News from the Chief Executive

It's December and as we enter the final stages in the planning for BTME & Clubhouse 2005 I wonder where the year has gone. Having recently renewed acquaintances with an old friend I am reminded how easy it is to lose contact and how a great many of us use occasions such as Harrogate as an opportunity to catch up on those lost friendships.

The 'Harrogate week', as it is often referred to, is more than just an exhibition, more than just an education opportunity, it is a bringing together of like-minded people who have one over-riding common interest - greenkeeping - and the provision of the best facility possible regardless of the resources available.

No matter which country they come from and no matter what type of golf club, the conversations revolve around the latest in equipment, the current thinking on maintenance and presentation of the golf course and an open and frank exchange of problems, solutions and ideas.

In recent years the addition of the Clubhouse Exhibition and a range of seminars aimed at golf club Secretaries, Managers and Owners has resulted in a steady increase in the number of this category of visitor. Harrogate used to be seen by many as an excuse to get away from work or home and enjoy some of the other attractions of the town, often to excess! I am pleased to say that we have moved away from this less acceptable image. I hope that BIGGA can rely upon your support, if only for a day, and don't forget to bring with you the Secretary or Manager or perhaps the Chairman of Green.

On Friday January 21 2005 BIGGA will host at Harrogate an International Summit. This has usually been held at the GCSAA show and I feel very privileged in being able to organise this event. The summit has developed over recent years to become a forum where greenkeeping associations and other related organisations from around the world are able to discuss and progress initiatives of common interest.

There are two main items currently on the agenda: One, A Global Environmental Policy and, two, the development of a set of standards for professional golf course management. Both of these items have been extensively discussed during the year and by consolidating various existing proposals and policies it has been possible to produce draft documents for consideration at the Summit.

In November I attended the conference held by the South West and South Wales Region when the theme for the day was 'The Environment'. The presentations were excellent and I hope that those delegates not already directly involved in an environment project went away duly motivated enough to think about their own golf course. It is all too easy to blame a lack of resource, be it manpower or funding, however there is quite a lot that can be done with very little effort or cost. Golf courses are a major user of land and one of the Association's projects for next year is to try to establish the extent of environmental best practice being carried out in Britain. This will then give us a 'benchmark' against which we can measure the future.

Legislation and the demands for a more discerning golfer will force many clubs down a route that they have chosen to ignore. It is proposed to hold a series of workshops next year on the development of an environment policy and the R&A have agreed to make a grant towards the cost of the training. If you need more information on this or help in getting started then please do not hesitate to contact Ken Richardson or Sami Collins at BIGGA Headquarters.

Finally I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please note that BIGGA HOUSE will be closed between Christmas Eve and January 4, staff being obliged to take some of their annual holiday at this time. An emergency telephone number will, however, be left on the answering machine which in itself will be regularly checked. Lets hope 2005 is a drier year, on the few occasions that I played golf in 2004 I more often than not seemed to get wet. Perhaps someone is trying to tell me something!

John Pemberton
hard work to the Section over the years. They were not replaced, as there are enough
on the committee for the present.

The seminar evening was held at The MacDonald Golf Club, in Ellon, on November
12 and was a resounding success. The speakers went down well and are to be thanked
for their contribution, with the main speaker being Dave Renwick, who is currently
Vijay's Singh's dad, the number one golfer in the world. Dave had to answer many
questions and this proved to be very entertaining. The other speakers were Dave
Watson, of East Ayrshire, and John Gavlin of, Paul Lawrie Management. Our thanks
also go to MacDonald Golf Club who fed us superbly with a carvery and also kept us
well watered. There were about 80 people attending and this was up on last year.
£100 was raised for the Archway charity, which helps look after disabled people.

It was also noted that a certain chirpy bluenose bought a round of drinks and this
was thoroughly appreciated by everyone. He also had a tie on for the first time ever,
honest.

The outings for next year are at Murcar in the Spring and Garmouth in the Autumn.
The Scottish National Championship for greenkeepers is to be held at The McDonald
Golf Club, in Ellon, on June 23, 2005.

