

Ten years? Seems like yesterday

At the risk of sounding a little like that Edmonds bloke, in Noel's Telly Years, what were you doing a decade ago and what can you remember about 1987?

The reason I ask is that, as you no doubt know, this year is BIGGA's 10th anniversary and it's interesting to look back 10 years and recall what life was like when BIGGA was born.

In the interests of this column, I've undertaken some extensive research of a time when the names Major and Blair conjured up images of Farrah Fawcett and Lionel, the Berlin Wall was still in place, Nelson Mandela was still inside and Melinda Messenger was only 12... or should that be 16?

Well, back in 1987 Europe won the Ryder Cup at Muirfield Village, the first time ever in the United States. Nick Faldo hadn't even won a Major at the beginning of the year but by the end of July was being acclaimed for his 18 straight pars and victory in The Open at the other Muirfield.

What else happened in golf? Larry Mize produced the cup of a lifetime to deny Greg Norman in the play-off for the Masters, while Wales got the better of Scotland in the World Cup of Golf (Neil Thomas made me put this in).

The year also saw the deaths of two legends of the game, Sir Henry Cotton and Bobby Locke, while high profile courses like East Sussex National, The Wisley, Loch Lomond, The Oxfordshire and Collingtree Park were mere twinkles in an architect's eye.

Elsewhere in sport Coventry won the FA Cup; Rangers hadn't started the run which now threatens Celtic's nine in a row record; Martina Navratilova claimed her sixth consecutive Wimbledon single's title; Ben Johnson won the World Championship

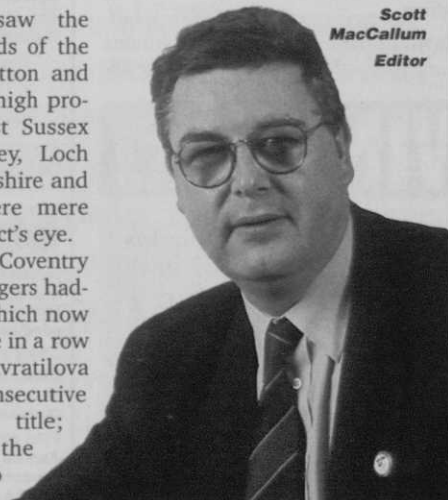
100 metres in a world record time; Mike Tyson became the youngest winner of the World Heavyweight title; Lester Piggott was sent to prison for tax evasion and Mike Gatting went nose to nose with Pakistani umpire Shakoor Rana.

Looking at these events it is perhaps surprising how some, at least, seem like only yesterday, and it does help to reinforce the fact that, when recalling the formation of BIGGA, we're not uncovering ancient history.

The Association has made huge strides in a relatively short space of time. From virtually a standing start the Association now boasts almost 6,500 members; a progressive and wide ranging education programme the envy of many other industries; a trade show which has grown to be the largest indoor of its type in Europe and a successful magazine (I hope!).

Add to this the fact that the next two years should see BIGGA move to new custom-built offices and you have an Association which will continue to move forward and look after members' needs for many more decades to come.

Those who helped to create this success have every reason to feel extremely proud.



Scott
MacCallum
Editor

As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

Since becoming Chairman my feet haven't touched the ground. No sooner had I finished BTME 97 then I was off to Las Vegas for the GCSAA Conference and Show.

BIGGA had a stand at the show and it was an outstanding success with a great many membership enquiries.

Interestingly, our Master Greenkeeper Award scheme appeared particularly popular with quite a number of superintendents.

It was a busy week with functions every day and I made presentations to Joe Baidy, President in '95 and Paul McGuinness, the incoming President.

I also had the privilege to sit beside Jaime Ortiz-Patino, the President of Valderrama Golf Club during the Gala Dinner and he chatted to me about preparations for the Ryder Cup in September. I also met both Robert Trent Jones Senior and Junior.

A speaker at the opening session was the astronaut Jim Lovell, whom Tom Hanks played in Apollo 13. He gave one of the best talks I've ever heard.

Another highlight of the Conference was the International Symposium. Neil Thomas and Per-Olof Ljung both spoke excellently about FEGGA and generated quite a bit of interest among the other nations represented.

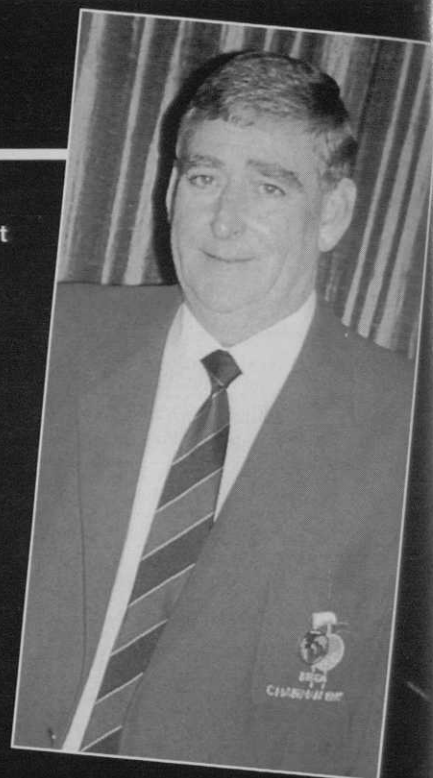
It was good to meet up with Toro Student of the Year Fintan Brennan, who was at college in the States as part of his prize while Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Cedric Gough was part of our group and appeared to enjoy himself. We also met George Brown, from Turnberry, and our five American Master Greenkeepers who were at the Show.

The Show itself was enormous and, while not being knocked sideways by any one new product, it was interesting to see hand tools and some of the extensions which are unavailable in this country.

I also brought back some of the soft spikes for my Chairman of Green to try out. I do think they will be huge in this country soon. Not only do they protect the course but also the car park, walkways and the clubhouse.

Las Vegas is some place. The light shows in Freemont Street have to be seen to be believed while Caesar's Palace Hotel has an amazing show every hour. We visited the Valley of Fire where the Star Wars film was made and also went to the Hoover Dam.

I also went to the infamous World Heavyweight fight with Lennox Lewis and Oliver McCall but we were seated so far back my wife saw more than I did watching it on television. It was the first world title fight I've been to and will probably be the last. I did have a drink with Jim Watt and Reg Gutteridge though.



Pat Murphy