sary to look at what thinking shapes the way in which golf courses in this country are managed to see what rationale there is for not embracing change. It is rare in both traditional members' clubs and modern proprietary facilities to see golf courses that either cling on to, or were designed with a clear set up standards of present different from those facilities that are seen as normal, or desirable. But what influences the way that many golfers think that a golf course should look like? Presumably there must be some influence from television, but this cannot explain the contradiction we see when golfers marvel at the Old Course and its policy of minimal fertilising, yet pressurise their own club to produce a lush green course with all the contingent problems that this brings.

A golfer's view of how his or her own course should be set up must also be influenced when he or she plays at a club that employs a massive amount of resources to produce a specific type of course and it is perhaps this that has the greatest influence on current course set-ups. The golfer's entirely human desire to improve their own environment by matching the standards set by their recent experiences has led to direct comparisons between the very richest golf courses in Britain and the very poorest. The average golfer may not openly admit that they wish their own course to be as manicured as Augusta National or the Carnoustie in Scotland where it was presented for the Open in 1999. The way in which it was presented was in the removal of chemicals as a management aid and that Greenkeepers have no doubt that I will cope with these same problems without the use of chemicals. These naturally occurring preventative measures are used routinely in the form of seaweed solutions, carbohydrate feeds, microbacterial compounds and so on, but the science involved in producing these is still in its infancy and is still not holistically used.

If, or perhaps when, every tool is harnessed to both prevent and control turf problems and golf courses come to accept that changes in current practises are inevitable, then I have no doubt that I will cope with the removal of chemicals as a management aid and that Greenkeepers everywhere will prove once again that turf management is not simply a case of cutting grass.
Scott MacCallum headed west to Bolton to learn about BIGGA Golden Key supporter Rigby Taylor's consultancy agency Grass Science...

In the last six years an advisory service has grown from a standing start to become the second largest in the country... with its sights set on the number one slot.

Grass Science now has four full time consultants, working under the direction of Director of Agronomy, Brian Robinson, each offering advice to golf clubs, operators of amenity turf and on environmental issues up and down the length of the UK.

The company was born out an appreciation of Rigby Taylor Chairman, Bernard Hedley, that customers were becoming increasingly interested in advisory support and that the industry itself had become more technical and research driven.

"We were conscious that advice was becoming more and more important to customers and in 1995 we felt that we'd got to the stage where we wanted to offer advice in a more formal manner. We felt that there was an opportunity to build a separate division of Rigby Taylor which would be dedicated to offering advice on a commercial basis," explained Bernard.

Brian Robinson, a former Groundsmen of Lancashire County Cricket Club, who had for the five previous years been managing one of Rigby Taylor's sales teams, was asked to take the project on board.

"Brian was a good example of someone whose natural inclination was to give advisory input to customers and he too was keen on the idea. So Grass Science was born with in the beginning Brian basically managing a department of one with the help of some internal resources. The business flourished thanks to Brian's enthusiasm and capacity for hard work and within six months we'd appointed consultant Chris Peel, from ADAS, and the business continued to develop from there," explained Bernard, as we sat in the Bolton Headquarters of Rigby Taylor.

The next major leap for the company came last year when two further appointments were made with a fourth consultant being added earlier this year, all from the STRI.

"We appointed Andy Cole and Noel MacKenzie, both well known and well established agronomists about nine months ago with another, Tim Colclough, joining the team earlier this year.

"Our sales reps were used to offering advice and still do and this is welcomed by their customers, but now we also have a team of consultants whose entire focus is advisory input," explained Bernard, when tackled about the potential conflict of a product supply company setting up its own advisory service.

He added that while a consultant may visit a course three to four times a year the rep may visit 12 times a year so the greenkeeper is always going to hold great store on conversations with his rep.

Grass Science is marketed independently of Rigby Taylor and maintains links with other parties out in the field, whether they be contractors and supply companies.

There is a financial link between the two organisations but in terms of man...
agement the two are 100% divorced from each other.

“Brian has no responsibilities to Rigby Taylor and there are no Rigby Taylor managers with any responsibility for any Grass Science management,” explained Bernard, who offers the only genuine link as Chairman of both companies.

Indeed convincing customers and potential customers that Grass Science was an independent company was never a problem.

“It was always more of an issue in theory than in practice. I’m not aware that there has ever been an occasion when a client has felt uncomfortable about the Rigby Taylor/Grass Science link,” said Bernard.

While it was something Brian did consider prior to Grass Science being formed, he is happy to admit that it has never become an issue.

“Even from the word go it was never a concern and over the last three years it has got less and less so to the extent that it is never brought up at all now. That was particularly obvious at BTME this year.”

The benefits which come from having a link are informal. If a Rigby Taylor rep sees that a customer has got a need for advice he’d be happy to recommend Grass Science. Likewise if a Grass Science consultant is looking to give a product solution he’d be happy to recommend a chat with the Rigby Taylor rep.

“That’s the way it works and to be honest pretty much every consultancy tends to have a leaning towards a good product supply company, one that he trusts, knows will deliver a solution and not do his reputation any harm if he recommends it,” said Bernard.

That said there is nothing to prevent Grass Science consultants looking elsewhere for solutions to problems.

“There are no restrictions preventing the consultants developing contacts with other supply companies. In fact it is positively encouraged to ensure their product knowledge is as comprehensive as possible,” explained Bernard.

It is a point reinforced by Brian who pointed out that it is not unusual for one of his team to recommend a product for another company.

“We approach our work as a professional organisation which has merit and credibility and to do so it has to stand alone. So there have been cases, quite a number of cases, where it has been necessary to specify other materials... which doesn’t make the Rigby Taylor reps too happy,” he confessed.

However, such occasions offer the opportunity to assess the Rigby Taylor product range and see whether there is a gap that requires filling.

“As a product supply company we are looking to supply a need and one of the best ways of recognising a need is to be aware of what consultants generally are recommending to their clients,” said Bernard.

“The way that Rigby Taylor benefits from our relationship with Grass Science is that we are able to tailor our product range to find solutions to the problems that the consultants are identifying. “This has been the case in terms of grass seed development and in some fertiliser formulations within our range,” said Bernard.

As an aside he recalled how Rigby Taylor first got involved in fertiliser production 50 years ago when it mixed up the fertilisers prescriptions the STRI recommended to particular clients.

“In large measure we are doing no different now only we have our own consultancy service which enables us to work that much more closely. But the same processes take place.”

Bernard and Brian are keen to stress that each consultant brings a specialist skill to the team but that the individuals do offer a collective approach to their work.

“Andy and Noel have specialist golf knowledge; Tim’s particular strength is in training while Chris has skills as an expert witness,” explained Brian, whose own specialities are grass seed and environmental issues.

While those specialist skills are regarded as important the team, to use a footballing analogy, does play the same formation.

“We didn’t want people at opposite ends of the consultancy spectrum and that, although they are individuals they will offer advice which is along the same lines,” said Bernard.

“The team is able to dovetail so that if another member of the team has to stand in for whatever reason the advice would be of the same calibre. People have had to change slightly to fit in with that approach,” explained Brian, one of whose projects has taken him to Scotland on a regular basis over the last two years.

He has been contacted by the Highlands and Island’s Development Agency to look at the Cairngorm Ski Lift Company project to build a funicular railway.

“It is a site of special scientific interest and my role is to ensure that everything is reinstated to how it was... not just after this project but following the bulldozing work that was done in the 60s when the original ski lifts were put in. So far we’ve photographed rock structures and plants so they can be reinstated just as they were.”

The work has enabled Brian to plant our trial plots for grasses to see how they cope at 1,000 and 2,500 feet.

“Taking this work into the mountains has enable me to research how grasses cope with extremes of weather and this will be of benefit to many golf clubs in years to come,” he explained.

