



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Paul Worster, gives his thoughts for the month

Change brings opportunities...

If anything has become obvious to me over the course of this past year – it is the need to embrace change. Change can be unsettling, change can be daunting, but always, always, change brings opportunities.

Opportunities to improve. Opportunities to become more efficient. Opportunities to become more prominent in the industry. Opportunities to become more effective. Time waits for no-one, and there is more than ever a pressing need for us to develop our abilities.

A single efficient unit to move the profession forward

At the moment however – it is survival of the fittest. BIGGA has a great network of volunteers; a great infrastructure on a Regional and National basis, and right now all this needs to function as a single efficient unit to move the profession forward.

The BIGGA Volunteer Board is looking closely at the organisational finances and the structure of the association – particularly HQ at BIGGA HOUSE.

We have the most terrific, purpose-built building with offices and a meeting room, but I must add that BIGGA, like many other organisations in this recession has to face the truth. Our costs are too high and our income has been dropping.

It is quite clear to me that there is not much more income in the industry at this moment. As a consequence the BIGGA Board has been examining and cutting costs wherever appropriate, to balance income and expenditure. The Board is looking at every last item of expenditure from travel expenses to the cost of meetings, from stationery to printing, and heating & lighting.

We are also looking for a new CEO. This is not something to be rushed. A job description has been drawn up along with a person specification. A parallel can be

drawn with the GCSAA who have taken considerable time and diligence in their search for a CEO and are only just beginning to initiate this despite losing Mark Woodward back in May this year.

While this is ongoing, BIGGA must not take its eye off the ball. We must press on with our mission statement which, put succinctly, is to advance the greenkeeping profession through education, training, and CPD.

We will need to help others to take these opportunities

If we are to advance the entire profession and not just a few individuals we will all need to take these advancement opportunities and make the most of them. We will need to help others to take these opportunities because BIGGA intends to always provide CPD opportunities for everyone.

We will all need to participate in local section, region and national events and we will all need to engage more fully in the wider golf industry.

Harrogate Week is a case in point. This only comes around once a year. This coming year, the show could be smaller than the last. However, with a huge effort, the 'Continue to Learn' programme will actually be bigger than ever before, to compensate.

These opportunities will not be diminished at all

This will mean that the networking opportunities – the research, the exchange of ideas, the exchange of information and problem solving – these opportunities will not be diminished at all. In fact they will be increased and all of them will be available to each and every one of us.

This year, the Board will meet the members in an 'open forum' situation. This meeting will follow immediately after the AGM when all Volunteer Board members will be

present to answer your questions about BIGGA and its future direction. I urge all members to attend. To avoid repetition of the same questions on the day may I invite you to submit written questions in advance? You can do this by emailing me at talktopaul@hotmail.co.uk. There should also be time for any questions that might occur to you at the last minute.

There will also be an opportunity for our Trade Partners to also meet the Board and to ask questions. This will take place before the Exhibition opens and is the ideal chance to build on the success that is Harrogate Week.

FREE Development Seminars for Assistant Greenkeepers

New for 2011 there will be a FREE 'Development Seminar for Assistant Greenkeepers' (Wednesday 19th January 2011 from 2pm to 4pm). This very down-to earth and friendly seminar has been specifically devised to increase the confidence and work performance of Assistant Greenkeepers. It is a free seminar but places are limited so please make sure you or your team members register early by contacting Sami or Rachael at BIGGA HQ on 01347 833800 - Option 3.

FREE Volunteers Workshop

Also new for 2011 will be a FREE 'Volunteers Workshop' (Tuesday 18th January 2011 from 1.30pm to 3.30pm) for people who are considering helping out their local section and want to see if volunteering is for them. If you are interested you will be joining the largest membership association for greenkeepers at all levels in the world. Quite a club to be in!

The Volunteers Workshop is also for existing volunteers from the UK and around the world who want to be even better at advancing the greenkeeping profession.

In my experience volunteering can be great for your career...

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TALK TO PAUL

Please note that any member can contact the Chairman directly and privately at: talktopaul@hotmail.co.uk

the course go to Terry Peachey the owner of Three Rivers and to the club house and greens staff for looking after us so well.

The London Club was the venue for the Knockout final between Ray Clark, Channels, & Jon Selwood, Avoncrop, and their opponents, Dougie Fernie & Bill Maynard, Upminster GC. Due to Ray being unable to attend at the last moment, Jon unfortunately had to play the match on his own.

Played on the International Course at the London Club, the match was played off in fine but cool weather, with the course in a nice condition, there were some nice but tough Par 3s, with some other very stunning holes and the course was well appointed with water hazards. Jon reported that Dougie played his socks off with long irons and fairway woods peppering the flag at every opportunity.

