



**More speaker profiles from the glittering National Education Conference, to be held at Keele University, Staffordshire on 26-28 March. If you haven't already booked your place - DO IT NOW! Time's running out and if you're serious about your profession, you just can't miss this event. See the full line-up in the advertisement on Page 43 and call BIGGA HQ on 03473 581.**



**Patrick Murphy**, the Scotsman with the essentially Irish name, cut his greenkeeping teeth at Broomiehall 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 an unlucky omen it has brought him good fortune over the years, and he has remained a loyal Shipley man for all of that time, a creditable achievement.

Listening to Patrick, you'll soon realise that his enthusiasm for Shipley knows no bounds, though his 23 years as head greenkeeper on the course have not been without their moments. For example, his first STRI report back in 1970 suggested that Shipley's greens, laid some fifty years earlier, had been neglected for far too long and were in need of major surgery, with conditions beneath the surface indicating that a long slog lay ahead. Along with the regular 'fixes' - moves such as deep aeration, verticutting, scarifying, hollow tining and mole ploughing - 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.

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 Patrick's skills over the years. Now the fifteenth such green has been lifted, (actually the sixteenth hole) excavated, re-built and put back into play in seventeen days! How he does he do it? Come to Keele and find out!



**Robert (Bob) Brame**, 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 in 1971, assistant golf course superintendent in 1972, thence through a number of senior jobs as superintendent proper at such grand places as Guadalajara Country Club in Mexico (1972-74), Timber Trails Country Club, La Grange, Illinois (1974-78), Lafayette Country Club, Indiana (1978-80), and the famous Broadmoor Country Club in Indianapolis from 1980 through 1990 - an impressive and essentially practical record.

Bob took his Bachelor of Science degree in 1972, majoring in Agronomy at Purdue University, and he is now (since 1990) the Mid-Atlantic 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 hugely

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 Pitfalls of American Turfgrass Management'.



**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 by becoming 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 C&G Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management, whilst also lecturing to degree level those working toward a BA in Equine Studies (Turf Management). Though his year or so at Moreton Merrell was not without pleasure, 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, Leicestershire, Hertfordshire, London and Kent.



**Iain Ritchie** has the eye of an artist, his canvas the 27 glorious holes of Portmarnock, Ireland's glorious jewel. Stemming 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 world's premier amateur championship battle, the Walker Cup. His 1990 pre Walker Cup overseeding programme was quite an event in itself, succeeding in obtaining a 90% strike rate with some three tons of fescue/bent mixture applied through a Moore Uni-Drill.

The subject of a profile report in Greenkeeper International December 1992, Iain will elaborate on his championship maintenance programme, including those experiences briefly touched upon in the magazine, his

aptly titled address being 'Three years at Portmarnock'.



**George Brown**, a Kent man by birth, has been around golf since the age of thirteen, having caddied over the Royal Cinque Ports, Royal St George's and Princes courses from

that tender age. George left school at 15 and joined the green staff at the 27 hole Princes course, Sandwich, remaining there for nine years before marrying, moving to Alton in Hampshire and taking up a position as pro-greenkeeper.

Three years later he left Alton to work for a wealthy family in Kent, looking after their small estate, following this in the early seventies with a return to Princes, this time fulfilling a childhood dream by returning as head greenkeeper at his old course.

In 1979 he accepted an offer to move to Broome Park G&CC, near Canterbury, to supervise the construction of the new golf course and other sporting facilities. Once established, he took on the role of manager and director of golf, staying until 1986 when a further opportunity arose, for him to become golf courses and estate manager at Turnberry and to supervise the preparation of Turnberry for the 1986 Open Championship, scene of Greg Norman's greatest triumph.

George, whose talk is titled 'Being Open-minded', is a former County Cap and Kent Open Champion, as well as being a former chairman of the Ayrshire section of BIGGA.



**Gordon Child**, who is regional administrator for the South West and the course manager at Churston Golf Club in Devon, will forgive me if I tell those very few readers who do not know him personally - he is of sufficient maturity to be able to carry off the subject of his choosing, 'Greenkeeping, - Past, Present and Future', almost by remote control!

Yes, Gordon has been supremely active in the profession of greenkeeping for what seems like an eternity, founding his sporting connections as a professional cricketer for Yorkshire before moving into a career that has become his life, his joy and his obsession.

He is the power-house behind Westurf, the regional exhibition that has gained a national reputation, and he is father figure to just about every greenkeeper in the West Country, proof positive that a man obsessed can take others of like mind along with him, witness the success of the SW region and their unswerving loyalty to their mentor.

Furthermore, there is none more active in the furtherance of greenkeeper education than 'our Gordon', and I am giving away no secrets when I tell you that his talk will be not only an educational trip down memory lane, but I suspect it will be peppered also with more than a liberal scattering of 'reet grand Yorkshire humour' - don't miss it!

◆ Contact BIGGA HQ for booking details.

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