Scottish Region

East

I start my report for this month with reminders of the harsh winter that we have all experienced. Certainly the worst winter that I can ever remember. On the east Lothian coastline some of the courses have been hit with what could be termed as a "mini tsunami"! Coastal erosion has lead to some golf holes being partially washed away.

Let’s hope the summer makes up for it.

By the time you read this report our Spring meeting at Kilspindie GC will be history, June edition of GI will reveal all of the scores.

At the beginning of May we are running a Pest Control event (No not how to get rid of some complaining golfers), but mole trapping and vermin control over two days. This event is kindly sponsored by Mike Dooner, of Thorntree Amenity. If you are registered 1.5 credit points are awarded for event.

Our Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, is on the lookout for old SIGGA East Section memorabilia ie photographs, letters, stories, trophies, medals etc. If you have anything of interest please contact Stuart.

People on the move are David Kelly, formally my apprentice at Ratho Park and presently at Marriott Dalmahoy, who is moving on to pastures green where he will take up the new post in Holland on a new Colin Montgomerie 36 hole design complex. We wish David every success for the future.

Other people on the move are Graham Bryce, who held the position of greenkeeping lecturer at Oatridge College. Graham will be a big miss from Oatridge College as he offered a lot of his knowledge to up and coming young greenkeepers. Graham being from a greenkeeping background who previously worked alongside Andrew Mellon at Elmwood. Graham is moving on to teach at Myerscough College. We wish him all the best.

Still with Oatridge College this lady needs no introduction to our greenkeeping Industry. Eileen Barry is calling it a day after 28 years as Oatridge College Lithion Officer. So many success stories have come out of the greenkeeping world and a lot of this is down to Eileen’s hard work and enthusiasm.

I am only one of many greenkeepers who would like to thank Eileen for the honesty, professionalism and dedication that she has shown throughout the years and wish her all the best for the future.

Tom Murray

Central

As I write this I hope we are coming to the end of one of the worst winters most of us in the industry can remember, four months of snow, ice, rain and wind have kept courses closed with little or no income making it a difficult time for everyone. The inland courses such as Crieff, Auchterarder and Gleneagles have been open for as little as 10 days since mid December, with a second full of snow in March meaning some were still closed into April. Trees down, disease scars and ice damage have affected many courses while others, despite the snow cover, appear to have come through virtually unscathed.

It was an appropriate time for Stan Zontek and friends to give a presentation on winter damage at Elmwood on April 27 which was very well attended. The coastal courses suffered as well with exceptional storms at the end of March combining one of the highest tides of the past 50 years with strong North East winds to leave many places damaged. Crail, Kingsbarns and others all lost a piece of the coastline to the sea. or else had part of the beach washed up and deposited on a fairway along with tree trunks stones etc and similar stories can be heard from Aberdeen to the borders.

At St Andrews, a sea wall on the Eden Estuary just beyond the boundary of the Eden course was washed away flooding three holes on the Eden and three on the Strathclyde course every time the tide came in, while the Swilcan burst its banks and sea water spilled onto the 1st green and fairway of the Old Course. Fortunately the damage appears to just be discoulouration to the grass where the water sat for a period although silt deposits on the Eden fairways from the neighbours fields may yet prove more troublesome.

Our next education evening is on May 19 at Elmwood Training Room at 6.30pm when Rex Kimberly, of Terralift, will talk on nitrogen fixing bacteria. Rex is an experienced speaker and I am sure it will be an entertaining evening as well as informative. Meanwhile Gordon McKie has started a blog on the Links trust website www.standrews.org.uk on the preparations for the Open Championship.

Main winners at the Spring outing are as follows: Best Scratch, Allan Patterson, The Castle Course - 71. Best Hcp. Dougie Barr, Caird Park - 67 nett. Section 1, Archie Dunn, Auchterarder - 68 nett Section 2, Derek Scott, Scoonie - 70 nett. Trade prize - Kenny Hunter of Fairways. Guest prize - Mike Horkan, Property Manager at St Andrews Links Turf results are on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk Gordon Moir

West

The sun is shinning as I sit and write this article which makes a slight difference from the recent rain and snow, so spring has sprung eventually, and growth will be sprouting from all areas to fill in the damage caused by the snow mould attack in February/March. What a winter that was, let’s hope we get a good summer to cheer everybody up for a change.

