



▲ The Tyneside team with Dave Simpson centre

everything as much as possible," explained Dave.

He added that they were fortunate the course was laid out of sand and gravel, drained easily, and was often open when other courses in the area were forced to close.

"The whole game is now a lot more financially driven than it was before. The reason being we are now businesses as well as clubs and there is much more competition to survive.

"In the past courses more or less shut down in the winter months and were re-carved out in the spring. Nowadays we can't afford for that to happen and what is expected, and needed, is for there to be as near summer playing conditions as possible all year round which gives the golfer the feel good factor so they can enjoy their day's golf and go away with a feeling that they want to come back," said Dave, sounding more like the General Manager of a large golf hotel development than the Course Manager at a traditional members' club.

To illustrate his point he recalls the old days when a new set of flags, pins and hole cups, together with spruced up tee markers and other course furniture were introduced for the first major competition in the spring.

"We don't wait until things are old and in need of replacement now. We have new flags whenever they're needed and we try and maintain the standards of that first spring competition all year round."

"We've got members who would play seven days a week. If they were restricted to once a week, 52 games a year, they'd think their legs were cut off – 'Just 52 games? That's less than a month and a half!'"

Dave also uses all means at his disposal to help with agronomic and other course issues when it comes to identifying and solving problems.

"I use the magazine a lot for reference and through that and the Internet I contacted Kate Entwistle for help with a recent Fusarium problem Tyneside has shared with a great many clubs in recent months. Kate was absolutely superb and emailed me back with reassurance that we weren't doing anything wrong within our agronomic practices. It just shows how in the modern age you can tap into more avenues when you encounter issues.

The team also shows common-sense when it comes to the on-course work it does during periods of foul weather.

"On days like this we don't do anything on the course that involves machinery and things being transported over the course that would create more damage. We do work that is complementary to the weather."

A point emphasised by the fine brushwork and studied attention to detail one of the team had been displaying on tee markers back in the sheds earlier in the day.

To aid the year round condition of the course the club has introduced several "damage minimising" measures including teeing up on certain holes and the introduction of McDivot, divot anchors.

"One of our better golfers pointed out that as we use forward tees in the winter and a shortened course, balls are landing in the areas he would be landing in during the competition season in the summer and that those areas were becoming more damaged.

"That was part of the reasoning behind using the McDivots. Not only did it anchor divots down but when they were handed their pack of McDivots in the

Pro Shop it also encouraged people to thinking about their golf course," said Dave, whose own personal preference of mats has still to receive sufficient support from the membership to make it an option.

With a membership which includes a lot of older guys and a hilly, undulating course a no trolley policy is a non-starter at Tyneside.

"Some of the trolleys you see now are so big you could virtually sleep in them. They are unbelievable things for carrying a maximum of 14 clubs and lot of clubs have stopped them in the winter but it won't happen here. I tried it once and it lasted a day. It was just after Christmas, play was borderline and people were itching to get out. I said 'yes' to golf but 'no' to trolleys and added that I wouldn't be taking any machines out either. I got absolutely slaughtered," he recalled.

"That's fine, but people have to realise that for every action there is a reaction and that there were consequences to taking trolleys out in those conditions which we had to deal with months later."

Like a house of a certain age an older golf course does require on-going maintenance and the five strong team has been working hard over the winter on an issue on the 15th hole which had major health and safety consequences.

The hole boasts a ravine just in the ladies' and older male members landing area off the tee which has become steeper and steeper as the years have gone on.

"We cut it as semi rough and initially we could do it with a ride-on - rotary on the back of a tractor and then an out front rotary - but then the banks altered, became steeper and cavernous potholes began appearing. It became more and more dangerous to maintain," said Dave, who in the final stages was using a borrowed Ransomes Bobcat before deciding that the only way was strimming.

The team, along with Fosters Landscaping, has worked hard at re-contouring the entire ravine making it much safer to maintain while retaining the excellent feature it has always been.

"The membership are happy with how it looks and we will see what more is needed by way of contouring in the spring, then drill and seed it," said Dave, as he overlooked the work from the bridge spanning the ravine, installed by the army some years ago as an exercise.

The other major job the team carried out recently with health and safety issues was on the 14th which runs over a popular public footpath which winds its way down to the banks of the Tyne.

With the tee a mere 50 yards behind the path the dangers were obvious until the land tee-side of the path was raised to a height of nine feet, giving 100% protection to the public.

