The 2011 South East Regional Conference was hosted this year by the Essex Section at Stock Brook Manor Golf & Country Club.

Unfortunately the first speaker, Darren Baldwin, Tottenham Hotspur Head Groundsman, was called away on business to Belgium, which resulted in a swift change around of the running order. First up, and Chairman for the day, was BIGGA’s Chief Executive Officer, Jim Croston.

Jim got proceedings under way quickly, giving a rundown on how he saw the Association progressing in the coming years.

First of the main speakers was Peter Arnold Phipps-Jones, Course Manager at Burnham & Berrow GC. Richard ran us through his maintenance practices, with a breakdown of fertiliser and chemical usage, topdressing regime and how he dealt with pests like rabbits. He explained the principles of his work programme and the ethics behind them. Richard showed graphs of his records, which he has been keeping over the 10 or so years he has been at the club.

Next to hit the floor was local boy, Stuart Kerrison, Head Man at Essex County Cricket Club, in Chelmsford. To we greenkeepers cricket seems a strange game with the misconception that the wicket is shaved to the root.

Fine maintenance, cutting and rolling are what are involved. Water is also a key factor and Stuart has only a 15mm main water supply to look after all of his ground, and that also has to feed his house and his main water supply to look after all of his greens and his practices and principles of maintenance. He justified why he cut at 2mm and what he did to sustain the turf at that height of cut. His feeding and topdressing programme and the difficulties he faced throughout the year.

A number of delegates asked questions of the speakers, which then started a debate between the speakers and the floor with the speakers, which then started a debate between the speakers and the floor with the speakers, which then started a debate between the speakers and the floor.

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Craig, from the Hurlingham Club. He explained the need to keep the foot holes at each end, in good repair during a match and told of how this was achieved, sometimes at other grounds by devious means. He even explained about the use of glue to stick the cracks in the wicket together.

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The programme gave us an insight into the different aspects of managing sports turf and sports facilities.

These varied from the diverse requirements of a modern football stadium, to presenting a course for the Scottish Open and the problems which have to be dealt with when adverse weather takes it’s toll. Along with these speakers the Region was pleased to welcome Jim Croston the new BIGGA CEO who spent a little time telling delegates about their Association and the future plans.

June Jones
South West and South Wales Regional Administrator

The Spectrum of Sports Turf Management

The South West and South Wales Regional Conference took place at the new venue of the Oaktree Arena and Conference Centre, Highbridge, with 134 in attendance. The theme for the day was “The Spectrum of Sports Turf Management” with presentations from Cale Bigelow, from Purdue University, in the US, Chris Hampett, from Castle Stuart Golf Links, Huseyin Morgen, from Ashburnham Golf Club, Craig Richardson, from Bristol City Football Club, and Mark Hunt, from Headland Amenity.

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St Andrews Certified for Sustainability

St Andrews Links has become the first Open Championship venue to achieve the GEO Certified™ eco-label in recognition of its sustainability commitment and achievements.

St Andrews Links Trust, which manages the seven courses at the Home of Golf including the Old Course and The Castle Course, has operated a sustainability programme for many years and this approach was described by Mike Wood, the accredited verifier, as being “close to defining an ideal model for sustainable management.”

In its GEO verification report the assessor praised the Trust’s commitment to social responsibility and community engagement as well as the eco-friendly manner in which the clubhouses, retail outlets and other facilities are operated.

They said that not only was the Trust maintaining a 600 year heritage as the birthplace of the game, it was a “standard bearer for 21st Century good practice in golf management.”

Jane Jones
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