The future for Grass Science looks rosy with continued expansion on the cards. We see Grass Science developing a wider geographical spread over the next five years certainly throughout the UK while we do believe that Europe remains an attractive proposition,” revealed Bernard.

Their sights are still firmly set on becoming the number one consultancy in the country but they are also rightly proud of the strides they have made since Grass Science was formed.

Grass Science can be contacted on 01204 377757
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North

There was a record turnout of North Section members at BTME this year, it was great to see so many folk travelled down to Harrogate, I hope you all thought it was worth the effort and that you will go down again in the future. As ever it was a great week, with record attendances and full of quality events. The new ball meant more stands than ever and the trade show was excellent, with lots to see and buy if you had the budget!

The Tuesday night football match was played in cold pouring rain so it was not surprising that the Scots lads won 4-1. There was a shortage of English lads this year, so we gave a chance to the English team some Scots who have been working in England for a while so had gone a little soft! Sorry George.

There were some great evenings, with the Canadian contingent numbering 40 this year, and I am sure our party that were in Canada last month had a great time as those good folk know how to party, they could almost be Scottish! Roll on BTME 2002.

Congratulations to Ian Cowper, of Tain Golf Club, who became a DGC member month.

His partner, Samantha, gave birth to Adam and all are doing well. As a result of the imminent birth, Ian had to miss his Patrons Annual trip to Bi NE, but every cloud has a silver lining for someone and Jock Urquhart, also of Tain, stepped in and thoroughly enjoyed his first visit to Harrogate and the party will be full of stories that will keep me on my toes for a while.

Congratulations also to Gordon McKie, of St Andrews, who next month gets married to his fiancée, Susan. We wish them every happiness.

Bobby Mackay and his staff at Royal Dornoch have been very busy recently building five new holes on the Struie course as part of an upgrade that will see two great courses in Dornoch in the near future, we look forward to playing it when it opens.

It will soon be Spring and I hope by the time this report is read that the weather has been a little kinder to us to make up for the hardest Winter we have had for many years, as it is a good job we have such understanding members at our clubs.

I hope you are all sending your money to Stewart McBain for the 2001 Scottish Open, please do if it is fresh in your mind and Stewart does not have to chase around after you for it. Thank you.

Iain Macleod

East of Scotland

Well here we are another month away as it was at the Scottish Open at Gleneagles on June 2 and look out the window at the course which is covered in a foot of snow I wonder when we are going to get a decent spell of weather. As we were the turning point of the weather, we've had snow, deep frost then more deep frost then a thaw for a week then some rain then more snow when will it come to an end as it's only six weeks till the start of our season and some other courses as well. Hopefully March will be better.

The amazing thing is we spent a week at BTME in Harrogate and the weather was superb the whole week. Strange isn't it?

As normal the Section is quiet just now but a few bits of news for you. Firstly people on the move last month are Paul Hares, formerly Assistant Head Greenkeeper, has left Melville to take up a post with Standard Life and Shaun Ramsay who left Monktonhall, has taken Paul's job as Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Melville Golf Club. So best of luck to them in their new positions.

Well I think it is time for another letter as we must say BTME 2001 was excellent once again and every year it just keeps getting bigger and better. Well done to everyone at BIGGA and all the partners show the seminars and all the other activities that are going on that week and I speak for everyone when I say it is a credit to you all so keep up the good work and we will see you all next year at BTME 2002.

Peter Boyd, the hotel and the package you put together was first class once again so that's another reason why we are going back. I hope the new website that you took the clubs with you that is.

Now don't forget Ian and Richard and I am still waiting for your essay about your trip to Harrogate and I wont forget so I'm just reminding you both. No excuses please.

I hope to see you at the BIGGA Scottish Conference at Dunfermline on March 6 which will be past by the time this report is read but I hope to see you anyway.

