



Welcome

THE PERFECT BALANCE

If you were one of those who contributed towards the final attendance figure for Harrogate Week 2006 of 7757, I'm sure you will agree that it was a very good use of a few days in the second half of January.

It was my 11th Harrogate. I know I don't look old enough, but it's true, and I would honestly say that of them all this was the one where the balance between education and training and time doing business in the Halls was closest to being just about right.

Education and training is the bedrock of everything BIGGA does as an Association, borne out in the constitution and mission statement. It is the aim and duty of the BIGGA staff to provide members with opportunities to improve their education and add to their training. That said, Harrogate Week wouldn't happen if not supported by the many companies who take stand space and display their wares over the three days of BTME and ClubHouse and if everyone were to be involved in workshops or seminars and not in the Halls the trade would have no reason to attend.

By providing such a wide range of education and training, not just in the formal programme but with the newly introduced Fringe Programme to enable companies to give presentations, and by starting workshops on the Sunday, with more on the Monday, the needs of the Exhibitors, to have people passing their stands on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday area were met.

The highlight for many was the R&A's Maintaining a Sustainable Golf Course Debate on the Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. This may have had the benefit of retaining visitors who may otherwise have left for home and certainly added to the numbers in the Halls on the Thursday morning.

It was extremely pleasing to see a full house of 270 plus in the auditorium on Thursday afternoon listening to the presentations. It was perhaps even more so to see how many people remained until lunchtime on Friday to take part in the open discussion, which was conducted by none other than legendary television anchorman, Michael Barratt, now a consultant for the R&A.

The passion shown by those who contributed to the debate, from either side of the argument, was a pleasure to witness and proves that when all is said and done the issue which dominated Harrogate Week 2006 more than any other was one of pure greenkeeping.

To give us time to reflect the occasion properly Greenkeeper International will carry a feature on The Big Debate in a later magazine.

As is always the case thoughts now turn to 2007, which will be my 12th consecutive Harrogate Week. There is much to be discussed before then and plans to be made but you can be assured that everyone connected with the event will do everything to ensure that Harrogate Week 2007 offers as much for the visitor as its immediate predecessor.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

PATRONS' AWARD

On December 8 2005 the annual Patrons' Award and lunch took place at the Terraces Hotel, Stirling, where 47 members and patrons attended.

As in previous years, the Scottish Region has awarded prizes to 10 members of the Association who have supported their Sections during 2005. Each award winner received a book, attendance at Harrogate Week and three nights accommodation at the Moat House Hotel, Harrogate. This is possible only due to sponsorship provided by the patrons. Their generous and financial provision makes not only the trip to Harrogate Week possible but also so many BIGGA events throughout the season.

This year's Patron Award winners were: Dale Norquoy, Irvine GC; Alistair Storie, Beith GC;

Ian MacMillan, Murrayshall GC; Mike Lindsay, Scoonie GC; Stewart Crawford, North Berwick GC; Ryan McCulloch, Berwick-upon Tweed; George Mitchell, Newmacahar GC; John Geddes, MacDonald GC; Colin Scott, Glasgow GC; John Barr, Ranfurly Castle GC.

During the lunch the guests were entertained by John McKelvie, a former police officer who had a fund of stories of his days within the police and it was easy to see why John is in demand on the after dinner circuit. Chairman Iain Barr was an excellent Master of Ceremonies and ensured everything ran smoothly. Next year's lunch will be at the same venue on Thursday December 7 2006.

GOING FOR GOLD

Stephen Burroughs has achieved his ambition of completing his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. Stephen, who has been employed by Stock Brook The Country Club since he left school in 2004, was presented with his award at local level at Chelmsford Cathedral by Danny Crates, the Paralympic 800 metre Champion.

Part of his work towards the award included the NVQ in Sports Turf Level 2, where his Head Greenkeeper, Adrian Cornell, and Nigel Beckford, of Writtle College, put Stephen through his paces. The Staff and Management of Stock Brook are extremely proud of Stephen's achievement, and celebrated with him at a joint 18th birthday and award party recently.

"It has been a real challenge and I have learnt new skills, experienced new things. The next new experience will be seeing the inside of Saint James' Palace when I go to receive my medal from the Duke of Edinburgh," said a delighted Stephen.



Stephen, left, with Paralympian Danny Crates

CHAMPIONSHIP BACK ON



L-R: David Hart, C&CE Division Manager, John Deere Limited, with BIGGA's John Pemberton, 2006 Chairman Richard Whyman (seated) and Kerran Daly

The popular John Deere Team Championship Golf Tournament is going ahead once again this year. The Great Britain final is due to take place in September at East Sussex National, while the Irish final is booked for the new PGA National Ireland Golf Course at Palmerstown House, in Co Kildare.

In organising this event, John Deere Limited traditionally makes a cash donation to BIGGA and the GCSAI, based on the number of teams that take part. This donation goes toward supporting the respective Associations' educational activities.