Three months into my new role as Chief Executive and I wonder where the time has gone. The management structure at Headquarters has been revised and now centres around myself, Ken Richardson, Scott MacCallum and Rosie Hancher thus creating a positive team which is committed to working with the Board of Management and to moving the Association forward. In line with my determination to improve the transparency of the day to day running of the office we have already visited many Section and Regional events and meetings, with more planned for the coming months. We have also welcomed many visitors to BIGGA HOUSE, some for the first time who realise that the staff are approachable and work hard on their behalf. This exercise has been well received by members who all too often feel that the headquarters staff are remote from them and the realities and pressures of greenkeeping today. I have also been concentrating on building relationships with the other bodies with whom we are associated as well as strengthening the ties with our trade partners. While we are a significant body ourselves we must not lose sight of the fact that we are only one part of the industry and if we are to influence thinking in the future on such topics as the environment or the future of exhibitions we are only one part of the industry and if we are to influence thinking in the future on such topics as the environment or education then we need to present a unified approach to others.

Through my column each month I will attempt to keep you up to date with BIGGA's current policy, its implementation progress and I'm sure a few thought provoking and perhaps at time contentious observations and comments.

Plans are well under way for BTME & ClubHouse 2005 and the halls are already approximately 80% sold. Twice a year we hold a Steering Committee meeting at Aldwark comprising of exhibitor representatives and members of BIGGA staff. There is however still a strong undercurrent in the trade which would like to restrict the number of shows serving the industry to one each year in order to reduce their costs.

The more popular suggestions are: 1) Alternate shows annually with the IOG in SALTEX one year and BTME & ClubHouse the next; 2) Combine forces with the IOG to produce one show at the NEC and 3) Reduce BTME & ClubHouse to a two day show. The Association is committed to an annual exhibition in Harrogate and will do its upmost to ensure that it is a successful three day event. In this connection Rosie and I recently travelled to Peterborough to meet with members of the Outdoor Power and Equipment Industries division of the Agricultural Engineers Association whose members include some of the major machinery manufacturers. Their concern over the future of exhibitions was re-iterated and I can only stress how crucial the profit from the show is to the funding of BIGGA's activities. We continue to talk to try to find a mutually acceptable solution however the support of members is paramount. If you need any more information or would like to know how you can help then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally I would like to thank Derek Farrington for his eight years of loyal service to the members of BIGGA especially in the South East Region where he was the Regional Administrator also latterly helping out in the South West and South Wales Region. Derek retired at the end of May however I am sure that he will continue his ties with the Association through other channels.

John Pemberton

North

My apologies to the Section for there being no reports for the last two months, so I will try to bring you up to date.

New members are Dale Steven, Forres GC, Marc Miller, Elgin GC; Christopher Bruce, Duff House Royal; Stephen Grant, Kintore GC; David Leys, Kintore GC; Steven Arnott, Kintore GC, Fraser Munro, Kingussie GC; Welcome to the Section lads. I hope you can make it to some of the outings.

The Spring outing at Moray GC in May was well attended and the course was very well presented by Martin Cameron and his staff with the greens in particular being in 1st class condition.

The Captain and catering staff are also to be thanked for a very enjoyable day.

The prizewinners were as follows;

Longest drives: Class 3 G. Asher, Kenmoy GC; Class 2 P. Wood, Newmacher GC; Class 1 M. Miller, Moray GC. Nearest the Pin: A. Stewart, Royal Aberdeen GC. Sweep: 4. R. Donald, Oldmeldrum GC; 5. S. Robertson, Craigiehill GC; 2. H. Mclatchie, Peterhead GC; 1. M. Main Moray GC.


Some other news, Celtic diehard, Robert Hardie, Head Greenkeeper at Crabstone GC, has become a father again and this time its a baby boy. Congratulations Rab. Also congratulations to Keith Wood, of Aberdeen Links, whose wife has had a daughter.

A major thanks to Jim McCormack, of Kirriemuir GC, who raised around £5,000 for the Anthony Nolan Trust when he scaled the heights of Kilimajaro. A tremendous achievement Jim and a lot of people are very thankful to you for your efforts.

Congratulations also go to Gary Gruber, Head Greenkeeper of Skibo Castle GC, who presided over the Northern Open in May. The course was a great credit to Gary and his staff.