Well that's it for this month, if you have any news let me know just as Steve Halliday (Head Greenkeeper at the West of Scotland GC), did because it's quite painless really. The usual numbers are 01968 661313 (home), 01968 661721 (office), 07719 595116 (mobile) or e263@cognexperlite.co.uk about anything you want as long as you think it will be of interest to the members. So come on, do it now!

PS - I have just heard the forecast and the rain is going to lash down and the wind is going to whip up so that so sounds familiar, but if it doesn't it won't leave any lasting impressions on me!

Chris Yeaman

Ayrshire

I'll start by extending a belated New Year's Greeting, to everyone, all the best for 2001 and hopefully we all can have a good playing season. My apologies for a vacant column over the past months this was down to my examinations. The birth of my second daughter in November and a bout of family flu at New Year before last month's deadline.

The AGM produced a very small turnout and there were no significant changes. The following committee were elected for serve for 2001.

Chairman, Ian Barr; Langs Kelburn; Past Chairman, Duncan Gray; The Pines; Secretary, Derek Wilson; Irvine Bgoside; Committee, George Brown, William McMeiken and Jimmy Johnsone all Turnbury, Jim West Kilbride, Brian Finlayson, Barassie. Dennis Tweddell (New member), Bonnyton, Robert T Bruce, Stewarts. There are vacancies for the Chairman's assistant committee which remain to be filled. The out- goings will be finalised at February's committee meeting and will be post- ed in next month's column.

The Young Awards winners were Martin Lothian, from Turnberry, and Colin Murray, from Brighouse Bay, who were presented with their award at the Patron's lunch and also received a trip to BTME at Harrogate, con- gratulations to you both. Also many thanks to all the Scottish Region patrons for making these awards possible.

People on the move recently are Scott McLear from West Kilbride to Wentworth as Assistant and Joe Bell who moves up from Deputy Head at Kilmacolm to Head Alben (New mem- ber), West Kilbride. Brian Finlayson, Barassie. Dennis Tweddell (New member), Bonnyton, Robert T Bruce, Stewarts. There are vacancies for Vice Chairman and committee members. So best of luck to everyone at BIGGA and all next year at BTME 2002.

It is a credit to you all so keep up the good work and we will see you all next year at BTME 2002.

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Chris Yeaman

West

On January 22-26 I had the good fortune to visit the BTME exhibition at Harrogate for the first time and must again thank the Patron's of our section for making this awards possible.

Well that's all I have to report this month, again if any Section member does have anything they would like added to this newsletter please contact me on 01335 236333 or 01335 266682. Brian Bolland.

Central

This month we extend a warm wel- come to another nine new Section members, and they are Graham Brand and Alan Breen, from Caroussie Golf Links, David Smith, from Glenalmond College Golf Course; Richard Colley, from Dunfermline Golf Club; James Dowie, from Bridgefield Golf Centre; Andrew Armstrong from Whitecraigs Golf Club; David Doddy, from Thornton Golf Club; Derek Downie, from Ladybank Golf Club; and Dudley Atchison from Anstruther Golf Club. As before, hopefully we will hear the news of Section activities in some of you at forthcoming events.

News of two former Section members, David Murdoch, formerly of Dunfermline Golf Club and now of Liphook Golf Club received his Master Greenkeeper Award at BTME. At Harrogate and Ian Ross, formerly of the Dukes Course at St. Andrews, is now working in Norway as Head Greenkeeper at the Mikkjarg Golf Club in Ostera.
Congratulations go to them both with every success for the future from everyone in the Section.

As usual there were a good number of Section members at Harrogate again this year and I'm sure everyone must have enjoyed a bigger and better BTA Meeting. Again this year I was unable to attend this event should mark it in their diary and start planning now for 2002 as it is an enjoyable week on both the "educational" and social sides of things.

