Richard Barker returns from the freezing cold of Canada where he saw the success of a Silent Auction. He is also ready for the new golf season over here.

Masters

Having not long unpacked my short sleeve shirts from my trip to the States it was now time to pack my roll necks and woolly hats and head off to Canada in following an invitation to the Canadian Show.

Last year I received the invitation with just one downside - could I make a presentation to the Canadian delegates on some Greenkeeping topics? Well after some thought on various topics and also learning that the Canadian Show ties in each year with a Provincial Show which would obviously be well supported by those in that Province, I decided on a general topic - Greenkeeping in the UK, bearing in mind that golf in this area of Canada suffers from the same frustrations quite a nice balance really!

For those of you that have met the Canadians at Harragate you will know they are good company and if you get the chance visit them next year in Calgary - I would thoroughly recommend it. I would just like to thank Jay Leach, their retiring President, and Vince Gillis, their Executive Director, who has retired after 12 years service. I was pleased to meet up with his successor, Ken Cousineau, who stood up well to the stresses of his first major event.

On both my visits the Americans and Canadians were talking about the success of the John Deere Team Classic and what a great event it was, certainly if you got to the final in the Team Classic and what a great event it was, certainly if you got to the final in 2000.

Richard Barker

for Spring 2002 with a selection of one and two day courses in your February magazine. I hope many of you have taken up these courses but don't hesitate to get in touch if you require any other kind of course Ken and Sam will be only too pleased to help and tailor one to your own specific needs.

Remember it is your Association and the staff are here to help.

By now the time you are reading this article one major event will have taken place and another will be about to start. First and foremost is the new Board of Management's March meeting, and if you have any queries pass them through your Section and Regional committees and the Board Member will bring them to the National Board. For those that don't know I will introduce the Board for this year:- George Brown - Vice Chairman; Clive Osgood - Immediate Past Chairman; David villen - Midlands; Ian Holohan - Northern; Ian Semple - South East; Paul Jenkins - South West & South Wales, and Ian MacLeod - Scotland.

These guys are our representatives and will report back, keeping you fully informed of the Association's progress.

Secondly, I was referring to a small Golf Competition held in August! Yes it's that time of year again when all the azalea's and rhododendrons are in flower while we are struggling to see the first signs of spring, with members dropping subtle hints as they pass us by. But if it's any consolation spare a thought for those Canadians that are trying to rid that last bit of snow!

A function, please don't hesitate to get in touch, I will only be pleased to attend.

Having made my presentation, I was pleasantly surprised at the feedback I received with regard to the Canadians suffering from the same frustrations that we do back home certainly from members and committees. Like the Americans, however, they seem to have the budgets and staffing levels - 14-22 people for 18 holes to put things right, when they can play. Call it what you like, but many are putting up the same scale as BTME there was still plenty of interest and business being done - none more so at the Silent Auction where anything from a travel bag to some machinery was being bid for. One item that caught my attention was an autographed Ice Hockey Shirt which fetched $1290 Canadian Dollars - about £500.

The Canadians certainly excelled with their social programme. I was made to feel most welcome at all their functions which included a night at the 'Sugar Shack' where we sampled maple syrup and also the closing Banquet which featured a 16 piece Brass Band to finish the week off nicely.

Whereas this year (launched at BTME) and I urge as many clubs as possible to enter. Speak to your local dealer for more details and see if you can make it.

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On both my visits the Americans and Canadians were talking about the success of the John Deere Team Classic and what a great event it was, certainly if you got to the final in Arizona. For those of you who don't know Great Bend in Kansas has been included on this year (launched at BTME) and I urge as many clubs as possible to enter a team not just for the fun that you might have but also because John Deere will donate £25 to the Education and Development Fund for each team entered. Speak to your local dealer for more details and see if you can make it to Arizona.

TALKING of Education and Development you should have all received the Regional Training Flyer for Spring 2002 with a selection of one and two day courses in your February magazine. I hope many of you have taken up these courses but don't hesitate to get in touch if you require any other kind of course Ken and Sam will be only too pleased to help and tailor one to your own specific needs. Remember it is your Association and the staff are here to help.

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