Leeds United's Training Ground is located on the outskirts of the village of Thorp Arch, near Wetherby and just thirty minutes' drive from the club's Elland Road Stadium. David Mears visited recently to meet Head Groundsman, **Stefan Jones** and learn more about the facilities and new developments; in particular the construction of the new first team pitch 7

I could not have arranged our meeting on a better day, as things turned out! The visit had been planned for a while and after a few suggestions, Monday 23rd May was finally selected. This meant going the day after Leeds United's final game of the season and not knowing if they would be relegated or stay in the Premier League. As luck would have it, Leeds made it; so, it was smiling faces all round! The article title (one of the supporters' songs) seemed appropriate as it will be "marching on together"; the players and the training ground staff; The training ground is a crucial element in the club's fortunes.

The site covers 12.1 hectares and was the brainchild of Howard Wilkinson,

Leeds manager from 1988 to 1996. He realised that the club needed a purpose-built training facility to succeed. (There were two, by today's standards, mediocre pitches at Elland Road in those days). The Thorp Arch location was found and several pitches were laid followed by the building of the Grange, completed in 1994, to house changing rooms, offices and accommodation for the academy players. In 2000, work commenced on a much larger facility (the Barn). This £5 million state-of-the-art establishment included much needed training equipment, an indoor pitch, reception, changing rooms and more was opened in 2002. Facilities have grown and improved over the years and an additional



Pitch 7 digging out



Stefan is committed, loves the job and all that it entails, but realises that maybe he needs to get a bit more downtime and switch off; something he says he struggles with!



Renovations get underway



Undersoil heating pipework

available! This pitch is the one many are talking about as it features a fairly novel undersoil heating system.

Undersoil heating and hybrid are not new, so what was so novel about this pitch? During Covid-19 restrictions, Leeds United decided to modernise their pitches at Elland Road Stadium and at Thorp Arch Training Ground. In May of last year, work commenced on the pitch 7 project at Thorp Arch to construct a top-quality hybrid pitch with undersoil heating. Chappelow's were the contractors selected to carry out the work, with the undersoil heating the responsibility of Pitch Heating Ltd. Based in Hull, Pitch Heating was founded by Ken Pryor in 1979. Prior to this, Ken had worked on projects laying underfloor water-based heating in giant greenhouses to maintain a steady temperature. The idea came about that the same principle could be used on pitches. The concept was put to the test on a pitch and the results proved better than the electric cable systems in use at the time, which baked soil-based pitches. This niche idea inspired Ken to form Pitch Heating, developing the right skills and



academy building built.

I met a very cheerful Stefan outside the machine storage part of the Barn and it was decided to tour the outdoors area first as rain was possible later. The idea of meeting on the date we did was to see and learn about the special pitch 7 before it was stripped; end of season! However, such was the work load for the contractors, Chappelow's and regularly used by Leeds United, that they had decided to strip on Saturday after all training had finished. By the time I had arrived, stripping and much more had already been done and Ed Chappelow was driving a tractor up and down carrying out GPS controlled seeding! Not to worry, as good library images were



Stefan is currently looking at GPS equipment for spraying and line marking which will speed things up and ensure even greater accuracy





creativity. The company has grown and installed their system on many pitches in the UK and Europe, including a number of the well-known football clubs. The full reconstruction of the new pitch came with the brief to replicate the Elland Road stadium pitch and conditions. This was to ensure that the Leeds players trained on a pitch with familiarity; the same surface, size and dimensions of the stadium pitch.

Ed Chappelow commented that

professional pitch construction has developed significantly since the days of simple soil pitches. The new pitch at Leeds Training Ground has the following specification: 125mm of gravel to drain water, topped with 200mm of sand, a 100mm sand/soil mix and a hybrid turf consisting of stitched synthetic fibres, interwoven at every 2cms and combined with organic grass. This provides ideal playing conditions and helps maintain the

grass in top condition.

The work was carried out as follows: Chappelow's came with two large diggers and dug out to the required depth and size. Then came the gravel and drainage which was followed by the sand. Stefan says that Mansfield sand is the sand of choice and the best in his estimation! Ken Pryor and his team then came and installed 36,500 metres of MDE piping over the pitch at 250mm centres throughout. This layout

CHAPPELOW
SPORTS TURF LTD

Specialising in Sports Pitch Construction

Chappelow Sports Turf specialise in the construction and maintenance of recreational surfaces to the public and private sector markets.

01924 493359 www.chappelowsportsturf.co.uk

Football. Rugby. Cricket. Golf. Bowling. Equestrian. Schools & Colleges. Local Authorities.



was calculated to provide around 140,000 litres of warm water around the pitch. The piping was connected to a self-contained and purpose-built boiler house which contained the circulation pumps and control equipment. Kerosene fuel was chosen and supplied to the boiler from a 10,000 litre bunded tank supplied by Tuffa Tanks. Controls are set to maintain a constant pitch temperature of 10°C as this also ensures fertilisers will work efficiently. When the pipework and heating had been tested, the pipes were covered, then rootzone and seeding. Stefan said that three weeks grow-in was allowed before stitching the 9,000sq. mtrs. which took around four weeks.

Regular cutting and maintenance followed in due course and Stefan is justifiably proud of the new pitch!

Following our inspection of pitch 7, the rest of the facility was viewed and photographed, including the boiler house, controls and irrigation system. We returned to the Barn and, after looking at the new academy building, went inside the main building and provided with an extensive tour of the facilities which included a café, rest

rooms, sleeping quarters, hi-tech gym and equipment and a relaxation area including a log burner (one of Marcelo Bielsa's ideas to create a relaxing ambience). We sat in this area to talk about Stefan and his work at Thorp Arch.

Stefan, aged 45, has now been at Thorp Arch Training Ground for eight years. He lived near a golf course and, with a love of the outdoors, always wanted to play golf. He attended Fulford School and went to the greenkeeping department at Fulford Golf Club for his two-week work experience. The head greenkeeper, Mark Mennell took an interest in his development and provided the inspiration for Stefan to pursue a greenkeeping career. He went to Askham Bryan College where he studied Amenity Horticulture and achieved a City & Guilds level 2 qualification. He enjoyed his time there but had to play a waiting game, as he tried work in landscape and horticulture, until a greenkeeping opportunity came along. His chance came when he saw a vacancy at Fulford Golf Club for an apprentice; he jumped at this chance, applied and got the position! He





New Academy Building

spent five years at Fulford where he said he learnt so much from Mark, especially a good work ethic! This gave him the necessary skills to be able to broaden his career. He left Fulford Golf Club in 1999 and took a year out, returning to Pike Hills Golf Club for a while and then on to working for a contractor looking after local authority schools as well as carrying out renovations on cricket squares and winter sport pitches. He followed this with some time at Drax Golf

Club. The greenkeeping experience taught Stefan much, but groundsmanship seemed to beckon. He finally secured the position of Head Groundsman at St Peters School, York and spent three years there, honing his skills, before the big opportunity came and he attended for interview at Leeds United in 2014 for running the training ground. He secured the position of Head Groundsman Leeds United Thorp Arch Training Ground. Stefan prepares and presents his budget

requests for kit and consumables to Kiel Barrett, Overall Grounds Manager for approval.

At present there are five members in the grounds team, including Stefan. The others being: Oliver Brown - longest serving member with ten years' service, Ryan Healey - four years' service, Liam Davies - two years' service, Phil Norman - was in catering at Elland Road Stadium but wanted a change! Now, one year at Thorp Arch.

CHAPPELOW
IRRIGATION

Irrigation System Maintenance, Repair and Installation

01924 493359 www.chappelowsportsturf.co.uk

Football. Rugby. Cricket. Golf. Bowling. Equestrian. Schools & Colleges. Local Authorities.



Pitch 6 three weeks growth

Stefan expects to add two more to the team soon and advertising is already out.

Ryan and Phil are the nominated and trained first-aiders. A Health and Safety officer is based at Elland Road.

The soil profile, apart from the main pitch 7, has two pitches sand based and others are clay, gravel, rootzone, etc. Cutting of pitches is to professional standards and Premier League compliant. Additional equipment includes, undersoil heating (see above), drainage, irrigation, lighting rigs and frost covers. Pitches are not hired out. Flooding was an issue some time ago but, with recent renovations, including updated drainage, there is none. Frost is not so much of an issue either, neither is light or shade in the open environment.

There are eight grassed pitches/areas, two SIS hybrid areas (pitch 7 is one and the second is the goalkeeping warm up area). The main training pitch, to the same standard as Elland Road Stadium, is all weather, all seasons playable.

Maintenance regimes are pretty straightforward and grass, weather permitting, is cut nearly every day. Artificial surfaces are brushed up to three times a week. Pitch marking is carried out every week. Every two to three weeks, liquid fertiliser is applied. Frequency and amounts

are dependent on usage and training levels. Each month, deep aeration is carried out using a tractor mounted Verti-Drain and a Toro walk behind ProCore is also used providing varying heights and spacing. These machines can be fitted with a variety of tines. Most of the work is carried out by the team and each member is able to carry out all regular tasks. All have received training and necessary certification where required (e.g spraying). All have attended or are undertaking college courses. Compliance with current legislation is ensured for staff and working practices and all necessary PPE is supplied. Presentation is of prime importance and above everything else. Accuracy is also most important too (cutting, spraying and, of course, line marking). Stefan is currently looking at GPS equipment for spraying and line marking which will speed things up and ensure even greater accuracy. Sharp, dead straight, clear white lines certainly enhance presentation!

At the end of the season, pitches are stripped (usually 10 -15mm off the surface) and then prepared for the new season. This was already underway by Chappelow's when I visited. Around 80 -100 tonnes of Mansfield sand would be applied to each pitch. Seeding follows,



The concept was put to the test on a pitch and the results proved better than the electric cable systems in use at the time which baked soil-based pitches



Main Building - The Barn



He lived near a golf course and, with a love of the outdoors, always wanted to play golf. The greenkeeping experience taught Stefan much, but groundsmanship seemed to beckon

then vertidrainage and, after much watering, the first cut will be made. Stefan and his team used to carry this work out, but using their contractor is more effective and efficient. Renovations are affected by budget and Leeds United's league position; staying in the Premiership this year will undoubtedly help! New projects will be discussed at a meeting between himself, Kiel Barrett and Mark Broadley (operations manager) in January each year. A plan of

action will then be drawn up to include the projects agreed, e.g., updating drainage.

Stefan felt that current weather patterns generally seem to be kinder and do help, as it's warmer. Pitch soils are monitored daily with readings taken for pitch firmness and moisture content. These should be comparable with the Elland Road stadium pitch.

Machinery is safely stored in a dedicated area of the main building and close to the

itches. (See What's in the Shed). Local dealer Russells, based at Eggborough is their main supplier of machinery and used for servicing/parts too. Campey Turfcare also supply. There is no overall loyalty to one brand but Toro, Dennis and John Deere are preferred. Russells and Campey carry out servicing and Reel Sharp carry out sharpening on the cylinder mowers.

One piece of kit that has proved popular and has helped improve playing surfaces

World Class Sprayers – from Park to Pitch – Court to Course

SPPS
Self Propelled Pedestrian Sprayer

www.techneat.co.uk | t: 01353 862 044 | e: info@techneat.co.uk



Current weather patterns generally seem to be kinder and do help, as it's warmer. Pitch soils are monitored daily with readings taken for pitch firmness and moisture content

is a SISIS Litamina, a tractor mounted rotary brush. These compact sweepers are designed for efficient collection of unwanted debris from sand filled or rubber crumb synthetic surfaces. This, Stefan said, cleans out the surface very well after training and reforms it, standing up the pile.

Pests and diseases are not a major issue at Thorp Arch. Normal weed control is carried out and, where worms are a problem, brushing and boxing off maintains control. Leeds United have an environmental policy in place and care is taken to conform with current legislation and prevent pollution etc. They have a dedicated wash area for their machinery with a central sump to take washwater to two large separators before water passes to foul sewer. The separators are inspected and pumped out each year. Oil storage is fully bunded and compliant too.



To round off, we talked about the state of our industry. Stefan's opinion was that the team at Thorp Arch are not as undervalued as many others in grounds maintenance. He said that managers he had experienced during his time at the training ground, particularly in recent years, helped with their professional attitude to Stefan and his team. This gave the groundsmen a sense of worth. One thing though, was that the hours can be long! Stefan also felt that

not so many these days wanted to enter the profession of Grounds Maintenance. He thinks it will be difficult to get people to come into the industry and wondered how they might be attracted. Stefan, however is committed, loves the job and all that it entails, but realises that maybe he needs to get a bit more downtime and switch off; something he says he struggles with!



What's in the shed

- TYM 503 55hp tractor
- TYM compact tractor
- 3100 Toro ride-on mowers x 5
- Dennis 860 cassette mowers x 2
- LawnFlite rotary mowers x 6
- Pro Core 648 pedestrian aerator
- John Deere 4066 tractor
- SISIS Litamina brush collector
- Charterhouse Vertidrain
- Toro pro Vertidrain
- Toro Workman Utility Vehicle
- Tractor mounted sprayer
- Hand held equipment



Add real spark to your game with a reliable STAR performer




From the
name you can
rely on

The next STAR player. Meet the Capella Work Machine.

From the name that you can rely on, Reesink now brings you the all-electric and versatile Capella Work Machine with Cargo Box. The perfect plug-in electric utility vehicle purposefully designed to help you move people and equipment around the grounds, quietly, comfortably, safely and efficiently. Pick a STAR for your vehicle line-up.



On-board charging



Outstanding MPC



Lithium-ion powered

reesink-evehicles.co.uk

Electric utility vehicles from the name you can rely on.

Depend on Reesink EV for innovation, performance, choice, reliability, value and excellent service.

Epsom College

Sparkling sports provision



It's all fun and games, plus plenty of hard graft, for the grounds team tending one of the country's elite sporting schools. Greg Rhodes arrived at the entrance of Epsom College to interview head groundsman **Jason O'Keefe**, and was ill-prepared for the sheer scale and splendour of the place

On an expansive stretch of the Surrey town, renowned for its racecourse, rest clusters of solid, traditional red brick buildings (aside from an imposing entrance reminiscent of Hogwarts) that give the college a unity of structure that is both welcoming and reassuring.

Picking a quiet morning period when the college's 1,000 pupils were in class gave us the chance to witness the full scope of this 85-acre estate - 12 hectares of those devoted to outdoor sports provision.

A brief history first. Epsom College is viewed as one of the UK's finest independent day and boarding schools for girls and boys aged 11 to 18.

Founded in 1855, with royal patronage granted by Queen Victoria two years later (the Queen is its current patron) the college was the vision of Dr John Probert, who wished to improve the lives of those who had fallen on hard times by offering orphans of medical families free housing, clothing and school.

The then-named Royal Medical Benevolent College evolved into today's co-educational establishment: with the charitable Royal Medical Foundation still based here, dedicated to "improving the lives of the individual and society" - values that, the college





website declares, “remain at the heart of the college today”.

The imposing Chapel of St Luke’s, built in 1857, reflects the school’s Christian heritage, although the college community now embraces diversity, to include pupils and staff of many different faiths and beliefs.

Co-educational since 1976, the college opened the Lower School in 2016 for years seven and eight, further swelling pupil numbers.

Offering “a seamless transition into undergraduate life” will be the 2,000m², £9.4m Sixth Form Centre, currently under construction, to “equip students with the skills to succeed in the 21st century”.

Jason rolled up to meet me in a whisper quiet, newly acquired Yamaha electric buggy, the latest example of the grounds team’s shift away from diesel and petrol kit. “I came here as head groundsman seven years ago with a mission to improve the quality of the pitches,” recalls Jason, who is employed by the college’s external contractors Commercial Grounds Care Services, as are his five-strong team.

Keen to move to a net zero carbon model,

Jason had the data at his fingertips to demonstrate where he was on that journey.

“Replacing our petrol buggy, strimmers, hedge cutters and blowers is saving us 1,800l a year,” he reports. “Now we’ve gone electric, we’re offsetting about 4,500kg of carbon dioxide a year.”

He shows me a white cabinet in the shed, displaying digital readouts of battery charging status, power usage and cost, and carbon offset. Above that are four orange batteries, part of the Pellenc package Jason has invested in, following a visit to the supplier’s Saltex stand last autumn and an “impressive” demo day dealer RT Machinery staged at the college.

We settle in the wood-panelled long room of the cricket pavilion - walls lined with lists of school XIs going back well over a century. Through the windows is visible a panorama of outfield as lush green and densely swarded as any top-flight football training ground I’ve seen.

Permanent fixture

“We’re on site permanently,” he explains before stressing: “Just because we are



All the cricket outfields transition to rugby until December, when football takes over until March. We then have just three weeks to transition to cricket across the five squares





This is a growing, living environment so we must reflect that. The school never intrudes or interferes with our activity, so we have a free rein, within the scope of the yearly plan

contractors, it doesn't mean we're not every bit as passionate about the quality of the service and standards we maintain in creating the best environment and playing surfaces."

Epsom College's estate grounds are managed by Commercial Grounds Care Services, the contract forming an intrinsic part of their portfolio of 85 schools and colleges across London and the south-east. Based in Godalming, Surrey, Commercial

Grounds Care Services is family-run business headed up by Irene McTaggart, with a team of forty experienced groundsmen working out of the company's three depots in Woking, Haslemere and Epsom.

With more than twenty years of caring for the College grounds under their belts, the team is clearly meeting requirements for what is a mammoth sporting calendar spanning football, rugby, hockey, cricket, tennis and field and track athletics.

Since coming into post seven years ago, Jason has agreed the annual maintenance plan to develop the site, including pitches and equipment budget, with the college bursar - a process that will continue under new incumbent Ben Bennett.

Sporting demand continues to burgeon. Opening of the Lower School boosted pupil count to 800, which has since risen by another 200. "Two hours of sport are played Monday to Thursday, with extracurricular

Light on its feet for winning results.

OPTIONAL 5 YR EXTENDED WARRANTY
Kubota care
 BASED ON THE HOURS YOU WORK*

Kubota

BX Series: Comfortably scores on every level

Available in cab and ROPS versions, the BX Series delivers a high level of comfort with its intuitive, ergonomic operator environment.

- Extremely reliable, high performance Kubota engines.
- Robust hydrostatic transmission, 4WD and superb manoeuvrability ensure maximum productivity.
- Spacious operator's environment for comfortable operation.
- The strong rear linkage has lots of lifting power and with two independent PTOs, a wide choice of implements can be used.
- Legendary reliability backed by Kubota's first class, nationwide dealer network.

*Conditions apply. See your Kubota dealer for details.

Contact your local dealer or visit our website for more details.

www.kubota.co.uk    



Scan the QR code to find out more on the BX Series.

For Earth, For Life




We're preparing for Founder's Day at the end of May; that's when we up the ante even more. Our key focus is always the playing surfaces



activity between four and six, so pressure to provide facilities to standard is mounting," Jason says.

Having the Commercial Grounds Care team based on site lifts the college of the burden of running a fleet of machinery of its own, Jason points out. "The company has a rolling programme of investment in new equipment," he confirms, "which includes our switch to electric, a second Grillo mower, Toro 4000 groundsmaster, Verti-Drain 7416, which can deep tine down to 14 inches, new vans and assorted cricket equipment."

The change to battery power reflects a trend among schools to ask contractors how they plan to tackle carbon offsetting. "We're moving with the technology," says Jason. "I researched the market for electric power tools and a new buggy last year, along with Neil Anderson, Commercial Grounds Care's contracts manager for Surrey and the South East."

"The power tool batteries are ergonomically set up to fit comfortably and the larger packs allow three of the team to be out for up to four hours each. The buggy (new this year) will go all day towing cricket mowers and prep."

However, just in case ... "I've kept one of each of the old hedge cutters, strimmers and blowers as back-ups."

The electric tools also give the team an added advantage. Noise is a growing concern across many aspects of modern living and the College estate needs to provide as stimulating an educational experience as possible, while limiting impact on the surrounding community.

"Now that we have the battery powered hand tools, we are allowed to cut the hedges at the front of the school, as noise levels have reduced considerably," says Jason. The Yamaha buggy brings similar gains across the estate.

Although still in the process of a wholesale move to electric equipment and machinery, the team maintains commitment to reduce the environmental impact of its fleet.

The newly acquired used Kubota 42-522 mini tractor stands outside the shed with the Verti-Drain 7416 attached. "The Cat6 engine features lower carbon emissions, helped by AdBlue diesel exhaust fluid (distilled water and urea) to reduce particulates," Jason explains as we pass by.

Pride of place in the fleet is the Grillo. "Two machines in one" is Jason's verdict on the mower, which has a Verticutting deck on the front and collection unit at the rear. I spotted this team favourite scooting around the site several times, moving across lawns dotted with trees or trimming the cricket outfields.

Moving outside to tour the grounds by buggy, we briefly meet director of sport





Michael Johnson, who needs a quick word with Jason. The easy rapport between the two men is striking (more than one independent school I've visited had issues over pitch preparation policy).

"He's been in post around six years and has proved really helpful," Jason notes. Given the scope of provision and fixture demands, that's got to be a major blessing.

"At our monthly and seasonal meetings, we discuss the fixtures programme and pitch

preparation - a fine balancing act as cricket outfields become football and rugby surfaces during the year."

"In any given week during summer, we can have 18 cricket matches, spread across our five squares - four each on Monday and Tuesday then five morning junior games and five senior ones in the afternoon."

The athletics season has started and we pass a crisply lined six- and eight-lane track, with field facilities and equipment clustered

nearby. "It's a two-hour Friday slot for us to cut the running surface and overmark with Fleet paint using the Beam Rider," Jason explains. "The machine broke down once so I contacted Richard Mamoany from Fleet, who sent us a loan unit next day. That's good service."

Team play

Given the diverse duties maintaining the grounds requires, Jason has offered the

GROUNDSMAN® *Leading by design*

Turf / Sod Cutters

- Exceptional Traction & Cutting Ability
- Low Operator Hand Arm Vibrations
- 12 - 24 inch Sod Cutting Widths

Turf Aerators

- Solid or Hollow Coring Tines
- Proven Reliability & Performance
- Consistent Depth to 5" Depth

Soil / Core Collector

- Hugs Contours for Clean Collection
- For Groundsman Aerators, Turf Tractors and other aerators

Tractor Aerators

- Core and Collect in one Pass
- Fast Coverage
- Clean Collection with No Smearing

Versatile
Reliable
Performance...

Tel : +44(0) 28 2766 7049
info@groundsmanindustries.com
www.groundsmanindustries.com

MHGOALS

FOOTBALL FOUNDATION GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE

CHOOSE FROM OUR HUGE RANGE OF GOALS:

- 11V11
- 9V9
- FUTSAL
- MINI SOCCER
- 5V5

ALL GOALS 20% OFF APPROVED FOOTBALL FOUNDATION SUPPLIER

All goals conform to the latest standards

TOGETHER, WE MAKE THE GAME
VISIT MHGOALS.COM OR CALL 01502 711 298



team ample training opportunities since he arrived in 2015. "Some of the gardeners have gained their NVQ Level 2 in Sports Turf from Merrist Wood College, near Guildford, while everyone is qualified to use the hand power tools and knapsack sprayers and hold trailer licences," he says. "And they all put their hand to preparing the squares, marking and setting out. Providing a varied work environment also avoids boredom."

Jason's PA2 and PA6 tickets allow him to undertake various spray duties around the estate. "I tried one of the Berthoud Vermorel 20l knapsacks a couple of years ago, liked it and bought a second one," he tells me.

"They're really comfortable - the extendable lance is handy for reaching tricky spots and the nozzles that come with the sprayer include flat fan 90 degrees, deflector, solid and hollow cones, which can be stored in a side pocket."

Jason uses the knapsacks to apply herbicide to the water-based hockey pitch as well as iron sulphate to green up and strengthen the grass and acidifier to control worms across the site. For the annual weed and feed spray though, he

brings in Weed Management.

We trace over Jason's career - a varied one covering groundscape and gardening at home and abroad, stretching back to 1992, when he began as an apprentice under head greenkeeper Roger Tideman at Croham Hunt Golf Club, South Croydon.

"I attended Plumpton College to gain my City & Guilds Level 2 in Sports Turf before moving to Walton Heath Golf Course. Uncertain of my career direction, I left there in 1996 to join Knights garden centre group as plant area manager, working up to assistant area manager."

Suffering from the seven-year itch perhaps, Jason moved back into greenkeeping, taking up a post at Woodcote Park before switching to the Alton Wood Group of clubs, owned by Crystal Palace FC's former chairman, Ron Noades.

"Then a job came out of the blue in Menorca, as deputy superintendent at the Golf Son Parc club. I crash-learned Spanish, picking up basic commands and helping the club extend from 9 holes to 18."

"My wife and I moved to the Costa del Sol, where I looked after urbanisation gardens



Just because we are contractors, it doesn't mean we're not every bit as passionate about the quality of the service and standards we maintain in creating the best environment and playing surfaces





and pools because I couldn't find work on a course. Our second child was on the way and my wife wanted to give birth back home so we returned, and I found work at Surrey Downs Golf Club, then Gatton Manor."

A spell tending high-end gardens in London followed before Jason spotted a job advertised by Commercial Grounds Care Services, "and the rest, as they say, is history". But, he confesses, "when I came to Epsom I knew nothing about cricket

or multisport."

His time since clearly has been well spent and he reveals some of the complexities of the college grounds care delivery he manages on what he says is "a topographically interesting site".

"The college has a huge sporting ethos, as well as academic excellence. Luckily, we're on chalk, so playing surfaces enjoy free draining and we aerate, fertilise and water them regularly. Irrigation is particularly



I came here as head groundsman seven years ago with a mission to improve the quality of the pitches




ENHANCE
ANY TYPE OF TURF!

Vitax Enhance Prime is the ideal post-winter recovery treatment for your turf

Low nitrogen and high potassium, zinc and iron content for strong firm growth with good colour.

The Amino-Sorb R content and the beneficial micro-organisms and plant vitamins stimulate and sustain strong rooting and healthy growth early in the season, forming the basis of season long healthy turf growth.

Easy to spread and has consistent performance. The mini-granules are homogenous giving an even, reliable performance across the turf at low application rates of between 15g and 25g/m².

Economical to use, one bag treats up to 1333m² or three average sized greens.

Enhance^R Turf		Micro-granular bio-active fertiliser available in three formulations, containing Amino-Sorb [®] and Bacillus subtilis
Enhance Prime (zero phosphate)	5+0+10+4Fe+2MgO with Amino-Sorb	
Spring and Summer	15+2+8+2MgO+TE with Amino-Sorb	
Autumn and Winter	5+2+15+2MgO+TE with Amino-Sorb	
Enhance^R Outfield		Granular bio-active fertiliser suitable for fairways and other larger mown turf available in two formulations
Spring and Summer	15+2+6+TE with Amino-Sorb	
Autumn and Winter	6+2+10+TE with Amino-Sorb	

For full details visit www.vitaxamenity.co.uk or call 01530 510060

Pitch etiquette

Jason emailed every head of house with a summary of pitch etiquette for pupils to follow.

Avoid practising penalties in the dedicated penalty areas. Move to the side of the goalmouths to avoid undue surface wear and tear.

Avoid treading on pitches unnecessarily and no playing on the dedicated football pitch.

Think before you act as these are your pitches so respect them.

Etiquette for the cricket squares is already sorted, Jason says. "No-one walks on the pitches and pupils know to use the end strips for practising, leaving the middle ones prepared for matches."



key in warmer weather to avoid drying out. I use an electronic moisture meter to check levels regularly."

Pointing out the blocks of pitch provision, Jason continues: "Numbers one and six are named the Chuds, the Old First doubles for both rugby and football, as does Second Side and Colts pitches."

Grouped as a foursome are the 12,000m² Farm pitches, numbering two, three, four and five. Making up the complement is the full-size dedicated rugby pitch, and its football equivalent, which can also be marked out as two smaller playing areas and which transitions to the athletics track in the summer term.

"Moveable barriers line the first team football pitch in season, before the team move them inside the athletics track to create a diamond that protects runners from field sports such as the javelin and discus."

"All the cricket outfields transition to rugby until December, when football takes over until March. We then have just three weeks to transition to cricket across the five squares - two contain nine strips, another two, five each and the fifth with six."

"We topdress the pitches - all natural soil - with 600 tonnes of sand across the grounds, which are sown predominantly with RPR Sport perennial ryegrass, under a process of sand improvement and creating a rootzone environment but that is set to rise to 800 tonnes because of increasing usage."

"Some pitches are played on ten hours a week, which is really heavy going. The girl pupils are now heavily into cricket, and we have some real prospects coming through, while rising pupil numbers are putting pressure on provision."

"Sutton United FC Academy use us for pre-season training, as do other local minor



Two hours of sport are played Monday to Thursday, with extracurricular activity between four and six, so pressure to provide facilities to standard is mounting





Our natural area is designed to attract and support a diversity of wildlife. We've introduced more wildflowers to add colour through summer into autumn

league football sides, plus the UR7s, who come here for a week every year to give rugby training sessions - strong motivational for the grounds team."

It all adds up to one thing. "STRI agronomist Stella Rixon evaluates the pitches and squares annually and her latest findings reveal that we are at capacity to cater for current sporting needs."

Bolstering the college's existing six-lane practice nets this summer will be an

eight-lane, ECB-approved fully synthetic facility, under a six-figure project delivered by Total Play.

"This'll be as close as you can get to grass in terms of the sub-base," Jason states.

"It's designed to simulate pitches and the outfield, so it'll be an exciting addition to our provision."

Tennis season has arrived too, with more transitioning the order of the day. "In addition to our nine permanent hard courts,

we create another 16 by marking out our second, sand-filled, hockey pitch with Fleet Colour XS. I overmark with a mix of 20% paint and 80% water as this blend damages the turf less."

Walking from the quadrangle, with its colourful summer bedding coming into full bloom lining the crossed-hatched lawn, to the terrace overlooking the grounds, a tented village springs into view below as we talk through the team members.



Perfect play requires Perfect maintenance



All the tools of the trade for professional overseeding

- Overseeder 3D • DD Overseeder • Verti-Seed
- Multi-Seeder • Speed-Seed

redexim.com

01428 661222



Left to right: Mark Stalker, Jason O’Keele, Will Offer, Paul Constable, Simon Knight and David Pringle



“We’re preparing for Founder’s Day at the end of May,” Jason says, anticipating my question. “That’s when we up the ante even more, super striping and double cutting the pitches to wow parents and visitors. Our key focus is always the playing surfaces.”

Senior groundsman David Pringle, 32, joined the team from nearby Headley Court Rehabilitation Centre as a gardener five years ago. With sports turf qualifications from Merrist Wood, David’s key tasks include setting out, marking and preparing cricket strips. “A solid member of the team, he also fully understands fine turf maintenance, including the need for watering the football pitches in hot weather and about the importance of fertilising,” Jason says.

“Our work is organic as far as possible and with the price of nitrogen rising, we apply slow-release fertilisers, seaweeds mainly, that stay in the soil longer, rather than factory-based polymers - certainly a more sustainable option.”

Working under David is characterful Will Offer - the self-styled “special” - who came to Epsom College with plenty of practical ability but little experience of working on sportsgrounds: a fact now being

fully rectified.

Jason takes up his earlier comments about irrigation and its role in helping combat the impact of climate change. “Longer hot summers and really wet winters are forecasted for the UK. I know of some schools that have had to cancel fixtures because pitches were too hard as they had no irrigation system in place.”

“In 2016, I explained to the former bursar how vital it was to install irrigation. We were fortunate that someone in that position realised the importance of upgrading our system, and this has now paid dividends in terms of providing safe pitches.”

“A ring main and 100,000l underground holding tank, sited behind one of the football pitches, were installed the following year along the playing surfaces perimeter, which two 14kw Javelin pumps tap into so we can attach the sprinklers. The system works very well.”

The portable pumps are moved round the ground to plug into the ring main wherever they’re needed - one task being to feed the Olympic standard water-based synthetic turf hockey pitch that replaced a sand-filled one recently.



Now that we have the battery powered hand tools, we are allowed to cut the hedges at the front of the school, as noise levels have reduced considerably



At our monthly and seasonal meetings we discuss the fixtures programme and pitch preparation - a fine balancing act as cricket outfields become football and rugby surfaces during the year

“Compaction and standing water had made the old surface no longer fit for purpose,” Jason says. “The new pitch includes pop-up sprinklers that apply a 3mm water layer. They can be pre-set to irrigate the goalmouth at half-time.”

Mark Stalker, 54, joined the team twelve years ago and knows the college grounds and many of the longstanding members of staff very well. Mark is Jason’s number two and his length and breadth of experience

prove invaluable, Jason says.

“He has seen many changes over his years at the college and is the ideal person to introduce new members of the team to college ways as well as sports requirements where he is known as Mr Calculator.”

Simon Knight, 56, TUPE’d over from College staff when the grounds maintenance was originally contracted out to Commercial Grounds Care.

He plays a key role in ensuring that the

college grounds are litter and debris free and, under Jason, is learning to undertake other grounds maintenance tasks.

Planting with purpose

While sport has to be the main focus for the team’s activity, horticulture plays its part across the estate.

“I consult with Irene McTaggart, Director and owner of Commercial Grounds Care on planting schemes and brought in Paul

PASSION FOR THE PROFESSION

Using our knowledge of contracting to supply professionals with the ultimate turf maintenance solutions.



FOR ALL TYPES OF SYNTHETIC SPORTS PITCH – WE HAVE A MACHINE TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS

www.gkbmachines.com • tom@gkbmachines.com • 07495 883617



What's in the shed

Dennis FT610 cylinder mowers x 2
 Dennis G860 cylinder mower
 Hayter Pro x 2
 Pellenc Rasion electric mower
 Toro Sidewinder
 Toro 5410 Reelmaster®
 Toro Reelmaster® 5510
 Grillo FD 2200 ts rotary and additional verticutting deck
 Yamaha UMX electric utility vehicle
 John Deere Pro Gator 2030A and HD 220 sprayer
 New Holland tractor
 Trilo sweeper and vacuum
 Kubota G23e Glidecut high lift
 Kubota B3030 tractor with front loader
 Kubota L2-522 tractor
 Redexim Verti-Drain 1513
 Redexim Verti-Drain 7416
 Fleet BeamRider
 Fleet Kombi
 Vitax EvenSprey
 Power Brush 1010
 Pellenc Airion blowers x 4
 Pellenc Excelion trimmers x 4
 Pellenc Helion 3 hedgecutters x 2
 Pellenc Helion alpha long arm hedgecutters x 2
 Pellenc Selion pole saw x 2
 GreenTek Maxi-Brush
 SISIS Multitiner
 SISIS Quadraplay
 Charterhouse deep slitter



Constable from the Ripley depot for his gardening expertise and experience. Paul has worked for the company for over 20 years and has helped me develop the gardens, including those surrounding the headmaster's and student accommodation houses and teacher accommodation offsite."