Entry forms for this year's Spring Tournament, which is being held by courtesy of the members of Scottscrag Golf Club in Fife, should be with you shortly and once again I would ask you to return your form, with the correct remittance, as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

The winners of the January draw in "Club 2000" are D. McOwat, £30 with number 357 and D. Wilson, £20 with number 385. The winners of the February draw are M. Lindsay, £30 with number 320 and P. Butler, £20 with number 166. Thanks to S. Conrath, T. Edwards, W. Swan, A. Paterson and D. Gillon for purchasing their tickets, although outwith the allotted time period, these tickets will be included in the first draw. Thanks again to everyone who has supported this Section fund raiser.

John Crawford.

North West

I have just completed the fixtures for the year, and by the time you read these notes you should all have received your fixture list for the year I would like to thank Rufford Soil Technology for once again sponsoring the printing and distribution of the fixtures, and once again ask you to support the Section events, and make it all worth the time spent organising. If for any reason you have not received a list of fixtures, or if you are a new member please give me a ring and I will send you one immediately.

I have been informed that Paul Worsencraft, Head Greenkeeper at Knutsford Golf Club, has been involved in a car accident, and his wife and two children where also in the car with him at the time Paul has broken both legs, and his wife is still very ill.

Thankfully both of the children where uninjured, and are six months, and three years old. I am told the driver of the other car was killed outright, so I am sure we all wish them a speedy recovery and wish them all the best.

The extreme weather conditions have brought about the need for extreme greenkeeping, with many courses so wet and the grass still frozen, the only solution was to cut fairways and rough during the freeze, the results have meant courses are now playable, with good definition of fairways and greens, and memberships that can now play again, everyone happy! it just shows that at times we just have to throw the rule book out of the window.

On March 21 you can visit Barthgate Silica at Archild Quarry if you are interested please contact John Hammmond on 01270 762828; our spring meet is at Ruddall Golf Club on April 5, entry is £12 under 21. E53 members and £80 Gautes, the North Wales vs North West match will be played at Abergollen Golf Club, date to be announced, anyone interested in getting your shield back please contact our match secretary Jeremy Hughes.

At the college, Graham Wright would like to hear from any Head Greenkeeper's who are interested in NVQ level 2, two students on afternoons in the summer.

The Section welcomes back into the fold Mr. Andrew Campbell, MG. You know it makes sense.

Finally, our Section at this moment in time has two of our members serving as captains of golf clubs, they are Wyn Mostyn, who is the Captain of the Denesway Golf Club for the year, and Terry Adamson, Captain of Northop Country Park Golf Club. I was wondering whether any other Section wishes both of them every success in their year of office, maybe they could influence the weather seen as that's what us Greenkeepers are supposed to do.

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

Very little to report this month. Two members of staff at the Wynard Club have successfully completed their NVQ Level 2 at Askham Bryan College, Stephen Tiggart, and Gary Hutchinson both passed with flying colours the course also included the PA 2 which they both also passed.

After being advised by the police (three times) Shaun Carroll, Deputy Course Manager of Eaglescliffe Golf Club has abandoned his attempt to break the land speed record, through Yarm High Street, he can now be seen travelling to work with a queue of traffic behind him. Once he has safely arrived at work Shaun has the responsibility of maintaining machinery at Eaglescliffe Golf Club and he boasts that in three years only one piece of machinery has had to go away to be repaired, well done Shaun for setting an example for others to follow.

A BIGGA Committee Meeting has taken place at Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Club to discuss various issues, including the planning and golf tournaments.

A newsletter is being prepared and will be sent out when things have been confirmed, any news please contact me on 01372 5412 or Mobile 07671 383387.

Bert Cross

North Wales

Well the month of January brought us all some proper weather even through the rain, this got to the other extreme of freezing, at least we were able to move soil etc around the course to get some of our construction work completed. But oh yes the rains came again and our course is yet again saturated and closed.

The extreme weather conditions have brought about the need for extreme greenkeeping, with many courses so wet and the grass still frozen, the only solution was to cut fairways and rough during the freeze, the results have meant courses are now playable, with good definition of fairways and greens, and memberships that can now play again, everyone happy! it just shows that at times we just have to throw the rule book out of the window.