On the golfing side congratulations again to Steven Macintosh, Course Manager at Torvean GC, who retained his Ross-shire County Championship title at Tain GC with scores of 70, 71 in very difficult conditions; and to Derek Chisholm Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Kingussie GC who won the Inverness County Championship at Kingussie GC with scores of 66 and 68, also in very difficult conditions. A season ticket to Celtic Park was also a prize for these guys.

On the move is Stuart Hogg, of Fortrose GC, who has now taken the position of Course Manager of St Annes Old Links. Stuart was at Fortrose GC for many years and had been in charge for the last 10.

He has recently been awarded his Master Greenkeeper Certificate, which is a testimony to his ambition and the hard work he has put in over the years. Fortrose GC have also been awarded many environmental awards under Stuart's supervision.

Kevin Fowler, Stuart's Deputy for the last few years has been appointed as the new Course Manager and we wish him all the best.

I hope everyone has a trouble free summer, and the weather is good to you.

Iain Gunn
North Wales

The Open Championship at Royal Troon GC will be with us in a couple of week’s time and for all of you involved with the BIGGA Support team, you will shortly be boarding that plane from Liverpool to Glasgow or Manchester to Prestwick and then across by bus or taxi to the links.

The biggest event of the year, with the rest of the world watching your help is a vital part for the smooth running of the tournament and it looks like we will yet again be treated to some brilliant expertise with all the top players battling for the prestigious Claret Jug.

Closer to home the Welsh Ladies and the Welsh Men’s Team Championship will be held at The Vale of Llangollen GC, from August 11-15.

Our Spring Tournament this year took place at Porthmadog GC and our thanks go to Gareth Williams and the team for the presentation of the course. With the fairways running very fast at 15 on the stimpmeter it was great to reach the receptive greens as we needed something to stop the ball on!

Our thanks also to the caterers for a fine carvery meal and to the club for giving us such a warm and friendly welcome.

A gift in the form of a book on Greenkeeping from a Canadian author Gordon Wittenveen (who also played in the event) was presented to Gareth, after the meal. I believe he has read some of it and finds it extremely interesting.


We had two Nearest the Pin prizes on the 9th and 13th and these were won by Stuart Hayley, Vale Royal Abbey, and Huw Brown, Golf Son Saura, respectively.

Nothing much to report this month so just a reminder that our Chairman, Gordon Brammah, is progressing nicely with the new Section library, but still needs as many contributions as you can spare.

I’m sure that if you dig around at home, work or in the back of your locker you may find something that you no longer need but might be of use to another Section member.

Best wishes go to David Ingleton who has left Gainsborough Golf Club after 19 years as greenkeeper and mechanic. Dave worked for the club firstly as a salesman. So, if you fancy a new Nissan, Tito’s your man!

I and the rest of the Northern Section Committee would like to thank Tito for all his hard work over the years, and I know he’ll be very much missed at all Section events, especially by our new Chairman, Andy Slingsby, who’ll now have to make all the speeches!

Welcome to Paul Dankin, who has joined the Section this month.

In next month’s report I shall bring you the results of this years President’s Day. Any news regarding Northern Sections can be relayed to me at the usual address: 16a Hodgson Fold, Myers Lane, Bradford BD2 4EB

Telephone 01274 638366; mobile 07739 319060 or email adam@speight1156.fs life.co.uk

Northern

Northern

The date has been set for the Northern Section v Sheffield Section match. It will be played at Huddersfield Golf Club on September 15. Start times and other information will be available at a later date.

As some of you may already be aware, at the last committee meeting, Tito Arana stepped down as Chairman and off the committee with immediate effect.

This was due to Tito leaving his post at Riddlesden Golf Club and becoming a car salesman. So, if you fancy a new Nissan, Tito’s your man!

I and the rest of the Northern Section Committee would like to thank Tito for all his hard work over the years, and I know he’ll be very much missed at all Section events, especially by our new Chairman, Andy Slingsby, who’ll now have to make all the speeches!

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This and thousands more that are too rude to print are waiting for you at www.golfjokes.co.uk.

Don’t forget you can call me with any news or comments on 01427 614175 or 07904 121690 or e-mail me at www.geoff@wellsy1.freeserve.co.uk.

Geoff Wells

Sheffield

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Adam Speight

BB&O

Having read many issues of various different golfing stories over the years, I recently had the pleasure of listening to one which I am sure, given time, will be published in many a golfer’s book and magazine.

