



Welcome

SOME OF FOOTBALL'S PROFILE PLEASE!

Every two years I tend to question the decision my wife and I took some 16 years ago to move south for what at the time appeared better career prospects. Why every two years?

Well, I supposed I can trace it back to 1996 when "Football came Home", with the European Championships being played in the country I now call home. The excitement was palpable in every street, in every town. England were going to become European Champions! They played well but lost out on penalties in the semis.

Every two years since, England have been going to become World or European Champions on alternate two year cycles and the hype has grown and grown.

Now, we're there again and England, with or without Wayne, are going to become World Champions and everywhere you go you see cars festooned in St George flags, posters in windows and potbellied people wearing three lions on their shirt. Indeed you have to fight your way past St George inflatable hammers, fridges, frisbees, tee shirts and mugs to buy a tin of beans in the supermarket.

I often ask if I can buy a Scotland mini fridge or Scotland underpants to be met with a condescending smile from the shop assistant. Don't get me wrong, I'll admit there is a large amount of jealousy there, even if my own team has turned a corner and recently came home with some silverware, the prestigious Kirin Cup - "Scotland Win Trophy Shock". I just can't help feeling it's a little overdone and expectations are inflated to the extent that if England don't win - and only once have they not come up short - it must be someone's fault. A dodgy referee; the Hand of God; managerial incompetence; the lottery of a penalty shootout. Would it be heresy to admit that the opposition were just superior?

Having said all of the above wouldn't it be great if, just occasionally, golf could attract such an overwhelming place in the consciousness of the populous? Let's face it cricket managed it last year with the Ashes. If a new British golfing superstar were to emerge from an inner city housing estate and capture the hearts of the nation, golf would become hip overnight. At one fell swoop we would see kids swinging golf clubs in parks and putting along the pavements while posters of the new golfing hero would appear in the bedrooms of boys and girls alike.

Something similar did happen in the late '70s and early '80s with Seve Ballesteros, who was quickly followed by Bernhard Langer, Sandy Lyle, Nick Faldo and Ian Woosnam who won Majors and Ryder Cups. On the back of it came a huge golf explosion but that was over 20 years ago.

We could do with another popularity injection and for your clubs to have new golfers battering at the door demanding memberships. I'm sure there is much you could do with the larger budgets which would surely come your way.

I hope all BIGGA's English members enjoy the World Cup, but please remember the rest of us!

Scott MacCallum, Editor

NEW ASSISTANT EDITOR AT BIGGA

Melissa Toombs has joined BIGGA as Greenkeeper International's new Assistant Editor.

A graduate of the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, Melissa has a degree in Media Studies having previously studied at the University of Kent, in Canterbury, where she gained an HND in Media Production. Prior to this, she also achieved an Advanced GNVQ in Media Communications and an A Level in Sociology, at Canterbury College.

Melissa spent her formative years in Newington, near Sittingbourne, in Kent, having been born a little further north in Kettering.

Her journalistic career began at the Kent Regional Newspaper Group, where, among other things, she wrote theatre and travel reviews as well as covering football and cricket matches. Among her illustrious interviewees have been actor, Hugh Laurie, and actress, Brenda Blethyn,

She moved to Yorkshire recently with her boyfriend, Richard, himself a Sports Journalist, who joined the Press Association, in Howden.

A gym addict, Melissa is also a keen film goer and follower of current affairs.

"I'm delighted to be joining BIGGA and Greenkeeper International where I look forward to expanding my knowledge of golf and meeting many of the BIGGA members," said Melissa.



TURF GROWERS TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO ADDRESS WATER SHORTAGE

Members of the Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) have united to address the drought problems which are likely to affect, not only themselves, but their customers too.

The association has formed a steering group to call for an exemption from any hosepipe ban for newly laid turf and to look at practical steps it can take to protect growers and reassure end-users.

"Although there are no current restrictions on water usage other than in the South-East, we recognise that water shortage is an issue which will affect everyone involved in the turf industry in the future. That's why we're taking proactive steps now to address it," commented TGA Chairman Stephen

Edwards. "In the short term, we're looking into the use of recycled water and water-retentive soil conditioners. In the longer term, growers are working with leading seed companies in the development of new, drought-resistant turf grasses which require less water both at the time of planting and throughout the life of the turfed area."

In the meantime, TGA members will be supporting and advising gardeners, landscapers, sportsturf managers and contractors who are buying and laying turf. A 10-point guide to choosing, storing and laying turf in dry weather is now available on the TGA website at www.turfgrass.co.uk.

NEW RECRUIT IN SALES



Marketing and exhibition professional, Lisa Rayson, has been contracted by BIGGA to work on Harrogate Week 2007.

Lisa, who has previously worked with Dunlop Slazenger, Nike and

Riley Snooker in the sports sector, is working within the existing sales team whose focus is to bring a new and broader appeal to the marketing and selling of BTME, Clubhouse and Continue to Learn.

"The strategy for 2007 is to bring a fresh impetus to Harrogate Week with a view to increasing the audience and exhibitor reach to include generic turf, sports and amenities alongside the traditional core interest of golf greenkeeping."

Lisa was inspired to work on behalf of the Association, by the desire to help develop an even greater awareness of the levels of professionalism, required in amenity turf management.

"The education programme, Continue To Learn, brings professionals together to create a forum of mutual respect. The exhibition is the UK's premier Turf Professional and Sports Club Management event and in 2007 we are broadening the product and service interests for a wider appeal to visitors and exhibitors at what is already a highly successful show," said Lisa.