**WHERE DO YOU READ GI?**

Jack Davies, Greenkeeper at Five Lakes Hotel Golf & Country Club in Essex, posted this terrible picture on the BIGGA Message Board, showing him reading February’s GI on a boat!

Jack said: “After a spell of prolonged wet weather we now have a sixth lake lying on the fifth carry. I thought I could read February’s magazine on the flood while we pumped it out – my boss was a bit sceptical of the plan though! February’s magazine made a great read while I was on the water”.

In what unusual locations have you read GI? Email a picture to steve.castle@bigga.co.uk and we’ll print the best...

**BOB’S BLOG**

We’re continuing to receive some excellent suggestions for blogs penned by greenkeepers across the land. The featured blog this month is Bob Meikle’s at Crail Golfing Society in Fife, Scotland.

Course Manager Bob has used the blog for three years, and it features regular updates, pictures of Bob and his team working on what is one of the oldest clubs in the world.

Encouragingly, it also features on the main website meaning members and visitors alike are able to discover exactly what the team are up to – and why they’re doing it.

Bob said: “I started it mainly to make our BIGGA section website more relevant and up to date. Barely a day goes by without a member mentioning to me that they’ve been looking at it, and a lot of the complaints we used to get have stopped because people know what’s happening. It helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed on what’s going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects. People visit the blog also and it informs about us in much detail.

“Visitors to the blog also find it informative because we have particular issues at Crail, such as high tides damaging the course in spring and autumn depending on wind direction. It also helps them understand what we are trying to achieve on a regular basis by keeping them informed on what’s going on – everything from basic cutting and aeration to winter projects.

I also spoke to the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Tom Flavelle who’s clearly learning a huge amount from his time in the States. He’s there for a little while longer and I know he’ll be appearing in a future edition of Greenkeeper International informing the membership about his experiences.

One major difference was, of course, the weather – their winter is similar to our summer! I was also fortunate enough to see these courses and they were truly stunning.

**MARATHON MAN PLANS TO SKIN COMPETITION**

On April 14 Greg Skinner, Head Greenkeeper at Forest Hill Golf & Country Club, is running the Brighton Marathon. He’s running in aid of Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research in memory of a good friend named Paul Glennon who passed and we’re now on an equal footing with them.

Greg would welcome any donations to this extremely worthwhile cause, large or small – to donate and for further information please visit www.justgiving.com/Greg-Skinner1

**Chairman’s Word**

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

It’s been a whirlwind few weeks for me – as soon as I returned from BTME I was making preparations to attend the Golf Industry Show in San Diego.

As well as the exhibition itself, which impressed me greatly with its size, scale and the range of exhibitors on display, I dipped into a few of the educational seminars.

If there was a time when we were playing catch-up with American education, I believe that time has passed and we’re now on an equal footing with them.

Education is taken extremely seriously on both sides of the Atlantic – it’s great to see, and it’s about time.

The International Briefing I attended during the Show was valuable, particularly as I’m now lucky enough to look at it from a Chairman’s perspective.

I quickly got the impression that we’re not alone with our problems in the UK – various Associations from all corners of the world share similar challenges regarding to the economy and also retaining and increasing membership.

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One thing he said which stuck in my mind was “I wish I could bottle all this up and dish it out to all the young greenkeepers in the UK”.

Another highlight was the BIGGA Reception we held on the Monday evening which was a gathering of our members who had travelled to San Diego, and it was so successful we’re looking at making it a regular feature.

On my return from America the Board of Management met which gave us a timely opportunity to review BTME 2013 and put plans in place for 2014 and beyond.

Feedback from visitors and exhibitors alike has generally been really positive and momentum is already gathering for January 2014.

Towards the end of February the Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations (FEGGA) held its Annual Conference in the picturesque but snowy city of Zurich. It was fascinating to listen to the challenges faced by the many other Greenkeeper Associations across the continent and realise that they are so similar to those that we face in the UK.

Economic pressure, lack of awareness and appreciation of the profession, legislative/regulatory