Myerscough Annual Turf Conference

‘In Pursuit of Excellence’

Our Annual Turf Conference will be held from 12th - 15th November 2001 at The Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool.

Bookings are now being taken for this prestigious event.

Please contact us for further information or to book your place on 01995 642222 or email us at turfconference@myerscough.ac.uk.

www.myerscough.ac.uk

Do you believe that most sprinklers are like any other? Then be surprised, they’re not. Only Toro for example, offer a choice of sprinklers designed to uniquely fulfil specific tasks in the world of sports turf management. Two, the unique seven nozzle V1550 and the new 800 series pop-ups are ideal for golf course work. A third, the Toro 640 anti-vandal pop-up, is designed specifically for use on (not around) football pitches and large areas of sports turf open to the public...

These and many other sprinklers from the Toro range incorporate features which are unique to their individual design specification. In all cases, they are made available to help people like you to conserve valuable water resources, yet enhance your approach to turf management. Like to learn more? Then simply talk to us, let us explain just what the words Toro and unique mean. It could change your attitude to sprinklers and irrigation for ever!
This month, Tracey and Susannah from BIGGA’s Membership Services Department, would like to welcome almost 75 new members to the Association and keep you up to date on 2002 Membership news.

Get the most from your membership

If you have renewed your membership or joined BIGGA this year, you will have received a Membership Pack through the post which includes information on all the benefits and services offered to you as a BIGGA Member. This pack is important and needs to be referred to if you require further information, or in the case of a full greenkeeper member, require the use of the legalhelpline or need to claim from the personal accident insurance cover. A second membership pack will not be sent unless requested.

From 1st January 2003, the Membership Department are going to issue plastic Membership Photocards for all Greenkeeping Members of BIGGA. This card will be sent to you together with a renewal letter and leaflet updating you on the benefits and services of membership to BIGGA. If you have mislaid your membership pack you will need to contact Membership Services for a replacement. We cannot send you your membership card until we have a photograph of you! Beat the rush and send your photograph to Tracey or Susannah in the Membership Services Department today! Don’t forget to write your name, date of birth and membership number on the back.

BIGGA to introduce Minimum Qualification

As from 1st February 2002 all NEW applicants applying for Greenkeeper Membership will need to state on their application form whether they hold a minimum NVQ/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf qualification (or equivalent) and enclose proof of competence e.g. a copy of an NVQ certificate or indicate whether they are in training to achieve this minimum qualification. This will effect the category of membership for which the applicant is applying. The application form, although longer than in previous years, will be easy to complete and will include guidelines. See Education Update on page 10 for further information on the minimum qualification.

Increase your personal protection benefit

As part of the Greenkeeping Membership, all Greenkeeping Members are covered by this personal protection package. This provides cover for Greenkeepers for any accident they may have at home, work or even on holiday. Each member can increase this personal protection by completing the tear off slip attached to the information leaflet in the membership pack. A simple, one off payment could secure members up to £50,000 in increased benefits. If any member would like further information please contact the Membership Services Department.

Leisurewear that’s well worth a look!

BIGGA now offer you a fantastic choice of BIGGA logo Leisurewear

Cutter & Buck Classic Polo Shirts complete with BIGGA logo
Available in sunshine with navy trim, and navy with cream trim only £22.95 inc. VAT, post and packing. Sizes Medium, Large, XL or XXL.

Peter Scott BIGGA logo Jumpers
Available in three styles
1. Round neck, available in navy and chesnut sizes from 40” to 46”. £29.95 inc. VAT, p+p
2. V-neck long sleeve, available in navy only, sizes from 40” to 46”, larger sizes available on request. £34.95 inc. VAT, p+p
3. V-neck no sleeves, available in navy only, sizes from 40” to 46”, larger sizes available on request. £29.95 inc. VAT, p+p

Shaving Gooseball Caps
Available in navy with navy peak, one size fits all with adjustable strap. £12.95 inc. VAT, p+p

BIGGA Members Lapel Badge
BIGGA have introduced a new “Members” awarded lapel badge. Available to all members at the special rate of £5.00 inc. VAT, p+p

For further information contact Tracey or Susannah in Membership Services.

