

Wimbledon Seminar

A total of 140 grounds and golf Course Managers gathered at The All England Club recently for a seminar at which prominent speakers addressed the challenges of preparing turf for major events, hosted by Scotts Professional.

Head Groundsman, Eddie Seaward MBE, opened the day's programme with an insight into the logistical challenges he and his team face in preparation for an intensive summer of sport in 2012, which will see the world's tennis stars competing twice in a matter of weeks.

The hectic period begins in June with the regular Championship fortnight.

The courts will then be brought back into action at the end of July for a week of Olympic tennis.

Simon Barnaby, then took to the floor to discuss the development of Primo Maxx strategies for tournament turf.

After lunch, Dr Ruth Mann, of the STRI and her colleague, John Lockyer, described some of the work the team at the institute has carried out at stadia in the



Ukraine, Monaco and South Africa.

The focus then switched to golf, as Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links, Gordon Moir, outlined his team's preparations for last summer's Open Championship staged on the Old Course.

Completing the speaker programme was Ipswich Town's Head Groundsman, Alan Ferguson, whose presentation described the steps he took

to prepare the football club's playing surface for the heavy plant, staging and 25,000 music fans that descended on Portman Road for Pink's concert in June.

A visit to the world's most famous tennis venue wouldn't be complete without a tour of the courts.

Eddie Seaward and his staff gave everyone the opportunity to see some of the construction work taking place in preparation for the Olympics.

SCOTTISH REGION

On behalf of the Association I would like to express our thanks to our Patrons for their support during 2010. Their financial and practical support makes it possible for the Scottish Region to run another successful Conference in March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline. Individual sections continued to organise various seminars, talks and golf outings throughout the year. All of this, plus the Scottish National Tournament, made it a very successful year for the Association.

The Patron Award winners enjoyed a trip to Harrogate along with their book prize presented by the Patrons. This is only possible with the support of the Patrons. We are extremely grateful to them all.

We look forward to continuing the relationship we have with our Patrons and look forward to 2011.

Thanks to the following firms: Richard Aitken (Seedsman); Bayer; Daval Industrial Products; The Double "A" Trading Company; Fairways Group; Hamilton Bros (Eng); Golf Finance; Greentech (Sportsturf); Henderson Grass Machinery; Indigrow; McNab Sport; Meiklem Drainage & Groundworks; Nairn Brown (Glasgow); Parsaver Golf; Rigby Taylor; SGM Contract; LLP; Scotlube; Symbio The Scotts Company (UK); Souters Sports; Sports Turf Services; Turf Irrigation Services; Thomas Sheriff & Coy and Thorntrees Amenity.

*Peter J Boyd,
Scottish Region*

George Hampton

Former SPGA, SIGGA and BIGGA member, George Hampton, sadly died at the end of last year at the age of 74 after a short illness.

George (second from left) was a well kent face in the Scottish greenkeeping and golfing circles and you could always hear him if you were within ear shot with his distinct laughter, either telling or receiving jokes!

George completed his National Service in Singapore to which we were told he treated it like a long holiday!

With his sound golfing ability and through getting afternoons off from his postie job led him to become the Pro at Burntisland GC, in Fife. George then took up the post of Greenkeeper/Pro at Stornoway GC on the island of Lewis before moving back to the east coast in 1973 to do the same at Fortrose and Rosemarkie GC.

Not only a good teaching pro as a greenkeeper George would



preach about keeping the turf lean and dry, aeration is key and to work with nature.

Sensible greenkeeping I am happy to say!

George retired from greenkeeping in 1991 and took up the post as Pro at Pitlochry during which time he won the

Scottish Seniors PGA in 1993. Arthritis in his hands restricted his golf these past few years before finally setting home down for retirement in Inverness.

We pass on our thoughts to his wife Mary and family.

George Paterson



THE HOW TO SERIES

Download and learn

- How to conduct a one-to-one meeting
- How to conduct a team briefing
- How to prepare for an appraisal
- How to recruit the right staff
- How to write a job description

Exclusive to BIGGA members

1. 'How to Cascade Goals to Teams and Individuals'

Introduction
The formation of goals that set out what a business is aiming to achieve is a key part of business planning. Teams and individuals throughout the organisation need to be briefed about what the goals are and what they should do to help achieve them. This requires a management process to be in place that cascades top-level goals down through the organisation.

