August - what a month for rain and I wonder if we have seen the last of summer for this year. I realise how time seems to pass quicker and quicker each year as preparations for the forthcoming BTME and Clubhouse become more involved.

The staff at headquarters have been out of the office to several region and section events during the month and the feedback that I am getting from members on this policy is positive and reassuring. These included several Golf Management Trophy days sponsored by Scotts and also the final of the John Deere Team Championship that was held at Forest Pines Golf Club in Lincolnshire. Our thanks go to both companies for their support.

August has also been a busy month with regard to staff. My congratulations go to Marie Whyld, BIGGA's designer, who gave birth to a baby girl, Jessica. Marie is on maternity leave until 31 January 2005 when she hopes to return to full-time work. In the meanwhile we are employing the services of a freelance designer.

There has also been a change in the Sales Department with the appointment of Sarah Craven who replaces Sam Richardson. Sarah will be working mainly on display advertising tele-sales. The two vacancies for regional administrators have been re-advertised and the response for the South East post in particular has been encouraging.

My own change of role has resulted in a change in the accounts office with Tony Cocker, my old assistant - "less of the old," says Tony - stepping up from four to five days a week and taking on the responsibility for the day to day accounting. This has left a vacancy and I am pleased to announce that Stephen Coates will join the Association on 1 September.

We are now back up to a full complement with the exception of a part-time cleaner following the resignation of Sue Hancock, who has been offered more hours at her main job. The search for a replacement goes on and we hope to come to some agreement with the hotel to use their housekeeping services. In the meanwhile we are all having to learn to be far more responsible for our actions.

I don't wish to sound patronising but what a pity I cannot say the same about some of our members. I have been in many mess rooms in greenkeeper's sheds and mess is an appropriate word. In my opinion there is no excuse for lack of hygiene and care.

Before everyone starts jumping up and down I must add that I have also been in some rooms where it has been a pleasure to sit down and enjoy a chat and a mug of tea. I know at times greenkeeping can be a dirty job but it does not need to spill into the canteen and become a health and safety risk!

I am also aware that golf club funds do not always stretch to providing the most modern of facilities, however, it's not always about money more a question of basic housekeeping.

Mugs not washed, floors not swept, litter not disposed of properly, surfaces not kept clean, filthy toilets, perhaps a coat of emulsion on the walls now and again would not go amiss. Do you recognise the scene? If so what are you doing about it?

The biggest investment is time and effort not money. BIGGA is working hard to raise the public opinion of the greenkeeper and gain recognition for the professional job that its members do. The Association however can only do so much, the rest is up to you.

John Pemberton