Only a couple of things to mention as March was a fairly quiet month.

The West Section was recently represented at a charity event in aid Bernardo’s Children’s Home by our present and past Chairmen and myself playing over the Duke’s Course in St Andrews but sadly we didn’t live up to expectations. The course was in great condition for the time of year and the event was well organised by the students at Elmwood College. The eventual winners were Turnberry on 84 Stableford points.

Please remember that the Scottish National event to be held at Murcar will be on June 17.

A report on the spring outing at Lanark GC will be given next month, and I will include the STRI talk on wetting agents which is being held at Loch Lomond on April 20.

I would like to extend best wishes to Gordon Kerr, of Marr Hall, as his course is now ready for play and opened last month (April). The Section hopes everything went well on the day and we wish him and his staff all the best for the future.

May I also extend the Section’s best wishes for the future to Denis Tweddell who started his new position as Course Man-
A very busy period is upon us again and with a little warmth now creeping into the ground & our old friend the rain we are sure to be kept on our toes! I wonder how the Masters last month has affected our club members? Will their expectations still be as high after the winter we had?...Course they will! So we greenkeepers must continue to provide quality surfaces so early on in the season. Keep up the good work lads! We will get it right one day eh!

A congratulations is due to George Morrison, of Largs Kelburn GC. George and Maggie are expecting a little visit from their stork sometime in July. Won't be spending as much time on the old Land Rover now, George! We wish you both and your little bundle of joy all the best when the time comes.

Remember guys this is your Section news, So any news, Any goss, Anything you would like to be seen in the mag let me know.

John Mair
johnmair982@btinternet.com
07500874449

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still had way back in 1984. My God how has that changed over the years, seeing is believing. Anyway we were reminiscence on all the Regional and National competitions there were in those days no doubt only the older greenkeepers will remember them lets see if any other members and Sections in here goes Marshall Concessionaires, Iski, Hayter, Jacobsen, Kubota Golf Challenge and the Ransomes International which was played as The National Greenkeepers Competition, plus over three years on a point basis so the top three players would represent England against other countries around the world. Sadly we don’t have anymore competitions like that these days but I suppose it’s down to money. All I can say on that matter thanks to all those Jimmy Richardson

North West

So then Easter has come and gone and we here in the North West have just had our first tournament, obviously, I’m writ-
ing this in advance so let’s just say thanks to all the new faces at the event it was great to see it well supported. Unfortunately, I couldn’t attend as I had already booked a round at Turnberry, which couldn’t be cancelled.

I am writing this at the beginning of April, the 8th to be exact. I’ve just returned home from the Northern Region Seminar at Penrith Golf Club, the topic being “The next decade”. Peter Larter had put together a great programme of speakers. The morning started with Tracey Maddison talking about how CPD was developing and how BIGGA was advancing with relationships with GCMA and the PGA, to name but two, following Tracey was Laurence Pitthe, (who I remember getting his MGC when I was a young 16yr old at Cannington College, he’s aged better than me). Laurence talked about getting the basics right when it comes to greenkeeping, I had brought along my Deputy, Sec/Manager and Greens Convener to the event, the latter being very impressed with Laurence, hopefully in the not too distant future we will have some of Laurence’s workshops in the NW. Richard Minton followed next talking about the sustainable use of Pesticides, there were many thought provoking comments about current and future legis-
lations. After lunch Bob Taylor, from the STRI, talked about developing a competitive, the amount of information that man can get across in 45 minutes is unbelievable - topics ranged from rough to trees, from ponds to dead-wood and from sus-
tainability master planning to Hemi-views, all very interesting and I for one will be contacting Bob in the near future to Hemi-
view Hesketh or something like that. The final speaker of the day was Tim Lobb, from Thompson Perritt and Lobb Golf Design, Tim gave a detailed insight on the workings of golf course architecture past and present.

While not just talking about his own company Tim showed how an architect goes about tackling golf course changes taking into consideration all the factors affected by the redesign, again another very interesting talk ending a very good day, the four of us travelling the 80 miles back to Hesket had plenty to talk about and all found the day worthwhile. Again thanks to Peter for setting up the seminar and also the setting at Penrith was excellent, the course looked great and the cleaner who ordered our Bacon rolls early in the morning was a star. Och well, I’ve probably talked too much now, hope all goes well for the coming month…

Peter McVicar
07885347818
pdmv@hotmail.co.uk

Cleveland

Hi all, not got much news to report this time around. Hope you all are well and rearing to go for this season.