Colour-themed herbaceous borders around Whitehouse and Crawford girls' houses include, white, purple, yellow and black annuals, for example.

Formality and informality live side by side on site. "Our natural area is designed to attract and support a diversity of wildlife. We've introduced more wildflowers to add colour through summer into autumn and the bee and grandad orchids are proliferating."

The best-laid plans can come a cropper, due to factors outside Jason's control, however. "We wanted to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with colour-themed planting but were unable to buy the 1,500 plants we needed from one supplier," he explains.

Dream job

When many grounds and course managers are struggling to source and retain staff, in part due to pay scales falling out of kilter with

other sectors, Jason can report high levels of satisfaction throughout the Epsom College team.

"Commercial Grounds Care pays well and looks after its workforce," he says, "with time and a half for anything over forty hours, including Saturday work." Paid "according to my skill set", Jason can also be spotted on Sundays in the cricket season, tidying up after intensive action on the squares the day before.

Nothing stands still in grounds provision, and, "as a contractor, we will change our service with the needs of the school. This is a growing, living environment so we must reflect that. The school never intrudes or interferes with our activity, so we have a free rein, within the scope of the yearly plan."



LET IT ROLL.



**INCREASE GREEN SPEEDS THIS SEASON
WITH *TurfRx* NUTRITIONALS**

 **TurfRx
Supreme**

 **TurfRx
Si**

 **TurfRx
K+ Micro Crystal**

 **Aquatrols®**

 **Redox**



READY TO FIND OUT HOW **TurfRx NUTRITIONALS** CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT CONDITIONS ON YOUR COURSE? Contact Your Local Distributor or Visit: EU.Aquatrols.com/redox/

Goodwood Estates

Good turf management



Andy Boxall



Goodwood is a beautiful estate in the heart of West Sussex covering 4,900 hectares (12,000 acres) in the village of Westhampnett, Chichester, West Sussex and is the seat of the Duke of Richmond. Phil Helmn met with Head Groundsman, **Andy Boxall**, to discuss one of the most varied and challenging sites in the country

Goodwood is a beautiful estate in the heart of West Sussex covering 4,900 hectares (12,000 acres) in the village of Westhampnett, Chichester, West Sussex and is the seat of the Duke of Richmond.

Due to its location on the South coast, nestling in the beautiful hills of the south downs national park less than two hours train journey from London, has made it an ideal destination over the last twenty-five years for a variety of spectacular events. The house, built around 1600, and its grounds host the annual Goodwood Festival of Speed (usually July), whilst elsewhere on the estate the motor circuit track hosts the annual Goodwood Revival and Members Meeting (usually September and April respectively), the 'one of a kind' grass

airfield has a flying school, which is busy all year round, and the Goodwood Racecourse hosts "Glorious Goodwood" (usually in June) and nineteen other (horse) race meetings from early May through to the end of October.

The aerodrome, located within the motor circuit track, is a historic airfield that was used extensively during WWII when it was known as RAF Westhampnett. Several historic aircraft continue to be housed at the aerodrome, including two Spitfires and an American Harvard fighter plane.

The Estate also includes two 18-hole golf courses, a cricket pitch, home to Chichester Cricket Club, a luxury hotel, a pub, a shooting lodge, extensive ornamental grounds and a 1,600 ha (4,000 acres) organic farm. The farm boasts an excellent selection of home brewed beer, milk and



some of the finest organic cheeses on the supermarket shelves. The estate employs over 550 people and attracts 800,000 visitors a year. For good measure, the headquarters of Rolls Royce Motor Cars can be found on the estate too. an impressive line-up of activities and most involve turf management in some shape or other.

Head Groundsman, Andy Boxall, started his love of turf management as assistant groundsman at Brinsbury college in North Heath, Pulborough after leaving a couple of indoor factory type roles back in the early nineties. “I soon realised that I loved working outdoors and really enjoyed the diversity of the job,” Andy explained. “It wasn’t long before I was promoted to deputy and then later, as part of a re-shuffle of roles across the college, I became Head of grounds and Estates,” Andy reminisced. “I

really enjoyed my five years at the college, but I saw a job advert for an assistant groundsman at Goodwood, and although it was a demotion in role at the time, it was too good an opportunity to miss.”

Since then, Andy has enjoyed a lengthy career with the Goodwood family, starting back twenty something years ago in 1998. Fair to say then, he’s seen a lot of change over the years and during that time has been a valuable part of the grounds and estate team, steadily rising through the ranks and taking increased responsibility as he progressed.

Now we all know grounds are unique, but I think it reasonably fair to say that Andy and his team have one of the most varied and challenging sites to manage and maintain in the country. A bold statement I know but, apart from the sheer size of the areas



The two real challenges we face in the event season are protecting the turf during the event build-up and repairing the damage quickly after the event. It can take approximately four weeks to build up for an event and the same time to clear up



Goodwood team left to right: Andy Boxall, Pete Symonds, David Webb, Chris Woods, Paul Sheridan (Deputy) and Richard Aldridge



Andy and his team have one of the most varied and challenging sites to manage and maintain in the country

(and the distance between them across the estate), it's the variety of surfaces and the complexities of the turf management which I believe warrants my declaration. However, with such a wealth of experience under his belt, this is something Andy takes in his stride. To be fair, it's something that deserves acclamation for the exacting standards he achieves day in and day out.

I caught up with Andy as he and his team were beginning to prepare the motor circuit for another popular annual event, the annual Members Meeting. "This is the 79th meeting," explained Andy, "and it's hugely popular with our Goodwood Road Racing Company members (GRRC). It attracts over 20,000 visitors a day who come to watch vintage cars and motorbikes race around

the Goodwood track."

As Andy drives me around the motor circuit, dodging scaffolders vans, signage contractors, marquee lorries and grandstand construction forklift trucks, we begin to discuss the challenges and complexities of continually preparing for events, and more crucially, repairing the ground after the spectators have gone home and the grandstands have been dismantled. "Early in the season, when the weather is cold or wet (or both), it can sometimes be a bit disheartening when preparing for an event. We are so passionate in trying to produce a first class environment for everyone to enjoy, it can be extremely challenging to say the least, but that's just nature and it's taken me a while to understand you can only do

What's in the shed

- Toro Groundsmaster 3500 sidewinder rotaries x 2
- Toro Groundsmaster 5910 wide area mower
- Iseki cut and collect ride on mower
- Pedestrian hand rotary mowers x 4
- Stihl strimmer's x 6
- Flymo hover mower
- 24,000lt water bowser
- Stihl backpack blowers (4 electric) x 6
- Stihl hedgecutters (1 electric) x 6
- Ford ranger pick-up truck
- Renault van
- Toro Workman utility
- New Holland T5 125HP tractor
- New Holland Boomer 35HP tractor
- Sisis mega slitter
- Sisis Quadraplay



Spitfires on the airfield during Revival meeting



your best” Andy explained, “It takes a lot of hard work and dedication on the part of my team, but when it goes well it’s an amazing feeling of accomplishment when everything comes together and the site looks fantastic.”

“The two real challenges we face in the event season are protecting the turf during the event build-up and repairing the damage quickly after the event,” Andy explained. “The time between events isn’t

very long when you remember it can take approximately four weeks to build up for an event and the same time to clear up. We need to be quick off the mark and supercharge our repair schedule to have everything ready for the following event.” Andy went on, “We use the services of a local grounds contractor to assist us in the renovations. The bare areas left from the grandstands, kiosks and tented villages are thoroughly raked for debris, lightly tilled



The turf is constantly under pressure to perform and ground conditions must be exact for aircraft to fly

CS-PRO

3m MOWER FOR COMPACT TRACTORS

- 3m working width
- 2m transport width
- Heavy duty gearboxes ensure consistent mowing rates even in the toughest conditions
- High blade-tip speeds finely cuts and evenly disperses clippings
- Adjustable cutting height from 15 - 100mm



Call 01524 850501 to book a demo
www.major-equipment.com



Watch Video

Getting Personal

Andy Boxall - I don't think he likes politicians much and he wants fairer taxes!



Who are you? Andy Boxall Head Groundsman Goodwood Estate.

Family status. Married to Martina with two children - Teddy and Lucas.

Who's your hero and why? Kenny Dalglish - the Liverpool football legend.

What's been the highlight of your career so far? Being promoted to head role at Goodwood.

If your younger self saw you now, what would he think? I should have studied more!

Which famous people wind you up? Any politicians.

What job would you love, other than your own? Any job that involved working indoors. I'd like to work from home!

What was the most embarrassing moment in your life? I have far too many to list here! I often find myself caught in embarrassing moments.

What is your favourite film? Kingdom of Heaven.

What scares you? Someone in my team getting hurt.

What would your autobiography be called...and who would play you in the film? The Steady Man - Orlando Bloom

What is your favourite sport? Football (Liverpool fan).

What would you cast into room 101? All politicians!

What's the best advice you have ever been given? Work hard.

Which historical time and place would you most like to visit?

The 1940s, in the second world war years.

Do you have a lifetime ambition?

To help my children be happy and successful.

What's your favourite smell?

Chocolate!

Which three people, living or dead, would you invite to a dinner party? Kenny Dalglish, Bob Marley and Sir Winston Churchill.

What's your favourite piece of trivia?

The Goodwood motor racing circuit measures 2.367 miles.

What's your favourite piece of kit? Our New Holland T5 tractor - it's so versatile.

Which three albums would you take to a desert island?

Bob Marley - Legend, David Gray - White Ladder and any Luciano Pavarotti album!

What's the daftest work-related question you have ever been asked?

Seed just gone in the ground - will it be fully grown in two days?

What three words best describes yourself? Friendly, reliable and hard-working.

What is the single most useful thing you could tell a 16-year-old grounds person? Ask lots of questions!

What law/legislation would you like to see introduced? Sort out fairer taxation on earnings!



to create a seed bed and finally direct seed drilled at 50gms per square metre. If the weather is favourable, we apply a pre-seed fertilizer to boost growth and constantly water the area using hose and travel sprinklers," Andy explained. "One of the biggest decisions is when to seed or turf damaged areas following an event. The decision has always had to be based on the weather conditions, size of area, cost and timescale of recovery."

Andy clarified, "My repair timescale is sometimes very condensed, and can be as little as eight weeks. Yes, seed will grow easily in that time but not sufficient to mature enough to withstand thousands of foot traffic and temporary structures of an event. What does help is the use of strong

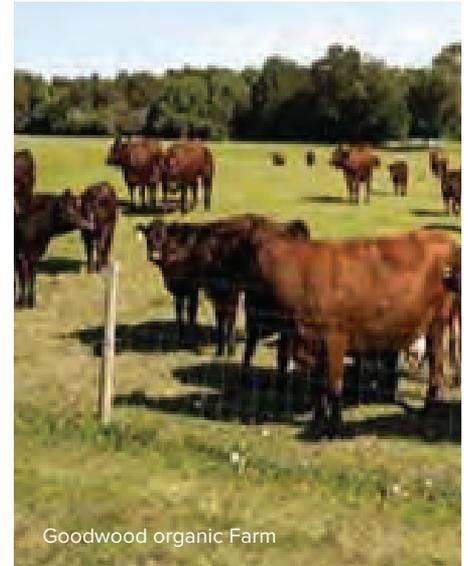
growing rye turf sourced locally and the predominant use of DLF seed tetraploid J4Turf perennial rye," Andy explained.

This brings us nicely on to the other unique area of responsibility for Andy and his team, the maintenance of a fully operational, 365 days a year grass airfield. "There are three runways we look after," explained Andy. "It's quite a task maintaining these to the required standard for light aircraft to operate safely from all year round. The turf is constantly under pressure to perform and ground conditions must be exactly right for aircraft to fly."

Goodwood has its own flying school and healthy flying club membership and is also the home to a spitfire flying school which means Andy and his team need to



Goodwood airfield (inside motor circuit track)



Goodwood organic Farm

be constantly focussed on maintaining this large expanse of specialist turf. “The added challenge is that these areas have tented villages and marquees on them for around 122 days each year during event season,” Andy revealed. “The surfaces are in a pretty poor state when the tents are removed. We use the same recovery philosophy as the other areas, deciding to either turf with rye or use the J4 tetraploid seed. Traffic management of the aircraft is vital at this

stage as safety is crucial, so we swap the use of runways to allow germination (and maturity build up) time for recovery.”

Andy explained that he has one permanent member of his team dedicated to the runway at all times. The vast area is cut using the Toro 5910 wide deck rotary mower, which takes two days to complete the task and repairs are carried out by either contractors or the other members of the team. “The runways were partly re-built



It takes a lot of hard work and dedication on the part of my team

TIGHT BUDGETS? SPENDING CUTS? NEED THE EQUIPMENT BUT CAN'T AFFORD IT?...

Greensmower
12-blade
20" x 25"
£2,400-£2,600
+VAT

...THINK AGAIN

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO CHOOSE

PROTEA

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY,
UNBEATABLE VALUE

For further information contact Rivendell Projects

TEL: 01949 851420

www.rivendell-projects.co.uk

Turf Green Commercial
20" x 25"
£2,700 + VAT

Cutting System
20" x 25"
£2,700 + VAT

Roller
20" x 25"
£1,800 + VAT

Commercial Lawnmower
20" x 25"
£2,000-£2,200 + VAT

Heavy Duty Commercial Mower
24" x 28"
£4,800-£6,100 + VAT

2-year parts and labour warranty. All spares available next day

ASK ABOUT OUR FINANCE OPTIONS

Right: Goodwood aerodrome during WWII as RAF Westhampnett



The ‘one of a kind’ grass airfield has a flying school, which is busy all year round, and the Goodwood Racecourse hosts Glorious Goodwood and nineteen other race meetings



three years ago and are now exceptionally smooth and drain a lot better than in the past. We don't have an irrigation system so, in the height of the summer, we use our large water bowser to run up and down the runways to keep the turf alive. It's a long job and, due to the pressure of traffic movement, we must do this incredibly early in the morning before the runways open for business."

To conclude, it was great to catch up with Andy and the gang again and a pleasure to visit the site during the final stages of the build-up for the 79th annual Member Meeting this year. The guys do an amazing job and the passion and enthusiasm shines through in the product they produce time and time again. Congratulations Andy and all the best to you and your team for the forthcoming year!



THE JOHNSONS PROMISE

ALWAYS THE BEST



- MIXTURES
- CULTIVARS
- PURITY
- ADVICE
- RESULTS

For over 200 years, we have been producing the very best mixtures, that deliver unrivalled turf quality at sporting venues around the world.

With unique innovations such as 4Turf®, DLF Select and ProNitro® we are leaders in the field – that's why turf managers turn to Johnsons Sports Seed.

Johnsons
SPORTS SEED

COVERING THE WORLDS GREATEST STAGES

T: 01386 791102
www.johnsonssportsseed.co.uk



"Combining lock-down with an unprecedented season of international cricket matches and endless practice sessions, we couldn't have been happier with how the seed performed. The robustness of Johnsons J Premier Wicket on the squares and the establishment of J Intense on the nursery ground outfield, was outstanding."

Simon Lee
The Ageas Bowl



ProNitro
READY TO GROW



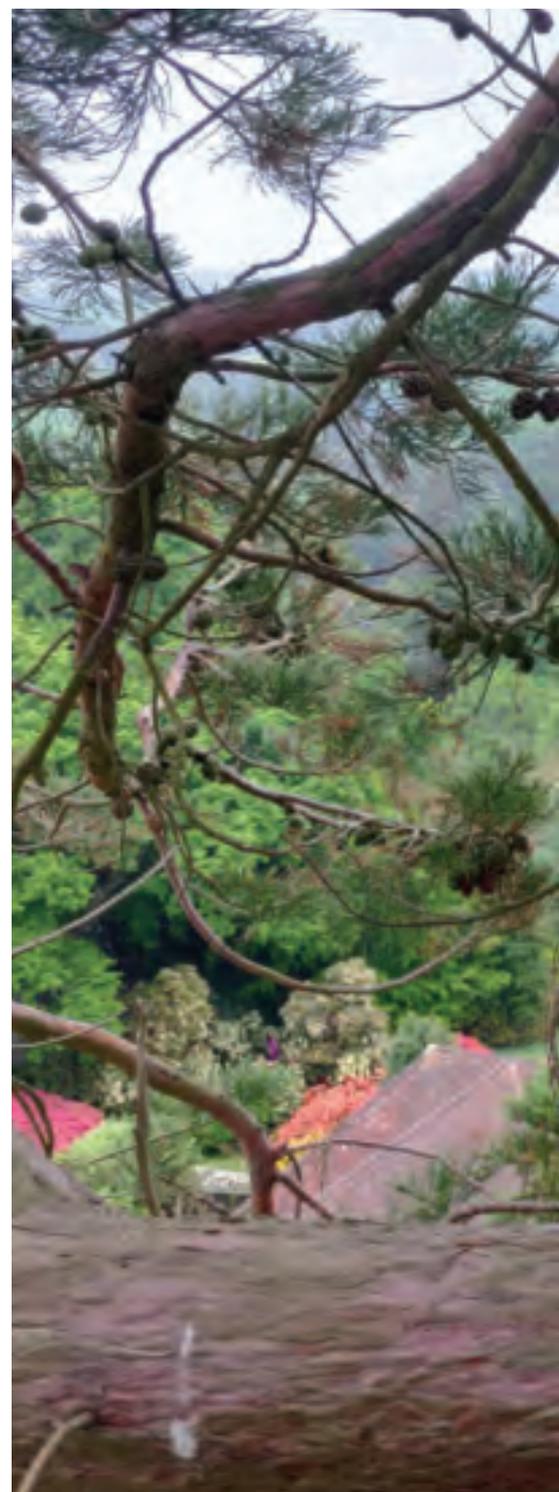
Champion Trees

We are the champions

Do you have a prize tree in your midst? If so, celebrate your good fortune, lavish the attention on it that a champion deserves while putting in place a legacy plan, reports **Greg Rhodes**



Sassafras labels



David Alderman must be the Mr Chips of trees. As honorary director of The Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI) he has the skinny on 259,000 specimens currently on the books - native, foreign, evergreen, deciduous, tall and thin, fat and squat.

These trees are special, however. No fewer than 76,000 are dubbed champions - locally, regionally and nationally, whether largest girth, unmatched height or widest canopy - the remainder confirming their status.

David and his nationwide network of volunteers conduct a rolling programme of measurements, using hand-held lasers,

to verify new entrants to the register and reverify current listings.

"The register reflects the pioneering work of leading dendrologist Alan Mitchell's 'A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe', which Collins published in 1974," explains David, a graduate in forestry. "Working for The Forestry Commission, Mitchell recorded finest specimens for the purposes of seed collection."

Mitchell had amassed enough data to publish what was the first book of champion trees, mostly growing in the south of England. "He retired in the 1980s, having assembled 70,000 individual records," David continues.

Working alongside Mitchell, assistant

dendrologist Vicky Schilling took steps to protect the body of work after Mitchell retired, setting up a board of trustees and a bursary that helps fund the volunteers in their tree-measuring activity.

The Register collection constantly evolves. When one champion dies or suffers damage that affects its status, a contender is waiting to replace it, says David. "We're still unsure how many on the register blew down during Storm Arwen, but it had quite an impact, we believe."

"Checks by our volunteers will confirm those we lost, while National Trust sites that run champion tree trails can provide fast feedback. The public also updates us. We should know by the end of this year."



Leonardslee head tree surgeon Adam Butler climbing a Sequoia tree

It's no surprise to learn that the Great Storm of 1987 brought seismic change to the register. "Tallest champions were hit worst," says David, "semi and fully mature specimens mostly. Japanese maple and cherry suffered the biggest losses - often flattened by other trees."

Isolated good news did emerge from the devastation however, David recalls. "Kew managed to winch a couple of its champions back upright to live another day. The whole process of recovery from the storm aftermath changed arboriculture forever."

Landowners and managers have no legal requirement to maintain champion trees over and above other specimens but, adds David, "our role is to raise awareness among

those who have champions in the hope that they look after them more sympathetically".

It's worth noting that this mission must surely apply to the nation's veteran trees too. Examples such as the horseshoe oak on Thorndon Park Golf course spring to mind - a gnarled, almost sinister-looking specimen with a hollowed-out trunk large enough to stand within.

It was discovered by the greens team almost strangled by suffocating undergrowth, now cleared away to reveal the tree in its full grandeur.

The parameters for judging a champion are not complex, David notes - "tallest or fattest girth for that species, though if rare, we register a specimen for each feature."



Tree management has changed a lot over recent years and we have the technology to make the most of a valuable natural asset that captures carbon and oxygenates the air

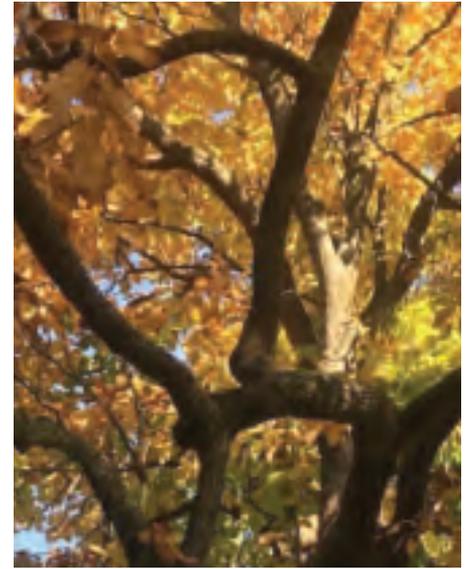


Laser height measurement of sassafras



Tree preservation orders are the only protective measure currently, while SSSIs are applied independently of individual specimens

Towering trees such as the evergreen sequoias (most famously the Californian redwoods) are familiar sights in landscaped, older, larger spaces (Victorian pleasure gardens) and estates. However, the tallest examples are found in plantations in Wales and Scotland that have been left undisturbed and unthinned in deep, sheltered ravines where their constant search for light fosters exceptional growth. “The Douglas Fir predominates,” David reveals. “There are more of those specimens reaching over 60m in height than



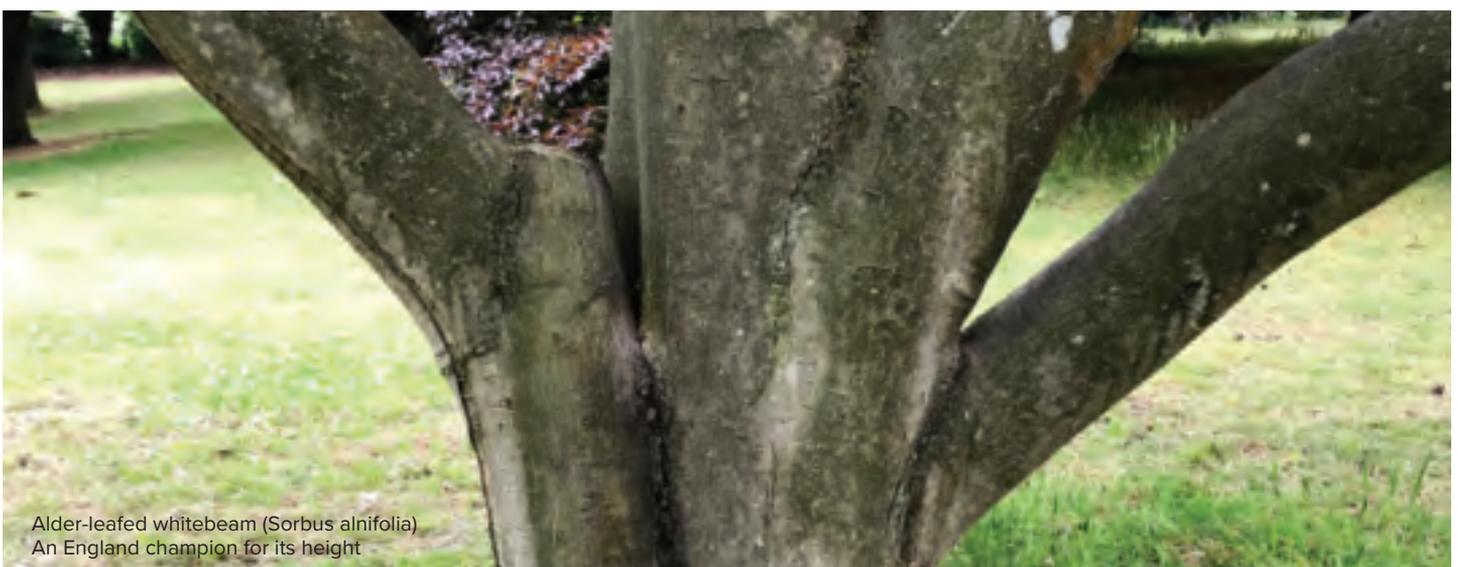
any other species on the register. You’ll find them mostly on Forestry Commission land, where they were planted up in the 1920s and ‘30s.”

“They became uneconomical to fell because of their location. The Commission switched to amenity management after WW11 under a plan to make us independent in timber supply. The idea was for faster rotation - 30 to 60 years rather than 100 to 150.”

Location is a key driver for attaining record heights, he adds. “The wet conditions in the west of Scotland stimulate more rapid growth, compared to say the drier, exposed climate of East Anglia, where the same species may reach only half or a third the size.”

Recording trees can be traced back over 200 years, “particularly oak, yew and chestnut,” David says. “Some sweet chestnuts are at least 350 years old - plenty were planted in the 1700s, while some even date back to Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.”

Today’s monitoring meanwhile also focuses on how climate change is affecting growth rate for different species and the



Alder-leaved whitebeam (*Sorbus alnifolia*)
An England champion for its height



Girth measurement of Sassafras. An England and British Isles champion for its girth



Adopting the 30:20:10% rule for planting is critical to encourage more widespread take-up of a greater variety of species

impact different soils have on that.

Counter-intuitively perhaps, younger trees may be at greater risk than older counterparts, David points out. "Many are suffering because of lower groundwater levels as their roots are not as deep or as established as those of older trees."

"A 400-year old oak could be healthier than ones planted recently. It may have been part of ancient woodland or forest for example."

The message is clear then. Planting saplings and young specimens is only the first step in a programme of care that will help ensure your new additions will survive and thrive.

Awareness key

The Tree Register's tally of champions may sound sizeable but given the UK's tree count, despite our lowly ranking in the international leaf coverage league, prize

specimens seldom may be spotted. Even in urban or high footfall areas, they may be hidden in plain sight.

Awareness of them is of pressing importance, TROBI acknowledges. "Most champions were planted on estates or self-seeded and left to grow undisturbed," says David. "Tree management has changed a lot over recent years and we have the technology and know-how to make the most of a valuable natural asset that captures

TURF CARE TOOLS

IN STOCK WITH



★★★★★
INDEPENDENT
CUSTOMER
REVIEWS



SOIL SAMPLERS

STANDARD 1" SOIL SAMPLER

Core sample is easily examined in large tine window.



AGRONOMIST OPEN END SAMPLER

Solid stainless steel sampler with end left open for easy appraisal.



SOIL PROFILE SAMPLER

Robust shovel type sampler, slightly tapered to give a clean cut with minimal disturbance.

From **£65.00**



SAREL SPIKER AERATORS



Aid water/air penetration and improve root growth with the Sarel Spiker. Fitted with 63 tensile steel spikes 6 mm (0.25") in diameter, protruding 45 mm (1.75") for optimum surface aeration.

- Available in three widths
- Each tine is replaceable

From **£385.00**



Exclusive Offer: Call 01902 440250 or visit Pitchcare.com

FREE pair of Waterproof Gardening Gloves worth **£4.25** with every purchase



OPM Spraying



carbon and oxygenates the air. Landowners need more financial help and good advice to ensure that asset stays healthy to benefit us all.”

Trees generate heightened local interest and passions flare when ones cherished by the community are felled to make way for new developments, as a recent case in Cornwall demonstrated all too starkly amid a media outcry.

“The Register doesn’t campaign as such,” says David, “but provides information for local groups.” Awareness of champion trees as exemplars of what many fear is an endangered branch of Earth life remains pressing.

“When speaking to a local councillor recently, I mentioned the idea of setting up a champion tree trail (CTT). ‘What are champion trees?’ came the reply.”

And that was the same response from an experienced groundskeeper.

The data TROBI collects from gardens, sports and amenity sites and tree collections such as arboreta can give local councils valuable insight into how they can plan and execute tree planting and management

programmes, including the issue of street tree sustainability, David believes.

“Our volunteer force of 50 avid tree lovers can only do so much,” he says. “It’s something people mostly pick up on when they retire and they can work at their own pace, without any pressure from us. Some are incredibly active and super keen, but we could do with more.”

More volunteers mean more outlay on the specialist equipment they carry with them to measure current and candidate champions. Laser hypsometers are the tools of choice here and abroad and have supplanted traditional measuring methods.

“Everyone across Europe is using the same equipment to ensure consistency in recording vertical height but it requires training to get accurate results,” David stresses.

The sheer variety of the register lends a fascinating perspective to the world of trees. “From the incredibly big and tall to the modest and small,” David divulges.

“Opening of trade routes from China marked an influx of species new to the UK, while original examples of the dawn



If any of our champions fell in high winds, we would have to alert TROBI and amend the records accordingly



All images on this spread: Bartlett Tree Experts



On the ground, inspections can be hugely helpful to a golf club or sportsground as they can point to what might need maintenance or chopping down

redwood, introduced in the late 1940s, have reached well over 100 feet in height.”

Which begs the question; What is a native species? “Those that were growing here after the last ice age, 10,000 years ago. We have 33,” David states.

Whatever their height, girth or age, whether dowdy or exotic, champions need to be more widely recognised so that we understand more fully trees’ capacity to realise their growth potential and the conditions that allow them to achieve it.

One thing’s for certain, concludes David, “more champion trees are out there to be discovered.” So keep your eyes peeled.

Tomorrow’s champions

Keeping tabs on the current register of champion trees is important, as is raising awareness, but is a system in place to give tomorrow’s likely contenders a fighting chance to qualify as prize specimens?

Tree ambassadors can help generate a sustainable method of keeping the environmental and societal benefits of green cover up front in the public perception.

“Former head of Kew arboretum Tony

Kirkham was one such tree champion,” believes Dr Jon Banks, head of research at Bartlett Tree Experts, which specialises in tree monitoring, management and disease control.

“He possessed vast knowledge and was adept at pushing forward awareness of the huge benefit trees offer and the importance of species diversity.”

Targeting key messages correctly will help redress the balance of what Jon says is a vicious circle that, if left unchecked, may have dire consequences.

“Nurseries still stock the same species by and large,” Jon says, “because they are the ones landscapers specify for their projects.”

“The sector’s in a Catch 22, chicken and egg dilemma. The temptation is to buy the

tree types we are familiar with and that risks driving out less well-known species.”

Looking at landscape solutions more in the round and over the longer term can foster diversity and help prevent a potentially dangerous spiral, he adds.

“Adopting the 30:20:10% rule for planting is critical to encourage more widespread take-up of a greater variety of species.”

In contrast to larger settings such as golf courses, urban environments are usually more constrained, where heat islands and higher pollution levels (carbon dioxide for example) are more common.

Converging species diversity may well aggravate these factors, Jon argues.

“Planting a broader range of cultivars, including drought tolerant ones, will help





© The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

increase biosecurity.”

The capital is renowned for its population of London plane trees, which can reach enormous proportions. Younger examples may well be champions in the making, so protecting them and their environment is critical.

“The London Tree Officers Association, whom we work with, runs a network of

good field officers who have the protective interests of such species at heart,” says Jon. “The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) focuses on environmental factors such as carbon storage and pollution absorption.”

Creating a powerful legacy of tree management to safeguard future champions depends on implementing systems that put monetary values on both individual

specimens and woodland, Jon continues.

“They are already in use. The Helliwell and i-Tree Design models aim to put a price on the amenity and environmental value trees provide.”

The Helliwell system has been used extensively in court cases, insurance claims and public inquiries to place visual amenity values on individual trees and woodland, Jon explains.

As such, the parameters it measures also apply in any sport, leisure and amenity landscape. Factors the system takes into account are each allocated scores to give an accumulated total - tree size, life expectancy and suitability of setting all add towards an overall comparative measure.

“Using the system can give you more clout in a court of law,” says Jon, adding that placing a price on the worth of a tree especially helps retain older trees.”

Current Helliwell point values, as of 1st January this year are £42.97 for individuals and £171.87 for woodland, their website notes.

The online i-Tree Design system is a web-based tool that allows us to estimate the benefits individual trees provide - carbon dioxide absorption, air pollution reduction



Hackberry



The wet conditions in the west of Scotland stimulate more rapid growth, compared to say the drier, exposed climate of East Anglia, where the same species may reach only half or a third the size

Left: Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden
© Owen Johnson



A 400-year old oak could be healthier than ones planted recently. It may have been part of ancient woodland or forest for example

and energy saving among other factors.

The method gauges tree benefits for the current year and for up to 99 years and can include age and can model estimates for multiple trees and buildings.

“Without applying such systems, we can only offer intangibles and non-economic arguments,” Jon states, “when developers are looking at numbers on a spreadsheet.”

“Tree preservation orders offer the only protective measure currently, while

SSSIs are applied independently of individual specimens. Enforcement for any infringements can be difficult as well.”

Succession planning

Protecting the current crop of tree champions is a worthy sentiment but with age and an increasingly stressful environment, ancient trees are in need of increasing care. Up-and-coming generations of ancient trees also need to be identified,

evaluated and cared for.

“On the ground, inspections can be hugely helpful to a golf club or sportsground as they can point to what might need maintenance or chopping down,” Jon advises. “Presence of a champion does not necessarily indicate that the environment is ideal for it. If a tree does need to be removed, planting young replacements successfully depends on a proper programme of aftercare.”



Est. 1878

Manufacturers of high quality Mowing equipment

The finest finish you will ever see!

Lloyds range of high quality mowers offer robust design. They are engineered to give outstanding performance with years of trouble free service.

MOWERS; PALADIN, LEDA GANG, ROTARIES, HOVER AND FLAIL COLLECTORS, TURFCARE SYSTEMS; TURF MAINTENANCE; AERATORS, SCARIFIERS, TOP DRESSERS, BLOWERS



Whatever the game... you need precision

Hunters Precision Grinders is a division of Lloyds and offers world class precision mower grinders.



www.huntergrinders.com

JUPITER ATI, AMAZON, JUPITER, JUNO, ORION

HIGH PERFORMANCE RELIEF & SPIN GRINDING

REDUCE TIME GRINDING BY MORE THAN 65%



LLOYDS & CO. LETCHWORTH LTD. BIRDS HILL, LETCHWORTH, HERTS SG6 1JE

Telephone: 01462 683031 Fax: 01462 481964 Email: sales@lloydsandco.com



Bute Park © Owen Johnson

The news could be better on that front. “Research studies reveal that only 30% of plantings usually survive. That rate rises in forests to more than 50%.”

