



Chairman's Word

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

The times they are a changing - perhaps

So March broke all records for warm weather and lack of rain, certainly in the East of Scotland, and it was so good to be out dealing with irrigation issues, with sun on your back, and seeing all the golfers with smiles on their faces, in warm weather clothing. The course has greened up, it's beginning to look nice and healthy again and growth is filling out the winter wear areas.

I'd like to start by thanking Peter Boyd for his loyal and dedicated service to BIGGA. We wish him all the best in his retirement and I know he will be missed by all who have come to know him as a friend. I'd also like to wish Angela Wilson, from our accounts department all our best wishes as she moves to Scotland, and to thank her for her excellent work during her time at BIGGA.

Feedback from all the National conferences and events has been very positive, and there is definitely a more positive outlook on the golfing front. I attended the one week SGU Management Development Programme Level II Course, excellently hosted by the SGU and SLGA. It has been developed in conjunction with the Club Managers Association of Europe and approved by the Club Managers Association of America, the Industry leaders in this field. I'm glad to report BIGGA played their part, with Jim Croxton, our CEO and Gordon McKie, St Andrews both doing a great job in representing our Association. Well done to all involved! The other speakers were also excellent and the company of the delegates all working at a variety of clubs made for an interesting week.

We are considering the possibility of running such a course at Harrogate. Whether you decide to move into management at your club or not, having an understanding of the full picture and the management issues facing the club as a whole gives you a very good perspective in considering how you manage the course and the impact of all the decisions you make. It also teaches you the vital importance of good communication.

I am planning my next trip to China, on behalf of Elmwood where I will be teaching Golf Course Superintendents. I'll also take the opportunity to further discuss how



The course has greened up, looking healthy again, and the growth is filling out winter wear areas

Woburn Golf Club, by George Little

BIGGA may be of benefit to International members there.

You may be aware that a private members bill was presented to Parliament to consider moving our clocks forward one hour. This has been delayed due to lack of time, but it will surface again as there is a large body of support behind it. BIGGA had previously been opposed to this about 10 years ago when it first surfaced. Our opinion has once again been sought by various bodies. I would ask you not to rush to conclusions and that we work to form an informed opinion of the impact this may have, looking at positives and negatives if we can.

No doubt, it does not rest on our opinion whether it proceeds or not, but others in the industry would be wise to understand the impact before making their own positions clear. For example: in the shoulder seasons (Spring/Autumn), we will have longer evenings, potentially allowing more golf and a useful revenue stream to the golf clubs. Conversely, preparation time in the morning will be limited if golfers are still to get a round in before lunch, and maintenance schedules could be under severe pressure to keep ahead of play. Potentially secure income at present could therefore come under threat. It would be useful to have a wide consultation and ensure its impact is understood.

On another subject, The R&A is working to protect the enjoyment of the game and

to safeguard the financial operations of golf facilities, in a manner which preserves natural environments and enhances community engagement. Their website has a vast array of content which will help and support you to understand this subject better. You can access it through the BIGGA website under the "Sustainability" page under "Resources" or at www.randa.org/en/TheGolfCourse.aspx

I hope you are all excited and as prepared as you can be for the season ahead, whether its dealing with too dry, too wet, too hot, too cold, turf problems, machinery problems, whatever, you can always seek the help of your fellow members on the forum as there will always be someone else reading it who has faced the same challenges.

The dreaded "M" golf major is just round the corner. Although it leaves many of us facing very high expectation levels, on the plus side it drives golf participation, and revenue and I like to think the gap between what we can all produce now with the skills and resources we have, and what they have done for years, has been reduced.

I hope for all of you your season gets off to a good start. Remember to use BIGGA to seek any advice or support you need, and if you have any suggestions on anything you think BIGGA should be considering, then let me know. My best regards.

Andrew Mellon, Chairman 2012
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