The BIGGA Scottish Conference was held at the Tayscott Hotel, Laurier College, Dunfermline on Tuesday March 6. This was our fourth visit to the BLC which over the years has improved its facilities and is now regarded as one of the best Conference venues in the Central belt.

The speakers provided us with a variety of topics, all relevant to the industry today. In the morning session we had Peter Jefford leading the way with his talk on Top Dressing and Rootzones. Today was a most informative and topical subject. Next we had Sandy Armit, from the Double A Trading Company, who explained in great detail the care and maintenance required in taking care of your machines.

After the break we had Jim McKenzie, Director of Golf for Celtic Manor Hotel GC, who led us through the construction of the golf courses at Celtic Manor and the problems associated with such a large project, but also the tremendous satisfaction in having been involved in such a grand design. We next had John Souter, who explained in great detail the care and maintenance required in taking care of your machines.

Finally we had Sandy Armit, from the Double A Trading Company, who explained in great detail the care and maintenance required in taking care of your machines.

The Scottish Region of BIGGA would like to place on record their appreciation to the speakers for taking the time and effort to travel, in some cases quite a considerable distance, to attend and present their talks to us. This year’s Conference had the highest attendance for many years with 168 attending.

North
Another batch of new members to welcome to the Section this month. First of all Andrew Macrae and George Duncan, from Fine Turf, then Edward Brown, from Drumoig GC, then Craggan GC, and Paul Murray from Ballumbie GC a new course near Dundee. I hope you ladies can get along to our outing this month on the 17th at Brechin GC. It will be our usual large turnout of North members.

There has been a change of date for our Autumn outing to Keith GC, we now go there on September 6 instead of the 13th, so put that in your diary. Further details will be sent out in August.

Spare a thought for Stuart Robertson, who has recently retired from John Souter Ltd, his new job is at the Ben Wyvis Distillery. We wish him all the best in his new job.

Finally, during the Conference, our Chairman, John Scott, had the pleasure of making a presentation to one of our long standing and most respected supporters of the Association in Scotland. John Scott is a long-time member of the Central and West Sections. John, throughout the years, was a supporter of SIGGA and BIGGA and provided support in the form of goods and services to the Association in general. The Chairman wished John well in his "alleged" retirement and assured him he would be made most welcome at any of our events in future.

The annual BIGGA Scottish v Secretaries’ Association fixture took place at the Kilbriide GC on Tuesday April 3. The Secretaries were looking for revenge as they had been beaten quite soundly last year in the corresponding fixture.

Things didn’t look too good weather wise just three days prior. It had been very wet all week. It was pretty miserable at this point, however, things improved and it remained dry but windy which seemed to suit the Secretaries as their lead pairing convincingly won the first match against our Chairman and partner. Things evened out with one match still out on the golf course. The Secretaries were leading by five matches to four and it was looking good for them. However, the statistic from the Kingdom came good in the shape of Derek Scott and Stuart Sime who squeezed home by one hole to earn us a draw.

We therefore retained our trophy! Wins were recorded by Aisheh Duran and George Brown, Jim Paton and Ian Barr, Steven Sullivan and Douglas McIntosh and George-Morrison and Derek Wilson... and, of course, the heroes from Fife.

Once the golf was over we had the chance to discuss and Committee of West Kilbride for affording us the facilities and use of the clubhouse. Considering that it is pretty easy in the season Jim Paton and his staff are very obliging in the morning session, and at very short notice, we had Tim Colthog, who stepped in for Neil Edwodin who unfortunately couldn’t make it.

Work this winter has been hard enough without added problems like that. I hope you lads can get along to our outing one day to find vandals had taken their toll. The committee are putting the travel involved.

I recently attended a meeting of Section Secretaries at BIGGA HOUSE and all in all it was another very enjoyable event on numerous different subjects it appears that we all have the same problem in getting more members to participate in any other than golf tournaments! So congratulations to you all on letting your Secretary know what you want from your Section. Even if it’s a change of Secretary! On the subject of golf tournaments, it has been suggested by one Section that we have an Autumn one in December, just before Christmas, with a social function (Lap Dancing was actually mentioned!) to follow. Anyone interested? Seriously, if you are interested in any event being organised please let us know on www.bigga.org.uk/events.html

Section Event? www.bigga.org.uk/events.html

This winter I am thinking of running a winter pairs greensome competition which would be played as a matchplay knockout competition with the first round in October and the final being at a meeting in April. If there is enough interest the entry forms will be sent out in the summer which you fill in with the partner of your choice and send back with the entry fee of £5 then after the closing date the handicap committee will make the draw and it will be on view at the autumn outing at Monkrashan GC and it will also be in this column in the September/October edition of Greenkeeper International.