Definition
A goal describes a measurable outcome or result that needs to be achieved.

1. Cascading goals
Cascading goals means breaking down the organisational goals into a series of smaller goals that describe what each unit or department needs to achieve. These goals are then broken down further until each individual in the unit has their own performance goal. In this way, progress throughout the organisation is measurable.

In some areas of the organisation, it may be enough to cascade goals down to the team level (e.g. in administration or production teams where they work together more as a team than as individuals). For some it is more appropriate to agree individual goals (see 'How to Develop an Appraisal System', and 'How to Prepare for an Appraisal'). What is important is that you get it right for your organisation.

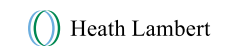
instep
BIGGA

instep UK Ltd, Willow Barn, Newcastle Road, Branton, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1SB
Tel: 01477 505811 Fax: 01477 505822 email: enquiries@instepuk.com www.instepuk.com

“How To...” guides are now available exclusively to BIGGA Members, on a range of Human Resource topics.

These short, handy guides provide practical, step by step guidance on a range of subjects. The guides can be downloaded and used to help you develop your knowledge and implement new processes within your workplace.

To access the “How To...” guides, log on to the **BIGGA Members Area** at www.bigga.org and **click on Member Resources**.



The 'How To...' guides are a new benefit of BIGGA membership and are brought to you thanks to the continuing support of the contributors to the Learning and Development Fund.





Chairman's Word

Incoming National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, with his first monthly column

The start of a busy year ahead

On October, 21, 2009, I received an email from Paul Worster, BIGGA Chairman 2010, asking me to give him a call. I had an initial slight concern, thinking have we done something wrong at Section level. I called him that afternoon, and much to my surprise, he asked me to consider taking on the role of Chairman for 2011.

Surprise was probably an understatement, and my initial reaction was, that I would be honoured, but that I would need to know more about the commitment required, consult with my family, my employers and our team at Elmwood Golf Course. I also wanted to speak with my Section committee, (Central), and the Scottish Board to ensure I had their support.

Having done that, and discussed with John Pemberton in more detail the challenges involved, and receiving full support from all concerned, I was honoured to accept.

My first meeting was at Harrogate 2010, when I was welcomed and introduced to the Board. I came out of that meeting under no illusions to the fact that this was not a committee for committees' sake, but a group of people passionate and dedicated to ensuring the success of BIGGA, and supporting their fellow Greenkeepers.

We were also beginning to feel the bite of the recession, and the challenges of not only running a successful Association, but a successful business, became only too apparent to me.

When I arrived at the AGM this year to step up to Chairman, I had attended many meetings, both with the Board and several working parties, attended several events in the year, including The Open at St Andrews, and formed stronger working relationships with the Board members and the Staff at HQ.

Having checked my email inbox out of interest just before the AGM, and having received a good luck email from Paul, I noticed that I had received 554 emails from Paul over the year. I knew for a fact that we

had spoken almost daily during that year, not to mention my correspondence with the rest of the Board and the staff at HQ.

That may give you an indication of the level of commitment shown by those who serve you, the members, while volunteering their time to help steer the association.

I'd like to thank Paul and the rest of the Board for their dedication to this task, and also the staff whose enthusiasm, drive and dedication ensure that we can strive to meet the needs of the members.

There are many other members, (Greenkeepers and Trade), serving the Sections, Regions, and working parties and sub committees, who often go unrecognised and their contribution is vital to our future success. The support we receive from Industry is significant, and their recognition of the importance of our Association, despite their own current challenges, is something we value.

I returned from Harrogate, and once the adrenalin had worn off, I was shattered, but elated. I witnessed first hand the hunger among the members for further education, which had been more than satisfied by a fantastic record breaking education programme put together by Sami Collins, Rachael Duffy, and I'm sure support from many other staff. To see the queues up the escalator waiting to enter the sessions was incredible.

