



Chairman's Word

**BIGGA National Chairman, Tony Smith,
this month focuses on the future of greenkeeping**

Young guns (go for it)

Firstly, many congratulations to Thomas Flavelle on becoming the 2012 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.

I was hugely impressed by all the finalists and was particularly taken by their knowledge, passion and enthusiasm as well as being a very sociable group.

Well done to all the finalists. It's unreal how much winning this award, or even being nominated, can help your career.

It lifts your profile hugely and stands out a mile on your CV.

If you're not convinced, take a look at the interview with David Norton on page 58.

Just three years after winning the 1990 title, he was Head Greenkeeper at The Belfry.

This says everything about the stature and importance of the award, and he has some excellent tips for greenkeepers taking their first steps in the industry.

It's vital that we educate and inform the younger generation who are the future of this great profession, and after meeting this year's finalists it's clear they are going to progress and become superbly skilled greenkeepers.

However, there is still plenty of work to be done in this area.

I received no formal education until my mid-thirties – it just wasn't available.

You could argue I blagged my way into jobs without any formal training, which was an unsustainable situation. Now, the opportunities are there to be grasped, and I would urge you to get your name down to attend the fantastic educational seminars at BTME.

Speaking of BTME, as I left SALTEX (where the BIGGA seminars were tremendous and extremely well-received) it was clear attentions were now turning to our flagship event in January.



I was particularly taken by the knowledge, passion and enthusiasm of all the finalists

Pre-registration is now open at www.btme.org.uk; sign up now to avoid the queues. Personally, I can't wait for my first BTME as chairman and I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

On the course, we had a little bit of a dry period in early September which I hope you also enjoyed.

We were able to cut the whole course twice a week until the rain came again in late September, and myself and all the team at Teesside have been working extremely hard to return it to the pristine condition it should be in.

It really has been a dreadful few months weather-wise – the only positive is that the ponds and lakes are full to the brim!

One of the main issues I've been concentrating on in the first weeks of my chairmanship is communication.

I want people to shout about BIGGA and the myriad benefits we offer our members.

We need to encourage the Sections and Regions to talk to us and tell us what's going on.

We've made the first steps on this mission but there is still more to be done in promoting the association.

I'm going to be visiting as many Sections as is practically possible over the next few months.

But, if you've got any issues whatsoever, don't hesitate to call me on 07988 838956 or email tony.smith48@ntlworld.com

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