Jon managed to hold his own up until the 11th but then it slowly slipped away in the final few holes, too lose to Dougie and Bill by 5 & 4. Well done to both teams for getting through to the final and well done to Dougie and Bill for a fine win.

The Essex Section wishes to thank Peter Todd for arranging the match and the London Club for there kind hospitality and courtesy of the course.

Our Chairman has been a busy boy over the past weeks, totally changing the 14th hole at Bentley Golf Club, he's removed that tree which has caused so many of us problems over the years and adding another problem by enhancing and enlarging the pond to the left of the green. Then adding mounds to the rear of the green and extending a ditch to the right of the approach. I for one look forward to seeing the new style hole in the near future.

Last month Geoff Smith, Course Manager at Abridge Golf Club, successfully climbed Mount Kilimanjaro for charity, well done to him and I hope to have a full report in a coming issue of this magazine.

Bad weather has hit the South East as I write this, with wind and rain driving the temperature down. Looks like we are in for a long hard winter this year.

Please look out for a new look website in the early part of January, hopefully I will have time over the Christmas period to get some work done on it and make

some more changes and add some more features.

Next month's report will be of the Winter Team Event and AGM which by the time you read this will have just past.

If you have any news for the website or for GK International please contact me on 07764-862.337 or via e-mail essex-bigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer

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...You have lots of opportunities to meet new people and helping to organise events and influencing outcomes can look very good on your CV. It can make you more promotable. It can help you to have more influence over the way the association is run at local, regional, national and international level.

Again it is a free seminar but places are limited so please make sure you register early by contacting Sami or Rachael at BIGGA HQ or download, complete and send off the booking form. Both these free seminars will be hosted by conference favourite Frank Newberry whose 'Moving into Management' Workshop on 16th and 17th January 2011 has already sold out nearly three months in advance.

Silence is unlikely to advance this great profession

In the meantime - to quote a well-known supermarket - 'Every little Helps'. May I ask you to contact your local BIGGA official and tell him or her just what is on your mind? Perhaps you have some ideas they can use to boost local participation. Perhaps you could give them some feedback on what they have been doing. Perhaps you could give the Board some feedback. Perhaps you could give me some feedback. Whatever is on your mind please say it - rather than be silent. Silence is unlikely to advance this great profession!

In the meantime - have a great Christmas and New Year. I'll be writing again in January which will be my last posting in the magazine as your Chairman. 2010 may have been difficult - let's make 2011 a better year. I am hoping for better results and better progress for our profession - much better.

Paul Worster



**John
Pemberton**
Chief
Executive

December already and as the calendar marches on our sights in the office fix not just on Christmas, but also on BIGGA's annual event at Harrogate in January. This year is no different to any other in that respect, the pressure is on the Sales Team to sell the last few remaining stands and we are all eagerly watching the numbers rise on the bookings for the education and social programme.

Meanwhile the daily life in BIGGA HOUSE must continue, Membership Renewals and Applications to be processed, a magazine to write and design, advertising to sell, numbers to be crunched, papers to be pushed around, emails to be dealt with. While the turnover may be relatively small compared to some businesses it often surprises me when I stop and think about things, just how much work goes into making the Association function. The diversity of activities is what makes the Association tick.

Times may be difficult in this country in general, and let's make no mistake BIGGA is feeling the effect of the recession, but it is by no means in financial trouble. Having read a recent posting on the Bulletin Board it seems that the end is nigh. Not so believe you me. The profit for the year to the end of June 2010 was after all a profit and not a loss. This year so far we are ahead of budget, so more good news. Let's celebrate our successes and look at what we have built BIGGA into rather than dwell on the downturn and get depressed.

That's not to say that we should be over confident and ignore the trials and tribulations that we all face in 2011. Next year will be tough, there is no doubt about it in my mind, and BIGGA will need to do some careful strategic planning in order to maintain the current level of service to its Membership and the Industry.

As we head towards the end of 2010 I would like to personally thank the Staff at BIGGA HOUSE (and let's not forget that this includes the four Regional Administrators) for all the help and support that they have given me during the year.

We have faced many challenges together and come through all the stronger for it and their dedication to the advancement of the Association is only equalled by the efforts of the volunteers within the Sections, Regions and the National Board, without whom BIGGA would not be where it is today, at the forefront of a very specialist industry and a role model for others.

My remaining time with BIGGA is slowly being counted down but I assure members that I will continue to strive to ensure its success. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and may Good Luck and Good Fortune come your way in 2011.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive