



News from the Chief Executive

It's December and as we enter the final stages in the planning for BTME & Clubhouse 2005 I wonder where the year has gone. Having recently renewed acquaintances with an old friend I am reminded how easy it is to lose contact and how a great many of us use occasions such as Harrogate as an opportunity to catch up on those lost friendships.

The 'Harrogate week', as it is often referred to, is more than just an exhibition, more than just an education opportunity, it is a bringing together of like minded people who have one over-riding common interest – greenkeeping - and the provision of the best facility possible regardless of the resources available.

No matter which country they come from and no matter what type of golf club, the conversations revolve around the latest in equipment, the current thinking on maintenance and presentation of the golf course and an open and frank exchange of problems, solutions and ideas.

In recent years the addition of the Clubhouse Exhibition and a range of seminars aimed at golf club Secretaries, Managers and Owners has resulted in a steady increase in the number of this category of visitor. Harrogate used to be seen by many as an excuse to get away from work or home and enjoy some of the other attractions of the town, often to excess! I am pleased to say that we have moved away from this less acceptable image. I hope that BIGGA can rely upon your support, if only for a day, and don't forget to bring with you the Secretary or Manager or perhaps the Chairman of Green.

On Friday January 21 2005 BIGGA will host at Harrogate an International Summit. This has usually been held at the GCSAA show and I feel very privileged in being able to organise this event. The summit has developed over recent years to become a forum where greenkeeping associations and other related organisations from around the world are able to discuss and progress initiatives of common interest.

There are two main items currently on the agenda: One, A Global Environmental Policy and, two, the development of a set of standards for professional golf course management. Both of these items have been extensively discussed during the year and by consolidating various existing proposals and policies it has been possible to produce draft documents for consideration at the Summit.

In November I attended the conference held by the South West and South Wales Region when the theme for the day was 'The Environment'. The presentations were excellent and I hope that those delegates not already directly involved in an environment project went away duly motivated enough to think about their own golf course. It is all too easy to blame a lack of resource, be it manpower or funding, however there is quite a lot that can be done with very little effort or cost. Golf courses are a major user of land and one of the Association's projects for next year is to try to establish the extent of environmental best practice being carried out in Britain. This will then give us a 'benchmark' against which we can measure the future.

Legislation and the demands for a more discerning golfer will force many clubs down a route that they have chosen to ignore. It is proposed to hold a series of workshops next year on the development of an environment policy and the R&A have agreed to make a grant towards the cost of the training. If you need more information on this or help in getting started then please do not hesitate to contact Ken Richardson or Sami Collins at BIGGA Headquarters.

Finally I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please note that BIGGA HOUSE will be closed between Christmas Eve and January 4, staff being obliged to take some of their annual holiday at this time. An emergency telephone number will, however, be left on the answering machine which in itself will be regularly checked. Lets hope 2005 is a drier year, on the few occasions that I played golf in 2004 I more often than not seemed to get wet. Perhaps someone is trying to tell me something!

John Pemberton



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SCOTTISH REGION

Ayrshire

Hello once again, hope you're all well and have got off to a good start on your winter projects. The machinery demonstration/AGM day went well with a good turnout on what proved to be a bitterly cold day. Our thanks to Hamilton Bros for their efforts in displaying a wide variety of their inventory and entertaining PowerPoint presentations. Thanks also to Jim Paton for his part in organising this successful event. The AGM portion was efficiently dispatched under the auspices of Secretary Derek Wilson and outgoing Chairman Martin Lothian. Derek, it was unanimously agreed, should continue as Secretary while Marshall Sloss takes over as Chairman with Stephen Higgins his Vice-Chairman.

Tumberry's Brian Aitken has been recognised by Langside College with an award for outstanding achievement for his recently completed HNC in Golf Course Management. So on behalf of the Section, "Well done Big Bri!"

What have I been up to you ask? Well in October I went down to Leeds to play in the National Championship for the first time and after the first round I found myself leading! No really! Normal service resumed the next day and I played like a big girls blouse! I thoroughly enjoyed the two day event and would highly recommend it to anyone thinking of going.

Good news though, as I have recently been invited to go on the BIGGA Delegation, sponsored by Bernhards, to travel to Orlando in February. Come on! It was the first time I sent back the card that was in the magazine, so if you have been sceptical before maybe next year you should give it a go.

Y'all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year now, Y'Hear!

Phone me on 07939 104701 if you want.

Dennis Tweddell

Central

The Section AGM was held at the conference facilities at Elmwood Golf Course, on October 27, when 20 members (out of a membership of 240) made the effort to attend and we were treated to three excellent presentations prior to the AGM by Tim Earley, from Waste 2 Water, Fiona Miller, from The Scottish Golf Environment Group, and Douglas Shearer, from Elmwood College, due to the interest shown in each speaker the timetable for the day went completely out of the window.

Nevertheless a very constructive meeting took place when many issues were discussed and answers given to numerous questions put to the committee, answers to the questions unanswered will be sought from those who know. I won't tell you what the questions were because you should have been at the meeting to find out!

Following the meeting, Course Manager, Andrew Mellon, took us on a tour of his excellent newly constructed facilities, if you wish to visit them just get in touch with Andrew and he will be more than happy for you to visit, it would certainly be worthwhile to take a member of your club committee with you just to let them see what should be provided for golf course staff, especially to keep within the Health and Safety Legislations which are coming at us thick and fast these days.

Anyway, I know you are all dying to know who your new committee are for the next year, so, are you sitting comfortably, then I'll begin!

Chairman, Stuart Cruickshank, Deer Park Golf & Country Club; Vice Chairman, Deek Scott, Scoonie Golf Course; Past Chairman, Andy O'Hara, Leven Links;

Committee, Archie Dunn, Auchterarder Golf Club; Ian MacMillan, Murrayshall Hotel & Golf Course; Andrew Mellon, Elmwood Golf Course and Euan Grant, St. Andrews Links; Patron's Representative, Kevin Brunton, Greentech Sportsturf; Corporate member, J. Finlayson, Scotlube; Secretary/Treasurer, yes you're stuck with me again, John Crawford, Stirling Golf Club.

As this is the final report for this year I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us this year, i.e. the Patron's of the Scottish Region, the numerous golf clubs for the courtesy of their facilities, the Section Committee and those members who supported our events, to those of you who didn't, thanks anyway for being part of The Association!

Awrabestfurtwathoosanananive.

John Crawford

North

Only one new member to report this month and this is Simon Donald who is an apprentice at Peterhead Golf Club. Welcome to the Section Simon.

The AGM was held at the Links in Aberdeen on October 14 and Dougal Duguid and Stuart McBain stood down from the committee. Our thanks go to these guys for all their