



Chairman's Word

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

Meeting the challenges

This last month since BTME at Harrogate has been very busy at work and in my duties to BIGGA. A nice dry spring has allowed us to progress well with the continued improvements at Elmwood Golf Course, building new bunkers, at our 18th green, and landscaping areas around our entrance way. Students have been heavily involved at all levels, learning the importance of all aspects, eg. planning, resources, effective execution, evaluation, and communication. Preparing the course for another season is also top of the agenda.

In a similar vein BIGGA work continues. The staff have met to evaluate BTME 2012, the members have also been surveyed online and findings will be discussed at the March Board meeting. The Board and the Chief Executive met in early February to continue work on the Strategy and Business plan. This will also be advanced at the March Board meeting.

I attended the FEGGA conference with the CEO in Prague, Czech Republic. The hospitality of the Czech Greenkeeping Association was warm, friendly and extremely well organised. It was good to meet representatives from so many of our European Associations and to hear about the issues affecting them and to discuss potential solutions to address them. We were invited to attend the Board meeting, and we took the opportunity to represent the views of BIGGA's members. We will continue to press for more involvement in order to ensure BIGGA members are represented in the work FEGGA undertakes and can make an appropriate contribution, alongside all the Associations of Europe to our mutual benefit.

I'm just back from the Golf Industry Show hosted by GCSAA in Las Vegas. We had many meetings with our counterparts, to discuss how to help our members. Bob Randquist (President), Rhett Evans (CEO) and The Board took time to meet with us and I'm pleased to inform you that we have formally signed a Strategic Agreement with GCSAA which will strengthen both Associations and enable us to advance our missions and promote cooperation and goodwill between our members.

Opportunities for successful collaboration exist in five specific areas:

- Annual education conferences and trade shows
- Support from industry vendors, sponsors and partners
- Professional development and education, and recognition of qualifications/awards
- Commitment to sustainability
- Membership products, services and information

This is a great opportunity to ensure that we can share good practise, and the spirit and goodwill which was shown to us during this visit gives me confidence that this work will bring real benefit to our members. Our staff will be working together to see how they can best implement these opportunities and we will communicate this to you in due course.

GCSAA has at it heart, the same as BIGGA; passionate, professional and dedicated members and staff, for whom the

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camaraderie of a Professional Association provides a network through which we can constantly strive to improve, gain support when necessary, and share our experiences for the benefit of others. I was very proud to witness this professionalism demonstrated by our very own Bernhard's delegation, who thanks to such generous support were able to benefit from this experience. This will be reported in more detail next month.

An International meeting also took place and discussions were held on further collaboration globally among all our Associations. This will be developed further by our CEOs who communicate regularly, and hopefully we will see what progress can be made.

Since Golf's origins in Scotland in the form we recognise, it has spread across the world, and the standards expected and

the demands on Course Managers and Greenkeepers has increased dramatically. As golf courses were developed in increasingly diverse terrains and climate conditions the challenges grew and our profession adapted to cope with these challenges. Many lessons have been learned with tens of thousands of courses being built in the established golf markets. Such vast knowledge, skills and experience has great value and we need to ensure it is shared. The economic climate has brought about the latest challenge we face, and this has led to a greater understanding that golf developments and maintenance practices must be sustainable in the true sense of the word. This is a vitally important area in which we can all learn from one another, and will be at the forefront of collaborations we seek.

The future of the game of golf depends on growing the game, in a way that it is recognised as a responsible part of the community. Golf can be a leader in sus-

tainable sport and business, universally valued for good environmental and social contributions. I'd encourage you again to visit the website of GEO at:

www.golfenvironment.org/mygeo/register/oncourse

In about 15 minutes, and at no cost to you, you can enter some simple information, which will create an action plan for you and your club, which along with the website will provide you with some great advice and share many good examples of other clubs work in this area.

I'd like to wish you all the best for the coming golf season. 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.

Andrew Mellon, Chairman 2012
amellon@elmwood.ac.uk