



## News from the Chief Executive

Welcome to 2007 and I wish all members of the Association a healthy and stress free year. The unsung heroes of 2006 were the volunteers who served on National, Region and Section committees and without whose devotion to duty the Association could not have functioned. The membership owe them a vote of thanks and I hope that as we move into a new year that they will receive the support they deserve and that others will come forward to help. At the AGM later this month there will also be changes to the Board structure. Bert Cross (Northern Region) and Iain Macloed (Scottish Region) will retire and will be replaced by Tony Smith and Archie Dunn. Bert and Iain have represented their Regions admirably and have each contributed to the ongoing success of BIGGA. The other changes include Kerran Daly who retires as Immediate Past Chairman and Kenny Mackay who becomes Vice Chairman elect. Last, but by no means least, I am sorry to learn that Walter Woods has decided not to seek re-election as a Guardian. Walter has been a stalwart supporter of BIGGA and its predecessor for more years than some can remember and his vision, wisdom and enthusiasm at meetings will be sadly missed. I wish Walter well for the future and would like to record my personal thanks to him for his support.

Harrogate Week will soon be upon us all and bookings for education are at record levels. The exhibition halls are fully sold and all we need now are the visitors. Remember that although golf is the central theme it's more than a golf show.

Here are some of the reasons why greenkeepers, groundsmen, golf club officials and buyers should attend:

- Specialist education programme, delivered by acknowledged leaders in their chosen field of expertise and covering a wide variety of topics
- Europe's leading turf and facility management exhibition
- Technical presentations and seminars by exhibitors
- Network with peers from all around the world
- Product launches by exhibitors, the R&A, the AGCS and BIGGA

Everyone should be well aware by now that some well known suppliers will be absent from Harrogate having chosen to realign their marketing strategy. We must not however, overlook the financial support that some of these have given to the Association's projects over the past year. Without their funds then we would not have had an Education and Development Fund, a Scholarship Scheme, an Environmental Competition, a competition for students, a chance for 10 greenkeepers each year to attend the GCSAA show, and so the list goes on. None of these help the Profit & Loss Account bottom line however it does mean that members enjoy benefits that the Association would otherwise not be able to afford.

Opportunities will arise in 2007 for the Association to broaden its horizons and I hope that members will carefully consider initiatives that may from time to time be put forward by the Board of Management. If the Association is to continue to develop the education and recognition for greenkeepers that is deserved then we must all look forward whilst building on the foundations laid down over the years.

Finally I look forward to welcoming Vanessa Depre to BIGGA House on January 15. Vanessa will take over the running of the membership office from Rachael Palmer who left just before Christmas.

**John Pemberton**

### SCOTTISH REGION

#### CENTRAL

As I sit and write these notes, I'm getting ready for a Christmas night out with the lads. I'm looking forward to it, and dreading it at the same time. I hope when I read this in the January magazine it's with fond memories and not regrets. The good old Christmas Nights out are famous for our follies. I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas break, and on behalf of your committee, I wish you all the best for 2007.

I would like to welcome Nicholas Horsefield, Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Crail Golfing Society to the Section. I look forward to meeting you, Nicholas, at a future event.

The evening event with Richard Windows, the local STRI agronomist, saw 18 local members attending - a great turn out on such a very wet and dreary night. It was a very informative evening and we had the opportunity to discuss many topical issues, from sustainability, to frost policies. A good chat in the bar after also. There are many forthcoming events in the diary. Please check the website for further details. We would especially like to hear from greenkeepers who are new to the profession, to discuss what type of training or assistance you would like us to provide for you.

The AGM was the best attended for quite a few years, (28 members) and it was good to see so many taking an interest in the running of the Section.

The new committee is as follows: Derek Scott - Chairman, Euan Grant - Vice-Chairman, Andy O'Hara - Past Chairman, Andrew Mellon - Secretary/Treasurer, Archie Dunn - Board Member; Brian Heggie, Gordon McKie, and Alan Sharp - Greenkeeper Members, Kevin Brunton - Patron Member, and Jim Finlayson - Associate Member. I know that all of these guys will work to represent your best interests and are only too keen to hear from you with any matter you wish the committee to consider.

We have made arrangements for this year's spring and autumn tournaments.

Panmure GC will host the spring, and The Duke's, St Andrews the autumn. I have not played these courses myself yet, but have heard rave reviews from colleagues, and having looked at their splendid websites, I am really looking forward to what I'm sure will be very enjoyable events. We are very fortunate in the Section to have such wonderful courses who are willing to offer us courtesy of them.

Remember, the Association is here to help you, but also needs you to contribute, especially the seasoned experienced members, to enable us to help each other. We all face the same challenges, and I'm sure our combined experiences can help us deal with all of them.

All the best,  
Andrew Mellon  
Secretary

[www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk)

#### EAST

I am writing this report at home, on Sunday, December 3. With conditions outside being horrendous I am prevented from getting my weekend fix of gardening. Oh well, roll on next weekend!

After many years loyal service Paul Black, Headman at Gogarburn is moving to the Elgin area. His wife Georgina is an English Teacher and Assistant Housemistress at Gordonstoun School, hence the move to pastures new. He commenced his greenkeeping career at the age of 19 at Murrayfield GC under the expert tutelage of Jimmy Neilson. In 1988 he