After the driest January on record we have now had the wettest, windiest February on record. This must have had some effect on the communication links in our Section as no news has come to hand. We shall take it that no news is good news and everything in the area is going to plan and we can all look forward to a good start to the season ahead.

I am looking forward to meeting everybody at the Spring Outing on April 22 at the Wigtownshire County GC. Derek Wilson

Spring is upon us and courses are busy putting final touches to their season preparations and clearing up the winter work. Spring hasn’t really been too good so far with high winds and plenty of rain, maybe next year we’ll get a good start...

The Conservation Day was held at Kirkhill and East Renfrewshire GCs. There was a good turn out with various views expressed, differing ideas and new concepts and hopefully more and more clubs will look to the future and adopt some of these ideas. Our thanks go to Gordon for the day and to Jonathan Smith for his interesting outlook.

On a lighter note everyone should have received an entry form for the Spring Tournament/Hayter Challenge qualifying event on April 29 along with forms for some of the various events which we intend to organise this year.

How is everyone coping with this weather? The driest January, the wettest February and by the way March started... all over the place. Never mind, things can only get better and by this time we should all be expert painters.

The Game’s Night arranged for February 27 saw 26 participants with a few late arrivals (no names mentioned!). There was a good turn out and the pies and the facilities. Please convey our thanks to Claremont Bowling Club for accommodating us.

Congratulations to Neil Ballingall on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Moray GC, Lossiemouth. Welcome to the Scottff Region.

The vacancy of the North West Presidency that occurred through the retirement of Arthur Harrison has been accepted by John Walker, Director of Rite-Feen. The North West Section Committee voted unanimously to offer John the opportunity to become President of the Section because of his genuine efforts in trying to better the cause/efforts of the greenkeeper. I was delighted that John accepted and know that we will see him at many of the Section events.

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

The Scottish Region Conference in Perth was a great success with a large turnout of delegates especially North members I am pleased to report. The morning and afternoon sessions were ably chaired by North men Alisdair McLaren and Sam Morrison, the latter having not quite recovered from his son’s wedding reception a couple of days earlier. A vote of thanks to all who helped to organise the day. Just one request for next year, could the weather be had on the day in 1998 as for the second year running the weather was lovely, dry and sunny, leaving a lot of greenkeepers sitting in the hotel and cursing missing the best day’s weather for quite a while. Indeed as I write this the following day it is pouring with rain again here in Tain. It was good to see the BIGGA Chairman Pat Murphy present and also James and Janet from Headquarters.

Congratulations to Neil Ballingall on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Moray GC, Lossiemouth. Welcome to the Section, we look forward to seeing you at outings etc if possible. Congratulations also to Richard Atkin Jnr on his recent marriage down in Hull.

Section Secretary Dougal Duguid is wondering if anyone has a spare kidney as he is experiencing problems with his, seriously we wish Dougal a speedy recovery from his problems.

Two reminders for members, firstly you have sent back your 200 Club money yet, time is running out as the first draw is next month at Duff House Royal. Secondly, but not quite so urgent, BIGGA are running management courses again this Autumn, probably at Falkirk, and I know they were not full up in Scotland last year. This is ridiculous when you consider the cost is only £50 as the remaining £150 per delegate is paid from the Golden/Silver Key Fund. Clubs should be more willing to send staff on these two day courses as they are so heavily subsidised so get working on your Committee now, I am sure you will both benefit.

Finally I have received a letter from a young man in Canada who after seven years experience in greenkeeping in Canada and USA is looking for a job in Scotland. Unfortunately we are not currently looking for staff here at Tain, but I thought that maybe someone out there in Scotland might have a place for him. His CV makes good reading, he even has a degree in turf management. Anyone interested in finding out more about Mark Obee can contact me on 01862 894402 and I can send you his CV.

Scottish Region
Elliott Small
Tel: 01259 731445
Ayrshire

Scottish Region
Elliott Small
Tel: 01259 731445
Ayrshire

Central

North

North

Bob Lupton
Tel: 01782 750539

North West Water assures us that the reservoirs are full and that this year there will be no water restrictions. I only hope we don’t have a cold spring again giving a late growth on bent and fescue greens.

