



# Chairman's Word

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

## A glimpse of the future

**The only place to start this month's column is Ipswich – or more precisely the HQ of Ransomes Jacobsen which proved to be a marvellous venue for the first ever Future Turf Managers' Initiative.**

It turned out to be a wonderful couple of days that I can honestly say surpassed all my expectations.

I'm 64 now but still came away having learnt all manner of new things. All the presentations were superb, but if I had to pick a highlight it would be Lorna Sheldon's seminars on interview techniques, writing CVs and effective communication strategies.

I enjoyed Lorna's seminar at the Turf Managers' Conference this year and was delighted to see her return and pass on her years of expertise.

You can have all the greenkeeping knowledge in the world, but without a well-written, professional CV you won't get past first base for the next position you're aiming for.

Once you've got to interview stage, you really need to stand out and Lorna showed everyone how. In today's highly competitive job market these are critical skills being passed on.

Well done to all the candidates, who without exception were engaging, enthusiastic and eager, and I've a feeling we will be hearing much more about them and their career successes in the future.

Also, my heartfelt thanks to the presenters, and the BIGGA mentors, who gave up their valuable time to assist the next generation.

Finally, congratulations to everyone at Jacobsen who were so helpful and welcoming.

When I started in greenkeeping all those years ago there was little to no formal training available and it was a frustrating time to be an ambitious young (or relatively young!) greenkeeper. I fondly remember the first ever supervisory management course organised by BIGGA which took place at Aldwark Manor in the early nineties.

The seminars, presentations and mentors we had gave us so much to work on and many of us went on to become Course Managers at all manner of courses.



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It was also a great chance to meet other greenkeepers from across the country, tap into their knowledge and get to know them personally.

It was a novelty at that time to take part in formal training, now there are so many opportunities for all members and you must take these opportunities.

As I mentioned at the start of this column, it doesn't matter if you're a little older and nearing the end of your career, you will definitely learn something.

I don't want to jinx it, but it seems the weather has turned and spring has finally arrived after one of the longest and coldest spells I can remember.

March was particularly cold which I'm sure may have thrown a spanner in the works for your plans ahead of the start of the season. I enjoyed watching a superb Masters tournament on TV, but as we all know, Augusta is a long way from the day

to day reality of life preparing a golf course in the UK.

In fact, I'm sure many of you had a wry smile on your faces as you watched the final holes take place in torrential rain and gloom looking more like a drab day on Teesside – they've now had a taste of what we had to put up with for most of last year!

With the Masters out of the way it really feels like summer is approaching, let's hope it's a good one. I've got a busy few months coming up, as I'm sure you all have, and I hope to visit as many Sections and Regions as possible.

As always I'd be happy to discuss anything with BIGGA members, my contact details are below.

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