Keeping in touch with news and comment from the Sections

North
Congratulations to Iain Grant on his move to Head Greenkeeper at Selkirk GC, Buckie. I am sure Brian Cocker and all at Alyth will miss Iain, who was Deputy to Brian for a number of years. One of our Trade members is excelling in another sport. Andy Memmott of Rigby Taylor, is fishing for Scotland next month. We wish him success and tight lines!

More new members to the Section. This month we welcome Donald Mackinnon, Barra G C, and Fabrice Tournier and James Middleton, from Royal Aberdeen G C. I think that must be the full staff of Royal Aberdeen as members now. John Milne also rejoins the Section but has just moved from East Aberdeen GC to Glenelges, so may move into the Central Section as a result.

One of my Club members came to see me with some news which might be of interest to North members. He has just returned from New Zealand, where he was wearing a Tain GC jersey. It turned out that the gentleman in question was Steve Macdonald, formerly a greenkeeper at Fortrose and Rosemarkie GC. Last I heard of Steve he was working in Holland on a sailing boat. I wonder if he still carries the Tain jersey?

This position has become available due to Stewart Barr's impending retirement, his customers and all the best. If he ever gets up to the North Island, he should call on another Scotsman, Willie Carnegie, Head Greenkeeper at Redwood Park GC and is still wearing a Tain GC jersey. I wonder if he still carries the Tain jersey?

Well, that's it for this month, sorry if there is not a lot, but we seem to be in a quiet period.

Chris Yeaman

East
This season has got off to a good start for everyone as the weather is being a bit kinder to us all now, with courses drying out after the very wet spell this past winter.

I heard some comments about the Scottish Conference in early March and was told there were some very good speakers on the day. I had to miss out due to work but a few comments but will be in attendance next year.

Well done to Peter Boyd and everyone, who helped organise this years event. So, by the time you read this we will have held our Spring Tournament at Goswick Golf Club which will also be the qualifier for the new National Tournament at Carden Park in Cheshire. Results and comments next month.

You should also have received your 1999 fixture cards and again, our thanks to Greentech Limited for sponsoring these for us. As everyone now knows the dates of fixtures etc, we hope to see a good turn-out at the Section events. After all, it's your Section, so support it! If you did not receive a fixture card, give Steve Dixon a call on 0131 443 0233 and he will get one out to you. If anyone is on the move or has any births, marriages or photographs of interest, give me a call or drop me a line and I will be only too pleased to put it into a future edition of Greenkeeper International. We are arranging another football match, this time against Mid Lothian District Council and a report will be done after this game, hopefully with better results!

On March 24 we visited Stewart of Dalkith's Top Dressing and Kelpie plants. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but feedback from members was very positive. Our thanks to Graham Forbes and everyone at Stewart's from all attending, for an informative and enjoyable afternoon. This was the fast of the winter lectures for 1998/99, the committee are putting together an itinerary for Winter 1999/2000, so keep an eye open for them.

Well, that's it for this month, sorry if there is not a lot, but we seem to be in a quiet period.

Union numbers, 0131 445 7165/6/7165 work phone/fax, 01620 842037, home or 07901 846 194, so come on, let's hear from you.

Central
We begin this month's report with the sad news of the recent death of one of our former committee members, Jock Armstrong. Many of you will remember Jock as the jovial rep from Souter's of Stirling who went out of his way to help many a greenkeeper, even if they were not one of his customers and nothing was too much bother to him. He was appointed to represent the Trade on the Section committee at its inaugural meeting in November, 1980 and served us well until 1989, when he felt it was time a younger person should have a chance. To say the ideal opportunity to do just that and hopefully answer any questions you might have.

Anyone with news items or who wants to get in touch with me please note my new phone number: 07788 923214 and yes it still vibrated!

IA MacLeod

Ayrshire
I pen these notes on a dull dreary Easter Monday evening which has seen the recent short spell of good weather come to an end. My only consolation is that the rain is washing in my Spring fertiliser.

A good few members are on the move to new jobs. I'll start with nearest to home by introducing George Morrison as our new Deputy Head Greenkeeper. George moves to Largs from West Kilbride where he has worked from apprenticeship. Staying in Largs, this time at Routenburn, Ian Donaldson has been promoted to Head Greenkeeper after Marshall Stewart's departure to Beith GC. Peter Boyd, Head Greenkeeper at Anderle GC, is moving to the trade Section as a representative for Rufords. Jim's job will be filled by Steven Higgins who receives internal promotion. The much sought after position of Head Greenkeeper at Western Gailes GC is to be filled by Jim Devlin, who has been working for some time at East Lothian GC. I am sure all the Section wish him success.

I will bring reports from the Committee Meeting and the Spring outing at Ballochmyre GC next month along with any other news. If you have any, call me on 01505 683278.

Iain Barr

West
Just a few items to report on this month. Firstly the West Section's Education Seminar held at Crow Wood GC on Thursday, 25th March. The headline topic was Cosh for all. The session included an overview of Cosh and what it means to us all and how we will be affected by changes now and in
the near future. Secondly, the effects of microbial activity within the soil profile and how to sustain these precious life forms for the long term benefit of the grass plant. Lastly, Steven Hogg, Head Greenkeeper of Crow Wood GC, spoke about the basic uses of the Weather Station. The emphasis with this apparatus is the potential to record and store data over given periods of time. Such records could enable us to predict the best time at which to apply pesticides and fertilisers, thereby reducing the costly expense of misjudged applications. Thanks go to Steven Hogg and Crow Wood GC for allowing us use of their clubhouse and facilities. Many thanks to CSC for their time and effort in presenting and organising this seminar. Well done.

On now to the Conveners’ match held at Cawder GC. I understand that the day went very well and that the weather even managed to beleaguer itself. The results for the day are: Winners. Cawden GC, 38 pts. Scott Ballantyne and partner, runners up Balmore GC, 36 pts. Charlie Goodall and partner.

Thanks to Neil and all the staff for preparing the course, to Cawder GC for allowing us to share their facilities and thanks also to the bar and catering staff in attendance. Thanks also to the two sponsors of this event, Aitkens and SGM. Both Richard Aitken and David McNay, in attendance.

Thanks to Stuart Taylor for organising the Winter lectures and also to the bar and catering staff in attendance. Thanks go to Neil ana all the staff for preparing the course, to Cawder GC for allowing us to share their facilities and thanks also to the bar and catering staff in attendance. Thanks also to the two sponsors of this event, Aitkens and SGM. Both Richard Aitken and David McNay, in attendance.

A report on a football match played last Thursday, April Fools Day no less. An 11-a-side game held at the University Science Parks, a sportmanlike group of Greenkeepers v East Kilbride YM. Word has it that the game was quite a toughie. Despite Stuart Taylor’s rallying cries of “Come on the Greenies” and with the astro turf surface playing havoc with limbs etc, the E. Kilbride boys took an early lead with Gerry Bruen scoring the equaliser and, alas, the only goal for the Greenies. Finishing with only ten men after Sandy Brawley’s sending off under mitigating circumstances!! the final score was 4-1.

Rumour has it that on the day some of the Greenkeepers may have been carrying extra baggage under their shirts! Ah well, at least you will all be in shape for the next match won’t you?

Thanks to Stuart Taylor for arranging the game and please remember to contact him of you wish to partake on 0141 992 5554.

Finally, if anyone has any news of interest, ie. promotions, births, deaths etc., please contact me on 0141 776 1532 or 07050 179080 (mobile).

Gavin Jarvis

Sheffield

On 14 March we held our final Winter lecture at Rotherham Golf Club and I would like to pass on my thanks for once again letting us use their facilities. The first lecture was given by Mr Crowther from Glenside Organics on organic fertilisers and the second lecture was given by Mr Hodakiss from Perryfields Holdings, formerly Johnsons seeds, on grass seeds. I would like to express my thanks to the two gentlemen for an excellent lecture and also thanks to Roy Ullathorne for organising the Winter lectures once again.
On the golfing scene our annual competition will be held at Abbeydale Golf Club on Monday 12 July.

John Lax

Cleveland

The Section had two lectures on 16 March. Turfcare had an Open Day at Ramside GC. It was very well attended by both greenkeepers and groundsmen. The speakers were very interesting and everyone came away a bit wiser. As usual Terry Charlton put on a very good day. The meal was excellent. Our thanks to Roger Shaw and his staff for letting us loose on his course with the demo gear.

The second lecture was on the night at Darlington GC. The speaker was Gordon Holms from CSC on Risk Assessment. About 20 greenkeepers attended. All seemed to enjoy it and our thanks to the Darlington Steward for a first class supper.

Once again any news, let me know at work 0191 378007 or home 0191 3781912. Next Section news will have the latest from our Spring Tournament. That should make riveting reading!

Kevin (Scoop) Heslop.

