

REGIONAL CONFERENCES HIT THE ROAD



BIGGA members from across the country came together for four Regional Conferences in November which kicked off the countdown proper to BTME with some superb seminars and presentations.

Thanks to everyone who presented, members who attended and also the sponsors.

The four Conferences again reinforced BIGGA's commitment to greenkeeper education with a huge range of presenters.

The likes of Henry Bechelet, Lee Strutt MG, Jason Brooks, Paul Lowe, Steve Chappell and Dougie Robertson presented to hundreds of delegates the length and breadth of the country.

There were also a series of breakout sessions, and Stuart Green showcased the new CPD software which has gone down so well so far – and of course, CPD credits are available if you attended the conferences.

Don't forget the Scottish Regional Conference is on March 4 – for further details please contact Scotland Regional Administrator John Young on 07776 242120 or johnyoung@bigga.co.uk



JIMMY HAYES

Everyone at BIGGA was saddened to hear of the death of Jimmy Hayes, former greenkeeper at several clubs in the North East and BIGGA member for many years.

He was Head Greenkeeper at Gosforth Golf Club having also worked at The Northumberland Golf Club, Parklands Golf Club and Wallsend.

He was an extremely talented amateur golfer and was club champion at Gosforth an amazing 19 times.

BIGGA's former North East Section Secretary Jimmy Richardson paid a warm tribute to Jimmy. He said: "He was the people's champion in golf and was generally recognised as one of the best players never to be capped by England. He very rarely played in national tournaments as he was a man of modest means but he was a star among stars. He represented Northumberland at county level winning around 200 caps during the 30 years he played county golf."

He also won a notable national amateur tournament of his era, The Golf Illustrated Gold Vase, and the Scottish Seniors Amateur Open in 1988.

He lived in Seaton Burn for most of his life. He leaves a widow, Janet, a daughter Sandra, a grand-daughter and a great grandson.

BIGGA MEMBER LAUNCHES TURF CADDY APP



A new App has been developed that could revolutionise the chemical spraying of agricultural and leisure land. Turf Caddy, devised by Ben Blampied-Smyth, Course Manager at Royal Jersey Golf Club, will help users meet legal obligations whilst also helping to alleviate environmental concerns.

Turf Caddy is designed to allow quick and easy calibration of Fungicides, Pesticides, Herbicides and Liquid Fertilisers used in all areas of Turf Management whether on Golf Courses, Sports Grounds or Land Management.

It calibrates the amount of chemical required for various types of spraying equipment over a given area as well as plotting the areas sprayed via GPS and allowing a spraying record to be created for reference.

Turf Caddy allows users to electronically track their spraying

as they work; it also helps to extend the shelf life of expensive product and allow for better budgeting.

Ben qualified with a Turf Science and Golf Course Management degree in 2009 and became Head Greenkeeper at the Royal Jersey Golf Course in 2011.

The birth of this app and also of his blog, which has now had over 17,000 viewings and a large following online, are both tools Ben is using to help streamline his role to be more efficient, compliant and informative.

Ben said: There has always been a lot of misuse of Pesticides, Herbicides and Fungicides. The main issue is measurement with them being put down either too weak or too strong. Apart from the performance and environmental considerations, the products are also very expensive so it's

vital for users to find a way to monitor and use them effectively. Originally I just designed Turf Caddy for Greenkeepers but it soon became apparent that it was also applicable to managers of agricultural land and sports fields and also owners of large gardens. The interest in the App has been quite phenomenal.

"With Turf Caddy it feels like we're moving the industry into a new era."

Requirements: Compatible with iPhone, iPod touch and iPad. Requires iOS 4.0 or later. Cost: £4.99 Android version. Available from Amazon Android and iTunes. Compatible with Android 2.2 and above. Requires GPS.

The App is also calibrated for the US market.

For more information please visit: turfaddy.co.uk. Ben's Blog: royaljersey.getrefined.com



STEWART CLAYTON

Last month saw the passing of Stewart Clayton, MD of Greensman and well-known face in the greenkeeping industry. Alan White, who owns Greensman, paid this tribute.

"Stewart passed away in the company of his devoted younger sister, Linda, after battling a brain tumour for a year. He was an accomplished sportsman who became involved with hockey, representing England.

"Golf then became Stewart's greatest passion, he was the driving force behind The Bramham Lions Golf Society for almost thirty years and was a member of Scarcroft GC for almost as long.

"Joining Greensman in 2002 Stewart quickly developed his East Anglian territory and was offered a Directorship. Representing Greensman and Scotlube, he was happiest when playing in regional golf days. Stewart played off twelve and could remember every stroke he had ever dropped. He never forgot to help his fellow man, to be supportive, warm and genuine, and always be there when you needed him. He will be sadly missed.