I spoke with many exhibitors in the halls. Despite the gloom and doom expressed by some in the lead up to Harrogate week, they were delighted and astonished at the level of support and interest they had received during the show.

My frustration was that I was unable to meet them all personally to thank them for their support. I am writing to them all to thank them and to ask for their input to ensure we continue to develop and organise

the event in such a way to obtain the most benefit for them and for the members – win/win.

During the week I attended many productive meetings, seeking to establish collaboration from other Golfing Bodies and Industry Partners. We sought feedback at open forums from the members and exhibitors which were well attended.

We will be actively engaging with all stakeholders. The Board took part in a strategic planning session during the week, the first of several.

By engaging with you we can ensure that we are working toward a common vision, and we can formulate the correct strategies and objectives to ensure our resources are focussed on achieving it.

“The support we receive from Industry is significant, and their recognition of the importance of our Association, despite their own current challenges, is something we value”

While we have all this attention, due to the challenges of the economic climate, it presents a great opportunity to evaluate our position and communicate. I am sure, more than ever, that not only will we face this challenge, but, that as we work together with our members, and collaborate with Industry and Golf bodies, we will flourish and ensure BIGGA's success.

I would like to close by thanking John Pemberton for his faithful, dedicated service to BIGGA over the last 18 years.

We have grown from small beginnings, to the strong vibrant Association we are today.

John will always be part of that and always welcomed by our members.

On behalf of all the members, thank you John and all the best for the future.



Greenkeepers Training Committee



David Golding, Education Director,
with a monthly update from the GTC

The GTC was back in attendance at this year's show after one year's absence as an exhibitor and for many of us it has been a pilgrimage since the first exhibition back in 1989.

So many faces who have attended since that first show are still committed to ensuring that greenkeeping is seen as a respected profession and they should be proud of their achievements over the years.

Prior to this year's show, there was much talk about there only being three halls and the recession will keep people away....well back in 1989 there were only two halls but that event signalled the start of something very special.

Those in attendance back in 1989 will remember the image of the greenkeepers and how BIGGA was continually encouraging members to buy Association blazers, sweaters and even giving ties away as a membership benefit, all designed to promote a more professional image.

There were even neck scarves for any lady members. You could say the Association was ahead of the sexism laws!

Image is so important and while we all accept greenkeeping is a very hands on job, often dirty, there must be the continual drive to be professional as it clearly has put greenkeeping in the spotlight.

Most recent, the greenkeeping team, admirably managed by Jim McKenzie at Celtic Manor, during the most atrocious weather imaginable, were all aware of the importance of image and wearing corporate effective attire was brilliant to see.

The site of the GTC stand this year meant everybody attending a seminar or workshop had to pass our stand and from the dress of delegates to the professionalism of speakers it spoke volumes for the industry.

Harrogate Week may be all about supporting the exhibitors whether they are in two halls or five, but many companies now contribute so much to the very soul of the

annual January gathering and that is EDUCATION!

It has been said by many who attended this year's event that the education programme had something for everybody and attendances were record breaking.

Those older readers may well remember the dynamic stunning speaker, Bobbie Gee, back at the 1991 exhibition giving a keynote address on, 'Image - understanding the role image plays in personal and professional success'.

If my memory serves me right, Bobbie's husband was a Golf Course Superintendant in the USA and she knew first hand how the profession, or image of the profession, had to be changed and she was inspirational for all of us at the presentation.

We have known for many years that the American Golf Course Superintendants are held in high esteem by their employers and golfers and thankfully I believe our Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers are now at least on a par with their colleagues throughout the world of golf course management.

For many years the GTC focused, quite rightly, on ensuring the agronomic aspects of the greenkeeper's job were covered in education courses and qualifications and rest assured this is still the number one priority, just look at the content of the apprenticeship scheme!

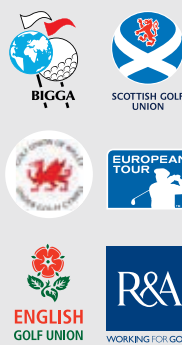
However since The R&A's discussion document The Way Forward was circulated to golf clubs and golfing bodies in 1989 which, among other matters stated: "that many Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers feel that advanced training in management skills is the greatest deficiency in their training" - times have changed!

