



News from the Chief Executive

Another Open Championship comes and goes and with it the stark realisation that July is nearly over and the golfing season is steadily marching on. Congratulations must go to the R&A for their smooth running of this great Championship and also to Gordon Moir, Euan Grant and their team for presenting the course in such wonderful condition. My thanks also go to the members of the BIGGA Open Support Team, who were in action for the four competition days, they represented the Association very well and I know gained a lot from the experience.

Places on the team are always a point of contention with applications usually exceeding availability by two to three times. The team is selected as fairly as possible and comprises of a dependable core drawn from those who have been to The Open before and therefore know what to expect and just as importantly we know that this group can be relied upon. They are topped up by a number of 'Open novices', many of whom will never have experienced Championship golf at this level, let alone find themselves within a few feet of some of the world's greatest golfers, which in itself can be a daunting prospect.

For most The Open is more than about raking bunkers following errant golf shots, its also about meeting new colleagues, exchanging views, sharing problems and perhaps the chance to talk with the resident greenkeeping team about the venue and competition preparation. Anyone interested in being considered for Royal Liverpool in July 2006 should contact Scott MacCallum at HQ.

Many of you will have read Trevor Ledger's article on Harrogate in his latest publication in which he 'poses' thoughts about the management of this Association and in particular how staff may be 'living it up' at the Majestic Hotel during BTME at the members' expense. I have received many, many calls and emails of support from those members who know the staff better and I thank them for their concern. If there are any of you who wish to discuss any aspect of his writings then I invite you to contact me. I believe in open government and in fact there is, and always has been, a standing invitation to members to visit Headquarters and see for themselves what is being done for the benefit of not just its members but also for greenkeeping as a whole.

Plans for Harrogate Week in January 2006 continue to progress and it is intended that we host an Open Day on August 18 at Harrogate International Centre in order to explain developments to current and potential exhibitors. If any members would like to come along then please contact Pauline Thompson or Sami Collins at HQ by Friday August 12, so that catering arrangements can be made, additionally there are a limited number of free parking facilities.

In the near future we are looking to set up an email based regular information service to members and if you would like to be included can you please send an email to Rachael (rachael_p@bigga.co.uk) or Gemma (gemma@bigga.co.uk) in our Membership Office so that we can capture your details.

Finally I would like to wish Tony Cocker, the Association's Accountant at HQ, a speedy recovery. Tony has recently undergone surgery for a knee problem and is expected to be off work for about six weeks.

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

East

I write to advise you that after many years' loyal service Chris Yeaman has decided to retire! However, before you all rush your CV's off to West Linton Golf Club, I can assure you that the only retirement Chris is planning is from writing this column. A big thank you to Chris for all his efforts over the years, and I will endeavour to keep the flag flying on the Section's behalf.

On returning to Scotland in 1992, after many years' absence, I was frankly appalled at the poor facilities used by greens staff, many of which did not meet basic Health & Safety standards. During the intervening years this is no longer the case, with quality Greenkeeper Compounds now the rule rather than the exception. The latest to get new facilities is Cardrona, which at the time of writing is almost complete.

On the move in April was Alan Campbell, formerly of Eyemouth Golf Club, to Jedburgh Golf Club. Alan takes over at an exciting time, with maintenance of the existing 9 holes and growing in of a new 9. The course designer at Jedburgh is Alistair Connell and the contractor is Souters of Stirling. Another gentleman on the move is Brian Sharp, the Deputy Course Manager at the Roxburghe, who takes over the role of Head Greenkeeper at Westerhope, which is not far from Newcastle Airport.

Finally, Monksford House, which was once owned by David Murray, is currently for sale, and includes a top quality 9 hole course. So, if any of you have a spare few million, it would be worth putting an offer in.

Any news please call me on 07831 855182 or email: info@thorntreesamenity.co.uk.

Mike Dooner

NORTHERN REGION

North West

Well on the day of writing it was the final day of the greatest tennis tournament, with Roger Federer winning once again, so next was the greatest golf tournament at St Andrews, the home of golf. I am sure that those of you lucky enough to have been chosen for the Support Team enjoyed your week.

One member of the N/W Section who has already taken his holidays, and I am sure enjoyed himself, is Steve Johnson, Wilmslow GC, who has just married Jennifer Callwood. They have taken off to Thailand for a three week honeymoon. Good luck to you both.

Neil Atkinson, a Section member who works for John Greasley, tells me that a new course near Crewe has just opened, called Gorstly Hill GC. Perhaps some of you Cheshire lads might like to try it out. I have just recently attended the Regional Board and the Board of Management meeting at HQ and at both meetings Education has been discussed. The Education fund, which is financed by the Gold and Silver Key Companies and also from BIGGA funds, is there to run Regional funds, so why not take advantage of it.

There are many courses available of one and two days, for example Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting, Computer skills, Risk