



Chairman's Word

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

BTME will kick-start 2013

Firstly, I hope you and your families had a very enjoyable festive period, and you're ready for a positive 2013...and BTME!

BTME is a huge highlight of the year for me, as I'm sure it is for many of you. I'm sure you've all made arrangements for accommodation and what you'll be doing while you're there. If you truly have left it until the last minute, get it sorted now!

At the time of writing there were still places available on our superb education workshops and seminars – visit the BIGGA website or btme.org.uk and if you're lucky you may snap a place up.

I've attended every single day of every BTME since it began and can honestly say I've thoroughly enjoyed every minute.

I've visited as a delegate, Section committee member, Regional/National Board member, Vice-Chairman and am proud that this year I will be representing the Association as Chairman, cutting the ribbon to officially open the exhibition.

I will of course be attending the AGM. It will be held on the Wednesday of the exhibition at 5.15pm in the Queen's Suite at the Harrogate International Centre.

I really would encourage you to come along, it's an opportunity to find out more about our future plans and the direction we intend the Association to be heading in.

Our CEO Jim Croxton will make a presentation outlining the main strategies for BIGGA over the next year or two and will concentrate, I am sure, on the role that the current membership has to play in helping drive the Association and the profession of greenkeeping forward. As usual he and I will be available for questions thereafter.

January is of course a time for looking forward to the New Year,



Tony (right) with BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton, and past chairman, Andrew Mellon at BTME 2012

and I feel that this year it's more important than ever to be positive and really go for it in 2013. We all know 2012 was a tough year, and no-one was immune from the appalling wet weather.

As I write this in mid-December, my golf course, Teesside, has been closed for weeks. It was also closed for a period in summer, and all in all it's been closed for longer in 2012 than it ever has been in the past. Our sewage pipe has also overflowed twice due to the wet weather, and you can imagine the problems that caused (or maybe you shouldn't).

I have great sympathy for all greenkeepers who are giving their all in these conditions.

Of course you can plan for the worst weather and react - up to a point - but there can't be many industries where things are so beyond your control as they have been this year.

To keep our heads above water (sorry about the pun!) we need to pull together, and if we do we'll emerge refreshed, able to give golf-

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ers the courses they expect and hopefully looking forward to a fine and dry spring.

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I would like to close by congratulating the ten BIGGA members who have been selected to form the Delegation to the Golf Industry Show in San Diego next month.

As ever the standard of applications was incredibly high and I know the successful candidates will represent the Association with distinction while having an amazing opportunity to improve their greenkeeping knowledge and network.

See you in Harrogate.
Regards, Tony

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