

NOVEMBER COURSE REPORT

Lockdown diary

An update - before lockdown

HEADLINE NEWS!



Harvey Sims. After a successful interview, Harvey was promoted to Deputy Head Greenkeeper.

Harvey has shown commitment and loyalty to Rowlands Castle Golf Club unlike anyone else. He has a real determination to drive his own professional development. He attends every training course he can. Spending days away from the family at times in pursuit of bettering himself. All this on top of completing his level 3 diploma in Greenkeeping management. Inside the workshop he sets the machines to perfection and he's not too bad at cutting a straight line too!

Congratulations Harvey.

Team news

Jack Slade, 1st assistant Greenkeeper at RCGC landed himself a job as Deputy Head Greenkeeper at East Brighton Golf Course. This golf course is much closer to home



Course news

We recorded 200mm of rainfall during the month of October. This amount of rain meant the ground softened up so much we had to start protecting the course with black mats and roped off areas.

Some areas were roped off for protecting seeded areas. We did try some germination nets as an experiment, firstly to create a micro-climate for the seed, secondly, to keep people off the area.



The seed under the germination net established itself faster.



We made a few bridge improvements on the course too.



Going into lockdown

With Jack leaving we immediately put an advert out to replace him. Unfortunately, just as we did this it was announced that we would be going into another lockdown, so we halted any recruitment process. The advert ran for a couple of weeks before I took it down and contacted the applicants - details to follow (entry: 19th November).

This left the team of myself, Harvey Sims, David Appleton, Graeme Barnsley, and Paul Glue. With annual leave already booked, for most of the lockdown we would be working with 4 people in total.

It was agreed at the Course committee meeting that we would keep the team on to try and tackle some projects that would otherwise cause disruption to golf.

Golf course maintenance essentials:

Every day -

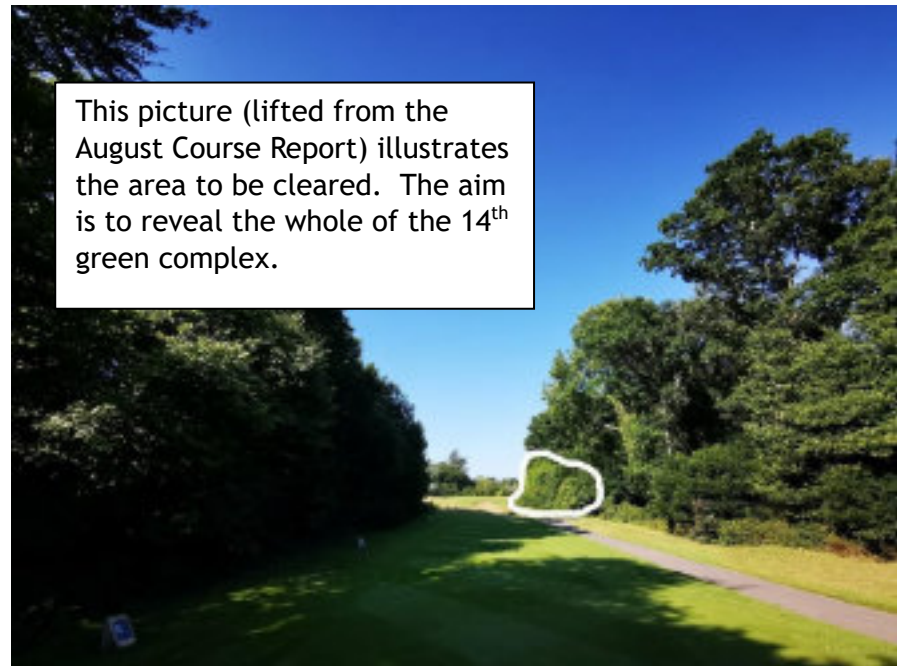
- Disperse the dew on the greens to prevent disease
- Check and clear ditches
- General golf course check - disease outbreaks, damage (vandalism) fallen trees etc.

Thursday 5th of November

- 1st day of lockdown... The sight every golfer wants to see but not during their round! The Terra Spike. Deep, 200mm solid tines smashing up the subsurface to relieve compaction and aerate the soil.



