

BIGGA



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Open support

Ernie Els was rightly hailed for his brilliant back nine that piled pressure on Adam Scott and brought him his first major for ten years, but congratulations must also go to Paul Smith, his team and all the volunteer greenkeepers including the BIGGA Support Team who fought the elements to provide a first class examination at Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club for the 141st Open Championship.

Last year's Open passed in a bit of a blur for me coming so soon in to my time with BIGGA so this year it was immensely gratifying to have the chance to be involved with the Support Team from the very beginning and to witness the extraordinary teamwork and determination from all concerned first hand.

The Open is a great opportunity to remind the golf industry of just how vital quality course management and the thousands of skilled practitioners who provide the excellent playing conditions are particularly bearing in mind the standards that modern golfers have come to expect.

Recently though we have spent too much time counseling and advising members facing redundancy at golf clubs that are undergoing financial hardship. The golf industry is not immune to the effects of the global recession but it is surely a false economy to place at risk the effective management of a facility's prime asset - its course.

Deterioration in course condition, as we have read in previous editions, has a major downward impact on club revenue so golf clubs are placing their very existence in jeopardy by making skilled, educated, professional course managers and head greenkeepers redundant.

Attending the Championship at Lytham provided the opportunity to make

representation to many industry bodies that can attempt to influence decision makers at club level and I am delighted that our message was heard loud and clear and was well received. We continue to work hard with our various industry partners on this crucial issue.

As Andrew Mellon departs for warmer climes we welcome Tony Smith as BIGGA's 25th Chairman and look forward to working closely with him and his Vice Chairman Chris Sealey to continue to implement the Board's vision for the Association.

Both men have considerable experience in the industry and at Board level and I know they are hugely committed to the success of BIGGA.

With The Open behind us it is now time for the team here at BIGGA House to begin the detailed planning for BTME in January 2013.

In this edition we preview the Turf Managers Conference which is shaping up to be a must attend event for next year for all course managers and head greenkeepers. Pencil Monday 21st January in to your diary now!

Enjoy the read.



**Jim Croxton,
BIGGA CEO**