



BIGGA members come together at Rockliffe

A **News Special** on the call to arms for the recent PGA English Seniors Open, held at Rockliffe Hall



BIGGA members from across the country came together recently to help out as Rockliffe Hall hosted the successful PGA English Seniors Open.

The team at the County Durham course was given just six weeks to prepare for the tournament and Head Greenkeeper Pete Newton knew he would need a support team to maintain the huge course which measures a staggering 7,897 yards from the back tees.

Together with Course Manager Davy Cuthbertson and Cleveland Section secretary Ian Pemberton, they appealed for greenkeepers to travel north for the week of the tournament and were delighted to receive offers from across the country.

Greenkeepers from Forest Hill, Forest of Arden and The RAC Club joined others from Matfen Hall, Close House plus other

local courses – and the team couldn't have done without them as Pete explained.

He said: "Obviously we were on a tight timescale, but I wasn't worried about the course quality as it's always at a high standard at any time of the year.

"The main issue was the amount of daylight we had to prepare the course.

"We started at around 6.30am for 9:30am tee times, and they were finishing around 4.30pm so we only had a total of five hours' light a day to work with.

"We were double cutting in the mornings and rolling to get the greens up to 10.5ft so there was a lot of work to do, but all the guys threw themselves into it.

"They were full of enthusiasm - we had rain on the Friday and I've never seen so many greenkeepers volunteer to grab a squeegee!

"The tournament was a huge success

with great feedback from the players and the PGA, and this just wouldn't have been possible without the volunteers assisting our full-time team here.

"They also gained valuable tournament experience, and I truly believe this is another example of the great industry that we're part of."

As well as help from various BIGGA members, Rockliffe enjoyed wider industry support. Reps from Tacit and Turfcare helped out as did the club's local Toro dealer Lloyds who supplied a mechanic, plus Gary Woodward from Bernhard Grinders who reground their machines prior to the Seniors Open.

Pete added: "Thanks to everyone who helped out and keep an eye out for more volunteering opportunities when the tournament returns here next August."