

John Crawford's year as chairman of BIGGA came to a close at the National Conference. He told Greenkeeper International what it's like being in the hot seat

End of term report



John Crawford has helped promote the status of greenkeepers through 33 years of membership with SGGA/SIGGA and BIGGA. During those years he has held numerous offices:

- 1981 – appointed to the Central Section committee
- 1983 – appointed chairman of the Central Section
- 1984 – appointed secretary of the central section
- 1989 – appointed to the board of management
- 1992 – appointed chairman of the Scottish Region
- 1993 – appointed chairman of BIGGA

Being chairman of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association was an honour which I did not set out to achieve, but one which I certainly took great pride in.

I see the chairman's role outside board of management meetings as one of being 'PR' or 'front man', attending the various events which are organised in conjunction with our trade sponsors and any section/region events to which he is invited.

It is my opinion that not enough of the sections/regions extend an invitation to the chairman to attend their events, while appreciating that someone who is working full-time would find it difficult to attend them all during his year in office, at least the invitation should be extended.

What were the highlights?

The highlights of my year were too numerous to mention but obviously being chairman during the most successful BTME so far, attending the numerous functions and events to which I was invited and the GCSAA show in Dallas, even though I was somewhat apprehensive about wearing a kilt for the first (and last?) time in my life, are all events of which I will have many fond memories.

What were the worst moments?

There were one or two low points during the year, which I would rather not go into, but hopefully they were not to the detriment of the Association.

What did you learn during your year?

I certainly learnt there are still too many different views amongst the members as to what the Association is about and what the board of management are attempting to achieve on their

behalf. This can be changed with the improved communication which is now taking place through Greenkeeper International and with members of the staff from HQ attending more section and region events.

How much time did it take being chairman?

If the past chairman told the incoming chairman how much time was required during his term of office he would probably resign on the spot! It is something you want to do for the Association and are willing to sacrifice your own time freely. I reckon it took between 60-70 days, not counting section and region events in Scotland.

Did it help being out of work?

Being unemployed for part of my year of office made it easier for me to attend more functions/events than I would have felt comfortable doing if I had still been in employment, but it certainly did nothing for my self-confidence.

How do you see BIGGA's future?

Although the Association is growing slowly, there are still too many greenkeepers who are not members, which is disappointing as the benefits which can be derived from being a member are numerous. We must also endeavour to get every member to present a more professional image, ie. dress and self presentation.

Improved communication with employers needs to be achieved (a difficult task with some golf clubs) to inform them of what the benefits of their staff being members can mean to the club, ie. better education opportunities.

I feel that in the not too distant future the chairman will not come from within the board of

management, due to the amount of time involved in dealing with Association matters, perhaps he may well be a well known retired greenkeeper or someone associated with the greenkeeping/golf world.

What will you do now?

Hopefully I can find employment which will allow me to return to greenkeeping and try to continue with life as before – if not, who knows what lies ahead?

Any final messages?

Yes, I would like to say a special thanks to everyone who gave me their support during my year as chairman – the members, fellow board members, Neil Thomas and all the staff at HQ, every company that gives superb support to the Association and last but not of all Ailsa, without whose wholehearted support and encouragement it would certainly have been a totally different year altogether.

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