I will be making an announcement at the spring outing at Dunbar about this tourment. If you can’t make it, get in touch and I will give you full details if it is successful. The Scottish Greenskeepers Championship will be held at Drumoig GC in Fife on June 12, not too far away from our area, so let’s have a good turnout from the Section. The BIGGA National Championship is at Royal Birkdale and the Scottish Greenskeepers Championship will be held at Ayrshire GC.

This is a chance to play at an Open Championship venue which will be well worth the travel involved.

The evenings are beginning to stretch out and the weather looks like it’s going to be quite cold. I hope for a bit of growth and a good summer ahead to make up for the awful winter we have just endured, I didn’t realise there were so many shades of green!

Iain Macdonald

Central

This month we extend a warm welcome to our new Secretary and vice-secretary, who are Andrew Ramsay, from Bishopbog Golf Club; John Mylles, Chris Smith, and Gavin Speedie, all from Gencalgues Golf Courses and, as I say every time, hopefully to see you all at some of our events in the near future.

The proposed football match between the Central and West Sections did not take place last month as planned for unforeseen reason (the West section felt that Dunlee was too far away from Glasgow!). It’s the same distance both ways! A practice match was played instead, when the Dunlee team (or should that be bhoyos?) took on the rest of the Section, and a good game ensued, resulting in a four all draw, giving team manager, Andy O’Hara, plenty of choices when selecting his team for the challenge match when a suitable venue can be arranged. Andy is still seeking a successor for the position of team manager; so if anyone is interested, just get in touch with him and he will fill you in on all the details of what is involved, including salary etc.

Congratulations and every success for the future go to Section member Debbie Mckie, who has recently moved to Falkland, Balbirnie and Thornton golf clubs has decided to further his career and experience by accepting the post of Senior Greenkeeper at Leynair Golf Club in Ireland which is situated in the town of Aulneens ten miles from the Icelandic capital of Reykjavik.

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had a convincing 6-2 win. The goal scorers on the day were Kevin Collins (2), Sandy Brawley (1), Gerard Braun (1), Edd Adamson (1), and one goal from the policeman who joined our team. Man-of-the-match on the day had to go to Alastair Taylor in goal who pulled off a string of good saves to keep our lead intact. Gerry would like to thank all who turned up on the day and hopes it will encourage more Greenkeepers to put their name forward for future games. Watch this space for future games.

New member’s to be welcomed to the Section are Steven Laird, Renfrew GC; Stuart Crossan, Pollok GC; Christopher Lunaria, Pollok GC; John Kelly, Shotts GC; Andrew Muir, Paisley GC; Iain Mcfarlane, Whitecraig’s GC, and Craig Drummond, Paisley GC. We hope to see you all at the up and coming section outings 6 events.

Congratulations are to be extended to Gerard Braun who has been appointed Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Williamwood GC. Gerry has worked with myself for the last eight years at East Kilbride GC and I personally wish him every success in his new position.

A moderator’s meeting was called at the Gleneagles Hotel on March 22. The meeting was well attended by 20 to 25 attendees. Several key points were raised about keeping your certificate current and better communication between assessor’s and training provider’s were covered. Ronnie Bunting and Sue Goddons, GTC, stated they were pleased with both the turn out and the content of the meeting. Well that is about it for this month, I hope you all have a good season.

Biology Rolland, 01355 68852

PS. I know I spell Houllier wrong in the last report, apologies but, it’s not as if it is the first time Gerry’s name has been miss-spelt.

Gleneagles Chapter

My name is Ian Morrison and I am writing to introduce all students and full members to a new initiative created this month between BIGGA, Textron and the PGA Centenary Course for the PGA Centenary Course for the Gleneagles Scottish Championship, the Scottish PGA Championship and the WPGA Invitational all to be held here in 2004.

