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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Déjà vu, all over again

There is a genuine feeling of déjà vu around the country at the moment. Wasn't it this time last year that the country was covered in snow and Christmas proved to be a real endurance test for anyone wishing to get about over the festive period?

Well here we are again. As I write we've had Siberian conditions for three whole weeks and rather than seeing the end of it we are awaiting another wave of the extremely cold stuff.

A White Christmas looks great on the Christmas cards, but not quite so great when you have to live, or travel, through it.

We can, however, still hope for a balmy spell in January for Harrogate Week but, whatever the conditions, I know it will perform its regular role, of providing the industry with a boost at the start of the year.

There can be no doubt that those who attend Harrogate, in either a visitor or exhibitor capacity, get so much out of it and I do have genuine sympathy for those who don't have the necessary budget to attend this year.

We all know that money is in short supply and futures are uncertain. What it means is that many people who would have loved to take advantage of the regular career and company enhancing treats that Harrogate brings are quite simply unable to do so this year.

You will all be missed, but you can rest assured that we will welcome you back with open arms in 2012, when hopefully signs are a little more positive.

And there is some light on the horizon for the golf business and it comes in the shape of the wonderful form of the British golfers over the last 12 months.

Lee Westwood has achieved the previously unthinkable feat of knocking Tiger Woods off the top of the World Rankings - the first Brit since Nick Faldo in '94 to reach such a heady position, while there are five players from these shores in the World's top 10, Westwood, Graeme McDowell, Paul Casey, Luke Donald and Ian Poulter, with Rory McIlroy just outside at 11th and, honorary Brit, Ernie Els, at 12th.

Put that together with the stunning victory in the Ryder Cup, at Celtic Manor; McDowell's magnificent win in the US Open, at Pebble Beach, and - let's claim a bit of credit as well for - Martin Kaymer's win in the USPGA Championship, at Whistling Straits, and we have enough reason to expect that the popularity of golf is on the up.

Remember the golden age of the 80s when we had Seve, Sandy, Nick, Woosie and Bernhard all playing at their absolute peak?

The benefits that brought to the game were huge and golf clubs were swinging places to be. With the new generation of player beginning to do equally well it would be great to see such enthusiasm for golf resurface.

So we do have some justification for a bit of optimism.

A happy new year to you all.

Scott MacCallum
Editor