



## News from the Chief Executive

Another week at Harrogate comes and goes and all the pre-event apprehensions were, I am pleased to say, unfounded. Coming back into the office after Christmas the usual questions ran through all our minds: What will the weather be like? Will the visitors come in sufficient numbers? Will the Credit Crunch affect the spending power of those that do come? Will we sell the last couple of exhibition spaces? Will the Social Night be a success? And just as importantly - What will be the reaction of the visitors and exhibitors?

At a time when the industry in general needed a lift we got it. Yes there was talk of a recession and dark times ahead but the majority of people looked forward to the challenge of a new season and, hopefully, a better Spring and Summer than in the past couple of years. The exhibitors were buoyed by the good attendance levels and the high quality of visitors, with many reporting brisk business even on Thursday!

Let's not lose sight of the fact that there is still a healthy demand for golf we just have to accept that the nature of the demand is changing and clubs must learn to change with the times and become more attractive and be able to compete with a changing lifestyle and a changing economy.

An awful lot of use of the word 'change', something that many of us find alien but something that is necessary. BIGGA is no exception to the rule. We have already changed our office layout to improve working practices and internal communication, the Members at the AGM approved voting by proxy for future AGM's/EGM's and also approved the conversion of the Association into a company limited by guarantee.

A copy of my report to Members at the AGM has been posted on the BIGGA website and the minutes of the AGM will be also be made available for download.

What we do and how we do it will be coming under scrutiny and we will be attempting to forge closer relationships with other industry bodies to avoid duplication of efforts and better utilisation of resources, all aimed at improving the overall standard of service to Members. One such example is the signing of an Agreement with the Club Managers Association of Europe that will facilitate better provision of cost effective management courses for those wishing to develop their career along these lines.

The American Golf Industry Show will this year be held in New Orleans and I am looking forward to representing the Association at the Annual International Summit where associations from around the world meet and compare trends, working practices, current affairs and factors affecting the future of our industry. It is also an opportunity to share thinking on how, by working together, we can resolve some of the problems facing the game and the welfare of associations such as ours.

Finally I would like to thank Billy McMillan and Gavin Robson for their service on the Board of Management. Both have made significant contributions to the development of the Association and I look forward to working with Peter Todd and Paul Worster, Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively, and Garry Cunningham who succeeds Gavin as the representative for the Midlands Region.

John Pemberton  
Chief Executive



### SCOTTISH REGION - CENTRAL

There is very little to report from the Central Section this month. We are holding a one day seminar which is likely to be on February 24. This will be a follow up on the Disturbance Theory Seminar which we held in early 2007. Richard Windows, Henry Bechelet and Andy Cole will be the presenters and the purpose is to expand on the 2007 seminar with those attending providing feedback on their experiences, what has worked, what they would do a little differently, etc.

I believe a similar event took place at Cannington College at the end of 2008 and proved very successful and the West Section are holding one on February 25 at Loch Lomond. Details for our one have still to be finalised - timings, meals, etc as well as the venue - although it will either be at Gleneagles or The Castle Course. By the time you read this, these details will be available on the website, [www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk)

Also, while you are freezing your bits off reading this, spare a thought for those Section members who are in sunnier climes, Willie Jardine and Scott Finlay, of St Andrews, will be in Australia where they have gone to work for a year starting with a placement at The Metropolitan Club.

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### EAST

This will be my first report for the East Section news as I will be taking over from Mike Dooner, namely "Thorn trees Amenity", who, with Kathleen McIntyre, has done a splendid job for our Section news.

Our Chairman and Committee would like to thank them both for all the hard work they have put into our Section newsletter over the years.

Sorry - we missed the January issue for our report so some of the text might be a bit dated now.