October’s Monthly Membership Draw Winner

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA sportswatch. Our congratulations go to October’s winner, Martin Mabey, Wareham Golf Club.

Scotch Region

Kevin Bunyan, Ayrshire
Mark Carey, Ayrshire
David A Jeffrey, Ayrshire
Steddy Laurie, Ayrshire
Ian McIvor, Ayrshire
North Andrew W Nicoll, North
East Scott, Central

Northern Region

Stephen Crosswell-N West
Barry Glyn, N East
Thomas W Melia, N East
Paul M Ruberts, N Wales
Richard Storey, Sheffield

Midland Region

Robert A Coppick, Midland
James W Martin, Midland
James Nanton, E Midland

Malcolm O’Brien, Midland
Paul J Penniston, Mid Anglia
Gary D Solley, E of England
John L Warkes, Midland

South East Region

David Ballantyne, Kest
Gordon Batchelor, Sussex
Paul A Brown, Essex
Robert S Hunt, Kest
Andrew P Butcher, Kent
Niall M Coleman, Kent
Phil Ducket, W Sussex
Steven Everitt, London
Mark Foster, Kent
Kevin Francis, Kent
Alastair Hollingshead, Kent
Darren J Panassey, Surrey
Gary P Sargent, Kent

South West Region

Kevin P Colley, S Coast
Paul J Cooper, S Coast
Paul J Crisp, S Coast
Philip Ducket, W Sussex
Phil Ducket, W Sussex
Kevin J Hensman, S Coast
Craig Reeves, W Sussex
Ian P Reeves, S Coast
Alistair M Smith, S Coast
Barry Stevens, W Sussex
Wayne Townsend, W Sussex
Dav J Young, W Sussex

Northern Ireland

Gerard Cooper

Republic of Ireland

Christian J O'Sullivan

International Members

Gordon MacGregor, Germany
Paul E Spronk, Germany
Joseph R Swing, Germany
Danny J McFadden, USA
Mikael Waldsin, Norway
Michael Allen, USA
Gareth J Davies, USA
Brian R Huin, Canada
Rhod Trainor, Canada
James M Farrer, Australia

Student Members

Mark S Crossley, N West

Corporate Members

David P Snowden, Northern
Can Day, France
Bill Bybnes, USA

Brian Goodwin, USA

Associate Members

David Storey, Northern
Peter Hulka, BSBO
Ryan Peddle, Surrey
A Liddick, S West
Kevi N Hall, S Wales

Student Members

Mark S Crossley, N West

Next month... September’s latest members

Ian Holoran
Board Member
Name: Ian Holoran
Golf Club: Middlesbrough
Association Position: National Board of Management
How long have you been a member of BIGGA?
Since 1987
Where do you hope the Association will be in 10 years time?
To have improved an image, so that every greenkeeper wants to be a active member
For what would you most like to be remembered?
Apart from being a lottery winner, it would be making a contribution to running a members’ Association that we can be proud of. And for the Whitley Bowl Golf Tournament in Cumbria
For what would you least like to be remembered?
The Section golf match with North East Section and being beaten by Jimmy Richardson who has never let me forget
Why did you take on a more involved role in the running of the Association?
To give something back after taking so much out
Name one thing which would improve the Association?
Members to have immediate access to support systems if problems arise in the course of their work
What is your claim to fame (None, not acceptable)?
Being asked to present Prince Andew with a gift on behalf of the Association

Describe BIGGA in 15 words
To give something back after taking so much out

UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPD

A MEMBER'S ENAMEL LAPEL BADGE

See Education Update on page 10 for further information on the minimum qualification.

Important news for members

The December and January membership renewals will be mailed out in November, if you have moved and need to advise us of your change of address please contact Membership Services as soon as possible (See Education Update on page 10 for further information on the minimum qualification.)

