

Harrogate Week 2010 Review



Cover Photography by Steve Anstey except BOTTOM CENTRE (by Helen Farnham)

Harrogate Week Never Fails to Deliver

It takes more than a global recession and arctic like conditions to stop Harrogate Week from being a success. Many would crawl over broken glass to get to Harrogate each year and with an attendance of 5883 over the three days - only marginally down on the previous year and well up on pre-show expectations - that was proven to be the case yet again and exhibitors were rewarded with an enthusiastic and committed audience.



A Timely Boost to the Industry

Scott MacCallum takes you through a *Harrogate Week* which defied the odds and gave the industry a genuine lift

It was with considerable relief that I drove to Harrogate on the morning of Monday, January 18. It had only been a couple of days since the snow and ice had departed after the longest cold snap in over 30 years and it was good to see that roads were clear.

Had the conditions remained the same for another few days it might have had a considerable impact on the attendance levels

As it turned out a number of Course Managers had to remain back to steer their courses through the thawing period but Harrogate Week 2010 did enjoy fine weather over the course on the five days with road, rail and air all being well utilised by the exhibitors and visitors to get there.

BIGGA's advance party, in the shape of Pauline Thompson, had been on site since Friday working with Harrogate International Centre and early-arriving contractors. Chief Executive, John Pemberton, and the Learning & Development Department, with Sami Collins and Rachael Duffy, arrived on Saturday to prepare for the start of the Workshops, which were to begin the following day. Over the course of the day trainers, and delegates arrived and Harrogate Week 2010 began to take shape.

So, by the time I arrived, everything was pretty much under control and I was able to check on the build progress of the Media Centre, underneath Hall A, and prepare for the afternoon's International Summit. This was in The Old Swan

Hotel and included representatives from Associations as far afield as Australia, USA, Canada, Ireland, Sweden and Slovenia, as well as BIGGA, FEGGA and the GTC.

The meeting, chaired by Past BIGGA Chairman, Andy Campbell MG, CGCS was a great success with the aim of sharing the incredible expertise available within the bodies and tackling problems that are universal to all countries. BIGGA was represented by incoming BIGGA Vice Chairman, Andrew Mellon, John Pemberton, Sami Collins and me.

Monday evening and the BIGGA staff were joined by BIGGA President, Sir Michael Bonallack OBE, who always makes sure Harrogate Week is on his schedule. Sir Michael was in good form and recovering



ABOVE: Andy Campbell is thanked for chairing the International Summit



well from having a hip replaced earlier last year.

Tuesday morning and the official opening of BTME & ClubHouse 2010.

Chairman Peter Todd, was the man in charge of the BIGGA sheers and cut the green ribbon to declare the Show open.

Back in the Media Centre any thought of a "soft start" to the week was blown out of the water by the arrival of European Solheim Cup Captain, Alison Nicholas, and the famous crystal Cup, which had been flown in from the States specially for the occasion.

The reason for Alison's visit to Harrogate was to help announce that John Deere would be an official industry partner of the 2011 Solheim Cup and would be renew-

ing its patron agreement with the Ladies European Tour.

The match will be held at Killeen Castle in Ireland and legendary Irish Walker Cup player, Roddy Carr, who works for Killeen Castle, had also flown in for the press conference.

Roddy was absolutely delighted to have a brief reunion with Sir Michael, who had been his Walker Cup Captain in 1971.

The Cup was then taken onto the John Deere stand where it was displayed for a few hours for the benefit of the visitors.

Early Tuesday morning was also an opportunity for John to present a BIGGA Learning and Development Fund Silver Key supporter plaque to Vitax, the latest company to join.

With the Show well and truly

underway and the Halls filling up I returned to the Media Centre for the next press conference, this time from Bernhard's, and it was great to catch up with Stephen Bernhard, who has recently decided to take less of a hands-on role with the company with Bob Buckingham, formerly of Toro, being brought in to share the running of Bernhard's along with Chief Operating Officer, Peter Wood.

