

Welcome



10 YEARS ON...

Earlier this week I was standing, camera in hand, taking a picture of Prince Edward unveiling the plaque to commemorate the opening of the new Bernhard & Co offices in Rugby. It was 10 years ago, give a week, that I was standing, camera in hand, taking a picture of Prince Andrew, as he unveiled the plaque to commemorate the opening of BIGGA HOUSE.

I remember the occasion because the Prince actually told me it was the worst picture of a plaque unveiling he'd ever seen – he wasn't looking at the camera and the plaque was still covered - and we all trooped back to the plaque and did the picture again. In mitigation it was due to a borrowed, but unreliable, digital camera, but I genuinely felt that having taken the worst picture of Prince Andrew in action ever was a great claim to fame and have dined off the fact since. I'm currently awaiting comment from Prince Edward to discover if I've improved any!

So much water had flown under the bridge since the opening of BIGGA HOUSE on October 21, 1998, not least that Neil Thomas, the Executive Director of BIGGA, at the time is no longer with us.

Neil had steered the Association from its inception in 1987 to the stage that new offices were necessary and was extremely proud of the strides BIGGA had made. He continued at the helm until he was taken seriously ill with a brain tumour in mid 2003 and died the following February. As I write Seve Ballesteros is fighting a brain tumour, and our thoughts go out to Seve and his family, and this again brings back memories of Neil, and his proudest day when the new offices were opened.

Two of the other honoured guests back then were former Deputy Prime Minister under Margaret Thatcher and BIGGA President Viscount Whitelaw and Secretary of the R&A Sir Michael Bonallack, who was to take over as President when Viscount Whitelaw died the following year.

The magazine that marked BIGGA HOUSE's opening, November 1998, contained a report of the Hayter International match held in Atlanta, Georgia; an article by Laurence Pithie MG on the benefits of having a dedicated Golf Course Mechanic; a piece on Ramside GC, in the North East, and an article by Roland Taylor - who, sadly, is also no longer with us, on gang mowers and how they are drawing towards retirement.

National Chairman at the time was Gordon Child, who 10 years on, is still in fine fettle – using two new hips to propel him around the golf course, often in a score below his age!

In many ways 1998 seems like only yesterday but in other ways it's a lifetime away. Where will we all be on October 21st, 2018? is a question to be asked with quite a bit of trepidation bearing in mind the people mentioned above who are no longer with us. However we can all hope that we'll be enjoying the fruits of our labours, lying back, soaking up the sun on some Caribbean island, safe in the knowledge that we are financially secure and that our savings and investments are locked away somewhere safe.

There's a novel thought for November, 2008.

NORRIE WHYTOCK TROPHY

August saw BIGGA Scottish Region return to Auchterarder Golf Club for their annual Team Competition, featuring the five Sections within Scotland.

Auchterarder was one of the few places in Scotland not affected by the weather and this must have delighted the organisers of the Johnnie Walker Tournament at Gleneagles only a sand wedge from the fairways of Auchterarder Golf Club.

The Central Section were hoping to make it three in a row, but with a blustery wind and tough pin positions, it took its toll on some of the teams. The ever-reliable North Section finished in 2nd place on a total of 100 points. The team comprised Hugh McLatchie, Peterhead GC; Warren Beveridge, Ballindalloch GC; Muir Ross and Fraser Downie, both Peterculter GC. The worthy winners, after their one and only success 10 years ago, were the West Section with a winning total of 105 points, Team Captain, Douglas McIntosh, Cathkin Braes GC; Brian Hillen, Drumpellier GC; Alasdair Read and Alan Syme, both Williamwood GC.

The winning Captain Douglas thanked Bayer and their Scottish representative Kenny Liddell for their continued sponsorship of the event. Thanks go to the Captain and officials of Auchterarder for the courtesy and facilities of the golf club and to the Secretary Barry Johnston for his assistance in organising the event.

Special thanks to Archie Dunn and his staff for all the hard work and congratulations in presenting the course in such excellent condition despite the many days of rain they have had to endure this season.

Next year's event will once again be held at Auchterarder Golf Club on Thursday, August, 20, 2009.

