

BIGGA SCOTTISH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Once again we made our way to the newly named Business Learning Centre, Carnegie College for our annual Conference in March where we welcomed 140 delegates.

In charge of proceedings for the morning session was Iain MacLeod, our Education Convenor and Course Manager at Tain Golf Club. Iain had the task of introducing our speakers, Gordon Holms, Director of Indigrow Ltd, Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive, Golf Environment Europe and to finish off the morning session, Gerry Byrne from the K Club in Ireland.

After lunch the annual presentation was made to the Student of The Year. This year we had two winners, Neil Plenderleith, Gleneagles Hotel and Jamie Duncan, Brodick Golf Club, Isle of Arran. The presentation was made by the Chairman of the Scottish Region, Stuart Greenwood, Course Superintendent, North Berwick West Links. Neil was in attendance, but unfortunately Jamie was unable to attend.

The afternoon session was chaired by Stuart Greenwood who introduced Allan Patterson, Head Greenkeeper at the Castle Course, St. Andrews Links, Ron Alexander of Ron Alexander Associates in America and Archie Stewart of Land Maps.

All speakers on the day were most interesting and entertaining. The Board very much appreciated the time and effort they made to contribute so much to the success of the conference. The Board also wish to thank the delegates for their attendance and participation.

The Conference for 2009 will be at the same venue on Tuesday, March 3.

PATRONS: Richard Aitken (Seedsmen) Ltd, Alpha Plus (Scotland), Bayer, Daval Industrial Products, The Double A Trading Company, Fairways Group Ltd, Hamilton Bros (Eng) Ltd, Golf Finance Ltd, Greentech (Sportsturf) Ltd, Henderson Grass Machinery, Indigrow Ltd, McNab Sport Ltd, Meiklem Drainage & Groundworks, William Monks & Partners, Nairn Brown (Glasgow) Ltd, Parsaver Ltd, Rigby Taylor Ltd, SGM (UK) Ltd, 3PointPower/SISIS, Strachan Construction, Stewart Plant Sales, Scotts Company, Souters Sports Ltd, Sports Turf Services, Tower Sport Europe, Turf Irrigation Services, Terra Firma (Scotland) Ltd, Thomas Sheriff & Coy Ltd, Thorntrees Amenity and Vitax.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

The 2008 Scottish National Tournament will be held at Irvine Golf Club, Irvine, Ayrshire on Monday 23 June 2008 by kind permission of the Captain and Committee. The cost of the event will be £21, which includes coffee/tea, filled roll, evening meal and prizes. (Apprentice fee will be £12). Entry forms will be available at all Section Spring outings and from the Regional Administrator.

All entries with remittance to; Regional Administrator, Peter J. Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6TA by Thursday 12 June, 2008. Please make cheques payable to BIGGA Scottish Region. The draw will be posted on the BIGGA website.

BERT CROSS 1934-2008



BIGGA has lost one of its most longstanding and best known members. Bert Cross died suddenly in hospital in early April leaving a void which will be difficult to fill in his native Liverpool and north west as well as the Association as a whole.

North West Section Secretary for 30 years, Bert has also served as Northern Regional Chairman and was on the National Board of Management until as recently as last year. But his influence on the Association stretched much further than that. He was a key figure in the organisation of the Mere, later to become the North West, Seminar, while those members who have worked on the BIGGA

Open Support Team and played in the National Championship will be more than familiar with Bert's contribution, in the Cabin at The Open, and on the 1st tee as Starter at the National Championship.

There can scarcely have been a BIGGA event of any consequence at which Bert was not a key figure, often doing the essential behind the scenes roles which are often difficult to fill. For example he would often talk of the mixture of frustration and humour involved in collecting the Irish representatives of the Hayter Challenge from the ferry and getting them to and from the hotel. According to his wife, Marie, his association and work with BIGGA was something of which he was immensely proud.

Bert was born in Liverpool in 1934 and joined the Liverpool City Council Parks and Gardens' Department at the age of 15. Aged 18 he joined the Kings Regiment as part of his National Service and served in Korea where, by coincidence, he first met BIGGA Past Chairman, Gordon Child. He returned to the Park and Gardens Department two years later and worked in the greenhouses where he specialised in growing Orchids and Biomeleads which he showed, and won awards with, across the country including Chelsea Flower Show.

Always a keen and able golfer he applied for and got the job of Head Greenkeeper at Allerton Golf Club in 1978 and he worked there for seven years before being promoted to Courses Manager of Liverpool City Council's three municipal courses – Allerton, Kirkby and Bowring Park. He carried out that role until 1990 when he was again promoted, this time to Contracts Manager for the Council, a job he did until he took early retirement at the age of 59 three years later.

Not one for a pipe and slippers retirement, Bert and Marie throw themselves into another project – making at least 10 trips, each between a fortnight and a month, to Zambia to work at the Kasisi Orphanage, taking with them clothes and medical supplies.

Bert and Marie were adored by the 270 orphans, all with either AIDS or HIV, and Marie is going to complete the next scheduled trip, in June, where she will spread some of Bert's ashes at the orphanage.

Bert is survived by Marie, and sons, Peter, Head Greenkeeper at Blundells Hill GC, and Anthony, daughter-in-law, Yumi, and grandson, Koji.

Donations can be made to the Kasisi Orphanage.