



News from the Chief Executive

Upon my return from two weeks holiday I realised how the days suddenly seem to be growing shorter and any prospect of 'a few holes' after work is no longer an option. It seems only yesterday that I was writing about looking forward to playing more golf in the forthcoming season, getting better value for my subscription investment by playing more often and perhaps clipping a shot or two off my handicap, all ambitions that were never fulfilled! Like so many golfers today I am finding it more and more difficult to justify regularly spending at least half a day on either Saturday or Sunday away from home. This, coupled with the rising cost of golf membership, is perhaps symptomatic of some of the problems in golf generally. We discuss sustainability of grass species and playing conditions however, I do sometimes wonder at the sustainability of the number of golfing facilities that exist today.

This year has been as difficult, if not more difficult in some areas, as can be recalled in recent times. Lack of rain and restrictions on water usage have created undue pressure on greenkeepers as the quest for improved performance by many golf clubs continues. Somewhere in all of this I personally cannot help but feel that there is a wake-up call for many average clubs, members clubs in particular. Just what the answer is I am not sure however, over the coming years I can see severe financial pressure being a real threat to the existence of some facilities, or perhaps my interpretation of trends is wildly wrong!

On a more positive note I hope that you have all taken time to study the 'Continue to Learn' brochure for Harrogate 2007 that contains an unprecedented choice of Workshops and Seminars. Some workshops are already 50% booked, so if you have a specific preference then I urge you not to delay your booking form any longer than necessary. The exhibition for 2007 will occupy Halls A, B, C, and M and at the time of writing there is only a very small amount of space left to sell. There will be a number of new exhibitors and a detailed preview will appear in next month's Greenkeeper International. In the meantime further details of the event can be found on the Harrogate Week website: www.harrogateweek.org.uk.

The National Tournament, early in October, produced a worthy champion in Tony McLure and my congratulations go to him. My thanks go to the other competitors for supporting the event, to the members and Committee at Burton on Trent GC - who were excellent hosts and to Gavin Robson and his staff for the presentation of the course. In addition I would like to acknowledge the generous financial support of Ransomes Jacobsen, without which the event would not have been viable.

Development work has already commenced on the redesign of the Association's website following the appointment of a new design team. The new site will incorporate many of the suggestions that have been made by members and is due to be launched in January at Harrogate Week. The new format will give Headquarter's staff full control of content management meaning that it will be far easier and much more cost effective to keep the data up to date.

During the coming weeks I will be attending the Regional conferences and I look forward to meeting as many members as possible.

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

Harrogate Week 2007

The Scottish Region once again offers their members a subsidised package deal for Harrogate Week 2007.

The Package includes: Entry to Continue to Learn Seminars (seven in total); three nights Bed and Breakfast in en-suite twin rooms on 23rd, 24th and 25th January, 2007 in the Holiday Inn, Harrogate, (formerly Moat House Hotel). Package cost: £261.00. Accommodation package only: £156.00.

To obtain booking forms contact the Regional Administrator, Peter J. Boyd on: 0141 616 3440 or 07776 2422120 or email: pj.boyd@btinternet.com

Ayrshire

The autumn meeting and final leg of the Harry Diamond Trophy was contested over Western Gailes GC. Although not present on the day myself, I have it on good authority that Jim Devlin and his staff had the links in first class order. On behalf of the Ayrshire Section I would also like to thank the Captain and committee at Western Gailes for allowing us courtesy of such a prestigious course. Likewise to all bar and catering staff for their friendly service on the day. We had another excellent turn out with 35 players taking part. The results were as follows: Harry Diamond Trophy - Duncan Gray, 62pts (better 2nd round); 1.1 J McLachlan, St. Nicholas; 1.2 G Morrison, Largs Kelburn; 1.3 S Higgins, Ardeer; 1.4 J Mair, Hamilton; 2.1 M Green, Ballochmyle; 2.2 D Gray, Pines; 2.3 J Wilson, Ballochmyle; 2.4 J Wilson Bogsides and Trade Prize - D Duthie, Richard Aitken.

The AGM will have taken place by the time you get this, so I will pass on any slightly interesting information next month. Honest!

Lastly, our match versus the N. Ireland Greenkeepers will have been decided on Friday, October 20. I will let you know most of the gory details of this 24-man thriller next time! Ta ra for now!

Denis Tweddell

Email: denis.t@hotmail.co.uk or: 07939104701

East

I start this month's report with a question - which would you prefer, a feast or a famine? Well, judging by the news and views, which have been pouring in from all quarters during the past week, the former is the resounding winner!

The Greenwood family from North Berwick are very much in the news this month with Stuart being appointed Scottish Chairman of BIGGA. He takes over the chair from Ian Barr of Largs GC, who has carried out his duties in exemplary fashion during the past two years. I also understand from a reliable source that Stuart is due to be appointed captain at Kilspindie GC, which all in all should make for an extremely busy 2007.

Not to be outdone on the news front, Stuart's daughter Fiona has just returned from Kenya where she spent six weeks doing voluntary work. During her time there she and her fellow volunteers helped complete the children's refuge centre in the town of Embu. The centre runs various pastimes for the many street children in this poverty stricken part of Kenya, including craftwork and sport. The trip was rounded off by climbing to the summit of Mount Kenya, Africa's second highest mountain at 17500 feet.

Finally, Fiona would like to thank everyone who helped make this trip possible with their kind support.

On Wednesday, September 27, the Section held their autumn outing at Glencorse GC, where, thankfully, good weather prevailed on the day.