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Dave Goodridge

East Midlands

This year has again seen another excellent Trade Show at Harrogate, with more products on show, more workshops and seminars. Although I was only able to attend the show for one day it was still great to see a few old friends, gain some more valuable information and to see what a fantastic Association we have. Once again I would like to thank Rufford Soil Technology for once again sponsoring the Section events, to support the show in future years, so we can remain successful. It was nice to meet up with the Canadian Greenkeepers prior to my visit to Vancouver, to make a few more friends. Also it was great to see an old friend of mine Steve Peters, now Head Greenkeeper of Blankney Golf Club. Steve and I both attended Reaseheath College, with plenty of happy memories to talk about.

The Section has arranged a Lecture evening, which is to be held at Kirby Muxloe Golf Club on Tuesday April 10, entry is £10 including the evening meal. In association with Barenbrug Seeds, Aitkens, with many courses so wet and the grass still frozen, the only solution was to cut fairways and rough during the freeze, the results have meant courses are now playable, with good definition of fairways and greens, and memberships that can now play again, everyone happy! it just shows that at times we just have to throw the rule book out of the window.

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Dave Goodridge

East of England

The winter education seminar held at Newark Golf Club had Dennis Mottram as its key speaker. Dennis talked all day on 'Understanding Soils' The day was broken into various top- ics and members were involved in group participation, which added to the day. Nearly 50 members enjoyed a very informative seminar.

Thanks to all the excellent trade members for providing all the excellent raffle prizes which came from Barenbrug Seeds, Aitkens, Cannon's Turf, Rigby Taylor, Ruffords, Topdressers and Alpha Amenities. From Barenbrug Seeds, Aitkens, Cannon's Turf, Rigby Taylor, Ruffords, Topdressers and Alpha Amenities. From Barenbrug Seeds, Aitkens, Cannon's Turf, Rigby Taylor, Ruffords, Topdressers and Alpha Amenities.
been asking about another computer course, I can get enough support I want to organise the day, so let me know if you are interested.

The fixture list is now complete and will be with you shortly. A new sponsor this year for our second fixture is Amenity Technology which replaces the Les Pardy's Golf Day which unfortunately has packed in.

Graeme Macdonald

Midland

Firstly I would like to offer a warm welcome to our six new Members, Andrew Miller, Gary Watkins, Colin Vessey, Christopher Young, Keith Abercornbie and Jason Simms. It was good to see some familiar faces at BTME which, again, offered an excellent opportunity to learn and develop professionally as well as mix socially. All in all a very rewarding week. By now each member will have received a 2001 Section programme - omitted on December 13 is the AGM. A 4.15pm start. Anyone wishing to offer a tournament venue for 2002 would be very welcome to contact Rhys Thomas on 07775581615.

Finally, British Seed Houses are pleased to announce a visit to IGGER Abertyswyth in July. Those interested in this excellent two day trip please contact Andy Smith 07977 145091.

Phil Gates

BBB

My apologies for missing last month's article but, I was very busy at the time breaking my New Year's resolution. Most were broken by about an New Year's day apart from no smoking which I'm pleased to say is still going strong, but believe me the lads at work wish I hadn't.

Never mind, so it's into the new year and what have we got to look forward to? The members moaning about the temporary greens, more rain, the staff whingeing about the cold and then some more rain just for luck. But don't panic there is always the Section events to look forward to. Now before you get the rope out and start putting it around your neck we have got a little bit of good news from the Section. Some good from West Herts GC in that Andy Smith has been confirmed as Course Manager. Congratulations to Andy who can also look forward to the construction of new maintenance sheds in the very near future.

Going back to the incredibly wet weather I had an interesting tour of Browns in Chesham recently and if you think we've all got flooding problems think again. The weather coming off the hills around the yard at Browns means that without constant pumping the staff would by now have developed gills and fins. They do say that goldfish have a five second memory span so no change for the guys in stores department there! If you're reading lads it's just a joke - honest!

