

# Ground report

Welcome to the fourth edition of your IOG Regional Newsletter, where you will find all the latest news from your area. It will also keep you up-to-date with what's happening in other areas and at Head office. Each region has its own newsletter, which will be published on a quarterly basis, and all branches and members are invited to contribute.

Please do keep us posted with details of your latest dates, event and news stories.

## Wales & South West England Edition



### IOG Members Gain Recognition in MOD's Sanctuary

A conservation project to restore heathland on a satellite MOD airfield in Cornwall has been awarded the runner up position in the MOD's 2006 Sanctuary Award.

Doug Smith, IOG member and Bristol Branch Secretary, is the Grounds Maintenance and Rural Estate Manager for Debut, which holds the South West Regional Prime Contract with Defence Estates. Doug and Cannon Horticulture, Corporate IOG Members, which partner with Debut to deliver land management services, were key players in planning, managing and delivering the project on site.

The project involved the removal of invasive scrub and the introduction of grazing, using traditional breeds of cattle, on parts of the 350 hectare airfield. To execute the work a variety of techniques had to be employed to ensure that there was no damage to conservation interest on the site. The site has both national and European statutory conservation designations: it was

therefore necessary to work closely with Natural England (formerly English Nature), Defence Estates ecologists and archaeologist, together with the National Trust and Cornwall Wildlife Trust who have key interests in the area and manage land adjoining the airfield.

To supply water to animals in some of the remotest areas of the airfield a borehole and pump powered by a solar panel was installed to avoid excessive disruption that would have been caused by the laying of mains supplies.

To graze an operational airfield required consent and a great deal of co-operation from the establishment to ensure that military function or safety would not be compromised or impaired. Initial works were completed in 2005 to enable Defence Estates to lease compartments for grazing in time for the graziers to apply for grant aid under the new CAP, Single Farm Payment arrangements. This will provide a much needed source of

revenue that will ensure viable retention of livestock on the land which will restore traditional management techniques that have shaped the landscape since the Bronze Age.

The aim of the Sanctuary Awards is to encourage group and individual efforts that benefit wildlife, archaeology, or community awareness of conservation on land that MOD owns or uses. The judges said they were "particularly impressed by innovation shown in the project and how the Royal Navy, Defence Estates, the MOD Conservation Group and the new Regional Prime Contract worked closely with external stakeholders".

Doug went along to the Main MOD Building in Whitehall in October with four colleagues from Defence Estates and the Royal Navy to receive the award from Derek Twigg, Under Secretary of State for the Environment.

### Bristol Branch

Congratulations to Les Gibbs, our Regional Treasurer who joined the SALTEX site team this year.

Bristol Branch will be looking for a new Secretary at the Branch AGM as Doug Smith will be standing down due to pressure of work and life I expect. So if there are any volunteers etc. etc.

David Warner, Grounds & Gardens Manager Millfield School, was star turn on the BBC Radio 4 Connect programme 'Pitch Perfect' broadcast on Wed Oct 4<sup>th</sup>.

If you missed it go to- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/> where you can listen to the programme.

#### Reflections

Long summer days have finally succumbed to quieter autumnal lights, with only the prospect of next summer to save us from winter madness, long

nights and colder days.

Perhaps we should all be thankful for the change of scenery and change of pace - if only it were possible!

Disease, leaves and heavy dew descend upon us all to keep us from our warm(ish) retreats and on our toes. Don't do any painting yet, the worst is yet to come.

Autumn is a time of bonfires, the crackle of a handful of leaves, mischievous smoke and the occasional blaze - guarantee to warm those at 20 paces!

Long live autumn with its sure but steady pace into winter when looking back on what was the order of the day. Take this opportunity to relax and reflect, and all too soon it will be a time of building up and not of winding down.

**Mayfly**

# Welcome to our new members in Wales & South West England

Bridgend County Borough Council  
Mr J Banks  
Mrs J Chick  
Mr J Fiddock  
Mr M Margetson  
Mr N Stevens

University of Bristol  
Mr M Bishop  
Mr S Clifford  
Mr R Hann  
Mr W Robbins  
Mr G Venn

St Martins Bowling Club  
Mr C Campbell  
Mr M Cullen  
Mr N Hunter  
Mr G Rogers  
Mr R Watts

## Chief executive Geoff Webb reflects on his first year in office, explaining developments to date

The IOG has made great strides during the past 12 months, culminating in our six-year plan as the Challenging Perceptions strategy. Developing the strategy has occupied a great deal of my time during the past 12 months, and at the forthcoming membership roadshows I will personally be presenting, explaining and discussing the implications of the points raised by this groundbreaking document.

