



News from the Chief Executive

More and more I hear of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers that get themselves into stressful situations through their lack of management skills, or through a lack of appropriate skills in the clubhouse. Golf is undergoing a serious change with far greater financial competition between clubs than ever before. Only recently have I heard of a long established, highly regarded club that is close to insolvency, perhaps even technically there already. Drastic measures are being considered to reduce overheads but the action may be too late.

The daily life of a typical golf club now needs to be geared to the commercial world and with it the employment of commercial skills. Today's Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper needs to keep up to date with some of these skills and that is where being a member of BIGGA can help. The programme for Harrogate Week will soon be released and in it members will find an abundance of workshops and seminars designed to help them cope with the demands of the job. The competent manager can contribute so much more to the golf club than just looking after the course, and golf club committees and owners need to recognise this fact. Management that works as a team has a much greater chance of success and had this happened in the case I referred to earlier, then the club might not have found themselves in their current crisis. Getting the average golfer to understand and accept this fact is difficult, however, by looking and acting professionally and by demonstrating business competence then the Course Manager can make his mark.

I am continuing to build stronger working relationships between BIGGA and the other lead bodies in golf, in particular the R&A, the Golf Club Managers' Association, the Home Unions and the Greenkeepers Training Committee. We all need to work together for the benefit of the game and thereby avoid duplication, make better use of resources and hopefully improve standards.

While Harrogate Week is the annual focus of BIGGA's education, members should not ignore the opportunities that are available the rest of the year, both on a local and a regional basis. The Education and Development Fund together with the Ransomes Jacobsen scholarship/grant scheme, provides the funding or subsidy for a wide range of courses. If a member has a specific need then I would encourage them to contact either Sami or Rachael in the Learning and Development office at HQ, to discuss how we can help.

Once again the Association's staff will be pleased to welcome you to the BIGGA stand at Saltex. Remember though, it is Harrogate Week that provides vital funding to YOUR Association and not Saltex! I will be in attendance on the Tuesday and will be happy to discuss any points that members have.

Finally, a reminder to book your place at the National Championship sponsored by Kubota and also to submit your application for the Bernhard & Co sponsored trip to the Golf Industry Show 2008 in Orlando, both of which appeared in the August edition of Greenkeeper International.

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH – CENTRAL

First of all, a warm welcome to all our new Section members - please feel welcome to attend future events. The committee will be trying to arrange some educational events commencing in November. All info will be posted on the website, talking of which, we have all been rather busy this summer and the website activity has slowed down. We will be putting some effort into kick-starting this activity again, as the positive feedback we had when it was active indicated that it was well received by the members. Please play your part and send any news and ideas you have to the committee.

It's been a really busy time for many courses in Scotland, playing host to The Open Championship (Carnoustie), The British Ladies Open (St Andrew's Links – Old Course), The Seniors Open (Muirfield), and the Johnnie Walker Championship (Gleneagles). September will also see The Scottish Lades Senior Amateur (Glenbervie), the Ladies Home International Matches (Dunbar), and the Ladies Scottish Open (Carrick), followed by the Dunhill Links Championship (St Andrews, Carnoustie and Kingsbarns). A really fantastic year for the Golf spectators among us if you have the time. From what we've seen so far it has shown the talent that exists in our profession producing such fantastic venues in what has been a very challenging season weather wise. Congratulations to all involved.

The Autumn Tournament will be played on September 20 at The Dukes. All entries should have been processed by now, and you can check the draw on the website or by calling Andy Mellon: 01334 658914. This year's National Tournament is being held at Dundonald Links and Kilmarnock (Barassie) Golf Club. For a fee of £85 you get to play two fantastic courses with lunch both days and dinner on the first evening all included. I hope that many section members take up the opportunity to play, when it's being hosted so close to home.

I have been as busy as usual on my own Golf Tour. All the courses were in great condition and a testament to the hard work of the Greenkeeping teams' efforts. I had great days at Royal Burgess, Kirriemuir and Brechin. I was trying to keep it quiet but I also lost £4 to Andy O'Hara, Course manager at Leven, on a real Black Thursday when I also lost my trusty 7 – iron, damaged my putter and was run down by a golf buggy. Fortunately my injuries were not severe enough to stop me jetting off to Canada next month on holiday, which I'm busy setting up a schedule of course visits for. I'm pulling on all contacts to try and get some good courses. I get back the day of our Autumn Tournament and I've asked for a late tee time to try and take part. Hope to see you all there.

Your committee are keen to arrange as many events as you need, and to provide relevant learning opportunities for our members. Please give them your support and let them know what you want. The AGM is just round the corner and you'll receive an Invite in the post. It's your opportunity to come along and have a say on how things are run, and offer your services to help if you can. All the best.

*Secretary: Andy Mellon
Chairman: Derek Scott*

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk 01334 658914