Where do you hope the Association will be in 10 years time?
To have improved an image, so that every greenkeeper wants to be a active member

For what would you most like to be remembered?
Apart from being a lottery winner, it would be making a contribution to running a members’ Association that we can be proud of. And for the Whitley Bowl Golf Tournament in Cumbria

For what would you least like to be remembered?
The Section golf match with North East Section and being beaten by Jimmy Richardson who has never let me forget

Why did you take on a more involved role in the running of the Association?
To give something back after taking so much out

Name one thing which would improve the Association?
Members to have immediate access to support systems if problems arise in the course of their work

What is your claim to fame (None, not acceptable)?
Being asked to present Prince Andew with a gift on behalf of the Association

Describe BIGGA in 15 words
To give something back after taking so much out

UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPD

A MEMBER'S ENAMEL LAPEL BADGE

See Education Update on page 10 for further information on the minimum qualification.

An...
THATCH PROBLEM?

NO PROBLEM!

ROTORAKE 600

goes down to 50mm
to relieve severe thatch problems

collector box available
powerful 13hp engine wide working width
interchangeable reels for year round use
designed for ease of handling

For full details, or a demonstration, of the SISIS Rotorake 600, combined deep thatch remover, scarifier and linear aerator, please contact:

SISIS EQUIPMENT (Macclesfield) LTD
Hurdsfield, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 2LZ
Tel: 01625 503030 Fax: 427426 E-mail: info@sisis.u-net.com
Check out the latest on the BTME microsite

With BTME2002 fast approaching, recent weeks have seen a surge of interest from exhibitors both past and new enquiring about available stand space. Three halls are now sold out with space still remaining in the recently extended section of Hall B, the Kings Suite and Hall Q. The extra space in Hall B has accommodate only two more central island stands which are ideal for companies wishing to exhibit large pieces of equipment.

The BTME microsite, which can be accessed at www.btme.org.uk, is proving to be extremely useful and time efficient for companies and visitors alike. It has streamlined the stand booking and pre-registration processes considerably and allows every visitor to the site access to clear and accurate information which is regularly updated.

If you have not already booked for BTME2002, take a look at the web site and see for yourself who's already exhibiting, where they're exhibiting and which stands are currently available. Stand size, cost and location details are all available at the touch of a button.

Some exhibitors have yet to send in their 100 words exhibition entry which will appear on the Web Site and also in the BTME show catalogue.

Remember, the sooner you send them in, the sooner they will appear on the Web Site along with the rest of your company information for your customers and all visitors to the microsite to see.
Scott MacCallum travelled to Northern Ireland to meet two brothers managing two of the finest courses the country has to offer.

Northern Ireland is true golf country and one of the areas rightly regarded as a jewel in the crown is the northern most coast which boasts some of the finest golfing land to be found anywhere.

Two of the golf clubs which occupy this land are Royal Portrush and Portstewart. Only seven miles apart the clubs are a dream double act for golfing visitors from all over the world who make the golfing pilgrimage to Ireland.

Surprisingly the clubs are independently managed by two South London-born brothers, Joe and Bernard Findlay. Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that although the clubs have so much in common they are also so very different.

Joe, who is in his second stint as Head Greenkeeper at Royal Portrush, sees himself as custodian of a historic links which hosted The Open Championship exactly 50 years ago, while Bernard, Course Manager at Portstewart has piloted many fundamental changes at the Club including the building of a fine new nine holes for the Strand course and as well as a new parkland layout.

"I am very conscious of my responsibility as Head Greenkeeper looking after a course like Royal Portrush, I take that responsibility very seriously and feel almost like a custodian," says Joe.

By contrast Bernard's job is completely different.

"Portstewart has not stood still since I arrived. The club is never frightened to change, and I sometimes joke that it’s been like a building site since I got here," explained Bernard, who at 44 is the younger Findlay by six years... although Joe is quick to point out that he is the one with more hair and teeth.

"Ports of call"
As the only course to have hosted an Open Championship outside of the British mainland - Max Faulkner lifted the Claret Jug in 1951 - Royal Portrush has a pedigree unmatched by any course in the Province and anyone visiting the Club now will find a challenge very similar to that faced by the extrovert Champion it crowned.

Any change that has been carried out on the course in the intervening 50 years has been done merely to preserve the challenge that is Royal Portrush.

"The club employed Donald Steel a few years ago to do a hole by hole report on the course just to assess what changes were needed and all it amounted to was the repositioning of a few bunkers and the odd case of lengthening holes," explained Joe Findlay who began his second stint as Head Greenkeeper when he took over from Philip Baldock, some three years ago.

