

MBE for Jim McKenzie



Celtic Manor's Jim McKenzie has been awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours, in recognition of the miraculous work he and his greenkeeping team achieved during last year's Ryder Cup as well as for his 30 years involvement in the greenkeeping industry.

In being awarded the MBE, Jim, Director of Golf Courses at The Celtic Manor Resort, joins a select band of greenkeepers who have been similarly honoured for their

achievements including Walter Woods BEM, Jack McMillan MBE and Jimmy MacDonald MBE.

"I found out on May 11 when the letter arrived through the door and I was totally overwhelmed. I told my team this morning that it was for all the guys who worked at the Ryder Cup, not just the Celtic Manor team, but all of the volunteers who helped us during the week itself," said Jim.

"To be honest I'm a little embarrassed by the whole thing because there were times

when I just stood back and watched, in awe at what they were achieving," said Jim, who added that he also saw the honour as being for those people who had helped him over the years, some of whom had left the industry and some of them who had passed away."

Jim started his greenkeeping career at Hagg's Castle GC under Chris Kennedy, before moving to Cawder GC to work under Alistair Connell. His first Head Greenkeeper's job was at Renfrew GC where he took over from George Barr. He moved to Wentworth, rejoining Chris Kennedy in 1990, before moving to Celtic Manor in 1993 where he managed the construction of three 18 hole courses including the 2010 Course, the Ryder Cup venue, and was extremely active in bringing the match to South Wales.

"I would never have dreamt that one day I would win such an honour but it is a measure of the huge strides the profession, and BIGGA, has made that it is now possible," said Jim.

During the Ryder Cup week itself there was 55% of the expected monthly rainfall in two days before and during the match and it was only through Jim's 130 strong team working through the night that the match was able to proceed, albeit being the first ever Ryder Cup to finish on a Monday.

European Captain, Colin Montgomerie, proclaimed them as the first ever greenkeeping team which could honestly claim to have helped win the Ryder Cup.

Jim believes although no-one has told him such, that the nomination came from a number of people and organisations from Newport and South Wales and from within the industry.

He expects to be presented with the medal sometime in the summer, although he has not yet been told where it will happen.

PGA Pro's Charitable Efforts Win Toby Sunderland Award



Phil Harrison, Wildwood Golf & Country Club's Managing Director and PGA professional, has won the Toby Sunderland award in recognition of his charitable efforts. After raising thousands of pounds for numerous causes close to the Surrey club and further a field, Phil collected the accolade at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth. He also received £1,000 for a charity of his choice.

"When I took over Wildwood it did not have a good reputation in the local community so I wanted to engage with the community and got involved with the youth, schools and the elderly."

Phil has decided to split the £1,000 for charity between two local charities – The Jigsaw Trust and Muntham House School.

Shown left, Phil Harrison (centre) receives the Toby Sunderland Award from PGA Captain Eddie Bullock (left) and Warren Sunderland (right). *Courtesy of Andy Redington at Getty Images.*