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There have been a couple of vacant columns during the summer months because there has been absolutely no news or views and really nothing much has changed.

The autumn outing is scheduled for the Pines Golf Centre in Dunfermline where our Chairman, Duncan Gray, will welcome us to his course. This is on Thursday 30th September with the usual format for our golf outings. Secretary, Denis Wilton, will have letters out soon with all the arrangements and an entry form so get it returned in plenty of time to let him confirm the numbers with the Pines for tee times and caterers etc.

News has reached me of one member on the move, Michael Byrne is leaving West Kilbride to join the turfing industry with local company Total Turfing. Our best wishes go to Michael with his new job.

Any news or views call me on 01505 628278 (evenings)
Iain Barr

North

More new members to welcome to the Section this month; numbers are now standing at 257 for this year. Rejoining us and now working at Peterhead is Steve Simpson, and new members are Greg Smith, Fortress; Maurice Hadlock, Brechin; Alistair Scott, Longside, and Colin Biddick from Strathleven. Just in case it was missed last month, as I sent it in, Andy Wilton has left Camoustie to become Head Greenkeeper at Brechin, where I believe he started his career. We wish him well every success.

The Open, back in our area again, was a great event with the course set up, in my humble opinion, just right to test the World’s best professional golfers, and it certainly did that. Some had been set up beautifully and was a credit to John Philp and his staff. It was interesting to note that the ones at the top of the leaderboard on the Sunday had just got on with the job and not moaned about the course.

It was a credit to John Philp and his staff and fitting that a North man, used to playing in the wind at Aberdeen, came out on top. Apologies to Scott Liggertwood, Montrose for not mentioning him in an earlier report of North members in the Support Team. The Saturday night football match was finally won by the Scots, with a crushing 14-4 victory against the audacious enemy, and the player we gave you over the weekend was not a rogue, honest despite his missed penalty and own goal. He really is that bad.

The two lucky winners of the Patrons award will be announced in next month’s article, so if you have been a regular at Section and Region events over the last year you could be. Also next month there will be a report on the Norrie Whyteford Trophy at Craigie Hill, we are on home ground so let’s hope we can do the business.

I look forward to welcoming as many Section members as possible at the 50th anniversary celebrations at Downfield this month. Rest assured no one will go home empty handed!

Iain Macked

Central

How long did you search for last month’s news? There is never a lot to report at this time of the year, with everybody too busy on their course or on holiday, hence the reason for the blank month. Members keep promising to “spoon” me for the Column but I’m still waiting on them to arrive, so you will just have to put up with my rambling on. No comments please!

Forms for the Autumn Tournament at Ballochmore Park, Markinch, have been circu-

lated, along with your allocation of tickets for “Club 2007”. It is important that every mem-

ber supports this venture in order for it to be successful, so please try and sell your tickets. If anyone needs extra tickets please feel free to get in touch with me and I will send them out to you. There is a deliberate mistake on the “Club 2007” letter, that’s my story and I’m sticking to it! So the first person to sell their tickets and write to me with this mistake will receive a prize.

The proposed football match against the West Section failed to take place for a couple of reasons, but it will be organised for later in the year. Speaking of football, has anyone seen A.OH, you know who he has missed the last two Section committee meetings and there have been reports of him being spotted in Blackpool. I am led to believe, by another member of the Leven Links Sporting Club, he of the cananning fame, that he has taken up “synchronised swimming”. Maybe that’s why he was in Blackpool.

Congratulations go to Ian MacMillan on his appointment as Course Manager at Murrayshall in Perthshire. Every success for the future Ian. Hope everything goes well for you.

Andy Fraser has left Stirling for pastures new, and we wish him well for the future.

Former Section committee member, John Bashford, from Kinross, has not been keep-

ing too well lately and has spent some time in hospital. Best wishes for a speedy recov-

ery go to John from everyone in the Section.

Section Chairman, Archie Dunn, spent a week in America working at Firestone during the US Open and from all accounts it was an experience that he will never forget. I’m trying to get him to give a talk about it at a seminar sometime in the near future.

The winners of last year’s Inter Club Tournament are Leven Links ‘B’ team, who have been awarded the tie as they won the first leg, and their opponents Tullichall ‘A’ team failed to agree on a date for the second leg.

Next month sees the National Tournament, at Garden Park, and we send best wishes to our two representatives, Kenny Stirling and Sean McMillan for a successful tournament and hopefully they will come home with some silverware, if not, I am sure they will have a great time. Next year qualifying will be based on scores from both the Spring and Autumn Tournaments.

John Crawford

East

We are running a Section prize draw at our annual dance on the 4th of December at the Kilspindie House Hotel. Tickets are on sale now and we need you to sell them for us. There are some very good prizes available so hopefully we (members of the East Section) friends, family, etc can all sell some before the draw in December. So come on it’s you, the member, and the Section who will benefit from the money raised.

The tickets are available from Craig Parnick on (mobile) 07979 452 097 (work) 01368 865 349 (home) 0131 654 2913.

As I have already mentioned the annual dance is at the Kilspindie House Hotel, more details will be available shortly or details can be obtained from our social convenor, Stuart Crawford, on (home) 01620 893 103 (work) 01620 895 765.

People on the move this month are Gordon Trotter who is leaving Glenmore to take up an appointment in Canada at the Royal Toronto Golf Club. Gordon has been a member of the East Section for a number of years, so the tournament and the rest of your friends in the Section would like to wish yourself, your wife, Nicola, and son, Blair, all the best for the future and don’t forget to drop me a line if you come across anything of interest let me know or you could send me an e-mail when I get my modern working correctly.

The Section presented Gordon with an engraved quaich to remind him of all his friends in Scotland when he is in Canada.

Other people on the move are Frank Forrest who has joined my team at Swanson as assistant Greenkeeper. Frank joined us from a temporary position at Newbattle. All the best to him.

When you read this you will have received your entry forms for the Willie Woods tour-

nament at Glenmore and the autumn tournament Newbattle at the end of September. Get them back before the closing date as no entries will be accepted after these dates. You have been warned.

Also, don’t forget BIGGA code of dress must be adhered to at all times while attend-

ing these tournaments.

Chris Yarrow.

North West

I have recently returned from The Open and what an eventful time it was. The course had been set up beautifully and was a credit to John Philp and his staff. It was tough with narrow fairways, and plenty of rough, but had been set up to test the best professional golfers, and it certainly did that. Some of the pros whinged about the rough but they had thousands of tall spectators lining the fairways, so they should not have had any problems.

The Frenchman gave us all a laugh with his antics in the water. (I think he should have taken out a bucket and spade). Instead of a set of clubs, but the winner Paul Lawrie showed them how to play the final holes with two magnificent birds.

The Support Team all enjoyed their involvement even though this year we were not required to send in an early team, or a

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The 1999 Midland Region Seminar will be held once again at Meadow, an excellent venue, on 17 November. Frank Newbury will be speaking along with Cedic Gough, Course Manager, Broadway Golf Club and former Greenkeeper of the Year, Dennis Nutter, Golf Rules Expert and former PGA Regional Secretary, Jonathan Carr, Amenity Land Services, and a BIBCA Headquarters representative. Application forms for attendance at the Seminar are inside this issue of Greenkeeper International, and can also be obtained from the Midland Regional Administrator, Peter Larter. 01480 437507. Members of the Midland Region, please make an effort to attend what promises to be a very interesting day.

Peter Larter

Midland

The summer tournament took place on 8 July. We seem to be blessed with very good weather conditions for our summer tournament and this day was no exemption, very hot and the 18 holes felt like 36! Many thanks to all the officials who provided us with a good test of golf and well presented course. Many thanks also to the catering staff who provided the evening meal. The winners were as follows: 1. Cross T. Cheese, 2. Nett D.Follows, 2. Nett A. Roberts, 3. N. Bird, 4. M. Hughes, 5. R. Thomas, 6. M. Jones, Best Trick. 1. Peter McCranier, 2. N. Wells Nearest Pin Peter Richmond. Longest Drive. M. Culler. Thank you also to our main sponsors Rolawn, Graham A. Mace. Prizes and wine, John Minns, of Sper turf. Our next tournament will be held at Ross-On-Wye on 15 September. If there is anyone who has any news or information please contact me on 01362 861 434 and I can get it put into this article and make more interesting reports with the information that you the members require to hear and see.

Jonathan Wood.

East of England

David Hornsey of Woodhall Spa, had a day to remember at Lincoln. His 66 tied the second lowest score of the season, the closest drive and the nearest pin.

Dale Garda, from Kenwick Park, and Graeme Macdonald, Newark, both lost on countback to David, also on 35 points.

The competition was sponsored by Buddlers Groundcare and it was nice to see Normo Brown playing and presenting some superb prizes. Other sponsors on the day were Greespire, who sponsored the nearest pin. Alas Right, Taylor, Tower Sports which were Tower Chemicals, Roy Harrison, Bob Hewitt and Graham Bell, John Deere.

It was a pity that Head Greenkeeper Derek could not make the dinner, but it was his 60th birthday! But his work colleagues Adi and Andy Lou, Lou and Greens Chairman Keith Whalley were praised by all who played.

Graeme Macdonald
The month of August saw the Section hold its Autumn tournament at Thorndon Park Golf Club on the 4th. The sponsor for the day was Tomlinson Groundcare and our thanks go to Ian Willett and the Head Greenkeeper, and his staff had worked hard to provide us with a very testing and well-prepared golf course. Thanks for the pin placements Martin. May I take this opportunity to thank John Sayer, John Cook, the Club Captain, all the Clubhouse staff and Steve Millard and his greenkeeping staff for an excellent days golf, thank you all.

Larry Pearman and Eddie Scale, from Toro, were our main Sponsors for the day and they supplied a splendid prize table, again our thanks go out to you for sponsoring the day and the event on an annual basis.

I think I can speak for everyone when I say that we all had a very enjoyable day and it was nice to see some old friends Chris Crimmin Captain from Tuxford and Pat Swinn the new Head Greenkeeper from Rushmere who joined us for the first time.

I also would like to thank Burma’s Captain, John Cook, for his company on the course and, during the proceedings of the meal and the speeches, he helped make the day.


We had Mike Taylor, a trade member from Tomlinson Groundcare, turn up to his first golf meeting, it was his first 18 holes and he never lost a ball and scored a creditable 11 points. On to a sad note. The golf ball that Tomlinson Groundcare, turn up to his first golf meeting, it was his first 18 holes and he never lost a ball and scored a creditable 11 points. On to a sad note. The golf ball that Bob Chesham has used since 1963 has finally fallen apart, it had been out of shape for a few years and Bob had become quite an expert at putting, allowing at least two yards either side of the hole so it could arc its way to the cup. After telling his tale to a friend he was given a new ball, which has given him another problem, his putting has gone down hill and he says it will take at least six months of running in the new ball before he will be back to his old self. In November the Essex Section will be holding the Regional Seminar at Wittle College. Could we have a good turnout from the Section for this event.

I have received a letter from Derek Farrington thanking us all for the get well card and he sends us all his best, he says he is well on the mend and will see us at our next meeting which will be held at Rookery Park on 13 October. See you all there.

Ian Willett
The morning's golf competition will be a single's Stableford competition for the D.O. Hunt Trophy, for our non playing members there will be the usually course walk which will leave the clubhouse at approximately 10.30 am, lunch will be from 1pm followed by our afternoon educational talk by Bernard & Co on keeping your edge all year round.

Golfing members please note entry details for our forthcoming meetings: After receipt of your completed entry form which will have been sent out to you or your course manager golfing members to receive starting times before meeting with a draw for partners being introduced, pairings will be accepted for our foursome and greensome competitions - A levy of £2 will be added to each entry received before the closing date - As some members have problems paying before meetings, they will be able to continue to pay on the day without being levied as long as the entry has been received before the closing date, any member who doesn't attend after entering will be invoiced if no payment is received.

Regional educational dates to note, 24 November Regional Seminar to be held at Cannington College, 18-21 January, Regions trip to BTME at Harrogate. For more details on regional events contact Paula Humphries. You should have received your new fixture card which has this year been kindly sponsored by Rigby Taylor, the fixture card has dates of all our forthcoming events, if you haven't received yours yet please let me know:

Richard Whyman
South Coast
Another reminder for our Autumn Tournament, It is to be held at Shanklin and Sandown on the Isle of Wight. The date, 14 October. All details were in the August report. What we ask for more than anything, is that all those wishing to play contact Fred.

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Deamens as soon as possible as there is a lot of work in organizing this particular tournament.

Our Summer tournament was held at Rowlands Castle on 22 July. The weather was great, the course was in superb condition, the food was good and the hospitality was second to none. The results were as follows: 1. Eddie Fox and T Cartis who were awarded the John Deere Trophy; 2. Matt Blake and N Couttes; 3. Chris Sturgess and J Cann. The best gross drive went to Cameron McMillan.

We would like to thank the Captain, Committee and members of Rowlands Castle for allowing us the courtesy of their superb golf course. Thanks to Bill Davies and his staff for producing the course in pristine condition. A big thank you to the catering staff who provided everyone with a splendid meal and kept us well watered during the day. Last but not least we must give a big thank you to our sponsor for the day, namely Sisis and Rigby Taylor. They provided us with an excellent prize table which was much appreciated. The last person who has got to be thanked is Fred Deamen, our Tournament organiser. Fred has done a grand job since taking on this mammoth task.

Ken Lodge.

South West

A magnificent total of 49 section members turned up for the Summer Tournament held at Lilley Brook on July 22. On arrival at the club many of us were struck by the superb appearance of the course and the wonderful variety of trees which were enhanced by the sunny weather.

The competitors were sent on their way off the first tee by Paula Humphries, along with Martin Townsend who handed out Scotts caps, which became very useful in the glare of the sun.

The actual playing of the course lived up to its initial appearance. Everyone who played the course was in agreement that the greens were in excellent condition and extremely fast. Indeed the club captain of Lilley Brook, Mike Allcot was so worried about the possibility of overwatering that the day itself was an enormous success, with special thanks going to Scotts for their vital support and sponsorship of the prizes.

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The best gross went to Cameron McMillan.
Thanks also to Bangor for the courtesy of the course on a most enjoyable day.

The Section would like to welcome some new members, Paul Mathison, Head Greenkeeper at Holywood; James Harkeness, Malone; David Wilson, Conway Murphy and Michael Haughian, all from Silverwood.

Due to members lack of response the August BBQ was cancelled.

Jonathan McCabe

North East

Stanley Emerson held his North versus South Golf Greenkeepers match at Stakis Park in July for the "Stanley Emerson Trophy". The match finished in a three all draw with the Southern Greenkeepers winning the tie-hole. There were also a number of four ball matches, best score was by Joe McBride with 37 points, second was Mark Cassidy with 34 points. The weather was glorious and the day was finished off with a few drinks and a very enjoyable meal.

Emerson's would like to thank all the Greenkeepers who turned up, many of them travelled a distance to take part. Thanks also to Stakis Park for hosting the event and all the Green staff for having the course in such good order. Many who played said it is an excellent course with first class facilities.

Special thanks to the Course Manager Frank Ainsworth and Joe English for organising the event and making everything run so smoothly.

Eamonn Farrell

See you all next month!

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A few years ago Stewarts of Edinburgh, Company of Seedsmen Ltd, celebrated their 100th Anniversary. A company which has served the greenkeeping and horticulture industry. One man in particular, Mr Ian Forbes, will always be remembered in his quest to assist the greenkeepers with their educational pursuits by often giving lectures which would develop or enhance their educational career. Many years ago he was asked if he would write down some of his memories on the experiences or growth of the Greenkeeping Association, which he did and passed one to me at St Andrews. This fine gentleman has now passed away leaving the company, Stewarts of Edinburgh to be run in the good hands of his son Graeme Forbes, who is following exactly in his support to Scottish and North of England greenkeepers. A few months ago the document saw daylight after laying dormant, but I would like the readers of BIGGA to read it as it will be of interest.

Walter Woods

Dear Walter,

Some time ago, Graeme told me you would like to have my views on the status and training of Golf Greenkeepers over the years. At the time, I had to attend two conferences away from home, and in effecting my retirement from business at Stewarts and elsewhere. I hope, therefore, my delay in acceding to your request has not caused you any inconvenience.

It is my view that, for a variety of reasons, the history of Golf Greenkeeping could be said to fall into a number of very distinct periods. Unfortunately, sources of information have turned out to be very scarce, and in order to do a really good job, one would require to contact a large number of clubs who might be willing to furnish details for their records as to numbers employed, wages and status in the club, eg. honorary membership etc. My sources are the few remnants of Stewarts records, these are very sketchy as during the 1939-45 war, part of our premises were taken over as a fire watching post and the records stored therein, destroyed.

Two copies 1920 and 1929 of the British Golf Greenkeepers Journal, and a few books, one written by a greenkeeper, being all I have at Stewarts, except for a photograph or two.

I have spent some days at the National Library of Scotland, but they do not have records of the BGGA Journal, which is a pity as they would be most helpful. I did find that the library had copies of the Golfers Handbook from its original publication in 1903 onwards, however, after consulting a number, although not all of these publications, I found that the records of Head Greenkeepers, even when this was given, was by no means complete, even the R&A holders of this office were not always shown.

Much of what follows is therefore just my own opinion, based on what little I have found and supported by a none too reliable memory.

The first phase of the Greenkeeping profession would surely be the period from around 1750 to 1876. During this time the number of golf courses was very restricted and they were mostly situated in the East of Scotland, on sandy links or heathland. This was probably the only areas golf could have been played on, owing to the problem of mowing grass which grew to any height. I recall my father had a letter dated around the early 1900's describing the work of an East Lothian Greenkeeper who concluded after describing how he constructed drains, ditches and sleeper faced bunkers, by writing that he scythed the greens and the rabbits kept the rest.

Up until 1886, the number of new golf courses appears to have been only a few each year, five being the largest number recorded and only in the period from 1875. I think it would be fair to conclude that during this period, the only exchange of greenkeeping experiences would be between the various Fife and East Lothian men, and that most of the other courses in operation at that time would have had a greenkeeper who came from these areas or had a connection with them. A possible exception might be a man from a cricket or bowling club taking over the office of Head Greenkeeper. 1887 saw the start of a boom in golf course construction which was really astonishing, and is attributed in the
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Golfers Handbook to the advent of railways, and the visiting of Scotland by people who before did not travel to golfing areas.

1887 saw the number of new courses rise to double figures. 1888 - 20 new courses were built, and 1889 - 30. From then to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, between 22 to 55 new courses were opened every year except for the period of the Boer War, when the numbers opened fell to around 12 to 15 courses opened each year.

This astonishing increase in golf courses must have required a very large number of greenkeepers. The invention of the lawn mower would have played a big part in making golf possible, and the arrival of the gang mower, even though horse drawn, would enable fairways to be cut.

It is probable that a good number of gardeners became greenkeepers. At this time in Scotland, the landed estates usually took young men into the "bothy" system where a number of apprentices and journeymen sometimes in considerable numbers, were housed at or near the gardens of the large estates.

As promotion to a house became possible only with the status of foreman having been obtained, there was at times a surplus of trained gardeners.

Stewarts among other firms, ran an employment bureau whereby head gardeners would write in asking for details of men available and also those of men looking for jobs. Stewart's operated this service for greenkeepers sometime around that period, especially when they were emigrating to the USA or Europe.

The term Gullane Greenkeeper was at one time often used, and I can recall letters using these precise words being received as, East Lothian produced a lot of trained gardeners as well as greenkeepers.

During this pre World War I phase, companies such as Suttons and Stewarts, along with others, used to prove information and booklets on greenkeeping practices, some greenkeepers wrote articles and books. In 1908 the Scottish Greenkeepers held an outing at which my father acted as Secretary. I think this was the first meeting the greenkeepers had held, but was more of a golf occasion than an educational one, but in some cases lectures were given to greenkeepers at the outings.

The use of fertilisers, seed mixtures was common before 1900, and many greenkeepers were already knowledgeable as to the uses and practices of greenkeeping. Others probably entered the profession because they were good golfers and the office of Greenkeeper Professional was not uncommon. As far as I know the Head Greenkeeper was at that time ranked in most clubs above the professional as far as status is concerned.

In 1914 the boom in golf came to an end and from then until 1919 few golf courses were built. The BGGA Journal of 1920 states that 90% of its membership served with HM Forces during the war years and a number were decorated for distinguished service. The membership of the association was just over a hundred, which must have been a very small proportion of the total number of greenkeepers as the Golfers Handbook of that time states there were around 1000.

By 1920 the BGGA Journal was again being published and new cours-