As I said in my last report our Spring Meeting will take place at Stockley Park GC in May - date to be confirmed. Please support the day if you can. A couple of recent appointments around the Section have seen Martin Guy installed as the new Course Manager at the American Golf-owned Oakwood Park and Guy Jenkins moving from West Herts GC to the Course Manager's position at Denham GC. Every success to both.

As you may or may not know here at Sandy Lodge we have undergone some major redevelopment work in the late summer. But we're not the only ones - oh no! Ian Semple, at Old Fold Manor GC has overseen the refurbishment of several bunkers, carried out by Kestrel Golf, who incidentally were the contractor for our work as well. John Merriman, at Batchworth Park, can also look forward to another nine holes in the near future.

At Harpenden Common GC new maintenance sheds are the order of the day. Steve Brocklehurst and his team have recently moved in to the new building which is situated in a much more accessible position on the course.

Digressing wildly away from Greenkeeping just to blow my own trumpet for a moment myself and Rob Washbrook, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Hadley Wood GC last month reached the last 16 of the Herts Carpet Bowls singles tournament. See you in the final Rob!

Finally, anyone looking for the ultimate
mature driving experience should contact Peter Hopkinson, at Bowers, who has a Y Registration VW Golf for £950 o.n.o. Taxed until the end of March, no MOT and four slick no weather tyres. No time wasters please. Don't all rush to the phones to get it.

Finally a message to Gordon Scott, of Toorlhill Golf Club. Thanks for your letter, sorry it has been a while but rest assured you will be contacted by us to set up a possible golf day at your course. See you all at Wittle, if not Frinton or Walton Heath.

Steve Crosdale

South Coast

Have you ever been to the BTME Learning Experience? I went to my first one this year and I was very impressed by the two days. So if you haven't been before I can thoroughly recommend it.

The show itself was much bigger, and so was my hangover! It is now spread over more halls, so it takes an age to get round it all, but it is a good show with everything you've ever wanted there. Well done to everyone who organised the week. Anyway, enough of BTME, and back to our sunny little Section.

There are only two things to mention this month. The first is Westurf. You should have all had the information on the day by now, so please show your support for the day and try to come along.

If anyone knows anyone who would like to exhibit anything at the show, then let Paula know. You can contact her on 01288 352194. Stands are going cheap this year, so don't think that it's expensive.

The second item is the Spring Tournament. Chris Sturgess works...
very hard organising the tournaments, so try and help him out by getting your names and money in early. The Spring Tournament is at the Army GC, Aldershot, this year. The price for the day is £21, this includes 27 holes, morning coffee, lunch and dinner. £21 is cheap for all that, so you would be mad to miss it!

Cheques should be made payable to BIGGA and sent to Chris at 40 Kinsbourne Way, Thornhill, Southampton, Hants, SO19 6HB. Don't forget to include your name and address. If you have any queries, then you can phone Chris on 02380 494084.

Please remember that if you have to pull out of the event, then give Chris at least seven days notice. If you don't, then you are liable to still pay for the day, as the golf club will still charge the section. You have been warned!

The seminar at Sparsholt would have been and gone by the time this column goes to print, but if anyone is concerned about the fees charged by some of the speakers, don't worry. The Education Fund, and not the money taken for the day, pay for all the speakers' expenses. All the money taken for the seminar, as with other events, goes towards the cost of the venue and the food.

Well that's all for this month. Mike Cartwright.

Devon and Cornwall

As usual the first event of the New Year for many members was to attend the BTME show held in the lovely town of Harrogate, the region's annual trip to the show departed from Fingle Glen this year, the coach was excellent and the videos on board kept members amused on the long trip North.