Peter J. Boyd
Regional Administrator



OUR APOLOGIES

In the last issue (October) of GI, regrettably, some of the text was missing from the article 'Making the Appliance of Science Simple'; because of this error, we have reprinted the story this month in full.

BEST GOLF GROUP FOR SECOND YEAR RUNNING

Crown Golf has been named Clubhouse Golf Group of the Year for the second year in succession at an annual industry awards dinner hosted by Clubhouse magazine.

The Golf Group of the Year category in the Clubhouse Awards recognises venue and operational excellence. Crown Golf was successful in a group which contained Burhill Golf and Leisure, The Club Company, De Vere and Exclusive Hotels.

In its Clubhouse Golf Group of the Year application, Crown Golf was able to demonstrate strong membership growth, investment in the game through the launch of its Academy network, which includes an innovative new disabled teaching programme, grass roots golf development via special open days for women and children, operational excellence in sales and marketing, and a major contribution to the game's legacy through the £100m redevelopment of the St Mellion International Resort in Cornwall.

ALL IN THE NAME OF CHARITY

A host of celebrities including Jamie Redknapp, Matt Dawson, Michael Vaughan, Keith Duffy and Paul Collingwood took part in Sir Ian Botham and Ronan Keating's Charity Golf Classic at the exclusive Archerfield Links Golf Club in Scotland on September 15-16. The event raised more than £ 132,000 for Beefy and Ronan's charities - Leukaemia Research and Cancer Research UK.

Throughout the two days, golf was only interrupted by a gala dinner, charity auction and top-class entertainment.

HARROGATE WEEK 2009

The Scottish Region is pleased to offer the following package for the Holiday Inn, Harrogate (formerly, Moat House Hotel). The accommodation is from Monday, January 19. Three nights Bed & Breakfast in en-suite rooms on 19, 20 and 21 January, 2009. Cost will be £165.

In 2009 Harrogate Week Seminars are free of charge. The workshops that are available can be viewed on the Harrogate Week website and in the 2009 Harrogate Week Booklet.

To obtain a booking form for the accommodation contact the Regional Administrator, Peter J Boyd on: 0141 616 3440/07776 242120 or email: pj.boyd@btinternet.com

ANNUAL TRADE MATCH

On Tuesday, August 19, teams comprising of greenkeepers and trade of the East of England Section met at Immingham Golf Club, to do battle in their fourth annual match.

The greenkeepers, led by Section Chairman, Allan Walker, arrived full of confidence having been victorious in the past three fixtures. However, this year's trade team, led by new skipper Gary "Azinger" Cooper of STG Amenity Supplies, whipped the trade team up into a frenzy beforehand and sent his team out ready to win at all costs.

The course was presented in excellent condition by the Immingham greenstaff, despite a morning of rain and a greensmower hydraulic oil leak. However, the sun came out as the teams arrived on the first tee.

The greenkeepers were hampered by the late withdrawal of a player, however Les Howkins manfully took on the role of last man standing against the trade pair of Peter Larter and Ian James.

The trade team began well winning the first three matches, but the greenkeepers won the next two games to leave them needing a point in the final game to retain the trophy. Despite the valiant efforts of Les up the 18th, the trade pair won the game by 1 hole and gave the trade team an overall victory of 4 - 2.

The picture (below) shows victorious skipper Gary Cooper, left, gratefully accepting the trophy from losing skipper, Allan Walker.

The trade members can bask in their glory for a year, but the greenkeepers will be back next year to claim back the cup.



NO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR EU PESTICIDE ROUTE

The British Government does not support the negotiations currently underway in Brussels on chemical regulation.

That was the message delivered to the Amenity Forum Conference, in London, by Lord McKenzie, the Government Minister with responsibility for the Health and Safety Executive.

"Unfortunately the negotiations in Brussels have not proceeded as we would have wished. The emerging text would, in our opinion, deliver a regime which could remove access to an excessive number of pesticides without any corresponding reduction in risk to the environment or human health.

"The measure is, therefore, disproportionate and not compatible with the concept of sustainability. Consequently we are unable to support it. We do hope, however, that suitable amendments will be made as the negotiations continue this autumn."

Opening the Conference held in the HSE headquarters, Lord McKenzie, revealed that other challenges currently being faced include a tightening of restrictions on amenity use.

"I am aware that the European Parliament has called for 'substantial no-spray zones' adjacent to healthcare facilities and there are elements within the Parliament who would like a complete prohibition on chemical control in amenity areas. I would like to reassure you that the Government does not view such measures as being based on a scientific assessment of risk.

"We will not recommend the adoption of such measures and will do all we can to influence the debate."

Lord McKenzie expects the negotiations to conclude later this year or early in 2009 and said that the Pesticide Safety Directorate would work with and advise stakeholders on arrangements for implementing new legislation.

Dr Neil Higgs, of East Malling Research, reported on the research he had undertaken looking for non-herbicide methods of controlling weeds.

Among the ways he had tested were Infrared, freezing, UV Radiation, electricution, flaming, microwave, steaming, hot water; laser, hot foam and brushing.

However, he discovered that herbicide is still the most cost effective method of control with the other methods taking longer and requiring to be carried out more frequently.

GREAT SUPPORT FOR GRAHAM WOOD

A Charity Golf Day in support of Graham Wood, who spent 32 years as Head Greenkeeper at Dunbar Golf Club, and 37 years in all, held at the club in September, raised a substantial amount of money towards his welfare.

Graham suffered a stroke early last year and was hospitalised until very recently when he was allowed home.

The money raised will go towards a powered wheel chair and other aids to making Graham's life as comfortable as possible.

The Charity Day was organised by the golf club, with a great deal of help from Stuart Greenwood, Graham's close friend and Course Manager at nearby North Berwick Golf Club, it attracted a huge field – with a double shotgun start, and 54 teams, some starting on several tees, to accommodate the many who wanted to support the event.

The greenkeeping industry came out in force to support with many companies supporting the event.

Among the celebrities to take part were footballers, Pat Nevin, Murdo McLeod, Darren Jackson, David McPherson and Billy Dodds; rugby stars Doddie Weir and Duncan Hodge and former Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party, David McLetchie.

As well as the golf there was an auction, full of attractive lots, conducted by former Scottish Rugby Captain and Dunbar resident, Peter Brown, and a raffle.

Graham's wife, Helen, and daughter, Lisa, were in attendance in the evening as Club Secretary, John Archibald, announced how much money had been raised.

NEW OFFICE OPENING

HRH The Earl of Wessex officially opened the new Bernhard & Co offices in front of staff and invited guests at a special ceremony in October.

The Earl was shown around the new offices in Rugby and watched a grinding demonstration presented by UK Sales Manager, Steve Nixon, before being introduced to the staff and the various guests who had flown in from all over the world to commemorate the day.

"Our visit by Prince Edward was the culmination of a lot of hard work and detailed planning by many of our Rugby based team. It goes without saying that the honour of having His Royal Highness come to open our offices is something I and all the Bernhard team feel immensely proud of.

It was also a well deserved recognition of the Queen's Award for Enterprise.

This event also gave us the opportunity to bring several very important industry representatives together from across the world. We were proud to host senior executives from the GCSAA, FEGGA, GCSAI, and FEGGA as well as several well known industry leaders at the opening ceremony, reflecting our interest in promoting international relations. An added plus was the initiative to involve Land Rover in our celebrations who hosted the group of international visitors at the Land Rover Experience and provided several vehicles for the week."



Dean Cleaver, of FEGGA; Kenny MacKay and John Pemberton, of BIGGA, Tracy Coburn and Michael Loughran, of the GCSAI chat with the Earl and Stephen Bernhard.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS FULFILLED BEAUTIFULLY

Ashe Warren Farm has become a leading grower of Wild Flower Turf, the fastest growing medium in the UK for diverse uses such as landscaping projects on domestic and commercial sites as well as civil engineering schemes and green roofs.

This breakthrough in technology is the result of a combination of soil-less turf with native wildflower seeds, grown on a compost bed. Advanced research and many trials have given this turf the guarantee of establishing a wildflower meadow, using a specialist seed mix that acts as a weed suppressant, a production process that does not require the turf to be cut resulting in an undamaged root structure and best of all, a turf that requires very little maintenance.

