



Chairman's Word

BIGGA National Chairman, Tony Smith, writes with his regular update

European support

Firstly, I'm delighted to say the board and I recently enjoyed hosting the Board of the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations (FEGGA) at BIGGA House.

We have many members who work in different countries across Europe and there are many areas that affect greenkeeping that are governed by the European Union.

It is therefore important to BIGGA that FEGGA has our strong support and as the largest association within Europe we do all we can to ensure our members are well represented. As part of our meeting we welcomed the FEGGA board for a joint session which was positive and constructive on both sides.

As the frosts begin to set in it's a sure sign that BTME is getting closer, and I'm urging everyone to get in gear for BIGGA's showpiece event.

After such a successful event last year, we need everyone to be supporting and promoting the trade show, the seminars, the workshops and everything associated with BTME. If you're coming – and if not, why not? – you need to be sorting out your travel plans and booking accommodation, it will come round before you know it.

We want you not only to attend, but to encourage as many other people to attend as possible and bring them along. Everything you could possibly need is on our dedicated website at btme.org.uk

I know everyone thoroughly enjoyed the 2012 BIGGA National Championship. It was an exceptional event on a traditional golf course, immaculately prepared by Derek Wilson and his team. I'd like to thank the captain David Moore and the entire Irvine Golf Club for their hospitality, and also the sponsors Charterhouse and Kubota who once again offered excellent support for the event.

Summer turned up at last,



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although I seemed to spend most of the tournament in a bunker on the 18th. I thought I was going to bury myself in the first one, then managed to escape but landed right in another. My misfortune apart, it was a wonderful couple of days.

During the presentation dinner I took the opportunity to mention one subject that I want to be a recurring theme of my time as Chairman and beyond – communication. We all know that course management can be a lonely business at times and when the weather is inclement as it has been this year it can also be quite a thankless task.

At times like these it is vital that we stick together and also make sure we talk regularly with our peers and friends. It's a cliché to say that a problem shared is a problem halved but there is no doubt that words of support and advice are always welcome.

So I urge all of you to make sure you pick up the phone and give

Tony next to the now infamous bunker on the 18th at Irvine GC

each other a call or a text and share your problems and successes.

On my own course, it's been very hard work this summer as I know it has been for everyone. We're working on improving the drainage as the wet weather has highlighted problems in certain areas of the course. We're also continuing work on the long-term tree management programme.

I was very fortunate to attend the Ryder Cup on behalf of BIGGA – what a fantastic experience. It was a privilege to meet Medinah's Director of Golf Course Management Curtis Tyrrell and see the knowledge Steve Chappell and Lee Strutt were gaining ahead of the next tournament at Gleneagles. BTME offers a unique opportunity to hear their reflections on a stunning event and share their knowledge - don't miss out.

As always, I'd be delighted to hear from BIGGA members. I'm available on 07988 838956 or at tony.smith48@ntlworld.com.

Contact Details

Tony Smith
07988 838956

tony.smith48@ntlworld.com