A Successful Month

I am writing this piece from the 131st Open Championship at Muirfield where the BIGGA Open Support Team has been hard at work assisting Colin Irvine and his team to prepare the golf course and enjoying the privilege of accompanying players during their rounds to rake the bunkers they find.

The course has been absolutely superb and has provided a tremendous test for the best players in the world. I do think the height of rough and tight fairways made it extremely difficult for some of the field and Muirfield now holds the record of Tiger Woods' highest professional score - the 81 he shot in the third round. In Ernie Els, however, the course has yet again produced the knack of singling out one of the world's finest players to be its Champion.

Colin and his team must be congratulated on the magnificent condition they produced the course, while I would like to say a big thank you to each member of the team - as well as the BIGGA staff - who attended, for all the work they carried out to such a high standard. It was a great success and I was proud that everyone of you represented the Association to such a high standard.

It is a hard week with early starts and late finishes but, as ever, the team members threw themselves into the work with great enthusiasm and were rewarded with experiences which will last them for the rest of their lives. For example how many people can say that they got to be called "hello I'm Tiger Woods"? That's something to tell the grandchildren!

Earlier in the month I was delighted to be invited to the Scottish National Golf Championship at West Linton Golf Club. This was a very successful day with more than 80 players taking part on a magnificently prepared golf course. Special credit must go to Chris Yeaman and his team for managing this unique moorland golf course to such a high standard. That standard was matched by Scottish Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, for whom the phrase "Working like clockwork" might have been invented. All in all it was a wonderfully enjoyable occasion.

On another matter I was particularly pleased to learn that Bernhards are continuing their BIGGA Delegation sponsorship for a third year and that ten members will have the opportunity to attend the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta, Georgia, next February. Having spoken to those who have attended in previous years I know that it is a superb trip and a great deal is learned from it. It is open to every single member of the Association from Assistants to Course Managers and all you have to do is put yourself forward for consideration is fill out the card which appears on the front cover of this magazine.

Finally, I am absolutely delighted to hear that negotiations have been concluded with the NEC in Birmingham and that BIGGA has now purchased the rights to the Clubhouse Exhibition, which will now join BTME at Harrogate in January to make our biggest week of the year even more significant within the golf industry as a whole. A lot of hard work and discussion has gone into making this possible and I am pleased that the Association has been able to make this arrangement a reality.

I am sure that it will be a great success and I would urge all members to ensure that their Secretaries and golf club personnel attend.

Richard Barker