"All good things come to an end - apart from memories."

HEAD GREENKEEPER JON RAISES THE BARR

Congratulations to Jon Barr, Head Greenkeeper at Lutterworth Golf Club, who has become our latest Master Greenkeeper.

Jon began his studies for the certificate seven years ago and passed the exams earlier this year, becoming the 63rd BIGGA

member to achieve Master Greenkeeper status.

He said: "I'm really pleased. I'm most pleased that I won't have to sit the exams again! They were the first exams I've sat in about 20 years so it was daunting, but I put a lot of work in.

"I did it for my own career and development.

"Having the Master Greenkeeper certificate puts you in a great position if you want to further your career."

Turn to page 38 for much more on Master Greenkeeper.



Steve (centre) with Karen Proctor, Ransomes Jacobsen Key Accounts Manager, and Neil Back

SLALEY HALL'S STEVE CRAM WINS AWARD

Congratulations to BIGGA Member Steve Cram, Golf Course & Estate Manager at De Vere Slaley Hall, who was awarded 'Greenkeeper of the Year' at the annual Pro Shop Europe Awards. Steve has received a wealth of praise throughout the year for his sterling work in preparing the Hunting course at De Vere Slaley Hall to such a fantastic standard for the 40th anniversary of the PGA Cup.

Steve has been a long-standing member of the team at De Vere Slaley Hall and has been integral in developing the North East resort's reputation as one of the UK's premier golfing destinations and tournament venues.

As well as maintaining a championship standard of golf course through challenging weather conditions all year round, he's overseen six

European Tour and 13 European Senior Tour events at the Northumberland resort. The team implemented a strenuous programme of course and drainage improvements over the winter months, and this paid dividend throughout the peak season, culminating in the 26th hosting of PGA Cup matches.

Steve said: "I was really pleased and humbled to win – to be honest I was surprised to even be nominated. The award is more for all the team here who have worked so hard over the last few years.

"I feel the greenkeeping team is now a tighter ship and more efficient than it's ever been, and the whole golf operation here deserves credit.

"We came into March and April this year facing a real challenge – we had snow on

the ground for two weeks in April. But since then we've flown – it was a great summer. We did have two or three spells of really heavy rain, but we'd done lots of work on our drainage in preparation for those conditions. So, the next day we would be fully open with no compromise for our members and visitors."

Keith Pickard, Regional Golf Director at De Vere, said: "Steve is a credit to his profession, a true leader who loves his trade and has a fantastic ability to galvanise and motivate his team of green staff. His passion and pride inspires his team to put in the extra hours to ensure everything is perfectly prepared, and he stands as a role model for heads of departments across the whole De Vere Group. The award is richly deserved."



A KNIGHT'S TALE

Hydroturf International welcomes Gareth Knight as their newest addition to the Dubai Head Office – a familiar face to many at BIGGA. Gareth's new role of Commercial Sales Manager sees him managing the UAE, Oman & Bahrain for products such as Toro, TruTurf, Bernhards, and others.

Gareth previously worked as Estates Manager at Trefloyne G.C. He was also Section Secretary of BIGGA South Wales and BIGGA Regional Vice Chairman.

PHYTOPHTHORA RAMORUM IS THE REAL ENEMY WITHIN

A succession of alien insect pests and diseases have entered the UK over the last decade almost entirely via other EU nations, and by taking advantage of inter-EU 'free trade' accompanied by no quarantine measures worthy of that name. Heaven knows why the government publicly took on Chalara ash dieback disease caused by the fungus *Chalara fraxinea*.

This is a spore spread pathogen causing internal vascular wilt disease in one of the UK's most frequently occurring and ubiquitous trees (common ash – *Fraxinus excelsior*). Once in the UK it was beyond eradication, here to stay and with the fate of common ash in its hands.

Chalara fraxinea is highly host specific and has so far only been found infecting members of the *Fraxinus* genus. A number of *Fraxinus* species of European, Asian and North American origin are planted in the UK as ornamental ash trees but *Fraxinus excelsior* is the only native *Fraxinus* species.

Only other trees (shrubs) at possible risk from this pathogen are privet, common lilac and patio olives, because like *Fraxinus* species they are members of the plant family Oleaceae (olive family).

As bad as it is for common ash there are other alien diseases in this country here for much longer, with a much broader host range and the capacity to wipe out a whole range of trees and shrubs important to the amenity, landscape and forestry sectors.

Greenkeepers may remember *Phytophthora ramorum* which was dubbed 'Sudden Oak Death' because a strain of the fungus-like pathogen was ripping through native North American oaks and tan oaks in California and neighbouring West Coast States. First identification of *Phytophthora ramorum* on a mature tree in the UK was in November 2003 on a 100-year old North American red oak (*Quercus falcata*) in Sussex.

