



# Chairman's Word

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

## Should we keep Harrogate Week? You decide

**Harrogate Week is unique. It is the only Groundscare event in Europe to offer its members the following combination of attractions in one place.**

An Education and Training event that has dozens of seminars to choose from ranging from one hour to two days.

An Industry Show that has all the latest products and services on display and under cover.

A social networking experience – year in and year out greenkeepers return to re-charge their batteries and enjoy the camaraderie that brings the town of Harrogate to life.

Greenkeepers from all over the globe gather at Harrogate every year. And so they should for BIGGA is the single largest Association for greenkeepers at all levels in the world.

However, all trade shows are now going through a period of upheaval. In response to this, BIGGA, the IOG, Pitchcare, the AEA and others are looking at how Harrogate Week and SALTEX can be “future-proofed” over the coming years.

*BIGGA will fight fiercely to protect and enhance its membership services.*

Starting soon the industry will be surveyed to determine exactly what is wanted – e.g. the Trade, the Member Associations, and the individual working greenkeepers and groundsmen. Rest assured however – BIGGA will fight fiercely to protect and enhance its membership services at all times.

As a member of the Association you will be surveyed. May I strongly urge you – when the survey arrives, do not ignore it. Please consider each part of it very carefully.

BIGGA is committed continuously to improving Harrogate Week. This year the event will feature even more career enhancing opportunities, ranging from a one-day ‘Fine Turf Managers’ Conference’, to a ‘Development Seminar for Assistant Greenkeepers’, to ‘Viva Volunteers!’, a Workshop aimed at supporting industry volunteers from home and

abroad, to an ‘Enviro-zone’ where experts will be on hand to discuss projects and advise on such issues as ‘grant-aid’, carbon reductions and green energy.

I hope you will take the opportunity to visit our suppliers and manufacturers and discuss with them the latest innovations as well as the tried and tested products.

Also, take a moment to thank our supporters who have donated £1 million to the Learning and Development Fund.

I am very concerned that if we do not support our trade shows we will lose them. If we want to keep them we will need to vote with our feet and get to Harrogate Week in January.

We will need to fill out and return the surveys and show the industry what we want.

*To paraphrase that well known TV show. ‘Should we keep Harrogate Week? You decide!’*

Greenkeepers may not be able to continue to thrive in the profession without producing CPD certificates.

Much will be written about Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the coming months and years.

To continue in the profession Greenkeepers will have to embrace CPD. It is highly likely, for example, that Pesticide Spray Operators Certificates of Competence are to become time-limited, requiring a re-sit every three years – unless the operator can prove ongoing CPD.

This ‘compulsory’ CPD exists in other professions. Just as lawyers and dentists cannot continue in their profession without attending the seminars that update their skills and awareness then pretty soon greenkeepers may not be able to continue in the profession without producing CPD certificates every year.

*BIGGA will support your advancement all the way, providing the opportunities to keep up with qualifications.*

I refer anyone in the slightest doubt about this to (for example) Jon

Allbutt’s Pesticide Update Course (12 CPD points) on the Monday of Harrogate Week 2011.

BIGGA wishes to introduce a modern, industry-recognised CPD scheme which delivers exactly the opportunities that are needed for today’s greenkeepers to thrive.

However, without your help and participation the scheme would not be as effective or as user-friendly.

If you are an Assistant, or you know an Assistant who perhaps has never attended Harrogate Week, or who perhaps has felt overwhelmed at the prospect – then make a resolution to attend Harrogate Week in 2011.

There you will find something for everyone, and equal status as far as development is concerned. CPD has never been just for Master Greenkeepers.

Now it is essential to all our careers. Essential because of the pressure of the recession. Essential if we are to advance the greenkeeping profession.

Finally, may I just say that many of us can find ourselves working on far-flung sites often without close support from peers and colleagues. BIGGA provides support if you feel you are being treated unfairly by your employer or even your colleagues. We offer impartial and relevant advice through our legal helpline.

*Get in touch.*

I would urge any member to get in touch as quickly as possible should difficulties arise.

It can be very lonely at times, and this brings me back to the networking and support that BIGGA can offer.

*BIGGA has the systems in place for you to get up-to-date advice and support.*

Let me also assure you that your volunteer Board of Directors has the vision and the determination not to shrink from difficult decisions if they are in the best interests of our members and the best interests of the greenkeeping profession.

#### Contact Details

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