

WELCOME FROM BIGGA

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Turf Managers Conference 2012

BTME brings New Year Cheer

A Happy New Year to all, let's hope it brings better weather and economic conditions than the last and that the amazing year of sport we've witnessed leads to an upturn in participation meaning more golfers and more golf.

Certainly the heroics of the European Ryder Cup team and Rory McIlroy's ascent to being the sport's number one superstar should provide inspiration and I know our industry is desperate to provide the excellent playing surfaces that make the game so enjoyable.

January is BTME month, the exhibition looks buoyant with many of our exhibitors debuting new products and services that will make turf maintenance more efficient or effective. The Continue to Learn education programme is filling up nicely with the Turf Managers Conference on Monday 21st going particularly well. The balance of technical turf matters with management topics is a great reflection of the role of the Course or Facility Manager and I know that all those who attend will leave having gained knowledge and skills that will benefit their surfaces and by extension their customers.

Visitor numbers look very healthy with pre-registrations up on this time last year, I would urge all of you who are intending to come to go through the pre-registration process on btme.org.uk to avoid the queues on arrival. All in all the signs are all pointing to another superb festival of turf management with the suppliers and manufacturers providing the platform for a few days of fantastic networking, I look forward to seeing you in Harrogate.

On a less positive note we have started to hear rumours of non-exhibiting companies who are planning to come to Harrogate and attempt to do business with visitors inside or outside of the Exhibition Halls. The Americans call this practice 'Suitcasing' but I have a stronger term for it – Hijacking. BTME is a brilliant vehicle for getting thousands of greenkeeping and groundsman professionals together and driving standards up. The hundreds of exhibitors who take space in the

Halls provide this platform and any company who seeks to take advantage of this 'Hijacking' is doing the entire industry damage. I would strongly urge any of you who are or have been approached by a non-exhibiting company not just to deny them your time but to make it clear to them that their actions are unacceptable. We understand that BTME is not a viable option for a number of companies but they should have the good grace to respect those who are contributing to the event.

During BTME I am very much looking forward to meeting up with the ten successful BIGGA members (see page 26) who will make up the Bernhards Delegation to the Golf Industry Show in San Diego next month. This initiative is now into its 11th year and I know a high proportion of previous delegates believe that the experience of taking part has had a significant positive impact on their careers. Our thanks again to Stephen Bernhard for his long term support of this fantastic member benefit.

My New Year's Resolution (or at least one of them!) is to stop moaning about the weather but I fear I'm in the wrong industry for this. A look back over the last twelve months of magazines shows that water – either the lack of it or far too much of it – has dominated conversation. In this edition we look at the way one club, Woburn, has chosen to address their particular needs (page 28) and hope to focus in future editions on the many innovative solutions that our members have found.

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton
Chief Executive