You will all see from your fixture lists that we have a full year of golf tournaments with the roses match and the stewards match requiring teams of 16. The Spring Tournament which is the Hayter Qualifier is on May 1 and you will need to register with Bill Merritt, 255 Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool, L49 9RB enclosing £15 made payable to BIGGA N/W no later than Thursday April 24. Soup and sandwiches will be available from 12 noon to 1pm with tee off from 1.30pm.

Sheffield

On February 6 we held our winter lecture at Rotherham GC. Our thanks go to Michael Palmer, from Supaturf, who gave a very interesting talk on water management which was thoroughly enjoyed by a good number of our members.

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Bob Lupton
Tel: 01782 750539

North West

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Bert Cross

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**North East**

Saley Hall are having a busy winter extending the 8th and 13th holes in readiness for the European Tour event in July. Work has restarted on the new 18 hole championship course designed by Neil Coles and Associates and just another reminder that they are looking for volunteers again this year.

Tony for supplying turf on two new tees there.

Derek Cruddass, of Garesfield GC, informs me that they are opening their new 8 acre practice area shortly. Paul Moore, from Lindum Turf, has just gained a valued order from Tony for supplying turf on two new tees there.

North Wales

A bit of news, contrary to my report in last month's issue of GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL, please ensure that you return them to Terry Evans by the closing date of Sunday April 13. Our teeing times are between 0900 and 1300hrs and it is expected that "locals" will take the earlier times, leaving the later starting times for those that have further to travel.

Please note that all trade representatives that are not playing golf but who wish to attend our tournaments are requested to contact Terry Evans on 01352 720692.

It is provisionally hoped that our Autumn tournament will be at Aberasoch GC on October 8.

Finally, a welcome to two new members, Gareth Wyn Jones, from Henllys Hall GC, at Beaumaris, and Paul Drennan, of Maesdu GC. Gareth is our 14th member with the surname of Jones which represents exactly 10 per cent of our Section membership - can any other Section beat this?

Trevor Johnston.

Northern

Our annual dinner dance was held at Bradford GC and what a superb evening it was. The food was excellent. Thank you to all the staff at the club for their hospitality and making it a very enjoyable event.

A total of 115 people attended the dinner which I believe is the best turnout to date. Many thanks to Dave Thackray and Mel Guy for their help in arranging the function and to everyone who contributed towards the raffle prizes. Plenty of effort went into the organisation but I'm certain all who attended will agree it was worthwhile.

May I thank Pat Murphy, our National Chairman, and his wife for attending in a year which I believe is exceptionally hectic. Thanks are extended also to Ian Holoran and his wife and Bob and Sara Lupton for coming. Sara always puts a smile on the face of a certain small stout rep's face! I wonder who that could be?

An excellent event and I hope we have as much support from greenkeepers, trade and friends at future dinner dances. Finally thanks to you all for your support to the Section.

Spaces are rapidly decreasing for the Hayter qualifier at Wakefield GC. Some people will be disappointed for not booking earlier.

I hear down the grapevine that things are happening out there in the Section, but unfortunately nobody gets in touch so that I can put it into the magazine. Please let me know of retirements, promotions, change of club etc so that l can let everyone know.

My numbers are Home 01484 519829 (answer machine); Work 01977 690117 (12-1pm) and Mobile 0585 266136. Simon Heppenstall

**MIDLAND REGION**

Peter Later

Tel: 07454897507

England

The Section's winter education seminar seems to go from strength to strength. The turnout was excellent for our small area nearly half our membership. The informative talks were from John Hacker on soil sampling, Jay Dobson on thatch and a talk on Ecology and Conservation from Mike Schofield.

The afternoon session was a tour of the course with Mike Schofield assessing the conservation and ecology at Kenwick Park GC.

Many thanks to Ian Morton of Kenwick for providing the venue and to everyone organising the successful event.

A warm welcome to new members of the Section: Philip Oldman, Newark; Colin Hutchcraft, Osby; Graham Millard, Lawnmower Services; James Cuthbert, Boston, Craig Knight, Gedney Holt and Mathew Francis, Oundle. Remarks from Members, Fred Cobb and George Knowles.

Dates for your diary:

April 9, Thorney Lakes GC, PGM Cup; May 1, Holme Hall GC, Rigby Taylor/Hayter Qualifier; June 17, Rutland County GC, Purdy's Cup and July 24, Bradford GC, Lamb's Cup.

People on the move. Phil Belton, Ramsey GC to St Neots GC and Kevin Hodges, Northshore to Cambridge Lakes.

If you have any news, ideas etc please telephone 01733 260297. Graeme Macdonald

Midland

I would like to start by informing you of two members making moves to new golf clubs, the first being Michael Green who has left his position at Evesham GC. Congratulations! The second being myself, I have now moved to be Course Manager at Ross-on-Wye GC from my position at Eniwa, so the future for both of us is a busy one.

By the time you read this report all of you who intend playing in the Spring competition should have sent your applications along with those intending playing in the singles or doubles knock-out.

There has been a steady return of people who are interested in the trips to championship
Around the Green

Berks, Bucks and Oxon

Once again a new season beckons, I wonder what's in store for us all this year? As we enter Spring my thoughts go back to before I entered this profession when my only interest was to play golf. I used to look forward to the US Masters on the telly, the sight of that manicured playing surface was something to behold. Not anymore! This one tournament causes so much grief for many of us as we approach the start of another season. The sight of those lush fairways and fast true greens causes comments in many clubhouses to the effect of "How come our course is not like that standard?" Do we really have to explain?

Despite my comments I will still be glued to the television on the Sunday evening watching the drama unfold once again. I mentioned in last month's article that we were putting together the Fixture Card. This has actually gone to print with all the dates and venues confirmed: Spring - Castle Royle; Summer - Badgemoor; Autumn - Lambourne; Turkey Trot - Richings Park. As well as confirming the venues we have lined up sponsorship for the first two events and are in the process of tying up the remaining two.

We have appointed a Handicap Secretary for the coming season so be warned, please leave the sombreros and guns at home!

As well as the golfing events we have been approached by a local company who wish to sponsor a family fun day in the summer. This will be a social event with food and drink, probably a barbecue on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Details of this event will be posted soon, in the meantime if you have any ideas about events you would like us to hold then contact myself or Ray Clark.

I have recently attended a Regional Board meeting at Northampton. If anybody wishes to glance over the minutes of this meeting then please contact me by telephone.

I look forward to seeing many new faces this coming season at the various events.

Lindsay Anderson

Mid-Anglia

Our first golf tournament of the year takes place on April 17 at Wellingborough GC. All entries should have been sent in by now. This will be a 56 hole event with one round counting as the qualifier for the Regional Final of the Hayter Tournament.

The Regional Final, should you qualify, will be held on Thursday June 26 at the Warwickshire GC.

There have been several new appointments at golf club's in the Section recently. Good luck to Philip Belton, the new Course Manager at St Neots GC, and Neil Whitaker, who has moved from Woburn to Arkley. Also, Andrew Trainell takes over as First Assistant at St Neots.

The Lodgeway fourball has been drawn by now and you should all know which league you are in. I know April and May are particularly busy times on our golf courses but please do not leave your matches to the last minute as this only causes problems with arranging times to play and can disrupt the final league tables.

Paul Lockett

South East Region

The Gentlemen's Dinner at Walton Heath is often beset with weather problems, in the past it has been known for players to tee-off in snow. This year however the weather was very kind to us, being very pleasant even if turning a little chilly towards the end of the day.

It is comforting to know that a Golf Club with the stature of Walton Heath can make Greenkeepers and their guests so welcome, with Administrative, Bar and Catering Staff doing all that they possibly could to make the day a success.