An example of this tweaking came at the feature 5th hole where a new Championship tee, adding about 27 yards to the hole, prevents players cutting the corner and forces them to play the hole as it was originally intended.

"Using Donald Steel was very good because he has a very objective and critical eye and is very much tuned into the traditions of the game," explained Joe.

Royal Portrush has long been regarded as one of the best courses in the world and certainly one of the finest links and Joe is in no doubt why this is the case.

"The site is on a particularly beautiful section of land between the main Bushmills road and the sea and it is absolutely fabulous, a very dramatic area of outstanding beauty."

Royal Portrush boasts two fine courses, the Dunluce, which is the senior Open course, and the Valley which is very similar but tighter with narrower fairways and smaller greens.

"If the Dunluce wasn't there the Valley course would be rated very highly in its own right as it's a stereotypically links course constructed with minimal earth movement, cut through the valley."

As well as a rich golfing history Portrush also contains artefacts from an age way before the time when the first golf balls were being knocked down fairways. Archaeologists have also been involved in uncovering finds.

"We have one large open area known as the War Hollow where there was once a Viking battle and we regularly find ancient scrapers and knives."

Joe first moved to the course in 1977 to take up the position thanks to the persistence of his Northern Irish wife. "I was working at Hindhead Golf Club in Surrey at the time and noticed the job advertised in Golf Illustrated magazine. The next thing I knew I received a letter inviting me for an interview. My wife had applied for the job on my behalf," recalled Joe with a smile.

Even then, brave man that he was, once he had been offered the job he didn't accept straight away reasoning that he was still very happy at Hindhead. However, he was forced to think again when the club came back to reinforce the job offer.

"I was working on a tee at the time and my wife walked out over the golf course carrying our newly born son and holding the letter from the club asking me to reconsider. I suppose I underestimated by wife's desire to return home," he said.

When he did arrive he discovered a course labouring under a feed and water policy which had been in place for some time.

"I still have reports recommending a pound of iron and three pounds of sulphate of ammonia per 100 square yards at six week intervals and advice to use preventative applications of fungicide," he revealed.

Prior to arriving at Portrush Joe had read much of Jim Arthur's work and he started to apply those methods to the course.

"The best piece of advice I was given by Jim Arthur was to buy a spiker and try to wear it out as quickly as I could."

"Very quickly we got rid of the inch and a half to two inches of thatch and..."
had all the associated problems with poa annua.

We have a verti-drain, a Toro Pro Core, a Toro Hyrojet and a Ryan Greens Air and we use them,” he explained.

Over the season Joe only applies five grams of nitrogen per square metre and they top dress five or six times per season.

“I haven’t seen fusarium on the course since I’ve been here and in all confidence don’t expect to see it.”

“I don’t believe in miracle cures in greenkeeping. I believe in good husbandry - try to look after the soil and if the soil is healthy the chances of growing anything become greater.”

“I’ve got a great deal of respect for Jim Arthur’s general philosophy because I’ve proved at Portrush that it works,” said Joe.

The biggest greenkeeping problem Joe and his team of 14, plus summer casuals, encounter is ryegrass contamination and erosion.

“This is partly due to the fact that when I came in ’77 they were using rye grass on the fairways. It had been introduced through misguided advice and because it was cheaper and we are working to eradicate it from Portrush.”

The erosion could prove a more difficult and certainly more expensive hurdle to overcome.

“During the 80s we lost the back of the 5th green. I came in one morning and the irrigation ring main was hanging out into space where the sea had taken away a substantial area of sand dune. It was an interesting problem as we had to reconstruct the green which was right on the edge of the dune ridge,” said Joe who is blessed with an extremely talented team of greenkeepers and a fine First Assistant in Alec McCoole.

They installed some stone armourment with financial help from the R&A and through an appeal made to the wider golfing world.

While that was emergency rebuilding the longer term prognosis has serious financial implications for the golf club but Portrush, like so many of Britain’s finest links courses cannot and will not bury its head in the sand.

“Part of the problem is that Portrush is a holiday town and very popular with visitors in the summer who like to walk around the dunes and play in the sand. This breaks down the Marram grass and leaves the dunes vulnerable to erosion,” said Joe who worked for the late and much respected architect, Fred Hawtree, at Addington Court.

The club has commissioned a report from a professor based at the University of Colraine which recommends remedial work the cost of which will run to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

“We will probably take action in the worst and more vulnerable areas first and then see where it goes,” said Joe.

Joe’s initial period at the club lasted 10 years before he left to managed a company for a Monastery which produced digested farmyard manure which the Club had been using as an ingredient in their top dressing.

“The monastery was interested in its application in amenity horticulture and they offered me the job, which after a lot of deliberation I accepted. I was particularly interested in working for a charity and the fact that it was an environmentally friendly project while I was keen to experience the opposite side of the business, that of supplier rather than consumer,” he explained.

He worked there for four and a half years before the lure of practical greenkeeping pulled him back.

“I underestimated how much I missed preparing a golf course and seeing the long term benefits of management practices,” he says.

So he left and took over at the parkland Roe Park Golf Club in County Londonderry before moving to Ballyliffin Golf Club in Donegal where he oversaw the growing in of a brand new 18 holes before reapplying for Royal Portrush when Philip Baldwin moved to Ganton.

“I’m delighted to be back and I think my experiences in working in the supply industry and on a brand new golf course has meant that I’ve bought a lot of additional experience to the job. Certainly the thought of reconstructing greens or tees doesn’t hold any horror for me.”

It was Joe who was responsible for bringing his brother to Ireland.

“I knew there was a vacancy at Portrush and suggested to Bernard that he apply. He was a Head Greenkeeper at a small course in Berkshire and I knew that his ability was being wasted.”

“He’s a younger brother but I’ve got more teeth and hair than he has. Our relationship works very well. We get together often and talk about work, sharing what is happening on each other’s courses. We bounce ideas of each other and there is no real upmanship, certainly not on my behalf,” said Joe who took Bernard on as an apprentice at Shirley Park.

“I was Head Greenkeeper and he was a trainee and he hated me because I made him work. But he learned very quickly and soon became First Assistant.

“We agree on lots of things and disagree on others. Bernard is very organised as far as his office work is concerned whereas I prefer to be out on the course working, digging holes etc.”

Talking to Joe you feel that here is a content man having returned, full circle to Royal Portrush, and enjoys his life outside the course through his sailing - he sails traditional working boats - kayaking and archery.

“I am very conscious of my responsibility as Head Greenkeeper looking after a course like Royal Portrush. I take that responsibility very seriously and feel almost like a custodian.”

October 2001 Greenerkeeper International 17
While Royal Portrush has a reputation which draws people from all over the world those with more than one day to spare often take the opportunity also to play Portstewart. When they do it is a decision they invariably don't regret.

"Portstewart is happy to be associated with Royal Portrush and to receive some reflected glory. Almost without fail whenever golfers come to Portrush they play Portstewart as well and then they make the comparison between the two. Many people do say that Portstewart is as good an 18 holes as Portrush," said Bernard Findlay.

You can tell, talking to Bernard, that he feels his charge, which includes two 18 hole links courses - the Old and the Strand - and a currently under construction parkland layout, doesn't lose anything by comparison with anyone.

"It's difficult not to be biased but I do think Portstewart is far more dramatic than Portrush. The dune system is very dramatic and the golf at Portstewart is generally played from a height where you can enjoy the views whereas Portrush is set down in hollows between the dunes," he said.

One of the other benefits of the Strand Course is that with the towering dunes the holes tend to be well separated.

"I call it the Yellow Brick Road syndrome. Golfer like not knowing what is round the next corner and that is part of the appeal of the Strand."

When he was interviewed for the job in 1986 Bernard was asked if he thought he could build holes in the Thistlely Hollow - an area of dune land owned by the club. "I said 'Not on my own but that I could if I worked to a specification drawn up by a golf course architect'," he explained.

It was certainly a clue but perhaps it didn't quite prepare him for the extent of the work he would be doing over the next 15 years. The initial project, mentioned at the interview, involved replacing some of the course's perceived weaker holes with new ones built on the spectacular Thistlely Hollow land.

"The club didn't use a golf course architect at that stage but a fellow called Des Giffin, a member of the club, who had ideas of what he'd like to see on the course. The club formed a committee and we walked the dunes and decided upon the routing of seven new holes. In the end we built nine new holes," said Bernard.

"We listen to the views of all concerned and certainly weren't closed to any opinion but the routing was done mainly by Des and myself."

They stripped out the buckthorn and removed the marram grass to produce the holes taking photographs all the time to display on a board.

"We started by building a pilot hole - the 8th which was to act as the link from the existing course to the Thistlely Hollow - and from the lessons we learnt we were able to go on and complete the rest of the holes and that worked very well."

The work was started in '86 and the
to the practical people I found around me. I didn't have the experience on my own to do this and what I found was that the Greens Staff had lots of practical experience of different elements of greenkeeping and the different elements of this environment and I found that by listening to them it was a great help to me.

Since the new Strand holes have opened they have been able to go back and correct some of the mistakes that were made. "We had made some fundamental mistakes with bottlenecks. With the best will in the world with areas of dunes 30 metres high you will not avoid them but we are improving the situation all the time," said Bernard, who admits that even after 15 years he has yet not quite slowed down to the Irish pace of life.

The comment Bernard made more than once that the club never stands still is borne out by the fact that the latest project, a nine hole parkland layout called the Riverside, is well underway which will give the club 54 holes of golf. "The Club sees the Riverside as the next big project," explained Bernard.

Their latest acquisition was in 1999 when 47 acres or arable land came up for sale next to the Riverside course. The main reason for the purchase was to extend the Riverside Course from 9 to 18 holes and thereby further accommodate the demand for the Club's golfing facilities. The Council and Members of Portstewart Golf Club were also aware that the purchase of this land would prevent development by those wishing to build 'hard structures' in an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sensitive area at any time in the foreseeable future. The ecological value of the general area has been limited by its agricultural use. However, the opportunity to enhance the wildlife and habitat value as a result of golf course development is considerable.

October 2001  Greenkeeper International  19
North Staffs Irrigation Ltd
Ivy Mill, Longton Road, Stone, Staffs. ST15 8TB
Tel: 01785 812706 Fax: 01785 811747
Email: NorthStaffs.Irrig@btinternet.com
www.northstaffsirrigation.co.uk

- Trenchers with Automatic Conveyors
- Green Micro Banding using 'Lytag'
- Specialists in Fine Turf Projects
- Drainage / Irrigation Specialists
- Latest laser guided trenches
- High Lift and Gravel Trailers
- 30 years experience
- Competitive Prices
- Distance no object
- Fully trained staff
- Free quotations
- Whizz wheels

THE HOME OF GOOD DRAINAGE

I.L.S.
Irrigation Systems & Equipment

If you are looking to upgrade or replace your irrigation system, contact I.L.S. for

Choice  Experience  Value

I.L.S Irrigation Systems & Equipment
Oundle Road, Lutton, Peterborough PE8 5ND
Tel: 01832 272450  Fax: 01832 272191

TIGHTER CONTROL OF WATER USAGE
RETROFIT TO YOUR EXISTING DECODERS
LOWER COST THAN A PC

THE TONICK RAINMAKER

- COMPREHENSIVE PRINTED REPORTING OF WATER USAGE – ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR NEW LICENCE!
- PREDICTION OF WATER VOLUMES AND APPLICATION
- EASY ALTERATION OF PROGRAMS WITH A WATER BUDGET
- PLUG-IN LIGHTNING PROTECTION
- PROGRAM SPLITS TO PREVENT WATER RUN-OFF
- EASILY RUNS A FULL FAIRWAYS IRRIGATION SYSTEM
- THREE YEAR WARRANTY
- OPTIONAL RADIO REMOTE CONTROL

Tonick Watering
Coetir Bach Farm, Maes-y-Bont, Cross Hands, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire SA14 7ST
Telephone: 01269 832325  Fax: 01269 832326
www.tonick.co.uk

Water extraction licences are due to become much tighter and will only last for 5 years*. Proof of efficient water usage will be necessary. The Tonick Rainmaker provides all the information to manage minimal water application.

*The draft Water Bill.