On Thursday, February 25 at Teeside Golf Club, Baz and Ally held their annual quiz. The night was great success and was well put together as always. Thanks to Baz and Ally for their hard work.

Congratulations to Phil Har-
grave and his wife, Suzanne

on the arrival of their son, Finlay, on Sunday, April 4. Many sleep-
less nights for you now, Phil.

Congratulations to Richard Pybus, at Blackwell, who has been promoted to Deputy Head Greenkeeper. James Parker, also from Blackwell, has been invited to join the BIGGA Support team this year for The Open, with and I for one will be contacting Bob in the near future to Hemi-
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Sheffield

I hope everyone is now finally settling into the new season and that we are all working in glori-
ous sunshine.

Unfortunately we had to cancel our Grinding/Workshop management day due to lack of interest. I must apologise to those who wanted to attend and we shall be trying to reor-
ganise the day later on in the year. Thanks to Golf and Turf Machinery for their help trying to organise this day.

Our first Golf match of the season will be upon us shortly hopefully you will all have received your invitations and will be dusting the clubs off. You will all be receiving Our 2010 fixture card soon but here is a list of the competitions and venues for the year.

Annual Competition- Hillsborough GC, July 7. Autumn Competition- Silkstone GC Sep-
tember 13. Sheffield vs Northern match- Wooley Park, July 14. Christmas Competition- Lin-
drick GC, November 29.

It would be nice to see as many of you as possible at these competitions. I must also remind everyone that we must adhere to the dress code at all our events the dress code will be on the invitation to all events.

James Stevens
jimmy jams20@hotmail.com
07738719614

Midland Region

Hi everyone, I hope you are all enjoying the warming weather. I am happy to report that we have some news for the East Mid-
lands Section. There is a PGA Seniors Tour event to be held at

East Midlands

P.S I’m not a Sunderland fan
Any news, or verbal abuse after the last section, kevscarce@aol.com or 07921817857

Around The Green

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It is with great happiness that I can report that two of our members have had a visit from the old stork, and I don’t mean margarine.

Firstly, Mark Cutler, of Edgbaston, and his lovely wife, Sara, with a bouncing baby girl, Lucy. Well there goes your golf, Mark. Secondly, our Chair, Ed Stant, and his ever suffering wife, Tracey, {sorry I got it wrong last time Iass} have had a big lipped (not my words) cracking girl, Jemima. Ed you look nothing like Jagger, your belly’s too big for a start, and as it’s your second your golf is already out of the window (is that the round one!). Seriously though, welcome to the world, Lucy and Jemima, and congratulations to their proud parents.

And finally, just time to remind all to get their entries for this year’s Scotts Doubles Knockout Competition in by the spring tournament, where the draw will as usual be conducted. I do suspect that we mortal mortals will stand a greater chance this year as the dynamic partnership that has almost dominated this event for many years has been forced to split. So please get your entries in and support this long running popular event. With the final being the wonderful prize of playing at Wentworth and as a guest of our fine sponsors for the day by Scots such is surely £6 well invested.

Sorry for reiteration, Sean McDade.

South West and South Wales Region

South Coast

To begin with I have to mention that South Coast Section Spring Comp is fast approaching and that the info will be sent to all Section members very soon. Just a reminder that the winners on the day gain automatic entry to the National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse Redexim, later in the year.

The venue is the beautiful and picturesque Bramshaw GC, on Thursday May 13, (I’m sure Jason and his team are looking forward to it!). We will be playing 9 holes on the challenging Forest course before lunch; then 18 holes on the Manor followed by dinner and presentation, the price yet to be confirmed will be around the £22 mark. I’m hoping we manage to get the excellent support we had at the Turkey Trot.

With no other news to pass on, if your ready for your sleep at tea break then continue reading as I’m going to tell you a bit about life at Brockenhurst College, to turn them out in the torrential rain, with the help of some of members on the day gain automatic entry to the National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse Redexim, later in the year.

After the continuous rain of November, the freezing temperatures and ice of December, and the snow in January, it gave me a chance to embark (excruciating) on our much needed Woodland Management programme, although the majority of the work is hopefully going to be carried out by tree specialists, John Nicholson Associates. We have spent many frozen hours clearing around greens and tees to improve air circulation and sunlight, the feedback from members has been encouraging, especially as we now have some stunning views of the New Forest, while standing on some tees instead of the previous walls of holly and very little light.

