

Welcome



News that a Heads of Agreement has been signed between BIGGA and the IOG has resulted in a few negative responses on the BIGGA website from some quarters within the BIGGA membership.

Such reactions are to be expected and I'd be very surprised if similar sentiments are not being expressed by elements within the IOG as well.

But it really is a case of standing back and looking at what has happened, what is happening and what is likely to happen in the future.

What has happened? Well, the golf industry is not getting any larger. Indeed, in some areas it has shrunk and everyone is beginning to feel the pinch. Golf clubs no longer have the comfort blanket of long waiting lists – more golfers now stay “unattached” and pick and choose the best golfing deal of the week. This has led to reduced revenue for clubs and smaller budgets devoted to maintaining the course, which, in turn, means machinery manufacturers don't sell as much - a consequence of which being their decision to alternate their attendance at Harrogate and Saltex. This has affected BIGGA's income, which means a knock on for the benefits and services we can offer members. It's a genuine vicious circle.

What is happening? Well, BIGGA could cut its cloth to suit and reduce benefits and services, or it could look at other ways of moving forward and protecting, and perhaps, enhancing those benefits and services. One way to achieve this may be to merge with the body which, while not exactly the same, has sufficient overlap - maintaining fine turf – to make a coming together an option, thus giving genuine economies of scale and more industry clout.

Both organisations are currently investigating whether such a merger is viable. I can tell you that there are some highly qualified and talented people from both sides involved in these talks - including representatives from the All England Tennis and Croquet Club and the R&A - and they are looking at all the implications of a merger as thoroughly and objectively as they can.

What is likely to happen? It may be that the working party's findings will result in a recommendation to continue as we are - that a merger is unworkable, or not of sufficient benefit to either organisation. In which case there would be no point in going any further.

However if the talks do highlight potential benefits and the logistics of it all are manageable, more work will be done with a view to putting a proposal to both memberships. It will be then down to the respective boards to put the facts forward to their individual members, who can then take a view based on what is placed before them.

So why the negative comment? Turn it around. Surely failure to explore all options for the future benefit of greenkeepers, could be seen as sticking their heads in the sand on the part of the BIGGA Board?

Scott MacCallum, Editor

Why not drop us an email with any news, press releases or new product updates you have –
Send them to Melissa (melissa@bigga.co.uk)



Ron Christie, Course Manager at Addington Palace GC, winner of The Raymond Day Memorial Trophy

ANNUAL GENTLEMEN'S DINNER

Over 100 members and guests sat down for dinner and an evenings entertainment recently, after a days golf on a Course superbly presented by Ian McMillan and his team at Walton Heath GC.

The Board for the South East Region of BIGGA would like to thank the Club for their hospitality, as always, and the following companies for their most generous support of this event and many others in the south east throughout the year: Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd, The Art of Grass BSP Landscapes Ltd, CMW Equipment Ltd, Complete Weed Control, Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd, ESD Waste2WaterEurope Ltd, Grass Roots Trading Co Ltd, Harper & Eede, Headland Amenity Products, John Shaw (Machinery) Ltd, R & K Kensett Ltd, Rigby Taylor Ltd, The Scotts Co (UK) Ltd, Sisis Equipment Ltd, Symbio, Seol Nassau, Tower Chemicals Ltd, Tacit Golf Equipment Ltd.

ANDY COLE RETURNS

Andy Cole has returned to STRI after six years absence. He will join the Southern Agronomy Team and develop the Midland Region.

Andy left STRI in 2001 following 14 years service. He joined PSD Agronomy where he continued to advise golf clubs and also worked with Northern Racing and football clubs including Aston Villa and Birmingham City.

As a founder member of RIPTA, Andy is a popular presenter and a regular contributor at events for the English Golf Union, The Land Drainage Contractors Association, BIGGA and the Golf Club Secretaries.

TURF DONATED TO HOSPICE

Rolawn has donated its renowned Medallion® turf to Julia's House children's hospice, Broadstone, Dorset. The garden, which includes a sensory area, memorial garden and adapted play area was officially opened by celebrity gardener Alan Titchmarsh. The creation of the garden was supported by the Greenfingers charity which is dedicated to the creation and improvement of the gardens at UK children's hospices.