



# Chairman's Word

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

## All good things...

**I've mentioned the weather several times in my previous reports, but I've come to the conclusion that I am a jinx, and just as we think we have seen one extreme we witness another. I hope the guys who endured the recent floods are coping and wish them the best in their efforts to restore their courses.**

No doubt some of you will have heard the news that I am moving on, so this will be my last official column as Chairman.

I have been offered and accepted a position on the "Dark-Side" as many Greenkeepers refer to it, as General Manager of Hydroturf International in Qatar. It certainly won't be dark there though, and those who know me must be smiling at the thought of my fair skin under that blistering sun. It will be a new challenge for me, in many ways, but I'm looking forward to it.

Leaving my current employer was a tough decision, as I love the job. Elmwood has been a great experience for me from which I've learnt a great deal and I will put that to good use in my new role. The demands and location of my new role mean that I must step down from the Chairmanship of BIGGA. That is something I'll do with some sadness, but also with a sense of satisfaction, knowing that BIGGA is in very capable hands with a dedicated team of staff, well supported by volunteer members through all the Sections, serving on Boards and committees to ensure that BIGGA delivers to the members. I'd like to thank all the members who have offered their support and advice to me, while I have been on the Board, and all those I didn't meet but whose participation makes BIGGA so strong.

I have really enjoyed my time with BIGGA, from the day I started greenkeeping, eagerly waiting for the magazine to see what more I could learn, and to see what everyone else was doing. When I got involved at Section level it was so good to meet so many people who were all willing to share their experience with me and offer support when I needed it. I'd like to thank the Central Section, who I've spent the majority of my time with over the years, for their friendship and for teaching me so much. They are a fantastic example of all that is good about BIGGA.



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I've been fortunate that my employer, Elmwood College has supported me in every way as I've sought to learn more, and in allowing me to spend more time in serving on the BIGGA Board. I'm very grateful to them for that support, and the experience of remodelling Elmwood Golf Course and being involved in the education of so many greenkeeper students. That has been especially rewarding and it is so good to see so many of them progressing so well in this industry. The team at Elmwood Golf Course have been a great support to me over my 30 months on the Board and their extra efforts have ensured that while away on business everything ran smoothly; some would say even more smoothly!! They are a great team and I'll miss them all.

Through my involvement in the Board I have experienced a wider view of the industry, witnessing welcome support for

our profession from all the various Golf Industry Associations and Organisations and the trade. It was great to see such overwhelming support when we celebrated our 25th Anniversary at BTME in January. Our increased collaboration with the various International Greenkeeping Associations has huge potential and it's good to see the willingness from them to work more closely together in future.

I'm extremely grateful to the founding members of BIGGA, and those members who served on the previous Associations before they merged to form BIGGA. Their foresight and perseverance has served to advance the standards of greenkeeping and the condition of golf courses. Their input to the formation of the GTC, and to the colleges in developing education is something we take far too much for granted today. Conditions of employment now, and the support

and the great opportunities available to budding Greenkeepers are in large part down to their efforts all those years ago. There is still work to be done though, and we have a duty to ensure that the Association they created continues to drive forward better education, support for all its members, and recognition of the huge contribution they make to the game of golf, and the pleasure and livelihoods it provides to so many.

I would like to thank all the current and previous staff at BIGGA. In some ways they work for the biggest greens committee in the country – imagine what that must be like! Their dedication and professionalism provides all the services and benefits BIGGA now brings to its members and I'd like to thank them sincerely for their friendship and continued commitment during an economic period which has not been the easiest for any organisation and brings added pressure to us all.

At the helm we have Jim Croxton, who has succeeded John Pemberton as CEO. I'd like to thank both of them for their support to me while on the Board. Their professional management of every aspect of the Association has ensured that BIGGA developed successfully and will continue to do so going forward. I've worked closely with Jim this last year, and his energy and enthusiasm, and his wealth of industry knowledge will be a great asset to us.

In July, Tony Smith from Teesside will step into my shoes. I've known Tony for about ten years, since he bought me a few pints in Southport at a conference (I've bought my fair share since in return). He has become a close friend, and he is totally dedicated to ensuring BIGGA serves the best interests of the members. His considerable experience will be of great benefit to the Board and I'd ask you all to support him and the Board in ensuring the Association continues to be of valuable service to its members.

I've made many new friends during my time in BIGGA, and I will continue to offer any support I can to an association, which has helped me so much. I intend to continue making the annual pilgrimage to Harrogate to keep up with all the developments in the industry and to catch up with everyone.

My wife and kids have been very patient, thankfully, during my time as a greenkeeper and all the time I spent obsessing about the course, and lately with BIGGA. Although I will be working hard in my new job, I'll definitely be spending more time with them and I'm looking forward to it. (I hope they are!)

So over to Tony – I must admit, not having HQ chasing me every month for the column is not something I'll miss, but I will look forward to receiving Greenkeeper International and keeping up to speed with everything. Thank you sincerely to everyone in BIGGA and I wish the Association the very best for the future.

**My best regards, Andrew Mellon**  
**Chairman 2012, 07780 995602**  
**amellon@elmwood.ac.uk**



## Save the Date - 2013 Turf Managers' Conference at BTME

The third edition of the very popular Turf Managers' Conference will take place on Monday 21st January 2013 during BTME at Harrogate.

The finishing touches are just being applied to the conference programme and full details will be available on [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) shortly.

We are pleased to announce that the world-renowned expert on green speed and performance Dr Thom Nikolai will be opening the conference and further topics to be covered include the latest news on Turf Diseases, Communicating with employers and golfers and Organisational Politics amongst others.

The Turf Managers' Conference is a not to be missed opportunity to broaden your knowledge of cutting edge turf management whilst improving your wider managerial skills.

## Turf Grass Information File Closer to Full-Text Availability

The Turf Grass Information File (TGIF), the largest online collection of turf related research and information has passed a truly significant milestone – as of June 2012, 50% of all TGIF records link to full-text of the item.

This is a particularly important achievement for users of TGIF worldwide.

Full-text availability is highly desirable in these instances, saving valuable time and effort dedicated to locating physical copies for personal use. With half of all TGIF records linking to full-text, this means thousands and thousands of records link directly to content.

BIGGA announced recently that the TGIF has been made available free of



charge to all Members through [bigga.org.uk](http://bigga.org.uk) by visiting the Members Area, selecting Member Resources from the options on the left hand side and scroll down to Turfgrass Information File (TGIF), from here you can click through to the site.

Back at the end of 2005, TGIF had 108,741 records with only 21% linked to full-text, approximately 23,000 records.

Today, however, TGIF has about 204,000 records total, meaning a little over 102,000 records are full-text accessible.

In the span of just six years, the TGIF database has nearly doubled in strength, while the availability of full-text has tripled.