The tickets for the 200 Club will arrive sometime in the new year and Hughie
McAtatchie, from Peterhead, is running the club. He can be contacted on 01779 470173.
The show atScottsturdf was held on November 10 and 11 and was a lot smaller a
show than anything I have been to before at Scottsturf. The fertiliser companies were
absent and this made it possible to walk around the show in no time at all. For anyone
travelling a great distance this may have been disappointing.

The Patron Award winners are heading to Striling shortly to pick up their awards
and they are David Duggan, of Fortrose GC, and Duncan Adams, of NairnMacher GC.
They also get a trip to Harragrate for their award.

I would also like to wish Mike Wilson all the best for the future. Mike, formerly
of Forres GC, always had the course in pristine condition and on behalf of the members I
would like to wish him and his family all the best for the future.

Have a Merry Christmas, a good New Year and a hassle free holiday period.

Iain Gunn

West

Our AGM was held at Hampden Park on October 27 and it was great to see such a
big turnout. There were 38 members in attendance and they were treated to a tour
round the complex. Scottish Grass Machinery sponsored the day and laid on several
different demonstrations of equipment. Thanks to David McNroy for his continued
support and to Kenny Hunter for organising the programme.

The day ran very well and the new committee is; Fraser Ross, Chairman; Douglas
McIntosh, Vice Chairman; Brian Bolland, Past Chairman; Gavin Jarvis, Secretary; John
Robertson, Education; Derek Duthie, Trade; Kenny Hunter, Trade. There are two new
members, Stuart Taylor and Eddie McGee welcome aboard. I would like to thank Brain
Bolland for his two years as Chairman, he worked very hard for the Section, attending
various seminars, golf outings and many other duties involved with the post.

Gerry Bruen, from Williamwood Golf Club, is moving on to pastures new, he has
been appointed Head Greenkeeper of Kilkeel Golf Club, in Northern Ireland. I'm sure we
all wish Gerry all the best, many thanks for the hard work you carried out for the
Section over the years.

There are three new members this month Andrew Peace, Port Glasgow Golf Club,
Steven Copland, Kinkilnloch Golf Club, and Alan Dykes, World of Golf, welcome to the
Section.

It's with great sadness that I announce the death of Robert (Bob) Scott who was
Head Greenkeeper at Eilderslie Golf Club for many years. Our thoughts are with his
family at this sad time (see the letters page for a tribute to Bob).

This year's dinner has been a big sell out, we will try to get more tickets for next
year. On a personal note it's a great honour and pleasure for me to be the Chairman of
the West Section. I will do my best to represent the Section over the next two years.

Fraser Ross 07970 366 355

NORTHERN REGION

North West

October has been a reasonably quiet month for the Section, with no golf
competitions to report on, although the National Championship was played at
Alwoodley Golf Club on October 4 and 5, which is in the Northern Region.

Unfortunately only one member of the N/W Section grasped the opportunity to play
this truly superb course, and that was Peter Hogan, who will receive £50 towards
his costs from the Regional funds.

The environment award is once again up for grabs, and Wilmsof Golf Club has
once again entered, so let's hope Steve Outram and his team can pull it off this
time. Wilmsof GC have in the past won the Regional award, so it is worthwhile to
keep on trying.

Two members in the Section have increased their families, both with daughters.
Aidie Holt and his wife have a little girl named Cerys, and Duncan Smith and his
wife have a little girl called Katie. All are doing well, and I suppose both dads are
taking their turn at doing night shifts. How time flies, we will shortly have Christmas
upon us, so in order for me to save money on cards and stamps I will wish you all a
very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

You can contact me on 0151 724 5412 or 07761 583357.

Bert Cross

Northern

Hi all. I must start this month with an apology for the lack of a report in last month's
magazine, this was down to me sending it to the wrong email address.

September 15 saw the long awaited return of the match between the Northern
Section and the Sheffield Section. The match was held at the fantastic Huddersfield
GC, and may I take this opportunity to thank everybody at Huddersfield for the superb
course, food and hospitality on the day.

The result was a 3-3 draw but after looking back through the archives it was found
that when the match was last played, some 25 years ago, the Northern Section were
victorious so I'm pleased to say that as holders the trophy stops up here for another
year. It has just been confirmed that next year's return match is going to be played at
Hillsborough GC on July 13. A big thank you must go to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the
day, especially Mike Bree for his help in setting up the day.

The Autumn tournament and AGM was held at Low Laurels GC on October 13 and
yet again the AGM was a huge disappointment with just 23 members from the Section
attending. The golf, on the other hand, was a great success with the results as follows:
DIV1. 1. Andy Clarke, 38; 2. Dave Collins, 36; 3. Andy Slingsby, 34. DIV2. 1. Frank
Rothwell, 30; 3. Jo Baxter, 27. Thank you again to Alpha Amenity and Scotts UK who
sponsored the event and for their support of the Section.

Contratulations to Chairman Andy Slingsby who, on November 4, made his
television debut on local news programme Calendar. He found some stolen Shetland
ponies wandering the fairways of Moor Allerton Golf Club and was interviewed
following his heroic equine rescue. He promises to have a shave and do his hair before
his next appearance!

With Christmas fast approaching, Chairman, Don Cockburn, has added a new pair
of driving glasses to his wish list. This is due to the fact that when dropping his son at
work, he ran into a closed barrier, resulting in a shattered windscreen, among other
things! Luckily the barrier survived the incident, I'm pleased to report.

Finally, thank you to John Watts and Frank Stewart, who have both volunteered to
be on the committee with immediate effect.

Merry Christmas and a very happy 2005 to all members and their families, I hope
Santa is kind to you all!

Adam Speight, Tel: 01274 638366, Mobile: 07739319060, Email: adam@speight1156.fsiline.co.uk

Cleveland

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lack of news over the last few months -
however this was due to some technical problems within the 'Electronic World'. The
relevant computer at Headquarters did not receive the notes! Therefore if I have
repeated any items please bear with me.

However congratulations are in order for Martin and Joanne Woods. They have
recently had a visit from the stork, who delivered their first child, little Charlotte, who
weighed in at 7lbs 2 oz. Good luck to all three of you. Bags under the eyes and
dirty fingernails will soon be evident in the Bedlington sheds! Best wishes also go to
Phil Hargrave, of Crook Golf Club, who married Suzanne in early July. Good luck to
you both from all Cleveland members.

The Autumn Tournament took place recently, at Saltburn Golf Club, kindly
sponsored by Brendan Brown of Norlube. This type of main sponsorship is very
much appreciated by our Section - thanks Brendan. Phil and his staff have the place
in first class order - well done. Mind you the course certainly takes its toll on the 50
plus brigade who have dodgy knees. It was Saturday before I could walk again.

First prize went to Ian Holston, of Middlesbrough Municipal, he nudge out
Barry Walker on the back 9 scoring, both players scoring

34 points. Martin Woods,

of Bedlington, finished a close third with 33 points. Ian said a few words at the
presentation, he said how pleased he was to take first prize but, more importantly,
he took a quid off his golfing protégé, Tony Smith, of Tee side. Results of the
Whitewall Bowl held at Penrith on September 8: Tony Smith, Teesside GC, came 3rd;

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Whitewall Bowl held at Penrith on September 8: Tony Smith, Teesside GC, came 3rd;
Ian Holoran, Middlesbrough Municipal, came 2nd.

News from an UN-NAMED reliable source: In the Middlesbrough Municipal Open held on August 15, in a Four ball-Better ball competition, Tony Smith (partner was Ian Holoran) got on the scoreboard only twice! Comments were that if we converted the number of Tony's putts into points in a Stableford competition, they would win 99 times out of 100! Practice required here Mr Chairman.

The jobs merry-go-round has begun. Barry Walker has moved from Wearside to City of Newcastle. Good luck Baz! I wonder how he will cope in the heartland of the Mag's?

News please to El Prez on 07831 214879.