It all happened at Wycombe Heights GC during March this year. As part of their winter maintenance programme is was decided that a new championship tee would be built on the signature par-3 16th hole. Rob Surgey and one of his senior assistants carried out the work.

The tee was completed shortly before Christmas and left to mature ready for the new season in the spring. Three months would pass and in late March it was decided that while playing golf that afternoon, Rob and his team would be the very first people to play the newly-constructed tee. The weather was perfect and the receptive pin tucked away in behind one of the greenside bunkers, which protects the green.

Colin, the senior assistant, who helped build the tee three months earlier, was the very first player to tee off after a slippery birdie on the 15th. With an 8-iron in his hand Colin (the best ball striker in Wycombe as he now likes to be known!) stepped up, teed it high and let it fly straight down the throat of the pin pitching 18 inches from the hole directly in line and with a bounce and a touch of check it released slowly into the hole.

As you can imagine there was a big eruption on the tee and all preceded to congratulate Colin on his first hole-in-one. We believe that this must be a first in golf as Colin had constructed and built the tee and was the first person to strike a ball at the green and to get a hole in one, this must be some kind of record. Guinness Book of Records take note!

On a negative note the Rigby Taylor Knockout has been cancelled due to lack of support from the members but on a positive note your feedback and comments about this competition will always be welcomed and it is hoped that with constructive feedback this once popular competition will thrive again bringing
enjoyment to all who participate. Your comments, suggestions and ideas to John Scoones 07880 550 380.

Alistair Holehouse from Blue Mountain GC is leaving the American Golf Group after seven happy years and has accepted a challenging new position as Course Manager with Royal Ascot GC in Berkshire. We wish Alistair well in his new venture.

Meanwhile rock and roller, Justin Robinson from Henly GC, is jetting off to Las Vegas to tie the knot with the lovely Liz, his bride to be. Congratulations. Will it be an Elvis Wedding? Wait and see.

A special thank you should be extended to Dave Ritchie and Brian Woodcock, Captain and Club Manager, for their participation on the day. Also to the caterers, Rival Catering. Finally I would like to, on behalf of the East Midlands section, thank Mansfield Sand for sponsoring the prize day, and Tacit for Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive awards.

Next years Spring Tournament will be held at Melton Mowbray Golf Club. Antony Bindley

Mid Anglia

Hello chaps, it's me again, sorry there have not been any reports for a while but there hasn't been a lot of news to write about.

I would like to welcome Rob Buffoy and John Gubb to the committee and hope their input will be of benefit to us all.

Back in May we had our first competition of the season which was held at John O’ Gaunt. Thanks to Colin Robinson and his team for the great effort and hard work they put in to provide us with two superb courses.

This was over 36 holes and also a qualifier for the National Championship in October.

The results were as follows: 1. Dan Hodkin, Knestrwood; 2. Geoff James, John O’ Gaunt; 3. Chris Slimm, John O’ Gaunt. Dan and Geoff have made it to the National and will given a donation from the Section to cover the cost of accommodation.

Other results were: Nearest the Pin: am, Steve Mason; pm, Clive Parnell, and Longest Drive: am, Dave Thompson; pm, Gerald Bruce.

Our main sponsor for the day was Rigby Taylor and thanks to Gareth Knight for providing a great prize table and also to all the Trade members for supplying a well stocked raffle.

Thanks to the caterers for looking after us throughout the day and finally the Golf Club for the courtesy of their courses.

The next meeting is at Mount Pleasant on Wednesday July 28 with tee times booked from 1pm. Coffee and bacon roll on arrival and a two course evening meal, which will be casual dress instead of collar and tie. Entry will be limited to 30 so get your forms in early to avoid disappointment.

If anybody has something they want to say please get in touch with any member of the committee and we will try to air your views through this column.

Steve Mason

East of England

The third golf day of the year was held on June 3 at Belton Park. Congratulations go to Gary Poole and his staff on the condition of the course, it was. just a shame he couldn't do something about the weather as half the round was played in very heavy rain.

The weather didn't affect the scoring and the Burdens Cup was won by Steven Beverley with a very good 42 points (we will be reviewing his handicap) 2. Ben Corby, 38 pts; 3. Graeme Macdonald 35 pts. Nearest the Pin: Peter Larter; Longest Drive: Rob Welford. Stewart Clayton won the trade prize with 38 pts.

