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BTME 2013

Grounds to look forward

Happy New Year! I firmly believe there are grounds to look forward to 2014 with a degree of optimism.

Though the golf industry is not as buoyant as before the recession there were strong signs during 2013 that things are looking up; rounds played increased and many clubs are reporting an upturn in membership and green fees.

The World Cup in Brazil will undoubtedly keep some casual golfers away from the course during the summer but happily the majority of the matches will not impact on golfing time. On the flip side the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles will once again mean golf is firmly in the sporting spotlight.

The biennial match against the Americans catches the non-golfing public's imagination like no other golf event and I expect many clubs around the country to capitalise on this and throw open their gates to new customers and old alike. For Scott Fenwick, Steve Chappell and the team at Gleneagles the countdown is very much on and we wish them a trouble free summer as they prepare the PGA Centenary Course for the 24 players and the hundreds of millions who will watch.

The very many of you attending BTME later this month will have an opportunity to hear how work at Gleneagles is progressing as Steve is appearing as part of the popular Seminar programme. The Continue to Learn education programme is filling up nicely with many of the Workshops and Focus On sessions now full. It looks like the Turf Managers' Conference will attract a record turnout this year and it is clear that the balance of technical and management subject matter it contains is a winning formula.

With the exhibition halls sold out for so long we know we are in for a successful event. Sadly we have heard rumours that some companies that aren't exhibiting intend to try and 'work the halls' in an unofficial capacity. We are doing all we can to discourage this practice and would urge you to play your part in protecting the future of BTME by not allowing

any non-exhibitor who attempts to discuss business with you to do so. The huge number of companies who have invested in exhibiting in Harrogate this year are providing significant support to our industry and we owe them our own support in return.

I am looking forward to our Welcome Celebration in the Royal Hall immediately after the show closes on Tuesday 21st, the chance to acknowledge some of our members' outstanding achievements in 2013 and then to hear the 'voice of golf' Peter Alliss give us the benefit of his wisdom in a keynote address is not to be missed.

I am also looking forward to meeting up with the Jacobsen Future Turf Managers as they gather together for the first time since the inaugural event in Ipswich in April. It will be fascinating to hear how they have used the experience to their benefit in the intervening months. Entries are now open for nominations for this year's FTMI and again we have received an excellent response.

This month's GI contains some excellent winter advice from Henry Bechelet (page 26); the R&A's Steve Isaac follows up his article from last year with some interesting conclusions on working towards a healthier environment (page 30) while Laurence Pithie catches up with Neil Baker in his first few months as Course Manager at Little Aston (page 34).

Enjoy the read.



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO