

# The First British Turfgrass Symposium

The Conference is now an established method of communication in modern political, business, professional, and scientific life. The origins lie in the immediacy of speech and dialogue. Unlike readers, an audience participates, cross-questions, elaborates points made by the speaker, exchanges localised experience, and makes new contacts. The characteristics of a conference are the intensity of study and the relevance of the communication. A true occasion is made out of new ideas, discoveries, areas of study. To all this internationalism has added glamour and interest.

The Turfgrass Symposium at Ipswich was most certainly an occasion for the B.G.G.A. The point when an association comes together with other delegates to talk about its work rather than its purposes is an important one, and reflects not only enthusiasm but responsibility. The Symposium was the first of its kind and not ideally situated for the whole country. The attendance figure of 200 was therefore a most encouraging start to what may become an annual or two-yearly event.

## Attendance

The Symposium was attended by 200 people: 50 per cent from Golf Clubs, 33 per cent from Firms, 4 per cent from Local and Central Government, 6 per cent from Associations and Institutes, and 7 per cent from Overseas.

The number of Golf Clubs represented was 68. Forty-three per cent of these clubs were situated within a 70-mile radius of Ipswich. Distribution of remaining clubs was very scattered and showed no relation to distance from Ipswich. Eighteen (26 per cent) clubs sent more than one greenkeeper to the Symposium, nine more than two. These last clubs were

nearly all situated in Essex and Suffolk.

The number of firms represented was 35. These firms ranged from turfgrass machinery and chemical industries to golf course contractors, golf architects, turf advisory services, and the seed trade. Distribution was more evenly spread throughout the South and firms tended to send more than one delegate regardless of distance.

## Response to the Symposium

On the day of the Symposium a postcard with space for percentage scoring and general comments was issued to each representative. Only 20 (10 per cent) have so far returned the cards. From this small sample a number of points of interest emerge.

The mean percentage ratings for Papers was 70 per cent, for Discussions 55 per cent, for Food 65 per cent, for Comfort 65 per cent, and for Audibility 80 per cent. General comments supported the low figure for Discussion. It was felt that not enough use was made of the panel and that more time should have been devoted to discussion. A few felt more generally that the programme had an air of haste about it. Some felt that the speaker should have been a little less academic and made more use of demonstrations and colour slides.

## The Future

Fifty per cent of the respondents suggested that the future location should be in the Midlands. One was content to keep it at Ipswich, two hoped for London and the South East, and two looked forward to an international location.

Suggestions for future Symposium themes were fungal diseases, machinery, chemicals, turfgrass varieties, training, and turfgrass management.

Here, in this sample at least, is enthusiasm and conviction of the need to hold future Symposiums.