During this year's Continue to Learn programme, there was a workshop for assistants hosted by Frank Newberry (nowhere near as attractive as Bobbie Gee!) which focused on the importance of good communication and image. It is by raising the awareness of the importance of image at the earli-

In Brief

David reflects on the recent Harrogate Week and also remembers the first show, European Turf Management Exhibition (ETME) in 1989 and how he believes the greenkeeping profession has moved forward in those 22 years and that professionalism is still the key to being a successful greenkeeper, Head Greenkeeper and Course Manager.

The GTC is funded by:



est opportunity in a greenkeeper's career that we will produce the Course Managers for the future.

Some 22 years on there is so much to be proud of in the way greenkeepers have progressed both in seeking knowledge to add to their skills to maintain the golf course and now we see many apprentices from the 1990's as today's Golf Course Managers and some stepping into General Manager positions.

The GTC will ensure the ranges of qualifications available within the sector include "communication" Units and that includes image.

We will work with our Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers to ensure there are seminars, workshops and short courses available leaving options for employers and learners to choose from.

BIGGA, I am sure, will continue to promote supervisory and management short course provision through its Sections and Regions, which are often subsidised through the Learning and Development Fund and the GTC will continue the drive for professionalism through greenkeeper training.

In closing please feel free to feedback any views you might have on current provision of education, training courses and any gaps you feel the GTC should be addressing.

Please contact us on:

Tel: 01347 838640 or email david@the-gtc.co.uk

For the latest news on greenkeeper education, training and qualifications including the up to date list of GTC's Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers visit www.the-gtc.co.uk

Contact Details

David Golding
GTC Education Director

01347 838640
david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC
Aldwark Manor
Near York
YO61 1UF

www.the-gtc.co.uk



Learning & Development

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development,
with an update on education issues



That was the week that was.... and what a week it was!

Rachael and I are soaking our feet while looking aghast at the attendance figures for the Continue to Learn Education Programme. Now we know why we're so tired and our feet still hurt!



Continue to Learn 2011 delivered 143.5 hours of education to 2008 attendees. The Queen's Suite was buzzing with the queues outside the auditoriums for some of the most popular seminars. On a couple of occasions there was standing room only and a couple of prominent Course Managers were spotted sitting on the floor to ensure that they could participate in the session.

The introduction of the Turf Managers' Conference proved to be a success with superb feedback on the speakers and the content of their presentations.

Dr David Jones from the Natural History Museum, aka 'the worm man', equally educated and entertained the audience with many requesting his return to future programmes.

The 'Fringe' sessions, presented by exhibitors at the show, were as popular as ever. The more established speakers imparted their knowledge to enthusiastic audiences, with newer speakers attracting a credible number of attendees.

I am forever indebted to all the

speakers who (sometimes with a little coaxing) agree to speak on the Continue to Learn education programme. Without them, there wouldn't be an education programme to present.

The new challenge is to replicate the success in 2012 – no pressure!

A HUGE thank you goes to the Gold and Silver Key companies and individuals to the Learning and Development Fund for their support in enabling us to present Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week.

Pesticide Update for NPTC Certificate Holders

Health and Safety advisor, Jon Allbutt has confirmed that the possession of a City and Guilds/ NPTC Pesticides Certificate that is more than five years old may not be accepted as evident of competence, unless the holder has updated their skills and knowledge and kept pace with the many changes in this important legislation, the Code of Practice, application equipment and techniques for the control of pests and diseases.

Following an oversubscribed workshop at Harrogate, there are a number of Update Courses being presented. For up to date availability, contact Jane Glassett at Jon Allbutt Associates on 01959 575575 or visit the Events' page on the BIGGA website.

The current Pesticides Code of practice for using plant protection products is now available as a free download in the Members' Area of the BIGGA website.



Contact Details

Sami Collins
Head of L&D
sami@bigga.co.uk

Rachael Duffy
L&D Administrator
rachael@bigga.co.uk

01347 833800 (option 3)
www.bigga.org.uk

The funding provided by Gold and Silver Key Sponsors is used to produce training and career aids, DVDs, CD Roms, field guides and provide refunds for training fees and subsidised learning and development courses. The funding also helps support seminars, workshops, courses, the lending library, careers advice, posters and manuals.

Many young greenkeepers owe their career progression to the assistance they've had from the Learning and Development Fund. An equal number of established greenkeepers have also been able to access the fund to continue their professional development thanks to the donations of the Gold and Silver Key Sponsors.

Thank you to our Gold and Silver Key Sponsors



Gold Key Individual Members: Steven Tierney; WJ Rogers; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS; Iain A Macleod; Frank Newberry; Andrew Turnbull; Ian MacMillan MG; Ian Morrison

Silver Key Individual Members: Ade Archer; Steve Dixon; Paul Jenkins; Richard McGlynn; Sam Langrick; Neil Whitaker; Graham Wylie, Michael Beaton, Douglas Duguid, Derek Grendowicz, Jaey Goodchild

New Name for JCB Groundhog



JCB has rebranded its Utility Terrain Vehicles with the new name JCB WORKMAX.

This covers both the current diesel-powered models; the 4x4 for rough terrain applications and the 6x4 for 'fine turf' applications such as golf courses and sports fields.

Until now JCB has used the name 'Groundhog' for its UTVs.

JCB is focused on answering

the demands of the professional equipment user and therefore the new Registered WORKMAX name has been adopted to reflect this.

The 'Groundhog' name has been in use since JCB entered the UTV market in 2005.

JCB Utility Products Sales Director Keith Hoskins said:

"The old Groundhog name has served us well in establishing our

products particularly in the UK.

"But we are on course for market share growth in several countries at the expense of ride-on quads which we believe can never offer the ride quality, safety, and load carrying performance of a Side-by-Side design.

"Our new WORKMAX name is also easily understood in other languages."

James Watson Joins Sherriff Amenity

Sherriff Amenity has strengthened its national sales team by appointing James Watson as an Amenity Specialist covering Surrey and the south.

James, who will be working closely with Chris Rudkin to support Sherriff Amenity's current customers and also develop new business in the area, spent 15 years as a Greenkeeper in the UK and Europe before joining Headland Amenity as a Regional Manager.

"James' previous experience, both as a Greenkeeper and in a sales position made him the ideal candidate for the job ." commented Mark Pyrah, Amenity Director of Agrovista UK .



NEW IRRIGATION ADVISORY SERVICE

Intelligent Watering is a new irrigation advisory service that has been founded by Adrian Handbury. Adrian has been in the industry for 17 years, originally as the First Irrigation Manager at the London Golf Club. As well as being an end user, Adrian has also installed many irrigation systems. However, his main discipline has been the specification and design of irrigation for the companies he has been employed by or those that he advises, and has worked extensively over three continents.

Intelligent Design has been set up to supply irrigation audit, advice and new system design services to the Golf, Sportsturf and Landscape industries.

Email design@intelligentwatering.co.uk or go to the website www.intelligentwatering.co.uk



TWO HEADLIGHTS, ONE BATTERY

Ian Howard, Managing Director of Dennis, has announced that his company has acquired SISIS, which will now operate as a division of Howardson Ltd, alongside Dennis.

"We have acquired the respected brand, designs, patents and intellectual property and this new partnership is part of our on-going investment strategy," explained Ian.

"I would compare Dennis and Sisis to two headlights being operated by one battery," said Ian, as he explained the new strategy at a press briefing in Harrogate.

"The companies will run independently, while at the same time benefiting from each other's strengths and powered by parent company, Howardson Ltd

"Our traditional strengths of reliability and excellent customer support will enhance this partnership and we are optimistic about our future



together, working as a team to grow further our profile in the market. Our products dovetail extremely well," said Ian, who added that they would be conducting an immediate review of all aspects of the business including customer service and supply.

Ian Howard, Managing Director of Howardson Engineering, with Andrew Walker, Field Sales Manager of SISIS



Huxley Golf extend into Europe

A new business, Huxley Golf Europe, has been formed in Luxembourg under the direction of Danish golf professional, Ole Pedersen, and businessman, Torben Poulsen.

