

## WELCOME FROM BIGGA

### BIGGA



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## Reflecting on a successful BTME 2013

**When five inches of snow fell on the Sunday night of BTME week I have to admit I was concerned that it would have a significant impact on the few days to come.**

Clearly though I had underestimated just how committed to attending and enjoying the annual opportunity to learn, network and interact with the trade so many of you are. I would like to thank all those that made the trip to Harrogate and made it such a success, in fact some of the exhibitors called it ‘the best for some.’

I would also like to thank the 121 exhibitors who were equally determined to ensure they were present to show off their ranges of products and services to such a committed audience. Good planning and innovation were required to make sure all stands were fully built, equipped and manned by the Tuesday morning but happily when BIGGA Chairman Tony Smith conducted the traditional ribbon-cutting at 9am all exhibitors were present and correct and there was a healthy throng of visitors already queuing to enter the Harrogate International Centre.

There were naturally a few hard luck stories, with some of our international visitors thwarted by flight cancellations but generally speaking those that wanted to attend the Continue to Learn programme and the Exhibition itself were able to do so and found all that is good about this great industry gathered for their benefit.

The education programme once again achieved the difficult task of improving on previous editions with the Turf Managers Conference (see page 22) on the wintry Monday a definite highlight, striking an excellent balance between high-level turf technicalities and important management topics. It was also heartening to see so many of the Focus On and Fringe seminars packed out.

BTME affords the Association the opportunity to fulfil constitutional obligations, such as holding the AGM, but also provides a great platform to recognise significant member achievements such as the awarding of hard earned Master Greenkeeper Certificates and CPD Diplomas to the deserved elections to Life Membership for Chris Kennedy and John Philp.

Once again thanks to everyone who came to Harrogate and made BTME 2013 such a success.

**In last month’s magazine I discussed the problem of companies who choose not to exhibit but still try and take advantage of the huge gathering of potential customers.**

I’m pleased to say that I spoke with many visitors who had taken heed of those words and had reinforced our stance when approached. There is no easy solution to this but I’m confident progress has been made. One or two individuals were asked to leave the Halls for breaching the rules on inappropriate trading and generally our exhibitors gave positive feedback on our actions. The turf industry is complicated, with the supply chain sometimes having many stages in it, some exhibitors do not sell direct to their customers so it is appropriate that their distributors are on hand to provide the link to the end user, but there is a natural distinction between those distributors and the companies who attempt to hijack the Show.

**Meanwhile the challenging job of managing golf courses through the winter months continues.**

This month’s edition is packed with articles on a variety of relevant topics including two examples of BIGGA members who have made substantial improvements to their facilities meaning better conditions for play and therefore happier golfers. Andre Eralh at Easingwold Golf club (page 44) applied real innovation to find a cost effective solution to tree encroachment whilst East Berkshire’s Matthew Nutter (page 34) successfully tackled the common challenge of bunker inconsistency with a co-ordinated programme of redesign and renovation.

Enjoy the read.



**Jim Croxton,  
Chief Executive**