Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

Scottish Region
Elliott Small
Tel: 01259 731445
North
It is good to start the report with news of some new members to the Section. Rejoining us are three of the Ballater staff, Derek Cowan, Andrew Brown and Richard Cowper. Andrew Wood, from Bon Accord, has joined and Helen Bates, of Fife Silica Sands, has returned. I hope this year we can hold on to all 1996 members and add to our total instead of, as in recent years, when we have lost as many as we have gained. Anyone out there thinking of not renewing please call me and we can talk about it and I will try to show you all the benefits of membership which should outweigh the minus points. The stronger we are, the better for greenkeepers and greenkeeping all round.

Royal Aberdeen’s Sam Morrison, the current Scottish Chairman, is happy to announce that he has finally “off loaded” his son, Wilson, Head Greenkeeper at Alford, when he married his fiancee, Suzi, in January. Congratulations to both and good luck to Suzi. Being married to a greenkeeper takes a special kind of person, or so my wife says!

BTME was bigger and better than ever. I have never seen the Exhibition so busy and the workshops and Conference were packed out. A big vote of thanks must go to the staff at Head Office for all the hard work that went on to make this week so successful. It is comforting to know that the Association is in such good hands. The entertainment at the banquet was first class and I can thoroughly recommend others to go next year. Another pleasing aspect was hearing how they are doing. Congratulations to Gordon Moir on an excellent talk which was well received by all present, and I can thoroughly recommend others to listen to him. Well what’s been happening and what is going to happen in the future? By now the fixture cards will have been issued so most of you can roughly see the agenda for the year.

Although I was not personally at the BTME the reports were all first rate. The annual excursion to the BTME of lawnlanders and hopscotchers appears to have enjoyed the social events with some over-indulgence from certain quarters who will remain unnamed. The whole event sounds as if it was well worth the entry fee and another enjoyable day. Both events should have been let off so get in there quickly or you will be kicking yourself.

As mentioned previously, a trial was arranged for gathering an eleven-a-side golf tournament to mark Willie’s retirement and in recognition of his loyal service. So members in the area could enter that competition as well and swell the testimonial fund for Willie.

Lain MacLeod
West of Scotland
Welcome to spring, or so they say when the end of the month comes, but no doubt the grass will have ground to a halt. Let’s hope this spring is better than last with good temperatures inducing fresh growth for a nice early start to the season... wishful thinking, we’ve got as much chance of winning the lottery! Well what’s been happening and what is going to happen in the future? By now the fixture cards will have been issued so most of you can roughly see the agenda for the year.

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One last thing – please telephone me if you have an interesting piece of news on your events should have been lettered so get in there quickly or you will be kicking yourself.

Finaly, two events to mark in the diary – firstly a day trip to Loch Lomond, early entries will be a must as this is sure to be an interesting day. Secondly the greenkeepers/convener’s match at Kirkhill, again a popular event and an enjoyable day. Both events should have been lettered so get in there quickly or you will be kicking yourself.

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Central
Sandy I must begin this month’s report with the news that one of our retired members, Jim Harrison, formally Head Greenkeeper at Muthill GC, died recently. Jim was a long standing member of the section and along with his pal and fellow member, Haig Gordon, attended most of our events, even after retiring. He will be sadly missed and our sincere condolences go to his family at this very trying time.

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At the time of writing this report the date of the Spring Tournament in 1998.

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Australia. Sandy has family in Australia and I am sure it will not be too long until Sandy and his wife have settled into their new life.

At the moment I don’t think Sandy is intending to continue in greenkeeping but I am sure he will make a success of whatever he decides to do – as in the past I think he has won the lottery and won’t be doing anything! Best wishes for the future go to Sandy and his wife from all their friends in Scotland.

In December of last year I asked all trophy holders to make arrangements to return to them if they were required for engraving and valuation but I am still waiting to hear from some of you. Please make arrangements as soon as possible.

John Crawford

East

Welcome to this month’s news. I hope as I am writing this that spring is not all that far away because we do not want a repeat of last year so everybody get those fingers and anything else crossed for a good start to this season. I hope everyone from the East Section enjoyed their trip to the BTME which was even warmer than last year which takes some believing! Congratulations go to everyone at HQ who organised it and any other who assisted in the show, it just keeps getting better. If you haven’t been deciding yet – maybe he had won the lotteri didn’t miss the show. The Kenwood dinner at the Majestic Hotel was absolutely fabulous. This was something that we could put in the magazine please contact Sir John Cuffley, Chief Executive, Isle of Skye Hotel, Perth; April 12 - West Section Autumn Meeting, Worldlyth

New members this month include:- Ben Price, South Shields GC; Brian Smith, Brough GC; Simon Heppenstall, Rother Valley GC.