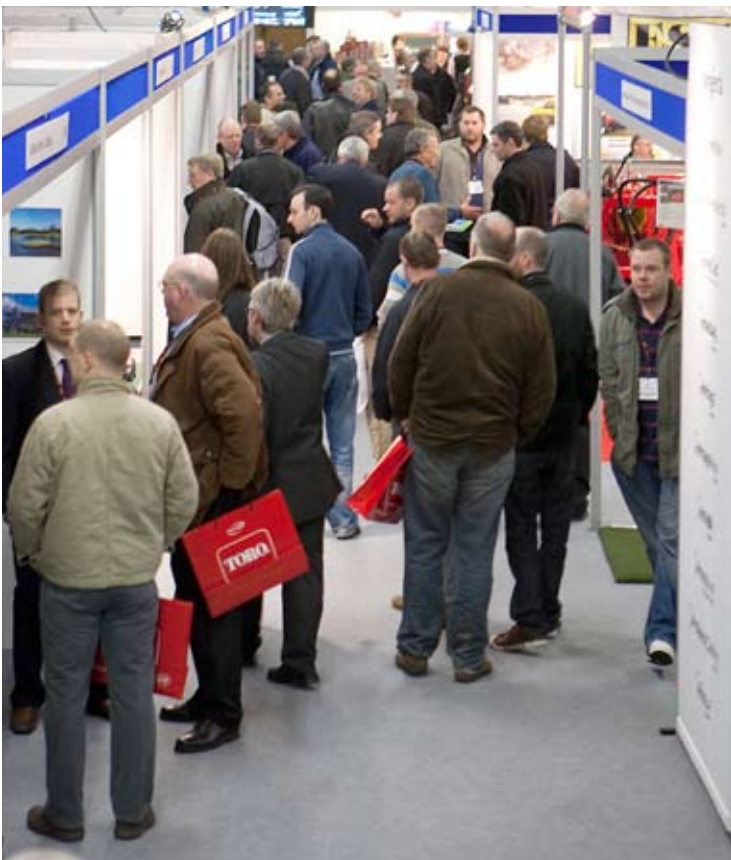
Stephen took time to explain the thought process behind bringing Bob to the company and Bob, who has yet to be fitted for the distinctive Bernhard's blazer, outline his hopes for the future.

The press are usually pretty well fed and this year lunch was provided by Ransomes Jacobsen, who launched the Eclipse 322 hybrid

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INSET ABOVE: The Vitax Presentation
 INSET ABOVE LEFT: European Solheim Cup Captain, Alison Nicholas.
 INSET ABOVE CENTRE: Stephen Bernhard and Bob Buckingham
 INSET ABOVE RIGHT: Signing into the Show.



THIS PAGE (34):
ABOVE: The Famous Ribbon Cutting by Chairman, Peter Todd, with Vice Chairman, Paul Worster.

ABOVE LEFT and LEFT: A guest arrives at the show, and the busy halls (Photography by Steve Ansty)

BELOW RIGHT and RIGHT: An interesting model display. (Photography by Helen Fannan)





Harrogate week

Selection of images depicting Harrogate Week 2010

THIS PAGE (35): All photography, showing the Exhibiton and the Media Centre (SECOND TOP RIGHT) by Helen Fannan, except TOP RIGHT: Continue to Learn Workshop and BOTTOM LEFT: A Visitor strolls through the halls (by Steve Anstey).



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ABOVE TOP: Dave Withers at RJ Press Conference. ABOVE : BIGGA Chief Executive John Pemberton arrives the BIGGA Social Night in style, before being 'Held to Ransome' (BELOW RIGHT). FOUR PHOTOS FROM TOP RIGHT: Presentations at the Show.

greens mower and a new E-Z-GO golf car.

The afternoon press conferences also included contributions from British Seed Houses and Charterhouse, who announced a collaboration with Blec.

All over Harrogate International Centre events were being held and it was great to hear the traditional "Harrogate Buzz" at full volume.

The Queens Suite hosted a presentation by STRI on the new service it was offering golf clubs, featuring its new smoothness gauge while the afternoon Presentation of Awards was the perfect occasion to celebrate and congratulate the achievements of BIGGA members, including the 50th and 51st Master Greenkeepers, John Ross MG, of Laleham GC, and Eric Foerster CGCS from Ironbridge Golf Club, in Colorado, USA; those who had gained their CPD certificate and the winner and runner-up in this year's BIGGA Photographic Competition, sponsored by Syngenta, Stuart Broom, of Lyme Regis GC, and Brian Consitt, of Linden Hall

GC. The winners of the Golf Course Environment Award and the winners of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year were also recognised.

The annual Unsung Heroes Awards, sponsored by Terrain Aeration, are always a lovely occasion and are exactly what they say on the tin. This year's winners were Keri Jarman, Deputy Head Groundsman at Moor Park and Hugh Murray, Head Greenkeeper at Bridgewater College. Each received a cheque for £200 as well as a framed certificate and a further cheque from Terrain Aeration.

Tuesday evening was one of the highlights of the week for those who attended. The Wild West themed BIGGA Social Night, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen and in the Old Swan Hotel.