Many thanks go to Burdens Groundcare for their continued support and sponsorship of this event.

The next event will be held at The Lincoln Golf Club on July 22. Good luck to Rob Welford, from Immingham Golf Club, who is getting married next month to his long term partner, Natasha. If any other members have any news for Around The Green, please let me know and I will put in the next issue.

Les Howkins
South Wales

Hello all. Firstly I would like to thank you all for the phone calls, e-mails, letters that I did not receive.

The Welsh Open has come and gone. I was lucky enough to attend on the Friday and witness the superb round of golf by the eventual winner, Simon Khan, played on a superbly presented golf course. A huge well done goes to the Celtic Manor Resort - Jim and his staff in particular.

Adrian Panks (strimmer boy from Dudley) is officially nuts. That’s the conclusion I came to when I spoke to him at the open and he informed me that he will be doing a little bike ride.

As some of us know he has just recovered from a serious health scare, so the sensible thing would be to ride a bike to keep healthy – sounds good. However he has signed up to do the Taff trail which is 110 miles in one day! I told you he was nuts. He is doing it for charity so any donations will be greatly accepted. Contact him at Llanwern Golf Club.

I have been accused in the past of favouritism to one Peter Lacey and some are calling this Section Lacey’s Chronicles. I feel that I have to inform you of his recent jog around London. Yes he’s done the London Marathon and he had a strategy.

His strategy was to run behind the model, Nell McDermid, who is known as a fit athlete and the sight of her behind would inspire him to his hopeful time of 4 hours 21 minutes.

However, the problems started when she began stopping for TV interviews and Lacey was stopping with her and he was jogging in the background staring at her bum. Anyway after the 10th interview Nell was getting concerned and the police informed and Lacey spent the night in jail!

A great seminar was held at Royal Porthcawl, sponsored by Countrywide, covering issues on fertiliser, seed and fuel storage. Feedback was excellent so thank you for all your efforts on the day.

Humble Cumble is the shortest poem in history can you name the poet?
Answer: HOAMMED ILA

Peter Lacey did completed the Marathon in 4 hours, 8 minutes and 3 seconds – well done.

Kerry Jones

South Coast

Summer is among us and as I sit and write this on a sun drenched day, sipping my Pimm’s, irrigation systems around the south are proving their worth.

The England cricket team have just wrapped up the Test Series, England are just about to win the football European championships, Henmania is about to hit us after his good run in the French Open and how can we forget The Open?

We have several representatives from the Section on the BIGGA Support team again this year and they will no doubt have a great week at Royal Troon. We wish them well and also Billy McLachlan and his team at Troon for what I’m sure will be a highly successful Open Championship. With the Olympics and the Ryder cup to come it’s a great year for sport. Unfortunately my wife doesn’t quite feel so enthusiastic about it all!

The Section has been fairly quiet although I’m sure we have all been extremely busy on our golf courses. Our fixture lists at Parkstone seem to get larger every year challenging us to be more efficient and continue to maintain higher standards, but we’re modern managers like you all, so its like water off a ducks back!

We are about to draw swords in our annual match against the secretaries. The match, which is sponsored by Course Care, will be played at Alresford Golf Club and your team will be looking to retain the trophy and maintain our pride. A full report will follow.

Don’t forget to contact me if you have any news which you would like include in the around the green section. My contact details are tel 01202 661106, mobile 07966 386232 or email me at a.mccombie@ntlworld.com

Until next time

Alex McCombie

London

If you are reading this than you are extremely privileged as notes in ‘around the green’ from the London Section are about as rare as an Emile Heskey goal!

I have (foolishly) agreed to write these notes for the foreseeable future so I will be looking to all our members to help fill the page with any news at all, whether it be about golf courses, jobs, births or even Heskey scoring!

The main news for this month comes from our spring tournament, which was, hosted by Batchworth Park, which, before I mention anything else, was in absolute pristine condition, so congratulations to Andy and his team on presenting such a beautiful course.

Also our thanks go to the club and its entire staff for welcoming us and providing a great meal afterwards.

On a gloomy and wet day there was some very good scores returned, but the clear winner with an excellent score of 40 points (5 handicap) was Richard Highway. Joining him at the National Championship was Dave Badham who had the best nett score of 36 points. Congratulations to both and good luck at the National.