Terry Charlton

Sheffield

This is the last of my monthly newsletters. As most of you know I have accepted an invitation to become Vice Captain at Gainsborough GC and as a result of this I shall no longer have the time to commit myself to anything else at present. I must say a big thank you to all who have contributed to the newsletters and I hope you will support whoever takes on the role of compiling the editorials after me.

The lecture season is upon us once again and the first held, as usual, was at Rotherham GC (our thanks go to them for the use of their clubhouse). The lecture was by Jerrad Winter, of Hazelkraft International, so many thanks go to him for a very enjoyable talk and interaction on Health and Safety.

There was a reasonable turnout but it goes without saying really that we would like to see more members attending, especially new members, as our Chairman has worked very hard in acquiring a wide range of different and informative topics, hopefully for you all to enjoy. Please don't let all his hard work go to waste, come and support the Section and chat with old friends and make some new ones.

The Rigby Taylor Trophy between Sheffield and the Northern Section took place at a sun kissed Huddersfield GC in September. The day was a great success, everyone taking part really enjoyed themselves. The result was a honourable draw, three matches each, but the Northern Section actually retained the trophy because they won the last time this match was played back in 1994. The return match has already been arranged and will be played at Hillsborough GC on July 13 next year. We look forward to this encounter and we shall be determined to get our hands back on the trophy this time having home advantage.

Congratulations go out to our ex President, Ken Arnold, on a hole in one in the second hole at Abbeydale GC recently. Ken Arnold is one of the oldest members at Abbeydale and achieved his feat in the same week that the youngest member also hit a hole in one at the very same hole. Many thanks once again for your support.

Geoff Wells

North Wales

Newquay Golf, from Northop GC, has a new position at Rhyl GC, we wish him well there and Don Pemberton, ex Vale Royal Abbey, has started with Arclid, based in Shropshire as a Representative for the Kobra range of machinery.

Penyryn driving range has opened a 9-hole golf course, just across the way from North Wales's Pebble Beach resort of Nefyn. The owner, Mr Will Owen, had the original idea for his land with great sea views and this, combined with the large caravan park next door, plus the driving range, will attract a lot of holiday traffic starting the 2005 season. It will also host the Wake fest held in June each year on his adjoining fields with over 10,000 surf enthusiasts from all over the globe parading through the night.

Terry Adamson seems to get into these ones every month, this time it is for the car crash he had on the A55 near to Bangor, he was coming to stop at the roadworks' temporary traffic lights when the car coming up behind him at about 40mph decided not to stop, Terry got shunted up the back and pushed across to the verge of the dual carriageway, he was trapped for a few minutes as the car door had jammed with the impact, he has sustained whiplash and is still having nightmares of the car coming up behind him in his rear view mirror, he is currently recuperating over at Tequila GC, in Tenerife. We wish him well and hope he can take off the neck brace when he returns to play at our Christmas tournament on December 8 (results next month).

Also next month is Harragote BTME, we are a little under six weeks away. January 18, 19 & 20 2005. I am always saying "make sure you book your accommodation", with all the extra activities going on at the night time it really is essential to book in early as most of the primetime walking location places will have gone by now. For those of you attending the GCSAA show in February again in Orlando, Florida, there is still a chance to get some great deals both on flights and accommodation. The GCSAA also hosts a night at Sea World for attendees to get together.

Well it is just short and sweet this month as we head up to the festive season, and it leaves me to do wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Meses Cymru

Andrew Acorn acorn@golf@supanet.com

MIDLAND REGION

East Midlands

This year's annual Rigby Taylor golf match against the Midland Section was kindly hosted by Lingdale GC on October 14. The previous day saw an exceptional amount of rainfall and the day started with even more rain, for the morning Greensomes. After the morning round the East Midlands led by 3 points to 2, with a fine 685 win from Richard Barker and Chris Brown.

The other two points came from Adi Porter & Stuart Raybould, and Steve Donoghue & Gavin Robson. After our lunch, the weather had brightened up ready for our afternoon singles round, with us needing a further four and a half points to retain the Shield. The afternoon round consisted of some very big wins for both sides, Adi Porter winning 7&6, Antony Bindley winning 7&6 and, unfortunately, Stuart Raybould obtaining a walkover as one of the Midlands players was unable to continue.

The other victory came from Andy Marsh, 1 up, with Richard Barker earning a hard fought half. This resulted in a tie, but as previous winners we were able to retain the Rigby Taylor Shield. Our other two remaining players to make up the ten man side were Dave Leatherland and Russell Allen.

Our thanks should go to Lingdale GC for hosting the competition and thanks also to Andy McGeal and his staff for presenting a superb golf course in such wet conditions. Also thanks to the Steward and Stewardess for a really great meal. A special thank you should go to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day, especially to Tony Cheese and Geoff Little for all their superb work in organising the day.

Also could I once again remind all members to return their entry forms and payment before the closing date of any event, the reason for this is that numbers and tee-off times have to be confirmed with the golf clubs.

Antony Bindley

Midland

It must be something in the water (by any other word poison)! Stupid me, with grain or grape, nectar. Plying has worked well for me in the past, although somewhat distant. "So what's the mad fool on about now?"

Congratulations to three of our chaps, and of course their fair lasses. L. Swann & Gavin, N. Maydew and wife, Jill, with baby boy Daniel. C.Tidmarsh and wife Emma with baby boy George, I know Asda's cost effective but that's extreme Craig. There is also another on the way, but I shall have to keep you in suspenders for now, all shall be revealed soon enough. It must be an adult thing, I'm so glad one is still a boy.

As you maybe aware, for many years our Section has played an annual match against our good friends and neighbours, the East Midlands Section. This year we were blessed with the pleasure of playing Lingdale Golf Club. Our thanks to Mr A. McGeal and his fine team for producing such fine standards in the most difficult and inclement of weathers. Very well done gentlemen. Also, thanks to Lingdale for affording us the pleasure of their course.

The match was eventually a tie, but as winners of last year the East Midlands team retain the shield. Well played gentlemen. Our thanks to A. Bindley for sorting out the opposition team, and to T. Cheese, of Rigby Taylor, for their kind sponsorship of this very successful event. Long may such continue.

On October 31 we held our annual angling match against our friends from Middleton Hall Anglers Association. We had a lovely morning's fishing in great weather, followed by a delicious buffet and drinks. The Greenkeepers won this year, but I was a little concerned with the amount of flasks P. Johnson had in his creel. Peter cleaned up very nicely thank you with largest fish, heaviest bag, and obviously the sweep. Combined worth in the region of £90, not bad for a morning's fishing. Other prize winners being A. Shore and yours truly. Our greatest of thanks to Mr A. Southam, of Hansons Aggregates, for organising the event, the great prize table and for putting on such a great spread which contained some of Mrs Southam's lovely trifles. Thanks also to Middleton Hall Anglers for making us so very welcome, we look forward to next year's match. Cheers Allan.
As you may recall, earlier in the year BIGGA, in association with Bernhard, ran a competition to win a trip to the GCSA show in Florida. Mr. Gash has been successful in his application. I have every confidence that Mike shall represent our Section to the highest of standards, and shall return with some great stories. Watch this space.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome four new members to our Section: Mr. Timms, Mr. N. Rheywood, Mr. E. G. Mutch, and Mr. J. A. Cunningham. Also I would like to include the new members that I had included within last month's notes, but due to a reason beyond my simple comprehension was not published. Such being: Neil Smith and Christopher Roberts, from Ludlow GC, Charley Allwood, from Brockington Hall GC, and lastly my old friend Paul Whitten, from Fulford Heath GC (I hope you are not kipping in Lyons Jones' old bedroom or I'll have to kill you). Lee, if you read this ring me on the following, I'd love to catch up with you, 0121 515 4331.

Finally congratulations to Mike Hughes and Dave Fellows for finishing 3rd Gross and 3rd nett respectively at the National Championship, held at Alwoodley Golf Club, and to the Midland Region for winning the Team Trophy.

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year from the Midland Section.

Sean McDade

East of England

October 21 was the date of the Section's final golf meeting of the year and was held at Boston Golf Club. The day was attended by only 15 greenkeepers and seven trade members. Our thanks go to Bruce Hicks and his team for the course and to Boston Golf Club for allowing us to see the club's facilities.

The day was sponsored by Nigel Lovatt, from Toro, and thanks go to him for the prizes on the day. The winners were: 1. Russ Moody, 35pts; 2. T. Shinkins, 30pts; 3. Jack Fairman, 30pts. The trade/guest prize was won by D. Coupland, 32pts. Longest Drive: S. Dickinson. Nearest the Pin. Russ Moody.

The order of merit for 2004 was also decided at Boston. The prize was still up for grabs but needed a mathematical miracle for anyone to catch the eventual winner, Russ Moody. Well done Russ, who has had by far the most consistent season, enjoy the glory Russ, your handicap has been cut for next year.

As the year is coming to an end I will take this opportunity to thank all the clubs that have allowed us to visit and have made us feel very welcome, also thanks to all the companies that have sponsored the events throughout the year, and the Trade members that turn out at every event and bring raffle prizes and to the members that come and support these events. All of these people play an important part of making these events successful but more support from greenkeepers around the Section could make them even better.

Planning is under way for next season and we are currently looking for venues for the season, so if you have any ideas where we can play or would like to offer your course please let me know ASAP on 07702 435122.

As a committee we are always looking for new ideas on events that could be held and we are trying to organise an educational seminar in the winter. More input from Section members would help us pick subjects that are relevant and of interest to you all. So please help us out with some communication and try to support your Section as much as possible.

Les Hawkins

Mid Anglia

Hi folks, here's the latest news from our Section. October 27 saw almost 40 members descend on Woburn Golf & Country Club, to thrash around in their glorious trees and enjoy the splendour of the Duchess course. A great day was had by all, due to the impressive work of Chris Hunt and his team, and all the helpful bar staff and waitresses. It really was a treat to walk the same course where so many great pro's had played before (although I think we found some places the pro's never found!).

The results were as follows: 1. Gary Boulton, Dunstable Downs; 2. Nigel Phelan, St Andrews Hospital; 3. Mathew Reed, Brocket Hall. Longest Drive. Neil Pestle, Brocket Hall. Nearest the Pin. Richard Goddard, Ashridge.

The whole day was sponsored by DFL/Sedd-Nassau, so big thanks go to them and everyone else involved in the day.

BIGGA's very own John Pemberton was our guest for the day and he gave a short speech all about what was happening at HQ and generally, on the whole, that it's a good time to be a greenkeeper and a member of BIGGA.

Woburn was also the venue for our AGM, which as usual was quiet but very well attended. Everyone on the committee was voted back on for another year, aside from Mark Ellis and John Wells, who had previously stated that they'd be stepping down.

So once again we go on, lead by our Chairman, Steve Mason, to see what another year brings. By the time you read this Christmas will be on its way, we'll all be skint, but hey it's Christmas! So if the good Lord is willing and the creek don't rise I'll be writing again, real soon, but until then... merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Bob Burfey

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

Due to Surrey Section not having an autumn golf competition, there is little to report on this month, except to welcome back, after a break of 18 months, Ian Jennings, who has taken control at Wimbledon Common GC as Head Greenkeeper. Ian, who was at Esher & Thames Ditton GC for more years than one can remember, is pleased to be back and would like to buy a drink for any of his old friends if they are able to catch him on payday.

Please also congratulate Anne Farley, who gave birth to Jon Anton Lee, 8 lbs 5 oz, on August 26. Her husband, Darren, RAC GC, looked remarkably well.

A report on the Turkey Trot tournament and AGM, at Laleham GC, on December 2 will appear in the January edition.

Since my last report in the October edition, I have, as some of you know, been on holiday in China. The two week tour was fascinating and included a 400 mile cruise on the Yangzi River, three internal flights, visits to the terracotta soldiers, Tianamen Square, the Great Wall, at least 50 palaces and temples, a silk factory, a jade factory, a very brief hello from a Madame in one of those bars, a foot massage (yes, foot) and finally a shopping expedition to Bob's Golf shop in Beijing.

