

It's hard work, but well worth the effort

The month of July is the highlight for many, with The Open Championship acting as a magnet for golf lovers from all over the world.

It is a marvellous event both on and off the course as it's the perfect opportunity to see the world's finest exponents of the game up close and also meet friends you perhaps haven't seen for the entire 12 months.

In this regard BIGGA is extremely fortunate. Not only does the hard working BIGGA Support Team have the chance to play a key role in one of the biggest events in the sporting calendar but the BIGGA marquee is a superb base for members to meet and enjoy a bit of refreshment between watching live golf.

Having said that, with television sets in the marquee some people do tend to settle in for an afternoon in front of the box and the delights of Peter Alliss and Alex Hay, rather than seeing the action first hand.

This year, Lytham St Annes plays host to the Championship, and the course has been prepared for an Open for the first time by Paul Smith and his team.

Paul was First Assistant to Jimmy MacDonald MBE last time the Championship was played there in 1996, and that experience, coupled with that acquired since he started out in the profession as a 16 year old apprentice at St Annes Old Links, will stand him in good stead when the media spotlight falls on the course.

You can read about Paul's preparations for The Open elsewhere in this issue but you can be sure that the conditions which face the 156 competitors, who tee it up on Thursday, July 19, to face Lytham's daunting opening par-3, will be as good as the weather in the run up to the Championships has allowed.

My first experience of Royal Lytham came in 1988 when Seve Ballesteros went head to head with Nick Price and produced some miraculous golf to win. We can all recall the wonderful chip he played from the side of the green which all but went in.

In the midst of such heroics it was easy to forget that Seve held the Claret Jug aloft on the Monday afternoon and not the Sunday. Horrendous rain caused Saturday's third round to be washed out and we all had to amend our diaries to allow for another day. While this was inconvenient for many it was nothing compared to the work Jimmy Macdonald and his team, with the help of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team had to do to make the course playable for the Sunday and the Monday. In such occasions people can show their true qualities and it was not just

Seve who deserved all the accolades that year, behind the scenes there were a great many more.

Hopefully Paul and his team will not have to pull the stops out to such an extent this year and will have a successful, and quiet Open Championship.

Scott MacCallum
Editor



BIGGA survey: An excellent response

As this edition of Greenkeeper International goes to press, Mike Williamson of MW Associates is busy analysing the responses to the market research survey we reported on in March.

"The response to the survey has been excellent," said Mike.

"We have received completed questionnaires from 570 BIGGA members, and have conducted about 150 telephone interviews with companies and organisations in the golf industry, as well

as representatives of golf clubs and greenkeepers who are not currently BIGGA members. A lot of people have applauded BIGGA for having the survey carried out - and are looking forward to hearing the outcome!"

As a first step, Mike Williamson will be reporting key findings from the research to the BIGGA Board at their June meeting. The Board will then decide on the best way of considering, and responding to, the detailed

results that will be in the full report.

In the meantime, Mike passes on his thanks to all those who took the time to respond, often very fully, to the questionnaires and interviews. And Mike's commiserations to the 569 members who did not win the £100 voucher in the questionnaire prize draw.

(The lucky winner was Stephen Curtis, Head Greenkeeper of Richmond Park GC in Norfolk.

Scottish National Championship



Results

Scottish Champion, SGGA Challenge Cup, Scratch, Stuart Raeburn, Tulliallan, 73.

Friendship Trophy, Best Net, Stephen Brown, Newmachar, 68.

Category One, Ransomes Trophy
1. George Thompson, Goswick, 72;
2. James McCormack, Kirriemuir, 73BIH;
3. Archie Dunn, Auchterarder, 73.

Category Two, Pattison Trophy.
1. Craig Pennycook, Winterfield, 72;
2. Colin Irvine, Muirfield, 74;
3. Alan Russell, Torphin Hill, 76 BIH.

Category 3 STRI Trophy.
1. Andy Wilson, Brechin, 73;
2. Albert Arnott, Lochore Meadows, 76;
3. Colin Scott, Glasgow, 80.

Best Head GK, Dick Aitken Trophy, Stuart Taylor, Glasgow, 73.

Best Assistant, M&M Trophy, Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews, 74.

Best Apprentice, Souter Trophy, Richard Love, Kilmacollm, 74.

Best Veteran, SIGGA Trophy, Duncan Gray, Pines, 75.

Team Trophy (Best four net scores) St Mungo Cup, North - Stephen Brown, James McCormack, Andy Wilson and John Urquhart.

Trade: Pat Allan, Stewarts.

Guest: Scott MacCallum, BIGGA.

A superb round of 73 around the long and testing Drumoig Hotel Golf Resort in Fife by five handicapper Stuart Raeburn clinched the 2001 Scottish National Tournament.

The 22 year-old First Assistant to current National Past Chairman Elliott Small, played near the back of the field and overhauled the scores of Stuart Taylor, from Glasgow Golf Club, and Richard Love, of Kilmacollm, who had been out earlier in the

day and posted fine scores.

Although windless, the home of the Scottish Golf Centre tested everyone with its succession of long par fours and fives not to mention an array of par-3s in excess of 200 yards.

Beautifully maintained by Ian Menzies and his team the 10 year-old course, just a few miles inland of St Andrews, required proficiency with every club in the bag to achieve a score anywhere close to handicap.

Stephen boxes clever at John O'Gaunt

Stephen Thompson, of John O'Gaunt Golf Club who has previously reported on the success of the bird boxes installed on the course has further good news to report.

"So far 11 out of 14 tit boxes have been accepted and we have 84 young blue tits ranging in age from half a day to 14 days. 31 blue tits were ringed and we also had a nest containing three young great tits," said Stephen.

The majority of the boxes were put up in February and March this year to give the birds time to get used to them and possibly to roost in them.



"Out of six open fronted boxes one was used and a complete nest found, presumably used by a wren," said Stephen.

"This was the first year for these boxes and it was very suc-

cessful," said Stephen who works closely with Peter Wilkinson of Bird life International, who was able to ring some of the birds.