

Chairman's Column

WAITING FOR THE FROST

It has been a very busy month on the back of our golf tournament. I was straight off to East Sussex National Golf Club for the BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota.

On arrival I was absolutely amazed with the size of the resort as a whole, the new hotel looked impressive, the whole stay was fantastic. On the Sunday morning we woke up to torrential rain, not a shock for weather so far this year, but naturally disappointing. It was decided, to be fair to everyone in this year's championship, instead of a two day championship the competition would change to a one day Stableford competition with a new trophy as well.

Monday was a fantastic day weather-wise, only turning poor towards the end; it enabled us all to see East Sussex Golf Club at its best - on that note, I would like to thank the Course Manager, Scott Litchfield, and his staff for their efforts and producing a great golf course.

I would like to congratulate the winners. Firstly, the BIGGA Trophy went to David Simpson, who won it for the second year running and travelled all the way from Crieff in Scotland. The BIGGA Cup went to fellow Midlander, David Fellows. The BIGGA Plate, which was for the Stableford competition was won by Brian Robinson. And the BIGGA Bowl was won by Andrew Cornes, on behalf of the trade. Overall, a good event and it was great to see people travelling from far and wide to attend.

The Board of Management meetings were my next diary appointment. We discussed the budgets, strategies for 2009, the AGM in January and for a proposed new membership structure, incorporating additional categories for fellow groundsmen in other areas of sport to become full-category members. This was supported by the Board unanimously and gives us a chance to increase our membership within the sports turf industry. I hope that with the support of the members too it will improve our standing, allowing us to not stand still and cope under the demands of the current financial climate.

I also attended Stephen Bernhard's new HQ opening at Rugby in October, in the presence of HRH Earl of Wessex. A very interesting and busy day and it was great to meet Prince Edward.

A poor start to the month of October although it has started to dry up nicely with some strong winds. Frost looks not too far on the horizon, however. It is good to have a nice, dry sunny, spell, despite the cold. The biggest problem for this time of year for Parkland greenkeepers is the leaves. They create so much work for the guys and with pressure from golfers over this next month or two it will be a continual job. It takes up a lot of the working weeks' labour. People think we are out of season but it is as much in season as ever with these workloads.

We are looking towards the winter and preparing for our projects in 2008/2009. I can't believe we are heading into the fourth quarter of the year already, as our planning will now concentrate on this time along with all the general maintenance the quieter season affords.



2009 – Harrogate Week

By now you should already have seen the Definitive Guide to Harrogate Week 2009. There is so much additional education and free seminars this



year, it really will be a fantastic opportunity for all our members to attend and sharpen their skills. We are giving great initiatives, I do hope as many of you as possible will be planning to come and support Harrogate Week 2009.

Budgets! It is a tough time to be looking at the figures. Obviously, with all the rising costs versus the downturn in revenue, it is going to be a hard year in 2009 and trying to set the right budgets is no easy task. I know it is on everyone's mind but hopefully there will be a positive end to the year within the industry and we can see improvements in this area.

Finally, I will be attending the Icelandic Greenkeeping Conference from 24-26 October. As always I look forward to meeting some new people within the industry, and I am to give a presentation on golf course management within a resort, incorporating sustainability and environmental issues.

Kenny Mackay
Chairman

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