I did manage to unintentionally find a way to get the green staff back into shape after the festive period, when we had a rogue herd of new forest ponies demolishing my garden fence and roaming around the golf course to seek pastures new. The horses must of thought it was Christmas...well it was! So with the help of some of members we did eventually manage to turn them out in the torrential rain, but at the expense of some serious damage to the greens and some tired and fed up green staff.

On a personal note. I attended a two day presentation skills workshop at BTME, I had the pleasure of the company of the then BIGGA Chairman elect-Paul Worster; Stuart, from St Annes Old Links, and Alec, from Newbury/Crookham. We spent a lot of time learning and putting together presentations and we found out a bit about each other through them. Sorry guys you had to listen to me talk about the famous Rams (Derby County FC) for five minutes. Oh yeah, Mr Chairman, I will get my revenge on you one day...you know what I mean eh! Joking aside best wishes during your time in office, Paul.

Back at BMGC due to more heavy rain this week our Maintenance Week has been cancelled...more headaches....I’m sure things will improve soon and by the time your reading this it will be too warm for us and the grass will be going mad. I wish you all a great season ahead.

Kevan Glass

South Wales

Hope you are all well.

I will start off by bringing you a report on two recent evening events that were organised by our Section and the South Wales branch of the IOG.

First was a trip to The Swalec Stadium for the rearranged talk by Keith Exton, Head Groundsman at the ground. Keith gave a very good presentation entitled ‘In at the deep end’ on the work carried out at the ground in preparation for the Ashes Test. There then followed a Q&A session with some searching questions from the attendees, then guests were treated to a lovely buffet. Thanks to Keith for his excellent presentation, to the South Wales IOG for organising

Stapleford Park on May 12, 13 and 14. Matthew Edge is looking for volunteers to help prepare the course. There will be many of the old favourites playing so will be a good experience for all who attend. If you are interested in helping Matthew out, then please contact him on 07989 356 145. Everyone by now should have their pair’s fixtures; it is shaping up to be a good year this year with some new courses in the competition. Once again if anybody has any news then please contact either myself or Andy de Wet.

Matthew Wormald

Midland

Firstly this month I would like to apologise for the lack of notes for both January and March of this year, such was composed and emailed to H.Q. but unfortunately they did not receive such, for some unfathomable reason “It’s only milk”. However, there is, of course, the cream that our Section is so reliant upon, such being the kind sponsorship of our many golf and educational events, and of course our wonderful calendar. My greatest apologies must go to those kind calendar page sponsors who were featured in the missed publications. Such being; January’s page, Abbey Mowers, please consider them for your machinery needs, especially regarding Toro products; for your Ransomes and Jacobsen sales, service and spares please call: 0870-242-6952.

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Sorry for reiteration, Sean McDade.
Anyway, here’s to a enjoyable and stress free growing season for you all!

Ceri Richards
07831 168645
celticcerc@aol.com

Devon and Cornwall

March’s Meeting at Mullion Golf Course down on the Lizard peninsula was a great success. 40 members made the trip to Mullion, which for many was a long trip. It was worth every mile though, as Gordon Tymblyn, Course Manager, had the course in superb condition. On a dry but windy day (apparently just a breeze for Mullion) the course played extremely well and the views from the bottom holes were outstanding. 25 members joined Gordon on an extremely interesting Course Walk. We all met back at the very friendly, and accommodating Clubhouse, for what was a very welcome lunch. The Carvery and desert was plentiful, leaving 40 very satisfied customers. After lunch, Brian Robinson, Rigby Taylor, Director of Grass Seed Research, gave a fascinating and in-depth into grass seed research and in what direction the industry is being lead. Enthesis was placed on reducing inputs and improving carbon footprints and how it will play a huge part in the future management of amenity areas. Many thanks to Brian for making the long trip and for giving such an enthusiastic and thought provoking presentation.

