Fond Farewell to BIGGA Chairman 2012

BIGGA’s chairman, Andrew Meldo is leaving his position as Golf Operations Manager at Elmwood College having been appointed as General Manager and Head of HydroTurf International in Qatar. HydroTurf are the Middle East’s leading golf course and landscaping supply company.

Andrew who will take up his new post on September 1st has been with Elmwood for nearly 12 years, having been a student greenkeeper initially and then working through from Greenkeeper Instructor to his present position.

At the latest BIGGA Board of Management meeting Andrew informed the Board of his circumstances and it was agreed that he will step down from his role of BIGGA chairman during the Open Championship at which time Tony Smith of Trenside Golf Club, the current vice chairman, will take over for the rest of the year before beginning his intended full year of office at the AGM in January.

In the two and a half years Andrew has been involved on the Board of Management he has served the membership with great drive, passion and commitment. The entire board and staff of the association wish to recognise his huge contribution to BIGGA and wish him all the very best with his new challenge.

Andrew said, "BIGGA has always been a great support to me, from the very first day I became a Greenkeeper, and I will be in my current role. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve on the Board. I wish Tony the best during his term as Chairman. The professionalism, the passion, and the friendship I’ve witnessed during my time at BIGGA from the members, the staff, and the Board has helped me understand why BIGGA is so important within this industry. I’m confident it will go from strength to strength under the current leadership and continue to further develop its support to the membership. I’ve made many good friends and I hope to keep in contact. I am sad to be leaving, but excited at the new opportunity I have. I’d like to thank everyone for their support to me, and wish everyone the very best going forward.”

Markus Klausmann: Student of the Year for GOSTA

GOSTA has been training golf course greenkeepers and landscape employees in the West of Scotland since 1962. Managing Director, Lesley Lowrie took the decision to commence delivery of greenkeeper qualifications in Edinburgh and Lothian in the summer of 2011. Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society were one of the first golf clubs to send one of their employees for training. The employee was Markus Klausmann who originally came from Wildtal, a small village right at the edge of the Black Forest, an area of Southern Germany.

As a trained chef Markus relocated to Scotland to charge both his life and career. He worked as a car cleaner and hospital porter for nearly three years in order to finance his flight to Edinburgh until he was successful in finding employment on a golf course. During that time he also attended English Language School in Edinburgh. Markus commented “to say my English was bad would be an understatement.”

He went on “by sticking to my plan to only behind Scotsmen and not mix with other German students at the language school I quickly began to grasp English!” Markus started work at Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society in 2008 and attended Oatridge College prior to moving over to GOSTA to do his SVQ Level 3 Modern Apprenticeship in Sports Turf.

“Markus was an outstanding student who strives to achieve the highest possible standards at all times and is a worthy candidate to achieve this award” said his lecturer Steve Miller.

Lesley presented Markus with the GOSTA Training Student of the Year Award which was an inscribed Quaich.

If you are interested in SVQ’s, Modern Apprenticeships or short courses (Certificates of Competence) in your area please contact GOSTA Training on 0141-556-3999.

John began his career at his own home town club of Pitreavie in Dunfermline after a spell there learning his trade, he moved to Newmarket GC as Greenkeeper/Professional, for a number of years before coming back to his roots as Deputy Links Supervisor at St Andrews in 1979.

Many people perhaps don’t realise that John was quite a proficient golfer in his day. In 1985 he moved to Carnoustie Golf Links, which was in extremely poor condition at the time, as Links Supervisor. It had hosted the Open in 1975 but because of the condition and other factors it had dropped off the rota. John, with the support of Jock Calder, Chairman of Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee, turned the Championship course around into the condition it is today, where it is now recognised to have set the benchmark for Open Championship venues in 1999 and 2007.

Under his tenure, Carnoustie has also staged the 1991 and 2001 Scottish Ladies’ Close Amateur Championships, the 1992 Amateur Championships, the 1995 and 1996 Scottish Open, the 1997 and 2008 Scottish Amateur, the 2002 British Boys Championship, no less than eleven Dunhill Links tournaments and this year, in his final week, the British Boys Championship and Buddon courses. While not involved in the construction of the Buchan Course, which was built in 1979, he has since rebuilt 16 of the greens.

He has been a regular speaker at various greenkeeper seminars and conferences in the years both in the UK and abroad and has also assisted Elmwood College where he has given presentations and field studies on grass species and identification.

In his time at Carnoustie he has also trained and inspired a number of staff who have gone on to become Course Managers at some of the most prestigious courses in the UK and Ireland. Alan Blackman at Walton Heath and Gary Johnstone at Portmarnock are two that come to mind.

His training has also been recognised by Carnoustie as they have promoted the Championship Links head greenkeeper Sandy Reid to succeed him and Craig Booth has also ascended to Sandy’s previous role.

He has also always been willing to discuss many matters with Course Managers and greenkeepers at all nearby clubs. Many a time I have turned up at Carnoustie on a Sunday morning in winter to drop my sons off at their football and wandered down to the course where I would find John busy on the course. I would always end up missing the first goal after getting into some technical discussion or other!

In 2000, his services to greenkeeping were recognised when he was awarded the MBE, an honour he received when he was awarded the OBE, an honour he received from the Queen.

As John Philip retires from Carnoustie he leaves a great legacy, writes Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust.

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