"It was originally built in the 50s but had become a practical but less than attractive feature," recalled Dave, who produced a report for the HSE detailing exacting mowing and transportation procedures for every hole on the course.

"Then there was a landslide and a huge crack appeared following a wet rainy summer about two years ago. The whole thing had to be redone and we got a contractor to pull the land back behind the upright concrete poles. We finished it with telegraph poles, which were in good supply at the time, and re-turfed the top."



▲ The 10th

The result is a very attractive professional job, fulfilling all the objectives of providing safe passage to the ramblers and dog walkers who use the path.

Dave, who is 39, became Course Manager, on Steve Pope's retirement in '95 having been Deputy. Prior to that he had worked as Deputy Course Manager at Washington GC, before that Ponteland GC and Newcastle United GC (a name the club had before the football club which is the object of the Toon Army's affections).

"I have a very good team, who, but for recent recruit Alex Wishart are trained to Level 3. Michael Gunn is my Deputy, Steve Richardson, the Mechanic/Greenkeeper, and Jeff Cullen.

As he ran through the names Dave highlighted their attributes and added that as a small team they all relied on each other to ensure success.

"To produce the goods you need a good team behind you who all have the knowledge. I'm a great believer in not holding anything back. I'm not a fly-off-the-handle guy and that means when mistakes are made, and they are, they come and tell me. If you are too autocratic you often don't get to find out what the problems are."

Dave and his team understand the demands of modern day greenkeeping at a traditional members' club and embrace the particular pressures such a combination brings.

"The industry is a lot more professional now than before and there are a lot of opportunities. I'm happy to stay in the industry and see it progress," concluded Dave.



▲ The 14th hole with the public path shielded by the recently refurbished wall of sleepers



▲ The remodelled ravine on the 15th hole

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A page from the Health and Safety guidelines produced by Dave and Michael showing the dos and don'ts for each maintenance operation

Hole Three

Tee
Main tee area cut using ride on triple mower. No sharp turning on main area or on sides. Sides of tee to be mown using flymo

Semi-rough.
Semi-rough on this hole is to be mown using semi-rough cutter. Ground speed appropriate to conditions. Care taken to avoid any notable hazards. Always cut up down any slopes rather than across.

Fairway.
The fairway is to be cut using the fairway ride on mower. All cut directions are permissible. Speed of cut to be appropriate to ground conditions. All turns to be at reduced speed fairway cut from end of carry to approach to green.

Approach.
This area to be cut using ride-on triple mower. Reduce speed and remain vigilant when cutting around bunkers and top of slope at rear of green.

Green
The greens mower is to be used for mowing greens only. Care to be taken on turning three point turns where turning would be tight. Slopes and bunkers around greens area to be avoided at all times.

Bunkers
If slope falls into bunker hand machines only to be used on slope. Bunkers sloping away from bunker may be cut around with ride-on mowers.

D.Simpson / M.Gunn March 03

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Andy Campbell MG CGCS - A Qualified Success

Scott MacCallum profiles Andy Campbell, who will lead the Association for the next 12 months

BIGGA has been blessed with some outstanding Chairmen since its inception in 1987 but in the 2004 Chairman the Association can honestly claim to have secured the services of a man whose qualifications are second to none.

Andy Campbell MG CGCS, Golf Courses and Estates Manager for De Vere Carden Park, is the only British greenkeeper to hold those two qualifications and is the living embodiment of how the education and training available to today's greenkeepers can open doors to, previously out of reach, employment opportunities and ensure the pressures inherent in those jobs can be met successfully.

For a 42 year-old to have achieved such an important role at such a prestigious resort as Carden Park - in addition to being in charge of the 30 greenkeeping staff he is also responsible for the team of pros, the starters and the rangers as well as being the Chairman of the Golf Club - you would imagine it to have been an unhindered march to the top of the career tree. However, the truth is far from the case and resembles more of a game of Snakes and Ladders, including a six year period out of the greenkeeping business altogether and a spell away from Carden Park when the Resort fell into receivership. It says all you need to know about Andy's strength of character, as well as the uncertain times in which we live.

"Recently I met up with Richard McGlynn, an Irish lad who used to work for me and who is currently working in Austria. Over a pint he said 'You might not be the most talented greenkeeper I've ever seen, but you are the most persistent.' I don't know if it was a compliment or not but I think I know what he means," said Andy, as we sat in the splendid clubhouse which overlooks the 18th hole of the Cheshire Course, the first of the two built at Carden Park. The other being the Nicklaus.

"That's the way I would sum it up 'Persistence'. I've always had the ability to get up, dust myself down and get on with it."

When it came to a career, greenkeeping's gain was very much the loss to two other professions and if things had turned out differently it could have been Andy Campbell's name at the top of this piece, profiling the new Chairman, and not Scott MacCallum's.

"I was a junior member at Chester Golf Club and at 16 was planning to stay on at a school and do A Levels with a view to becoming either a journalist or a banker and had gone so far as get the careers' information back from the training bodies of both," said Andy, whose journalistic interest stems from a relative who worked for The Daily Mail.

"But I'd been playing a fair bit of golf and wasn't too keen to go back to school for another two years. I'd always had a background in gardening, from my maternal grandfather who lived locally and I was



always in his greenhouse and cutting the lawn for pocket money, while my paternal grandfather was Head Gardener on an estate near Inverness."

It was around this time that a job became available as an apprentice at Chester Golf Club and Andy saw the opportunity to combine his two great interests.

"I got the job and first thing I had to do was resign from membership because in those days you couldn't do both and you weren't allowed in the clubhouse."

Chester, however, provided a superb starting point for Andy and he is particularly indebted to two individuals at the club.

"I was fortunate while I was there that Chairman of Green was Alf Jiggins, an ex City Surveyor for Chester, who'd done some golf course design work with Hawtrees. He was the man who got me involved in going to committee meetings when I'd been given the role of Senior among Equals. Len Sproston, was the Head Greenkeeper, who has recently retired, and he was one of the more forward thinking greenkeepers of the time."

With Len, Bill Lawson, Terry Adamson, Keith Holmes and Phil Davies, Andy was one of the men who took the decision to set up the North West Section of the EIGGA, much to the annoyance of many of the old BGGGA members.

He applauds the legacy, which had been left by the men who first made inroads into greenkeeper education.

"It is quite unusual for a group of people who want to move themselves forward without the pressures to do so being imposed by outside forces like business and bosses but that is what happened at the beginning. Greenkeepers have always had a thing about wanting to help themselves."

Andy left Chester in 1984 to become Course Manager at Eastham Golf Club on the Wirral, at the time a 13-hole course but when the move didn't work out he left the industry and set up his own landscaping business, employing at one time 11 people.

"In '92 my mum, who knew I wasn't particularly happy in landscaping, spotted an advert in the local paper for a Course Manager at Carden Park. It was the early 90s and it was getting increasingly difficult to get paid and there was a lot of pressure - so I applied and got the job."

They finished all the landscaping work over the next three months and Andy was back in greenkeeping, with thanks, on this occasion, to Brian Hatton, the Estates Manager, who had recognised what Andy could bring to Carden.

"The beauty of this place at the time was that it was really a big landscaping job. The golf course was halfway through construction, there was not hotel or clubhouse or even roads and I had knowledge of working with contractors and knew where corners might be cut."

All went well at the privately owned club until it went into receivership in October '94 and although initially retained Andy resigned when he was asked to compromise health and safety with a temporary maintenance facility and said he wasn't going to be responsible for working in those conditions.

He endured a miserable winter, including the '95 Harrogate, before being asked back by the Receiver as a consultant.

"I was basically last man standing when St David Hotels came in and took over. I had the keys as the Receivers had left the day before and Brian Hatton, sadly for him had been made redundant."

St David Hotel's injected the investment, which made Carden Park much of what it is today before De Vere bought over the group.

"My job role has increased as each hurdle has been jumped, the last being on January 1 when I became responsible for all the Pro Staff, the Starters and Rangers from both a financial and operational point of view."

This time his job title has remained the same "Golf Courses and Estates Manager".

"I don't feel the need to change it and if it's good enough for George Brown, it's good enough for me," said Andy, who also credits Jon Scott,

agronomist for the Nicklaus Group and the US Tour, for guiding him through some tough times particularly when it came to dealing with politics.

"He taught me only to fight the battles you have a chance of winning."

Through the growing demands of his job and the growth of Carden Park in terms of size of hotel and the construction of the Nicklaus Course, Andy studied hard to first achieve his Master Greenkeeper status in 1997 and then the CGCS (Certified Golf Course Superintendent) in 2001, becoming the only person in the country to hold both.

