I write this column just as I am about to leave Royal Lytham and St Annes after a wonderful Open Championship.

Many of the experienced men I’ve spoken with within our excellently located Marquee - with the Practice Ground on one side and the Bollinger and Seafood tents on the other - have been fulsome in their praise of the golf course which really has been a credit to the work of Paul Smith and his team. The preparation was excellent and the players have also been quick with their praise.

Paul, in his first Open Championship in charge, should be really proud of the achievement of himself and his team. The BIGGA Support Team performed marvelously as well. One of the comments I heard was that they wielded the rakes with all the precision of surgeons and when you watch them you can appreciate exactly what was meant by that.

Some of the galleries must have wondered what it was all about when they watched the guys using the rakes “the wrong way round” but they had been told to flat rake all the bunkers. Despite the fact that there were 197 bunkers which were raked 1,585 times during the four days complete players were minimal. Quite a feat and a tribute to a group of greenkeepers who willingly take holidays and give up their time to be a part of the Open Championship.

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