

February 2005; Harrogate 2005 Review; Meet the Chairman; Environmental Competition; Tyres; Coombe Hill GC

March 2005; Alwoodley GC; Difficult Areas; Drainage; Irrigation; Greens

April 2005; Augusta Syndrome; Thornhill GC; Difficult Areas Part 2; Turf Tonics; BIGGA Delegation; Fescue Grass

May 2005; Hellidon Lakes; Power Mowers; Pest Control; Cutting Heights Survey; Nozzles

June 2005; Minchinhampton GC; Aeration; Rigby Taylor Profile; Chemical Useage; Top Dressing; Jim Arthur Tribute

July 2005; Loch Lomond GC; St. Andrews; Mini Excavators; Disease; Finance; Scholarship

August 2005; Ramsey GC; Open Review; Quad Bikes; Top Dressing; BIGGA Golf Day; Anthracnose; National Championship Preview

September 2005; John O'Gaunt GC; Drainage Special; Security; Student of the Year; Massey Ferguson Profile

October 2005; Laleham GC; Dollar Spot; Utility Vehicles; Bio Oil; Pneumatic Fracturing; Best Practice

November 2005; Chipping Norton GC; National Championship; Course Construction; Fertilisers; Servicing

December 2005; Harrogate Week Preview; BIGGA Delegation; Environmental Competition; Fescue Debate; Irrigation

January 2006; Bearwood Lakes GC; Course Furniture; Nicklaus Design; Seed; Alternative Fuel; Disease Survey

February 2006; Cold Ashby GC; Netting; Chemical Fertilisers; Turf Construction

March 2006; Seed; Ride-on Mowers; Pesticides; Irrigation; Bio Stimulants

April 2006; R&A Conference Report; Sconnie GC Profile; GCSAA Delegation Report; Wastewater

May 2006; Stock Brook GC Profile; Spraying; Aeration; Line Marking; Growth Retardants

June 2006; Disturbance Theory; Hand Tools; Surveying; Thatch/Scarification; Drought

July 2006; Hoylake Profile; Difficult Areas; Japanese Course Management; Top Dressing; Askernish Project

August 2006; Open Championship Review; Drainage; Burton GC Profile; Sustainability; Japan; ATVs; Trailers

September 2006; Building an Irrigation Lake; Toro Student of the Year Preview; Artificial Surfaces; Algae

October 2006; Trevoze GC Profile; Aeration; Utility Vehicles; Open Aftermath; Grinding Equipment

November 2006; National Championship; BIGGA Photographic Exhibition; Drainage Explained; Greens Brushing

December 2006; BIGGA Environment Competition Results; Harrogate Week Preview; Work Wear; Paths; Tyres

January 2007; Turfgrass training; Harrogate Week Preview; Grass selection; Think Ergonomically; Petrol complying; Marvellous Mowers; BIGGA in the USA

February 2007; Happy Harrogate; A Hand on the Controls; Pedestrian Mowers; Sustainable Solutions; Sunningdale Ladies GC Profile; No Introduction Necessary; Keeping it Green.

March 2007; Brighouse Bay GC Profile; Landscaping Supplement; Organic Fertilisers; Greens Triples; Waste & Recycling; Bunker Building; Turf: A Growing Concern; Every Drop Counts.

Chairman's Column



Where Does the Time Go?



Where does the time go? I was waiting for my daughter, Summer, at school yesterday and my phone started ringing its head off. It was BIGGA HOUSE. "Hi Billy. How are you?" I'm very well, young lady," I replied. We exchanged a few pleasantries then, Melissa Toombs, our Assistant Editor, said, "This is just a reminder that we haven't received your Chairman's column for next month's magazine." "Ooh," I said. "What's the absolute deadline for it then." Hoping she would say something like, "Next week, or you have loads of time, Billy," "Friday." she said. "Ooh. Is it now," I replied, "Yes," she said. "Will that be ok, Billy?" What I wanted to say was not for this magazine and will be confined to my head but I'm sure you have an idea of what was on the shortlist of replies that I could have used, but instead I said, "No problem, young lady. "I'm sure that will be just fine and you will have it on Friday."

So here we are again and yes the time does fly, unlike when I was a young lad waiting for something to happen. You know, like a birthday, or something special like a holiday. It always seemed like an age before anything happened and we spent our lives counting days off the calendar.

Then we grow up and become a little wiser, now that's a debate all in itself, and we start planning things out with the short, medium and long term in mind. In some ways the innocence of youth has its attractions, however frustrating those long past days might have seemed at the time.

It's with thoughts to the future that I might dabble for a moment. Like death and taxes there is nothing more sure than we all will become older and, yes, end our exciting lives in the world of greenkeeping and the daily thrust of the wonderful life of producing a golfing experience for our members and guests at our own golf clubs.

So, have we planned for that time in our life when we have the freedom to take on a new challenge of something new? Well, I see some who have mastered the art of planning and securing something for the future and then, on the other hand, I see those who have found themselves in a position considerably less well off compared with the lifestyle they have enjoyed during their working life.

It's important to put things into context here. We have evolved from a history of poor wages and living in a tied house as the norm, at golf courses associated with high end value property areas. In the most part, we couldn't have dreamed of living, never mind renting or owning, a property there. So what's the problem you might ask? Well, it's kind of like me getting that call from Melissa.

Just as you feel happy comfortable and safe, something unexpected which we haven't thought of or planned for, will come along and take a huge bite out of your bum and put you in a position of having to do something about it before its too late.

In this case for me it was just a few words, but for us all as a whole it's an important development in our lives that needs to be planned for. So I urge you all to be wise and at least give some consideration over the coming years about your future beyond Greenkeeping.

We live in an ever changing world. The days of good pensions have, in my opinion, gone for the masses and become a minority sport for those executives and the very top of the food chain. So what is the answer? Well, I am, as you know, not qualified or so clever enough to give you that advice. However, I'm sure that there has to be a viable and better way forward for us all. So please explore every avenue possible and engage your employers to take part. Together, I am sure, if well planned, managed, and with joint benefits in mind, there can be a more secure future for everyone concerned.

I made a visit to a local golf club yesterday to have a look at a new irrigation lake being constructed, with a view to doing the same at Tyrrells Wood in the near future. Having just gone through about the worst drought in 30 years here in the south east of England last year, it's becoming very common that we have had to re think water storage issues if we are to be sustainable into the future.

I could talk for hours on that subject and all its ills, but another day I'm sure. The thing is I was in the maintenance base and having a coffee with the staff, who, I must say, made me feel very welcome indeed – which without exception is the case when I meet with other Greenkeepers anywhere I travel, so thank you all for that. I am overwhelmed by the reception I have received as your Chairman.

So, Darren, you asked and here it is young man! Your name in lights take it home and keep it forever. Thanks for the time and, of course, the coffee.

It's time to wind up and open my "E"s - another thing that has changed. Who would have thought, years ago, that you could receive and send letters almost in real time anywhere in the world. Now, that is truly amazing don't you think?

The hardest part of me doing it here at home is getting onto the computer with the kids around, chatting with all their mates. So it has, in my case, become a late night pursuit, having spent a few hours trying to get them into bed - an art I have still to master, I'm afraid.

So where does the time go? Well, I think, mostly where you plan it to go. So have a great month, enjoy every moment along the way, engage with others and secure your future.

Billy McMillan
Chairman