Watch out, a champion’s about

Nationally important Grade 1 listed Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens, near Horsham, West Sussex, is in the throes of creating a champion tree trail (CTT) reports head gardener Jamie Harris.

“All our champions have been verified by TROBI and we’ve attached one of the Register’s blue labels to each example to identify it for visitors.”

Rich in character and history, Leonardslee’s extensive tree collection, scattered across its 100 acres of woodland gardens and 150 acres of surrounding deer park, includes species from around the world - a hark back to Victorian times when Sir Edmund Loder, who established the site in the mid-1850s, concentrated on plant breeding and another previous owner, Charles Beauclerk, acquired plants from Kew that were new introductions into the country.

“Several ancient and significant examples are recognised as champions by the Register,” Jamie continues, “the tallest or largest girth of their type in the county, Britain and Ireland or even the world.”

“Prunus serrulata ‘Alba plena’ is one of our spring favourites. Found in the Daffodil Lawn, this huge spreading Japanese Cherry is over 100 years old and has the largest girth of its species in West Sussex at 247cm. In early spring, it is covered in pure white double flowers that last just a week.”

And Leonardslee merits special distinction - numbering a ‘monumental’ tree among its august companions. “Our Algerian oak is registered as the tallest known specimen in the world,” Jamie states proudly.

Setting up a champion tree trail is not necessarily about including every example on site - to create a safe pathway for members and visitors, owners and operators may have to exclude some champions growing in more remote or inaccessible areas of gardens, grounds or golf courses, David Alderman advises.

“The map we have prepared shows clearly where the champions are located

and how to reach them safely,” Jamie confirms.

Maintaining champion trees effectively depends on their size, accessibility and available resources. Leonardslee is luckier than many gardens in this last respect.

“We run a full-time tree team of three,” Jamie confirms, “and they all have gained their climbing tickets, so we can address any tree care issues that may arise, whether they are champions or not.”

“Local arboriculturalist Barry Houldsworth comes in from time to time to check the trees and we work with our local tree officer on specialist problems such as ground compaction.”

“Leonardslee is a steep-valleyed garden and prolonged dry periods can affect tree root systems, but heavy layers of leaf mould that have accumulated over generations help lock in valuable moisture.”

After working as assistant head gardener at The National Trust’s nearby Nymans Gardens, and head at its Polesdon Lacey site in Surrey, Jamie is excited to be rolling out Leonardslee’s CTT.

“This is the first garden I’ve worked in



Opening of trade routes from China marked an influx of species new to the UK, while original examples of the dawn redwood, introduced in the late 1940s, have reached well over 100 feet in height



Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) - An England champion because of its girth



Left: Gardener Elliot Chandler attaching a champion tree label in Leonardslee



Everyone across Europe is using the same equipment to ensure consistency in recording vertical height but it requires training to get accurate results

with champions where the focus is on plant collections and why they are world famous. Anything we can do to promote that, within the context of Leonardslee as a commercially-run visitor attraction, is to be welcomed.”

Nothing’s set in stone of course. The tree population across the South East particularly was decimated in the Great Storm, and the impact on mature trees continues to mount as storms and hurricanes become seasonal

norms in the UK.

“If any of our champions fell in high winds, we would have to alert TROBI and amend the records accordingly,” Jamie notes. “The Register runs a big team of volunteers - tree buff Ron came to check our collection - and he has been really supportive.”

Storms are not the only threat to champion trees though. Onset of invasive insects, parasites, killer moulds and fungi as climate change grips the UK all pose

potential perils that only constant vigilance can ward off.

The 50-strong team of volunteer gardeners at Cannizaro Park in south-west London, also keep tabs on its CT stock, besides recently getting stuck into some heavier landscaping and upgrade (making a bog garden, renovating the rose garden and transporting 50 tonnes of fresh topsoil to site by wheelbarrow) alongside council contractor Idverde, which is also responsible

Leading Manufacturers of Cricket Ground Equipment



STUART CANVAS

CRICKET









www.stuartcanvas.co.uk | sales@stuartcanvas.co.uk | 01925 814525



Tree surgeon Tom House surveys a tree at Leonardslee

Register roundup

- Numbers 11,000 different taxa, including cultivated varieties.
- Quercus alone has 620 genera and 651 cultivated species, hybrids and varieties, each with its own champion, as do the two native oaks.
- Village sports and recreation grounds and across the country harbour tree champions.
- The oriental plane at Woodstock Sports Club dates back to 1765.
- Hayton Recreation Ground near Carlisle boasts the largest walnut tree in Cumbria

for formal areas. Further projects are planned by the park charity The Friends of Cannizaro Park.

Owned by the London Borough of Merton, the Grade 2* listed park has more than 60 trees on the Register, including more than 40 CTs, nearly all of those Greater London ones, with three exceptions, which are also England CTs. The park's self-styled 'tree team', volunteers Richard True and Piers Le Marquand, started labelling many of the champions, and other interesting specimens about two years ago.

"I sourced a specialist printer to supply labels that included Latin and common names, and a QR code to allow visitors to discover more information, such as when best seen and natural range," Richard explains. "Once scanned and read, tapping the text links to the park website for more details."

Ready to launch phase 2 of the labelling process after earmarking more trees,

Richard is printing QR codes and preparing labels himself to cut costs. "We lost a few labels through vandalism but have replaced them to maintain a full record. David Alderman measured some of the trees when he visited and gave us a blue label for the British Isles champion, a sassafras."

Fancy checking out champions?

The Tree Register welcomes volunteers to help it keep tabs on the champion specimens it has listed - reverifying them and measuring new candidates for entry.

TROBI is also anxious to extend its seed collection programme to evaluate the local genetic base and help strengthen resistance to disease and climate change.

You can cover your own home patch or elsewhere - the choice is yours and TROBI may reimburse travel costs.

Email David Alderman at: david@treeregister.org



The sector's in a Catch 22, chicken and egg dilemma. The temptation is to buy the tree types we are familiar with and that risks driving out less well-known species



Veteran oak



agrovista
amenity

growing
through
innovation



Professional
spreading for
any season

Cresco 30

- Designed for professional applications
- Hopper capacity: 46Kg
- Pneumatic Wheels
- 3 Year Manufacturer Warranty

**Due
September
2022**



 @AgrovistaAMNTY

   @AgrovistaUK

enquiries@agrovista.co.uk

www.agrovista.co.uk/amenity

**Contact
your local Amenity
Specialist for more
information**

Why we use it and how to use it

Nitrogen efficiency

It is hard to escape from the fact that the cost of nitrogen fertilisers has increased significantly due to a range of factors placing strain on both supply and demand globally. With this in mind, it is useful to reconsider why we use nitrogen and how to use nitrogen efficiently to reduce costs and environmental harm and improve plant growth.

Agrovista UK Technical Manager **Dr. Abigail Graceson** discusses nitrogen efficiency and why it's important for plant growth

Why are prices for nitrogen fertilisers increasing?

The price of nitrogen fertilisers is significantly influenced by costs of natural gas due to the importance of this resource in the fertiliser production process.

Globally, the majority of synthetic fertilisers are produced industrially using the Haber-Bosch process in which nitrogen (N_2) from the air is combined with hydrogen (H_2) from natural gas to produce liquid ammonia (NH_3). This energy intensive process utilises fossil fuels to achieve the high temperatures of 400-500°C and pressures of 150-300 bar that are required. The ammonia is then used

to make nitric acid which can be combined with ammonia to create ammonium nitrate or with liquid carbon dioxide to create urea.

In total, it is estimated that production of nitrogen fertilisers accounts for three to five percent of the global annual natural gas consumption (European Commission, 2019). The reliance on energy intensive processes and fossil fuels, in particular natural gas, is the primary driver for nitrogen fertiliser prices.

Why is nitrogen important for plant growth?

Nitrogen is a key component of proteins which help plants to grow by providing structural support for cells, helping cells to

interact with their environment, and reducing the energy requirements for biochemical reactions. Proteins also transport nitrogen through the plant and are nitrogen donors for other fundamental compounds such as:

- Nucleic acids: The building blocks of DNA and RNA
- Hormones: Chemicals which control activities within the plant
- Chlorophyll: The pigments that enable plants to create food through photosynthesis

Proteins are formed from the bonding of amino acids. Each amino acid has a basic



Growth driven nutrient application methods measure plant nitrogen use to direct management inputs



Photo by Jonas Weckschmied

structure with a central carbon atom which is bonded to an amino group (NH_2), a carboxyl (acid) group (COOH), and a hydrogen atom. The final component is an R group which determines the unique properties of each of the 20 different amino acids.

The nitrogen that is used as a component of amino acids and proteins is generally taken up from the soil in the form of either nitrate (NO_3^-) or ammonium (NH_4^+).

Nitrates are the preferred form and can either be stored in the root for later use or translocated to the shoot where it is assimilated into amino acids. When ammonium is taken up from the soil, assimilation generally occurs in the plant root following uptake (Tischner, 2000).

Why is excess nitrogen harmful?

Applying excess nitrogen is not only a waste of available resources and money, but can also lead to problems with the plants it is intended to support, to the wider environment and to human health.

The effect of excess nitrogen on plants

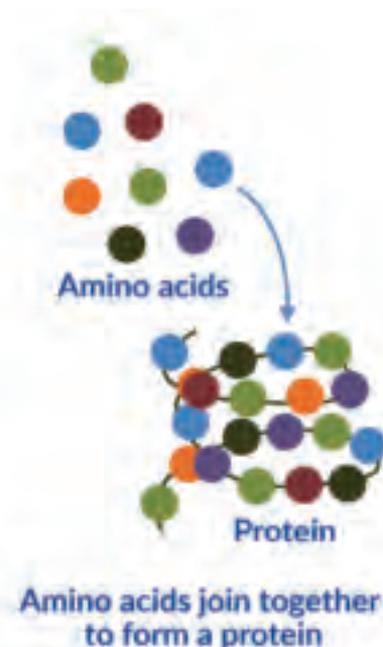
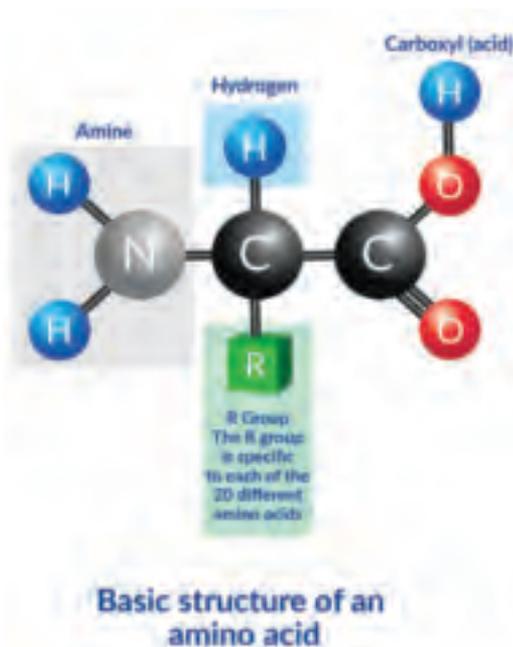
Excessive levels of nitrogen fertiliser can give foliage a weak physical structure which is susceptible to both abiotic stresses, such as drought, heat or cold, and to biotic stresses such as disease and insect damage. Whilst there is no specific nitrogen toxicity effect, the physical symptoms described above can cause significant



**Liquid fertilisers
generally release nutrients
rapidly with typical
longevity around 2-4 weeks.
They excel at providing fine
nutrient control determined
by plant requirements**



Excessive levels of nitrogen fertiliser can give foliage a weak physical structure which is susceptible to both abiotic stresses, such as drought, heat or cold, and to biotic stresses such as disease and insect damage



damage if excess nitrogen conditions are allowed to continue. In addition, it is known that ammonium can induce toxicity in plants when conditions limit the ability of the growing media to convert ammonium to nitrate (Handreck and Black, 2002). Conditions that can induce this are related to low soil oxygen levels (i.e. compaction, drainage etc) (Gelernter et al., 2001) and to reduced photosynthetic potential (dull, cool weather) (Handreck and Black, 2002). This leads to plants becoming wilted and stunted (Handreck and Black, 2002).

The effect of excess nitrogen on soils

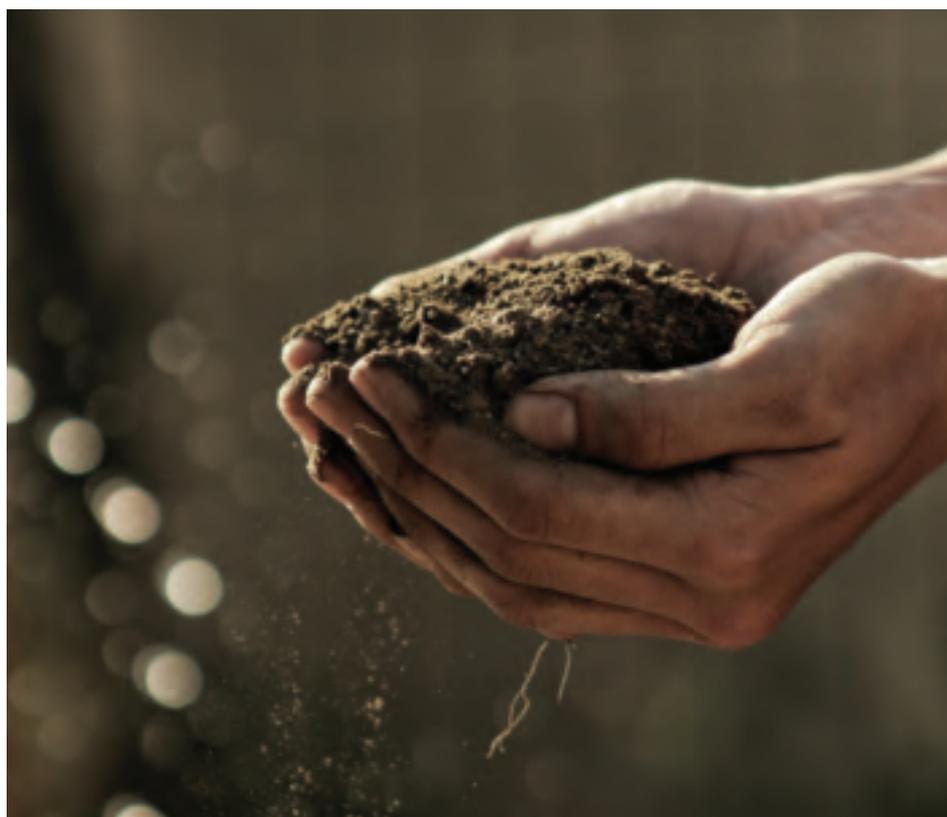
Excess applications of ammonium can lead to acidification of soils from the generation of hydrogen ions (H⁺) during conversion to nitrate. If the nitrogen is taken up by plants, hydroxide ions (OH⁻) combine with the hydrogen ions to form water (H₂O). Acidification is exacerbated when the nitrogen is not taken up by plants, and no hydroxide ions are released to combine with the hydrogen, creating a net increase in hydrogen ions leading to an increase in acidity.

The effect of excess nitrogen on water

Nitrogen that is not taken up by plants can leach from soils into water sources, affecting drinking water quality and creating pollution issues such as eutrophication.

Drinking water quality is compromised when nitrogen leaches into water sources because excessive nitrate can restrict oxygen transport in the bloodstream. Nitrate vulnerable zones (NVZ) were devised as a method of reducing nitrates in drinking water by requiring landowners to follow certain rules which minimise nitrate losses to water. NVZ designations are in force over some areas in the east of Scotland and the east of Wales. A large proportion of England is designated as a NVZ (UKSO, 2022).

Eutrophication can be caused when excess nitrogen leaches into water leading to excessive plant growth. This results in detrimental changes to the quality of the water and its value as a habitat.



In total, it is estimated that production of nitrogen fertilisers accounts for three to five percent of the global annual natural gas consumption



Photo by Lukas Bato



In addition to containing different nitrogen sources, fertilisers are available in different formulations which affect the speed and longevity of nitrogen delivery to the plant

The effect of excess nitrogen on air

Release of gaseous ammonia (NH_3) following applications of urea has adverse effects on human health as gaseous ammonia reacts with other chemicals in the air to form particulate matter.

Nitrates that are not taken up by the plant can undergo a process called de-nitrification which results in the formation of gaseous forms of nitrogen such as nitrous oxide N_2O . Gaseous nitrous oxide (N_2O) is a

potent greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change.

How can nitrogen be used efficiently?

Due to the importance of nitrogen to plant health and growth, its potential for harm to the environment and to public health, alongside price volatility, it is increasingly important to minimise nitrogen losses whilst maximising the value from nitrogen inputs. There are a range of strategies that can be

utilised to achieve this.

