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A gifted and talented bunch

It is so refreshing to have just returned from St Andrews and been in the company of so many committed and talented BIGGA members. It goes some way to offsetting the consequences of a succession of late nights and early mornings that I only ever face during Open week.

The entire team, and it was drawn from members from all over the world, and a wide age range, but they gelled tremendously well. My abiding memory of the week will be of gallons and gallons of laughter, especially on some of the late evening mini bus rides back to Elmwood College where we were billeted for the week.

But what struck me was how, in the space of five days, people who had previously just been a face on a database became interesting human beings in their own right.

Having the chance to sit down and chat with so many of them led to discoveries about how gifted so many of them were, not just on the golf course but in other areas of their lives as well.

I uncovered someone who had recently rowed at Henley; someone who had been three time British Line Dance Champion, a top flight football referee, not to mention a host of high class category one golfers.

By the end we all knew an awful lot more about each other and it just highlighted the greatest asset that the Association has – its people. The only way you find that out is by meeting and chatting and that is where the BIGGA networking opportunities come into their own. Whether it be Section, Region or National events there are some wonderful opportunities to meet new people and, if The Open is anything to go by, make friends who will last a lifetime.

Not everyone is a genuine social animal and it does come easier to some people than others but I do know that BIGGA is a very inclusive organisation and the act of making people feel comfortable in what otherwise might be uncomfortable circumstances is almost an unwritten paragraph in the constitution.

A member of the Open Support Team, or a rookie to Harrogate, or qualifier to the National Championship, supported by Kubota and Charterhouse will never feel an outsider for long and the next time they will be among those making other people feel comfortable and welcomed.

Can I also take a few moments to pay tribute to Cecil George, who has won the BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award. I had the great pleasure of travelling to Lenzie, just outside Glasgow, to meet up with my old friend, Cecil, and his wife, Margaret, to interview him for the article which appears in this issue.

Cecil is another example of one of those people who is more than the sum of his parts. From his early life as a para, dropping behind enemy lines, to being responsible for developing a greenkeeping syllabus which was taken around the world. He has more than earned a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Having been so impressed by so many of the Open Support Team members there may well be some future candidates for Lifetime Achievement Awards among them.

Scott MacCallum
Editor