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North Wales

Easter is upon us and, wow, the weather’s lovely. This time last year we had about nine inches of snow. Oh, the British weather - don’t you just love it! On March 10 we held a seminar at the college on Water Management and the movement of water through the soil and the effects of wetting agents. It was very educational and I’m glad to say, very well supported. I never got the exact figures but suffice to say if we can get that many members interested in future lectures etc., then it will certainly be worthwhile organising them. If any of you out there have any suggestions, please let me know.

I am now starting to go through the process of becoming the Internal Verifier for Wales with the GTC (at long last) and, hopefully, by the time all you assessors read this, you should have had your first moderation meeting with Howard Addy and myself. Fingers crossed.

I haven’t got any college news this month as they are on Easter break as I write, and this is probably the last time this year I have the opportunity to wish Steve Goode all the best in his new appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Kilworth Springs GC. Steve formerly worked as an Assistant Greenkeeper at Lingdale GC.

Antony Bindley

Essex

Risk assessment. Two words that put fear into most people, but Jon Albutt put us right on a Health & Safety evening at Writle College. It was an eye opener for me and the 30 greenkeepers present. An interesting evening. Thanks Jon and thanks to Doug, at Grass Roots Trading Company, for sponsoring the evening.

My Greens Chairman and I had a great day out at Walton Heath at the Gentleman’s dinner. Good to see some Essex boys there. None of us won anything but it was a good day out with Clive having the course in pristine condition as usual. Derek, you owe me a glass of red wine. Don’t leave the country!

New Members: Bob Sparway, Richard Linnen, Colin Robinson, Richard Wood, Tony Goddard all of Upminster GC; Andrew Taylor, Bishop Stortford GC; Steven Tovey, Jay Clark of Orsett GC; Ian Morrison, Saffron Walden GC and Michael Oakeg of Rochford Hundred GC.

The draw for the singles match play is as follows: R. Pride versus W. Wingfield; M. Forrester, R. Hughes versus M. Allen, D. Wells versus I. Mitchell, W. Wingfield versus S. Reeves.

That’s all for now. Risk Assessment, where do I start? Dave Wells. 01702 522202

East Midlands

This year’s Better-Ball Pairs Tournament will be hosted by Charnwood Forest GC on August 23 and will be played over 9 holes. This will hopefully be followed by an evening lecture. Anybody interested in participating or attending the lecture will find further details in future editions of this column. This year’s Regional Seminar will be held at Mentmore GC on Wednesday, November 17 and promises to be full of high profile speakers. Further details will follow in future editions, but it is hoped that many more members will support this annual event.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Steve Goode all the best in his new appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Kilworth Springs GC. Steve formerly worked as an Assistant Greenkeeper at Lingdale GC.

Antony Bindley

North West

The Seminar at Mere G&CC on March 23rd, attended by 84 delegates who enjoyed an excellent day’s education. The day started with an excellent talk and slide show by John Nicholson of Eamon Wall & Co. The subject of his talk was “History of Trees in Golf Course Architecture” and this man knows his trees. John has worked for Eamon Wall for a number of years and has advised over 130 golf courses ranging from new courses to long established courses, covering all aspects of woodland design and management. The talk was very interesting and also the advice on the availability of grants for tree planting.

The second speaker was Alan Gibbons, of Physio Control, whose talk was entitled “The need for Early Defibrillation.” A defibrillator; for those who do not know, is a machine that can re-start the heart by means of electric shock treatment.

Alan had brought along a portable machine which could become an essential part of the first aid kit on golf courses. After an excellent lunch the seminar continued with Richard Stillwell, Director of Greenkeeping PGA European Tour, whose talk was “Preparing Golf Courses for European Tour Events.” Richard has been greenkeeping for 34 years and has been Head Greenkeeper at Royal Porthcawl and Royal Dublin before starting his own advisory company. For the past 12 years he has been consultant to the PGA European Tour, preparing for over 300 tournaments including three Ryder Cups, the Volvo Masters and has travelled to every country in Europe. A folder on “Course Preparation Guidelines” was given to all delegates and Richard spoke on all aspects of the paper starting with preparation months in advance to the final things like out of bounds markings, hazard markings, GUR etc. This was an excellent talk and he stressed that the tournament director and agronomist will work closely with the Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager. The final speaker of the day was Jim Croxton, Regional Secretary PGA North Region, and his subject was “Rules of Golf Related to Greenkeeping.” This was obviously a very interesting subject for a greenkeepers’ seminar and of course many questions were asked and answered.

The old question of bunker rakes was raised and argued about, where do you leave the rake, in the bunker or out. The answer appears to be as close to the bunker without interfering with play.

