

WELCOME FROM BIGGA

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Some of the STRI Environmental Awards winners on the 18th at Wentworth

A thirst for innovation

Writing this column from the BMW PGA Championship where, sadly, off course issues are overshadowing the one and only Tour event to take place in England this year, it is fantastic to see the world's best players playing a beautifully manicured British course and it feels like the 2013 golfing season has finally begun. Congratulations to Kenny Mackay and his team at Wentworth for getting the West Course into such excellent condition after such a tough twelve months.

As always an excellent team of BIGGA volunteers assembled at the event to provide support to the home team and I know Kenny and all involved in the event were extremely grateful for their hard work and enthusiasm.

During the event a reception for the winners of the 2012 STRI Environmental Awards took place in the iconic Wentworth clubhouse and it was fascinating to chat to those assembled and hear some of the challenges that have been faced by our members all round the country. There is no doubt that everyone has had to be extremely dedicated and very innovative to get the nation's golf courses playable over the last few months. The innovative approach that our members bring to problem solving and overcoming weather, technical or agronomic issues is something that has really struck me during my two years in this role. It was certainly an issue that I was keen to highlight in a recent article in Golf Monthly that discussed the impact of the last year's weather on the whole golf economy.

This is something I'm keen to celebrate so on that note please see Innovation Corner (page 45, part of the Woolley Park course feature) – which aims to celebrate some of the more unusual approaches to greenkeeping. Additionally we really want to use the pages of this magazine and our website to highlight any successful new methods you have brought in at your facilities. This industry has always grown through the sharing of good practice and new ideas and I hope we're able to continue that

growth through our communications with you the membership.

As a member's association it is incumbent on us to also be innovative and forward thinking with our benefits and services to you.

This month we highlight changes to our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme that are intended to make the scheme both more user friendly and suitable to the needs of the modern greenkeeper (page 16). This includes a more modern approach to the different styles of learning that we all undertake as well as extending the qualifying period from the overly onerous annual requirement to a rolling three-year programme.

This month we also say a fond farewell to one of BIGGA's longest serving employees; Jane Jones has been the administrator for the South West & South Wales region for over eight years and has served the membership with great enthusiasm and integrity. Her excellent attention to detail combined with a charming manner have made her a joy to work with, we wish her well in her new ventures in the industry.

This edition features articles on a wide diversity of topics, from combining agriculture with greenkeeping (page 42) to the benefits of lightweight rolling (page 30) via the second and final part of Kevin Munt's excellent feature on the keys to career advancement (page 50).



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO