



# Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Chris Sealey, gives his thoughts for the month

## No rain in Spain...and get well Clive

**A few weeks ago I was privileged to attend the FEGGA Conference held near Girona in sunny Spain, and it was interesting to see how so many of their aims align with ours. It was clear they are looking to modernise, and explore exactly how they can best serve the needs of their members.**

We visited PGA de Catalunya, venue of the Spanish Open in May, which was just stunning. In many ways the course and setup were similar to those I had seen in Orlando just a couple of weeks earlier. Ransomes Jacobsen gave us an overview of the course's ecology work before Course Superintendent David Bataller gave us a fascinating insight into agronomic work and the course's history.

The educational seminars were excellent and it was also a terrific opportunity to catch up with brand new equipment from Campey, Toro and Syngenta. John Deere also presented a 'Q&A' session with a difference where you 'interviewed' other delegates, which was good fun!

I then headed to Dunfermline for the Scottish Regional Conference. It was superbly well-attended with over 200 delegates. Scottish Regional Administrator John Young had arranged a terrific line-up of speakers - Paul Miller from SRUC Elmwood, Gordon Moir from St Andrews, Alistair Eccles from Germinal Seeds GB, Cameron McMillan from Queenwood, Stuart Green from our L&D Department, Mark Hunt from Headland Amenity and Steve Chappell from Gleneagles. A superbly varied range of presenters and topics, and I know each and every person there will have learnt so much from the day. I would like to personally thank the Scottish Region for inviting me to attend and the fantastic hospitality and friendship shown to me on the day.

My next port of call in a very busy month was Walton Heath Golf Club for the South East Annual Golf Day. This was yet another very well supported event on a great golf course. I played alongside Jim Croxton and successfully managed to drag him down to my level with a particularly poor round! Sadly my excuse that I'd barely played in months seemed to fall on deaf ears. This is now the tenth successive year the event has been held at Walton



Chris with David Langheim MG, a prize winner at the SE Golf Day

**"It's great a club so prestigious is backing this important event in the greenkeeping calendar"**

Heath, and I think it's great that a club so prestigious is backing this important event in the greenkeeping calendar. Long may it continue.

Unfortunately one key figure was missing from the day. As many of you will know our South East Regional Administrator and former Chairman Clive Osgood has been unwell and was unable to attend. Clive - it wasn't the same without you, and everyone at the Association and in the industry wishes you a full and speedy recovery.

Next up was the Board Meeting at BIGGA House. It's fair to say that following a very positive BTME, things are on the up and it was a productive meeting. Now the dust has settled I have one important message you will hear me returning to during my time as Chairman because I feel it's critically important.

All members should remember that BIGGA is a members Association. The structure that was put in place at the very

beginning is there to ensure the voice of the grassroots greenkeeper is heard and that there are open lines of communication to the team at BIGGA House and to the National Board. If you have any questions or ideas please don't hesitate to talk to your Section or Regional committee members. They'll be able to answer many of your questions and will give your ideas their full consideration.

At Chippenham we will shortly be opening three of our new holes as part of our project to extend the course. We've managed to overcome one problem I've heard many greenkeepers mention recently. Because of the terribly wet winter, we struggled to get hold of any turf. Now it's finally been delivered, it's drying out and dying! Just another example of the challenges Mother Nature poses for us greenkeepers.

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