News from the Chief Executive

Plans for Harrogate 2006 are slowly coming together and as you will see from other parts of this magazine there will be a massive increase in education on offer when compared with previous years. This will be spread over a six day period and there should certainly be something for everyone, from Student to Manager, and no matter whether you are a Greenkeeper, Groundsman, Golf Club Official or perhaps employed in one of the other turf related activities.

On August 18 we held an Open Day for Exhibitors, both current and potential, at Harrogate International Centre (HIC). The morning included a presentation by myself, Rosie Hancher and Ken Richardson and was specifically designed for them to be able to gain a better understanding of the scope of Harrogate Week and give them an opportunity to discuss the future direction of our event with the BIGGA Management Team. The day was well supported and there was representation from all aspects of the broad exhibitor base. In explaining the benefits available to both exhibitor and visitor it quickly became apparent that it is generally not appreciated how complex an event this has become and how today it is much more than just a show with a few 'fringe' activities. The exhibitors would like to see more visitors from not only golf course or golf club management but also anyone involved in turf care, especially decision makers or those who influence decisions.

The advantage of attending Harrogate Week as a visitor, whether in full or in part, will be widely marketed over the coming months and a web site has been developed to enhance ease of access to information. The address is www.harrogateweek.org.uk and the site is now online. I encourage you to have a look at it and welcome any suggestions for improvement. These can be emailed to me at john@bigga.co.uk or, of course, there is always traditional mail or telephone. Many of the exhibitors have offered to help with the promotion of Harrogate Week however members can also assist in this area.

I would like to thank HIC for use of the facilities on the Open Day, Crown Venue Catering for providing lunch, 2/10 Productions for managing the audio visual requirements and Joe Manby Limited for providing a registration booth.

I am aware that I and those of my colleagues based at Headquarters have not had as much opportunity this year as in the past to visit Region and Section events. We propose to address this by attending some of the Autumn and Winter events even though the workload at HQ shows no sign of easing off! I am also in the early planning stages of arranging more regular meetings with Section Secretaries, perhaps on a regional basis interspaced with a less frequent visit to BIGGA HOUSE.

Please do not forget that the Regional Administrators are members of HQ staff and as such attend HQ staff meetings on a regular basis. Communication is an ongoing challenge and we will be looking at ways of improving the flow of information. There is always an open invitation for anyone, member or not, to visit Headquarters and if you would like to incorporate this with a stay at the hotel then we can arrange for you to take advantage of our preferential rates.

John Pemberton