For many years the role of Chairman of Green and Green Convener has been seen as the poisoned chalice at private members clubs and with a few exceptions a short-term appointment or a “must do” prior to moving on to be Club Captain.

Many readers will remember Jim Arthur, the wily Agronomist’s thoughts on the Green Committee, when he constantly reminded clubs of the importance of the GTC. For the GTC to be truly effective it is essential that we have a comprehensive feedback mechanism to ensure that the GTC does not become a paperweight and that we are constantly aware of the needs and expectations of the Clubs.

Jim Arthur was a firm believer that the review process should always be followed by an action plan and he was not afraid to be very direct in his criticism of the GTC’s work. The GTC in turn has taken this approach and asked those clubs to whom the GTC Chairman has just written an article in and in the opening paragraph states: “It has always been a strange anomaly that Golf Clubs appoint a highly qualified Head Greenkeeper to a specialist role and then tolerate highly unqualified members talking him where he is going wrong. Whereas, they are quite happy to accept a doctor’s, solicitor’s or stockbroker’s view of things, golfers are quick to express themselves knowledgeable (so they think) on subjects as varying as fuscius and fungi.”

Last month saw me packing my bags and making the trip to Orlando, for the Golf Industry Show, in the company of our Chairman, Andrew Mellon. With a packed schedule of events and meetings, as well as the trade show, it proved to be a busy week leaving both Andrew and myself wanting some new feet!

Golf Industry Show

Relationships were cemented with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA) and the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association (AGCSA).

It was most interesting to discover, that no matter the size of each of our Associations, we are all facing the same challenges.

The strength of our relationships with these Associations can only help us make all stronger by using each other’s knowledge and expertise.

We were able to spend a few hours in the company of the GCSAA education team, bringing them up to date on our Continuing Professional Development programme and Master Greenkeeper reviews, showing them how their certification portfolio would be integrated into the system.

Discussions surrounding the forthcoming TPC of the GCSAA Board of Directors were also on the agenda. We also had a very productive meeting with representatives of the GCSAA’s Board of Directors, their new CEO, Rhiett Evans, and Senior Director of Member Programs, Carrie Riedman.

We also got the opportunity to sit down with the Ken Coumans, CEO of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA), to discuss similar issues about their education and membership database that proved very interesting.

Many suggestions and ideas were given to us by some of the companies with which we were able to meet.

These have been brought back to the Board of Directors and the staff to develop for the future.

The BPIGA delegation, sponsored by Bernhard & Co, saw 10 BPIGA members making the trip.

They had a packed schedule of events and each time we saw them we got a trip update. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of them in saying that they had a great time.

It never fails to amaze me how many people I know after 18 years working for BIGGA. I meet up with many friends, old and new, on the trip allowing me to share a good mix of business and pleasure. This truly is an ‘Awesome’ industry to work in, I am very fortunate.

Continue to Learn at Horticultural Week

Feedback on this year’s Continue to Learn education programme has been phenomenal.

We have received a record number of phone calls and emails congratulating us on our efforts to deliver a high standard of education for our members.

The challenge is now in place to produce an equally good programme for 2012.

I have many ideas, but I am, as ever, open to suggestions on how to improve the programme, topics you would like to see covered and names of speakers who have impressed you.

If you have any suggestions, please email me: sami@bigga.co.uk

Planning for Continue to Learn 2012 is one of a number of projects that are on the agenda for the rest of the year.

However, my main focus will be on the development of the improved CPD scheme, the introduction of Accreditation and the Master Greenkeeper review.