With roulette, poker and blackjack tables - prizes to those people who won the most chips - quick draw and shooting competitions, coconut shys, and



THIS PAGE: Variety of photos showing the 2 Mil Debate and Education Workshops



the ever-popular bucking bronco bull the evening had something for everyone as well as a Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton, tribute act.

It was made all the more memorable by the number of people who entered into the spirit and came in fancy dress – including BIGGA's John Pemberton and Steve Wragg.

Wednesday morning was an early start for quite a few with the much anticipated 2mm debate taking place in the Holiday Inn, having been moved there to accommodate the number of people who wished to take part but even then the room included standing room at the back and a total gathering of around 220.

Chaired by David Croxton, of the EGU, the illustrious top table panel included some of the finest green-keeping brains in the UK with views as diverse as the country itself.

As expected the Debate didn't uncover a definitive answer but

a number of people were pleased to have had the opportunity to be heard.

Back in the Halls I was pleased to meet up with Chris Minton and Stuart Hall, mechanics at The Belfry and John O'Gaunt Golf Clubs respectively, who had recently been appointed the British-based Directors of the IGCEMA, the Mechanics' Association.

The day, confirming its reputation of the busiest of the week, continued in its frantic manner with press events in the Media Centre and on stands and information being exchanged and sales being agreed. The activity seemed to fly in the face of the financial downturn.

It was a pleasure to meet Jeremy Parkman, Course Manager of Dale Hill GC, who in conjunction with MJ Abbott, developed a new bunker draining device, which drains bunkers which are particularly prone to flooding. It is through meeting

people like Jeremy that you appreciate the range of skills, not to mention, ingenuity that many Course Managers have at their fingertips.

At the close of the Show the BIGGA AGM took place in the Queens Suite with Peter Todd conducting his final piece of business as National Chairman. Cecil George made a plea for members to support the Golf Course Fund, which had been launched at the same meeting two years before.

Peter handed over the Chairmanship to Paul Worster, Course Manager of Minchinhampton GC, who, in turn, introduced his Vice Chairman, Andrew Mellon, Director of Golf at Elmwood College GC. The meeting also saw Jeff Mills, of Taunton and Pickeridge GC, and the South West and South Wales Board of Directors representative, stand down after five years in the role, to be replaced by Chris Sealey, Course Manager of Chippenham GC.



ABOVE: Chris Minton and Stuart Hall, of the IGCEMA, the Mechanics' Association



ABOVE: The Unsung Heroes



LEFT: GI Magazine provides alternate uses as shown in The Media Centre (photograph by Helen Fannan).
 BELOW: The Golf Ball Toilet; BOTTOM LEFT: The Casino at the Social Night; BOTTOM RIGHT: The BIGGA Stand Team (Photography by Steve Ansty)



After a turn around of no more than 20 minutes I was off to the Vitax Dinner in the Majestic Hotel, where Ire-presented their Silver Key plaque in front of their customers and friends within the industry.

The enjoyable evening was made more so by a presentation by Colin Burns, General Manager of Winged Foot GC, in New York. Colin described the huge work involved in hosting the 2006 US Open, won by Geoff Ogilvy, but so nearly won by Colin Montgomerie and Phil Mickelson, and preparations for 2015 when the club will host it again.

Returning to the Old Swan Hotel I bumped into a number of BIGGA's Past Chairmen – including George Brown, Jack and Billy McMillan, Andy Campbell and Elliott Small – who had been at the Past Chairman's Dinner and it was good to pass a few minutes with some Pillars of the Association, who had also become good friends.

Thursday morning is always a frantic start to the day as BIGGA

staff all have to check out of the hotel before making our way down to the Exhibition Centre. Packing becomes less than an exact science but need's must and as long everything finds its way home then no damage is done.

Thursday was a fine day. With fewer commitments it is good to walk the halls – almost for the first time in the week – and I can catch up with exhibitors.

It was particularly pleasing to speak with Maarten de Vroom, of Green Toi UK, who, by early Thursday afternoon, had sold 50 golf ball shaped toilets at £13,800 each.

"I am absolutely delighted. I'd been a visitor at the Show before but not exhibited so to have such success is fantastic. We'll certainly be coming back, and bringing our green colour toilet with us as well, next year," said Maarten, as we stood in front of the show's closest example of "hot cakes".

Another welcome exhibitor was In Turf who hadn't known whether

they would be able to attend or not as a result of all their turf being under snow for much of the previous month.

Another company who enjoyed a fine BTME debut was Powakaddy, who introduced the new winter wheels, developed in collaboration with BIGGA.

"We have had a great deal of interest and will certainly be coming back next year and may take a bigger stand," explained Lee Manvell.