I would like to thank all the speakers for making this an excellent seminar. Mere Golf and Country Club for allowing the use of their excellent facilities and caterers and all the delegates who attended. The next golf tournament will be the “Summer Tournament,” at Longridge GC, on Thursday June 17. All applications to be sent to Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Clithorne, Liverpool L4 9RB, including a cheque for £15. Applications must be in by Saturday June 12. Any news or queries, ring me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross

Midland Region

Peter Larman
Tel: 01455 437507

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Devon & Cornwall
Dartmouth Golf & Country Club was the venue for the Rhone Poulenc & Supatuf March meeting held on Wednesday March 24. Unfortunately, on arrival, the rain started to fall which made playing conditions over Dartmouth’s excellently prepared course, very difficult. Our non-golfing members departed the clubhouse on the now customary tour of the course, but with the weather closing in, they headed for the greenkeeping compound before returning to the warm dry clubhouse. After a superb lunch Paul Clifton, Rhone Poulenc, and John Mullins, Supatuf, representing our sponsors for the day, both gave a short presentation on their respective companies before presenting the golf prizes.


Congratulations to Gordon Tamblyn on his successful defence of the Supatuf Trophy after yet another strong challenge from Tony Ramsden who finished second again! Also, congratulations to Tony James on winning the Rhone Poulenc Trophy. It was nice to see so many Cornishmen in the prizes.

Our afternoon educational talk rounded off the day with Billy Spratt, of Phoenix Irrigation Services, presenting his excellent talk on “Starting your Irrigation System for the Season Ahead.”

South West
The hot and sunny month of May has now arrived and it’s time to rummage through the cupboards and wardrobe and grab those essential summer items of the modern greenkeeper. These include an ill-fitting pair of tight shorts and a cheap and dodgy looking pair of black sunglasses picked up on a day trip to Western-super-Mare.

Hopefully by now the post Augusta syndrome will have faded away and most of your members will be appreciating your efforts and hard work over the Winter and Spring months with a big improvement in the condition of the golf course.

The better weather should allow for some excellent golfing days this Summer. The next tournament is the Greenkeeper/Amateur event which will be held at Tall Pines GC on 18 May. All entries must be received by the 14 May. In June there is a match against the South West Secretaries which will take place on the 16 June at Enmore Park GC.

Congratulations go to Dave Bougen on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Cherchester Golf Club. Dave, who has moved from Bath GC, is also Team Captain for the South West Section. Anyone who needs to contact him about team affairs should telephone him on his new number which is 01285 720112.

Now, turning to Education and Training, I am still building up a list of names for each course which BIGGA can run. Many of these courses just need a few more places to be filled before the course can actually be arranged and run. In February we ran a Fire Safety for Greenkeepers day at Gloucester Fire Station which was a big success. I am also hoping to run a one day First Aid Course in June. If you would like to add your name to this list or to any other course we can run, then please contact me on 01029 783382.

Paul Cunningham
South Wales
Unfortunately there is very little to bring you up to date with this month, which leads me to explain that our fixtures have not yet taken place when these notes go to press. Hopefully you all should have received this year’s fixture list, but if not, please contact our Section Secretary, Peter Lacey, who I’m sure will be of assistance in sending you one.

I’m sure everything went well at WESTURF this year but I’ll bring you up to date next month with the ins and outs.

You would also have played the Spring tournament at Southern-down GC, so I’ll also bring you up to date with that next month. A reminder for your diary: BIGGA versus Pencro College Golf Match on 2 June at the College golf course with a 5:30 pm tee off time. After, weather permitting, we may have a barbecue. Anyone with any information please contact me Tel: 01656 742761

Richard Hatcher

Northern Ireland

North East
On 25 March we had our Section qualifier for the National Championship on 3 to 5 October to be held at Carden Park, Chester. The qualifying is held at Royal Co. Down. We would like to thank all who turned up on what was a very enjoyable day. The course was in excellent condition with very fast greens. Our thanks to all at Royal Co. Down.

Finally, we would like to welcome our newest member Connor McLaughlin from Donegal who is currently working at Stakis Park. Congratulations to Mark Cassidy who is leaving Stakis Park to take up the job of Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Lurgan GC. We wish you all the best in your new position. Mentioned twice in two months, Mark is this a sign of things to come?… Good Luck. Eamonn Farrell.

The best net was Nick Webber and the best gross was Alison Sloan. First reserve is Pat Devine and second reserve is Mark Farrell.

See you all next month!