



Chairman's Word

As he writes his final column as BIGGA Chairman 2010, Paul Worster audits his motivations and aspirations

A momentous year comes to a close

The year 2010 was rather a momentous one for me - as it may have been for you. Some of you started the old year with a steady job and prospects, but unfortunately may not be starting the New Year in the same happy situation.

For many greenkeepers the old year was a year of change and adjustment; a year of difficult challenges but also, I hope, some welcome support.

I am grateful to my family, and my friends in the industry

This past year I have cause to be very grateful to my wife and my two sons for their support. I am grateful also to my good friends in the industry, my fellow BIGGA Board members, the hard working BIGGA staff and all our wonderful volunteers.

I am particularly grateful to Minchinhampton Golf Club for permitting me to have a considerable amount of time away over the last two years, and of course I want to thank all my staff for their hard work and support in 2009 and 2010.

At the AGM in 2010 I spoke from the heart in my acceptance speech. My personal view, after a year as Vice Chairman, was not a completely positive one. I felt the weight of accusation that the Association was somehow out of kilter with the aspirations of its members.

Like others on the Board I had heard criticism that nothing would ever change, and I had also heard a suggestion that once elected to the Board, ambitions to make change happen appeared to diminish.

I knew that this was unfair criticism

If this was true, then all Board members, volunteers and hard working HQ staff could be open to the further accusation that they were doing nothing, for example, to combat perceived apathy about

CPD in the profession.

I knew that this was unfair criticism, but I had to acknowledge that once such an impression had combined with the impact on our members of the worst recession in living memory something had to be done. Where then to start?

How about BIGGA's core values and mission? I was particularly concerned that our Association, which exists to advance the profession through training and CPD, was only actually able to train and develop a relatively small minority of its members over most past years.

Now some may argue that because we offer training and development to 100% of our members, our job is somehow done.

However, our mission is to 'strive through education and training for standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession'.

Focus on the things that will make a difference

Looking back over 2010 I hope that I have been reasonably successful in dispelling another notion - that the Board is a clique made up of individuals with limited interest in the needs and aspirations of the rank and file BIGGA member.

If you have any doubts about the ambitions of Board members I just ask that you give us a fair chance to prove otherwise. This month, for example, sees the first Development Seminar for Assistant Greenkeepers FOC at Harrogate Week. If successful, this will be run out in the Regions.

In 2010 I have also been motivated to help the Board that I serve to focus on the things that will make a difference, and I am hoping my successor will allow me to support him to deliver on a number of fronts going forward. Currently on my ongoing agenda:

1. Our relationships with our trade partners and other Associations

2. Member engagement in our services, particularly through uptake of CPD

3. Support for our volunteers
4. The CEO Succession
5. Governance of the Association
6. Re-alignment of the organisation
7. Advancement of the greenkeeping profession

So what is now happening in BIGGA HOUSE?

I suspect that many of our members will have concerns about staff changes at BIGGA HOUSE. Let me assure you that all of the hard working members of the HQ team and the Regional Administrators are highly valued by the Board.

Indeed HQ staff are already making bigger contributions to Board meetings. In doing so they are enlarging their contribution to BIGGA's delivery of its mission.

Meanwhile, the CEO and Board are working very closely together to manage the transition period to ensure a smooth and comprehensive hand-over of the business. This is a very important phase which will require John's full focus. To that end, Tracey Maddison (Currently Head of Membership Services), will take the role of Acting General Manager until such time as a new CEO is appointed.

There will be a huge "farewell" for John Pemberton at Harrogate 2011, and I hope members will take the opportunity to personally visit the Show to thank John for his contributions over the years. Keep an eye on the website for details.

The subject of Trade Shows continues to catch the eye

The subject of Trade Shows continues to catch the eye of the industry press.

Let me again assure you that the BIGGA Board continues to be at the very centre of discussions about the future of Harrogate Week.

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The results of the Christmas Competition will appear in February's column as the event took place after this edition went to print.

Back up to date now, and still on the subject of education, the Winter Series Of Evening Lectures has come around again. The first talk will be in January at Pencoed college, please contact Steve Chappell for the date as I haven't received it at the time of writing. Speaker for the evening will be Mark Hunt, of Headland. These evenings will again be sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity, so thanks to them from the Section.

Congratulations to Andrew Mannion, of Southerndown GC, on becoming a father again, this time to little baby boy Noa Tomos. Best wishes from the Section.

