

## WELCOME FROM BIGGA

### BIGGA



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## Memories are made of this

**As my body and voice recover from a truly hectic BTME 2014 I believe we can look back with considerable satisfaction on a job well done.**

Many exhibitors are calling BTME 2014 the 'best ever' but just as importantly feedback from attendees is hugely positive. Record pre-registration numbers, nearly 9,000 total attendees and a record number of delegates at the Continue to Learn programme show that the Exhibition is still a vital part of the turf industry calendar.

The memories are many but our inaugural BIGGA Welcome Celebration held in the historic Royal Hall is uppermost among them, and I hope this is something we can repeat in future years. The evening began with a bang when Alan Prickett of Ransomes Jacobsen donated a very generous £2,500 to the BIGGA Greenkeepers Benevolent Fund. It concluded with the legendary Peter Alliss regaling the several hundred attendees with his 'special connection' with greenkeeping during his epic career. The launch of the Benevolent Fund fulfilled a long held ambition for the Association and I am thrilled that we are now in a position to support those members that fall upon hard times.

It was also great to launch our new online member benefit offering – BIGGA Xtra Benefits – which aims to give our members even further value for money from their membership.

**The Celebration event was the ideal occasion to pay tribute to the tireless work Tony Smith undertook in his 18 months as Chairman, it has been a privilege to witness his passion for greenkeeping and the Association.**

Whilst I know he intends to remain active on the Board I am still delighted to be able to wish him well in his 'retirement'.

I am thoroughly looking forward to working with the new Chairman Chris Sealey through 2014 as the Association continues in its

ambitions to raise the profile and appreciation of greenkeeping.

Sadly the roaring success of BTME did come at a price. A number of companies attempted to hijack the event and profit from the gathering of turf industry professionals without formally exhibiting. I am pleased to say that increasingly the visitor is recognising that this behaviour undermines the event and all it stands for.

My thanks go to the 123 exhibiting companies who committed to be a part of BTME in 2014. Thanks are also due to all those who delivered education during the Continue to Learn programme, including many BIGGA members. Watch this space for details of how you can have your say in determining next year's content.

I make no apologies for dedicating so much of this issue (pages 17-45) to BTME coverage - there is much to report.

**Away from BTME, 2014 has begun with monsoon conditions affecting large parts of the country.**

Strong and innovative forward planning has never been more vital, on pages 56-60 read how Philip Taylor at Alwoodley has combined two detailed five year plans to ensure this gem of a course remains one of England's finest inland courses.

Enjoy the read.



**Jim Croxton, Chief Executive**