The course, as usual was in prime condition for which Clive Ogden and his team should be justifiably proud. The new Course however is not easy and this tough test of golf was reflected in the scores, with even scratch players struggling to achieve respectable scores. Of the 76 starters 13 managed to break par, whilst 61 players were within 2 strokes of par. Prize Winners were: 0-9 Handicap: Winner (and The Shulockie Putter) 1. Ian Semple, Old Fold Manor; 2. Mike Smith; 10-17 Handicap: 1. John Hill Birch Grove; 2. George Booker; 18-24 Handicap: 1. Nigel Stapley, Darenth Valley; 2. David Howells, Coombe Wood.


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Comment From Walter Woods
St. Andrews Links Golf Course supervisor

COURSES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Hello / Tel: 01803 844056

SOUTH WEST

AND SOUTH WALES REGION

Gordon Child
Tel: 01963 844056

SOUTH COAST

On Wednesday February 5 the Section held its quiz night at Bramshaw GC. Unfortunately I was not able to make it but our Chairman informed me afterwards that it was quite successful with seven teams of four competing. It would be nice to see a few more attending next time with perhaps a few more ladies, and don’t worry, the questions were on general knowledge, not greenkeeping! Congratulations to the winning team who were from High Post.

Our Regional/Section Seminar was held at Sparsholt College on Tuesday February 18 and was very well attended with around 100 delegates. The Education Committee once again has done us proud and arranged some very good speakers for us. Our first speaker was Duncan McGilvray who spoke on “Greenkeeping – A Developing Industry”. Duncan discussed the heads Greenkeeper or Course Manager and illustrated this with some very good slides. The question of “working head greenkeeper” also came up, I’ll leave you to think about that one! He then went on to talk about education and NVQs as Duncan is solely committed to educating greenkeepers.

Next we listened to an interesting presentation by Scott MacCallum, our Editor. He spoke about his past appointments in the golfing world which was very amusing and then talked about the magazine and what he had in mind for the future.

We then came to the first of our student presentations. Mike Cartwright from Salisbury and South Wiltz GC gave us a talk on the environmental programme at his golf course. As soon as he had cracked his first joke there was no stopping him!

Our second student was Steve Privett from Hampshire GC. His talk was about the autumn/winter programme at his golf course and he also gave his own views on the future of the industry.

Both students prepared themselves well and should be congratulated on their presentations.

After lunch John Le-Mar from Bio Lube spoke on “The Green Alternative”. John’s firm specialises in bio-degradable oils. These are to replace mineral oils that can do so much damage to a green when a hydraulic pipe bursts. He gave us a good insight into all his products and showed us how effective the cleaning agents were along with how water and oil separate.

Our final speaker was Joe Paulin who spoke about his club, The London GC. Joe has been there from the beginning and has two 18 hole courses. All the greens are a bent mix, hence at the peak of the summer there is a staff of 35. Joe illustrated his talk with some excellent slides. When he tells us that on one of the courses there are 179 bunkers you can see why he has such a large staff. The whole complex is a real eye opener. Joe is very keen for the Section to visit The London GC and if there is a large enough interest we will book a coach.

Please let your committee member know if you are interested and we will make the necessary arrangements.

At the end of the day our Chairman thanked the speakers for giving up their time and providing us with some very good papers. He also thanked Sparsholt College for allowing us the use of their facilities. Our thanks also go to the sponsors of the day: Huxleys Grass Machinery, Driving Force Leisure, Gem Professional, 185 Aquaturf Systems Ltd and Wanstow Garden Machinery for their support. On a personal note I would like to thank all of you who attended. Without you the Seminar would not have been the success that it was.

A final reminder for Westurf 97 to be held at Long Ashton GC on April 30. As I said in the March Report this will be Gordon and Marion Child’s last Westurf so lets make a big effort and give them all the support we can. We are looking for a record attendance this year. There are new stands, a new layout, plenty of demonstrations and an improved PA system! Anyone who has any spare seats please let me know, likewise anyone who requires a lift please contact me on 01329 282262.

Ken Lodge

Devon and Cornwall

April has arrived and at last those dark winter nights are starting to fade in our minds as our thoughts turn to presenting our courses in the best possible condition during the season ahead. What better way to help you achieve your goal than to visit Westurf on April 30 at Long Ashton GC, Bristol where you will be able to see all the latest products and technology at your local turf care show. On arrival just pick up and complete Westurf’s short questionnaire and you could walk away with a travel voucher for £200. This will be Gordon and Marion’s last show in charge so what better way to thank them for all their efforts over the years. Thank you to all of you who attend the show to make the day unforgettable.

