



News from the Chief Executive

Congratulations to Craig Gilholm and his team at Royal Liverpool for a very successful Open Championship. The pressure was certainly on him, although you would never have known that when talking to him! I am sure you will agree that the course was a good showcase to the golfing community and clearly demonstrated that courses do not have to be green and lush to be of the highest quality. This Open must surely have played into the hands of the R&A and helped them get across the message regarding their pursuit of 'Best practice'. Congratulations and thanks are also due to the members of the BIGGA Support Team that were in action at Hoylake. They were certainly far more involved than in previous years and their contribution to the success of the event was appreciated by the R&A.

As promised I tried to resolve the issue of entry to the Open for BIGGA greenkeeper members, however my contacts were all preoccupied with the tournament and it was agreed that I would meet up with them in September for a general de-brief.

After much deliberation the Board has decided to apply for membership of the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations (FEGGA). As a member of FEGGA we can develop much more interaction with the other greenkeeping associations within Europe and as FEGGA grows in stature, it should develop the due recognition that it deserves, and will need, in order to represent the industry on a pan-European basis. Much closer to home we continue to investigate the development of working partnerships with other bodies, the latest being the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA). It is hoped that we can form an alliance to develop and promote the activities of both organisations, especially at Harrogate 2007. The absence of the major machinery manufacturers at Harrogate next year is still a cause for concern. They are adamant that they can no longer afford to support two shows every year, however they are keen to continue to provide funding for education and special projects. Regrettably some of the smaller companies are 'sitting on the fence' waiting to see how the show develops and so have not yet rebooked. It's not all bad news though. Many exhibitors continue to support the event and some have taken the opportunity to increase their space allocation, additionally we have recruited some new exhibitors and hope that in the near future we will be in a position to announce a major new name to Harrogate.

Plans for the development of the BIGGA website are well under way and Scott MacCallum has already had meetings with four potential design companies.

Over the coming weeks, my colleagues and I will be taking the opportunity to attend some of the region and section golf events and we look forward to making the most of the opportunity to discuss the affairs of the Association with you. We are always looking at how we can provide a better service to members, if you have any constructive ideas then please share them with us!

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

East

The Scottish National Tournament was held at Leven Links on June 22. I understand the Course Manager Andy O'Hara and his team, presented the course in excellent condition - knowing Andy you wouldn't expect anything else! The only winner from the East Section was Keith Burgon from Goswick GC, who scooped the Apprentice Prize with a score of 78-5-73. Once again the turnout from the East was poor, with only 12 in attendance. Hopefully next year will see an improvement in numbers with our Section acting as hosts. Our thanks go to Peter Boyd and to my old friend Neil Mitchell, for their efforts on the day.

The Scottish Golf Environment Group held their annual awards ceremony at the Westerwood Hotel on June 29. Four Scottish clubs were given the following award SGE Environmental Excellence/Golf Environmental Europe Awards: Ratho Park (East); Coatbridge (West); Macdonald Cardrona Hotel Golf and Country Club (East); Brighthouse Bay (Dumfries and Galloway).

We have two members on the move this month with the Deputy at Ratho Park, Gordon McRae, moving to Leven Links to work as Deputy to Andy O'Hara. Moving to Ratho to take over the Deputy's position is Billy Hudson, who has recently been working as Headman at Whitehill House GC in Rosewell.

Finally, Musselburgh GC held their first pre-open qualifier on July 5. The course came in for rave reviews from both R&A officials and competitors alike, which is a credit to all the hard work put in by Tom Shepherd and his team. Due to a delay caused by lightning and a play off involving 10 competitors, play did not finish until 9pm. This made it a long day for greenstaff who had started at 5am!

Until next month.

Mike Dooner

North

How's it going fellow greenkeepers? The weather is improving with some decent sunshine and rain to give the golf course some much-needed growth. I don't know about anyone else but the early part of June was still pretty cold and I would say that the growth was about three to four weeks behind last year.

The Scottish Championships at Leven GC went well, with some good scores on the day. In the main it was good weather and the golf course was a credit to Andy O'Hara and his staff, it was in excellent condition throughout. It's never easy when your peers turn up and look at your work but the course was congratulated by many on its condition (great bunkering by the way). The Scottish Champion for this year is Brian Heggie, from Piper Dam GC, who scored an excellent 69 points.

The Open Championship will have come and gone by the time you read this but I would like to pass on belated good wishes to Craig Gilholm and his team for their first Open Championship. Enjoy the experience and make those guys suffer on the links.

Murcar GC will have hosted a Challenge Tour event in early July, so I will mention how it went in the next issue.

I spoke to Bob Mackay at Aviemore again and he mentioned some severe vandalism that had been done to his second and 18th green and some areas on a fairway and practice tee. This was generally obscenities written in three foot high letters, across the main part of the green, which