Ashe Warren Farm, originally an arable farm, has expanded this specialist turf to such an extent that it is now converting more land to cater for the local, national and sometimes international demand.



A COURSE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The much awaited Ransomes Jacobsen International Golf Course was opened officially by the Major of Ipswich last month.

The three hole course, designed by Howard Swan and James Edwards, of Swan Golf Designs, will give Ransomes Jacobsen staff the opportunity to road test new equipment in their own back yard and offer guests the chance to put their short game through the toughest of examinations.

In addition to Swan Golf Design the course benefited from support from Rainbird Europe, who supplied the irrigation system; Tarmac Topsport, who provided all the rootzone material, and Barenbrug, who were responsible for all the various grass types used.

Each hole has a different construction so that machinery can receive different tests.

Recently appointed Head Greenkeeper is Rory Ferguson, son of Ipswich Town's Groundsman, Alan. Rory works on site four days a week and the remaining day at Writtle College.

"This has been a great project and we are so pleased with the result, which reflects the quality of the team we put together," said RJ Managing Director, David Withers.

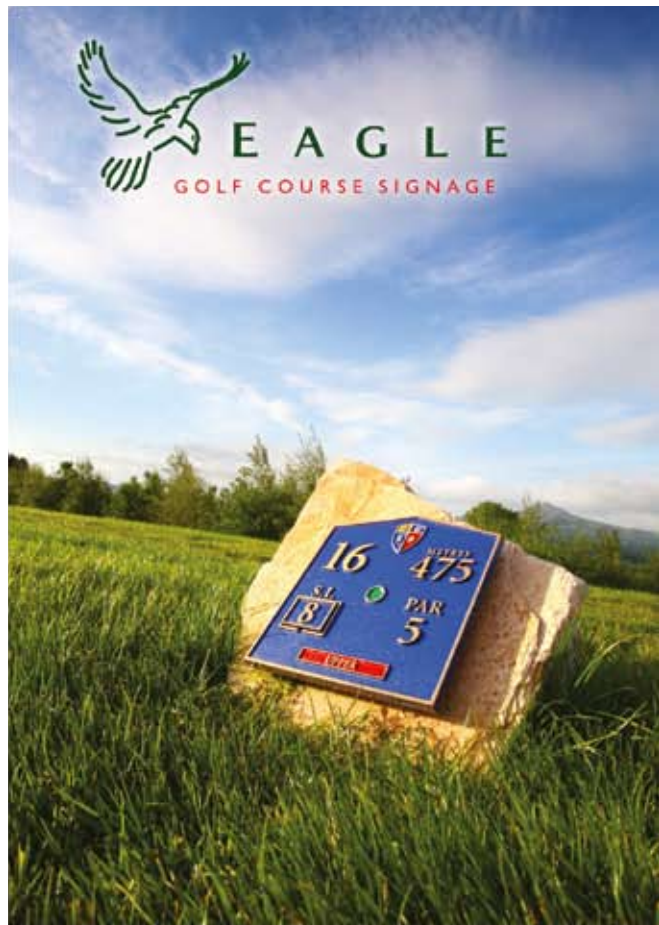
"We have about 1000 visitors a year coming through our Ipswich facility and we can now demonstrate our machines as well as our acknowledged environmental leadership," he added.

The three holes, Heather, Sand and Water measure 93, 82 and 49 yards respectively off the back tees and they are built round a superb water feature.

The 1st green has Bar 2, a slender creeping red fescue, chewings fescue and two browntop bents. The 2nd, Bar Fescue, a mixture of two slender creeping red fescues and two chewings fescues with the 3rd, an all browntop bent mixture of 50% Barking and 50% Heriot. Each of the tees boasts different mixes.



The Major of Ipswich, David Hale, cutting the ribbon in the presence of David Withers.



"WE SET EAGLE A VERY TOUGH DESIGN AND TECHNICAL BRIEF, BUT THEY CAME BACK AND GAVE US A SOLUTION THAT'S EVERY BIT AS IMPRESSIVE AS THE COURSE AND THE CLUBHOUSE."

"EAGLE REALLY DID GO THE EXTRA MILE, AND THE RESULTS ARE JUST SPECTACULAR."

