**Chairman’s Column**

**Back to the Future**

One sunny evening, back in the summer of 2004, I was enjoying a family barbecue when the phone rang and to my surprise it was Kerran asking if I would consider becoming his Vice Chairman. In utter shock I asked Kerran for time to consider such a honourable and illustrious position.

After discussing the role of Chairman with my wife, family and employers and with their full support I contacted Kerran with my acceptance. In turn, I would like to thank you, the members, for doing me the honour of appointing me Chairman for the forthcoming year at the AGM. I would also like to thank my employers, Burnham & Berrow Golf Club, together with my dedicated greenkeeping team for the encouragement and support they have shown for my coming year as Chairman.

This year is likely to be challenging with regard to Harrogate Week 2007, but I can ensure you that we will uphold an excellent level of communication with all parties. Your elected Board and staff will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of you, the members. I would like to welcome Billy McMillan as my Vice Chairman and Ray Davies as our retiring Chairman, Andy Campbell, and George Barr for their business-like approach during their time on the Board.

Time has already moved on so quickly, my children tell me it’s an age thing! However, now is the time to reflect on the very successful Harrogate Week. With record numbers of people involved in our industry gaining quality education which was catered through an educational programme of workshops and seminars organised brilliantly by Ken and Sami, who succeeded in providing more quality and breadth than ever before.

The week commenced on Sunday January 22 delivering five excellently presented workshops. Feedback from all Delegates concluded that the workshops were very productive and fun which set the tone for the rest of the week and encouraged the closing workshop’s - Maintaining the Sustainable Golf Course, presented by the R&A - attendance of over 250 Delegates.

Turning my thoughts to the BTME and ClubHouse Show - which again was a sell out - I am happy to say that this was truly the only place to look at the suppliers that matter within our industry. All of the exhibitors I met were very pleased with the quality and quantity of visitors they welcomed onto their Stands.

As I am writing this, my thoughts return to 15 years or so ago when travelling back from York with Gordon Child. He informed me of his vision of a week when greenkeepers would be able to get together and see the latest products while discussing and developing their skills. We have now achieved this and more, as we welcome and support the Secretaries’ Association, R&A, GTC and the Golfing Unions during the week.

At this point it would be incongruous of me not to thank John and the whole team at HQ who worked tirelessly to ensure Harrogate Week turned out to be yet again hugely successful.

This year I intend my monthly articles to recognise members who have given so much to our Association in a feature called Champions of BIGGA. This month’s Champions of BIGGA are my own staff, who work to a high standard, sometimes without the recognition they deserve. So stand up and be proud lads, namely Mike Dodd, Paul Dunn, Andrew Briggs, Noel Smith, Craig Dunbar and Gary Pither.

On closing my first article I would like to pay tribute to the retiring Chairman, Kerran Daly, for his excellent year in office. He did not let on how well he would write his articles over the last year but he had a wee smile on his face when I approached the subject recently.

My aim as Chairman is to continue the work Kerran has done alongside John Pemberton and all of our staff to improve overall communication at all levels.

Richard Whyman
Chairman