

due to be held at Neath GC on August 20 was cancelled due to heavy rain (I blame the Greenstaff) and had been rescheduled for Friday, September 10. Results weren't through at the time of going to print so will be in next month's column. As will a report on the annual Greenkeepers v Secretaries match.

The annual South West v South Wales match was held at the end of August at Ashburnham Golf Club. In a closely fought contest, played on a beautifully presented course, and, after countless count-backs, it was finally agreed that the South West team narrowly pipped the Welsh.... 6 bloody nil! So well done to the South West team and commiserations to the Welsh. Thanks to the Inscapes represented by Tony Horne for sponsoring the day, to Paul Hopkins for producing a great golf course under the direction of Huw Morgan who was watching from his vantage point in the Manager's office, and to Ashburnham GC for the club's hospitality and to everyone involved.

A bit of good news now especially for Steve Chappell, whose BIGGA Scholarship trip with Bernards was cancelled last year. He has just heard that the trip has now been re arranged and he shall be travelling to the GCSAA show at Orlando in Feb

2011. Have a great time Steve!

Right! I'm off to find out if Ms Julia Gillard, Australia's new Prime Minister, who hails from that picturesque and crime free seaside town of Barry, is related to the even more famous, Peter Gillard, former lecturer of Green-keeping at Pencoed College and IOG stalwart. Why, you might ask, is this important? Well, if they are related then the IOG might then have the backing of the Australian Government. Which will put them in a strong position in any future negotiations with BIGGA. I wonder if we can get her to attend the South Wales IOG Dinner? But only if she sponsors a table and brings a raffle prize.

I spoke on my Internet phone recently to an old friend who emigrated to Oz a few years ago and he described Ms Gillard as a 'Ranger' (pronounced like banger) which is in reference to her red hair and is short for Orangutan. I think this very unkind. This sort of name calling has no place in a modern society and I apologise to Orangutans everywhere.

Don't forget, if you have anything that you would like to have mentioned in this column then please contact me on the number below. Otherwise it'll be more ramblings in next month's column as well.

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**John
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Chief
Executive**

Sales for the space at the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition, better known as BTME or Harrogate to many, continue to come in steadily. There is no doubt that there is reluctance by some to commit to a stand at this stage of the year, but for those that delay the choice of stand position is diminishing with each day that goes by.

I hear on the grapevine that some companies, not many I am glad to reveal, think that they can avoid booking a stand and instead they intend to have their representatives wander round the show selling through the back door. This is a practice that must not be allowed to happen and we will be vigilant in watching out for this.

Make no mistake they are cheats. Who are they cheating? They are cheating BIGGA; they are cheating the bone fide exhibitor who invests hard earned money in a legitimate stand and they are cheating you the Member. It is widely known that the profit from BTME is BIGGA's prime source of revenue and is used to heavily subsidise the rest of its activities for the benefit of the membership. If we condone sharp practice like this then I would immediately question our business principles. I for one will do all I can to stop these people and have them escorted off the premises. Indeed, if I get my way, I will also name and shame in Greenkeeper International. Let's hope my rant is in vain and everyone plays the game fairly, but I suspect some will still try to 'do it on the cheap'.

Anyone approached by a company trying to trade from the floor without being an exhibitor should report the details immediately to any member of the Board or the BIGGA Staff. They may think it's a smart move but the real loser is YOU, the Member, you may not realise it but as a Member you own a share in BIGGA. It literally is your Association.

Talking of Harrogate the Continue to Learn brochure is released this month and a copy should have arrived with your magazine. If not then a pdf can be downloaded from the BIGGA website. The quantity and quality of education on offer is unprecedented and I challenge anyone not to find something of interest. For many of the workshops and seminars places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment and also to avoid the VAT rise on the 1st January.

There has never been a more important time for you and your employer to invest in your future. We all know that golf is going through challenging times and whether greenkeeper or groundsman, you need to keep up to date with practices, products and the industry. You can now book your place for education or register for the show on-line through www.bigga.org.uk or www.harrogateweek.org.uk so let's see commitment to your future, the future of BIGGA and the future of the sports turf industry.

**John Pemberton
Chief Executive**