

# Perfection is just down the road...

**W**ell that's it for another year. BTME has come and gone and, judging by the number of congratulatory messages from delegates and exhibitors, all the hard work leading up to Harrogate paid off.

That's extremely gratifying because the preparation work which, incidentally has already begun for BTME 98, takes up a great deal of time. As you know when preparing for Captain's Day, giving time to the small things as well as the large makes all the difference and that attention to detail is noticed by the people who matter.

It was while at Harrogate that I was told of this wonderful new golf course.

It sounds absolutely superb and I'm tempted to get my name down as quickly as possible.

From what I've heard it's open 365 days a year, even when there's three feet of snow. There's never any disease on the course and the greens never stimp at less than 10 – even in the winter.

The Course Manager must be some kind of magician because he has fewer staff than at my current club and the capital expenditure budget is just a fraction of ours but he always seems to be able to produce perfect results.

I gather he never needs to hollow tine or vertidrain and as for temporary greens... You can forget them. Never strays from the greens on which we were intended to play – and the holes are always perfectly painted.

I also believe the flower beds around the clubhouse rival Augusta National's.

You never see greens staff on the course but I'm told the club never has to pay any overtime. So I don't know when the work gets done.

It's also in line for a

Tour event sometime soon.

The whole place is something else. Outside, there's a dropping zone for your bag and it appears on the first tee with every club head gleaming and groove clean while you can see your face in your highly polished shoes. They even replace the spikes you lost the round before.

Inside the clubhouse there are saunas, jacuzzis, a swimming pool and gym. There are 10 snooker tables while you never pay more than £1.25 for a pint.

Oh yes. There's a team of volunteers to drive your car home for you if you've enjoyed yourself too much at the dinner dance.

When I heard all this it really whetted my appetite, more so, when I learned that the green fees are only £175 per year and there isn't a joining fee.

Obviously I wanted to meet the Course Manager, who speaks four languages and dances like Fred Astaire, but I was told he was back at the club personally trimming all the ladies' tees with nail clippers.

The name of this club? Well the guy at the bar referred to it only as "The Club Down the Road".

Sound familiar?



Scott MacCallum  
Editor

## As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

**I**t gives me great pleasure to be writing my first column as Chairman. I still remember receiving the call from Dean Cleaver just over a year ago asking if I would be his Vice Chairman. You could have knocked me down with a feather. The prospect of having the honour of being BIGGA's National Chairman in the year of the Association's 10th anniversary soon began to dawn on me. And now that day has arrived.

May I start by paying tribute to the magnificent work of Dean and Barry Heaney, who was last year's Past Chairman. Both are wonderful ambassadors for the Association and I have two great examples to follow.

My year has already actually started. There's no time to ease your way gently into the post in this job!

BTME was an outstanding success and I was overwhelmed by the warmth and sincerity of the congratulations I received from everyone. It makes you proud to be associated with such an industry.

I don't think we could have a better place for our annual get together than Harrogate, the atmosphere is very special and I'm sure BTME at Harrogate will go on getting better and better.

I'd like to thank the BIGGA staff for all their hard work during BTME. It's an occasion which highlights what a wonderful job they do for us.

BIGGA has certainly come a long way in the last 10 years and under Neil Thomas' guidance the Association is now only second behind the GCSAA in terms of membership. The importance of the Association and of BTME can be seen by the number of overseas visitors we had this year. I believe we had 17 different nationalities represented and in some cases large delegations attended.

I mentioned the GCSAA and I'm looking forward to going to Las Vegas this month for their exhibition and show where no doubt I will meet up with our five American Master Greenkeepers who do such a great job in promoting BIGGA.

As I look further ahead I'm looking forward to having the opportunity to meet many of you personally up and down the country.

Before I close I must mention the one disappointing element of BTME. It was the unfortunate duty of the Board on the final day to sit on disciplinary matters concerning two of our members. We must always be aware of the duty we have to our fellow members and the Association and behave in a professional manner. Remember it is possible to enjoy yourselves and present the right impression at the same time.

