Sorry Alistair! Never mind you got mentioned twice in the magazine. I hope it is right this time as Alistair's wife, Helen, is a lawyer.

Also in a previous issue, I reported the death of Jack Armstrong, a former committe member of the Section. Along with Past Section Chairman Bobby Fleming and Elliott Small, I attended his funeral at Falkirk Grematorium when tributes were paid to a great friend of numerous greenkeepers, young and not so young.

The first golf tournament of the season was held in brilliant sunshine at Lundin Golf Club, in April, when 62 members and guests enjoyed playing over a course presented in excellent condition by Head Greenkeeper, Willie Swan, and his staff. Our sincere thanks go to everyone at Lundin GC for the courtesy and hospitality which was extended to us on the day, especially Secretary, Mr Thomson, and Club Steward, John Rae, for making sure everyone was well fed and "watered" throughout the day. Also the patrons of the Scottish Region for all their continued support.

Prize winners of the day are as follows: Best Scratch K. Stirling, Kingsham, 73; Best Net, S. McMillan, Dunnikier, 70; 1st Class 1. H/Cap C. Pollock, St Andrews, 73; 1st Class 2. H/Cap A. Dunn, Auchterarder, 74; 2nd Class 1. H/Cap D. Scott, Soconic, 72; 2nd Class 2. H/Cap A. Tarnour, Green Hotel, 79; 3rd Class 1st H/Cap L. Donaldson, St Andrews, 77; 3rd Class 2. H/Cap A. Arnott, Dunnikier, 78; Stewarts Quaich C. Pollock, C. Mitchell, St Andrews, 148; Patrons J. Darling, Athens, 74; Guests D. Wells, Grangemouth, 74.

Congratulations go to Kenny Stirling, Best Low Gross, and Sean McMillian, Best Low Net, on qualifying for the Castlestone/Scotts National Championship at Carden Park in October. Disappointment on the new member front this month! No one to welcome to the Section this time, so far this year we have gained 35 new members and if we really worked at it we could maybe reach 52 which would make it one new member for each week. So come on you must know some greenkeeper who is just waiting for that bit of persuasion to join us!

There has been a lack of news from the Leven Links Sporting Club recently. I don't know if they have disbanded, retired, gone caravanning, interior decorating or what? Maybe their manager is taking time out to write his memories. It's highly unlikely that they will be working too hard to have time to continue with their "sporting" activities.

John Crawford

North

Once again I start the column welcoming new members to the Section. This month we greet Scott Atkinson, Royal Dornoch; Justin Loochie, Arth; Keith Law, Forfar; Scott Barclay, Balmoreal, and Neil Kidd, from Keith, the last three are rejoining us.

Judging by other Section reports, the Association is growing well this year. If we can retain last year's membership then there should be a significant rise throughout the country. Hopefully, at last, word is spreading just how good being in BIGGA is for greenkeepers everywhere and very reasonably priced too. I have just received my renewal for GCSAA dues and it is more than twice our fees, but that is still very reasonable: I think.

This month we have the Scottish Greenkeeping Championship at East Kilbride. I hope we can have a big entry from the North and that we can come away with some silverware. I cannot make it myself as I have a meeting about then and my daughter's graduation the following week, so will be too busy but I intend to send some of my staff down.

If we think golf is expensive here, how about then and my daughter's graduation the following week, so will be too busy but I intend to send some of my staff down.

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you the finest finish mower in the world.

The result is a revolutionary, zero-turning radius, wide-area, contouring mower. The 425D has a wider wheel base, and a Kubota 38hp water-cooled engine, giving those who attended an insight into the workings of HQ. He also commented on the size of the new building and felt that it should be slightly larger, giving the number of people attending this particular event. Keep your eyes peeled for an article on this subject.

Finally congratulations to Steve Richardson, formerly Bothwell Castle GC. Steve's new appointment is at Wentworth. Good luck Steve, hope you settle in well. Congratulations also to David Hutton who moved recently to Bothwell Castle from Hamilton GC. Sam Morrison informs me that he and Ian Wilson are still good friends, despite employing one of Ian's men. Sam redons that it was because he had plied him with drink to soften the blow!! (Which in itself is quite strange, you see I always thought Ian was teetotal!) Answers on a postcard please.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any news or anything you might think worthy of a mention.

There was some excellent golf played in some very tricky conditions. The eventual winner was Paul Neve who played some very good golf. Well done Paul. Results were 1st P. Neve; 2nd A. Lomas; 3rd C. Hopper. May I also thank all the trade members who provided prizes for the competition and raffle. There were also two callagraphs for the Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship. They were: Best Gross, A. Lomas, Well done Andy! Best nett: P. Neve. Well done Paul and good luck to you both in the finals. The qualifiers for the regional finals at Macclesfield: Golf Club are: 1 - 9 A. Lomas, J. Donach. 10 - 18 C. Hopper, M. Knowles. 19 - 28 P. Neve, T. Simpson. Good Luck to you all.

The big guns were that we chose Fairhaven Golf Club for the "Spring Tournament," because the weather was so bad that I think most other courses would have had to close.

The day started off dull with possible showers forecast for later in the day. Once again the weather men had it wrong. By 11.30am the rain started and continued for the rest of the day, becoming heavier as the day progressed. The last game, including myself, started at 3pm and we played in continuous rain for 18 holes. My feelings were not for myself or the other competitors, we have learned to accept wet weather in the last 18 months or so, but for Peter Simpson, Head Greenkeeper, and his dedicated staff who I am sure would have liked some decent weather so that the competitors could have appreciated more the superb condition of this very prestigious course. Despite all the rain the day did take place. I would like to thank the Greenkeepers, and Steve, for their help and support. The 29th was also the first draw of the recently launched "100 club. All 100 tickets sold successfully, weren't they Robert.

On such an occasion, I personally feel that a fanfare of trumpets or drum roll would have been in order, to build up to the moment that my ticket was drawn, badly though it was not to be, however the lucky number 21", the holder being Brian Bolland, well done Brian. Still, there's hope yet, two more chances one at the Autumn meeting and at one of the AGM. For the millennium Mike Dooner has kindly offered to sponsor the "100" club.

Please make a note in your diaries, Wednesday 22nd of September, Autumn meeting at Windyhill GC.

John Scott Jr recently attended the Section Secretaries meeting, held at HQ and reported that the two day course was very good and most informative giving those who attended an insight into the workings of HQ. He also commented on the size of the new building and felt that it should be slightly larger, giving the number of people attending this particular event. Keep your eyes peeled for an article on this subject.

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patrons, Burrows (GM)/Cheshire Light Machinery, Acon Equipment and Rigby Taylor. To secure their support the prize table, also White Moss Amenity, Gary Worrall, Greenkeeping Supply Co, Aitkens, County Crops, Richard Campey, for help to swell the prize table.

The six qualifiers for the NW team to play in the Regional Final at Macclesfield Golf Club on Wednesday 25th August are B-J Richard Castle, Denton GC; Tim Nolan, Denton GC; 10-18 Michael Nolan, Brampton GC; John Coar, Blackpool NS GC; 19-28 Mike Hogg, Childwell GC, Paul Eddlestone, Fishwick Hall GC. This competition is sponsored by R. J. Campey/Macclesfield.

The next meeting is the Summer Meeting at Longridge Golf Club on Thursday June 17. Lunch 12noon-1 pm Teeing time 1.30pm. If you have left it late to enter ring Bill Merritt on 0151 284 4416. Any problems or queries ring me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross

Northern

The Annual Dinner dance was again held at Bradford Golf Club. Many thanks to Dave Thackray and Mel Gay for the hard work in organising the event. This year we tried a curry style meal which went down very well with everybody and once again a good time was had by all.

This year’s Spring Tournament and Charterhouse/Scotts National Qualifier was held at Hornsea Golf Club. The weather was splendid, which enhanced the course presented to us.

Congratulations to Roger and his team for all the hard work in preparing the "track" to such a high standard so early in the year.

"The Chantrenouse Scotts National Qualifier, Carden Park and Richard Blackburn has got married. The six qualifiers for the NAV team to compete in the Regional Final at Macclesfield, have been run, but by the time you read this will not only important, it is the law. I've said before, the GEM Shield seems to be written in the wrong language as it seems I've been shirking my responsibilities, it's just that an awful lot has been going on in my private life which is not sorted, so I'm back on line, so to speak. I've been up to Alkwork with Howard McAdley to start the process of becoming I.V. for Wales, returned with half a rain forest neatly packaged in folders.


THE NI VERTI-DRAIN MUSTANG
YOU’LL QUICK SEE THE BENEFIT

Without doubt, the new Verti-Drain Mustang is the fastest, most effective aerator on the market today. Whilst it still features the unique, patented 'heave' action, there are many new improvements, including single point arm adjustment, a stronger frame support system and fewer working parts.
The opening golf day of the season was held at Beaconsfield GC on April 20. The day was a great success with around 40 entrants competing for two spaces in the national finals at Carden Park in October. The only problem was the continuous rain which I suppose was to be expected in April.

Our thanks go to Bill Patterson and his team who presented the course superbly; it was certainly a credit to all concerned. The meal was also very good, altogether a great venue and one I hope we will be able to return to. The prizes for the day were supplied by Gem Professional, thanks to Bernie for his continuous support for the Section. Last but not least thanks to Richard Fontmeuller and ETT, who supplied all the raffle prizes.

The results of the day were as follows: Best Gross R. Wilson 74. Best Nett T. French 76-7-69. 2. C. Taylor 87-16-69. 3. G. Wheeler 90-17-73. Congratulations to all winners the weather made the scoring very difficult. Tony French and myself will do our best at Carden Park to represent the Section.

Lindsay Anderson has now passed over the writing of this article to me but continues as Secretary. Thanks for the tips, Lindsay.

It can drive its 6" tines, solid or hollow, at a faster rate than any other aerator, which makes it the perfect machine for high speed runs down the fairway and for even shorter work on the greens.

The new Mustang joins the market-leading range of Verti-Drains that have outsold and outperformed all competitors for the past 20 years. And, with an aerator to suit virtually every application, it’s the widest range available anywhere.

But one word of caution. The new Mustang is fast; so fast that you may get done in a flash.

Contact us now for further information or a demonstration of the new Verti-Drain Mustang on 01428 661222.

Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd, Weydown Industrial Estate, Weydown Road, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1DW. Tel: 01428 661222. Fax: 01428 661218.

E-Mail: ctm@dircon.co.uk
Web Site: http://www.redexim.com
Simon Austin who is Lindsay’s apprentice at Badgemore had a hole-in-one at Badgemore Park on the par three 17th with an 8-iron. Hopefully the first of many Simon well done.

Finally I would like to welcome Colin Hunt into the world. He has taken up the post as my Deputy at Donnington Grove. Any news for the article would be much appreciated and you can contact me on the number below.

Ross Wilson 01633-821333

East Midlands

I have just had news from an old friend of our Sections, one of our former secretaries, Gordon Mitchell. Gordon has returned to his native Scotland, working at Piperdam Golf & Country Club in Dundee. Gordon formerly worked at Melton Mowbray GC and Westwood GC in Staffordshire. If any member would like to contact Gordon he has passed on his address and telephone number to me and he would like to hear from his old friends again within the Section. On behalf of the East Midlands section I would like to wish Gordon all the best at Piperdam Golf and Country Club.

Next year’s Autumn tournament will be held at Market Harborough GC on September 20 and will again be generously sponsored by Banks Amenity Products. Results from this year’s Spring tournament will appear in next month’s article. Finally if anyone has any information they would like to see in this article please let me know.

AntONY BIndley

Midlands

The Spring tournament was held at Walsamley Golf Club on a fine, sunny April day. The day was a real success and was enjoyed by all those who attended. Many thanks on behalf of the Midlands section to all the staff at Walsamley Golf and Club especially to Andrew Greenaway and his staff for presenting the course in such good condition. A big thank you to all the sponsors for the day who were as follows: E Breakwell for the prizes, Raffords for longest drive and nearest the pin and Bathgates for the wine at the meal.

I have all the results and they are as follows: Best gross - G Wallace. Best nett - P Loffman. 2nd M Gash. 3rd M Moulds, Craig Souter, Justin Roberts, Mark Roche, Douglas Macgregor, Colin McBeth, Steven Heath, Adrian Harris and James Wicks.

Jonathan Wood

East of England

The first competition of the year was held at Throop Woods, Peterborough where the small turn out played over a testing course set by David Walden. The course was in great condition and held up well to the atrocious weather conditions. The sponsors for the competition were Pharo Golf Machinery and Barenburg seed pitched for the golf day to be sponsored next year in a warmer month as they have been the April competition for the last five years.

Thanks to Alldair of PGM and Ben Retjen of Barenburg for their support in sponsoring the competition. They brought some great prizes and the raffle prizes which were donated by other trade members were much appreciated by our members. The eventual winner was Graeme MacDonald of Newark G.C 36 points. Second was David Welberry of Kerton Holme 31 points. Kevin Hodges of Roxton Park 30 points. Leigh Sidden of UAP took home the trade prize of 26 points.

On a much warmer day the Purdy’s Cup and Charterhouse/Scots Championship was sponsored over Les Purdy’s home course at Retford. This course was in excellent condition thanks to John Shan and staff. Les, as usual, produced some prizes which would befit our members. Thanks to Les, Annie and Andy for the sponsorship. Also thanks to the other sponsors, Tower Chemical (Gary you will hand out those fatCoppper) Rugby Taylor, Greenside and Roy’s bottle of wine.

The Charterhouse/Scots National Championship qualifiers are Gareth Rogers, best nett and Brian Turner best gross.

There have been a few changes in Surrey and we congratulate Terry Huntley who as most members know is now Course Manager at West Hill Golf Club and James Anderson who has been appointed First Assistant at Puttenham. Ron Christie and his wife have had their second baby, this time a daughter named Beth.

Richard Evans, also of ADDINGTON Place, it must be something in the air, is a proud father for the first time to a son named Evan.

To Ron and Rick our warmest congratulations and also to Simon Haynes, from Purley Downs Golf Club, whose son, Thomas, arrived five weeks early at the beginning of the year.

Brian Willmott

Essex

On April 13, 40 souls ventured out to Burnham-on-Crouch Golf Club for the first meeting of the Essex Section. It was so cold and wet I’m surprised everyone finished. Thanks to Patrons for sponsoring the event, the club for making us so welcome and Paul for arranging the course in such good condition, despite the wet winter. Raffle prizes were kindly donated by Rigby Taylor, UAP, Grass Roots, Avon Crop, CMW, Does, Tuckwells, Greenside Supplies and Gem.

Onto the prize winners:-
1-9 category Jeff Robinson-78; Andy Sheehan-80; Carl Croucher-80. 10-18 category John Winter-77, Richard Dunn-Ryan-78; Dave Wells-80, 15-28 category Paul Copsey-74; Malcolm Smith-78; Martin Ronister-81; Guest Prize: Sandy Anderson. Trade Prize: Andy Church, Mark Day.

Greenside Supplies sponsored the Longest Drive, won by Andy Sheehan and Nearest the Pin, won by Richard Pyke.

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Essex Section: Daniel Harvey, Three Rivers Golf Club, Andrew Miller, The Warren Golf Club, Mark Howard and Nicholas Kilkades, of Theydon Bois Golf Club.

A special thanks goes to Graham Paul for all the hard work he does for the Section.

Brian Willmott

Surrey

After all the rain thank goodness for the recent spell of sunshine that made the end of April and beginning of May so warm and a pleasure to be in the open air.

All three Bradeshead must have either sold his soul or spirit or spent all of the preprevious Sunday praying for fine weather for the Spring Tournament at Malden Golf Club. Well, whatever he did it worked. The sun shone and shone and made this first golf day an absolute pleasure to be part of.

The course was in excellent condition flawlessly presented and we thank Malden Golf Club for their courtesy and the catering staff for the superb meal.

The day was sponsored by Taricare and the prizes were presented by John Hobbs.

The results were as follows:-

The Charterhouse/Scots National Championship qualifiers are Gareth Rogers, best nett and Brian Turner best gross.

