



Chairman's Word

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

Moving forward

As you will know (if you read the website and the last magazine) our new CEO Jim Croxton is now in post as of May 31.

Jim's extensive knowledge of the Golf sector, his managerial and commercial experience will I'm sure be a great asset in assuring we utilise fully the potential of our members and the great team we have at HQ, and in the field through our Regional Administrators, and Sections.

We were fortunate in having many great candidates to choose from, and Jim was able to demonstrate to the Board, how he had the necessary qualities and leadership to take BIGGA forward.

(Nothing like a little bit of pressure Jim?)

Myself and Sami Collins, on behalf of BIGGA attended a meeting at the Belfry with the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) and The Golf Club Managers Association (GCMA), as the group collectively known as the Golf Club Management Partnership, (GCMP).

The immediate reaction may be, "Oh, not another group", but this is not simply a talking shop.

The group's purpose is to explore positive ways of collaborating between those who represent the majority of people employed to work at Golf Facilities.

That collaboration will seek to ensure that resources we commit to providing education and other services are used most effectively and that we avoid duplication, especially important in tough economic times such as these.

The added benefit is that each Association achieves a better understanding of the role their respective members play, and by gaining a mutual respect for each, can encourage and demonstrate the benefits of closer team working within our workplaces.

The meeting was very positive and I look forward to sharing with you soon examples of how this group's work will benefit you.

I was also asked to speak on behalf of BIGGA at the Golf Environment Organisation (GEO) Symposium.

Federations from all over Europe and all the Golf industry bodies were in attendance

and it once again demonstrated the benefit to be gained from close collaboration between everyone working in our Industry.

There is so much great work taking place, so much good practice, and innovation, and GEO can be a great conduit for sharing that work.

As you know we entered a strategic agreement with GEO at Harrogate in January, with a view to improving the services available to you.

Many other countries in Europe are taking full advantage of their services.

I would encourage you to discuss with your club and register on their website.

www.golfenvironment.org

In a very brief process you can upload some basic information which will produce an action plan, demonstrating how you can progress forward to achieving recognition for the great work taking place on most golf courses, and help to improve the image golf portrays in the wider world.

This is vital in ensuring that UK Greenkeepers remain at the forefront of developments of this type in Golf.

In conjunction with this I would also encourage you to make use of the benchmarking and self assessment tools available through the R&A on their website, www.bestcourseforgolf.org

Both sites have excellent case studies and a wealth of information to help you in managing the Golf Course.

Words can be extremely powerful, and it's important that you don't take everything you read or hear as fact and take time to look further.

If one were to believe the writings in a certain editorial from an industry magazine, then you would have seen Harrogate 2011 portrayed as "poor".

BIGGA won't be bullied! It's easy for those sitting on the side, with solely their own commercial interest to consider, not their members, to make such casual unsubstantiated speculative remarks and attempt to force a rash decision.

The facts, as correctly reported by BIGGA, speak for themselves on the outcomes of Harrogate, and the members proved that it was a success.

2012 is already well on the way to being a huge success with bookings very buoyant.

But we are not complacent; we will seek to properly research the correct solutions going forward which will benefit us all in a sustainable manner.

We have spoken with many customers, and there is "no one size fits all" solution, but that makes the continuing work even more important in ensuring we make informed decisions about how to move forward.

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Our members are the arbiter of our success.

We are currently investigating fully and planning to survey our stakeholders, alongside IOG, to ensure we get the necessary information to ensure sensible decisions are made.

Please contact me if you wish to share opinion on this matter.

It will get a hearing at the Board.

Finally, I took advantage of a week off at Easter for a quick break in Cornwall with the family.

It was good to switch off briefly and recharge the batteries for the season ahead, and make sure the kids still recognised me!

amellon@elmwood.ac.uk
Tel: 07780 995602