



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

A huge effort

I've just had one of the most enjoyable months of my career in Golf Course Management.

I attended the Scottish National Tournament, held at The Duke's Course in St Andrews. The attendance, camaraderie and competitive spirit were all in abundance. Paul Teviotdale emerged as worthy winner, and there was a lesson for us all as George Brown took first place in the 1st Class category. Course Manager, Derek Robson, and the team had the course in great condition, the investment in drainage has paid huge dividends. Thanks to General Manager, David Scott, and the team for great hospitality.

Back at Elmwood, the team continues to work hard on trying to finish all the snagging, now that our major reconstruction work is finished. It's hard to get those extra tasks done when you return to normal team size. Six hard working French students had joined us for three weeks to gain some experience and provided some much appreciated help. We also held an Open Day with the industry to listen to their views on Education across our three main areas of Golf Course Management, Golf Management and Professional Golf Coaching/Performance. This will ensure we develop our provision to match the requirements of students.

We held our June Board meeting, the first with our new Chief Executive, and it was very progressive and forward looking. Watch this space.

I then booked a week and a half away from work, for a whirlwind experience. It started with a visit to Celtic Manor 2010, for a Corporate day with Bernhards, a key BIGGA supporter, where Jim Mackenzie MBE, showed us around and explained what had taken place during the Ryder Cup. The recovery of the course is as much an achievement as completing play during the event.

Next I was off to Inverness to the Barclays Scottish Open at Castle Stuart. Courtesy of Toro on Thursday and Ransomes Jacobsen on Friday, I had the opportunity to meet many members and also see this great new course. Chris Haspell, Course Manager, and Stuart McColm, General Manager, run a very smooth operation, and despite horrific weather conditions overnight on

Friday, they managed with the assistance of their teams and volunteers to get things back on track for the Sunday finish. I would highly recommend a visit.

A quick visit home to make sure it was still there at the weekend and then down to Royal St Georges for The Open.

En route I visited two clubs, Carden Park and The London Club, as well as the Lastec company, in Maidstone. We arrived at the University of Kent, where the Support Team

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was staying and prepared for the Association of Golf Writers' Dinner. Among the golfers who attended were Colin Montgomerie, who presented a special award to Ernie Els, three recent Major Champions in Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen and Graeme McDowell and far too many more to mention. There were also all the major movers and shakers in the game of golf. I went in the company of Graham Royden, the Royal St George's Head Greenkeeper, and it was great to see him so in control on the eve of such a major Championship.

Throughout the week Jim Croxton and I met with many golf bodies and with Trade companies who were attending. It was reassuring to hear of their support for the direction we are taking. It is a superb opportunity to catch up with everyone in the golf industry and we had many productive meetings.

We attended the annual PGA reception, where it was a privilege to see their PGA Master Professional Awards presented, and to meet John Jacobs, one of the most famous golf coaches of all time. We also attended Golf Monthly's 100th anniversary celebrations at nearby Prince's Golf Club where again it was a privilege to enjoy an evening with so many influential people in the golf industry.



I've been extremely proud to have witnessed the huge effort made by the Royal St George's staff in presenting such a wonderful course in superb condition. The diligence of our Support Team in assisting them during the week and the excellent organisation of our own BIGGA staff helped to ensure that everything went smoothly, despite another challenging rainfall event.

I must congratulate the R&A on once again organising such a fantastic event. To see Darren Clarke emerge as winner was very special. Many thanks to Jim McArthur, Chairman of the R&A Championship Committee, for recognising the efforts and expressing his thanks to the Greenkeeping Team, led by Graham Royden and also to the volunteers during the closing ceremony.

Almost every major event this year has been struck by significant challenges from the weather, and it has been noticeable that the work done by volunteers has been crucial in dealing with this to ensure their success. I'm proud to be part of something which helps make that happen.

Next month, I'm focusing my attention on my own course. The support I get from the team there has been essential in enabling me to work on behalf of BIGGA. I'm confident our new CEO Jim Croxton has settled in well, and will continue to move things forward.