14th hole improvements

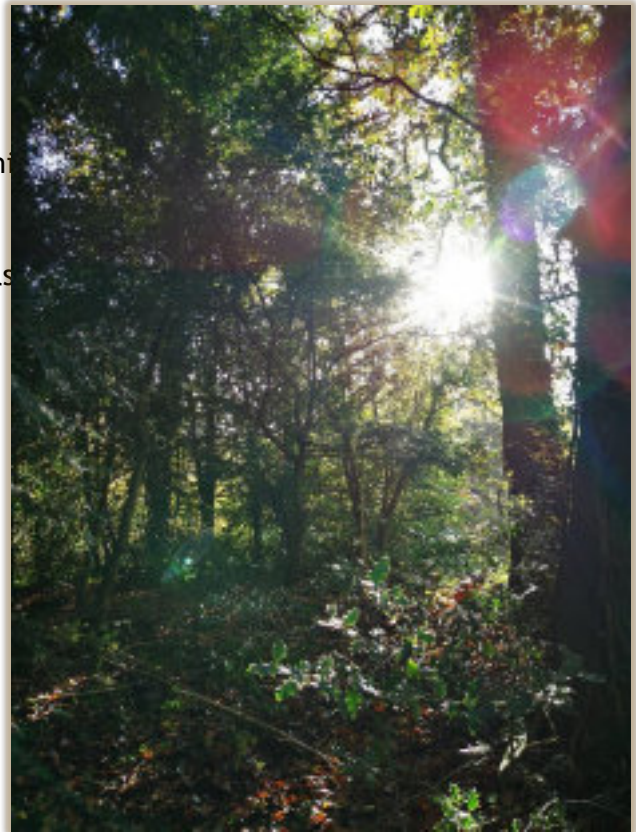


Day One, The 'Before' photo -



14th Hole project - The process:

- Identify small area to clear.
- Before cutting - check for nesting/h
- Cut and leave - allowing any animals
- Clear and assess next stage.



Friday the 6th of November

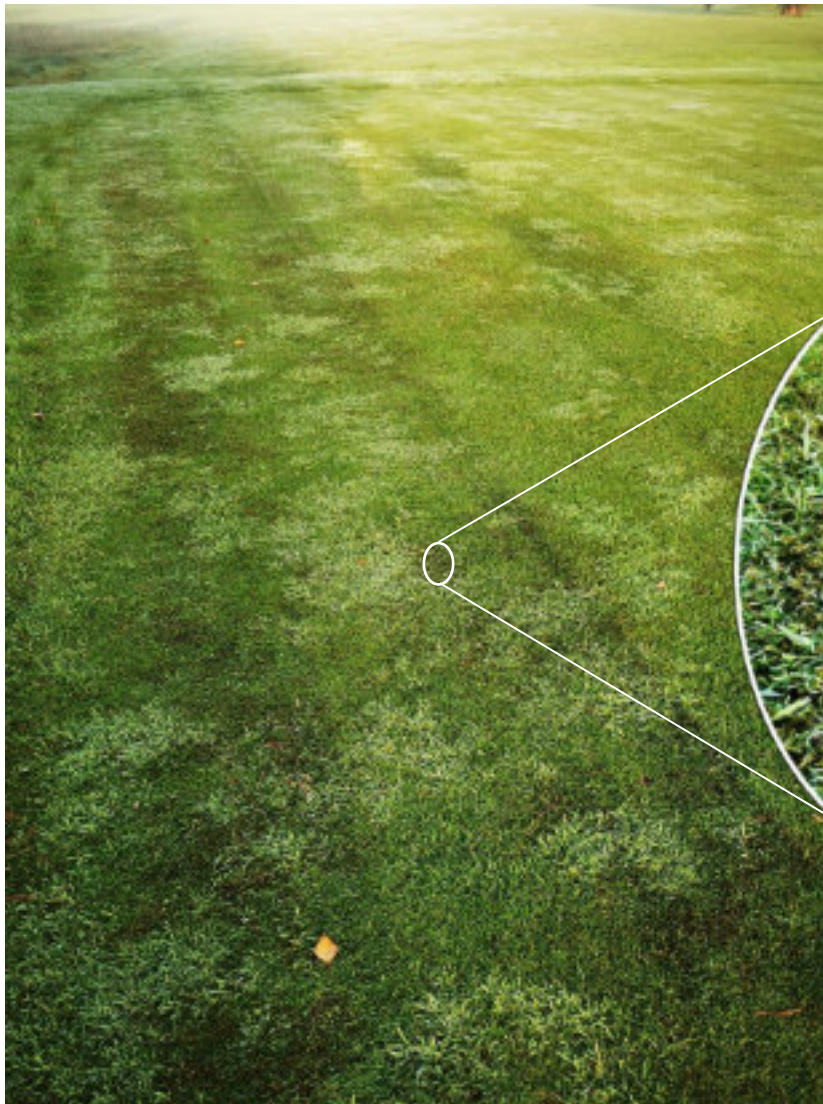
- Continuing the work on 14 and deep aeration of the fairways.
- With a month without golf we took the opportunity to give the tees a good divot fill with seed. Inserted is a picture of the results 15 days later!



