Patrick Murphy, the Scotsman with the essentially Irish name, cut his greenkeeping teeth at Broomielaw GC as a fifteen year old apprentice before moving into headship immediately after completing his indentured term. This was when he joined West Linton GC in Peeblesshire, where he stayed for about 18 months before being tempted across the border to join Shipley Golf Club.

The day is engraved on his memory, Friday the thirteenth of February 1970, though far from being a unlucky omen to join Shipley Golf Club. With the regular 'fixes' - moves such as those in need of major surgery, with hollow tining and mole ploughing - a building went, though one must assume it and re-build one green each year, starting with the worst and progressing onward as funds became available.

It is not recorded how the first re-build went, though one must assume it was hugely successful; for some fourteen greens have been recipient of this kind of treatment - of Patrick's skills over the years. Now the fifteenth such green has been lifted, (actually the sixteenth hole) excavated, replaced and re-planted - a decision was also made to lift, drain, and re-build one green each year, starting with the worst and progressing onward as funds became available.

Bob's experience includes all the major turfgrasses grown in the USA as well as those predominant in the British Isles, and (almost heaven) West Virginia. His career began by working as a regionally based head greenkeeper at Ladybank, Fife, where he began his career in 1970 as a humble ground crew member. Following this with a five year spell as head greenkeeper at his old course, Broomielaw GC.

Andy Cole, a regional advisory agronomist with the STRI, is eminently suited to address the gathered throngs at Keele on the subject of 'Greenkeeping qualifications - are we on the right lines?', for he has practical experience of all sides of the education equation.

For a start, he's young enough to remember still his own stint on the learning curve, having qualified at Leeds University in 1986 with a B.Sc Honours degree in Agricultural Science, following this almost immediately with a fifty year spell as an advisory agronomist with the STRI, hugely valuable experience.

Two years ago Andy took to the lecture platform full time, joining the staff at Warwickshire College in training would-be young greenkeepers toward CEG Greenkeeping and Sports turf Management, whilst also lecturing to degree level those working toward a BA in Equine Studies (Turf Management). Though his year or so at Moreton Morrell was not without purpose, Andy freely admits that the lure of advisory work was so great that he couldn't keep away and he is effectively the prodigal son returned (Aug 92), rejoining the STRI as probably one of the first to be appointed on a regional basis, covering a huge chunk of the country including Birmingham, Leicester, Hertfordshire, Liverpool and Kent.

Iain Ritchie has the eye of an artist, his canvas the 27 glorious holes of Portmarnock, Ireland's glorious jewel. Steaming from a love of the game, Iain began his career by working with those who construct golf courses - a classic education for any greenkeeper - before moving into the maintenance side, first at Dullatur and following this with a five year spell as head greenkeeper at Ladybank, another gem of a course.

Moving to Portmarnock Golf Club in 1990 as their course manager, Iain has seen a great deal of action in the past three years, including the staging of many major competitive events and in particular his own 'baptism by fire', the Walker Cup. His 1990 pre-match maintenance programme was quite an event in itself, succeeding in obtaining a 90% strike rate with some three tons of fescue/bent mixture applied three times a week.

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Robert (Bob) Brane, has what many British greenkeeper's might regard as the perfect pedigree, for he began his career in 1970 as a humble ground crew member at a public golf facility, rising through agronomy farm assistant at a public golf course superintendent in 1972, thence through a number of senior jobs as superintendent proper at such grand places as Gudalajara Country Club in Mexico (1972-74), Timber Trails Country Club, La Grange, Illinois (1974-78), West St George's, Mexico (1972-74), Timber Trails Country Club, La Grange, Illinois (1974-78), and (almost heaven) West Virginia.

Bob took his Bachelor of Science degree in 1972, majoring in Agronomy at Purdue University, and is now (1993) the regional agronomist for the USGA Green Section, covering the states of Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and (almost heaven) West Virginia.

Bob's experience includes all the major turfgrasses grown in the USA as well as those predominant in the British Isles, and he has worked closely with Stanley Zontek, with whom many are acquainted following previous highly entertaining lecture presentations.

Bob's two presentations both have intriguing titles, beginning with 'Poa annua, wherever did it come from and how do we manage it'. He will conclude our glorious proceedings as the final presenter on Sunday 28 March with a presentation entitled 'The Ten Pifalls of American Turfgrass Management'.