Eaton’s Mick Hits 40

Michael Lathrope (Mick) shown above second from right, moved from Maylands Golf Club, near Romford, to take the Head Greenkeeper’s job at Eaton Golf Club in Norwich in March 1972 – he’s still there today.

He left the ‘S모র’ with his wife, Lil, who he had recently married at the time, and began a new life in Norfolk. Now, 40 years on, he has three daughters, Joyce, Kate and Tina, and five grand

children - with twins on the way. With a reputation of hard work and loyalty second to none, he has been East Anglia’s scribe to the magazine for many years. He has strong relationships with fellow Greenkeepers and Trade alike.

Mick has successfully worked to get the current young crop of greenkeepers qualified, as he has since 1981.

There have not been many changes within the team at Eaton, testament to the great working environment that Mick creates.

The current green staff has over 130 years of combined service at the club. His team at Eaton, and everyone who has had the pleasure of knowing Mick wish him all the best on achieving this landmark and look forward to the years ahead.

iPAD2 Winner

BIGGA would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the online BTME 2012 Visitor Survey. We had over 500 people provide us with their valuable feedback on this year’s Exhibition.

The winner of the iPad 2 is Marcus Phillips, Head Greenkeeper at Filton Golf Club, Bristol. Well done Marcus.

BIGGA Chairman, Andrew Mellon drew Marcus’s name out of a hat during this recent visit to BIGGA House and Jane Jones, South West/South Wales Regional Administrator presented Marcus with his prize.

Marcus is a long-time member of BIGGA and has attended many BTME’s during this time, something Marcus values very highly. This is why BIGGA is supporting the GOLF19 campaign and is encouraging members to make a donation.

Supporting the Future

The Golf Foundation supports the development of golf in schools and the links between schools and clubs.

Through its efforts, the Golf Foundation has dramatically increased the number of schools delivering golf in England from 14% to 44% and the number of schools with links to clubs from 9% to 30%. In addition, the Golf Foundation is reaching youngsters in inner city areas and is providing support for projects which involve disabled children. It has also contributed significantly to the growth of junior golf in Scotland and Wales.

However, there is so much more to be done to make it possible for all children to experience our wonderful sport and all the benefits it has to offer: The only limiting factors are the amount of golf available. Therefore, the Golf Foundation has launched a new fundraising campaign – GOLF19.

All those who work in the sport are asked to support the next generation by texting GOLF19 £2 to 70070 and the Golf Foundation will receive 100% of the donation.

We all enjoy being part of the golfing community, and it’s important that we understand what the Golf Foundation has done for the sport, especially in its infancy. This is why BIGGA is supporting the GOLF19 campaign and is encouraging members to make a donation.

Thanks, Angela

BIGGA said farewell to its Assistant Accountant, Angela Wilson, at the end of March. Angela is moving home, with her partner to Scotland, for a much deserved early retirement.

Everyone at BIGGA House wishes her well in her ventures North of the Border, and presented her with a very touching gift to say thank you.

You can see her below just after clearing-out her home!

Chairman’s Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

So March broke all records for warm weather and lack of rain, certainly in the East of Scotland, and it was so good to be out dealing with irrigation issues, with sun on your back, and seeing all the golfers with smiles on their faces, in warm weather clothing.

The course has greened up, it’s beginning to look nice and healthy again and growth is filling out the winter wear areas.

I’d like to start by thanking Peter Boyd for his loyal and dedicated service to BIGGA. We wish him all the best in his retirement and I know he will be missed by all who have come to know him as a friend. I’d also like to wish Angela Wilson, from our accounts department all our best wishes as she moves to Scotland, and to thank her for her excellent work during her time at BIGGA.

Feedback from all the National conferences and events has been very positive, and there is definitely a more positive outlook on the golfing front. I attended the one week SBGU Management Development Programme Level II Course, excellently hosted by the Club Managers’ Association of America, and approved by the Club Managers’ Association of America, the Industry leaders in this field. I’m glad to report BIGGA played their part with, the Chair, George and Gordon McKe, ST Andrews both doing a great job in representing our Association.

Well done to all involved! The other speakers were also excellent and the company of the delegates all working as a variety of clubs made for an interesting week.

We are considering the possibility of running such a course at Harrogate. Whether you decide to move into management at your club or not, having an understanding of the full picture and the management issues facing the club as a whole gives you a very good perspective in considering how to manage the course and the impact of all the decisions you make. It also teaches you vital importance of good communication.

I am planning my next trip to China, on behalf of Elmwood where I will be teaching Golf Course Superintendents. I’ll also take the opportunity to further discuss how BIGGA may be of benefit to International members there.

You may be aware that a private members bill was presented to Parliament to consider moving our clocks forward one hour. This has been delayed due to lack of time, but it will surface again as there is a large body of support behind it. BIGGA had previously been opposed to this about 10 years ago when it first surfaced. Our opinion has once again been sought by various bodies. I would ask you not to rush to conclusions and that we work to form an informed opinion of the impact this may have, looking at positives and negatives if we can.

No doubt, it does not rest on our opinion whether it proceeds or not, but others in the industry would be wise to understand the impact before making their own positions clear. For example: in the shoulder seasons (Spring/Autumn), we will have longer evenings, potentially allowing more golf and a useful revenue stream to the golf clubs. Conversely, preparation time in the morning will be limited if golfers are still to get a round in before lunch, and maintenance schedules could be under severe pressure to keep ahead of play.

Potentially secure income at present could therefore come under threat. It would be useful to have a wide consultation and ensure its impact is understood.

On another subject, The R&A is working to protect the enjoyment of the game and to safeguard the financial operations of golf facilities, in a manner which preserves natural environments and enhances community engagement. Their website has created a vast array of content which will help and support you to understand this subject better. You can access it through the BIGGA website under the “Sustainability” page under “Resources” or at www.randa.org/en/TheGolfCourse.aspx.

I hope you are all excited and as prepared as you can be for the season ahead, whether its dealing with too dry, too wet, too hot, too cold, turf problems, machinery problems, whatever, you can always seek the help of your fellow members on the forum as there will always be someone else reading it who has faced the same challenges.

The dreaded “M” golf major is just round the corner. Although it leaves many of us facing very high expectation levels, on the plus side it drives golf participation, and revenue and I like to think the gap between what we can all produce now with the skills and resources we have, and what they have done for years, has been reduced.

I hope for all of you your season gets off to a good start. Remember to use BIGGA to seek any advice or support you need, and if you have any suggestions on anything you think BIGGA should be considering, then let me know. My email is:

Andrew Mellon, Chairman 2012
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