Bob, like most of the Chinese we met, had a wonderful sense of humour, spoke good English and insisted that all his products for sale were as genuine as the Rolex watch I had bought the day before. Needless to say, my brother-in-law, Paul, and I saw through this sales ploy and left empty handed, apart from the dozen Callaway shirts and the latest Taylormade R5 driver. The Taylormade R7 driver made us a little suspicious as to its authenticity when the moveable weight system in this Chinese version refused to move.

And finally, good luck to Tony Worsfold, Head Mechanic at the RAC GC, who, in addition to other duties, looks after the club's veteran vehicles. The 1903 Morris enters, once again, the London to Brighton veteran race and Tony will be there to ensure that it makes it to the finish.

Brian Willmott

London

The London Section hosted its first education seminar under the new committee at Ports Park Golf Club, last month. Although the quality of speakers were excellent, the turn out to listen to them did not reflect this. I agree that everyone must start somewhere, and this maybe is the start of something to build on, however, I do not see 22 members out of a possible 197 being successful.

These notes are the only real chance to get messages across to our Section members so I need to use them constructively and honestly, if we are to realise our goal of becoming a strong and organised Section. We want to reach out to all levels of greenkeepers, from the apprentice up to the Course Manager so when you read these notes, call me with any feedback or ideas that can benefit everyone in our Section.

Enough ranting, and back to Ports Park. A very special thanks to all our speakers, who were Rob Phillips, Duncan McGilvary, Katie Walls, Billy McMillan and the ever enthusiastic Frank Newberry. A wide range of areas were covered with the importance of communication and benefits of education standing out, as well as Billy's philosophy of keeping it simple. Many thanks to Ports Park as well for the use of the clubhouse and lovely lunch that was laid on.

I must also add that it was great to see our new Regional Administrator, Clive Osgood, there and, personally, I hope we get a lot more opportunity to meet with Clive and I am sure the whole Region will benefit from Clive's knowledge and experience.

Next month we will have the results from our turkey trot, being played at Ashridge Park, as well as a report on our AGM, until then I'll just keep picking up leaves!

Alec Macindoe 07780955817

East Anglia

62 members braved the weather forecasters prediction of a wet and windy day in the East Anglia area by making the journey to Ipswich to play in our October meeting at Rushmere Golf Club.

On arrival we were shocked to see the bar area covered off due to structural renovation and many of us were relieved to find out that in each corner of a lengthy bar there would be provision for us to acquire our favourite tipple.

Before golfing commenced egg and bacon rolls were served. Egg yolk on shirts became the hazard of the day. As for the weather forecast, the rain stayed away but there was a firm breeze blowing throughout the day, which was causing problems for some but not for others.

Once on the course it was evident to everybody how good a playing surface Pat
The South West and South Wales Region would like to thank Amenity Technology for once again sponsoring the visit to BTME. This year see the accommodation subsidised, instead of the transport, as in previous years. Reservations are for a three night stay. To make a reservation or to obtain details of prices please contact Jane Jones, South West and South Wales Regional Administrator on 01454 270 850 or mobile 07841948110.

South West
Hello boys - I'm back!
Yes, after 12 years of that most painful of afflictions "Greenkeepers' Block", and mainly because we couldn't afford Marc Haring's professional fees, I'm back in the fold as Fixtures Secretary and Press Officer.
Actually, it was all a ghastly mistake - I was just nodding off in the back of the AGM when I thought someone said - "Who wants to fix the Secretary?" - I leapt to my feet to scream, "Yes I'll fix the Secretary all right. Inventing that blasted silly yellow ball game,". My son was mentally scarred for life last year, losing the double-point scoring yellow ball, and his determination was rewarded and should be an example to all of those who have been unsuccessful this year. His night seems like another year has passed and Christmas is almost here.
Winter programmes are in full swing and preparations for staff Christmas parties are finalised. Staff parties are always a great time and ours is always a topic of conversation with Training Express. One example of Guys expertise was the recent Training Day at Cotswold Hills, Andy Akerman, The Orchard GC, Chris Sealey, Chippenham, 85 pts.
Some more good news from Parkstone, Paul and Jackie Cooper have been blessed with another cascading rocket, no doubt followed by the inevitable "oo's" and "ahh's" from spellbound children. Yes it's bonfire night. It seems incredible that another year has passed and Christmas is almost here.
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The AGM reported the great success of the Section and it is not by luck or chance that we are such a great success. This is down to the hard work and dedication of your committee and the great support we receive from you all, long may it continue!