Events to be held in the Region during 1997 are as follows:- February 27 - West Section Games Night, Claremont Bowling Club, Seaburn; April 17 - East Region 5-a-side competition. It will be held at the new Pitz Centre at Sighthill so if you would like to know what the number one golf course in Scotland is doing, good luck on your visit.

Finally many thanks to all those who have helped with our Section during the course of the last year. Bruce Burnett

North East

Two new courses have been chosen for the Spring and Autumn Competitions. We shall be at South Shields on April 17 and then at Bolsover in September.

The Section has purchased two videos – Golf Green Reconstruction and Golf Course Ecology. Should anyone like to borrow one please contact me, the only charge will be for postage.

By now all members will have received a questionnaire from the Section. Could you please fill it in and return it to me at 19 Southside, Matfen, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE20 0RL.

Finally I would like to welcome David Simpson, Course Manager at Tyneside GC, to the Section.

Jimmy Richardson

North

Spring is nearly with us and I am sure everybody hopes that it won’t be a poor one like last year. A bad spring and a dry summer don’t really go together for good greenkeeping conditions!

The BTME at Harrogate was again a splendid exhibition and one that BIGGA should be proud of organising. May I thank Ian Thompson, of Wetherby GC and Telford Jarvis, of Scarcroft GC, for helping me on the Northern Region stand.

Not many people have booked for the golfing events this year. I hope everyone is aware that if they have not submitted their deposit at least one week before the event they will not be allowed to play, so be warned you all have to plan ahead.

Here are this year’s golfing events:-

Haley Qualifier – Wakefield GC, Wednesday April 23 at 10.30am; Presidents Day South Leeds GC, Wednesday June 25 at 1pm; Roses Match – Halifax GC, Wednesday August 13 at 1pm; Invitation Day – Skipton GC, Wednesday September 3 at 1.30pm; Autumn Tour – Bridlington Links GC, Wednesday October 8 at 10.30am; Winter Golf – Scarcroft GC, Wednesday December 10 at 10.30am. Numbers at most events are limited so if you are interested in any event please contact me on 01484 519829. Bits and pieces for next month’s newsletter are in column.

Simon Heppenstall

North Wales

So far I have had only a relatively small response for the “Little and Large” show due to be held at the Welsh Horticultural College, on Thursday, March 27. I know it is early days yet but if you wish to know what the college has to say on grasses, topdressing and rootzone composition please telephone me on 01515 336 6675 in the evening to reserve your place.

I am pleased to be able to report that after a great deal of detective work, and an early morning raid on a home in the Abergele District, the Richard Campey Trophy has been found in perfect condition.

May I remind you that our Spring Competition will be on Wednesday, April 30, at Frodsham GC. We will be playing for the Hi-Speed Rose Bowl and the Richard Campey Trophy. Entry forms for Frodsham should be with you by the beginning of April. To ensure the viability of the Section we have had to make a small increase to the entry fee of £40.00 per team, please let the Secretary know of your intentions as soon as possible, so that we can arrange for the trophies to be ordered.

Andrew Meaden

Charterhouse

Deep aeration on an intensively used golf course in the grass silage which we require to be survive.

We purchased our first Verti-Drain back in 1983 and very quickly bought a second. Both these machines have been working on a continuous basis providing excellent results and utilising only a minimum of spare parts.

Comment From Walter Woods

St. Andrews Links Golf Course supervisor

S/EFFECTS SHATTERING

GREDENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL March 1997 41
**Around the Green**

Well done Jim.

The "Mere Seminar" will be on March 18, at Meres G & GC, and by now you will all have received your fixture lists with events for the year plus application forms for the seminar. The seminar is based on problems we have all had during the last two years with drought conditions. The first speaker, Graeme Francis, from Toro Irrigation, will be advising you on how to get the best from your irrigation system plus advise on the legalities of procuring your own bore hole. Derek Green will cover the construction of bunkers. Derek has already starred in the BIGGA video on bunker construction when he thanks to an article in a section members which one needs to be done properly as Derek will show you.

The afternoon will be covered by Guy Longshaw and Paul Hartley, from Symbio. They will introduce you to the biological subjects which Jack touched upon were really an interesting day and I am sure that the day before next year will be equally if not better.

**North West**

Once again another BTME is over. They seem to come around so quickly but at least this time we were lucky with the weather conditions (remember BTME 1995!). As usual it was an excellent show and a great opportunity to meet old friends and new. Let's hope the show continues at Harrogate for many years to come.

I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating Jim McDonald, Head Greenkeeper at Penyffordd GC, for winning the BME for his services. Jim will be retiring in 1999 after many years in the profession and after being involved in preparing courses for the Open on no fewer than five occasions. I feel his award is a very fitting award for a lifetime of dedication to greenkeeping.