"I was conscious that if I could get my Master Greenkeeper certificate it would make my role more secure within the company and it was the same with the CGCS certificate as well," said Andy, who hopes Ken Seims, Course Superintendent at Loch Lomond Golf Club, the only other holder of the CGCS goes for his Master Greenkeeper, as that would make two.

"I do get some criticism for putting MG and CGCS after my name. I only do it on certain correspondence but I want people to turn round and ask what it means. It's all part of the battle to change people's perception of greenkeeping."

Surprisingly for one who has taken such advantage of the educational opportunities available to him Andy sees the biggest benefits he's had from BIGGA coming in the networking opportunities.

"Meeting people like Walter Woods, Jimmy Kidd, Bill Lawson and George Brown - I never thought I'd be the guy he'd ask to be his Vice Chairman - was great and they have influenced so many young greenkeepers," said Andy, who added that he was fortunate that he had a boss who encouraged him to go to the Conferences where he met those people.

"You used to think what would happen when those guys left the industry, that there would be nobody to take their place. But someone said 'Ah, but you'll be that guy one day'. I thought 'yeh sure' and I still don't believe that but there are other guys who have followed in their footsteps. People like Gordon Moir and Eddie Adams have come through."

So what of the Campbell year in office? What can we expect?

"Greenkeeping is a microcosm of what is happening in society today. The pace of life is so hectic it is getting more difficult to encourage people out of their homes at night for Section gatherings.

"The challenge for the Association is to find ways to serve those people and service them in new formats. That will come at a cost in terms of technology but more people are able now to use computers and there must be a way of bringing the Association, and what it offers, to more people."

He is also aware of the uncertainties the Association faces in the coming months.

"Neil (Thomas) has built a strong team at BIGGA which is capable of managing the Association and that has been borne out over the last six months and I've no doubts that John Pemberton can continue to do the job he has over the last six months.

"As to what I can do. Well, 12 months isn't very long but I hope to keep people on board and all going in the same direction. I'm always going to bang the drum for education because of what it has done for me and I do believe in it.

"You don't stop on the level of education you've reached. We're in a fast paced environment and there are going to be many challenges to face over the next few years and we're going to need the skills to deal with them."

So what has BIGGA's best-qualified greenkeeper have in mind for his own personal development?

"Well, speaking to George Brown I don't think I'll have much time for books over the next year but I do want to work towards a business administration qualification, while I also want to learn Spanish as so much of the world's greenkeeping population speaks that language."

That's a challenge he may be facing with a well-known Real Madrid player soon... the Spanish, not the Business Administration!

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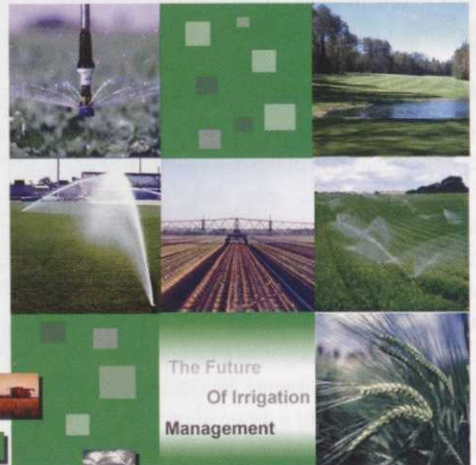
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Review of 2004

Always a Relief

There is always a sense of trepidation in the lead up to a Harrogate week that for some reason it might not live up to expectations. It may be down to something out of control of BIGGA staff - bad weather springs to mind immediately, but you could include things like general economic climate, industrial action, even something like the fuel protests of a few years ago would have a significant impact on the success of a Harrogate week. You never know, do you?

So it is with a sigh of relief that we can report another good week. Weather was amenable and there wasn't any outside factor to act as a fly in the ointment of the week.

More importantly the feedback we've been receiving has been excellent with the vast majority of exhibitors reporting they had enjoyed a successful show and were keen to rebook for 2005.

The statistics also bear out the fact that BTME & ClubHouse 2004 went well.

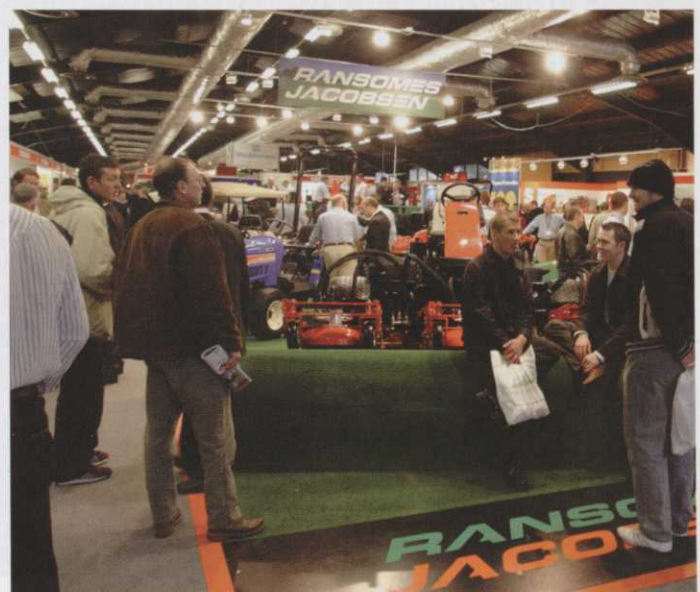
- 25 different countries, excluding the home nations, were represented, travelling from five different continents.
- 25% of visitors were attending Harrogate for the first time.
- The breakdown for British visitors was South 23%, Midlands 24%, Scotland 15% and North 38%, indicating that Harrogate draws from all corners of the UK.
- Other than golf, 15 industries were represented, including local authorities; farms; private estates; theme parks; showgrounds; football; racecourses, tennis clubs and polo fields.
- 35% of those who attended had the power to approve and purchase while a further 26% were in a position to influence approval.
- 10% of those who attend spent up to 25% of their annual budget at the Harrogate. 15% spend up to 10% of their budgets while a further 38% spend up to 5% of their annual budget.

We'd also like to salute the 120 people who have attended all 16 Shows. Let's hope you can keep your attendance records at 100% for many years to come.

It is statistics like those that encourage us to think that we have something to build upon for next year, but no doubt those feelings of trepidation will still be there come January 2005.



▲ George Brown officially opens the show at the Hall M entrance watched by some eminent Past Chairmen



▲ A busy Hall A

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You Had to be There

Scott MacCallum takes a back seat at the Harrogate week

Change was very much apparent to visitors to Harrogate this year from the moment they arrived.

This was mainly due to the fact that the Continue to Learn Education Conference, supported by the John Deere Team Championship, was being held in Hall D of the Harrogate Conference Centre and not the Majestic Hotel.

The reason was simple. As there is major renovation work required on the Royal Hall which has been the traditional home to the Seminar Sessions, Keynote Speech presentations, etc. a new home had to be found.

Ken Richardson took the decision to create a lecture theatre in Hall D, on the First Floor of the Exhibition Centre which last year housed the ClubHouse Exhibition.

As this had to be created specifically for BIGGA it was felt that we should make the most of this new temporary facility, so moving the education conference to Hall D as well made perfect sense.

With state-of-the-art Conference technology, including a series of screens placed down the sides of the theatre to assist with the viewing of photographs and graphics, it proved ideal and the interesting and thought provoking papers delivered by the speakers were given the ideal stage.

The Golf – Sport and Business theme to the Conference, under the excellent Chairmanship of Roger Greenwood, caught many an imagination and the quality of both paper and speaker were superb.

The morning started with Andy Campbell MG CGCS, at the time the soon-to-be-elected Chairman of the Association and Golf Courses and Estates Manager at De Vere Carden Park, who spoke on how performance is now judged on the daily figures produced by the resort as much as by the quality of his two golf courses.

Then came Peter McEvoy OBE, the inspirational Captain of a successful series of Walker Cup teams, who revealed how he got the most out of his team and ensured no inferiority complex when they faced up to their American opponent and also gave a glimpse into a new "golf in an hour" concept he is building near London.

Next, Billy McMillan, Course Manager of Tyrells Wood GC, who interrupted his paper to deliver a hilarious story about visiting the blood transfusion service, was as usual riveting self.

