I start my column this month with some desperately sad news. Our great friend and colleague Don Hunt passed away suddenly on Monday, May 14. Don supported greenkeepers up and down the country all his life and he was also the events organiser for the Devon and Cornwall Section of BIGGA. Don will leave a massive void in the world of golfkeeping and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

During a recent committee meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Section, Abi Crosswood, of Newquay GC, was appointed Secretary of the Section. Abi will be supported by all the “old boys” and Billy Mitchell was given the honour of becoming Abi’s Assistant. Graham Gallimore, the Head Greenkeeper at Launceston GC, is the Education Chairman and John Patfey is the new Fixtures Secretary with Tim Wakeham taking on the role of Treasurer.

Ashbury Golf Club in Okehampton have won The Large Employer of the Year Award at the South West Skills Awards. The Course Manager, Steve Harris, along with his Deputy, Pete Gross, have carried out all training “in-house” and with the help of Bill Pyle and Ron Skimmer from the Duchy College, no fewer than 12 greenkeepers from Ashbury achieved their NVQ Level 2. More training is planned for this year for Level 2/3 NVQs and A1 Assessor awards. The partnership between the college and the workplace has been expertly managed and congratulations go to everyone involved.

The Section, along with the Duchy College, sponsored four students to attend the BTME show in January. One of the students sponsored, Mike Wannell, Assistant Greenkeeper at Bovey Castle GC, went on to win The Institute of Groundsmanship Student of the Year Award. This is a fantastic achievement for Mike, Bovey Castle and Duchy College Well Done All

Any information for this column? Please contact me at stevenevans1849@btinternet.com or 01822 617671.

Steve Evans

The Tower Sport Europe Spring Shield was recently played for at the Coody-Mwstwr GC near Bridgend.

The weather was glorious, hot, no wind – ideal for golf and low scoring. The course was a picture, presented superbly by Head Greenkeeper Andrew Hatcher and his team. The greens were true, slick and firm and it was evident to all that participated a lot of work and effort had been put in (and not only for our benefit) for the tournament, the first of the year.

The hospitality afforded us by all at the golf club was excellent, warm and friendly, they went out of their way to make us feel welcome and it was appreciated by all.

Tower Sports took on the sponsorship of this event and it was their inaugural competition. Managing Director, David Goldstone got us off to a flying start and then proceeded to take care of everyone throughout the entire day. Again the hospitality afforded us by tower, David and our local representative Gareth Knight was superlative. A sincere thank you to them for their support, the excellent prize table, their hospitality and to David for his attendance and kind words in summing up after presenting the prizes.

Following the golf we were treated to an excellent three course dinner in the marquee, prior to the football (which we wont mention again) the fine food was plentiful (even for Emry) and great value, a sincere thanks to the catering staff for looking after us so well! The winner of the “Tower Sports Europe - Spring Shield” was Rhys McDonough from Llanerch with 38 points, winning the trophy and a colour TV. Second place went to local knowledge, Andrew Hatcher, Head Greenkeeper of Coody-Mwstwr with 37 points beating Herbie Probert from Pontardawe into third. The longest drive went to Old new boy, Huw Morgan from the Ashburnham golf club and nearest the pin went to Stuart Jones from Maesteg, Best Trade card went to Peter Holmstrom with a very creditable 35 points.

A great day had by all, made by the good weather, an excellent golf course, great company, super hospitality and fine food, what more could one ask for (perhaps a better back swing for the Secretary). A sincere thanks to the directors of the club for giving us courtesy for our visit and to Gareth Summerton especially for allowing us our visit.

By the time you reed this someone will have won the Wales Open at Celtic Manor Resort, we hope that he’s welsh and that the sun also shined on Jim Mcnolte and his staff for the event.

Peter Lacey - Section Secretary

PS: Our best wishes to our normal (if we can call him that) around the green scribe, Henry Stead, whose unfortunate trip has resulted in him breaking a wrist (mind you, it makes a change from a Toro!). No but seriously, Henry we wish you a speedy recovery, you never know long term it may improve your grip and you may finally better a handicap of 24!

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Tel: (01470) 530120

Clive Duggan SOUTH EAST
Tel: 01377 803343

Jane Jones SOUTH WEST & WALES
Tel: 01646 270820

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Section Notes
Can all notes be emailed to: melissa@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of month prior to publication please. Suggested word guide: 500

Steve Evans

SOUTH WALES

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