PAT SMITH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF GOLF, DUN LAOGHAIRE GC

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NEW MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENT

European Turfgrass Laboratories Ltd has announced the recent appointment of Sharon Bruce as Laboratory Manager. Sharon has worked at ETL for more than 10 years, many of them as Assistant Laboratory Manager, so she is already quite a well-known face at Harrogate and other educational and turfgrass trade events.

ETL was the first outside the United States to gain full accreditation for what is commonly-referred to as USGA rootzone testing.



SCOTTISH GREENKEEPER PLAYS TOP AMERICAN COURSE

Grant Moran, Assistant Greenkeeper at Mortonhall Golf Club, Edinburgh will be winging his way to New York this month, on a four day free trip including a day's golf at either Pine Valley or Winged Foot.

Standing in for his colleague Head Greenkeeper, David Fraser, who won the Vitax Dial-In for Perfect Hydration competition, Grant will spend three full days in America including at least one night in a hotel in the Big Apple before heading out of town to enjoy his day's golf.

Vitax's Dial-In for Perfect Hydration competition was open to all turf managers opting for a site survey followed by a recommended, tailor-made hydration programme incorporating Aqua-Aid products.

SUSTAINABILITY IN GOLF DEVELOPMENT

The Golf Environment Organisation has announced the launch of a partnership project that will define a new model for sustainable golf development.

Setting out a vision that all golf development should have positive environmental, social and economic impacts, this project will produce freely accessible, constructive and relevant guidance to:

- Raise standards in land use planning and zoning for golf development
- Help streamline the decision making process for development control officials
- Integrate environmental and social issues into the heart of golf development proposals
- Facilitate collaboration across the golf, government and environmental communities

This initiative will support golf course architects and developers in creating resource efficient, ecologically rich, unique and sympathetic landscapes, which integrate into local communities and economies.

Government and NGO communities will also directly benefit from this guidance - using it to inform land use planning, policy creation and feedback during development control.

In a time of increased energy costs, land use restrictions, limited water availability, climate change impacts, and heightened public awareness and expectation, GEO will present new ideas and approaches for profitable, sustainable development.

FINANCE FUNDS IMPROVED FAIRWAYS

A five year contract hire with maintenance package from John Deere Credit has allowed The Oaks Golf Courses, at Oaks Park, in Carshalton, Surrey to acquire an extra mower for their fleet, and to improve their fairway cutting regime.

The Oaks, at Epsom, was named after the original manor house built on the property, and one of its later owners, the 12th Earl of Derby, gave his name to another famous horse race. Horses of a different kind power the new John Deere fleet on the 18 and 9 hole pay & play courses and 16 bay floodlit driving range.

"The finance option allowed us to upgrade the whole fleet at one time, and the competitive rates offered by John Deere Credit meant we had the flexibility to order an extra 2653B mower within the same budget. This meant we have been able to improve the overall fairway cut, with more definition at three different levels, something we simply couldn't have done with the machines we had before," explained Head Greenkeeper Phil Benn, who has been at The Oaks for 19 years.



THANK YOU

Can Rita and the boys and I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their kind thoughts on the tragic loss of our daughter and sister Heather. The support we as a family received during this sad time helped see us through this traumatic experience, we were overwhelmed by cards, flowers, emails, letters and telephone calls, making us aware we live in a world of great friends and wonderful people.

It is the first time we as a family have had such a tragic experience within our immediate family. When, in the past, family and friends lost a loved one, I have always found it difficult to know just what to say, now on the receiving end I still find it difficult.

We as a family will treasure the memory of Heather in our hearts forever, she has left this us all with a legend of happy memories, and we are the richer for having shared our lives with her, she was much loved and will be greatly missed. In this predominately male family she was loved unconditionally and we will miss her sparkle, wicked sense of humour and free spirit she was and always will be Our Heather.

We are delighted to learn that donations at the funeral raised £1200 for the Shooting Stars Children's Hospice, in Hampton Hill, Middlesex. Thank you to all who contributed.

From all the McMillan's our thanks to everyone in this industry that we are all so much a part of, for all your kind thoughts at this difficult time.

From Jack, Rita & All the McMillan Family