Make sure you support and attend again next year at our golf days and Section seminar, which will be held at Canford Magna Golf Club on February 24. We have an awesome line up of speakers and full details will be with you very soon, it will be another great day!

It gives me great pleasure in informing you that our new Regional Administrator has now been appointed. We wish Jane Jones a very warm welcome to the Association and we look forward to seeing her at many of our Section events.

Having spoken to Jane she is full of enthusiasm and will be a great asset to our Section and Association and, as she is a keen golfer, has every intention of playing in as many of our golf days as possible. We look forward to meeting you Jane!

It would be very remiss of me not to thank all of our sponsors for their valued support over the last year. We could not have such wonderful golf days and a great seminar without them. We really do appreciate your generosity and look forward to working with you all again next year.

I would also like to thank all of the staff at headquarters for all their hard work and help over the last year. They all work extremely hard on our behalf and, like many great greenskeepers, get little thanks most of the time. They have certainly made my job a lot easier and it's much appreciated! Thank you.

It just leaves me to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Make 2005 a great year!

Alex McCombie

South Wales

A great day was had at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club, where 32 windswept golfers took part in the autumn golf day. Thanks go to Keith Maga of Mowers for their kind sponsorship and for supplying an excellent prize table. The course was in superb condition, David please accept and pass on our thanks to you and your team for their efforts. The prizes were taken by: 1. Andy Roach; 2. Rees Thomas; 3. Peter Lacey, who narrowly beat Angus Macleod on count back.

Our next match will take place at Pyle and Kenfig Golf Course on December 10, hopefully you will have received this by then, please make every effort to come but be warned early booking is essential as this is a popular day. To book contact Peter Lacey. Next year's fixtures will be published in early 2005, they will be forwarded on to you.

Kerry Jones

Firstly this month I would like to once again thank our very generous sponsors who supported the Section's golf days throughout this year. They are Kevin and Cahill Gates, from Ultra Plant Spreaders, Columns of Banbridge, Scotts Sands of Toomebridge and Brodericks Machinery at Mallusk. Your support is greatly appreciated by our members.

The AGM will take place at Fort William GC in December. The exact date will soon be finalised. Our Section committee would like to see a good attendance at our AGM and hopefully a few new faces will come onto the committee for 2005.

The National Championship was once again well supported by greenskeepers from Royal Co Down GC. Noel Crawford, Eamonn Crawford and son, Gary, were joined by Michael King on the annual trip in early October. The venue this year was near Leeds at Alwoodley GC. Many congratulations go to Noel Crawford, who once again lifted the Scratch Champion prize for the two days. Noel had a total score of 152, an excellent performance on a very difficult heathland course. Basically Noel steps off the plane at Leeds/Bradford Airport and onto the first tee without a practice round and little time for adequate preparation. Noel has won the Gross prize three times in the last five years, which is a tremendous achievement. Noel's brother, Eamonn, won the best Gross prize on day two with a 74 and Eamonn's son, Gary, won the best Nett prize also on day two. The guys from Royal Co Down would like to thank all at BIGGA and their fellow players for the hospitality and kindness shown towards them.

As a result of their fine performance at the National Championship Noel and Eamonn were selected to play for the BIGGA Team against the Combined Services at the Berkshire Golf Club in late October and a full report of how they got on can be found in this magazine.

Andrew Ferguson, from Brodericks Machinery at Mallusk, very generously provided sponsorship of £250 to assist with Noel and Eamonn's travelling expenses over to the Berkshire. Many thanks to Brodericks for their generous support.

Well that is about all my news for this month, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

Ken Henderson

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Both machines Single Phase Electrics.
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