Congratulations to Russia and Qatar for being chosen to hold the 2018 and 2022 football World Cups, although this didn't go down too well with an English colleague of mine! He

was especially mystified as to the thinking of the choice of Qatar as a host nation. 'Can you name a Qatar player?' He asked. I thought for a while and then said 'Eric Clapton?' He was not amused.

Finally, mystery surrounds the events of a few months ago, when a few Greenkeepers from our Section went on a golfing trip to West Wales. After a game of golf, they decided to go into the local village to have a few beers. A few hours later, suitably refreshed and in high spirits, they decided to take a short cut across a narrow bridge. Yes, you guessed it, one of them ended up in the drink, much to the amusement of his companions. To be fair, none of them has divulged as to the identity of the unlucky gentleman. So please don't throw pieces bread at him while making duck noises at the Christmas dinner as this might give the game away!

See You Soon
Ceri Richards

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It is our intention to always act in the best interests of all our members.

If you have views yourself on the future of trade shows please let others know about them. Contact your local BIGGA Section committee members; let them know your opinions so that they can represent your best interests.

These fine people volunteer their time to serve you in your greenkeeping career. If you don't know who to contact, check out the Website, Magazine or contact a member of HQ staff on 01347 833800.

There is still much to be done

As mentioned before on these pages the Association we should always strive for must have:

1. A Customer Service Culture
2. The alignment of Services to Mission

3. Data Driven Strategies
4. Dialogue and Engagement with Members
5. The CEO to be a Broker of Good Ideas
6. Organisational Adaptability
7. Alliance Building.

I know that Andrew Mellon (Chairman-elect) feels that BIGGA should be at the very forefront of advancing the greenkeeping profession. He is a driven and talented individual who will do a great job as your National Chairman. I pledge my full support to him.

There is still much to be done and I hope that I can play my part in helping Andrew in every way possible during his year. I hope that you too will find your own way of taking this great profession forward.

My best wishes for a prosperous 2011.

Thanks - and regards,
Paul Worster



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

Signing off for the last time

As we move into 2011 I sit down to write what is to be my last ever column for Greenkeeper International. This time last year I was focusing on dieting and handicaps with the thought of life without BIGGA never crossing my mind. What a difference a year makes though, my weight and my handicap remain unchanged but having given my future a great deal of thought I have decided to move into semi-retirement as from the end of April and will therefore be leaving my present post with BIGGA.

I first joined the Association in March 1993 and have, in my almost 18 years, built on my previous experience as an accountant and business manager to acquire a wealth of industry specific knowledge and large database of contact details that need to be passed on to the Board and my eventual successor. In order to achieve this the Board have asked me to seek some peace and quiet and to write them what in essence will be a manual to the job of Chief Executive, incorporating as much of that knowledge that I can.

Therefore, with effect from January 4, I will not be attending the office as frequently as I have in the past and in the interim period, until a successor has been appointed, Tracey Maddison, currently Head of Membership Services, will take on the role of Acting General Manager, working with the Board, myself and the existing staff team to ensure the ongoing success of BIGGA and the continuity of the high level of service that it offers to both Members and the Industry. I will continue to be available to the Board to give advice, information and to help with special projects during my wind-down period and over the next couple of weeks I will be actively involved with the management and planning of Harrogate Week 2011.

2010 has been a difficult year for all of us but I have every confidence in the BIGGA Board and the HQ Staff for the coming year and I will be working hard behind the scenes to give them my full support. I thank you for the support that you have given both myself and the Association in the past and ask that you continue to put your weight behind BIGGA and the team at BIGGA HOUSE.

I will be attending Harrogate as usual and hope that I will see you there. After April please spare a thought for the old guy in the bright yellow suit manning the school crossing in the pouring rain ... it could be me!

Wishing everyone Good Luck and Good Fortune for 2011 and beyond. And now, signing off for the last time...

John Pemberton
Chief Executive

AGM Notice

The Annual General Meeting of BIGGA will be held on Wednesday January 19, 2011 at 5.15pm in the Queens Suite at the Harrogate International Centre.

All paperwork including the Agenda and proxy voting forms are available on the BIGGA Website in the Members' Area.

The meeting will be followed immediately by an Open Forum where members will have the opportunity to discuss matters of concern to them with the Board of Directors.