The pair are targeting golf clubs, teaching academies, hotels and private clients across a large and important new sales territory for Huxley Golf.

Paul Huxley, Director of Huxley Golf, which has a growing network of distributors in the UK and abroad, said: "The region spanning the Benelux countries and France and Germany has become very important to Huxley Golf. Ole and Torben have the local presence and expertise necessary to position our products successfully in this marketplace."

Huxley Golf provides all-weather surfaces for golf around the world. Clients include training and coaching establishments, golf resorts, ranges and academies as well as several Open Championship and Ryder Cup venues.

For more information, visit www.huxleygolf.com.

What's your number?

Our regular and random profile of an industry figure continues with this month's lucky number...

Name: Fiona Gebbett

Company: PAN Publicity Limited

Position: Director

How long have you been in the industry?

Almost 20 years

How did you get into it?

In my previous job, PAN was one of my key suppliers. When a job came up there, I applied and the rest is history.

What other jobs have you done?

After university, I was a Holiday Rep in France and then Tenerife. I then joined a Conference Production company and ran corporate events around the country.

What do you like about your current job?

My clients. We handle a variety of accounts which means we get to know some great people and no two days are ever the same.

What changes have you seen during your time in the industry?

Very little change in the printed media compared to other industries we work in; but, of course, on-line media has developed considerably. What I have seen is the reduction in editorial staff and the growth of freelance writers. This has had an impact on our output seeing us supply more finished copy rather than marrying up a Journalist with a Greenkeeper/Groundsman.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Socialising mainly, but living on the coast I like nothing more than getting rugged up on a Sunday morning and going for a nice long walk on the sea front. We also have the beautiful North Norfolk coast to drive to and enjoy the superb beaches and pubs there.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

I very much want to be doing the same thing in a re-vitalised industry. Basically my job is about people; talking to them and finding out how they do their jobs. It's what I love about what I do and I don't see that changing much in the next 10 years.

Who do you consider best friends in the industry?

The Press. They're a great bunch of people. We've had some fun times over the years on Press trips in various countries. We all have some very fond memories from them, I'm sure.

What do you consider to be your lucky number? 4

Fiona has picked Tim Merrell, of The Grass Group



Living life to the full

Scott MacCallum catches up with, Gordon Child, the latest recipient of BIGGA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

A smile is never far from the lips of BIGGA's latest Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

Gordon Child has lived life to the full and in, modern sporting parlance, not left anything out on the park. His greenkeeping career was carried out at some of the finest golf clubs in the country and he watched some of the finest players in the world playing courses he'd prepared. His BIGGA career saw him become the only Chairman to date to serve for two years and spend 10 years as Regional Administrator for the South West and South Wales, while his own golfing ability was good enough for him to play in two Open Championships and now sees him beat his age virtually every time he goes out.

"I've been very lucky in life," said Gordon, as we sat in the upstairs living room overlooking some stunning Devon countryside.

"I'm greatly honoured to get this award and to be thought of in the same company as those who have already received it is quite humbling. I thought when I was asked to become Captain of Chuston Golf Club in 2009 that it had completed the circle for me but here comes another great honour."

Gordon joins Sir Michael Bonallack OBE; Walter Woods BEM; Jack McMillan MBE; George Brown and Cecil George as recipients of BIGGA's top accolade.

Anyone who knows anything about Gordon's background would have no doubt that BIGGA's Lifetime Achievement Award could have been introduced specifically for him and that his entry into the Association's most exclusive club

is a fitting tribute to a man who has achieved so much.

Gordon was the son, and grandson, of greenkeepers so a career on the golf course may well have been preordained, but from starting work as a school leaver at Dore and Totley, in Sheffield, he made the most of his opportunities.

"It was while I was there that I enjoyed one of the pieces of luck which I've enjoyed all my life. I started work in 1947 and at the time there were only two colleges in the UK which did turf culture and one of them was Leeds College of Art and Technology while the other as in Scotland. The college was in easy reach of my home so for three years I was able to study three nights a week and one half day for which the club gave me time off. It provided me with the foundations for my whole career."

It also saw the beginnings of a friendship which was to last for over half a century.