As 4pm approached and the Show began to wind down it was time to strip down the Media Centre, which in recent years has been regarded as one of the best on the Exhibiton.

Thanks go to FTAV, the audio visual support company, who provided the laptops and audio visual equipment in the Media Centre.

I would also like to thank the press and public relations specialists who attend and support Harrogate Week through their coverage and company support.





Safety Management System



RJ International Golf Course

The BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, has been developed to:

- Make golf clubs safer
- Introduce best practice
- Standardise Health & Safety throughout golf
- Reduce costs for golf clubs

Why do you need a Safety Management System?

Because:

- It incorporates all your legal requirements to comply with Health & Safety Legislation
- Clubs have responsibilities
- There are penalties for not complying – up to £20,000 fine and/or course closure
- Golf clubs are hazardous places to work

The Safety Management System contains help and guidance to enable golf clubs to:

- Set a Health & Safety Policy
- List hazards and assess risks
- Plan for the future
- Introduce audit and review procedures

The Safety Management System is accessed through the Members area of the BIGGA website (www.bigga.org.uk) and the GCMA website (www.gcma.org.uk)

sponsored by





Presenting Paul Worster

The new BIGGA Chairman has taken the time to write his own profile outlining his hopes and aspirations for the year ahead.

Some people lead – and in a volunteer-driven organisation such as BIGGA, leadership is crucial. Paul Worster is the latest in a line of twenty-three volunteer Chairmen since 1987 to slip on the blazer and take the reins.

Paul is in his own words – “a modest person” who never thought that his name would be mentioned in the same breath as some of the BIGGA “greenkeeping greats” such as ‘Jack’, ‘Walter’, ‘Elliott’, and a host of others in the intervening period.

Acutely aware of the traditions in greenkeeping and the fine work done by his predecessors Paul does not subscribe to the notion that blazers and badges are outdated and should have been consigned to the scrapheap or charity shop long ago.

I would not recommend trying to separate Paul from this item of his apparel. It represents, to him, one of the traditions worth preserving.

The growth of the Association

“Volunteering for BIGGA in 1983 as South West Section Secretary was the best thing I ever did” reminisces Paul. “Back in those days, the South West Section had only 56 members. When the position of Section Secretary was handed over to Adam Matthews this year, membership stood at some 280. This shows how far the organisation has come”.

When pushed – Paul recalls his early days as a greenkeeper – “One of the first facilities I worked in during the 1970’s was comprised of

two wooden Nissen huts which had been salvaged from a World War 2 Polish Refugee Camp which had been in the local area.

The huts were completely isolated in the middle of the course with no services whatsoever – no toilet, no telephone, no electricity, and no potable running water”.

“Can you imagine that in this day and age?” No – probably not. Paul is of the strong opinion that if it hadn’t been for the efforts of the previous volunteers throughout the history of greenkeeping, a good proportion of us might still be spending our working lives in marginally upgraded versions of that type of facility. That alone is why this year is so important to him.

The footprint greenkeepers leave in the sands of time

Paul is a Gloucestershire man through and through. “The Cotswolds are not designated an area of outstanding natural beauty for nothing, and golf in the county has become a part of that in the most natural way”.

Paul’s latest club, Minchinhampton, which some of you may feel you know quite well through the pages of this magazine, has been heavily involved in raising environmental awareness in the area, and as he puts it: “if anyone is still of the opinion that the environment is an issue that only affects others, then think again”.

“The Environment affects us all, and we all leave our footprint in the sands of time on our golf courses.

INSET ABOVE: Paul at his beloved Minchinhampton Golf Club

RIGHT: The annual portrait photograph of the Chairman

The environment is increasingly a huge selling point for golf – we at Minch have almost come full circle from being ‘polluters’ to ‘preservers’, and in greenkeeping we will eventually become ‘custodians’ of our own patches of the environment.”

Paul believes strongly that greenkeepers are uniquely placed to exert a positive influence on the thousands of people who visit golf clubs around the country every day.

The feelings of a life-long greenkeeper

Paul has spent the past 35 years of his life working as a greenkeeper. He has never actually done any other job and his two sons are also greenkeepers.

Paul has seen bad times in the profession as well as good and he understands the difficulties and frustrations, and the highs and the lows of a career in greenkeeping.

A positive individual with a serious side to him, Paul feels strongly that all greenkeepers should have the support they need to do their jobs well and be able to advance in their careers.

“For me, with two sons in the industry, this is particularly important.”

Paul feels that BIGGA through its own efforts and alliances can raise the profile of the profession even further so that greenkeepers can take even more pride in telling others about the work they do.