

BIGGA



President
Sir Michael Bonallack,
OBE

Board of Management
Chairman – Peter Todd
Vice Chairman
Paul Worster
Past Chairman
Kenny Mackay

Board Members

Jeff Mills, Gary Cunningham, Archie Dunn, Ian Willett, Tony Smith, Elliott Small, Mark Dobell

Chief Executive

John Pemberton
john@bigga.co.uk

Head of Learning & Development

Sami Collins
sami@bigga.co.uk

Head of Membership Department

Tracey Maddison
traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Contact Us

BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO61 1UF
info@bigga.co.uk
www.bigga.org.uk
Tel – 01347 833800 | Fax – 01347 833801

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.

Editorial

Communications Manager / Editor

Scott MacCallum
Tel – 01347 833800 Fax – 01347 833801
scott@bigga.co.uk



Design

Design and Production Editor
Tom Campbell

Tel – 01347 833800
Fax – 01347 833801
tom@bigga.co.uk



Advertising

Sales Executive
Kirstin Smith

Tel – 01347 833800
Fax – 01347 833802
kirstin@bigga.co.uk



Sales Executive
Jill Rodham

Tel – 01347 833800
Fax – 01347 833802
jill@bigga.co.uk

Printing

Warners Midlands Plc, The Maltings, Manor Lane, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH
Tel – 01778 391000 | Fax – 01778 394269

Contents may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission. Return postage must accompany all materials submitted if return is requested. No responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials. The right is reserved to edit submissions before publication. Although every care will be taken, no responsibility is accepted for loss of manuscripts, photographs or artwork. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Association, and no responsibility is accepted for such content, advertising or product information that may appear. Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £50 per year, Europe and Eire £65, Rest of the World £95. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.



ISSN: 0961-6977

© 2009 British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Listed building status needed?

As you will see from elsewhere in this issue – and on the front cover – Wentworth is currently undergoing quite a metamorphosis.

When Chris Kennedy kindly gave up some of his valuable time to show me around I was astounded by the extent of the changes. Some of the new work, particularly on the iconic 18th, is jaw dropping and the hole will quickly become one of the most talked about in all of golf.

The standard of the work is superb and a credit to Chris and all those involved. What they have produced is high quality, to extremely tight deadlines, all at a club where failure is not an option

You must also take your hat off to Wentworth's owner, Richard Caring, whose uncompromising desire to create a true challenge for the modern day professional, not to mention pockets deep enough to make it happen, has to be admired.

But deep down I must admit to nagging doubts about whether a course, which could claim to be among the top four highest profile in golf, along with the Old Course, Augusta National and Pebble Beach, should be so radically altered.

If the West Course were a listed building, and not a 75 year-old Harry Colt-designed golf course, there is no way anyone could make the slightest tweak to it, without building regulations vetoing even the most sensible of ideas. Let's face it, getting council approval for an extension to a three bed semi isn't straightforward.

But when it comes to a golf course - which in the case of Wentworth could be justifiably claimed as a national treasure - complete transformations can be carried out with impunity.

The counter argument is, of course, that a golf course should keep up to date with the people who play the game and with developments in balls and equipment. There can't be a golf course with any history at all which hasn't been extended to some degree or another, or had bunkers moved or added, all to counter the massive distances that the likes of Alvaro Queros or JB Holmes belt the ball.

Also modern day construction is generally required to extend the life of older courses – replacing old water retaining, push up greens, which can't cope with the demands of year round play, with USGA style greens - so why not make design improvements at the same time?

But what if the work isn't done to a high standard, or a course is treated as a mere plaything of a non-golfing billionaire owner.

Now this is exaggeration to make a point so don't shout at me, but what if someone decided the Road Hole on the aforementioned Old Course could be "tarted" up, and the actual road flooded to incorporate a golf-themed log flume ride – at one stroke a water hazard to rival the Swilken Burn and a money making opportunity. Brilliant! Or the Postage Stamp, at Royal Troon, requiring a precise shot through a windmill – better still, a giant letter box! Who would be able to stop it?

Is it perhaps time that we had a Listing Building style status for our historic golf courses? It might also help to force the R&A's hand when it comes to restricting the distance that the ball flies.

Scott MacCallum
Editor