

## Welcome



### Lucky Number 13

On Sunday, January 20, I drove into the car park of the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate, around 6 o'clock in the evening for the 13th year in succession. I witnessed the ribbon cutting which heralds the opening of the Show for the 13th time in a row and attended the BIGGA AGM, again for the 13th time. I let my hair down at the banquet again for the 13th time.

Now I'm not superstitious, but if I were I'd certainly rid my mind of any thought that 13 is an unlucky number.

Harrogate Week 2008 was what we hoped it would be. A celebration of all things fine turf, with sparkling new machinery on show; the latest developments in agronomic advances showcased and valuable educational opportunities being offered, and more importantly taken up, by turf professionals from all over the world.

The weather may have been a little unkind, particularly at the beginning of the week when everyone was setting up, and the GCSAA Show followed immediately on from our week for the first time in a number of years, but the Harrogate Week attendance figures reflected the fact that people genuinely feel they must be there. To not have been would leave them open to missing out on something. The final attendance figure for the three days was 8,641, almost 2,000 up on 2007 and 900 up on 2006.

At a time when the world economy is uncertain, and golf couldn't claim to be booming, it is a credit to the positive nature of greenkeepers, and their desire to keep on top of the job in any way they see fit, that they supported their show in such numbers.

We know that it's expensive to attend – hotel prices only head in one direction and I broke a personal record this year by paying over £10 for one drink! – but there is no avoiding that unfortunately. Harrogate is not out of step with other such venues while wherever there is a conference centre there are hotels which set their prices accordingly.

However, I do know that the price BIGGA charges for its education, whether it be workshops or seminars, is extremely inexpensive (I'd never use the word cheap) when compared with that on offer in other industries. And not just a little bit less expensive, considerably less so. BIGGA runs its education at a heavily subsidised level thanks to the continuing support of the BIGGA Golden and Silver Key programme, supported by the industry, and you'll not find the quality and broad range of BIGGA education matched anywhere.

For that reason I hope that golf clubs continue to find a way to send their staff, even if it is a day trip, so that they can take part, learn and develop.

Now, I'm going to make sure that the number 13 features large in whatever I'm going to be doing – lottery, roulette, bingo, the gee ges... But, as I said, I'm not superstitious!

## RAISING THE PROFILE OF GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The R&A has promoted Steve Isaac to the position of Director - Golf Course Management to reflect the importance placed by The R&A on environmental issues and sustainable course development and maintenance. The promotion also highlights the increasing reach and scale of The R&A Golf Course Committee's work.

Steve has been instrumental in delivering The R&A's golf course management policy, which reflects the organisation's belief that golf courses throughout the world should present themselves in the best possible condition and work to the highest ecological and environmental standards.

Since his appointment in 2003, his work has centred around developing management strategy guidance for sustainable golf courses, with particular focus on the use of water, fertilisers and chemicals, climate change, appropriate turfgrass selection and the planning of new courses.



Steve Isaac, 46, gained a BSc (Hons) in applied biology from Liverpool Polytechnic in 1983. Before joining The R&A, he worked as an agronomist for 17 years at the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI).

## SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2008 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Business Learning Centre, Carnegie College, (formerly Lauder College), Dunfermline on Tuesday 4 March, 2008.

This year's speakers include Gerry Byrne, Resort Superintendent, The K Club, Ireland, Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive, Golf Environment Europe and Archie Stewart, Landmaps Ltd. Other speakers include, from America Ron Alexander, Ron Alexander Associates, Allan Patterson, Head Greenkeeper, The Castle Course, St. Andrews Links Trust and, finally, Gordon Holms, CSC Amenity.

Tickets cost £34, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms will be posted to all members in Scotland and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J.Boyd, Regional Administrator on Tel 0141 616 3440 or [pj.boyd@btinternet.com](mailto:pj.boyd@btinternet.com)