The involvement from BIGGA has arisen from ideas by Ken Richardson, education and training manager for BIGGA, and talks with Jimmly Kidd, Director of turfgrass at Gleneagles. Both have recognised the need for students to have their own representatives within the profession, for students to have a voice at BIGGA regional and national conferences as well as a network of management students and experienced contacts throughout the industry that they can approach for ideas, help and support.

So that is the history, and why BIGGA, represented by Ken Richardson and Scott Macallum, arrived at Gleneagles on April 3, to present the BIGGA students with their Student Chapter Membership. The students included Christopher Baldock, Robert Coughlan, John Milne, Lee Reil, Keith Walton, Andrew de Wet, who was appointed secretary, and myself, Ian Morrison, who has the honour of being the first Chairman of the Gleneagles BIGGA Student Chapter.

We intend to utilise all the opportunities that are now open to us and would like to hear from other students, college and employers who might be interested in setting up similar student chapters within their respective organisations. So until next month thank you to BIGGA, Gleneagles, Textron and Scottish Grass Machinery for the fantastic opportunity to prove that students are dedicated to making a difference within this great profession.

Please contact me on 01764 694429 for details or just to say hello.

Ian Morrison

Gleneagles, Textron and Scottish Grass Machinery have supported by the schemes sponsors, Textron Golf Turf and Specialty Products, who along with Gleneagles have recognised the need for future development of potential golf course superintendents and managers.

Textron in conjunction with Scottish Grass Machinery not only fund library materials and lap top computers to aid with assignments, but they also provide a bursary award for the best students. This offers a financial award for our hard work and a fantastic opportunity to go to the annual GCSAA Conference and Show in the USA to network and gain industry contacts.

The scheme offers students the chance to invite external speakers to Gleneagles and to travel to some of Gleneagles’ extensive contacts. Wesley Walker has just returned from Riffa Golf Club in Bahrain and we are running an exchange scheme with Bandon Dunes Golf Club in Oregon, USA. Has the scheme worked and all the time and money invested been worth it, well that can be answered with a resounding yes. Previous students have not only been taken on by Gleneagles, but have gone on to represent their profession at the highest level. Examples include Todd Gilmour, who is now Deputy Superintendent of a new venture in Hawaii and Steve Johnson, who is the Superintendent at Riffa Golf Club in Bahrain. Also, last year’s winner, Damian Brown, has recently returned from Australia with the sole purpose of maintaining the greens on the PGA Centenary Course for the Gleneagles Scottish Championship, the Scottish PGA Championship and the WPGA Invitational all to be held here this year.

The Gleneagles BIGGA chapter has arisen from ideas by Ken Richardson, education and training manager for BIGGA, and talks with Jimmly Kidd, Director of turfgrass at Gleneagles. Both have recognised the need for students to have their own representatives within the profession, for students to have a voice at BIGGA regional and national conferences as well as a network of management students and experienced contacts throughout the industry that they can approach for ideas, help and support.

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North Wales

Firstly, the following notes of appreciation should have appeared two months ago, however there seems to have been a mix up at HQ.

Two committee members have left the Association and industry to go to positions new. Phil Davies has left to concentrate on his family-run business. We are all indebted to Phil for the professional way he went about his work in all aspects of our industry, from greenkeeper, through sales and education, his enthusiasm and knowledge always shone through as the winter lecture programmes he originated showed. He will be a hard act to follow.

Gary Edwards has also left. Our Section Secretary for the last three years, Gary took up the position when the Section was in decline and only ever missed one committee meeting. He was instrumental in getting our Section some of the best

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 time support system and fewer working parts.
courses in the world to play on and tried to get a balance to cater for all our members to ensure people didn't feel left out. He achieved that and in the last three years there will have been a tournament not far from you. Our best wishes go to both of you.

In March, I went to a couple of free seminars. The first was organised by DCE Focus where papers were delivered by Rufford Soil Technology and Alderburgh Atlantis Systems among others. I know most of you are familiar with Ruffords but I'd never seen the Alderburgh drainage system before - it looked the way forward to me. I think I was the only greenkeeper there and I even got a CPD certificate.

The next seminar was at Conny GC organised by the WGU. It was superb and well attended with speakers including Alistair Boge, David Williams, Ken Richardson and Derek Green with the WGU President, Mike Cole, chairing proceedings. We are very lucky to have a governing body which is so committed to greenkeeping in Wales. I remember they ever give grants for greenkeeper training. Hats off to a very forward thinking Union.