Brian Anderson, our Past Chairman, has written the following message: "To all members of the North Wales Section – I would like to thank you for your support for the past 1997 and thank you again for your support and to welcome and congratulate Pat Valentine as your new Section Chairman.

"Thank you to all the committee members past and present and to all the trade who have given us their whole hearted support without question, along with the golf clubs. It is because of this tremendous support that our Section is so financially viable and may you continue with your support for 1997 as we lose the membership money."

"So once again thanks to the following traders for all they have done for us:-

- Phil Davies, Montemmeer International; Terry Adamson, GEM; Dave Morgan and Mike Whitehouse, Rugby Shop; Paul Walker; Walker Engineering (Ransomes); John Osman, Osman Machingry (John Deere);
- Andy Jones, Major Owen (Toro); Andrew Gorse, Acorn Equipment; Julie Hargrave, Ki Chem; Paul Shaw, Course Care; Tony Cundell and Richard Campey, Campey Machinery; David Robinson, Strike (Top £18 which I am sure you will agree is still very competitive in today's market. I hope that next year we can fill the losing fees for subsequent competitions. The members' fee will be £13 and guests will be £18 which I am sure you will agree is extremely good value when you consider the whole package of golf, excellent food and prizes.

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Devon and Cornwall

It is with great regret that I have to inform members of the death of Steve Pike. Steve was the Head Greenkeeper at Trentham Park GC, Stoke-on-Trent. Our thoughts are with Stephen's family at this time of need.

At the Devon and Cornwall first meeting of the year was sponsored by Baren-Gate and held at Fingle Glen GC, on Wednesday, January 15. The day started with golfing members playing a Stableford competition over 9 holes with the 1st and 10th tees being played as 2nd and 9th tees respectively. The morning was treated to an excellent workshop on irrigation maintenance and equipment which was presented by Ocniis Irrigation with some of the golfers participating in the last part of the workshop before lunch.

After lunch members were invited to enter the Baren-Gate brass band competition:- 1. Tony Gooch, 20 pts. 2. Ridgeway, 20 pts. 3. Ken Lodge, 16 pts. 4. Peter Lacey, 12 pts. The closing date for entries is April 18. Congratulations to Gordon Child on his last Westurf in charge. What better way to thank them for all their hard work over the last ten years than all of you turning up to make the day unforgettable.

The Section's first meeting of the year will be held at Long Ashton GC, Bristol, on March 30 at 7.30 pm. Please make a note of the following dates in your diary – March 18, May 14 and August 13. Details of the programme will be announced later. Liquid refreshments will be available in the members bar after 8pm.

A meeting was held at Writtle College, on February 3, when members were invited to sit on an advisory panel to the College to discuss educational and training provision. These meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month.

SOUTH WALES

Our latest evening lecture was attended by Mark Dinyard, National Amenity Manager for Headland Agrochemicals. Entitled "Chemicals for the Management of Turf" Mark’s presentation covered many topics but was based primarily on drainage, management of the soil and the effects on its pH (per cent hydrogen). Fifteen hardy souls braved the typical winter conditions to attend and received an excellent lecture packed with invaluable information. Our thanks to both Headland Agrochemicals and Mark for what was a thoroughly worthwhile evening.

The Section's first meeting of the year will be held at Bannatyne Health Club, Porthcawl on Wednesday, January 21, when members will be treated to an excellent workshop on irrigating. The Westurf Golf competition:- 1. Tony Gooch, 20 pts. 2. Beach, 18 pts. 3. Mark Webb, 16 pts. 4. Summerhill, 12 pts. 5. Barmouth, 10 pts. The closing date for entries is April 18. Congratulations to Gordon and Marion for their excellent organisation of the trip and many thanks! If any member would like to borrow a book from the library, please phone me on 01702 522202.

As a bonus your form will be entered into a draw which will be drawn at our meeting on March 18. If you haven’t received your questionnaire yet please contact Mark at 01702 522202.

We wish Alan Sharpe and Doug Smith good luck in their new jobs and congratul- ate Andy Turbine and Adrian Kersley on their new roles. We all wish them well and look forward to seeing them at forthcoming Section events.

Another reminder for Westurf 97 to be held at Long Ashton GC, on April 30. We would like to see as many of you there as possible. It is the last time Gordon and Marion’s last Westurf, all the more reason to give them a large audience. Let’s give them our support and thanks for what they have done for Westurf over the years. I am told there are some new ideas for future Westurfs, it is time for us to give free speech on the subject, if it’s a quite a substantial prize then who knows, it could be jetting off to Bahamas, Bermuda or even sunny Blackpool!

On another occasion the Westurf AGM was held at Long Ashton GC, on June 11. All those wishing to play should forward their names, address and their handicap and a cheque for £16 to:- Mark Webb, 12 Lime Road, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7DL. The closing date for entries is April 18. Would all the winners of last years tournament please ensure they are returned on or before start of the tournament.

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