



January: Taking over from Dean Cleaver

**BTME** brings to an end the Chairmanship of one of the busiest men ever to have donned the famous red blazer.

If you are a member who has not encountered Pat Murphy during the last 12 months you must be one of the few, because there is no part of the country in which he has not set foot and few events which he has not been able to attend.

"It has been a great honour to have been Chairman of BIGGA over the past year but I am genuinely exhausted and looking forward to a holiday next year," explained Pat.

"There has been only one occasion during the entire year that I have had an uninterrupted three week spell at home. As well as all over Britain and Ireland I've been to Las Vegas, Sweden, Spain and Germany and can honestly say I've given 100% to the Association."

Asked to select some of the highlights of his hectic year Pat mentions last year's BTME when he took over from Dean Cleaver as Chairman.

"The most nervous I felt all year was when I chaired the National Education Conference on the Monday of BTME week and once I'd put on the Blazer it was just non-stop meetings and photographs."

Hot on the heels of BTME was the GCSAA Conference and Show at Las Vegas where Pat got some inside information on preparations for the Ryder Cup later in the year.

"I was seated next to Jaime Patino, President of Valderrama, at the Gala Dinner and was most impressed when he told me that he was bringing in the QE2 to act as a floating hotel.

"I also got the chance of attending a world heavyweight boxing match – the infamous one between Lennox Lewis and Oliver McCall, who broke down in tears and didn't want to fight."

If he was already becoming accustomed to the good life this was added to by a luncheon on behalf of the AEA at the Savoy Hotel in London.

"I was also particularly pleased to have been

# A year when your feet don't touch the ground...

Looking back on Pat Murphy's year as BIGGA Chairman



Turning the first turf on Berkshire College's new training facility

"The funeral of David Spurden, who was tragically killed just a week after he had prepared Ganton so superbly for the Hayter Challenge Final, was an extremely sad occasion."

Another notable occasion was BIGGA's 10th Anniversary Tournament at Aldwark Manor, which looks set to become a regular fixture and The Open Championship at Royal Troon.

"The Open was fantastic. I was introduced to Colin Montgomerie and his wife at the Association of Golf Writers' Dinner where I also met Jaime Patino again. The Open was also one of the several occasions when I met

our President, Viscount Whitelaw, during the course of the year.

"I can honestly say I must have been the most envied greenkeeper in the country when I got to hold the famous old Claret Jug during our traditional photograph with the new Champion. Justin Leonard turned to me and said 'Get a grip of this' It's a moment I'll treasure for a long time."

able to attend every Hayter Challenge Regional final in what was the last year of the Hayter sponsorship. Unfortunately it rained at most of them, which was a recurring theme all year. We are indebted to Kim Macfie and everyone at Hayter for their marvellous support over the last five years."

The Hayter also had a connection with the saddest occasion Pat attended during the year.



Another of Pat's duties was to present Hankley Common's Ian McMillan with the second half of an unprecedented double.

Ian had already been presented with the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping – ironically the only event in the entire year which the Chairman was forced to miss – when Pat travelled to Hankley Common to present him with the BIGGA Golf Environment Award, in association with Amazone and Rhône Poulenc.

“It was a superb achievement and Ian was a worthy recipient of two excellent prizes in two magnificent competitions.”

One common denominator at every event Pat attended was the warmth of the welcome.

“Everywhere I went, from Saltex, where I judged the stands, to the IOG Show in Dublin and Scotsturf in Edinburgh I was treated like a King and I can only thank everyone for their superb hospitality.”

Another stand out in an outstanding year was turning the first sod on the new Academy course at Berkshire College and the planting of a tree on the course.

Overall, and looking back, Pat takes satisfaction from the progress of the Association over the last 12 months.



Receiving a Westurf memento from Richard Whyman

“I'm delighted that we have now formed two new Sections in Northern Ireland and, having visited them on several occasions, I am sure that with the enthusiasm and talent available among the members they will both go from strength to strength.”

Another development over the last 12 months has seen everything put in place for the building of BIGGA's new Headquarters.

“I felt incredibly privileged last month to be the man to sign the piece of paper to confirm the purchase of the land at Aldwark Manor on

The Open was one of several occasions Pat met up with Viscount Whitelaw

which the new offices and training facility will be built. I'm looking forward to turning the first sod later this month,” said Pat.

“At the beginning of my year the two immediate Past Chairmen, Barry Heaney and Dean Cleaver, tried to give me an idea of what to expect but, to be honest, nothing could really have prepared me for the year I have had.

“I certainly couldn't have done it without the backing of Shipley Golf Club and I'm indebted to everyone at the club for their tremendous support over the last 12 months. Not only were they happy that I had whatever time off was required to give the Chairmanship 100%, members were also keen to know about some of the experiences I had.”

Another factor which enabled Pat to devote the necessary time was the work of his own team at Shipley. “I was always available on the end of a telephone but they have done a superb job and the course has been in excellent condition all year,” he said.

During the year Pat has had constant involvement with Headquarter's staff and this reaffirmed his belief that the Association is extremely lucky to have the highly professional staff it does.

“It all reflects well on the Association and I'd like to thank Neil and his team for all their help during the year.”

Gordon Child becomes the new National Chairman at BIGGA's AGM during BTME and Pat is sure he could not be handing over to a better man.

“Gordon has been a superb ambassador for the Association, as Board Member and long time South West and South Wales Regional Administrator since the Association was formed and it is an honour he thoroughly deserves. I'm sure he will do an excellent job. I just hope he lasts the pace!”



Meeting up with BIGGA's Kubota Cup team at The Belfry



The Golf Environment competition: a big success