

Chairman's Word

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

To: All UK Greenkeepers and BIGGA trade partners.

From: Paul Worster, BIGGA Chairman.

Subject – Your achievements, my acknowledgements, and The Boards invitations

**Dear Colleagues,
I am writing this month to express my admiration for the excellent work and the positive example set by so many greenkeepers who are based in the UK, and to acknowledge the essential role that the Association's trade partners play in making this possible.**

I have recently been fortunate to see the very best in UK Greenkeeping. I visited Wentworth, recently to participate in an event that rounded off the 2009 STRI Golf Environmental Awards and helped launch the 2010 Awards.

This was an event attended by the greenkeepers who featured in the 2009 awards. They were rewarded with a tour of the West Course, followed by a reception with Justin Rose. He is the figurehead for the STRI Awards. Despite being based in Florida, Justin follows British golf very closely and maintains a keen interest in the work of our greenkeepers.

As for the West Course – the work there, like everything that UK greenkeepers do, will be debated often over the years ahead, but I am very pleased to pay tribute now to the Chris Kennedy and the Wentworth team for the standard of their achievements.

The quality of the original workmanship and now the on-going maintenance, are both absolutely outstanding.

I also went to Celtic Manor recently, courtesy of a South Wales BIGGA/IOG initiative. If there are twin champions of South Wales greenkeeping, they exist in Jim McKenzie, Director of Golf Courses and Estates Manager of Celtic Manor, and Steve Chappell, South West BIGGA Regional Chairman.

These gentlemen between them, ably assisted by David Hart, South Wales Chairman of the IOG, utilised their passion for the profession, combined with their not incon-

siderable organisational skills, to navigate over 80 people around this magnificent complex which will host not only the 2010 Ryder Cup.

Rather like Wentworth – the 2010 course is an engineering marvel of modern golf course construction. Exactly like Wentworth – this marvel would not be sustainable but for the UK based Greenkeeper.

Make no mistake it is the UK Greenkeeper who stands at the heart of both these magnificent venues.

Without the UK Greenkeeper these tournaments would not be possible, added to that BIGGA provide Greenkeeping Support teams at each event.

It struck me, walking around at Wentworth, that this was something UK Greenkeepers have achieved. The expertise, the workmanship, the quality of the finished product are at the same time - outstanding - but also taken for granted.

It is taken for granted that whatever the demands, whatever the requirements, despite difficult conditions and constraints – the UK based Greenkeeper will deliver the goods every time.

For me, this is a vindication of the efforts of all those greenkeepers who involve themselves: - in training, whether it be devising, running or sponsoring training; - in leading and motivating the team; - in hard work and sacrifice, and even - in showing the sheer bloody-mindedness that is sometimes needed to inspire people to give of their best.

It is this spirit of hard work, sacrifice and perhaps bloody-mindedness that we and our trade partners will need to have in abundance in the years ahead as the UK government starts to pay off its debts by making cuts and raising taxes.

It is at times like this when the networking, the sharing, the inspiration and the education that BIGGA services and events bring to the profession, will be needed most.

In the coming years BIGGA events (particularly Harrogate Week) will also continue to be the place where we can stand together, brag a little about our work and seek 'best practice' from each other. Speaking of BIGGA events, the next Harrogate Week is only six months away.

May I invite you to put the dates 16 - 20 January 2011 in your diary now?

May I invite you to set aside the funds or start saving for Harrogate Week now before the cash is spent on something else? May I invite you to contact your local BIGGA Section to see what transport can be provided?

Even at times of recession and cutbacks Harrogate Week is acknowledged as the flagship event in the British Sports Turf Industry calendar. In 2011 there will be new features and attractions and BIGGA staff and volunteers are working hard behind the scenes already to make the 2011 Show a success.

Harrogate Week exists because the Association has the financial support of many companies in the golf sector. A number of them (Golden and Silver Key Sponsors) have together donated a significant amount of money to greenkeeper education over recent times.

These companies need to know that we appreciate their support. May I please invite you to say a kind word to our trade partners the next time you see one of them, and consider using their services? They are going through the recession and the cut backs with us and would appreciate our support.

Finally, it would be great if you could join me at the BIGGA stand at Harrogate Week 2011 to honour the efforts of UK based Greenkeepers and to acknowledge the kind contribution of our trade partners.

I look forward to seeing you there.

**Yours sincerely
Paul Worster**