



News from the Chief Executive

Following a recent audit by Yorkshire and Humberside Assessment Limited I am pleased to be able to report that BIGGA has been judged as achieving the required standard in order to be deemed an Investor in People. This is an award that the Association has held continuously since 1999 and it recognises the commitment by a business to staff development, financial and operational planning, efficiency, communication and management.

The performance of the organisation is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the very demanding standards set by the awarding body. Being an Investor in People not only demonstrates to the outside world that you have achieved a certain standard but it also can help when applying for Government and other related training funding.

In the office, planning for Harrogate Week 2009 is demanding more and more of everyone's time. I sometimes think that it is overlooked that this major event in the diary of the turf industry is organised completely in-house by the staff at BIGGA HOUSE, thereby maximising efficiency and profitability.

Despite the absence next January of some of the larger manufacturers, there remains a positive approach by the rest of the industry and already most of the planned space is already sold. The educational programme has been increased in both number of hours available and the range of subjects. The Association recognises the need to help with member's costs and has therefore taken the unprecedented step of offering the greatest part of the educational seminars free of charge.

Next January also sees another move away from tradition in so far as there will not be a banquet on the Thursday evening. New for next year will be a Social Night on Tuesday that will take place in the Majestic Hotel and will consist of a Casino, a variety of high-tech games machines together with a buffet meal. Where required gaming chips and tokens will be provided and there will be a prize for the person that accumulates the highest value. It is designed to be a night of fun, entertainment and social interaction where you can meet old friends and make new ones in a relaxed atmosphere. Once again the price has been kept down to a minimum to make the event affordable.

Full details will be promoted through Greenkeeper International and on the BIGGA web site however anyone requiring more information can contact any member of Headquarters staff.

Harrogate Week is a vital part of the income stream of the Association and relies upon the support of both exhibitors and visitors for its success. This event provides you, the Member, with the opportunity to support YOUR Association as well as you being able to experience some valuable education.

A team from HQ recently attended Dunbar Golf Club to support the testimonial golf day for Graeme Wood who tragically suffered a severe stroke at the beginning of 2007. The day was a huge success but just as importantly it demonstrated the fellowship that exists within the industry. I have recently been made aware that Colin Denny has suffered further health problems since I last met him at The Open and that Lars-Goran Bange, Chairman of the Swedish Greenkeepers Association, is seriously ill following a stroke last week. I wish them both a speedy recovery. Welfare of members is a vital part of BIGGA's agenda and we continuously review how this can be improved. I am always open to suggestions as long as they are reasonable and achievable!

Finally it is nice to have a day when it has not rained and I hope that your courses are drying out thereby allowing you to get some vital work done before we slip into winter. It is noticeable how the days are getting shorter and I wonder where this year has gone. I must be getting old!



SCOTTISH REGION - CENTRAL

The Central Section had a great day out at Dunblane New GC on September 4 for their Autumn Outing.

It was held in glorious sunshine on a course presented in excellent condition by Chris Pearson and his team despite the appalling weather we have had in this part of the country through August. Our sincere thanks to all at Dunblane for making us so welcome and to our Patrons for their support.

There were 40 golfers competing for the trophies on the day and the winners are as follows: Best Scratch, Kenny Mitchell, of St Andrews Links, Kenny also won the Spring and Autumn combined nett prize. Kevin Brunton, of Greentech, matched Kenny's score of 72 to win the Trade Prize. Best Nett on the day was Christie Mackenzie of the host club with 73 - 5 = 68. Archie Dunn, of Auchterarder, won best handicap in the first class with a 69 and Gordon McKie, of St Andrews Links, won best handicap in the second class with a 68.

The Section AGM will be held at Elmwood on Monday, October 27, where we will also have a speaker, Martin Heywood, of Aquadrop, talking about irrigation water quality and how you can improve it. The details will be on the website nearer the time: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

The website has been quiet through the summer but hopefully it will pick up again now that the season is coming to a close.

Gordon Moir



NORTH

Firstly this month may I congratulate Philip Don, from Kemnay GC, and his team of Neil Bremner, Martin Patterson and Raymond Warrender. They won the recent qualifying competition at Kintore GC for the John Deere Team Championships. This enabled them to take part in the UK Finals at Turnberry. They finished a fantastic second out of the 27 regional qualifiers. Well done lads but I could only think that Raymond was there to provide the team with a higher handicap and to make up the numbers. That said, though, on behalf of the Section well done.

I can't get away this month without mentioning I have become a dad for the second time. My wife, Susan, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Ava, on August 17. I thought that having one child was hard work but two! I wouldn't swap it for the world.

I also have to congratulate the father-in-law too, Brian Hunter. He is a