

I was recently very fortunate to be invited to Celtic Manor to watch the Wales Open as a guest of Toro. This was a great day out, spent in the company of John Keenaghan and Wayne Vincent, and well looked after by Keith Carter, of Handy Garden Machinery. The 2010 course was in superb condition, and should be a worthy venue for the Ryder Cup.

Back in the Section, we are hoping to run further Excavator Safety Training, Safe use of Tractors and Attachments, and Manual Handling and certification courses during the late summer\autumn, and some hedge laying\stone walling tuition and demonstrations during the winter. Please do contact me with any interest as it takes time to organise these things, and it is important to have interest and volition.

There is also a joint BIGGA | GCSMA education event to be held at The Kendleshire on September 30. This day is aimed at Managing Secretaries, Course Manager\Head Greenkeepers, and Deputies and will feature practical advice on how to improve the golf club, relations with members and staff, and how to solve disputes. Full details to be circulated shortly. Please contact Bob Williams at Chipping Sodbury GC for further information.

Finally, I've spoken with both our injured colleagues, Ali Turner and Roger Neale. Ali is progressing slowly and is at last able to put weight on his leg, although he doesn't expect to be fully fit until the autumn. Roger Neale, whose accident took place only a couple of days before his wife went into labour with their first child, was reminiscing about the birth. I could only imagine 6 foot 3 inch, 16 stone Roge, in the Delivery Room, with crutches, feeling queasy, and trying to keep out of the way. I also managed to spare a thought for the harassed midwife - "Gas and Air for Mrs Neale, and for Christ' sake give Mr Neale a full general anaesthetic and strap him to that chair in the corner - if he knocks over one more sample jar with those blasted crutches, I won't be responsible for my actions".

Father and child are now doing well. Congratulations Roger, from us all.

Paul Worster



South Coast

The management trophy at Barton on Sea Golf Club was a great success resulting in Tony Gadd's team running out winners. The course was, as I expected, in superb condition and the hospitality second to none.

The summer tournament is getting closer - July 9 at Hampworth Golf Club, so contact Kevin asap. Another reminder about the autumn tournament on the Isle of Wight - remember the day is courtesy of the Section so all you have to do is get there

Until next month
Chris Sturgess



Devon & Cornwall

Not much to report this month, as I'm sitting here writing this we are getting an absolute deluge after an almost 'French Riviera' week of weather!

Let's hope that wasn't our summer.

I understand there's a Digger Training course coming up on Tuesday, August 4 at Trethorne Golf Club for 10 - this hasn't been confirmed yet but I suspect it will have by the time you're reading this.

Congratulations to the Duchy College, at Stoke Climsland, and Steve Evans for their recent Greenkeeping Seminar, which I understand was very popular with the 80 plus that attended, providing up to date knowledge from specialists from within the industry.

I hope everyone's keeping on top of the grasscutting etc, and as always if there are any up and coming events or stories you would like mentioned, please let me know.

Jerry Cole



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

At long last the question of Full Membership for groundsmen has been resolved with a resounding vote last month in favour of a change to the Constitution. However let's not run away with the idea that this will open the floodgates and an Association built by greenkeepers will be taken over by groundsmen.

There is a natural synergy between all those practitioners employed in the maintenance of sports turf and so why not share best practice, training and education? A great deal of effort is already being expended on recruiting and retaining greenkeeper members and now the challenge is to market the benefits of membership to a groundsmen audience. I wish to make it clear that we are not looking to challenge the IOG, we are merely looking to provide an alternative choice of membership body to groundsmen, who may even wish to think about being a member of both BIGGA and the IOG.

In June, Sami Collins and I attended a third meeting at The Belfry with representatives of the PGA and the GCMA when we sat down to progress earlier talks on how our three organisations can develop and provide unified education to agreed common standards, especially at management level. Skill sets that you can argue are equally applicable to other related activities. The more we talk the more we discover that we have much in common and there is no doubt that the foundations of a close working relationship have been securely laid down.

The latest set of management accounts for the Association clearly demonstrate why it has been necessary to reduce staffing costs at HQ by way of redundancies. Advertising revenue has fallen victim to the cut backs in spending by both suppliers and clubs and the green shoots of recovery in some politicians' crystal ball are certainly not apparent in golf. We are, however, no different to the majority of businesses in our downturn, we are all very aware of the current economic climate and its effect on every day life.

The incorporation of BIGGA into a company limited by guarantee is well under way. It is the intention that the new limited company will be in operation with effect from July 1, 2009 at which date all assets and liabilities of BIGGA (unlimited) will be transferred into the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.

Funding problems continue to place a question mark over the future of the GTC in its current form. This aspect of greenkeeper training and education is vital to the success of the system and rest assured that BIGGA will do what it can to help maintain its existence.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive