



News from the Chief Executive

Congratulations to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America for organising such an excellent conference and exhibition in Atlanta, despite all the trials and tribulations that they faced in 2005. The BIGGA Stand continues to attract a lot of interest each year and on this occasion it was visited by many of our American members, together with a great number of American Superintendents who are keen to enrol on the Master Greenkeeper programme.

Once again Bernhard and Co sponsored 10 BIGGA members to attend the event and I am sure that the delegates found the experience invaluable.

The GCSAA hosted this years International Summit that was attended by representatives from a great number of countries. Over the last 15 months a focus group, of which BIGGA is a member, has been working on universal policies in respect of environmental management and also the role and responsibilities of a Course Manager. These were put before the Summit and were unanimously adopted. A copy of these will be available in the near future from BIGGA Headquarters and from the Association's website.

It seems that BIGGA is being evicted from its offices at Aldwark, or so the rumours would have you believe. I was questioned about the Association's future recently and I can assure members that BIGGA HOUSE can remain the Headquarters for as long as the Association chooses, or at least until the expiry of its 999 year lease on the land!

It is a matter of fact however that Marston Hotels have approached the Association with a view to buying BIGGA HOUSE for its own use and this is clearly where the story has gone astray. I am in the process of looking at the alternatives and will report to the Board in due course.

Plans for Harrogate Week 2007 are already underway and we have received a significant amount of support from exhibitors. Sadly the major machinery manufacturers have chosen not to return in 2007, however at this stage we have no intention of closing any of the halls. There are a number of companies looking to increase their floor space that may require their relocation and we have received a number of enquiries from new companies wishing to exhibit.

Over the coming weeks Ken Richardson and I will be having meetings with the other bodies in golf to establish the basis of the education programme for Harrogate Week 2007. I hope that when the time comes the Association can rely upon the support of its members.

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

Ayrshire

I hope you are all in fine fettle and have made good progress on your winter repair work.

I've been made aware of five new members to our Section. They are Richard Davis, Brighthouse Bay, Andrew Kirk, Brighthouse Bay, Ian Gray, Belleisle, Kenneth Gilroy, Shiskine, Steven Knaggs, Dumfries & County. So a warm welcome to you and hope to see you at Southernness in the spring. No pressure!

As mentioned, our spring outing will be played at Southernness Golf Club on Tuesday April 25. Times are reserved from 11am. I don't think it will be too difficult to keep our recent good turnouts for the outings as Southernness is regarded as one of the best courses the West of Scotland has to offer. See ya there!

It would be remiss of me not to mention the great news for Ayrshire as The Open returns to Turnberry in 2009. The Ailsa Course has undergone a bit of toughening up in January and February with 19 new bunkers added and a further 11 planned later in the year. There will be a couple of holes reshaped and around six new championship tees to be built also. So exciting times ahead for Ayrshire greenkeeping!

Oh! I nearly forgot to say, I hope those who travelled to Harrogate enjoyed themselves and didn't get filled up on marshmallows! Yes that's an inside joke!

Any news, call me on 07939104701.

Denis Tweddell

East

I start this month's report on a sad note by reporting the death of Ralph Bullock in January, he was 77. During his career, Ralph spent time as Head Greenkeeper at both Barnburgh Castle and Seahouses Golf Courses finally retiring in 1993. During his retirement years he still found time to tend the lawns on a part time basis at Ladykirk Estates at Berwick upon Tweed. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family at this sad time.

For those of you who have not yet received Kevin's newsletter, the fixtures for 2006 are as follows. Spring Outing - Dunbar Golf Club, April 25; Willie Woods - Haddington Golf Club, August 23; Autumn Outing - Glencorse Golf Club, September 27.

This year marks a first for Musselburgh Golf Club with their appointment as a regional qualifying course for The British Open. The key date when all roads lead to Monktonhall is Wednesday July 5. In preparation, Course Manager, Tom Shepherd, and his team have carried out various improvements, which include two new championship tees.

The Scottish Golf Environmental Group acting on behalf of WRAP (The Water and Resources Action Programme) are currently involved in field trials concerning the use of recycled glass sand. The main trials are being conducted at Elmwood College, with various golf courses throughout Scotland also involved. The trials in the East Section area are being carried out at Ratho Park.

The overall trials, which will run until the summer of 2006, will test the use of glass sand in rootzone, bunker sand, divot mix, top dressing and astroturf path surfacing. At Ratho Park this involved the practice bunker, divot mix and top dressing. The results of the trial will be published later this year.

The news hot off the press this month is the appointment of Stewart Duff as Course Manager at Gullane Golf Club. A former deputy to Paul Seago, he has spent the past five years as head man on a course in County Sligo. Stewart commences his new role in early May of this year.

Finally, I trust everyone enjoyed their time at Harrogate, and like me are looking forward to next year already.

Until next month

Mike Dooner

North

Christmas and New Year seem a distant memory now. January must have been one of the driest for a long time with very little rainfall or snow to speak of. The predicted cold spell hasn't materialised yet but I'd better not tempt fate as we'll probably get the snow and ice in March/April when were looking for warmer weather.

Harrogate went as smoothly as ever I am told, as I wasn't there this year. The Seminar and debate on the Fescue issues was very well attended and there were some lively discussions on a very emotive subject. Lets get some more discussions