"It was while at college that I met Jim Arthur who was working for the STRI at the time and who was one of the lecturers brought in by the college," said Gordon.

Friendship with the legendary agronomist lasted until Jim's death at the age of 84, in 2004, and ironically saw the pair of them living just a few miles from each other in Devon – Gordon in Churston and Jim in Budleigh Salterton.

Following his time at Dore and Totley Gordon joined the Army and the Liverpool Regiment where he served in Korea along with another well known BIGGA figure, the late Bert Cross, and when he got



"It was while at college that I met Jim Arthur who was working for the STRI at the time and who was one of the lecturers brought in by the college"

Gordon Child

back his grandfather told him that he was to take up a job at Royal Birkdale.

"I was told I was going. I wasn't asked. Going to an Open venue was his idea, his feeling being that I'd worked on a parkland and that I should learn how to work on a links course."

As career advice goes it couldn't have been much better, as having Royal Birkdale on his CV was the passport to what was to come.

"I was at Royal Birkdale for quite a while, never more than an Assistant, but I built up my knowledge base."

Gordon left Birkdale to become Head Greenkeeper at Blackburn Golf Club but before long moved south to St George's Hill, in Weybridge.

ABOVE: Gordon Child (centre) with his award, beside Paul Worster and Jack McMillan MBE

"I think having worked at Royal Birkdale helped me get the job and I absolutely loved the place. It was a gem of a club and I loved the people there. The course was hewn out of a pine forest and it was one of the those courses on which you only saw the people on the hole you were playing.

"The club was on a very upper class estate and a lot of celebrities were members, but once you were in you were a part of the club somehow.

"I met Eric Sykes there and he was a great help to me. We were like a big family and I can tell you it was very hard to leave."

What eventually did prise him away was the prospect of working at one of the biggest clubs in the country at the time – Moor Park, in Rickmansworth.

"Even when the job offer from Moor Park came in it took me a long time make up my mind to move."

Moor Park had two stunning golf courses as well as the tennis courts and the gardens, while Gordon also managed the local municipal course on behalf of Rickmansworth Council.

It was also one of the premier Tour venues at the time playing host to a number of events

including the Uniroyal, the Martini, the Bob Hope and the Tournament Players' Championship.

"One year we had two tournaments within the space of two months when the brand new Foxhills wasn't ready to take the TPC."

One of the highlights for Gordon was watching a young Seve Ballesteros win his first UK event, in a play-off with Nick Faldo.

"I watched Seve play the greatest shot I've ever seen in my life that week.

"He was on a severe downslope with the hole cut just over a bunker on the 17th but he sized it up following week we all tried to play the shot and no-one could keep the ball on the green never mind anywhere close to the hole," recalled Gordon, who also remembered Greg Norman playing a ball from off the television gantry.

After six years, six tournaments and, at the age of 50, Gordon accepted the job which was to see him through to his retirement and provide him with home for the next 30 years of his life.

"The Chairman of Green at Churston played Moor Park and came and spoke to me about coming down to Devon.

"The timing was right because if I had stayed at Moor Park I wouldn't have had the time to get involved with BIGGA or the other work I've been able to do since," said Gordon.

Gordon was on the Board of the BGGGA when the amalgamation talks started in the mid 80s and was actually delivering a paper on Parkland Golf at a St Andrews conference, chaired by Walter Woods, when the R&A got involved in bringing the BGGGA, EIGGA and SIGGA together with a view to forming what became BIGGA.

When it became a reality in 1987 Gordon, ably assisted by wife, Marion, who has been a constant companion, became a volunteer Regional Administrator for the SW and South Wales and remain so until the role became a salaries position in 1997.

He is particularly proud of the Westurf Show, at Long Ashton Golf Club, which ran for 10 years and which ensured that the Region was financially secure for many years.

Another success was the creation of the Cannington College golf course for which he was a key mover, along with Jim Arthur and, another close friend, golf course architect, Martin Hawtree.

Instrata

contact

The power of three actives provides fast, **year round** curative and preventative disease control at your fingertips. Instrata is the simple one-product solution to keep **'on the shelf'**.