Ironically the two genetic lineages (strains) of *Phytophthora ramorum* now causing havoc in the UK did not arrive from North America. They are European strains which slipped in through the EU 'back door', probably on *Viburnum* imported from the Netherlands or Germany.

Everyone thought *Phytophthora ramorum* would decimate English oaks but they have proved to be much more resilient than their North American counterparts, probably due to the extraordinary thick bark. However, *Phytophthora ramorum* was soon found on a number of UK broad-leaf trees including common beech, southern beech, sycamore, holm oak



and sweet chestnut though mercifully only relatively small numbers have been involved. Last count showed *Phytophthora ramorum* infecting 130 species across 75 genera in no less than 37 plant families. This host range includes many popular shrubs and ground cover plants including *Rhododendron*, *Viburnum*, *Pieris*, *Syringa*, *Camellia* and *Vaccinium* (e.g. bilberry).

The real damage subsequently caused by *Phytophthora ramorum* is on-going in commercial forestry. The pathogen has found wild *Rhododendron ponticum* foliage to be the ideal template for infection, disease development and spore production. From there the pathogen has proceeded to scythe through Japanese larch (*Larix*

kaempferi) and has essentially destroyed this conifer as one of UK forestry's premium softwood timber trees.

Many greenkeepers are probably unaware of these developments but those who manage golf courses in western England (Devon, Cornwall, Forest of Dean and Lancashire) in Wales, western Scotland and Northern Ireland where this moisture-loving pathogen and disease is rife will be only too well aware. Many thousands of hectares of Japanese larch have already been felled either because the trees were infected or as a precaution against further spread of established infections nearby.

Dr Terry Mabbett

TURF MANAGERS' CONFERENCE 2014 – BE THERE!

Book your spot at www.bigga.org.uk, www.btme.org.uk or contact the L&D team at BIGGA House



The Turf Managers' Conference 2014 is at The Crown Hotel in Harrogate on Monday 20 January 2014 featuring cutting edge presentations, seminars and debates full of critically important information for you as a delegate to take with you in your career.

You will spend a day in a room full of your peers from across the UK, Europe and the world allowing you a day of unrivalled networking and the opportunity to chat with greenkeepers from all manner of courses.

For BIGGA members it costs just £105 plus VAT for a truly unrivalled day of insight which is essential to equip you with

the tools you need to succeed in your future career.

For 2014, the Conference will be kicked off by Dr Karl Danneberger, Professor of Turfgrass Science at Ohio State University. As you will have seen in last month's Greenkeeper International in his article focusing on pigments and photoprotectants in turfgrass, Karl is an expert in turfgrass ecology and physiology and has received numerous awards for his work.

He will be discussing the research he's undertaken across the world and will be informing you how turfgrass plants respond to low light conditions.

Next up is Tammy Ball, Change Leader

at 'Coaching by the Balls'. American-born Tammy has been a change leadership specialist for 15 years, and she will be introducing the concept of Change Management as well as offering practical advice and proven methods for effectively communicating change in the workplace.

Third speaker is Karl Morris, Managing Director at The Mind Factor. Karl is one of Europe's leading performance coaches and will be introducing his practical approach to performance coaching that understands the role of the mind and how to get the very best out of yourself and others.

Junier Brown, Senior Advisor in Environment and Business at the



Environment Agency follows with a look at the water resource challenges we all face, how to manage these finite resources and will ask whether the country is facing a water resources 'Rubicon'.

Final speaker is the popular Mark Hunt, Technical Director at Headland Amenity. Mark's weekly weather blog which looks at our changeable climate from an agronomic perspective is a firm favourite in the greenkeeping industry.

His presentation will focus on GDD data how it can be used to make management decisions.

As if that wasn't enough, take a look at what just two previous delegates have to say about the event..

"After being a delegate at the last three Turf Managers' Conferences, I have no hesitation in recommending the event to all within the industry.

"The speakers are highly experienced in a wide variation of fields from turf experts, man management to club politics, all of which are playing a bigger and bigger role in our day to day job.

"I believe that the attendance of American speakers in recent years just highlights the popularity and expertise that this Conference carries. It is a must for me every year at Harrogate and I always wait in anticipation for the guest speakers to be announced- I have yet to be disappointed."

Dan McGrath, Course Manager, North Foreland Golf Club.

"The key thing for me is that it does not just focus on agronomy. I've been to the last three and I've seen excellent seminars on presentation skills, interview techniques and management advice. It's a really good mix of subjects.

"The important point is there seems to be a misconception that it's just for Course Managers, Head Greenkeepers and Deputies. But any greenkeeper keen to advance their career will gain so much from attending the Turf Managers Conference."

John McLoughlin, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Grange Park Golf Club.