



# Chairman's Word

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

## A memorable week at BTME 2013

**I'm putting these notes together as BTME 2013 comes to a close, and it's no exaggeration to say it's been an incredible week on so many levels.**

Ahead of this week, it has to be said things looked a little gloomy with 2012 being such a poor year for weather and also economically. My heart sank when I saw the snow fall on Sunday before the show, but the sun truly shone for the rest of the week and people started to flock in.

Cutting the ribbon to open the exhibition was a great honour and I can honestly say one of the highlights of my life. I've bumped into a few people who I haven't seen since I became chairman and their kind wishes for success in the role were very much appreciated.

The exhibition itself has been exceptional. There's been a good buzz throughout all the halls, a great atmosphere, and I've spoken to many exhibitors who have done really good business this week.

It has to be the best BTME ever from an education point of view. Taking the Turf Managers' Conference to a larger venue with better conference facilities was a great success and the quality of the presentations was unbelievable. I can't believe any Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper wouldn't benefit from attending. I also thoroughly enjoyed the Ryder Cup seminars with Curtis Tyrrell, Steve Chappell and Jim MacKenzie MBE, and the fact that so many questions were asked afterwards was a good sign.

I made a point of spending an afternoon visiting all the individual workshops in the Queen's Suite. I wanted to thank the lecturers for their exceptional presentations, and also all the delegates for making the most of these vital educational opportunities. They were coming out saying how much they had learnt and would be returning



Turf Management Conference, BTME 2013

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next year. Hearing them say that really was another big highlight of the show for me.

I know that some of the seminars were standing room only at certain times which is hugely encouraging and shows that members are taking advantage of our educational offerings.

I also found our Press Briefing midway through the show in the Media Centre to be very valuable. I was very pleased to see so many of the turf industry press in attendance asking honest questions, and receiving honest responses.

I'd like to all thank all the team at HQ and the Regional Administrators who have done a fantastic job in preparing for this show and working so hard during it. The James Bond Night which they organised was a great success – everyone I spoke to thoroughly enjoyed it.

I feel this week has proved once and for all that BTME is THE show to visit, the feeling everywhere is positive. Now our focus shifts to next year's show which promises to be even bigger and better. Before that however, we need to continue to drive for membership.

The association is strong but we need to continue to engage with younger greenkeepers and those that are new to the profession ensuring they know the value that BIGGA membership brings.

I want members who came to BTME to spread the word about how good the show was and how much there was on offer. I know next year's show will be fantastic, and I can't wait for it already.

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Cheers  
Tony