



News from the Chief Executive

It's all change this month at BIGGA House with the arrival of the builders whose task it is to convert the array of downstairs offices into one large open office. We are all dreading the nuisance factor but the overwhelming feeling is one of support for the project and the main disruption should only last for three to four days. The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of April following which the GTC can move into part of the upper floor, bringing the two organisations much closer together but also bringing BIGGA some rental income to help offset overheads.

I seem to have done an excessive amount of travelling of late but it just happens to be that time of year when the industry takes advantage of a quieter time to host conferences. My latest visit, and last for some while, was to the Canadian Conference and Exhibition in Calgary. Coupled with this was an International Summit that attracted delegates from a variety of countries.

It was especially pleasing to meet Allan Devlin, from the Australian Association, who, as an ex-patriot of many years, found himself immediately at home in the company of the delegates from the UK and Canada. Ken Siems, Steve Isaac and our Chairman had all been invited over to give presentations that were very well received and that fitted well into the busy and informative schedule of education seminars that my counterpart, Ken Cousineau, and his staff had arranged. Our hosts could not have been more welcoming.

My personal thanks go to Ken Cousineau, Terry McNeilly, the CGSA Board and the great number of Canadian friends, too numerous to list, who made the trip a success not only for me but for the Association. The golf industry in the UK is going through testing times but these conditions are not confined to our shores. The same pressures are in evidence in Canada, Sweden and America and I wish Past President of the CGSA, Ian Martinusen and Dana, his wife, every success for the future. Ian was recently a victim of change at his golf club, in the same way that many have suffered in the UK, he has thankfully found employment as a technical representative.

While it is important that we develop strong relationships within the UK to try to protect and develop the better interests of our members it is also vital that we do not neglect the international aspect of the greenkeeping fraternity. There is much to learn from others as well as share our own experiences and there is no doubt about the fact that BIGGA is held in very high regard around the world. The international travel sounds wonderful and I do find it rewarding, both personally and for the Association, but it is also tiring, very demanding on home life, and the work back the office never disappears! I do what is necessary to promote the Association but the cynics among us will say that I would say that.

Finally I would like to wish Steve Mona every success in his new position as CEO of the World Golf Foundation based in Florida. Steve took over as CEO of the GCSAA 14 years ago and has been a great ally for BIGGA. I look forward to building on this relationship with Steve in his new role.

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH REGION – AYRSHIRE

Hello everyone, just a few items on the agenda for your perusal as we actually held a committee meeting at the end of February (crazy I know!).

Although not present at the Scottish National Conference myself last month, I have it on good authority that it once again was a resounding success and a well worthwhile event to have been in attendance at.

The Golf Club Secretaries versus Greenkeepers match will be contested at West Linton GC on Monday, April 14, so here's hoping they get a good day for it and the greenkeeper's prevail.

Troon Portland plays host to our Spring Outing on April 15. Tee times will be from 9:30am - be sure to get your form back to Derek quickly as I'm sure such a fine venue will attract an excellent turn out.

Derek Wilson's Irvine Bogside course will be the venue for this year's Scottish National Tournament on Monday, June 23. I'm sure the Ayrshire lads will be out in force to lay waste to the field and plunder the big prizes that day. I for one will be looking forward to playing one of the most challenging courses in the area.

The National Championship is to be played at East Sussex GC on October 13 and 14.

After a brief conversation with some of the West Section lads at Harrogate it was tentatively agreed to hold a rematch of the dramatic and thrilling football match we enjoyed a few year's ago in Glasgow.

Director of Football, Marshall Sloss, has taken on the responsibility of organising a fearless squad to give the West a torrid time of it. Anyone interested in playing should contact either Marshall or myself. It was only lack of fitness, subs and talent that let us down last time!

Our annual match against the County Down Greenkeeper's has been scheduled for Friday, September 19 at Duncan Gray's The Pines GC in Dumfries. Having lost the first two year's to the Irish lads I feel we jolly well need to roll our sleeves up next time and keep the Shield on Ayrshire soil. Give us a ring if you're up for it.

Ability to hold one's drink would be an asset to this event!

That's it for now. I'm off to watch the Boro destroy Cardiff as we march on to cup glory, just a pity we couldn't of got Man U or Chelsea in final?

Denis Tweddell

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CENTRAL

Congratulations go to Albert Arnott, currently the Head Greenkeeper at