Change at the top for BIGGA

New BIGGA chairman Tony Smith officially took the reins from outgoing Andrew Mellon on the first afternoon of the Open Championships.

Andrew Mellon, who is departing to become general manager of Hydroturf in Qatar, handed the badge to current vice-chairman Tony Smith, of Tenaside Golf Club, who has been a member of the Board of Management since 2007. Tony thanked the now ex-chairman for his terrific efforts during his tenure, adding: “I hope to keep the flag flying for the Association.”

Andrew said: “The members are the strength of the Association. The work you do can’t be underestimated – without you there wouldn’t be any golf courses. “We’ve got a fantastic, diverse and passionate team and wish you all the best for the future.” The Board have formally elected Chippenham Golf Club’s Chris Sealey, who has been the Board Member representative of the South West and South Wales Region for four years, to be Vice Chairman in support of Tony Smith. Chris (right) is delighted to accept and has the full support of his Golf Club who are thrilled with his appointment.

A Technical Move for BIGGA L&D

As the focus of BIGGA continues to be on developing the Learning and Development pathway for members it has moved to strengthen the L&D Department.

Stuart Green, formerly of Askham Bryan College, has joined as L&D Executive. He joins long serving L&D Manager, Sami Collins and L&D Executive, Rachael Duffy.

Stuart brings a wealth of technical greenkeeping knowledge alongside his valuable experience within the greenkeeper education system having had more than eight years service as a greenkeeper including time at Gleneagles and Harbury Hall Golf Club.

“This is where I want to be.”

A Hole in Honour

As reported in last month’s Greenkeeper International, Carnoustie Golf Links has made the momentous decision to honour the work of John Philip MBE, recently retired Links Superintendent, by naming a hole in his honour.

On Friday 29 June the 383 yard par four 11th hole on the Championship Course, host to seven Open Championships, was officially renamed John Philip. The 11th hole was chosen as it is close to the Greenkeepers’ Maintenance Facility, the nerve centre of John’s operation for the past 27 years.

Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee chairman Gordon Wilson said: “I think everybody knows how important John has been for Carnoustie and bringing The Open back here.”

“His kindness and willingness to share his experience and knowledge with you also knows no bounds. I’ve been fortunate enough to attend several events at Carnoustie and I have not seen better turf condition anywhere.”

During his speech at the 11th hole, John thanked many people including his mentor and greenkeeping legend Walter Wood-BEM who was present and the late Dalhousie Golf Club captain Jack Calder, who played a leading role in bringing The Open back to Carnoustie.

He also highlighted the role played by the links staff. John said: “I accept this tremendous honour on behalf of everybody on my team, because at the end of the day it is a team effort, and I am just a team leader.”

“That is what has made it all possible, along with the investment of the management committee over the years.”

He was a spectator during the 1968 Open at Carnoustie, and explained he had no idea where his love of golf would lead him. He said: “Little did I know when I came here in 1968 to the Open Championship to watch Gary Player in the final round that I would end up here.”

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It’s been a great privilege and pleasure working at Carnoustie, just as I did at St Andrews.

“I have a great many happy memories from my career and a lot of them are from here in Carnoustie.”