



News from the Chief Executive

Merger talks with the IOG continue, albeit slowly. In August representatives of both organisations met to progress the report that will be submitted to members of both BIGGA and IOG for their consideration. To date the Group has not found any major reason why a merger could not work, although there are key issues yet to be resolved. The most significant of these is the question of location of the resultant headquarters and the staff structure. Progress is slow and has been hampered by the inability of the Group to make final decisions for inclusion in the report. While BIGGA representatives have been empowered by their Board to take whatever action is deemed necessary, IOG representatives do not enjoy the same privilege and must consult their Board at every stage. This inevitably causes delays and frustration. The recommendations of the working party, which need to be supported by each Board of Management, can only be adopted following a vote by members in accordance with respective Constitutions. The next meeting is scheduled for October 4, by which time both boards will have had routine meetings and thereby time to consider next steps.

You may know of the European Parliament draft proposal to restrict/ potentially totally ban, the use of pesticides in all areas to which the public has access, this would include golf courses. The next stage is a vote, this is likely to happen in late October. There is an action group, 'The Amenity Forum' made up of representatives from a diverse range of organisations and businesses, including BIGGA with Ken Siems (Loch Lomond GC) and Gavin Robson (Burton GC) taking an active role. I'm also in regular contact with the Forum's Chairman, Jon Allbutt, and Secretary, Bob Joyce. Following consultation with its members the Amenity Forum has submitted to a number of MEP's a report on the consequences of such action, highlighting the effect on the economy, employment and people's lifestyle.

I was pleased to be involved in the judging of Toro Student of the Year last month. The eight finalists who made the trip to BIGGA HQ, were of an exceptionally high standard. Congratulations go to overall winner, Avon Bridges. To get as far as the final is no mean feat, every year the standard seems to get better.

Staff changes: Ken retired at the end of September after 13 years service as BIGGA's Education and Training Manager and also latterly as my Deputy. Ken has been instrumental in transforming the provision of Education and Training to both members and staff of BIGGA, there is no doubt many greenkeepers wouldn't have progressed as they have had it not been for his impact on their careers. Most of his duties have been taken over by Sami Collins who became Head of Learning and Development on October 1. Sami has been with the Association for 14 years and has more recently acted as Ken's understudy. Rachael Duffy will be working along side Sami, I hope you will give both of them your support. Sandra Raper has joined BIGGA HQ as my Secretary but will also give administrative support to the office generally. Her arrival has already had a positive impact on the office.

Congratulations to Stephen Coates and his wife Emma on the safe arrival of their daughter. He thought it would just be his role as BIGGA's Accountant that would keep him awake at night!

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH – CENTRAL

On behalf of all members of the Section, we wish to pass on our condolences and best wishes to the families and friends of Mick Hanlon and Alan Holmes who passed away recently. I did not know them personally, but from the number of calls I've had, and the sentiments expressed, it is clear they were both held in the highest regard by their colleagues in the profession and all trade representatives.

A short set of notes this month due to pressures of work, and our Chairman's golfing calendar being rather full. (More events than the European Tour!) We'll see if all this practise pays off at the Autumn Tournament or The National Championship (8/9th October)

A nice dry spell of weather recently has certainly helped conditions on the course, and also stopped everyone moaning about how wet a year it's been. I even heard some guys starting to complain about how dry it was – Long may it continue.

We have organised a short presentation courtesy of our friends from the States who were kind enough to share their experiences and knowledge with us last year also. Let's have a good turnout for this again. The topics should be of interest to us all, and I'm sure they have a lot of interesting information to pass on.

Presented by Mike Fidanza, John Kaminski & Stan Zontek – USGA Green Section.

Location - Elmwood Golf Course, Maintenance Facility, Training Room. Time: 6.30pm, November 28. Free of charge. If you're not a member come along and see what we have to offer. Hope to see you all there for an informative evenings education. Check the website for further details.

Scotsturf is looming, and I'm sure we will all bump into each other again. This year has flown by. The Section AGM will be held on October 29 at Elmwood Golf Course Training Room, at 1.30pm. Please come along and air your views, and support your fellow greenkeepers.

All the best

Secretary: Andy Mellon

Chairman: Derek Scott

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk 01334 658914



EAST

I start this month's report with the news that John Eadie, Head Greenkeeper at Bathgate, has retired after many years loyal service. He commenced his working life in 1960 on a farm before joining Scottish Landscapers in 1971 where he worked his way up to the position of Contracts Supervisor. In 1992 he joined the greens staff at Bathgate working initially for Head man Stuart Cruickshank and then for a short