REMEMBER – APRIL 30 – LONG ASHTON GC, BRISTOL.

The Section’s February meeting was held at Perranporth GC on Wednesday 26 on a cool and very windy day. Our golfing members played over the excellently presented links course for the Avoncrop Trophy. The playing conditions got a lot tougher when the hail showers arrived early on in the day. As usual our non-golfing members had a
Around the Green

The Avoncrop Trophy and prizes on behalf of Avoncrop Amenity: 1. Gordon Tamblyn (Mullion GC), level; 2. Michael Child (Saunton GC), -4; 3. Gary Hargrave (Sidmouth GC), -3; 4. Gary Hargrave (Sidmouth GC), -4; 5. Gary Hargrave (Sidmouth GC), -5. Congratulations to all the prize winners especially Gordon who returned a superb level round in such difficult conditions.

The Section Chairman and Timekeeper, Malcolm Davies with his Assistant and Quizmaster, Peter Gillard. A quiz to beat all quizzes was the rescue came our Education Chairman and Timekeeper, Malcolm Davies with his Assistant and Quizmaster, Peter Gillard. A quiz to beat all quizzes was the like. Let's hope for a warm dry spells. It felt just like one of those wet seasons and no prolonged low tining or verti draining and the like. Let's hope for a warm spring is truly upon us and I'm sure that you're all busy low tining or verti draining and the like. Let's hope for a warm wet season and no prolonged dry spells.

Well spring is truly upon us and I'm sure that you're all busy low tining or verti draining and the like. Let's hope for a warm wet season and no prolonged dry spells.

Our latest Pencoed College evening lecture failed to take place due to the untimely withdrawal of the lecturer to be! To the rescue came our Education Chairman and Timekeeper, Malcolm Davies with his Assistant and Quizmaster, Peter Gillard. A quiz to beat all quizzes was based on general knowledge, greenkeeping, football and trivial pursuit. Six teams of three competed for the honours (a bottle of Scotch!) and the winners were my team, the Arsenal! Well done to the lads from Aberdare GC and commiserations to the other teams, the Spuds, the Vikings, the Crays, the Thugs and the Poas. An excellent evening with a difference, thoroughly amusing and enjoyable.

A sincere thanks to both Malcolm and Peter for hastily arranging the evening and doing such a grand job.

Peter Lacey

South West

February saw about 30 greenkeepers turn out for the Lawson Trophy at Clevedon GC. This was quite encouraging considering the forecast which was nothing short of horrific. However Mr Fish and Mr Kel- ley etc were a bit wide of the mark and we got away with some light winds and a bit of scotch mist just to keep us on our toes.

Clevedon is in the throes of some major rebuilding work at the moment and so we were on a bit of a cross country race trying to find the 18 holes in the correct order but the new greens, particularly those that had recently been built by the greens staff themselves were in quite exceptional condition.

Marc Haring

Almost perfect fescue dominated swards are difficult to find during the best of times but in the middle of February, well I can only conclude that Barry Reeves and his crew must have a magic wand or something. Anyhow, enough of my petty envy, thanks are due for all their hard work and obvious expertise.

Having got back to the club house safely we were then given an excellent late lunch followed by the sharing of the spoils, all of which were presented by Lawsons. First place with 36 points was Michael Fawcett of Malborough with Maurice Pierc of Wells in second with 34 points on a countdown from our beloved Secretary Peter Baynton. A sterling performance considering the pressure he is under. Thanks to Lawsons for their sponsorship and to Clevedon Golf Club for allowing us the pleasure of their course for the day.

Remember the short courses. We have recently held a First Aid course and a PA1 and PA6 of which appear to have been successful. If there are any others you would like to go on please give me a ring on 01380 828380.

Marc Haring

Amenity Land Services, Long Lane, Wellington, Telford TF6 6HA.

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