

# A Week In the Life

## Scott MacCallum recalls a fabulous Harrogate Week.

For BIGGA Headquarters staff, having already spent 11 months and three weeks in outline, and several months in detail, planning Harrogate Week starts very early. The advance party, Pauline Thompson, arrived at Harrogate International Centre on Saturday morning to oversee the handover from the previous week's Toy Fair to BIGGA. Pauline spent the day ensuring that no damage to the Halls caused by next year's Christmas presents would be attributed to this season's latest machinery launches.



Sir Michael Bonallack looks on as Kerran Daly does the honours

Later that evening John Pemberton arrived in Harrogate in preparation for an early start the next day when Ken Richardson and Sami Collins would arrive to administer delegates for the Sunday Workshops, which this year were held in the brand new state-of-the-art Queen's Suite, a purposed build conference facility on the first floor of the International Centre. Five separate workshops ensured a real buzz to the start of the week and certainly set Harrogate Week off on the right foot - Basic Health and Safety; Project Management; Financial Management; Golf Course Design and A1 Assessor Training meant a wide range of the skills required to undertake the job of a Course Manager were on tap.

While education was being provided upstairs progress was being made in the Halls as stand builders and exhibitors worked tirelessly to ensure that stands would look as attractive and welcoming as possible come the grand opening on the Tuesday morning.



A packed house enjoyed Keynote Speaker Colonel John Blashford-Snell, right

A dinner for the speakers and BIGGA staff on Sunday evening proved to be a highly entertaining and convivial evening, proving to be an ideal half way point for those involved with two day workshops and launch pad for those conducting the one day Monday Workshops – Customer Care; Drainage; Getting the Best from your Staff; the L12 Coaching Award and the Update A1 Assessor Award.

Monday witnessed a real change of gear as more stand builders and exhibitors arrived and the remaining BIGGA staff and more delegates took part in the workshops. By the end of the week over 1000 seats had been filled by people at Workshops, Seminars or the newly introduced Fringe Seminars offered by exhibiting companies.

Monday evening and Harrogate was alive with the expectant chatter of visitors awaiting Tuesday's opening and members of the trade ready to welcome them.

At 9am sharp on Tuesday Kerran Daly demonstrated that a year as BIGGA National Chairman had not dulled his more practical skills as he wielded the famous BIGGA shears to great effect and declared the BTME and ClubHouse Exhibitions open. With that the five halls quickly filled up and the familiar sound of communal chatter started.

Tuesday morning is also the occasion when BIGGA recognises its leading lights and Award winners. Thorpeness Golf Club, led by Course Manager Ian Willett, received the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Scotts, Syngenta and WRAP. It was quite a week for Ian, as he also received his Award for five years of CPD attainment and was also unveiled as Terrain Aeration's Unsung Hero of the Year. Although judging by the success he'd attained earlier in the week he seemed pretty well "sung" to me!

We also cheered the 41st and 42nd Master Greenkeepers in Colin Parrish and Kevin Ratcliff. Coincidentally both are from the north west of England with Colin Course Manager at Morecombe Golf Club and Kevin at Wychwood Park, in Cheshire. They received their plaques and blazer from BIGGA President Sir Michael Bonallack MBE, who made another very welcome visit to Harrogate Week.

With the Awards duly presented and acceptance speeches made the audience sat down to be enthralled by the Keynote Speaker, Colonel John Blashford-Snell, who spoke on his adventures and his work with Operations Drake and Raleigh.

He later joined invited guests at the Chairman's Lunch in the Majestic Hotel where Kerran Daly presented his Club with a plaque as a thank you for being so co-operative over the past year and where BIGGA Golden and Silver Key

Education and Development Fund supporters were recognised for their generosity, including latest Silver Key member Saul Nassau.

The evening witnessed a quiz organised by Sherriff Amenity and Bailey's of





David Lees, right, receives his prize for winning Stand Up, Sit Down Bingo from sponsor Korec



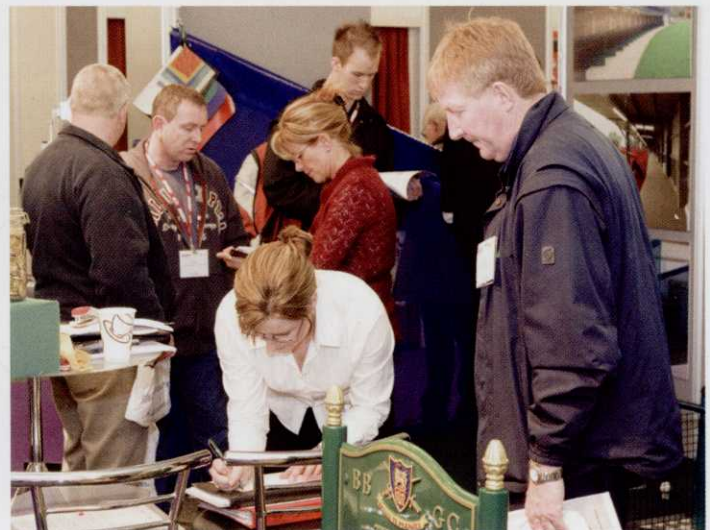
Busy busy busy - it was all go in the halls!



The Careers' Fair, sponsored by Toro, was again a useful component of the week



Left: The Internet Cafe, sponsored by Pitchcare, helped keep everyone in touch with the world



Richard Whyman draws Ian Osbourne, Head Groundsman at Richard Euan Sports Ground, out of the bag with the help of Vitax's Clive Williams





The Museum brought back many a memory of yesteryear

Norfolk and Kubota hosting a Casino night, both of which were in the St George Hotel. Other dinners included the annual Toro Dinner and the 60th anniversary Hayter Dinner, which was held in the Majestic Hotel. Another event on the Tuesday was Tower Chemical's seminar and Ian Batty, Sleaford Golf Club and Ronnie Myles, Scarcroft Golf Club, both won trips to this year's US Open after entering the company's prize draw.

Traditionally Wednesday is the busiest day of the week and 2006 was no exception. Many people were convinced a world record was being attempted for the most people squashed into the confined space of the HIC. It may have been, but people were too busy conducting business to notice and the 3422 visitors to the Show had a great time and kept the exhibitors exceptionally busy.

British Seed Houses hosted a lunch in the St George Hotel which eased the congestion in the halls a little and the guests were treated to an entertaining talk from Test Match Special's, Henry Blofeld, who shared stories for his time in the commentary box and hailed the work of the country's groundsmen and greenkeepers.

The afternoon saw the announcement of the welcome return of the John Deere Team Championship, which will ultimately see a team from the UK travel to the States to take part in the International event. Money from every team that enters is donated to BIGGA by John Deere, so everyone is delighted to see it back on the schedule.

BIGGA's Annual General Meeting was held in late afternoon and Kerran Daly duly passed on the crown of BIGGA National Chairman to Richard Whyman, Head Greenkeeper of Burnham and Berrow Golf Club in Somerset.

Richard took hold of the reins in expert fashion and introduced his new Vice Chairman, Billy McMillan, son of Jack, and Course Manager at Tyrrells Wood GC, near Leatherhead. Past Chairman, Andy Campbell MG CGCS, stepped down from the Board along with George Barr, of the South East Region, and was replaced by Raymond Day, Course Manager at East Sussex National GC.

The AGM was followed by the Bernhard's Reception where the 10 BIGGA Scholarship Delegates to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta were presented with their tickets. The event grows each year and the latest delegates brings to 60 the number of people who have benefited



The show allows visitors to chat with the experts

from the generous sponsorship of Stephen Bernhard and his company.

Thursday arrived and the pace didn't seem to lessen. In the past Thursdays had a different pace than Tuesdays and Wednesdays but the morning was particularly busy. Among other events, the day saw the launch of the excellent new STRI Environment DVD, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen.

Thursday was also Student Day at Harrogate Week, with the first ever Student Forum being held, sponsored by Toro. Ashley Lock, of Brigewater College, Cannington Centre, will be able to enjoy music on the move courtesy of the Student Quiz. Ashley's answer sheet was pulled out of the hat to win himself an Ipod Nano.



The TT Manx, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, produced 3 winners: Ross Plumbley, Andy Halifax and Richard Barbar





The R&A's Big Debate on Sustainable Golf caught everyone's imagination and was a fitting finale for Harrogate Week 2006

The highlight of the week for many was the R&A's Maintaining a Sustainable Golf Course Big Debate which attracted an unprecedented attendance of 270. Chaired by Nick Park, Vice Chairman of the R&A's Golf Course Committee, the Thursday afternoon saw presentations from Steve Isaac, of the R&A; Alistair Beggs, of the STRI; Gordon Irvine MG, and Chris Haspell.

The audience participation element of the Debate was held on Friday morning and remarkably over 170 of the delegates

numbers was read out you sat down and the last man standing, David Lees, won a Tom Tom Sat Nav system. The losers still had the chance of winning millions on the Saturday's Lotto Draw!

The main entertainment came from The Rat Pack's Back, who sang unforgettable standards between the main course and the sweet. Several members of the audience were unwittingly dragged into the act to sing or dance which added to everyone else's enjoyment.

After the meal television comedian and impressionist Terry Alderton had everyone in stitches with a hilarious set, much of which revolved around the GCSAA's Membership Services Director Scott Woodhead, who seemed to take the brunt of Terry's anti American material. However Scott took it in good part and Terry moved on to other subjects and with his all action style kept everyone laughing.

It was a fitting finale to a wonderful week and acted as the launch pad to Harrogate Week 2007. The hard work and preparations start now!



The Rat Pack's Back belted out the old standards



Terry Alderton with his American friend Scott Woodhead

remained. They spoke or heard from a long line of distinguished Course Managers from either side of the argument. A full report on the Debate will appear in a forthcoming issue of Greenkeeper International.

While The Big Debate continued until the Friday, the Thursday evening banquet represented the close of Harrogate Week 2006 for the majority of people.

The meal in the Majestic Hotel was superb and the entertainment top notch. It started with a raffle, prizes donated by companies who attended the banquet and was followed by a reverse lottery hosted by satellite mapping company Korec. Everyone was provided with tickets valid for that Saturday's lottery and told to stand up. If one of your