Monday 9th November

- Greens, tees, and approaches cleared of the morning dew, fallen leaves and worm casts. This work ahead of the sprayer for an application of ferrous sulphate (Iron) to help deter disease and moss
- Clearance of the previous day cutting on 14th project.

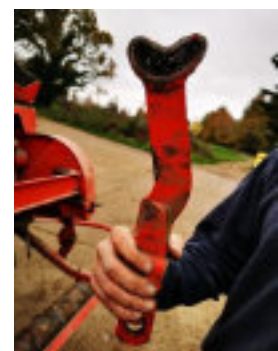
Tuesday 10th November



The day after the application of Iron. You can visibly see the blackening of the moss.

BREAKDOWN - Terra Spike -

Paul Glue holding the arm which came loose, spun around and hit the frame of the machine bringing everything to a standstill with a loud bang. We ask a lot of our deep aerators, too much in this case. The machine is over ten years old and with our ground of thick clay and flint it may not be worth fixing this time. We continued solo with our newest machine.



Wednesday 11th November

- Spray - greens tees approaches with a feed, plus the greens had a preventative fungicide applied to avoid any outbreaks while the sprayer left us the next day for its annual service.
- Ditches cleared in preparation for the forecast overnight rain
- Continued deep aeration of fairways and 14th project clearing



Thursday 12th November

- Too wet to continue deep aeration so ex
- Stump grinder used to clear the stumps



Friday 13th November

- Spike Greens
- Deep aeration of fairways completed
- Long eco-rough cut and cleared between holes 7 and 8



Water abstraction returns, submitted

Water abstraction from the borehole was the 2nd highest recorded. Over 8000m³ were drawn, only beaten by the 2018 figures. Plans to reduce this amount with the use of wetting agents on fairways are in place for 2021. Let us hope we are successful.

Monday 16th November

BREAKDOWN - Digger - battery fault, replacement ordered under warranty



- After the weekend downpour we started a small project to improve the tee shot from the 8th tee



Tuesday 17th November

- Demonstration of the all-electric triple mower from Toro. The GR 3370. If you would like to see a video detailing the benefits of the machine, please use this link:

<http://www.adr.sh/1tq4/byrm/1/1> - **Greensmaster eTriFlex POS Video with subtitles**

- Cut all 20 greens using 3 out of 9 bars of power. No engine, no diesel, no hydraulics. Incredibly quiet!

Wednesday 18th November

- 8th tee, tree stump removal and clear ground cover ivy.
- Crown lifting trees on 8 and removal of disease infected Ash tree between 7&8



- Clearing the ground cover and tree stumps on 14th project



Thursday 19th November

BREAKDOWN: Stump grinder

- Hollow core areas of wet fairway, 1st, 16th, and the top of 6th. The idea here was to open the existing sand banding/slits and improve the surface drainage.



This, on reflection was unsuccessful. Although in the long term we should see some benefit, after we hollow cored, the ground became unstable and gave the impression of being softer underfoot.

- Clear logs and debris from 14th project site. Make clearing in woods to pile logs to become home for many insects and other wildlife.

New vacancy

- All 130 plus candidates for the advertised position contacted. The candidates who made the shortlist were contacted individually to explain our situation. I asked if they would still be interested going into the new year. This highlighted the keen from the not so keen.
- For candidates who showed real enthusiasm but no experience, I explained that summer casual positions are an excellent way to get into the industry. I used our very own Graeme Barnsley as an example. We have made some useful contacts with this process.

FIXED: Digger

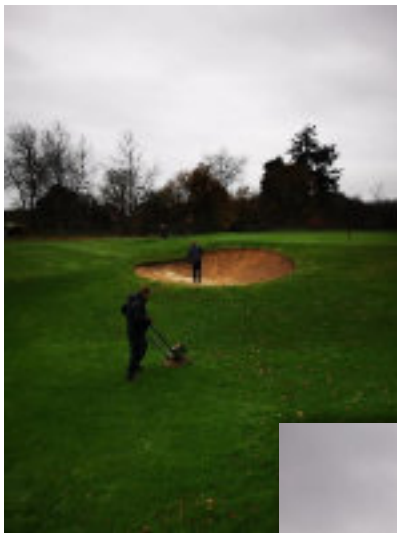
Friday 20th November

- Frosty morning allowing some machinery adjustments ready for cutting the course. Also took the opportunity to clean and tidy the welfare block.
- Digger work starting on 14th project - clear small stumps, roots and low ground cover ivy and bramble.





- When the frost cleared the team converged on the 14th hole. Cutting, blowing leaves, edging and raking bunkers, all for full presentation photo of 14th hole (12 hrs in total) which you may have seen in a previous communication.



