Having spent a week at the 2004 Open Championship at Royal Troon I was reminded when talking to the members of the BIGGA Support Team, and the many visitors, of the great camaraderie that exists in greenkeeping.

Living up to its name, the Association also played host to international members from Sweden, Spain, USA and Canada. The opportunity to participate in this prestigious event is only one of the many benefits of membership, however places in the team each year are regretfully limited. It was heartening to learn how members value the Association and how they either take advantage of or are involved with a wide range of its activities.

All too often in my travels I hear of members, or past members, who are disillusioned but when asked what more they would like they have nothing to say. Talk with those members who are involved at Section, Region or National level and you soon realise that the Association has come a long way since its formation in 1987. Perhaps too quickly for some! All too often though the work falls on the same shoulders and in many instances those who complain the loudest are the ones who are least willing to give up some of their time.

BIGGA has established itself as a leading body within the golf industry and as such is being involved more and more in the shaping of the future of golf and in both developing and delivering education. It enjoys a good working relationship with most other organisations and its trade partners and I have recently spent a great deal of time developing these links for the benefit of the Association and ultimately its members.

Like it or not times are changing and BIGGA needs to be proactive rather than reactive. I have again been warned of mounting pressure on company’s budgets, especially with regard to exhibitions and marketing and I urge you to support BTME and ClubHouse, which is not only our flagship event but also our greatest financial resource.

We are doing our best to improve communication from Headquarters down to members however please remember that communication is a two way process!

My colleagues and I welcome any constructive comments and I would hope that you feel confident enough to contact the staff at any time.

Finally a ‘plug’ for the National Championship sponsored by Ransomes Jacobson which is to be held at Alwoodley Golf Club, Leeds, on October 4th and 5th.

There are only a few places left and further details can be found on page 38 of the July edition of Greenkeeper International or by contacting Sarah Norris at Headquarters.

John Pemberton