The show itself just seems to get better each year and is now one that you can't afford to miss. Many members attended the Amenity Technology evening which I hear was buzzing with atmosphere. Congratulations must go to our Regional Administrator Paula and Stuart Ashworth, of Amenity Technology, who had organised the superb trip. Also, I would like to con-

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gratulate all the staff at head office for organising a superb BTME. The Section’s first meeting of the year was sponsored by Barenbrug Seeds and held at Royal North Devon Golf Club on Wednesday January 31. The day started with our golfing members competing for the club’s links course for prizes kindly donated by Barenbrug UK, our non golfing members were treated to a guided tour of the sheds and course by Head Greenkeeper Mark Evans before returning for lunch.

After an excellent lunch David Singleton of Barenbrug UK presented the mornings golf prizes as follows 1. Anthony Parker, Saunton, 38pts all on back 9 & 2. Tony Good, Torrington, 38pts; 3. Kevin Dymond, Mortehoe & Woolacombe, 38pts.

Our afternoon educational talk was presented by Peter Wisbey, Courses Manager of the EGU Woodhall Spa, and also answered questions relating to Woodhall Spa and the EGU. The Section would like to thank our meeting sponsor Barenbrug and David Singleton for their continued sponsorship. Also, our thanks must go to Mark Evans and his crew for all their efforts on the day. Last but not least; our thanks must go to Royal North Devon Golf Club for allowing the Section use of their facilities and all their staff who made our day run so smoothly.

Our last meeting of the winter programme will be the Aventis and Supturf meeting which will be held at Roserow Golf Club on Wednesday March 28, the day will start as always with golfing members competing for the Supturf Trophy (Head Greenkeepers), Aventis Trophy (Assistants).

Remember that West turf is now at Westport, Exeter on Wednesday; March 14. So let’s see a big attendance from the Westport and support the Region so the Region can support you.

Richard Wynnman

South Wales

I gather BTME was again another success combining the National Education Conference which is supplemented by practical greenkeeping workshops including machinery maintenance, computer skills and golf course design & grass/soil science. The key speaker for the seminars was none other than the world landrace record holder Richard Noble, of Thrust 2. Other seminars included health & safety and the environment issues. Well done to all the trade and the organisers of the exhibition.

In January we had our first evening lecture in conjunction with the JOG with 32 persons present. Keep it up! Geoffrey Davidson presented us with his extensive knowledge of drainage systems including the types, specification & design and soil texture. A very interesting evening with practical demonstration and slides.

Bring you to date with the Seminar next month although we look forward to a health & safety update on 14th of this month and on April 11, the Annual Quiz. Richard Hatcher

Northern Ireland

The Section had an educational visit to Coleraine and Ballymoney where we visited Geoff Connell, of the company Grass Roots, to see the product TDC9 being produced. Geoff gave us a very informative and overreaching insight into the different stages of production.

Mr Ivr Ramage, of the NOMIX company also gave us a detailed introductory talk on the NOMIX compact sprayer. He also kindly donated a NOMIX sprayer, herbicide and cleaner for a prize draw. The prize was won by Ballymena Club Club. I would like to thank Geoff and Ivr for their hospitality, the refreshments were very well received. After the visit to Grass Roots we all travelled the short distance to Groundsman Industries in Ballymoney. The company was formed by Bill Warrick and is able to cater for all needs ranging from supply and tines. The 25 members who attended would like to thank Bill Warrack and his staff for the excellent food and drinks he provided.

The members found the afternoon visit very beneficial. The Section held a committee meeting in early January to formulate but golf days for the year so members will be informed in early spring of the dates and venues. A sub committee has formed to organise the next Educational Seminar which will be held in the autumn of 2002. The Chairman of the committee is Emmett Curran so if any member has any ideas for the seminar Emmett can be contacted at Downpatrick Golf Club on Tel: 44612532. I would like to welcome Robert Crooks and Gordon McBride of Malone Golf Club back to the Section which brings our membership up to 110 and still growing. Please remember our next event is at Downpatrick Golf Club on March 27 starting at 2pm where we will play 9 holes of golf and attend talks by Liz Wilson, of JA Humpries on grass seeds and Ian McClements the STRI agronomist will give a talk on a subject of his choice. Ken Henderson