



Welcome

EASY START TO THE YEAR – SOME HOPE!

It's always nice to ease yourself into a new year, shake off the excesses of Christmas, dust off the old new year resolutions ready for another crack at making them stick and make the most of the January sales.

At least from what I remember, it's nice to ease yourself into a new year. Since joining BIGGA that concept has been blown clean out of the water. With Harrogate Week coming in the third week of January each year there is no time for such luxuries and we have to hit the ground of the new year running at full pelt. And this year more than ever!

Since January 1 we have put the finishing touches to, and followed through, with another excellent week in Harrogate; set the wheel in motion for talks with the IOG on a potential strategic merger and, sadly, said goodbye to a Board of Management member.

Everyone was aware of the background to Harrogate Week 2007, and the fact that some of the larger companies had opted not to exhibit, so it's a great delight and relief to report that the whole occasion was a resounding success.

It would be wrong to suggest that the larger companies were not missed, of course they were and we'll be delighted to welcome them back in 2008, but we heard from numerous exhibitors that people were prepared to spend more time on their stands than in previous years and that on many occasions business was conducted.

But right in the middle of the final touches being put into place for Harrogate, a delegation from the BIGGA Board of Management met with a similar group from the IOG to discuss the potential benefits of a strategic merger of the two bodies. A very productive meeting concluded with unanimous agreement on both sides to continue discussions for the benefit of the respective memberships and the sports turf industry as a whole. Obviously no decisions will be taken without full consultation with members, and if nothing ultimately comes from it at least the concept will have been explored, but both sides will be looking into the future with open minds and that can never be a bad thing.

Let's just wait and see how things proceed.

Harrogate Week started with sorrow in the hearts of quite a number of visitors when news reached us of the death, in his prime, of Board of Management member, Raymond Day. Raymond was Course Manager at East Sussex National Golf Club and a BIGGA man through and through.

I had the pleasure of playing golf with him at our annual golf day last year, just before his illness was diagnosed, and although, much to his dismay, my golf didn't come close to matching the standard of the 2 handicapper, he carried the team manfully – if not quietly – and we had a super day. Little did I know then that it would be the last time I would see him.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

JOINING FORCES

Eagle and Planette, have joined forces to become the largest supplier of guides to golf clubs throughout the UK and Europe.

The driving force at Eagle and Planette, Phil McInley and Brian Winteridge, are determined to reinforce their already strong market position by delivering even better value, and offering a wider range of marketing tools and income generating opportunities for golf clubs. Phil McInley, MD of Eagle, explains their thinking: "Planette is a strong brand name in this sector. Eagle deals largely with clubs and club secretaries, so combining with Brian and his company creates new opportunities for us in the club professional sector where Planette is widely respected for its course guides. Similarly, Planette's customers will now have greater access to Eagle's market-leading range of club and course signage, scorecards, green fee tickets, bag tags and other marketing and course accessories.



This synergy will be an ideal platform on which to expand the Eagle brand throughout 2007."

BIGGA AND IOG EXPLORE STRATEGIC MERGER



Geoff Webb IOG Chief Executive (left) and John Pemberton BIGGA Chief Executive (right).

On Thursday the 18th of January representatives of the boards from the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) convened and The Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) unanimously agreed to explore in depth the possibilities and potential of a strategic merger for the wider benefit of their members and the Sports Turf Industry.

John Pemberton, BIGGA Chief Executive, commented, "The potential unification of BIGGA and The IOG presents a major opportunity for the turf management industry to influence the future both commercially and politically for the benefit of all members."

Geoff Webb, IOG Chief Executive, commented, "this agreement is an opportunity for the membership of both organisations and for the unification of the Industry in general."

BIGGA'S NEW WEBSITE GOES LIVE AT HARROGATE

BIGGA's revamped Website – bigga.org – went live during Harrogate Week. The interactive site, with full content management capabilities, will offer BIGGA members many more tools and facilities and be updated on a much more regular basis.

Designed by York-based company Stone Soup, the website includes a calculation function enabling greenkeepers to work out sizes and quantities for tasks they are about to do; weather forecasting; downloadable job descriptions while the new bulletin board will accept images giving greenkeepers, for example, the opportunity to display and seek advice on diseased turf.



"We are delighted with the new site and feel sure that BIGGA members will benefit immensely from the tools and functions it carries. With full content management we will be able to keep it up to date on a much more frequent basis than in the past and we would urge people, who do not already do so, to bookmark it and visit regularly," said BIGGA Communication Manager, Scott MacCallum.