



News from the Chief Executive

Another Open Championship comes and goes and what a surprising, but very worthy, winner we have! Congratulations to the R&A on the success of the event but the real champions were Chris Whittle and his team for preparing a magnificent course. The BIGGA Support Team put in a lot of hard work in helping Chris and also surpassed the expectations of the R&A and the players when it came to the condition of the bunkers.

They represented the Association with true professionalism and I was proud to receive plaudits on their behalf on several occasions. It was pleasing to sit down with the members present and in doing so you soon realise the value of networking. New friendships were forged and old friendships renewed.

Try as we may we do not seem to be able to arouse the interest of the media though. We put out daily press releases in the Media Centre, Scott and I had interviews with press and we were in regular contact with the BBC. The odd mention came over but it really is not big enough news for journalists and commentators to get too excited about. Nevertheless we will continue to develop a working relationship with the media and I congratulate BIGGA's communication team, Scott and Melissa, for all their efforts.

The BIGGA Golf Day - the Neil Thomas Memorial Day - in June was a great success and we will be sending a cheque for just over £2,000 to the Children's Heart Specialist Ward at Leeds Hospital which is our chosen charity this year. Thank you once again to all those companies and individuals who made the day possible by giving their financial support.

This week I have had the privilege of attending the official presentation to Bernhard & Co of the Queen's Award for Excellence by the Lord-Lieutenant of Warwickshire. Stephen Bernhard is quite rightly proud of his team who have all contributed in some way or other to the company's success. In a climate of change within golf it is important that we all take heart from such an achievement.

During August we will be reviewing our own Business Plan and preparing budgets for the coming year as well as putting the membership categories and the Constitution under scrutiny. We must never lose sight of the need for the commercial arm of the Association, after all it is this part of the business that funds the majority of what we do.

Finally, I hope that members will take an interest in the National Championship, sponsored by Kubota, details of which are elsewhere in this issue of Greenkeeper International. It's your tournament and so please support it. New for this year will be an optional Stableford competition on Day 2 for those whose performance on Day 1 did not meet expectations!

John Pemberton
Chief Executive



SCOTTISH REGION - AYRSHIRE

Hi everyone, hope you're all well. It seems we're gonna get robbed of another summer if things don't change sharpish! As Jim Royle would say "Global warming my a**e!"

First, a quick mention of the Scottish National Greenkeeper's Tournament played at Irvine Bogside in June. Derek and his team had the course in truly superb condition and I'm sure all 70 entrants had a great day. Maybe more so for the local competitors as home soil advantage was quite evident at the Prize's table! Go on Ayrshire!

June also saw the British Amateur, contested over the Ailsa and Kintyre courses at Turnberry, where the dry Spring weather leading up to the Championship saw both courses running firm and fast.

Due to blustery conditions during the two strokeplay qualifying rounds the cut was made at 8 over. Although the weather played its part, the recent strengthening of the Ailsa was also a significant factor. Heavy showers overnight helped take some of the fire out of the course for the remainder of the week and it was Dutchman Reinier Saxton who triumphed over 17 year old Englishman, Tommy Fleetwood.

By the time you read this the Senior's British Open will have been played at Royal Troon, I just hope there's some warm sunshine that week as I'm looking forward to going along to watch as much as possible!

Our match against the County Down Greenkeepers' will be played on Friday, September 19 at The Pines in Dumfries. They are hoping to bring over 16 players to defend the Shield so anyone wanting to get in on the glory of being in the first Ayrshire team to get their hands on the magnificent Shield, please let me know. As we'll probably be celebrating well into the night - let me know if accommodation is required as Duncan has kindly offered to help with these arrangements.

The Pines is a popular venue in September with our Autumn Outing being contested there on Thursday, 25th. It will be interesting to see if Iain Barr can hold his nerve and preserve his well earned lead from the Spring Outing to lift the Harry Diamond Jug. Methinks it would be wise if the front-runners played the course on the previous Friday? You know it makes sense!

Sadly, Gordon Haughie, who worked on the course at Southerness for 18 years before his retirement and was a stalwart at Section events, passed away in May. Our thoughts are with Gordon's friends and family at this difficult time.

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