



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Peter Todd, gives his thoughts for the month

Finding uninterrupted times at work to spend thinking, reading or writing is almost impossible in peak season.

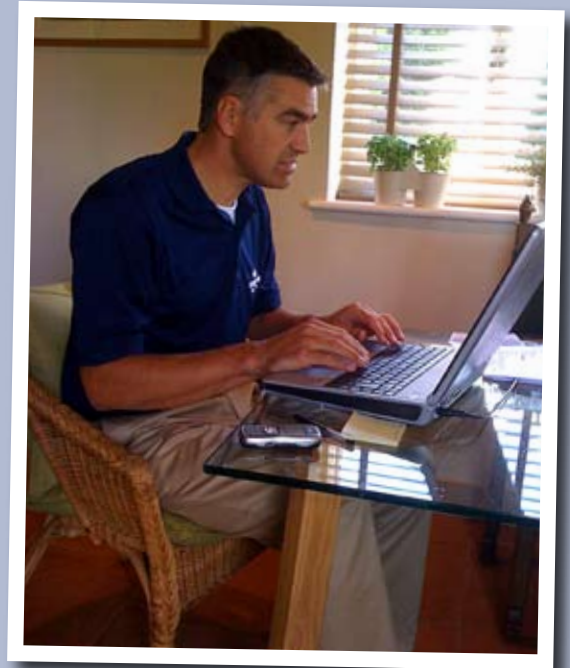
If it's not one of the phones ringing or walkie talkie radio needing answering, then visitors, meetings etc all eat into the day and leave little room for time concentrating solely on an individual task.

Having recently broken my leg in a fall on the course I am now working from home for six weeks and discovering what a difference it makes to be able to write a report without all these interruptions. Often we all try and juggle so many things at once only to find little space left to devote to a specific project that you know needs your complete attention which can end up taking weeks rather than days. Taking yourself away from the day-to-day work is only possible when you can rely on others to delegate to. The use of e-mail, laptops and mobile phones ensures you can keep in touch and at the same time enable you to break away to work elsewhere.

Having a well structured team with key members of staff able to step up and deputise helps in these situations. During our recent tournament both first assistants worked together and deputised for The Heritage Head Greenkeeper so he could respond to the call that his wife needed to go to hospital to give birth to their first child. Staff enjoy the opportunity to show what they can do when given more responsibility and you soon discover how much talent you have on your team. Delegating more even when you are not away can bring these benefits and free up some uninterrupted time to focus on areas that would otherwise keep moving down the to do list.

In our part of the country this has been one of the driest starts to the season for years with us experiencing only two thirds of the average rainfall. Play levels have no doubt picked up as a result of the better weather and this should be reflected in higher than expected revenue for clubs. The flip side of this is the prospect that the summer could continue unusually dry and a need to use large volumes of irrigation water. After the two very wet summers in 2007 and 2008 we needed some decent sunny weather to get golfers interested in playing regularly this year but the last two wet years did ensure that this dry part of the UK didn't suffer another drought. The expression that every cloud has a silver lining seems all too appropriate.

Water is fast becoming an expensive commodity at over £1 per cubic metre from some water companies and guarantee of supply looks decidedly shaky in future years. The last two years might have given some breathing space to water issues but we shouldn't be surprised when this subject returns again. Clubs need to look seriously at all areas of water usage. Starting with supply, whether recycling, rainwater harvesting or other suitable measures are a viable option for them. Thinking about your turf, do you have thatch levels under control, is sward composition where you want, do you have a comprehensive wetting agent programme? Is your irrigation system efficient, can you make improvements to coverage, design? The lead time



Continuous improvement keeps you out in front

to design, obtain permission, secure finance and do whatever is necessary to deal with these problems and put solutions in place before next the drought order appears may prove to be time well invested.

The June edition of GI in the new format resulted from a response to some constructive comments and eagerness of all those involved to make improvements to the magazine. Scott and his team have worked hard to make the changes and bring a fresh look and content. As well as this, the sub committee changes to encourage more members to have an input in Association matters have now been reorganised. With proxy voting in place the move to include groundsman from other turf sports was a truly democratic process and one that should be recognised as a strength of BIGGA to embrace change.

Sport and the leisure industry are going through tough times with the golf sector having to adapt to the changed economic environment. After the recovery period whenever it comes, the golf industry will have gone through changes, some of which will be irreversible. Clubs that have shed

staff numbers may only be able to survive by operating on a lower cost basis in future. On the jobs front it is likely to remain an employers market with strong competition for every position. Whatever happens, clubs will need experienced, well educated and professional greenkeepers who are focused on maximising use of resources and improving their courses.

Being a member of BIGGA provides you with an opportunity to associate with like minded individuals with a shared interest and demonstrates your commitment to professionalism in the industry. In addition, the learning and development programmes, seminars etc, aim to arm you with the information and skills needed to keep you at the front of your profession. Aiming higher is something we should all aspire to and your association wants to help you get there.

Peter Todd
National Chairman