On the day we had a great turn out and a huge number of trade who all helped out with prizes for the event, the raffle and on course refreshments provided very well by Ernest Does and Textron.

The man known as Supergar, Phil Jones, with other contributions from gem sponsored superb main prizes, and, of course, our ongoing support from Alan and Barry of Turners, and Avoncrop respectively.

Just a quick add on – readers will see that the golfing legend Ian Semple did not win (this is because he didn’t actually play) but I hope his shoulder won’t be too sore when he has to dig into his deep pockets to enter the nationals!

Finally, I wish to remind readers that entry forms for the summer tournament, at Sandy Lodge, must be received at least two weeks prior to the date, July 22, as we cannot accept names or payment after the cut off point.

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible, new and old.

07789 955 817

Alec MacIndoe

Essex

Well it’s me again, Winning Golfer of the Year last year took it out of me so much that I have not had the time to write another article...

As I sit and write this we should be in spring, but having been in my shorts for three weeks (not a pretty sight), I now find myself getting soaked everyday. You just cannot bank on the weather. It’s all been a bit challenging; it’s amazing how fickle golf club members can be!

Two weeks ago we had the 40th anniversary celebrations at our golf club which consisted of 10 days of events. Every member and guest was commenting on how wonderful the golf club was and the condition of the course especially given the time of year.

Last week we had a trolley ban for two days because of all the rain - and according to our members the course is in terrible condition and it is a crime that they cannot have their trolleys on! Happy days!

A break from writing this article as our grass is growing faster than we can cut it, especially on the banks and amenity areas around the course, two weeks later the
sun is now very hot and the irrigation is needed.
Well enough of me waffling on about banks and amenity areas.
The last golf day was at Channels and once again Ray, Dominic and the boys
produced a terrific golf course for 55 of our members to play. (Sorry none of the
Abridge boys were there but we were in the middle of our clubs anniversary
celebrations and couldn't get the time, but we will be at the next one).
I understand from several people who played that day that from greens to banks
to amenity areas the golf course was in great condition. A special thanks to Tony
Kirwin, Colchester, who galloped in with 47 pts. YEEHAA! and well done.
We had three handicap sections Section 1: 1. Ian Denny, Channels, 40 pts; 2.
Tony Kirwin, Colchester; 38 pts. Section 2: 1. Martin Forrestes; 41 pts; 2. Martin Guy;
Longest Drive went to Mark Day. Nearest the Pin went to Mike Bartlett.
Hopefully you all understand Dave Beals new points system, I'm sure Banks
would love to employ you Dave.
Finally on behalf of the Section I would like to wish Derek Farrington all the best.
He is retiring from the end of May.
See you all at Ballards Gore
Geoff Smith

Kent

Our second golf competition of the season was played at Edenmore GC on May
25. We would like to thank the Logan family for giving us courtesy of the course and
especially James Logan and his greenkeeping staff for having the course in really
brilliant condition.

Many thanks to Scotts Director Alan Hewitt, who joined us on the day and
presented the prizes.

Finally the biggest thank you must go to the members who supported the day
and made it such a success.

Look out for news on future developments and events in the Kent Section.

David Wood

NORTHERN IRELAND

Well with a week of June nearly gone, many of our courses would like to see a
couple of nights of steady rain. There hasn't been any rain for seven to eight weeks
in some areas and water restrictions could follow soon as reservoirs are already at
late summer levels. Let's hope the situation improves over the next few days.

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especially James Logan and his greenkeeping staff for having the course in really
brilliant condition.

Many thanks to sponsor Scotts Sands of Toomebridge, who provided very
generous prizes.

Results were: 1. Michael King, Royal County Down, 38pts; 2. James Harkness,
Malone GC, 36pts; 3. Warren Burnside, Malone GC, 36pts; 4m Michael O'Neill,
Fortwilliam GC 35pts. Visitors Prize: James Logan, Edenmore GC, 41pts.

Many thanks to Scots Director Alan Hewitt, who joined us on the day and
presented the prizes.

The next competition will be played at Galgorm GC, outside Ballymena, on July 6
with a 2pm tee time. The competition in July will be sponsored by Coburns, of
Banbridge.

Finally, I would like to wish Andrew Kerr good luck in his new position of Head
Greenkeeper at City of Derry GC. Andrew has recently moved there from Lisburn GC
where he was Deputy Head.

Ken Henderson