Monday 23rd November

- As the areas we hollow cored were now soft underfoot, we decided to Top dress and solid tine spike these areas. The sand would fill the holes and the solid tines were used to compact the soil around it. These areas were then brushed to work in the sand on the surface.



- Clearing work on the 14th continued... to say there were a few golf balls would be an understatement!



Monday evening...

At 7:47pm I received a call from Southern Monitoring Services saying that there has been a confirmed alarm at the greenkeepers complex, and the police have been called.

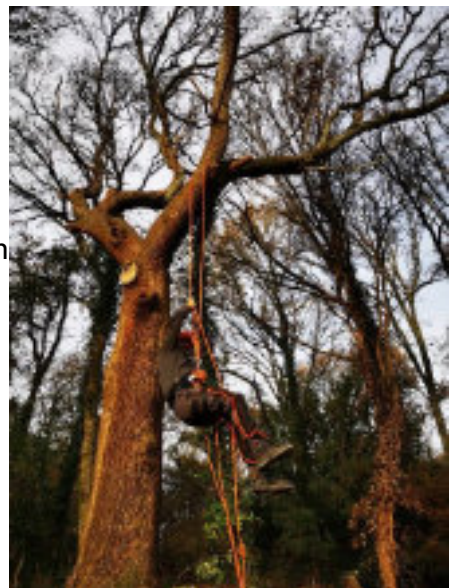
At 8:08pm the police arrive with Harvey Sims and Graeme Barnsley. What a fantastic response, not only from the police but from the dedicated staff we have.

When we looked at the CCTV, we confirmed that it was in fact an attempted break in, not a false alarm.



Tuesday 24th November, back to the 14th

- Dave Appleton took to the trees to take down some lower limbs and



Wednesday 25th November

FIXED - Stump grinder



Stumps removed by the 8th tee and resumed on the 14th hole.

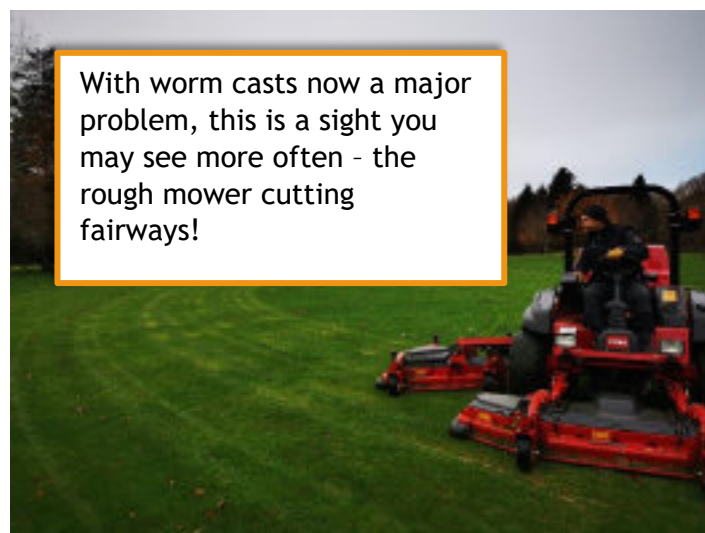
Thursday 26th November

BREAKDOWN - Stump grinder - This is an old machine, bought second hand many years ago to stop having to hire in. It has been sent away to be fixed. Some parts must be shipped from Italy so this may take a while. Unfortunately, we will be unable to finish the stumps by the time golf returns.

Landscaping the area on the 14th is hampered by the stumps being there. It is frustrating but we will do our best to make it look presentable for when you return. The plan for the cleared area is:

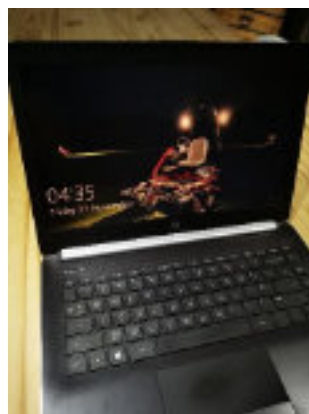
- Clear stumps and landscape
- Leave area to self-regenerate, hoping to see some bluebells like we have seen on the 13th after clearing work.
- Monitor area for unwanted regrowth of bramble, wooded shrubs, or trees
- Purchase seed to help blend in with the existing long grasses and flora

Work started to present the course for the return of golf



Friday 27th November

Start this course report...



Work ongoing -

- Cutting the course to present to the members on the 2nd of December
- Clearing leaves
- Landscape 14th
- Spray greens, tees, and approaches - disease prevention
- Bunker renovations
- Tree stump removal on 14th

Kevin Hensman

Head Greenkeeper RCGC