Congratulations are in order to Tracy Schofield (nee Williams), greenkeeper at Vale of Llangollen GC, on her wedding in Memphis in January and Paul Lowe on his appointment as Course Manager at Rhuddlan GC.

Welcome to new members Alwyn John, Dylan Hughes, of Pwllheli GC, and Chris Grain, of Borth Ynyslas GC.

Danny Fitzgerald has moved to Penstune GC (Hey this is good I'm getting information).

The Midlands Section has challenged us to either paintballing or carting - transport to be provided, cost approximately £20-£25, in the autumn/winter. Any interest contact Trevor Johnston Tel: 0151 336 6675. Also Sportsworld are organising a match against the Midlands at Northop on May 23. Anyone interested contact Terry Adamson Tel 07775 621272.

Talking of Sportsworld I attended their seminar at Garden Park in April. It was very well attended and very well put together, however, "Poa Annua. Our Friend," I think not.

Our spring tournament was held at Rhuddlan GC but unfortunately the rain came again and the comp had to be played over 11 holes. It was a real shame as the course was immaculately present.
East Midlands

On Monday March 19 at The Belfry, Brabazon course our Section Chairman, Gavin Robson, played for the E.T Breakaweld team in The Belfry Trade Day. Also as part of the team was Kevin Kinzer and another E.T Breakaweld rep and the Head Greenkeeper at The Forest of Arden course. Despite some difficult conditions the team finished a very respectable third place, in a AM-AM format Stableford with 73 points. On behalf of our Chairman I would like to thank The Belfry and E.T Breakawelds for their invitation.

This month we see a few Greenkeepers on the move and I would, on behalf of the Section, like to wish them all the best for the future. Chris Weir moves from Assistant Greenkeeper Kirby Muxloe GC to Assistant at Scraptoft; Kristian Hibberd from Luffenham Heath, and finally Martin Oliver, of Willesley Park, who as moved from Willesley Park GC into a new profession. Martin had spent several years in greeningkeeping and was well respected by his fellow professionals. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him all the best in his new career.

Also on the move is Les Earnley our Regional Administrator. Les has moved to the position of Secretary Manager at Beedles Lake Golf Centre, in Leicestershire. Again on behalf of the Section I would like to wish him well in his new position.

Antony Bindley

East Anglia

By now everyone should have received a copy of the fixtures list for this year, our first meeting will be over. Our thoughts will be concentrated on our courses and the season to come, no doubt that by July we will be in the middle of a drought and there will be a hosepipe ban (Ha Ha). If any member has not received a fixture list please contact me on 01728 452759 and I will send you one.

On March 26 & 27 I spent two informative days at BIGGA HQ with nearly all the Section Secretaries throughout the country, the meeting demonstrated to me how hard all the staff are working on our behalf. As everyone knows last year was a bad year for all concerned in our industry with theory and fertiliser sales affected by the weather and a lot of our courses under water for long periods. This has caused some companies to cut back especially on sponsorship, but it is good to know that the team at Adderbury are out there fighting for the sponsorship and the income needed for the running of the magazine, competitions, awards and benefits for the membership. There is an open invitation to those who wish to visit BIGGA HOUSE, you only have to make a telephone call and you will be made most welcome, remember that all the staff are working very hard on your behalf.

If any member has a problem that BIGGA can sort out, the team will be there to help them in any way they can, also for more information try visiting the BIGGA website which is going from strength to strength.

Under Ken's watchful eye the Education Department is making huge strides forward with courses at HQ and others in Regions and Sections up and down the country. On this note did you know the everyone is entitled to help with training from the Government. The initiative is called and Individual Learning Account which entitles you to £2000 of training per year. It pays 50% of the cost of computer training and various percentages of other training.

To apply for your account please phone 0800 072 2678 and apply for an application form. Please remember that in order for our Association to progress, we must give the team our full support, they are there to help us all.

Ian Wellet

Surrey

Surrey Section Committee met on April 4, the agenda was as follows.

1. Rules and Responsibilities. 2. Tom Smith - Canadian Trip and SISIS Bowl (a report from Tom will be printed in next month's mag) 3. Fund Raising. 4. Winter Lecturers, Visits, Quiz Night Etc. 5. Any Other Business.

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