The Golf format for the day was individual Stableford with prizes sponsored by Bayer. In first place was Mike Ellis, Lake View GC, with 35 pts, second was Andrew Dunstan, Newquay GC, with 32 pts and third was Tim Ellis, Mullion GC, with 31 pts. There were 2x Longest drives and 2x Nearest the pin. One set sponsored by Farmura and the other very kindly sponsored by Gordon Tymblyn, Mullion GC. Longest drive on the 4th and Nearest the pin on the 16th was won by Keith Kemp (West Cornwall), Nearest the pin on the 11th was won by Des Eickle (Bigbury) and Longest drive on the 18th was won by Shaun Warren (Staddon Heights). Well done to all and many thanks to all the sponsors.

The next meeting for us will be the “Devon v Cornwall” Match on the 15th June at St Mellion International. More details to follow.

Good luck to everyone for the season.

George Pitts
07929 754401
gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com

South West

Hello everyone, I trust you’re all well. I’m sure you’ll all agree when I say how great the weather has been the last week or so... (I do hope it remains while you read this) After the winter we had, this weather is the least we deserve, if you ask me a little bit of the Caribbean sun would be just fine.

As with most of you, I’m sure, we’ve just started to spread a little bit of the magic stuff to help everything grow, this always seems like a pretty good idea at the time only to realise we have a four day weekend just around the corner. Mind you it’ll still be there on the Tuesday so, I do hope you all have/had an enjoyable Easter bank holiday!

Just recently I received a very nice e-mail from Ian Hugglestone. Ian been an Associate Member with BIGGA for four years now, and comments on the great times he’s had during this time. Last year Ian took a break from work. However this summer he would like to offer his services and maybe help out on a golf course with you (this would be within the Bristol area). With such a busy time of year coming up, I’m sure some of you may need every little help you can get on the golf course. Please contact me if you may have an interest in his services.

I’ll be honest with you, this month people, I am a little short of things to write about (this is where I ask for your thoughts/stories or even a little light banter that you may like to share with us).

adam.1.matthews@hotmail.co.uk
07732503855

South East Region

Kent

As life slowly returns to our courses after the longest winter ever an increasingly smile seems to be re-appearing on the faces of Course Managers I meet, who are all relieved to be out there cutting grass again.

It’s amazing the difference 12 months can make. In previous years my watering system was being used on a regular basis at this time as the summer season began. This year has seen a return to more traditional seasonal weather pattern forcing the retreat of the global warming brigade and their preachings of doom and gloom. There’s always a bright side eh!

Not much to tell you about this month. By the time you read this we would probably have played our National qualifying tournament at Wildernesse on May 6. Full report on all the day’s events to appear in this column next month.

I would like to thank Neil Metcalf, and his team at Royal St. George’s, for his hospitality a couple of weeks ago when a group of us were given the privilege of the freedom of his immaculate course. Neil’s chat with us beforehand (despite the noise from the skip lorry!) was a great insight into what goes into maintaining such a prestigious venue. Even though we only had a walk round the course, the incredible level of difficulty players face from the back tees was off the scale. Thanks also to Glenn Kirby for his efforts in organising the day.

Like I said, just a short one this month but please check our webpage now it is being updated regularly. We have now added a forum, which I would really appreciate your comments, stories, experiences etc. on.

Back to cutting grass now. Best of British
Rob Holland
www.kentgreenkeepers.com

Around The Green
Surrey

May 6, its official, by now you could have voted for my new political party 'BALLS' and given me a retirement present that will keep me in luxury for many years to come. My Political Manager, wee Dougie, has assured me that his recent fact finding mission to Trinidad was two weeks of non stop hard work and should we win he has chosen his and my beach-side second home in a convenient position only 12 hours from Westminster. Please remember our slogan 'You play ball with us and we'll supply the referee'.

Darcey Eve Rowe will be almost four months old this month and wondering why your's truly did not mention her birth, 7lb 13ozs, on January 16 in an earlier edition. My excuse is that the information given to me by daddy Gary, Banstead Downs GC, was put in the wrong pocket and was retrieved only just before the offending piece of clothing visited the washing machine. Apologies to mummy Elaine, baby Darcey, and daddy, Gary. Had I left this news any longer Darcey could have read the paragraph all by herself.

My first kick boxing bout went well and that the cut to my forehead is healing well. My opponent was not so lucky as the cuts she received cannot be repaired and her tights were a complete right off. Sorry, of course, I don't mean that her tights came off, I mean, oh you know what I mean. What I really mean is don't trip and head butt the window frame it hurts.

Still, no holidays booked and few ideas so please when I next call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal 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