



News from the Chief Executive

The BIGGA/IOG group set up to investigate the potential benefit of a merger held its latest review meeting at BIGGA House. Both BIGGA and the IOG confirmed their desire to continue with talks however, BIGGA representatives firmly stated their concern at not having made more progress. After an open and frank discussion a very progressive task list was agreed with some extremely tight deadlines. The intention is to have a report out to members by January 31, 2008, for consideration. I stress nothing can be agreed regarding a merger without the approval of membership.

Another meeting has been arranged for November when the two Chief Executive's must present to the Group the following reports: The benefit of a merger to their respective members: The benefit of a merger to the respective businesses: A proposed membership structure with associated subscription rates: A study on exhibitions and publications. These will be key documents that will give a clear indication of the value of further negotiations.

The Amenity Forum's recent meeting was attended by our representative, Ken Siems. The meeting was very constructive, detailing the extensive work undertaken by the Amenity Forum in lobbying the European Parliament regarding the proposed pesticide ban.

The National Championship was a great success, our thanks go to Dundonald and Kilmarnock (Barrassie) Golf Clubs for hosting the competition. Both clubs made the Association very welcome. I would like to thank Kubota for their sponsorship and the members who supported the event by entering. Congratulations to David Simpson and Elliott Small, the respective winners of the Challenge Trophy and the Challenge Cup.

I recently attended a meeting of the Children in Golf Strategy Group – A partnership of the governing bodies and organisation's in golf throughout Great Britain and Ireland. They have committed to work together to ensure golf is an environment within which children/young people can participate in safely. A possible change in the law could see the golf club being registered as a business within which all employees will need to have a Criminal Records Bureau check. There is an increasing concern in society over the welfare of children and more and more those persons likely to have contact with them are being vetted. Whether we shall be invited to become a permanent partner will be decided at their next meeting. I hope this is the case. For more information go to: www.childrengolf.org

One of our greatest challenges is getting information to the golfer so we can create a better understanding of the role of the greenkeeper and the level of education, training and professionalism required to do the job. Scott MacCallum and I recently met with Mike Harris, Editor of Golf Monthly. We are in the process of putting together some suggestions for features in their publication, both on greenkeeping and the environment, linking in our own Environment Competition.

Please take time to study the education programme for Harrogate Week that members should have received. Details are also available through the BIGGA website. Book early to avoid disappointment!

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH - EAST

After the long wet summer, what a welcome relief to have a good September, with conditions ideal for renovation works.

The Autumn Outing was held this year at Ratho Park GC on Tuesday, September 19, with 24 in attendance. Weather conditions were ideal and as a result the golf scores were good. Our thanks go to Ratho Park for granting us courtesy of the course, the catering staff for keeping everybody well fed and watered and last but certainly not least to Tom, Billy and the team for presenting the course in excellent condition.

The golf results are as follows: Best Scratch – S. Cunningham 75; 1.1 T Murray, 75-7-68; 1.2 C. McArthur, 76-6-70; 2.1 R. Murdoch, 85-12-73; 2.2 C. Yeaman, 86-12-74; 3.1 S. Dixon, 92-19-73; 3.2 B. Hudson, 101-24-77; Best Nett - T. Murray 75-7-68; Veteran - A. Holmes, 77-3-74; Trade Prize - H Fraser (Huxleys), 69-3-66; Longest Drive - C. McArthur; Nearest the Pin at 15th - G. White. Finally the committee have asked me to personally thank all the Trade members for their continued support, it is very much appreciated.

I had a meeting this week with a real blast from the past, Donald Menzies, the former Head Greenkeeper at both Mortonhall and Peebles. He has spent the past summer working as manager on a farm near Malaga, which is one of the largest growers of Bermuda Grass in Europe. Now returned to the UK he is based in Edinburgh and is running his own landscape business.

The hot news this month is that Bill Lyon, the brother of Jim at Lanark is the new Course Manager at Murrayfield. He commences his duties in January. Continuing on the job scene, our congratulations go to Kevin Shiels on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Torphin Hills. He started his career at Lothianburn before joining the greens staff at Baberton in 1990. He has worked at Torphin Hills for the past two years as Deputy Head.

Mike Dooner



NORTH

The Autumn Outing was held at Fortrose in late September. The weather was windy but quite normal for this part of the world. A good day was had by all and thanks must go to Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC for their kind hospitality on the day. The course was in excellent condition throughout with firm fast greens that were hard to hit but a joy to putt on. Well done to Kevin Fowler and his staff for all their efforts on the day. There was a good turnout of 51 members on the day, which made it very enjoyable. Hopefully we can maintain at least this level of numbers for the outings next year and beyond.

Results - Longest Drive: Class 2 - James Hutchison, Castle Stuart GC; Class 1 - Neil Sadler, Portlethen GC; Nearest the Pin: Muir Ross, Ballindalloch GC. Sweep: 4th- Kevin Fowler, Fortrose GC; 3rd - Ben Brookes, Murcar GC; 2nd - Robert Patterson, Royal Aberdeen GC; 1st - Mike Keay Tarbat GC. Guest Winner: Neil Cameron, Castle Stuart GC.