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Brian Willmott

Now for the important bit, the results for the Charterhouse/Scots National Championship, best gross score- Steve Cane-63, best nett score- Chris Wood-72.

Good luck to both.

See you all at Colchester on June 23. Dave Wells

East Anglia

Well what a start to spring! Sun, rain, sleet, sun again and then snow, all coupled with winds from varying directions, has meant that soil temperatures have risen and then fallen, more often than a team of continental footballers in 90 minutes play!

Wishing for at least one settled day were 49 members of the Section who entered our first golf day of 1999 which was held at the Links Golf Club, Newmarket. Threatening skies through the competition was all the heavens offered but all around the neighbouring courses the downpours were the order of the day. Wind though was certainly not in short supply, as it was strong, with swirling gusts enough to test any high approach shot.

The Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship qualifier was played over 18 holes metal play.

Results: 1-9 handicap

Qualifiers for the Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship are N. Brewster and T. Morton. Before the link Club Captain Mr. D. Orwell presented the prizes. He thanked the club’s Head Greenkeeper for his hard work on the course, and presenting it in such good condition. He then went to praise all Greenkeepers and Course Managers, on behalf of all the golfers around the world.

Ian Willett thanked the Captain and then thanked Rob Boyle and his team of greenkeepers for the excellent course. Also a big thank you to our trade sponsors for their support. They are, Atterton & Ellis, Barenburg, Colliers Turf Care, Consult Clarkson, CMW, Grass Roots Trading Company, Hardley Tools, Pattissons, Rhodes Piping, Rigby Taylor, Rushbrooks, Stais, Tomlinson Ground Care, Toro UK, Turkfice Ltd, UAP Ltd. The collection that has now become part of all our meetings towards the Macmillan Nurses Fund raised £44.73. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 16th June at Ufford Park
South Coast

I am sorry there was no report in last month’s magazine. I just didn’t have any news. If you have anything for the Section report, please give me a call.

All those I spoke to at Westurf thought the move to West Point was a good one.

The members of the trade seemed to be a lot happier this year. There were a lot more stands than previous years. A lot of the locals also attended the show. This included bowing greenkeepers from the local football and cricket clubs. This must be good news for Westurf. I noted a large increase in the numbers from the South Coast this time. Well done all of you who made the effort. Adam and his Axe Men was well worth the visit. Who needs a chainsaw when you have men like that around.

The profit to be a lot more activity at the trade stands this year. This can only be good for all concerned. Before moving on from Westurf we must thank Paula for all the hard work in organising the show. Also all the work involved in moving to the new venue. Thank you Paula and we look forward to Westurf 2000 (The Millennium).

Our summer tournament will be held at Rowlands Castle Golf Club on Thursday 22 July. It will consist of a four ball better ball played over 18 holes. Pairing is to consist of a greenkeeper and a member from his Golf Club Committee or a golfing member of his club. A greenkeeper member may play with a greenkeeper member from another club. The cost of the day will be £15.50 per head. All entries to include you and your partners names and addresses, Golf clubs, current handicap and cheques for £31 to be sent to: Fred Deaman, Golf Club Bungalow, Alton Golf Club, Old Alresford Road, Alresford, Hants, GU34 4BU; Tel: 01420 86679. All entries to be with Fred 10 days beforehand, that is Monday 12 July.

Kerran Daly has secured a new post at RAF Lackenhath. S. Millard

South West

A great day was had by all the members who attended the Spring Tournament, which took place at Wells GC on April 22. Torrential rain almost postponed the event, but the weather held back and some good scores were recorded. The results were as follows—Mark Ford, 39 points; 2. Craig Fudge, 38 point; 3. A. Knight, 38 points.

The Trade prizes went to Phil Greenway with 38 points. The sponsors of the event were Ocnis who provided some excellent prizes which were greatly appreciated. Thanks were also given to Wells GC. Head Greenkeeper Maurice Pearce, and his staff for getting the course into great shape considering the adverse weather conditions and also Ray and Pauline and the rest of the catering staff for the superb meals above and onwards.

The next meeting is the Summer Tournament, which will take place at Lilley Brook GC on July 22. This event is sure to attract a large amount of interest.

I have been asked to make some enquiries as to the whereabouts of the team strip. The six shirts seem to have gone missing and are needed this year. If you know where they are please telephone the Team Captain, Dave Bougen, on 01285 720112.

The region will donate one ticket for the BTME in January 2000. The ticket will be raffled and sold at golfing events throughout the year, and will be picked at the AGM or the Christmas Tournament. The price will be £1. A ticket can be obtained by contacting Peter Baynton on 01275 855321.

Turning to Education and Training, I have arranged a number of courses for the Summer and Autumn. A one day First Aid course will take place on August 17th at Cumberwell Park GC, PA1 course will take place on September 22 and PA6 will take place on October 15.

Other training courses for chainsaws and abrasive wheels have been provisionally booked for late October onwards, at Hartpury, Lackham and Cannington Colleges. You have already put your name down on the waiting lists during the last year, there is no need to contact me as I still have your name. New applications for any of the courses shown above should contact me on 01249 783382.

If you would like to go on PA2 courses, you should contact Noel Stevens on 01452 352611 and he will arrange a convenient training course at a later date.

Westurf again was excellent, with a very good attendance at the event which was held at Westpoint for the first time. Thanks to Paula for her organisation.

Paul Cunningham.

South Wales

The new look Westurf, I must say was well worth the longer journey to Exeter for what was an excellent day. Congratulations must go to the organizers for the trade exhibition especially to Paula Humphries. From those who attended the show it was far better being indoors. I’m sure you would agree even though it was a dry day. Thanks must also go to the Axe man who gave us superb entertainment.

The day would not have been a success without the vital time that exhibitors gave. So on behalf of the South Wales Section thanks to all and the trade for an enjoyable day.

I’ll give you the update on the Spring Tournament and the golf match BIGGA versus Pencoed College next month.

A date for your diary: BIGGA versus the PGA to take place at St. Mellons Golf Club Cardiff on August 17. Richard Hatcher 01656 742761.

Devon and Cornwall

Westurf 99 took on a new look and a new venue which proved to be a great success as the show moved into the purpose built arena at Westpoint Exeter located just minutes off the M5 motorway. The indoor arena created a superb atmosphere very similar to BTME, allowing visitors to catch up on the latest development within our industry. Congratulations must go to our Regional Administrator and the Regional Board for taking such a positive step in moving the show to Westpoint which turned out to be a great success.

Visitors also had the chance to sample the hospitality in the BIGGA stand and to meet our Chairman Gordon Child, Executive Director, Neil Thoms, and Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, who were on and to answer any questions. Educational seminars were run throughout the day with the highlight of the day being the Adam Axe men demonstrating their skills.

With all the hard work Paula has put into Westurf and the Region over the last few months with the added pressures of moving house on one Bandic, I hope she has time to read this article while listening to the waves gently lapping against the Cornish coast line. Richard Whyman.

Northern Ireland

Congratulations to the qualifiers so far in the Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship for the BIGGA Challenge Trophy.

Keep those results coming in, and we’ll highlight the qualifiers every month.

South East

At the end of March we had our section qualifier at Royal County Down GC, Newcastle. There was a great attendance on the day appreciating the sunny weather. The championship course itself is in magnificent condition and all praise to Alan Strachan, Course Manager and to Walter Beattie and the team for the presentation of the course.

Congratulations to our two qualifiers Noel Crawford and his brother Eamon Crawford, both greenkeepers at Royal County Down.

Also thanks to Scots for the prizes of cut glass decanters to the winners. I would like to thank Terry Crawford, our handicap secretary for overseeing the competition as well as chairman Graham Wylie and secretary Ken Henderson and especially to Royal County Down GC for allowing us to run the section qualifier on their course and for the courtesly they showed to BIGGA members.

I would like to welcome further new members to the section, Dave Lenton, Head Greenkeeper at Milltown GC Dublin, also Michael King, Eamon Crawford, Noel Crawford and Patrick Brady all from Royal County Down GC.

One more thing to mention is a summer golf competition which will be held in early June and members will be notified.

Jonathan McCabe