



# Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

## Muirfield signals a year to cheer

**A fabulously sunny week at Muirfield marked a year for me as Chairman. The 12 months really have flown by, and now seems the perfect time to take stock of the last year, and look at what the Association has done well on and the things we need to improve.**

Becoming Chairman has given me a great chance to get in touch with members I don't see very often. I have been surprised by a few things.

I think the regional roadshows broke down a few barriers, and the regional conferences were also well attended and very successful. One of the disappointments has been the lack of feedback in from members to the roadshows. We knew that members wanted us to go out and see them, which we did, but we haven't had much response from them.

I think one of the reasons is simple – lack of time. I'm well aware that you are all hugely busy on your courses, particularly after the terrible weather last year, and I know this has also been the case when other events have not been as well attended as in the past. I understand the circumstances completely but my message hasn't changed from the moment I became chairman – you get out what you put in and I urge you to attend as many sectional and regional events as possible.

The course at Muirfield was second to none, a true links course and the perfect test for the world's best golfers – which was shown by the fact that only the winner managed a below par score, exactly how it should be.

Our Support Team have again done outstandingly well and made a really positive impression on everyone they met, really showing the Association in the best possible light.

It was a fairly young team this year, along with a few more experienced guys, but their enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment was wonderful to see. Every single one of them did an absolutely marvellous job.

I'd also like to thank the staff from BIGGA HQ who came up to support the event. Rachael and Tracey did a phenomenal organisational job, and



**“You get out what you put in and I urge you to attend as many sectional and regional events as possible”**

John and Sandra performed a vital role throughout at the first tee organising the guys as they prepared to head out on to the course. It was also excellent to see all the board members in attendance performing hands-on roles – from first tee duties to driving minibuses and match raking. Jim and I had some hugely worthwhile and progressive meetings with, among others, the R&A and the Home Unions, and it's great to see everyone getting together at golf's showpiece event to support the industry and move it forward.

I'd also like to say it's a shame that I just haven't had the time to return to Teesside. But I've heard many people say that it's in excellent condition, and it makes me feel proud that I've left it in the hugely capable hands of Gary Evans and all the team there. I miss it and promise I'll be back soon.

I had the chance prior to The Open to

attend Turf Science Live at Wentworth – this was a brilliant event featuring superb technical briefings. I know I went away having learnt a lot and I'm sure everyone else did too.

I also had a message from my predecessor Andy Mellon who sends his regards to one and all. As he's now based in Qatar he's become more accustomed to the sort of weather we were lucky enough to enjoy at Muirfield. I liked Lee Westwood's interview where he joked that he didn't realise the time he spent in Florida would acclimatise him for the Scottish weather – sums it up nicely.

Cheers  
Tony

### Contact details

Tony Smith / 07988 838956 / tony.smith48@ntlworld.com