

## WELCOME FROM BIGGA

### BIGGA



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The Carrick at Loch Lomond, Course Manager Jim Brown (left) with Head Greenkeeper Paul McClearn (right)

**Firstly I'd like to thank all those BIGGA members who took the time to respond to the Greenkeeper International reader survey recently.** This magazine is an

important activity for the Association on many levels but its primary purpose is to be a true benefit of BIGGA membership. It was heartening to read a great deal of positive feedback in the survey but of more importance were the many excellent suggestions for ways to improve the quality and relevance of the magazine's content. All these suggestions are being taken on board and some changes will start to filter into the publication from next month onwards.

**April signifies the traditional start to the golfing season as the familiar verdant hues of Augusta National are beamed into our living rooms.** This brings increased

golfer interest alongside sometimes wildly ambitious course presentation expectations (see The Back Nine article on page 66). With winter still hanging over large parts of the UK as I write, these expectations will need to be managed even more carefully than normal. It is encouraging to see just how many greenkeepers are now being proactive on this front through the use of blogs, Facebook and Twitter as well as old-fashioned methods such as newsletters and member gatherings. The industry needs events like The Masters at this time of year; they get golfers excited about playing the game after such a long winter. The challenge is to ensure they appreciate that Augusta-like perfection is largely unachievable in the UK climate with regular budgets.

**To illustrate this point in this month's magazine we hear how Jim Brown and Paul McClearn (see page 20) have set about dealing with the effects of over two metres of annual rainfall on their beautiful site by the banks of Loch Lomond!** Major drainage, turf health and bunker reconstruction work have been

implemented ensuring this busy facility is providing a more satisfactory golf experience. We also visit Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club (see page 26) in the South East of England where Chris Mitchell is the third generation of his family to have the custodianship of this beautiful course at which the governing Conservators ensure that the land is managed in a very natural way.

**Only a few short weeks after BTME 2013 concluded and already the signs for 2014 are extremely promising.** Following the

very successful exhibition in January, sales for next year have been extraordinary with many of this year's exhibitors increasing their stand space - making it tough to fit in those companies who want to be part of 2014 but weren't present this year. The sales team have done a great job in trying to accommodate everyone's needs and it looks at this early stage as though we may have all the available halls completely full within the next few weeks. The success of the last two BTMEs in particular has shown how important the exhibition and the associated education programme are for the industry. We are now working hard on the content for the Turf Managers' Conference and Workshop/Seminar Programmes, watch this space for details over the next few months.



Enjoy the read.  
**Jim Croxton, Chief Executive**