



Chairman's Word

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

An interesting and challenging year

The time has flown by since I wrote my last column. I'm glad to say that I have not required much time away from work recently enabling me to concentrate on my family life and busy role at Elmwood. There I was thinking winter is here and we get a very mild November despite the weatherman's predictions, giving us more mowing to do than predicted and less time for some of the other tasks.

I did attend a Management Training Course delivered by the Scottish Golf Union and Scottish Ladies Golf Association, with collaboration from many other golf bodies, BIGGA included. Many thanks to Lee Strutt MG who presented with Steve Isaac (R&A) on our behalf.

It was aimed at Golf Club Management and it was very interesting to learn about all the other aspects of managing golf clubs and to hear from experts and delegates who work in these areas.

It gave me a good insight into some of the challenges they face, and confirmed how important effective management of the golf course and its staff and resources are in maintaining the overall health of any golf club.

It also confirmed how important it is that each department works together, aware of their impact on each other and the customer experience.

Our staff at HQ have been very busy, and bookings for the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate are very brisk.

Make sure you check out all that is on offer and take advantage while space is still available.

Planning your visit to Harrogate will enable you to access some great education, see all the new equipment and products you need to research, and make time to meet your colleagues in the industry and catch up on what will have been a challenging year for everyone.

I'm sure there will be lots to discuss and lots of good help and advice available on meeting the challenges in the industry at present. I'm certainly looking forward to it, especially as we will be celebrating 25 years of BIGGA.

Many thanks also to the BIGGA members and trade members who delivered presentations at the recent round of Regional seminars and at IOG Scotsturf.

They were all well attended and feedback was excellent from the delegates.

To keep up with all that is going on check the "Events" page on the website.

The judging for the Bernhard and Company sponsored BIGGA Delegation to the GIS show in Las Vegas took place. Congratulations to the worthy winners and commiserations to the many fine applicants who didn't make it.

The quality of candidate is tremendous and shows how professional many of our members are in developing their careers.

The L&D department is continuing the review of the CPD scheme, Accreditation programmes and the Master Greenkeeper Award. The aim is to identify the needs of

Resort of the Year, and Fife was awarded European Golf Destination of the Year.

All fantastic achievements which should help in raising the profile of golf as an important part of our UK economy, and in influencing the tourism sector.

With that in mind, Jim Croxton and I were invited to attend the All-Party Parliamentary Gardening and Horticulture Group at the House of Commons, Westminster, by Brian H Donohue MP, at the behest of David Gwyther (Horticulture Trade Association).

Although the focus was on that sector, it gave us an opportunity to build some further networks and see how such events can be used to raise the profile of our industry and try to exert some influence on developing policies which could impact on our industry.

Time will tell, but if you don't try you will never know!

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Greenkeepers and Course Managers at every stage in their career, ensure that relevant content and provisions are made, and make it accessible. Facilitating education for its members is one of the main objectives of BIGGA, and we will continue to seek improvements and developments to that end.

Locally the "Home of Golf" has been gaining wider recognition with the achievement of several awards, which would not be possible without the excellent work of many of our members.

Kingsbarns set the ball rolling by winning the The Golf Tourism Scotland Gold Standard Course of the Year. Next up, St Andrews Links became the first Open Championship Course to achieve GEO certification.

At the IAGTO awards held in Turkey, Fairmont St Andrews won European Golf

Many thanks to David for the invitation.

I am off to China again for a week teaching on behalf of Elmwood, and meeting some contacts there to see what might be gained from relationships with BIGGA.

It's been a long, interesting and challenging year, but exciting also. I am looking forward to the holiday season, and spending some valuable time with the family.

I know we all get very passionate about our golf courses, and this tremendous industry we work in, but its important that we keep it in perspective and realise that our family and friends play the most important part in our lives and we need to get the work/life balance right.

Enjoy the festive season,
My very best regards,
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