Using nitrogen efficiently: Nitrogen sources

Different nitrogen sources are converted to plant available forms over different timescales. Nitrate followed by ammonium are the most plant available forms of the nutrient. When other sources of nitrogen are supplied, for example urea, it must be converted to these plant available forms

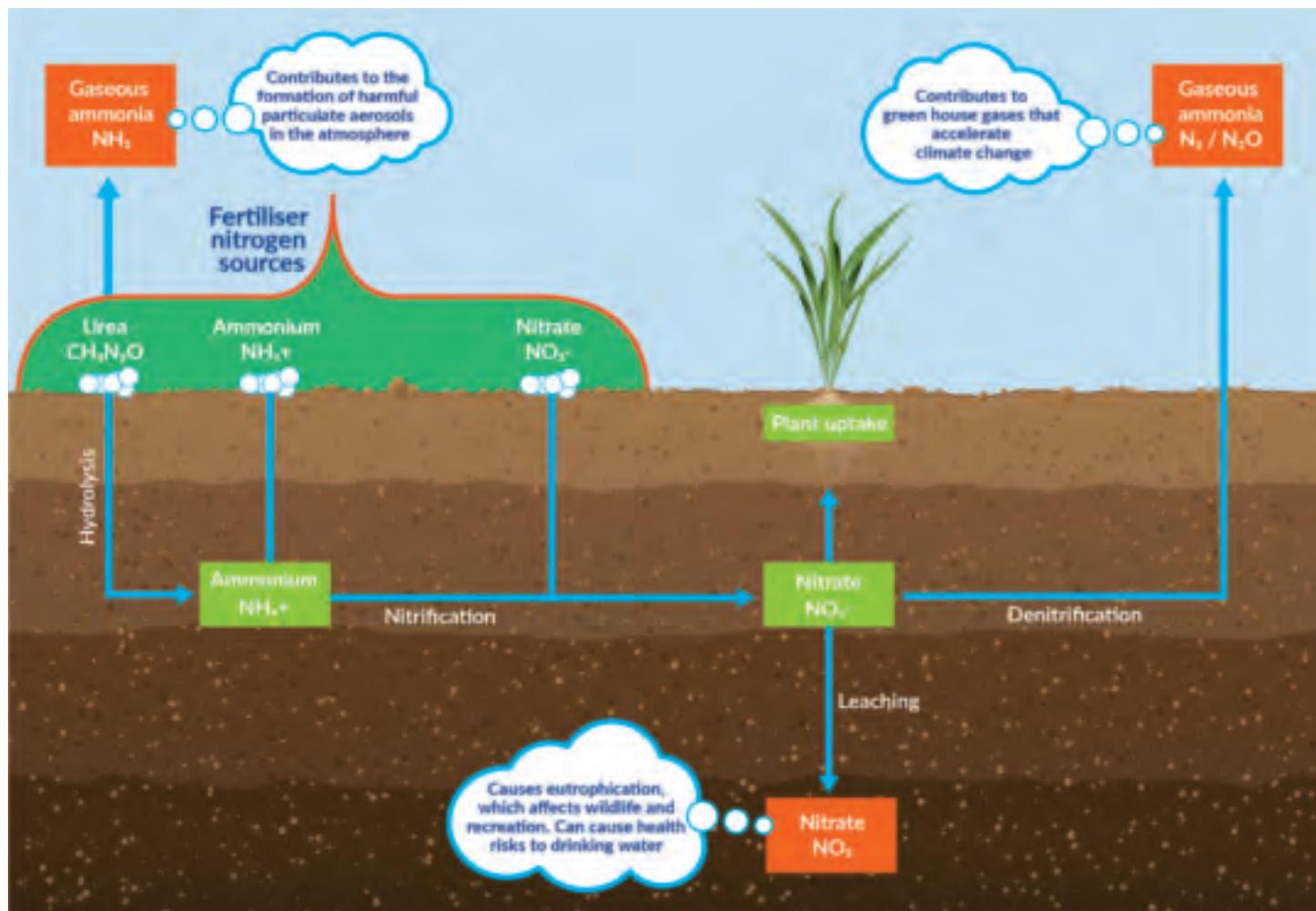
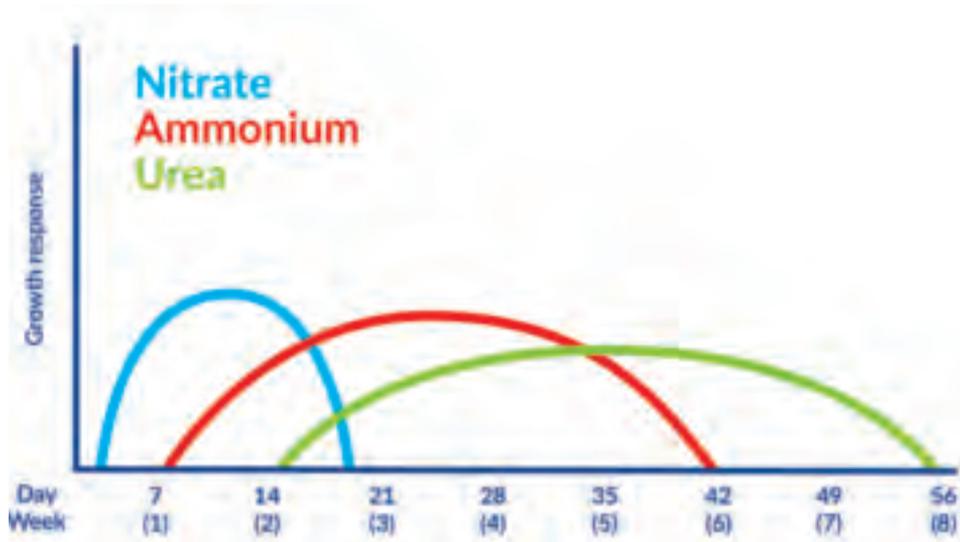


Photo by Silas Baisch



before it becomes useful to the plant.

The aim is to match nitrogen sources with plant requirements over time. For example, a nitrate fertiliser may provide an initial hit of nitrogen that is rapidly depleted whereas urea will take a period of time to be converted into a useable form but may be available for plant uptake for longer. Many fertilisers combine nitrogen sources to provide a consistent amount of nitrogen over the expected release period.

**Using nitrogen efficiently:
Fertiliser formulations**

In addition to containing different nitrogen sources, fertilisers are available in different formulations which affect the speed and longevity of nitrogen delivery to the plant. This in turn affects the likelihood of losses to the environment.

Liquid fertilisers generally release nutrients rapidly with typical longevity around 2-4 weeks. They excel at providing fine nutrient control determined by

plant requirements.

Conventional granular fertilisers have a typical nitrogen release period of 2-6 weeks. Organo-mineral, slow-release, or controlled release use different methods to reduce losses to the environment with typical nitrogen release periods of 6-12 weeks and 12+ weeks respectively:

- Organo-mineral fertilisers: gradually convert nitrogen from an organic form to a plant available form such as nitrate or ammonium. Typical release periods are 6-12 weeks.
- Slow-release fertilisers: gradually convert chemically bound urea to a plant available nitrogen form. Nitrification/urease inhibitors might also be used. Typical release periods are 6-12 weeks.
- Controlled release fertilisers: utilise coatings to determine release rate by water penetration and temperature. Typical release periods are 12+weeks.



Drinking water quality is compromised when nitrogen leaches into water sources because excessive nitrate can restrict oxygen transport in the bloodstream



Fertiliser application at Huyton and Prescott Golf Club



Photo by Nadine Shaabana

Using nitrogen efficiently: Fertiliser application

Soil nitrate and ammonium levels are extremely variable over short periods of time and therefore they are not usually tested for alongside other nutrients in soil analyses. Even during the time period that it takes for a soil sample to get from the soil to the lab and tested, there can be a considerable change in nitrogen levels. Because of this, nitrogen application recommendations are usually based on other known factors such as grass species, turf use and soil type.

Nitrogen fertilisers should only be used when plants are growing actively. The Code of Good Agricultural Practices for Farmers, Growers and Land Managers states that nitrogen fertilisers should not be applied to grass between 15 September and 15 January unless there is a specific crop requirement at this time (DEFRA, 2009). This helps to ensure that nitrogen fertilisers are used during active plant growth to coincide with plant nitrogen requirements.

Growth driven nutrient application methods measure plant nitrogen use to direct management inputs. This ensures that nutrient applications are made prior to observable nutrient deficiencies and do not exceed plant requirements. Suitable methods include measuring clipping volumes to approximate nutrient removal (Kreuser, 2018), or directly measuring leaf nitrogen levels (Ericsson, et al., 2021). Fertilisation inputs can then be increased/ decreased in response to sustained deviations of measured levels.

Nitrate uptake can be impaired following mowing and therefore avoiding nutrient applications immediately after mowing could improve uptake (Bowman, 1987).

Using nitrogen efficiently: irrigation

Opportunities for leaching can be reduced if irrigation rates and frequencies do not allow water to reach beyond the active rooting depth (Barton & Colmer, 2006).

Using nitrogen efficiently: complementary products

Complementary products are those which facilitate better uptake or use of nutrients in the plant:

- Humates can contribute to improved nitrogen use efficiency by stimulating the H⁺-ATPase enzyme which acts as a proton pump to increase movement of nutrients from the soil solution into the xylem.
- Amino acids utilise nitrogen as an essential component, but the synthesis of amino acids is a very energy intensive process. Therefore, providing a supply of amino acids to the plant helps to reduce energy use for this process, resulting in an increase in energy for other processes such as growth.
- Carbon sources can increase or maintain the carbon to nitrogen ratio in the soil, ensuring there is an energy source to fuel the microorganisms that convert nitrogen sources into plant available compounds.
- Plant growth regulators can reduce plant nitrogen requirements simply because the amount of growth is reduced. If nitrogen application is measured to match nitrogen removal through mowing, a reduction in mowing requirements will result in a reduction in the nitrogen required (Soldat & Kreuser, 2012).

References

- Ericsson, T. et al., 2021. *Precision fertilisation - from theory to practice*. Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (STERF).
- European Commission, 2019. *Fertilisers in the EU: Prices, trade and use*. European Commission.
- Kreuser, B., 2018. *What's the deal with measuring clipping volume*. University of Nebraska.
- Soldat, D. & Kreuser, B., 2012. *How growth regulators change putting green nitrogen requirements*. Wisconsin soils report.



Dr. Abigail Graceson



The little known science behind

Healthy water this summer

There are scientific reasons why we're drawn to water, it's calming, peaceful and inspiring, adding beauty to any landscape. Our love for it is pervasive and why most of our holidays are situated as near to the shoreline as possible. So, to say an attractive waterscape will bring benefit to your venue is quite an obvious statement

But, as with anything in life, maintenance is key to ensure it remains healthy, especially as we head into the warm weather of summer. Here, Simon Powell, business development manager for Otterbine at Reesink Turfcare, considers how water management for clean, healthy water in summer is critical.

Summer changes

When spring turns to summer, water begins to stratify due to differences in temperature. Before we get into the details of thermal stratification and lake turnover, there are two things to remember:

- Water density depends on its temperature. The warmer the water, the less dense it becomes. Water is at its densest at 4 degrees.
- Liquids of different densities often do not mix easily. The greater the difference in density, the harder it is to get the liquids to mix. Warm and cold water is as resistant to mixing as oil and vinegar.

Thermal stratification occurs when the water forms distinct layers through heating from the sun. Sunlight only penetrates a few metres into the lake, directly warming just the top few metres. As the water warms, it becomes less dense and remains at the



Otterbine's Gemini fountain

surface, floating in a layer above the cooler, denser water below.

The shallowest layer is the top surface layer called the epilimnion. It's at the top and interacts with the wind and sunlight, so it contains the most dissolved oxygen. Although dissolved oxygen doesn't play a direct role in lake stratification and turnover, it is important for all aquatic organisms that require oxygen to survive.

The deepest layer is the cold, dense water at the lake bottom called the hypolimnion. The hypolimnion often remains around 4 degrees throughout the year, rarely gets any direct warmth from the sun and is isolated from the air at the surface of the lake. The hypolimnion contains the lowest amount of

dissolved oxygen and can often become anoxic (zero dissolved oxygen).

The middle layer is the transition zone of water between the warm epilimnion and the cold hypolimnion, called the metalimnion. This is where the shallowest of the cool waters in the hypolimnion gradually warm up until they mix into the epilimnion. The point of greatest temperature difference (and therefore density difference) is called the thermocline and occurs within the metalimnion.

Warm summer water holds less oxygen than any other time of the year. As bacteria consume nutrients and dead organisms, oxygen depletes faster than it is replaced and the layer at the bottom loses all oxygen



Once water has lost its ecological balance and goes into crisis, the costs of restoring it increase dramatically

Top ten reasons for aeration

1. Algae and aquatic weed control
2. Odour reduction
3. Reduction/elimination of chemicals
4. Phosphorus reduction
5. Eliminates fish kills
6. Oxidation of iron and heavy metals
7. Mosquito breeding deterrent
8. Beneficial to aquatic animal life and the ecosystem
9. Prolongs the life of the pond/lake/reservoir
10. Public safety: aeration prevents diseases associated with stagnant water



Wildlife on the water is a good indication that it's clean and clear

and becomes anoxic. Anaerobic bacteria digest organic material much more slowly, resulting in the formation of hydrogen sulfide gas, which has that sulfuric smell we all hate, and large algae blooms overcome the oxygen supply when decomposing, creating a toxic environment for wildlife. This situation remains until autumn cooling allows the lake to mix again unless aeration is added.

Aeration

Aerating water combats these problems by preventing stratification and increasing the overall oxygen supply in the lake by adding dissolved oxygen to the water. Aeration supports oxidative processes and aerobic digestion, where naturally forming bacteria consume or biodegrade organic material.

We speak of oxidation primarily in that oxygen attaches to phosphorus in the water and converts it to an insoluble form, unavailable to plants as a nutrient. For example, one gram of phosphorus grows

one hundred grams of algae.

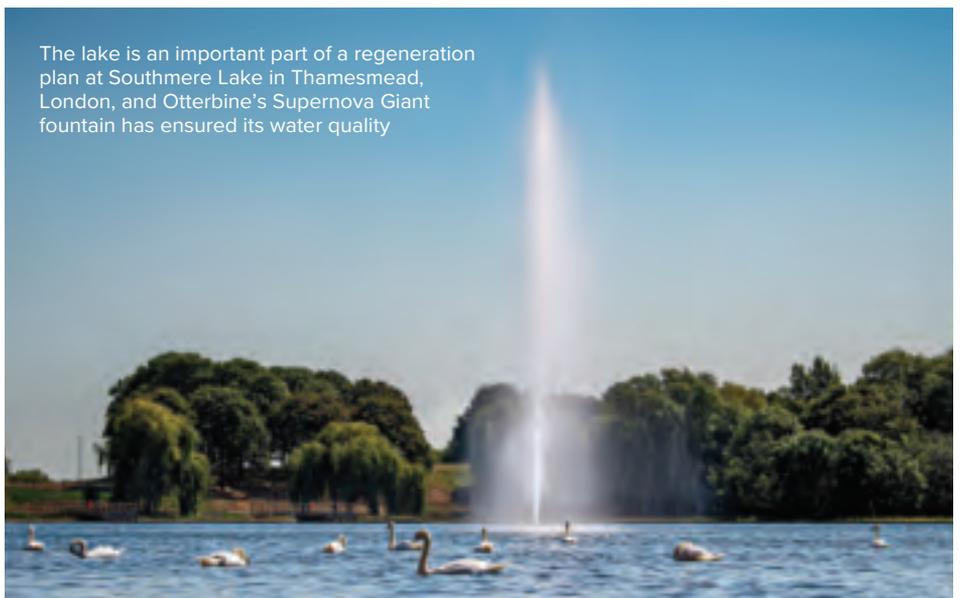
Pond or lake aeration is a better choice for the environment as it reduces the need for chemicals to combat problems caused by low oxygen including algae and aquatic weeds, fish kills, poor water clarity and smells.

Healthy ponds and lakes have the proper balance of oxygen and nutrients to sustain plants, fish and other living organisms. There are three sources for oxygen in the water - as a by-product of photosynthesis, from currents or wind pushing oxygen through the surface and via an aerator. Oxygen depletion occurs because oxygen is used even when there is insufficient natural water current, wind or sunlight occurring.

No matter what the cause of low oxygen is, adding diffused oxygen to the water column is a permanent solution. It increases water circulation, prevents stagnant-thermally stratified water and reduces muck; restoring a healthy, balanced ecosystem.



Oxygen transfer rates are the key to success. It's the gold standard for the measure of how much oxygen an aeration system transfers and for addressing all the reasons why aeration is needed



The lake is an important part of a regeneration plan at Southmere Lake in Thamesmead, London, and Otterbine's Supernova Giant fountain has ensured its water quality



Oxygen transfer rates

The scientific measure of an aerator's capability to supply oxygen to water is its 'Oxygen Transfer Rate' (OTR). Defined by The American Society of Civil Engineers, it's the gold standard for the measure of how much oxygen an aeration system transfers and for addressing all the reasons why aeration is needed.

Any manufacturer serious about helping customers achieve a balanced, clean ecosystem will provide oxygen transfer tests performed by an independent third party. Do be sure to ask for a manufacturer's test results when in the market for an aerator. Otterbine's, for example, are tested by the University of Minnesota and Gerry Shell Environmental Labs and the results can be found online at otterbine.com.

By simply adding dissolved oxygen to water, you are supporting the aerobic and oxidative processes of the water. The oxygen attaches to the phosphorus and converts it into an insoluble form, making it unavailable to plants as a nutrient.

You may wonder how the Oxygen Transfer Rate (OTR) of different aerators vary. Surface spray and diffused aerators are the most common and, in terms of the amount of oxygen transferred, that can range from 1.59lbs of oxygen per horsepower hour in 8ft of water from a diffused aerator to 3lbs of oxygen per horsepower hour regardless of depth from a surface spray aerator. Which one you choose depends on the size of the body of water you're looking to aerate.

Types of aerators

Surface spray and diffused aerators are the most common type. So, what's the difference between the two? Surface spray aerators throw water droplets through the air. The droplets trap atmospheric oxygen molecules and fall to the surface releasing 'dissolved oxygen' into the water. While diffused aerators work by compressing oxygen and pumping it into the water from

the bottom. Oxygen is transferred across all depths and achieves total aeration.

Using the Otterbine high volume surface spray aerator as an example, this adds over 3lbs (1.5kg) of oxygen to the water per horsepower hour regardless of depth. Independent tests indicate that surface spray units add 2mg/l of dissolved oxygen to the water at depths of 12ft (3.6m). Diffused aeration is a process where air is driven down a tube and released through a diffuser at the bottom of the basin. The air bubbles are slowly 'absorbed' by the water as they rise to the surface. Air bubbles rise to the surface at 1ft (30cm) per second, meaning that diffuser OTR increases with depth. A diffused aerator will transfer only 1.59lbs of oxygen per horsepower hour in 8ft (2.4m) of water, while it will transfer up to 2.72lbs (1.23kg) of oxygen per horsepower hour in 14ft (4.2m) depths.

The Otterbine 1hp high volume and Sunburst aerators have a higher OTR than a 1hp diffuser system at depths of 8ft-14ft (2.4m-4.2m).

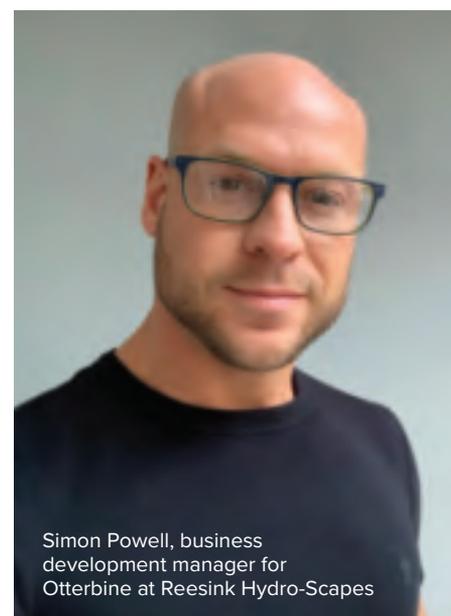
We understand that for some, water management may not be top of the to-do priority list, but it really does pay dividends to act now before the problems take hold - which they surely will in summer. Once water has lost its ecological balance and goes into crisis, the costs of restoring it increase dramatically. As well as often being more expensive to implement, reactive solutions tend to be less friendly to the environment too.

So, by simply adding an aerator to the water, you are preventing all 10 reasons for poor quality, smelly, insect-infested, unappealing water landscapes.

There are experts in water management at Reesink Hydro-Scapes, Otterbine's UK distributor, who will be happy to help understand your water body's oxygen needs. Contact Reesink on 01480 226800, email info@reesinkturfcare.co.uk or visit reesinkturfcare.co.uk.



As bacteria consume nutrients and dead organisms, oxygen depletes faster than it is replaced and the layer at the bottom loses all oxygen and becomes anoxic



Simon Powell, business development manager for Otterbine at Reesink Hydro-Scapes



Frank Newberry

Delegation can supercharge your career



Trainer and Conference Speaker **Frank Newberry** believes that you can supercharge your own career and the careers of others with delegation. If you personally want to avoid your career being ‘plateaued’ – then delegation can really help. Frank defines his terms, identifies the key players in your personal delegation equation and suggests a starting point - if you do not already have one

The Four Ds: Delegation, Devolution, Distribution, Dumping

I personally would define the term ‘delegation’ as being when higher level work or tasks are being passed down to be done by a person at a lower level. All the while, the boss or the person doing the delegating retains responsibility for the quality and quantity of the work being done.

They get the credit for a job well done; they get the blame if the work is done poorly. If however, the responsibility for the work is also being passed down - that for me would be ‘devolution’ not delegation. Done successfully, devolution could result in changes to job descriptions and even some pay adjustments.

Now, if the work being passed down is appropriate to the lower level anyway - then that would be ‘distribution’. If the person delegating work only passes down boring, dirty or repetitive jobs - that would be ‘dumping.’

Key players in your delegation equation

To avoid your career being plateaued early, you could begin with the three key players in your delegation equation. The three people are YOU, your BOSS and a COLLEAGUE to whom you can delegate some of your work. The key dependencies that need to be in place are:

1. You personally must want to do higher level work, including doing all of the associated leadership duties.
2. Your boss must see the advantages of passing higher level work down to you. Question - does your boss currently think you are capable of doing higher level work and taking on leadership duties?

A cascade of higher level work flowing downwards

Your boss needs to see that your doing higher level work has benefits for you and for him or her. Why? Because you will be doing higher level work, and your boss will be supervising someone doing higher level work. Maybe your boss can go to his/her boss and get higher level work delegated

down also, and so on, like a cascade of higher level work flowing downwards?

3. Finally, to make space in your work schedule - you will need to find a lower level colleague who is willing to widen their range of duties to include some of your work.

A starting point

The key here is not to wait and see - but to make the first move and get the ball rolling. If anyone says ‘no’, or ‘I don’t know’, then a starting point might be you suggesting you could all do it for a ‘trial period’ - ‘see how we get on’ - before a final decision is made.

The new arrangements will involve you in deploying at least four different leadership approaches or styles, these are the directing style, the coaching style, the supporting style and the delegating style.

There is no one perfect leadership style

Fifty years ago, Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard coined the term ‘situational leadership’, meaning that your leadership style may need to change when your situation at work changes. While others strived to identify an ‘ideal’ leadership style that worked for any situation - Hersey and Blanchard concluded that there is no one



I have to report that supervisors and managers in the turfcare sector do not do well at delegating. Some do, most do not!

Leadership Style	Key Actions
1. Directing	The leader gives clear direction and supervises people and their work closely. Good for trainees and emergency situations
2. Coaching	The leader expands the team's skills base and discusses work methods, priorities etc. more with team members
3. Supporting	The leader gives personal support and encouragement at team members' times of worry and pressure - to individuals and to the whole group
4. Delegating	Having given direction, coaching and support, the leader now 'lets go of the reins' and starts delegating higher level work to people. Leader eventually leaves people alone to do the higher level work - with little or no supervision.

perfect leadership style.

Rather, they suggested that four different leadership styles need to be deployed, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the situation prevailing in the workplace. They stressed the need for bosses to be competent in - and able to flex across - four different leadership styles in the table above.

Situational leadership had been proven to work

Becoming competent in each style and being able to adopt the right style, or combination of styles, to a range of situations at work resulted in leaders being able to get the best out of work teams. So far, so good. Hersey and Blanchard's work was a success all over the globe. Situational leadership had been proven to work.

Now, I have been testing people in the turfcare sector against this model for over thirty years and I have to report that supervisors and managers in the sector do not do well at delegating. Some do, most do not.

Turfcare sector people have their preferences as far as leadership styles are concerned. Ideally, every supervisor or manager in the sector would be equally good at giving direction as s/he is at coaching people. They would be just as good at being supportive of individuals as they are at delegating to people. However, let me share my findings of the last thirty years:

Leadership style and its popularity in the turfcare sector:

Coaching style: Most popular among turfcare people - by a good margin. Turfcare supervisors 'coach' too much?

Supporting style: Second most popular. Do just enough 'supporting'

Directing style: Third most popular. Comfortable giving 'direction'

Delegating style: Least popular style. Vast majority avoid 'delegating'

Reasons for these sector-wide low delegation levels

Now, I have heard many excuses or reasons given to account for these low delegation style preferences. Reasons given include the following:

I cannot delegate much because:

1. 'I am a perfectionist'
2. 'My team are inexperienced'
3. 'It's quicker to do the higher level work myself'
4. 'I cannot trust them to do the work well enough'
5. 'My people are not interested in higher level work'
6. 'I like the higher level work; I do not want to give it up'
7. 'If I train someone else to do my work - I could lose my job!'
8. 'They will want more pay before they do any higher level tasks'
9. 'My team are older people and do not want to change their ways'
10. 'I will have to do more training of people, and I don't have the time'.

Now colluding with one or more of the ten reasons above is a good way of trapping yourself at the supervisory level - as opposed to being a manager of supervisors. Relevant questions for supervisors or managers might be:

Five relevant questions for supervisors or managers

1. Do you want to stay at your present level and salary - until retirement?
2. Are you working long hours and taking short holidays?
3. Is it helping your employer if the team is so dependent on you and your skills?
4. Why are you denying yourself opportunities to get the best out of



If the work being passed down is appropriate to the lower level - that would be 'distribution'. If the person delegating work only passes down boring, dirty or repetitive jobs - that would be 'dumping'

yourself and others at work - by training them how to do higher level tasks - delegated to them by you?

5. Have you got your name on your boss's succession plan?

(For more information on Succession Plans - check out my 2015 article 'Who is Getting Your Job?' in issue sixty-one of Pitchcare).

Five questions for people who want to do higher level work

1. Have you told your boss that you want to help by doing higher level work?
2. Have you identified higher level tasks that you can do *right now* to help your boss and the organisation?
3. Have you told your boss that you have prioritised your work load and you estimate (for example) that you can spend a half day per week performing delegated tasks?
4. Have you helped a team member to prioritise their work so that they can accept delegated work (for half a day per week) from you?
5. Have you got your name on your boss's succession plan?

Until next time then, I wish you well with avoiding a career plateau, and getting or giving others the delegation that will raise the standard of leadership and delegation in the turfcare sector.

Frank Newberry has been helping people in the turfcare sector to get better results for over thirty years. His clients include the ATP Ireland, BIGGA, the GMA and Sampson Training Solutions. If you are new to supervision and delegation, or if you are an old hand looking to take your performance to the next level - just contact Frank by e-mail or by telephone via the contact tab of his personal website which is at www.franknewberry.com

© 2022 Frank Newberry

AERATION

ALS
ALS Contract Services
01952 259281
alscontracts.co.uk

Decompaction and aeration services

• Nationwide service • Experienced team • Customer satisfaction • Punctual and reliable • Early start

DOUBLE-QUICK

Slit, Roll, Rake, and Brush - all in one pass!

WATCH!

GreenTek

0113 267 7000 www.greentek.uk.com

TERRAIN AERATION

Turf and Trees

- 10" drill aeration
- 1m air injection
- 1m soil coring
- Air excavation

Tel: 01449 673783
www.terrainaeration.com
terrainaeration@aol.com

Advertising with us for as little as £200 a year.
Call : 01952 924202

BOWSERS

Technet TANKS

Diesel Bowsers

220L £6399

- Manufactured in the UK
- 12 month warranty
- 12v 40L/min pump
- 440L & 220L options
- AdBlue option available

01353 862044

DRAINAGE

DESIGN • CONSTRUCTION • RENOVATION

duncan ross LTD

Water Constructive • Flood Drainage Systems • Sand Slitting • Soil Vibro Sand Batching • Vibro Drilling • Wetland • Turfdrainage • Overmounding • Root Security • Weed Control • Landscaping

01257 255321
office@duncanrossltd.co.uk
www.duncanrossltd.co.uk

Philip Dixon Contractors Ltd
Established 1978
Sports Turf Drainage Specialist
Drainage Construction Renovation

Sitting Batching Maintenance
Tel 01772 877289 (Preston, Lancs)
Email: info@dixondrainage.co.uk
www.dixondrainage.co.uk

MILES DRAINAGE (20) LTD

Quality Level Drainage Systems for Sports Fields, Golf Courses and other Amenity Areas

- Advice, design and installation
- Piped systems • Sand Slitting
- Gravel Batching

01359 258424
www.milesdrainage.co.uk
trechery@milesdrainage.co.uk

ADVERTISE HERE

Advertising in this section costs as little as £200 a year.

For options and prices

Contact us on:
01952 898516

ALS
ALS Contract Services
01952 259281
alscontracts.co.uk

Decompaction and drainage services

• Nationwide service • Experienced team • Customer satisfaction • Punctual and reliable • Early start

Sell your unwanted machines or search for a used one.

You can advertise a machine for up to 8 weeks for just £30 plus VAT.
pitchcare.com/used_machinery

DRAINAGE

MJ ABBOTT LIMITED

Drainage experts

- Design & installation
- Primary pipe systems
- Sand slitting
- Gravel batching
- Ground breaking

Call 01722 716361
www.mjabbott.co.uk

Speed...
Versatility...
Efficiency...

Sports Turf Drainage
Sand Slitting & Batching
Construction
Maintenance
Renovation

PEARL

ONGAR, ESSEX
T: 01277 890274
www.hughpearl.co.uk

Est. 62 years

GREENS CARE EQUIPMENT

DYNA-CORER

- Fast micro-coring
- Lightweight
- 4M holes per hr

WATCH!

GreenTek

0113 267 7000 www.greentek.uk.com

IRRIGATION

MJ ABBOTT
LIMITED



Irrigation experts

- Design & installation
- Maintenance & repairs
- Remote system support
- Online shop for spares
- Water storage reservoirs

Call 01722 716361
www.mjabbott.co.uk

K·A·R UK

The leading wholesaler of irrigation equipment in the UK

Hunter[®]
Official Distributors

Tel: 0161 793 9703 www.karuk.com

Lwsirrigation

For all your golf, sports turf and landscape irrigation needs.



Buy online at www.lws.uk.com

Telephone 0345 230 9697
www.lws.uk.com **RAIN-BIRD**

OCMIS

Irrigation Systems
Design
Supply
Installation
Maintenance

Tel: 01480 241 939
Web: www.Ocmis.com

LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES

agrovista
amenity



Your modern, technical approach to landscaping, horticultural and amenity solutions

T: 0115 939 0202
E: enquiries@agrovista.co.uk
@AgrovistaAMNTY
www.agrovista.co.uk/amenity

LINEMARKING

WWW.SPORTSMARK.NET

A LINEMARKER TO SUIT ALL BUDGETS



LINE MARKING AND SETTING OUT EQUIPMENT PLUS PAINT - ALL IN ONE PLACE

CALL JULIE NOW ON 0800 0197733
SALES@SPORTSMARK.NET

Sell your unwanted machines or search for a used one.

You can advertise a machine for up to 8 weeks for just £30 plus VAT.

Or find a used machine.

pitchcare.com/used_machinery

MH Irrigation Services Ltd

Design, installation and system maintenance

Waggon washes and dust suppression

Nationwide
24/7 cover

Certified suppliers and installers of
Hunter
RAIN-BIRD
TORO
equipment

07714 152676 mhirrigationservices@gmail.com
mhirrigationservicesltd.uk

MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

BLADE Machinery Limited
Professional Lawn & Turf Care Equipment

BanNerman
Lawn Treatment Equipment
Used by many UK Lawn Treatment Professionals



Friction Free
Activation:
No nuisance
plugs or cables
Plus:
It reduces labour
and compression

Call: 01260 278 798
www.blademachinery.co.uk

Fixed Blade De-Thatcher / Scarifier

Professional Machines for a Professional Finish

01903 278240
www.ttirrigation.co.uk

Topturf
IRRIGATION

FULL SERVICE SUPPORT
SYSTEM DESIGN, SUPPLY & BUILD
OTTERBINE LAKE & POND AERATOR FOUNTAINS

NEW TURF-CONDITIONER 12

- 3.6m wide
- Adjustable rakes
- Removes thatch
- Controls nap

WATCH!


GreenTek

0113 267 7000 www.greentek.uk.com



Why not visit our online Buyers Guide for direct links to suppliers websites and email addresses - www.pitchcare.com

www.pitchcare.com

MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS



MULTI-BRUSH

- 5.4m wide
- Wormcast control
- Dew dispersal
- Topdressing

WATCH! 

GreenTek

0113 267 7000 www.greentek.uk.com

Major CS Pro
for compact tractors



 Watch Video

- ✓ 1.5m working width
- ✓ Fully galvanised deck

MAJOR 

Call 01524 850501 or visit www.major-equipment.com

A comprehensive range of machines covering all mowing requirements.

- Hire or buy
- Main dealers for: Dennis, Sisis, Ransomes, Iseki, Husqvarna, Etesia, Scag, Ferris, Ventrac and Ryan

rtmachinery.co.uk
T: 01844 299 037

 **RT MACHINERY™**

Enthusiastic specialists in lawncare and groundcare machinery since 2001



"Linking value with service"

STAR GREEN

From VALE Engineering (York) Ltd

SPRAYERS AND TOP DRESSERS
for tractors and UTVs



ROBUST & RELIABLE, UK MADE

Call: 01904 738533
Email: info@valeuk.com
www.stargreenturfcaresmachinery.co.uk

www.pitchcare.com

GROUNDSMAN *Leading the way*



- Turf Cutters
- Turf Aerators
- Core Collectors

info@groundsmanindustries.com
www.groundsmanindustries.com

RAKES & SHOVELS

CHELWOOD RAKES

For a wider range of specialist tools visit: chelwoodrakes.com

We offer a large range of rakes for all reasons, in sizes ranging from 35cm to 100cm wide, with a variety of tooth gaps.

+44 (0)1409 220230 sales@chelwoodrakes.com

REPLACEMENT AND SPARE PARTS

STEELMASTER PRODUCTS

Quality Aeration Tines. Made in the UK.

ORDER ONLINE
www.steelmaster.co.uk

SHOP ONLINE FOR REPLACEMENT **TINES**

BLADES, BRUSHES & QUALITY ACCESSORIES
FREE CARRIAGE ON ORDERS OVER £100

TINES DIRECT

SEEDING & OVERSEEDING

DYNA-SEEDER



- Precise & economical
- Fantastic germination
- Fits all greensmowers

WATCH! 

GreenTek

0113 267 7000 www.greentek.uk.com

pitchcare.com™
Serving The Turfcare Industry

ADVERTISE HERE

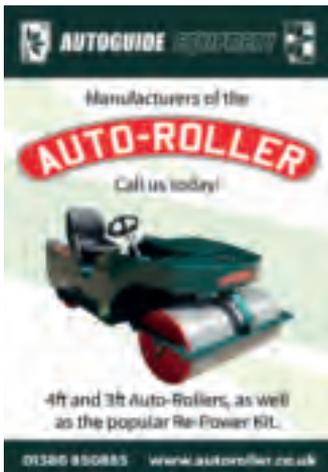
Advertising in this section costs as little as £200 a year.

For options and prices

Contact us on:
01952 898516

www.pitchcare.com

ROLLERS



AUTOGUIDE PROPERTY

Manufacturers of the
AUTO-ROLLER
Call us today!

4ft and 3ft Auto-Rollers, as well as the popular Re-Power RL.

01380 850855 www.autoroller.co.uk



POWERROLL

CRICKET WICKET ROLLERS
FOR VILLAGE CLUBS TO COUNTY GROUNDS

1910 REPAIRS TO SPORTS SURFACES
NEW AND REFURBISHED
PHONE 01223 833998
WWW.POWERROLL.COM

SPORTS SURFACE CONTRACTORS



AMS

AMENITY & LAND DRAINAGE CONTRACTORS

Constructing a better turf
for future generations

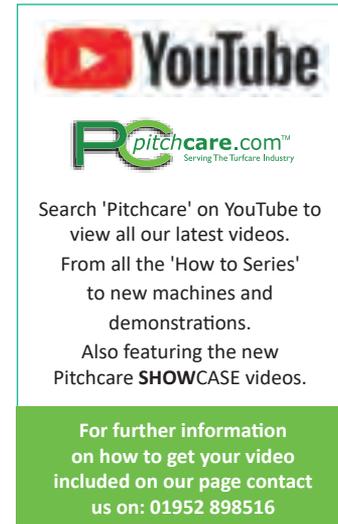
01223 833998



Swillington Rollers

A good selection of
reconditioned rollers
always in stock

Contact us on:
Phone: 01132 875318
Mobile: 07762 631297



YouTube

Pitchcare.com
Serving The Turfcare Industry

Search 'Pitchcare' on YouTube to view all our latest videos. From all the 'How to Series' to new machines and demonstrations. Also featuring the new Pitchcare **SHOWCASE** videos.

For further information on how to get your video included on our page contact us on: 01952 898516



CHAPPELOW
SPORTS TURF LTD

Construction. Maintenance. Performance.

01924 493359 info@chappelowsportsturf.co.uk
WWW.CHAPPELOWSPORTSTURF.CO.UK

Football. Rugby. Cricket. Golf. Bowling. Equestrian. Schools & Colleges. Local Authorities.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT



STUART CANVAS
COVERS

Leaders in covering all outdoor sports ground surfaces from cricket, tennis, football, rugby & indoor sports.

01925 814525
www.stuartcanvas.co.uk



Philip Dixon Contractors Ltd
Established 1978
Sportsturf Drainage Specialist
Drainage Construction Renovation

Sitting Banding Maintenance
Tel 01772 877289 (Preston, Lancs)
Email: info@dixon-drainage.co.uk
www.dixon-drainage.co.uk



ECOSOL TURFCARE

Ecosol Turfcare

Construction: Sports pitches, Cricket squares, AFL/RAFL/MUGA & Equestrian arenas

Renovation: RORO, heavy mow, laser-grade

Maintenance: Top-dress, overseed, aerate

Drainage: Primary piped system, Secondary gravel/bars & sand (grooving)

Golf: Ditch in fill, Grader Sand Injection, G&B Sand-fills

01566 861250 info@ecosolve.co.uk www.ecosolve.co.uk

Why not visit our online Buyers Guide for direct links to suppliers websites and email addresses - www.pitchcare.com



WWW.SPORTSMARK.NET

LARGE SELECTION OF SPORTS EQUIPMENT IN ONE PLACE

CALL JULIE NOW!
T 0800 0197733
SALES@SPORTSMARK.NET



MJ ABBOTT
LIMITED

Sports turf experts

- Sports turf construction
- Natural & artificial surfaces
- Drainage & irrigation
- Hard & soft landscaping
- Renovation & maintenance

Call 01722 716361
www.mjabbott.co.uk

SPRAYERS



TEAM VIXEN & TEAM DEMOUNTpro
JUST 2 OF OUR WINNING DESIGNS

From the super quiet, powered Vixen to compact push alongs and demountables with anti-drift covers, Team Sprayers have the lot!

new design features

British designed and proud of it.

team-sprayers.com Tel. +44(0)1353 661 211

SPORTSTURF SUPPLIES



The leading website servicing the Turfcare industry

PC pitchcare.com®
Serving The Turfcare Industry

Pitchcare stock an extensive range of **seed, turf nutrition, tools and equipment**, all at guaranteed competitive prices.

01902 440250

THATCH CONTROL



THATCH-AWAY

- Unparalleled thatch removal
- To fit all greensmowers

WATCH!



GreenTek

0113 267 7000 www.greentek.uk.com

TURF SUPPLIERS

Growers of natural, rootzone and hybrid sports turf using the very best STRI cultivars to create the perfect playing surface.

- ✓ Innovative Hybrid Turf Systems
- ✓ Custom grown turf
- ✓ 'Instant Play' sports pitch turf
- ✓ Golf and revetting turf
- ✓ Washed turf available in all grades

Tel: 01724 855000
www.countyturf.co.uk

Lindum
taking grass a step further

Specialist growers of sports and golf turf with a wide range of grades including washed and fibre reinforced Lokturf. Also Low Maintenance and Wildflower turf.

Tel: 01904 448675
lindum@turf.co.uk
www.turf.co.uk

TRAINING

GROUNDSTRAINING

Helping your team grow

- Pesticides, Safe Use and Application
- Pesticides Refresher Training
- Mowers, Tractors and ATVs
- Line Marking
- Seasonal Staff Inductions
- Train the Trainer
- Hand-Held Equipment
- Woodchippers and Shredders
- Sports Surface Maintenance
- Machinery Maintenance
- Toolbox Training
- Ecology

Lantra accredited training and assessment
Tailored to your team's needs
Delivered at your site
No travel. No hassle.

Spring 2022 Open Courses Booking Now

01865 509 510 | info@groundstraining.com | www.groundstraining.com

USED MACHINERY

Invicta Groundcare
Equipment Limited

We buy your used groundcare equipment

Contact us for more details:
T: 01474 874 120 E: info@invicta-groundcare.co.uk
www.invicta-groundcare.co.uk

Campey
TURF CARE SYSTEMS
QUALITY GROUND CARE EQUIPMENT

Always a good selection of used equipment.
Tel: 01260 224568 Email: info@campeyturfcare.com
www.campeyturfcare.com

Sell your unwanted machines or search for a used one.

You can advertise a machine for up to 8 weeks for just £30 plus VAT.
pitchcare.com/used_machinery

WATER MANAGEMENT

Topturf
IRRIGATION

01903 278240
www.tlirrigation.co.uk

FULL SERVICE SUPPORT
SYSTEM DESIGN, SUPPLY & BUILD
OTTERBINE LAKE & POND AERATOR FOUNTAINS

WASHDOWN SYSTEMS

ByWater wash down/recycling systems

- low cost
- low maintenance
- Built in the UK
- 100% tax relief
- finance available
- WFD conforming

Genuine Zero Discharge
with our unique rain separation system
NO TREATED WATER EVER DISCHARGED
even after rainfall or a spillage!

01536 604493 | www.bywaterservices.co.uk | www.bywaterservices.co.uk



Next Day
Delivery



Qualified &
Experienced Staff



Independent
Feedback

LIQUID FERTILISER



Green Solutions 15-0-6

Highly miscible liquid fertiliser with fully biodegradable organic complexing agents, humic acids, seaweed and trace element package.

£40.97 per 10l



Greenmaster 12-4-6

ICL Greenmaster Spring & Summer 12-4-6 incorporates cutting edge technologies to maximise turf performance and to provide excellent value for money.

£45.70 per 10l

COMBAT SUMMER PLANT STRESS

1 BioMass Sugar

A unique natural formulation of sugars, macro nutrients, and trace elements, approved as a bio-stimulant within the UK.

£82.15 per 10l

2 SeaAction Liquid Seaweed

Helps maintain turf in good condition and stimulate active soil microbes. Ideal turf tonic to reinvigorate turf after periods of stress.

£39.80 per 5l

3 Humimax

A highly efficient enhanced foliar absorption formulation, created specially for tank mixing.

£80.00 per 5l



WATER MANAGEMENT

1 H2Pro TriSmart

Designed for quality turf areas, its unique triple-active formulation provides great control over your moisture management.

£138.17 per 5l

2 Perrot Rollcart Travelling Sprinkler

For large sized green areas, sport fields, nurseries and gardens, moves and irrigates independently.

£1,225.74 each

3 Irriflex-GLX Hose

Available in coils of 25 m, 50 m and 100 m and widths of 1/2, 3/4 and 1 inch

call for prices

4 Handheld Yellow Magnum Nozzle With On/Off Valve

£75.90

SISIS Combirake

Simple to use, dual purpose implement for use on small fine turf areas.

£710.00 each



Call the sales team for more information or to place an order 01902 440250

The purchaser and/or end users are responsible for ensuring that these products are used in line with industry Approved Codes of Practice. All operators must be trained and certified in using and applying any Ministry Approved professional product. All prices are quoted excluding VAT.

www.pitchcare.com/shop - Order now on 01902 440250 or email us at sales@pitchcare.com

Please note, prices displayed may exclude VAT and delivery, if applicable. Prices correct at time of printing but may change due to manufacturers increases, please check when ordering. Errors and omissions excepted. Offers are subject to availability and products being purchased at published prices. Use plant protection products safely. Always read the label and product information before use.

OFFSIDE

The not so serious side
of the industry

On your marks, get set ... mow!

Dozens of racers straddled their lawn mowers for a race to help raise money to aid the people of Ukraine.

The North West Lawn Mower Racing Association staged a race meeting in Kirkham recently, with spectators lining the track.



Lawn mower racing - fondly referred to as 'the grass roots of motor sport' - was started back in 1973 by an Irishman called Jim Gavin, who, with a bunch of mates had gone down to a pub in Sussex to discuss his latest motorsport idea.

Jim was heavily involved in rallying and sponsorship was creeping in. Jim didn't really like this and wanted to create a form of motorsport that was more readily accessible to everyone.

They looked out across the village green and the groundsman was mowing the cricket pitch. They realised everyone had a lawn mower in their garden shed so said "let's race them". A race was organised and about 80 mowers turned up.

Paalzitten: the sport of sitting

Are you a fan of sitting? Well, the Dutch actually have a sport for that! This sport involves Dutchies sitting on a pole for as long as they possibly can (sometimes for over 90 hours!).

The poles do come with a board to sit on - and short toilet breaks are allowed - but my word, this can't be much of a spectator's sport



Mexico revives a 3,000-year-old ball game



In Mexico, a group of athletes are on a mission to revive an ancient sporting tradition - a tribute to the game once enjoyed by their ancestors.

Thought to be approximately 3,000-years-old, the Mesoamerican ballgame 'Juego de Pelota' could be one of the oldest team sports in the world. It was once played by the Aztecs, Maya and Incas and carries ancient cultural and religious significance.

It was only when Spanish conquistadors banned the game in the 16th Century did the game fade into legend.

As seen on social media ...

A bit of warm weather and the greenkeepers tans are well under way!



Dylan Stokes



Michael Duke



Mark Davidson



Ryan Mabey

If you spot anything you think might give readers a chuckle send it to:
kerry.haywood@pitchcare.com

TRIBUTES (PART 2)

"An absolute gent dealing with even the tiniest issue. Been part of the Pitchcare Forum superstructure for twenty useful, productive, informative and educational years and leaves a legacy of an enormous groundcare library of advice and opinion behind him. A huge round of applause for how he kept it all together quietly in the background, especially in the early 'angry' days before he taught us all to self moderate online." **Eddy Bayton, Forum contributor.**

"It is safe to say we are all devastated at the news. Fi, Tony and all of us can't stop thinking of you and Pete's family at this horrendously sad time." **Louise Challiss, Pan Publicity.**

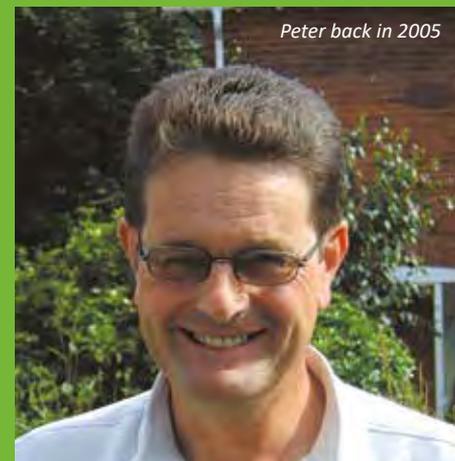
"All of us at Goodwood are shocked and saddened to hear of Peter's untimely death. Peter was a regular visitor to Goodwood in his youth and as he has said in these pages it was his favourite ground! We have been very grateful for all his support. He was part of the Miles/Britton family - stalwarts of Goodwood CC." **Richard Geffen, Goodwood Estate.**

"Although he probably didn't realise it, most of the opportunities I have and the travel I get to do, and even the house I'm stood in now, are largely down to Peter's recommendations to other people about me. I'd imagine that's the sort of kind thing he often did without maybe realising the difference he made." **Blair Ferguson, Freelance Journalist.**

"He was totally responsible for my article in the last issue. He took it on to help Kerry in her hour of need. How cruel can life be? My heartfelt condolences to Peter's family." **Gordon Gill, Gordon Gill Fine Turf.**

"I've known Peter for years and liked and respected him immensely. He was such a vital and key member of Pitchcare and the industry. He was a pleasure to work with and will be missed by so many." **Rosie Duckworth, One Agency.**

"Peter was such a lovely man, and such a good friend to have. He was one of the people who gave me the courage to go freelance and I loved working with him." **Jane Carley, Iron Horse Media.**



PETER BRITTON, 1951-2022

DIARY DATES

JULY

1st-17th: Cricket - England vs India ODis, Edgbaston (ecb.co.uk)

6th-7th: Industry - SAGE 2022, Sports & Grounds Expo, Malvern (sportsandgrounds.events)

6th-31st: Football - Women's Euro 2022 (uefa.com/womenseuro)

9th: Tennis - Women's Wimbledon final Wimbledon (wimbledon.com)

10th: Tennis - Men's Wimbledon final Wimbledon (wimbledon.com)

14th-17th: Golf - The Open, The Old Course, St Andrews (theopen.com)

28th-8th August: Industry - TGA Summer Show 2022, Kinross, Scotland (turfgrass.co.uk)

28th-8th August: Athletics - Commonwealth Games, Birmingham (birmingham2022)

AUGUST

4th-7th: Golf - Women's Open, Muirfield, Gullane, East Lothian (aigwomensopen.com)

6th: Football - Premier League 2022-2023 season starts (premierleague.com)

6th-14th: Equestrian - World Games, Herning, Denmark (herning2022.com)

17th-21st: Cricket - England v South Africa first Test, Lord's (icc-cricket.com)

25th-28th: Golf - PGA Tour Championship, East Lake, Atlanta, Georgia (pgatour.com)

25th-29th: Cricket - England v South Africa second Test, Old Trafford (icc-cricket.com)

29th-11th Sept: Tennis - US Open, Flushing Meadows, New York (usopen.org)

SEPTEMBER

2nd: Golf - Women's World Cup qualifying: Luxembourg v Northern Ireland; Greece v Wales (uefa.com/womensworldcup)

3rd: Football - Women's World Cup qualifying: Austria v England (uefa.com/womensworldcup)

6th: Football - Women's World Cup qualifying: England v Luxembourg; Latvia v Northern Ireland; Wales v Slovenia; Faroe Islands v Scotland (uefa.com/womensworldcup)

7th: Industry - RTM Live 2022 (rtmachinery.co.uk)

8th-11th: Golf - PGA Championship, Wentworth, Virginia Water (europeantour.com)

8th-12th: Cricket - England v South Africa third Test, The Oval (ecb.co.uk)

11th: Athletics - Great North Run, Newcastle (greatrun.org)

9th-11th: Rugby Union - World Cup Sevens 2022, Cape Town (rwsevens.com)

22nd-25th: Golf - Presidents Cup, Quail Hollow Club, Charlotte, North Carolina (presidentcup.com)

22nd-27th: Football - Nations League group stage featuring England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland concludes (uefa.com)

23rd-25th: Tennis - 2022 Laver Cup, The O2, London (lavercup.com)

24th: Rugby League - Super League Grand Final, Old Trafford, Manchester (superleague.co.uk)

To have your event included in this magazine diary section, please email details to kerry@pitchcare.com

Making light work

Ryder turf pigment

Consistent colour plus
protection from harmful
UV rays and excessive light

Ryder UV Filter



syngenta®

Syngenta UK Ltd. Registered in England No. 849037. CPC4 Capital Park, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5XE.
Email: golf.syngenta@syngenta.com Web: www.greencast.co.uk

Ryder® is a Registered Trademark of a Syngenta Group Company. All other brand names used are trademarks of other manufacturers in which proprietary rights may exist. Always read the label and product information before use. For more information including warning phrases and symbols refer to www.greencast.co.uk © Syngenta September 2022.



Distributed in the UK and Ireland by ICL Ltd. Tel: 01473 201100
Email: prof.sales@icl-group.com Web: www.icl-sf.co.uk

TM