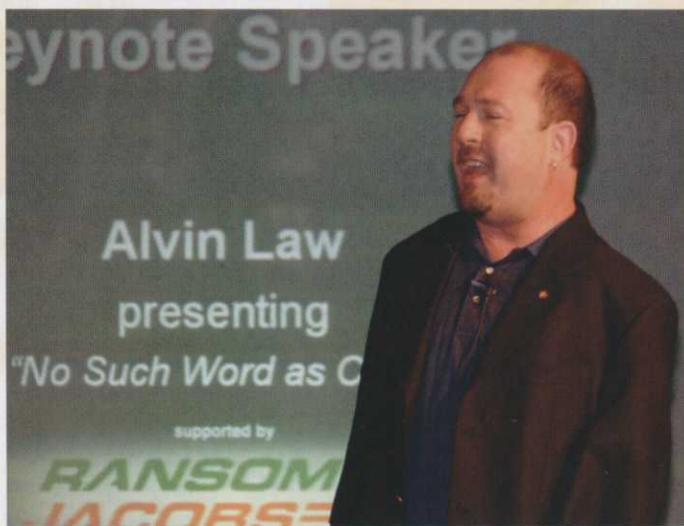
Last on in the morning was Professor Al Turgeon, Professor of Turfgrass Management at Pennsylvania State University, who was excellent, particularly when you consider that due to a cancelled flight he hadn't arrived in the UK until a few hours before he was due to speak.

The afternoon saw Chris Hartwiger, agronomist with the USGA, speaking on Raising the Bar – How High Can it Go?, and encouraging people to concentrate "down the middle" on tees, fairways, greens, bunkers, etc. and not to become drawn into peripheral work which, in a drastic case he'd seen, included dying the wood chippings used to line wooded areas.

Chris was followed by Kenny Mackay, Senior Course Manager, at the Marriott Forest of Arden Golf Club, and then Alex McCombie, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Parkstone GC, before Professor Al Turgeon returned to deliver a second paper entitled How Turf Science can Help to Overcome and Future Management Problems.

While the delegates were enjoying an invigorating range of papers at the Conference another group were engrossed in one of three workshops being held in the neighbouring Moat House Hotel.

Dennis Mortram led one on Water and the Golf Course; David Bancroft-Turner another on Real Influencing Skills with Jerrard Winter, hosting the Health and Safety Workshop.



▲ Alvin Hall was a truly inspirational speaker and was given a standing ovation from the audience at the end

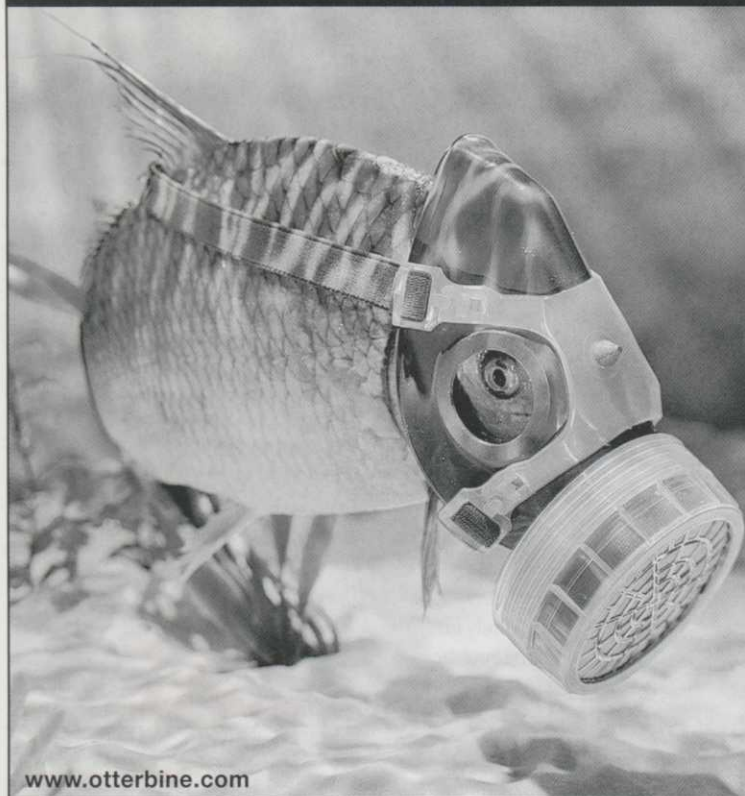


▲ Billy McMillan, Course Manager of Tyrells Wood GC, spoke on the Education Conference and again at the Future's Sub- Committee presentation.



▲ David Bancroft-Turner led one of the three workshops in the Moat House Hotel

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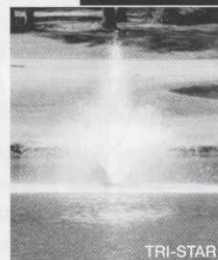
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