



Chairman's Word

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

Looking forward to 2014

I feel that November seems to be one of the busiest months for BIGGA members on and off the course and it's certainly been a fast and frenetic month for me.

The highlight for me was the Regional Conferences and I'd firstly like to thank our four Regional Administrators for their tireless work in attracting superb line-ups of speakers and for publicising all four of the events so well.

I'd also like to extend my thanks to the sponsors who supported each Conference, your backing is more crucial than ever.

I was delighted to see so many members in attendance and I'm sure you all gained plenty of knowledge and insight to take with you – I know I did.

It was the perfect opportunity for me to chat with members and discover what makes them tick, and hear news, problems and solutions from greenkeepers from the length and breadth of the UK.

The passion and enthusiasm you have for your jobs is superb and a credit to the industry.

I don't think it's unfair to say that this time last year, things in this industry were a little depressed, the weather and the economy had got everyone down a bit, but I really feel this has lifted and we can look forward with optimism.

With the Regional Conferences over, the focus more than ever switches to BTME 2014.

With a sold-out exhibition and bookings pouring in for our Continue to Learn education programme, the excitement is building – not just within our Association but also the industry as a whole.

Everyone looks forward to Harrogate to kickstart their year.

I'd like to highlight the Turf Managers' Conference in my column this month.

This really is an unrivalled educational, networking and development opportunity.

I was there last year and got so much from the combination of cutting edge turf management information, updates and management coaching.

I urge you to visit the BIGGA website or the dedicated BTME website to reserve your spot as soon as possible.



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There's also our first Welcome Celebration to look forward to straight after the exhibition on the Tuesday, featuring what's sure to be a superb speech from Peter Alliss – and it's free to all BIGGA members and BTME visitors.

I could go on for pages and pages about why you should attend BTME – if you haven't done so already, start making your travel and accommodation plans for Harrogate now.

I don't mind admitting BTME is likely to be a little emotional for me as I hand over the chairmanship to our current Vice-Chairman Chris Sealey.

However, I've been fortunate enough to be Chairman for 18 months and I intend to put all my energy into the remaining couple of months of my tenure.

I'd like to wish all members and everyone in the wider turf industry a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I hope you're all surviving the onset of winter, and that the weather isn't too bleak during the next few months.

Tony

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