Hectic from the Beginning

From the moment Brenda and I arrived at the Majestic Hotel on the Sunday of Harrogate week life has been one hectic whirl and ever since returning to Turnberry I don’t seemed to have stopped. Such is life in the 21st century I suppose.

Having said that BIGGA wouldn’t have it any other way and the fact that Harrogate 2003 was the busiest yet says much for the success of the most important week in the year for the Association, and perhaps even the industry.

As a kick start to the new year Harrogate is invaluable, giving the trade an early opportunity to meet up with their customers first hand and giving greenkeepers the chance to chat with colleagues and discuss the issues and problems of the day.

That record numbers who attended this year make it extremely gratifying and shows that we are on the right lines.

This year saw the debut of the ClubHouse Show, aimed at Golf Secretaries, Managers and Owners, and it proved to be a great addition to the Harrogate mix. Increasingly over the years more and more club officials visit BTME, usually along with their colleagues on the green staff, so it seemed completely natural to provide them with even more reason to attend.

With over 40 exhibitors, ClubHouse had a very good debut and I’m sure it will go on to become an invaluable element to what is a great week.

That was perhaps already apparent this year with the number of BTME exhibitors who have said that they did record business during the Show. With club officials there, along with their green staff, purchasing decisions could be taken so much quicker than previously, when often recommendations had to be taken back to the clubs before an order could be rubber stamped.

While ClubHouse was one addition to the week another was the Careers Fair, supported by Toro, which provided advice on jobs within all elements of the golf industry and gave clubs and companies an opportunity to advertise for new personnel at the Show. Another great innovation.

The one theme which runs throughout the week under the “Continue to Learn” banner is education and, again this year, the speakers were of a quality taken back to the clubs before an order could be rubber stamped. Such is life in the 21st century I suppose.

The highlight for me was the AGM during which Richard Barker helped me into my red blazer and I began my year as Chairman. Richard did a superb job of flying the flag for the Association last year and, as members, we all owe him a great deal for the unstinting work he put in on our behalf. Having been Richard’s Vice Chairman I have taken the liberty of choosing the very best Vice Chairman I could lay my hands on. I’m sure that Andy Campbell MG GCCE, of Carden Park, will be a superb Vice Chairman and go on to be a wonderful Chairman next year. We are very lucky to have him on board.

I’d like also to pay tribute to Clive Osgood and Ian Holohan who both stood down from the Board at the AGM and welcome Bert Cross, who joins along with Andy.

I said at the very beginning that it has been extremely hectic since the beginning of Harrogate week, even since we returned to Turnberry, but as the saying goes it hasn’t stopped me stopping to smell the flowers. When we got back home our garden was awash with fully bloomed daffodils... and this is the west coast of Scotland in January! Since then, of course, we have had two inches of snow and the daffodils have had a real covering but it just goes to show how the climate has changed.

I wish you all a year in which your problems are small and triumphs are large... and well recognised!