

British Columbia Director Report

August 23, 2024

I come to you in this edition from the lunchroom of the maintenance sheds of The Old Course at St Andrews! While this week has felt like a complete dream (and I'm sure the lack of sleep has something to do with that) I can assure you that my opening line is a fact. Last fall I was invited by the Director of Greenkeeping, Sandy Reid, to be a part of his Team this week for the Women's British Open. Being my first time in Scotland and of course then my first time at St Andrews, there are many things that are new, different, and exciting. One thing that is the same though is the feeling of belonging to a Team as we work towards a common goal in presenting the best possible golf course for the event this week. I'm sure one of the reasons you were attracted to, and continue to remain in the industry, is that positive feeling of working amongst a Team. It's not always easy work, not always fun work (see the pouring rain, wind, and 10 degrees temps of this morning shift as example) but knowing that we are working together in these conditions summons some deeper power to be able to push through and come out with a strong feeling of accomplishment. Strong enough to want to get up at 3:30 am tomorrow and do it all again right? Ok, so perhaps as golf course workers we are not always sane either, but at least we have found an outlet for our idiosyncrasies in this profession. While "Hell Bunker", "The Road Hole", and "Swilcan Bridge" can only be found at St Andrews, the feelings above can certainly be found at any course, and within any Team, around the world. I hope you have found some of this with your Teams this Summer.

Staying with my experience this week, I have also of course met many of the 60 or so Team Members I am working with. 95% of which is made up of Team Members from the 7 courses here at St Andrews. While there is understandably a strong Scottish contingent, there is a notable expat group particularly from commonwealth countries including Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa to name a few. Some came for a short while and have since married into the country and for others this is just a stop on their journey. While I was fortunate to do a fair bit of travelling in my 20's, if I had to list a regret it would be not taking advantage of the skills I had to spend longer stints around the world. Currently, one of my young Team Members is setting up to work on a course in Australia this winter. I assure you that the same shortage of skilled golf course workers we are seeing in Canada exists in many places around the world, including the United Kingdom.

As we work to promote the industry to new young people within our Teams, I hope you make mention of this potential opportunity to travel and live abroad with the skills they have and will attain. I know I am envious of these young Team Members here at St Andrews that are not only building strong, diverse resumes, they are also building their own character and life experiences at the same time.

Good luck to you all as we make the final push through one of the more challenging months that is September and look forward to hopefully seeing you at one of the many networking & learning opportunities this coming Winter.

T-Jay Creamer, AGS