With the underlying theme of 'better surfaces through better services', the Challenging Perceptions strategy – which is effectively a statement of the IOG's intent - outlines the IOG's aims and aspirations for the period leading up to the Olympics.

Now, however, it is worth looking back at the past year and outlining what has been achieved this year by your head office team.

### Office restructure

Some difficult decisions were made regarding staffing levels, but the process is now complete and the IOG continues to move forward with vigour and purpose.

### Launch of strategy

After months of industry-wide consultation, our Challenging Perceptions strategy document outlines 10 key development themes for the IOG over the next six years:

- Improved leadership and good governance
- Significantly improved working partnerships
- Quality surfaces supported by quality services
- Professional services, membership and

- communications
- Training and education
- Health and safety
- Research and development
- Natural environment
- Events and exhibitions
- 2012 opportunities.

This is agenda for our roadshows.

### Increased profile

Awareness of the IOG and its aims has been significantly improved, both in terms of partnerships with like-minded organisations and within the grounds care industry as whole.

For example, a host of sporting bodies and Government departments endorsed Challenging Perceptions while, on the other hand, IOG news and information is now successfully communicated to the industry press on a regular basis. I'm sure you've all seen how the IOG and its members are now regularly gaining press coverage.

Also, we are actively enhancing our relationship with the supply industry, including of course our corporate members.

### IOG SALTEX exhibition

The Windsor show continues to be a great success, and while this year a number of machinery companies took the decision not to attend this year's event, we had a record number of exhibitors occupying a larger area of floorspace than ever – and, importantly, an overwhelming num-

ber of visitors (almost 13,000).

### Increased membership benefits

A lot of work has been put into the development of a new package of benefits for members, and the announcement of exactly what will be offered is imminent.

### Research and development

We have initiated a groundbreaking programme of research into the ground care industry; the aim being to establish workable benchmarks by determining how many grounds professionals there are in the UK, their status and their image/position.

In addition, we have announced a massive extension in grant funding as part of the 2012 Fund (that supersedes the 2000 Fund), and are actively discussing joint funding initiatives with interested sponsors.

### Young people

It is clear that the IOG – and the grounds care industry as a whole – needs to attract young people if we are to thrive and prosper. We are already in discussions with schools and specialist sports colleges, for instance, investigating possibilities and, hopefully, developing suitable programmes while making the younger generation fully aware of our industry and its attractions.

**It's been a busy year, but that's just the start! With your full support, I truly believe that the IOG, its members and the industry as a whole is embarking upon the most exciting and rewarding time in its history.**

## Dates for your Diary

Date	Event	Venue	Details
24-26 February 2007	National Conference	Newcastle & Durham	Visit <a href="http://www.iog.org">www.iog.org</a> for further information
5-7 September 2007	IOG SALTEX	Windsor Racecourse	Visit <a href="http://www.iogstext.com">www.iogstext.com</a> for further information
8 - 9 November 2007	IOG Scotsturf	Royal Highland Hall, Edinburgh	Visit <a href="http://www.iogscotsturf.com">www.iogscotsturf.com</a> for further information

**BRISTOL BRANCH 2007** For confirmation of all arrangements contact Martin Ford – 07962 253140

Date	Event	Venue	Detail
January 8	Branch AGM	Coombe Dingle Sports Complex	7.00 pm for 7.30pm
January 15	Quiz & Tour of Bristol Rovers/Bristol Rugby Club	Memorial Ground	7.00 pm for 7.30pm
January 23	Regional AGM	Coombe Dingle Sports Complex	7.00 pm
February 12	An Evening at the Clifton Rocks Railway	By Avon Gorge Hotel	Check for starting times
March 12	Britain in Bloom – Talk by Martin Ford	Coombe Dingle Sports Complex	7.00 pm for 7.30pm
May - TBA	Visit to new Botanic Garden	Bristol University Botanic Garden	7.00 pm for 7.30pm

**WALES BRANCH 2007** For confirmation of all arrangements contact Les Gibbs – 01443 841249

Date	Event	Venue	Detail
January 10	Branch AGM	Taff Wells Rugby Club	7.00pm
January 17	Stress management in turf during drought conditions. Neil Baldwin Omega Science	Pencoed College	7.30pm
January 23	Regional AGM	Coombe Dingle Sports Complex	7.00pm
February 14	Enzymes - Richard Beghin	Pencoed College	7.30pm
March 14	Paint & Marking Technology Ian Courage - Fleet	Pencoed College	7.30pm
April 11 or 18 TBC	Tour of Liberty Stadium. Dan Duffy, Stadium Manager	Liberty Stadium Swansea	7.30pm

The newsletter co-ordinator for your region is Martin Ford — 07962 253140