



News from the Chief Executive

Plans for BTME & ClubHouse progress with the event approaching at an alarming rate. It seems no time at all since it was April and we were planning the education programme and discussing our marketing strategy with the steering committee.

In June we agreed to host the annual International Summit on Friday January 21 and delegate response to this has been excellent. Demand for space is encouraging, with several exhibitors coming to the show for the first time and others looking to expand their space. Bookings for the extended workshop and seminar packages on offer exceed numbers at the corresponding time last year and the Association feels that it is heading in the right direction.

The event, which provides a vital source of income for the Association, continues to grow as we dedicate more resources and invest more and more time and money in it, in an attempt to secure its future well being.

The management team at Aldwark is conscious that the exhibition is not just about making money for BIGGA or providing subsidised education for its members. It has to work as a showcase for the industry where traditional golf course equipment, machinery and maintenance products can be successfully marketed alongside innovative products to an increasingly discerning buyer.

A buyer who is expected to produce a higher and higher standard of facility while at the same time seeing his or her budget being constantly put under pressure. Latterly the rumblings on the horizon by some of the trade regarding the cost of supporting principally two shows, Saltex and our own, has become a black cloud over the future of both these events. Many of the major machinery manufacturers have indicated they can no longer justify exhibiting at both shows on an annual basis.

Clearly this is cause for concern and we must work with the exhibitors to try to resolve the financial pressures that they are also suffering. The Sales and Marketing staff at these companies are not exempt from the same budgetary restrictions that many Course Managers, Golf Club Secretaries and Chairmen of Green experience.

How we will resolve the matter remains to be seen. Many exhibitors are adamant that they would support an annual show at Harrogate but the logistics of a compromise are difficult to work out. I am sure it will be the subject of much discussion at Harrogate and for some time into 2005. There is one major factor in the whole equation that must not be overlooked and that is the visitor.

All too often we see the same faces at Harrogate, these are the dedicated keen members who take a pride in being a part of what has grown to be a key organisation in the world of golf. What do we have to do to get your colleagues along, if only for a day? Perhaps someone might like to respond via the bulletin board or e-mail me, at john@bigga.co.uk, Sensible suggestions only please!

At a time when all involved in the industry are working more closely together than ever before the clock is in danger of being turned back through lack of funding.

In the past the trade have been very supportive of the Association and this must neither be overlooked nor taken for granted and much of BIGGA's progress and development would not have been possible but for their help. I hope that the excellent working relationship that exists between the trade and the Association can result in a solution being found that favours all parties.

On a more positive note, I would like to congratulate Scott MacCallum on winning the 'Writing' category in the recent Communications in Business annual competition for journalists.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during 2005.

John Pemberton



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SCOTTISH REGION

Annual Conference, Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline.

On Tuesday March 1 2005 BIGGA Scottish Region returns once more to the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, for their Annual Conference.

This year the Scottish Region have speakers from all sides of the industry coming to Dunfermline to provide interesting and relevant topics, which should be of interest to everyone in greenkeeping.

From the ranks of the greenkeepers we have Frank Ainsworth, Course Manager, Hilton Templepatrick GC, and Kenny MacKay, Senior Course Manager, Marriott UK. Other speakers include Jay Dobson, PSD Agronomy, Neil Baldwin, Amega Sciences, Douglas Shearer, Head of Greenkeeping & Horticulture, Elmwood College and Louise Hollingworth, from WRAP.

All the speakers have confirmed their attendance and full details and application forms will be available in the early part of January 2005 and will be posted to all members in the Scottish Region.

The Conference Centre at Lauder College is centrally located and has easy access from the motorway.

Peter J. Boyd Regional Administrator

NORTHERN REGION

Northern

I have to start the year on a sad note with the news of the sudden death of Telford Jarvis. Telford was a regular attendee at all Northern Section golf events and will be very much missed by all. At the Golf Day in December the proceeds of the raffle, amounting to £200, were donated to Telford's family on behalf of all at the Northern Section. I have been asked to pass on a thank you message to everyone who donated on behalf of Telford's wife, Lisa, and son, Roman.

There was a fantastic turnout for the Christmas golf day on December 2, at Crow Nest Golf Club. Yet again we had a great day, and for a refreshing change the weather was fine and dry. The format on the day was a Texas Scramble with eight teams comprising of four players taking part. The winners on the day were Mel Guy, Henry Bechelet, Adrian Hollroyd and Steve Heaton (I know, I couldn't believe that Steve won either). The golf was followed by an excellent meal and a few light liquid refreshments. A massive thanks must go to Rob Gee, his staff and everybody at Crow Nest for the superb course, meal and hospitality.

After the golf the 'rabble' was let loose in Halifax which turned out to be yet another fantastic night and I'm pleased to inform you that the night ended in just one arrest, but no names will be mentioned!

With Christmas out of the way (hope Santa brought you all that you asked for) it's time to wish you all the very best for 2005, I hope it's a successful greenkeeping year for you all. Next month I'll bring you the details for the spring tournament, which we are currently arranging.

Don't forget BTME 2005, 18-20 January.

Adam Speight 07739319060 - 01274 638366

North Wales

Happy New Year and a warm welcome to the 2005 season for the North Wales Section. Firstly from Royal St David's GC the Kerry bros would like to thank Andy Campbell MG on their recent visit to Carden Park and for the hospitality shown to them. Secondly an apology to Richard Shields who won the Bromborough Autumn Tournament Best Gross with a reported 80 was in fact a 78.

Which brings me to the results from our Christmas Tournament, held at the Prestatyn Links GC, with its ever so cleverly repaired greens from the spate of direct vandalism earlier this year. They are as follows: Greenkeepers. 1. Craig Wheeler, Frodsham GC, 42 pts; 2. Alan Kelsall, Portal GC, 40pts; 3. Andy Peel, Bull Bay GC, 40pts; 4. Brian Taylor, Sandiway GC, 39pts; and with local knowledge, 5. Dave Parry, Prestatyn GC, 39pts. Guests. 1. Islyn Luke, also Prestatyn GC; 2. Paul Lowe, Rhuddlan GC. Two Nearest the Pin prizes, sponsored by BATgolf, went to Andy Peel, 60 inches on the 6th, and Dave Parry, 52" on the 11th. The trade trophy was Dave Austin, from Rigby Taylor, 41pts and the Aggregate trophy for the year went to Alun Lewis, Llanynymech.

A total of 76 players took part and our thanks go to Dave Parry and his team for presenting the course in top condition, for the time of year, to the caterers and the bar staff, for our turkey meal, and the committee, for the courtesy of the course, also to the patrons of the North Wales Section, for their continued support. Special thanks also to TACIT for buying everyone a bacon butty and finally to Stuart Yarwood, who collected just under £140 from the raffle with his unique approach selling the raffle tickets, "£3 for 3 strips," instead of the usual £1 per strip!

We welcome Carl Crocher, from Caldly GC, on to the committee, Carl, who was associated with his former Section in Kent, will help out with all the issues covering North Wales, and one item we discussed was sorting out a race night out at the Chester racecourse, including a meal for later on this year.

Some dates for your calendar this year are: Jan 18 - 20, BTME Harrogate; Feb 22, Spring combined seminar, at Mere G&CC; April 5, North Wales Vs North West, at Wilmslow GC, give us a call if you would like to play; May 25, Spring Tournament, at Upton by Chester GC; July 14 - 17, Open Championship at St Andrews; July/Aug, will